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Aquinas and the Platonist Tradition

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Aquinas and Platonism[1]

One is unlikely to find far-reaching agreement between Bertrand Russell and Etienne Gilson: the former a brilliant logician, the latter a brilliant historian of medieval philosophy. They are unanimous, however, in their historical characterization of Thomas Aquinas. In his *History of Western Philosophy*, published in 1945, Russell wrote:

> Aquinas, unlike his predecessors, had a really competent knowledge of Aristotle... Until his time, men's notions had been obscured by Neoplatonic accretions. He, however, followed the genuine Aristotle, and disliked Platonism, even as it appears in Saint Augustine. He succeeded in persuading the Church that Aristotle's system was to be preferred to Plato's as the basis of Christian philosophy, and that Mohammedans and Christian Averroists had misinterpreted Aristotle.[2]

Is it possible that Russell was influenced, even indirectly, by the authoritative judgment of Etienne Gilson, expressed some twenty years previously? Gilson had pronounced that

> Aquinas was obliged to choose, once and for all, between the only two pure philosophies which can exist, that of Plato and that of Aristotle. Reduced to their bare essences, these metaphysics are rigourously antinomical; one cannot be for the one without being against all those who are with the

> other, and that is why Saint Thomas remains with Aristotle against all those who are counted on the side of Plato. . . As a philosophy, therefore, Thomism was born out of a pure philosophical option to chose against the philosophy of Plato, in favour of that of Aristotle.[3]

During the decade preceding publication of Russell's *History*, a number of scholars had engaged in studies which would prove conclusively that the view of Aquinas as strict Aristotelian was no longer tenable.[4] Conclusive perhaps, but not coercive, since even Gilson himself never fully accepted their results. Half a century later a well-known author still referred to Aquinas as 'the leading christian Aristotelian of the Middle Ages', declaring:

> Thomas of Aquino wove, by his teaching and writings, the greatest of all the medieval tapestries of christian intellectual vision, its warp from Aristotelian theory, with its own characteristic value implications, shot through with the woof of christian traditions and symbols, laden with commitment to the final values of worship.[5]

More recently, in the first year of the new millennium, a course on St Thomas was offered at a historic German university, based upon Josef Gredt's manual, *Elementa philosophiae aristotelico-thomisticae*.[6] With such exceptions, however, Aquinas' substantial debt to the Platonic tradition has been widely acknowledged.

The presence of Platonist elements in the work of Thomas Aquinas is multifaceted and profound. Assessment of his debt to the Platonic heritage, however, is problematic; there is no clear evidence that he made use of any of the three works of Plato available to the Latin West in the thirteenth century, the *Phaedo*, *Meno*, or *Timaeus*.[7] His knowledge of Platonism derived from a complex tradition of commentators and followers who in varying degrees had themselves modified original sources. Plato's doctrines were gradually and significantly transformed in turn by Plotinus, Augustine, Proclus, Pseudo-Dionysius and the writer of the *Liber de Causis*, to name the most important.[8] Aquinas' debt to Aristotle is

also a case of refracted Platonism; the Stagirite retained inspiration from his days at the Academy and remained profoundly Platonist in many respects. This brought a unique problem. Having at his disposal the newly translated works of Aristotle, Aquinas had direct access both to Plato's best pupil and his keenest critic; he perceived thus a Plato critically filtered through the eyes of the one who knew him best, but painted with the darker hues of the pupil's palette. Thus Aquinas could only with difficulty discern the real Plato.

No amount of *Quellenforschung* will explain the personal genius of a great thinker. There remains an inexplicable element — the ἕτερόν τι, by which Aristotle[9] explains the difference between living and inanimate: the 'something else' which animates the vision of an original thinker and inspires his written *oeuvre*. It is a grace of nature, and Plato and Aquinas alike were gifted. They had the same searching approach to the world — even though the world of each was different. Great minds have like visions and think equally great thoughts, though never the same. Regardless of the differences separating them, Plato and Aquinas have many philosophical attitudes in common. It is not always a case of historical influence, but frequently a viewpoint attained independently by Aquinas. The Platonism of St Thomas was unreflected rather than conscious. Prescinding for the most part from the question of putative influence, I wish in the following reflections to explore some of the affinities binding Plato and Aquinas across a millennium and half. I propose to consider Aquinas as a Platonist, without negating — this should be stressed — the many other defining elements of the Thomist synthesis.[10]

Etienne Gilson's judgment of Aquinas is correct inasmuch as there are irreconcilable inconsistencies between Plato's starting point and that proposed by Aristotle; Aquinas indeed made a philosophical option for the method of Aristotle. He could never declare with Cicero that he would rather err with Plato than hear the truth from others.[11] Aquinas was an unwitting, avowed, but critical Platonist. His genius was to discern truth subtly even alongside error. The key to his approach is the distinction between

a Platonic *positio* or conclusion, and the *via*, *ratio*, or methodic principle by which such a conclusion is attained; rejecting the latter he frequently adopted the former, attained more securely — sometimes, but not always — under the guidance of Aristotle.[12] (Conversely, a position attained with the help of Aristotle might well rest more profoundly upon a Platonist intuition.) Aquinas was critical of Plato's style, accusing him of having a bad method of teaching, speaking figuratively and through symbols, 'intending by his words something other than what the words themselves signify'.[13] Aquinas follows, *grosso modo*, Aristotle's explanation of the scope and nature of knowledge, yet many of his deepest metaphysical intuitions are unmistakenly Platonist[14]. Before considering what unites Aquinas with Plato, it will be helpful to review briefly his critique of Plato's approach to knowledge. Here too we notice his skill at detecting truth even in alien doctrines, absorbing elements and applying them approriately and analogously within his own system.

Knowledge

Aquinas notes that Plato adopted the presocratic principle of similitude between knower and known: 'like is known by like'. The Presocratics presumed that this likeness was materialistic; Aquinas praises Plato for recognizing it as immaterial.[15] In correcting the materialism of the Presocratics, however, he took the error to its opposite extreme, explaining every aspect of cognition as exclusively immaterial, including the very being of the object itself: the real is the ideal. 'Plato, having observed that the intellectual soul has an immaterial nature, and an immaterial mode of knowledge, held that the forms of things known subsist immaterially.'[16] He failed to distinguish between the real and cognitive orders. Aquinas notes the confusion: 'What is a principle of knowledge is not necessarily a principle of existence, as Plato thought.'[17] He explains:

> It does not follow that, because science is about universals, universals are subsistent of themselves outside the soul, as Plato maintained. For, although true knowledge requires

> that knowledge correspond to things, it is not necessary that knowledge and thing should have the same mode of being.[18]

As Aquinas portrays it, Plato needed to accommodate two aspects of knowledge: its assimilation to the object, and its stability. He concluded that since knowledge is an immaterial activity, its object must likewise be immaterial, and because it requires fixity, its object must be immutable in itself. Plato is reacting against the Presocratic view that, since everything in the world is in continual flux, there can be no knowledge of truth.[19] What is in a continual state of flux cannot be known with any certainty. Plato thus posited the separate unchanging 'ideas', by participation in which all singular and sensible things are said to be either a man, or a horse, or the like. Science refers not to sensible bodies, but to those immaterial and separate substances: thus the soul does not understand corporeal, but the separate species. Aquinas rejects Plato's theory of subsistent ideas as useless: if knowledge is only of immaterial, immovable, essences, there can be no scientific knowledge of matter and movement; it is ridiculous (*derisibile*), he declares, to seek the substance of things outside them.[20]

There is an alternative: 'Aristotle proceeded along another way. For first he showed in many ways that there is something stable in sensible things.'[21] Aquinas states their distinct approaches:

> Some, in order to investigate the truths of nature, have taken as their starting point intelligible essences (*ex rationibus intelligibilibus*), and this was the characteristic of the Platonists; whereas some began with sensible things (*ex rebus sensibilibus*), and this was characteristic of the philosophy of Aristotle.[22]

It is not the existence of separate substances, free from matter, that Aquinas rejects — these he affirms himself — but rather Plato's ground for affirming them, what he calls the 'root of his position' (*positionis radix*), which, he says, 'is found to be without efficacy, for it is not necessary that what the intellect understands separately should have a separate existence (*esse*) in reality'. Aristotle also

affirms the existence of separate substances, but 'follows a more manifest and surer way (*manifestiori et certiori via*), namely, by way of motion'.[23]

Plato and Aristotle agree that intellect only knows what is intelligible. They both reject the materialism of the Presocratics, but assign different immaterial causes of knowledge: 'Plato ascribed the cause of our knowledge to ideas, Aristotle to the active intellect.'[24] For Plato intelligible objects exist prior to cognition, as separate, self-subsisting, spiritual realities in themselves; knowledge is effected when the intellect somehow participates in them. According to Aristotle, the intelligible is not given *a priori*, but is latent in the objects of sense and is actualized by intellect itself through the mental activity of abstraction. The sensible cannot enter as such into the intellect; the role of the active intellect is to raise the intelligible content to the immaterial level required for intellection.[25] For Aristotle, the agent intellect illuminates the essence of the individual, disengaging it from its individualizing characteristics and providing a concept which is immaterial and universal.[26] According to Plato, the mind is illuminated by the separated intelligible substances themselves; for Aristotle and Aquinas, it is the mind which actualizes and illuminates the potential intelligibility latent in material beings, thus assimilating the object to itself and making possible a knowledge which is stable and necessary.

Because Plato failed to grasp the nature of abstraction he believed that whatever is abstract in mind is also abstract in reality, hence the existence of separate universal essences.[27] 'The Platonists posited an order of intelligible beings beyond the order of intellects, since the intellect understands only by participation of the intelligible; and they maintain that what participates is below that which it participates.'[28] Aquinas concedes counterfactually that there would be no need for the agent intellect if such intelligible universals really existed outside the soul.[29] But such is not our experience; man is both body and soul:

> Plato, considering only the immateriality of the human intellect, and not its being in a way united to the body, held

> that the objects of the intellect are separate ideas; and that we understand not by abstraction, but by participating in abstract things.[30]

Aquinas finds fundamental fault with Plato's view of human nature: man is not a unity composed of body and soul, but 'a soul using a body (*anima utens corpore*), so that he is understood to be in a body in somewhat the same way as a sailor in a ship (*sicut nauta in navi*)'.[31]

While he rejects Plato's exaggerated immaterialism, Aquinas adapts to his purposes the Platonic noetic of superior illumination. He deftly harmonizes the twin interpretations of Plato and Aristotle of knowledge as a lighting process, either infused from a higher source or as a spontaneous personal activity; he combines the motif of *lumen naturale* with that of transcendent light. Whichever model is proposed, it requires also the other, he argues, in order to be complete; the superior light must act through an individual agent, and the lighting faculty of the individual participates in a higher source. Emphasizing that knowledge is the act of an individual soul, he states: 'No action belongs to anything except through some principle formally inherent therein; therefore the power which is the principle of this action must be something in the soul.'[32] Thus, even if Plato is correct in presupposing a separate intellect, the human soul still needs a faculty which acts individually in the concrete, while participating simultaneously in the superior intellect. And while Aristotle is correct in attributing to the soul a power which illuminates the phantasms of sense, this faculty is dependent upon a higher intellect.[33] The light imagery of both converges: Aristotle compared the active intellect to the light received into the air; Plato likened the separate intellect which illuminates the soul to the sun, the source of light itself. For Aquinas God is himself the 'separate intellect', as it were the spiritual sun from which the human soul receives its intellectual light. In the words of the Psalm: 'The light of your countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us.'[34] God's light is stamped upon the soul, but the soul acts with autonomy. The *lumen naturale* is participated light, but is also individual and personal;

both motifs are inseparable. God is the ultimate source, therefore, of both subjective knowledge and objective knowability; he infuses reality with its intelligibility, and the knower with the personal power of intellection. We are close to the symbolism of *Republic* 6.

Aquinas is also able to explain cognition in terms of both Platonist participation and Aristotelian causality. Knowledge is intellectual, but imperfectly so, that is, it participates in the power of intellect; on the other hand, it acquires knowledge progressively, moving from potency to act. According to Plato, whatever is imperfect requires the pre-existence of essential perfection; and according to Aristotle, whatever is mobile depends on something immobile. Appealing to both principles, Aquinas concludes that above the intellectual soul of man we must necessarily affirm a superior intellect.[35] Jacques Maritain suggests that the main difference between St. Augustine and St. Thomas in the philosophic and noetic order was the 'substitution of efficient causality, the dominant Aristotelian-Thomistic note, for participation, the dominant Augustinian note'.[36] This must be seen as referring, not to the metaphysics of being but to the metaphysics of cognition, that is, to the manner in which knowledge is effected: through an illuminative participation in subsistent truth, or the efficient causation of the agent intellect. Aquinas gives priority *quoad nos* to the latter, but grounds it ultimately in the former.

Being

Plato and Aquinas share a basic realism regarding the objectivity of knowledge. Notwithstanding a critical divergence of philosophic method, both are equally committed to the primacy of being *vis-à-vis* cognition. With his emphasis on the primacy of the act of existence, Aquinas' philosophy is a philosophy of being *par excellence*. Because he affirmed the primacy of the Good, Plato might be considered to have neglected the paramount importance of existence. However, his philosophy is in intention, I suggest, first and foremost a philosophy of being. Jacques Maritain even suggested that Plato, but not Aristotle, was blessed with the

intuition of being.[37] Plato had, more than Aristotle, a powerful and profound sense of existence but, lacking the conceptual language to articulate its significance, was obliged to go beyond being to seek its ultimate foundation. He recognized diverse meanings of the verb 'to be', and had, I suggest, a conscious but inchoate awareness of existence in the radical sense.[38] He certainly had a strong sense of the actuality of being, without naming it as such: an acute awareness of 'realness' as what is most profound in all things. How else can one explain the phrase 'really existing essence' (οὐσία ὄντως οὖσα),[39] in which he enlists every grammatical trope of the verb 'to be', in order to convey the pre-eminently realistic character of 'true being without colour or shape', the fully essential and firmly existential character of the Form? Plato misidentifies the true locus of being and misinterprets the ontological density of ordinary reality, but has nonetheless a keen sense of the need for existential adequacy and vehemence. Moreover, what he ultimately affirms as the transcendent and infinite plenitude, the Good in itself, is, I suggest, an adumbration of Aquinas' *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*, the self-subsisting plenitude of existence. In order to clarify the widespread agreement between thomist and platonist ontology, it will be worth expounding some elements from Plato's dialogues which, had he known them, would have found favour with Aquinas.

The question of being is central to Plato's philosophy: his thought is marked by a zeal for Being as the object and goal of all authentic thought and endeavour. This is largely masked, perhaps, under the guise of the Good, which Plato claims lies beyond Being. Nevertheless, if we look closely at the language, pre-suppositions, thrust and spirit of his thinking, we cannot but notice that it is imbued with a desire for *that-which-is*: for what possesses being in the fullest sense of the word — even though it is conceived in terms of essence: of what something is, rather than the more radical presence whereby it is — its being, its *to be*.

In the *Theaetetus* Plato gives a colourful thumbnail picture of the philosopher. He is not interested, Socrates tells us, in the rivalries of political cliques, in meetings, dinners, and merrymakings with

flutegirls. 'Disdaining all such things as worthless, his thought takes wings, as Pindar says, "beyond the sky, beneath the earth", searching the heavens and measuring the plains, everywhere seeking the true nature of everything as a whole, never sinking to what lies close at hand.' (173d-e) He keeps his eyes fixed on the whole (175a). In the *Republic* Plato repeats that knowledge is related to being and knows it as it is.[40] The philosopher loves such knowledge as reveals the essence of permanent and unchanging reality and seeks such reality in its totality.[41] The philosopher, in contrast to the lover of opinion, seeks each true reality.[42] True philosophy is the turning away from darkness to light and the ascent to real being.[43] His gaze is fixed upon 'all time and all existence' (θεωρία παντὸς μὲν χρόνου, πάσης δὲ οὐσίας). Habituated to thoughts of grandeur, his mind seeks integrity and wholeness in all things human and divine.[44] Such wholeness and permanence, untouched by multiplicity or change, is for Plato the mark of true being — pure being, (τοῦ ὄντος εἰλικρινῶς).[45] Such being exists *more*, to a *fuller degree* than limited, changing reality.

Plato professes an axiomatic commitment to being as the ground of truth. Truth and being imply one another: truth reveals being, and being is the foundation of truth. In the Seventh Letter Plato affirms that the study of virtue and vice is only possible in light of what is true and false of existence in general (τῆς ὅλης οὐσίας).[46] Being is the ultimate value in knowledge and raises for Plato the basic question: 'Is it possible for one to attain "truth" who cannot even get as far as "being"?'[47] In evaluating sensation, Socrates even suggests that, 'since it is always of something which is' (τοῦ ὄντος ἀεί ἐστιν), perception must be infallible',[48] but concludes after analysis: 'Knowledge does not reside in sensations, but in our reflection (ἐν συλλογισμῷ) upon them, since it is possible to apprehend *being and truth* (οὐσίας γὰρ καὶ ἀληθείας) by reflection but not by sensation.'[49] Therefore, we do not 'seek knowledge in perception at all, but in some function of the soul, when it alone and by itself is engaged directly with beings' (περὶ τὰ ὄντα).[50]

In the *Theaetetus* there is a simple demonstration of the concept of being as fundamental and universal, illustrated by a

phenomenology of cognition. In an analysis of cognition, Plato traces the limited and disparate grasp of the sense faculties back to the all-embracing first affirmation of being, upon which all truth and knowledge are grounded. Each sense faculty is restricted to objects of its own domain; none perceives what is particular to another.[51] We have, nonetheless, knowledge of objects which goes beyond sensation; the hardness of one thing and the softness of another are both attained through touch, but the sense of touch does not grasp their very existence: that the existence of each is distinct, while existence is nevertheless common to both.[52] The various senses seize material aspects of bodies but cannot rise beyond these to apprehend their being, commonality, or differences. Our knowledge, nevertheless, is more than the aggregate of disparate impressions; we know them in their unity and diversity. The soul apprehends the so-called κοινά, the common or universal features which characterize all objects of knowledge, the *universalia universalissima*: being and non-being, likeness and unlikeness, identity and difference, unity and plurality.[53] The apprehension of being provides the ultimate synthesis, expressing the fundamental unity which embraces all things. Being is the primary concept: 'With regard to sound and colour, have you not, to begin with, this thought which includes both at once — that they both exist?'[54] Being is also the most universal: 'Being (οὐσία)... more than anything else, belongs to all things.'[55]

This appreciation of Being as the ground and goal of all knowledge becomes more explicit in the *Sophist*. The occasion of the dialogue is to reveal the true nature of the sophist, who parades falsity as truth. He is a maker of non-real images, mere semblances devoid of being. He seeks subterfuge in obscurity and falsehood. 'The sophist runs away into the darkness of not-being (εἰς τὴν τοῦ μὴ ὄντος σκοτεινότητα), feeling his way by practice, and is hard to discern on account of the darkness of the place.'[56] In contrast, 'the philosopher, always devoting himself through reflection to the idea of being, is also very difficult to see due to the brilliance of that region; for the eye of the vulgar soul cannot endure to gaze upon the divine'.[57] Being is the ultimate goal and horizon of the soul. It is

radiant in its brilliance and merits the name 'divine'. Whereas the Idea of the Good is presented in the *Republic* as the greatest of all things to learn (μέγιστον μάθημα),[58] in the *Sophist* it is the Idea of Being which is affirmed as the object of 'the greatest science' (τῆς μεγίστης ἐπιστήμης).[59]

One of the most significant results of the contrasting analysis in the *Theaetetus*, of sensation which grasps particulars and of reflection which knows universal or common being, is that being may not be identified with any particular object of knowledge, since it is common to all. Being is what all sense data have in common but is itself distinct from whatever is sensed. Any datum of sense will exhibit existence, but will not reveal its fullness; what it discloses cannot be identified simply with being itself. For something to be sensible is for it to be; for something to be, is not necessarily for it to be sensible. This is brought out at length in the *Sophist*, where the Stranger judges the legacy of the φυσιολόγοι and arbitrates between the monists and the pluralists. Being is not to be equated with any of its determinants, but is a value which is variously participated. Being cannot be equated with cold, since its opposite would then be impossible; nor with sameness, else difference would not exist. An entity of which 'cold' is not affirmed, need not necessarily be affirmed as 'not cold'. It may lie outside the range of this mutually exclusive disjunctive: it may be non-material. Reality may not be equated with any one of its modes. Being may not be identified with its determinations — this is the golden rule to avoid all reductionism. Being is a universal value which is diversely participated, but may not be identified with any of its participants. In the language of Aquinas, it is disclosed through the judgment of negative separation (being *is*, but is not '*this*'), rather than grasped abstractively like other concepts.[60]

Being and sameness are among those γένη which 'pervade all and connect them so that they can blend'. Being and otherness are among those which 'traverse wholes and are responsible for division'.[61] 'Being and otherness traverse all things and interpenetrate so that the other partakes of being, and *is*, by reason of this participation, and yet *is not* that of which it partakes, but

other.'[62] Being is, therefore, the source of both unity and diversity, of sameness and difference. Being is what all things have in common, yet each is distinct because, while not identical with Being itself, it has being in its own limited way. The structure of unity and similarity is one of communion and participation. Being is not simply one among the endless forms or perfections of the universe but is the most fundamental of all, embracing all others as secondary and implicit. In affirming the existence of an individual, what is affirmed is at once the participation of the individual in existence, and simultaneously its non-identity with existence itself. The individual shares in existence, but is not itself identical with existence: it is not the fullness of being. Likewise, to affirm an accidental mode of being is to affirm that the accident shares in the being of the object, but is not identical with it. Being is the presence which contains all things, but is contained by none.

In the *Sophist* Plato deals explicitly with the nature of being and gives the clearest statement on being in his entire works. He considers the universe of beings from a dynamic point of view, that is, how they interact and influence one another, and defines being as the 'power to act and be acted upon'.[63] He understood being, however, in terms of movement (κίνησις), and conceived life and even thought as motions. He correctly grasped that Being was not static and insisted that perfect being must contain life and knowledge. This involved him in the contradiction that perfect reality implied motion, which was anathema to his entire system.[64] Aristotle's theory of act, and the deeper meaning of actuality (ἐνέργεια / ἐντελέχεια)[65] as the action or actualization of a substance, already complete within itself, allowed Aquinas to overcome this problem: life and knowledge do not necessarily imply movement. Being, considered in itself as simple act and perfection, is the most fundamental activity of all; it has its end and fulfilment in itself and needs nothing else to act upon.[66]

Aquinas' philosophy of being is well known and needs only a brief outline; Being is primary, he holds, in two related respects. Firstly, the concept of *ens* ('that-which-is') is the most universal and fundamental of all; it is presupposed by all other concepts and

is implied in them. The concept of being is the *primum cognitum*; every other notion makes explicit a characteristic already silently affirmed in the universal assertion: 'reality is'. But more important than this mental concept of *ens* is the act by which beings in the first place exist, that is, are actualized and enacted, as opposed to the only alternative, which is nothingness. This is the meaning attached by Aquinas to the verbal infinitive 'to be' (*esse*). The act of being, however, is not simply a neutral function determining the option between existence or non-existence. It determines also the level of existential perfection enjoyed by an individual. It is not only the 'act of all acts', but also the 'perfection of all perfections'.[67] The act of being is a variable value which determines the status of the individual in the hierarchy of being. *Esse* is the first participation in divine goodness, containing virtually within itself all other perfections. The value scale of existence ultimately accounts for the hierarchy of reality: *gradus in ipso esse invenitur*.[68]

There is much in the *Theaetetus* and *Sophist* which anticipates Aquinas' teaching on being. Plato grasped the fundamental and universal character of being; in this he adumbrates Aquinas' doctrine. We cannot find in the dialogues anything exactly corresponding to Aquinas' view of existence as intensive perfection, yet there are some preparatory and kindred elements. Plato asserts that οὐσία, 'more than anything else, belongs to all things'. In the *Sophist*, Being is regarded as a kind of 'superform', in which all things participate. The participation of individuals in the fullness of essence, moreover, entails the intensive gradation of a received perfection; the reality of the individual — regarded formally or quidditatively — is virtually present in its archetype, not in the same concrete mode, but according to a higher, sublimated, presence, within the power of the εἶδος. The motif of the virtual or intensive presence of the positive value of individuals in the Form is adopted by Aquinas in his conception of being as the comprehensive value in which all specific perfections partake. Hence life and knowledge participate in the primary value and perfection of being. Aquinas' conception of being as comprehensive intensive perfection echoes the Platonist motif of the preeminent presence of effects in the

cause. Aquinas transfers the relationship between participant and participated to the dependence of every secondary mode of being upon the perfection of being, and ultimately to the participation of all creatures in subsistent divine being (*ipsum esse subsistens*).

Plato's insight into being as the 'power to act or be acted upon' anticipates Aristotle's distinction between actuality and potency, which is central to many of Aquinas' doctrines, not only his metaphysics, but also his psychology, epistemology, ethics and theory of art. The definition of being as δύναμις prefigures to some extent Aquinas' notion of being as *virtus essendi*, the fundamental power whereby all things are present in themselves and to the universe, according to varying degrees of perfection. Plato's insistence[69] that what is fully real must be endowed with life and intelligence becomes an important source for the Neoplatonic doctrine of the threefold levels of reality, adopted enthusiastically by Aquinas. It matures into his doctrine of the intensive fullness of existence: being according to its fullest meaning is alive and intelligent; life and intelligence are not added as extra perfections to existence, as from without, but flow from the individual's act of being, as modes of its actuality.[70]

Participation

It was to explain the various modes of existence exercised by different realities that Plato proposed his theory of participation. Wishing to describe the metaphysical realities and relations underlying human experience, Plato was obliged — as Parmenides and Heraclitus before him, and philosophers ever since — to turn to the inadequate vocabulary of physical reality. The analogy of part to whole seemed best to depict the relationship of limited, changing, individuals to their essence conceived as perfect and immutable. Participation indicates the dependent status of individuals which possess in limited measure the identity and perfection of a specific nature, but which do not exhaust its full reality. Plato also took from Pythagoras the model of imitation, but found in participation a more profound and comprehensive explanation.

The core principle of participation is stated in the *Republic*: 'Whenever a number of individuals have a common name, we assume them to have a corresponding idea or form.'[71] According to Plato, wherever there is a many there must be a one: if a multiplicity possesses a common perfection or quality, there must exist a single source which is itself the fullness of that perfection and the source for all others. 'We affirm an absolute beauty and an absolute good; likewise for all things which we affirm as many, we posit a single idea, assuming it to be a unity, which we call the essence of each.'[72] Plato's ideal forms are possessed not simply of a mental reality, but of an existence more powerful and complete than that of physical objects. The relation of individuals to the universal is not one of mental association or abstraction, as for Aristotle, but of real dependence and causation.

Regarding the ontological status of the forms Plato states, in the case of equality, that it is 'not the equality of stick to stick and stone to stone, or anything else of the like, but something beyond all that and distinct from it' (παρὰ ταῦτα πάντα ἕτερόν τι)'.[73] Similarly with beauty itself, goodness, justice and holiness; likewise all those things which, as he puts it, are stamped with the seal of 'that which is' (περὶ ἁπάντων οἷς ἐπισφραγιζόμεθα τὸ ὃ ἔστι).[74] Marked with the indelible character of existence, these absolute forms are the only true realities. Εἶδος is the pure and perfect essence, free from change, defect and limitation. 'Beauty, goodness and the other forms have a most real actuality, existing to the fullest possible extent (εἶναι ὡς οἷόν τε μάλιστα).'[75]

It is the form in its fullness and independence which alone constitutes the ground and adequate cause for individuals. 'There is no other way by which anything comes to be than by participating in the proper essence of each thing in which it participates.'[76] As Plato states in the *Phaedo*, it is not its lovely colour or shape which makes a thing beautiful; 'nothing else makes it beautiful but the presence or communion of that absolute beauty'.[77] He does not know how this has come about, or how exactly it functions, but repeatedly insists that the principle 'beautiful things are beautiful through beauty' is sure and secure (ἀσφαλέστατον).[78]

The words used by Plato for 'participation', μέθεξις, μετάληψις, and κοινωνία, refer to the subtle and inscrutable relationship between individuals and the objective fullness of the perfection which they exemplify and share with others. The relation of multiple parts to a unique whole is a profound and illuminating analogy; yet eventually Plato becomes aware of its limitations, recognizing the difficulties inherent in his own theory of participation. He registers in the *Parmenides* two critical difficulties: problems associated with the multiplication of what is shared by its participants, and the impropriety that there should be forms of realities which are in themselves imperfect, such as dirt, mud and hair: how can these exist in a state of perfection?

Aquinas has an accurate grasp of the theory of forms,[79] and recognizes the difficulties implicit in Plato's participation. He notes that Plato establishes an order among the forms themselves, on the ground that according as something is simpler in the intellect, it is prior within the order of things:

> In accordance with the order of forms, the Platonists posited the order of separate substances; for example, there is a single separate substance, which is horse and the cause of all horses, whilst above this is separate life, or life itself, as they term it, which is the cause of all life, and above this again is that which they call being itself, which is the cause of all being.[80]

He recognizes, however, that beyond being Plato places a higher principle:

> Now that which is first in the intellect is the one and the good; for he understands nothing who does not understand something one, and the one and the good follow upon one another. Hence Plato held that the first Idea of the One, which he called the One-in-Itself and the Good-in-Itself, was the first principle of things and this Idea he said was the highest good.[81]

All forms, therefore, participate in the One (*omnes species participant uno*).[82]

As Aquinas expounds it, Plato's theory provides the solution to two questions: the nature of knowledge and the origin of finite beings. The forms are the foundation of a twofold participation: they furnish a ground both for the certainty of truth and the existence of individuals. The immaterial forms

> are participated both by our soul and by corporeal matter; by our soul, to the effect of knowledge thereof, and by corporeal matter to the effect of existence: so that, just as corporeal matter by participating the idea of a stone, becomes an individuating stone, so our intellect, by participating the idea of a stone, is made to understand a stone.[83]

Aquinas explains the analogous nature of participation in both cases:

> Plato held that the forms of things subsist of themselves apart from matter; and these he called ideas, by participation of which he said that our intellect knows all things: so that just as corporeal matter by participating the idea of a stone becomes a stone, so our intellect, by participating the same idea, has knowledge of a stone.[84]

As we have seen, Aquinas rejects Plato's theory of Forms. Yet he embraces with approval the principle that when many individuals possess a common perfection, there must be a single causal source. Rejecting separate subsistent ideas as the formal causes which generate sensible things, he applies the principle of participation more radically to the universal and intimate perfection of being; the common perfection of existence requires a single creative cause.[85] He states this with clarity and brevity in the prologue to his Commentary on St John's Gospel, remarking that the Platonists attained knowledge of God through his dignity, based on the notion of participation: 'That which is something by participation is reduced to what is the same thing by essence, as to the first and highest.' Aquinas himself applies this principle to what is for him the most universal and fundamental value of existence:

> Since all things which exist participate in existence (*esse*) and are beings by participation, there must necessarily be at the summit of all things something which is existence by its essence, that is, whose essence is its existence. And this is God, who is the most sufficient, the most eminent, and the most perfect cause of the whole of existence, from whom all things that are participate existence.[86]

This is a significant example of the distinction between *via* and *positio*. Aquinas applies the élan of Platonic principles to a new milieu, where existence is the primary ambience and element. Participation constitutes the central axis of Plato's dialectic: it is the foundation and coping stone of his entire vision; it becomes the same for Aquinas. Plato and Aquinas share comparable principles, applied analogously within distinctive intellectual and existential environments. The ultimate metaphysical explanation of individual beings is best accounted for by each, however, through the act of participation, pointing ultimately to the existence of a unique transcendent plenitude of perfection, the source of all existence and intelligibility.

The notion of participation was unquestionably the most fruitful insight which Aquinas consciously adopted from Plato. The dual relation of participant-participated signifies the indwelling presence of spirit, the efficacy of non-material power, the relation of the individual to its universal essence, the cognizance of objects by consciousness, and the intimate and profound action of God as creative presence to each individual. The analogy of part to whole is capable of expressing the relationship between any metaphysical principle — of material or non-material being — and its wider context. L.-B. Geiger remarks that the terms *participatio*, *participare*, and their derivatives are to be found on almost every page of Aquinas' writings, claiming that 'almost all of his philosophical and theological theses are formulated with the aid of the vocabulary of participation'.[87]

Plato's principle of participation, introduced to solve a false problem, provided Aquinas with an ontological structure which he

transformed and applied to his own original concept of existence. It is not participation as such which he criticizes, but its use by Plato. For Aquinas, participation is the best explanation for the obvious paradox of limited perfection; being is the fundamental and primary perfection of all things, the universal value in which each individual participates according to its unique measure. Each individual captures the perfection of existence in the measure of its specific essence, placing a limitation to what in itself is infinite. But, how can the infinite be limited? As Norris Clarke explains,

> Plato was unable to express the participation structure in terms of the limited reception by the participants of a perfection that exists in its source in a state of illimitation or infinity. This is the position that St. Thomas, following the whole Neoplatonic tradition, was to hold.[88]

Clarke remarks:

> Although Plato had the genius to discover the doctrine of participation in general and the necessity of some principle of negation or imperfection in reality, his equally deep-rooted conception of perfection as distinct form, and hence of finite and infinite as correlatives of perfect and imperfect, prevented him from carrying through his analysis of participation to its more natural consequence, i. e. to expression in terms of a limitation of the higher by the lower.[89]

Aquinas adopted with enthusiasm the Platonist principle of participation in order to demonstrate the reality of a first cause. He adopts from Plato the axiom that wherever there is a 'many', there must be a 'one', that is, wherever there is a multiplicity sharing a common perfection, there must be a single plenary cause of that perfection. Aquinas' *Quarta Via*, which argues from the grades of being to the existence of God, is essentially Platonist. The existence of varying degrees of perfection merely adds an extra dimension to the phenomenon of the one and the many, of multiplicity and unity in the universe, lending added force to metaphysical reflection on the problem. Aquinas' reliance on Plato is more clearly evident

in the simpler formulation in *De Potentia*, where he applies the argument of participation to both the diversity of being and the degrees of perfection. When something is common to all, he states firstly, it must be the effect of a single cause, since no individual can itself be the cause of what it shares with others. Beings are diverse, yet existence is common to all; hence they must come into being not by themselves, but by the action of a common single cause. He asserts: 'Seemingly this is Plato's argument, since he required every multitude to be preceded by unity not only as regards number but also in reality.'[90] Secondly, he states, whenever a perfection is participated by many beings in varying degrees, no individual with a limited measure can itself be the source of its own perfection; if it could be the cause, it should not place a limit to its own perfection but would by necessity possess it to an infinite degree — and there would be no difference of degrees. It must be caused in those in which it exists imperfectly by the most perfect. [91]

One commentator has remarked: 'Thomas was more convinced than Plato that participation helped us to appreciate what is going on in the created universe.'[92] Participation for Aquinas, however, was not participation in Plato's forms, but in the basic activity and perfection of existence. By bringing participation to bear on the most fundamental, intimate and universal perfection which all things have in common, Aquinas was able to affirm the existence of God who causes creatures by sharing his being, so that finite things may participate in the effect of creation.[93] Aquinas thus transforms participation by equating it with the efficient causality of creation.

Aquinas would agree with Plato's own objections to participation and the theory of Forms, stated in the *Parmenides*. How can something be shared without losing its simplicity and fullness? Can there be forms of imperfect realities? Plato has no difficulty in affirming the reality of such separate forms as justice in itself, beauty, and goodness.[94] He hesitates, however, whether there can be separate forms of such realities as man, fire and water and rejects as outright absurd the existence of separate forms of such things as hair, mud or dirt.[95] This level of reality is, he declares, most ignoble and vile (ἀτιμότατον τε καὶ φαυλότατον).

Plato's problem was largely solved by a distinction which was fundamental for Aquinas: that between pure and impure perfections. Pure perfections connote no mark of limitation and may be found formally in God, and affirmed essentially of him. Impure perfections are contained virtually in God, that is, in his power, such that he is their cause, but in no way resembles them. Pure perfections have also the fullness which escapes the problems of participation. The sharing by a multiplicity in the fullness of a pure spiritual perfection does not shatter its unity. The realities of spirit, such as love, joy or knowledge may be shared without being divided; participation is not division. With material being, this is not the case; when shared, a material object loses it wholeness or entirety. At a yet higher level of independence or freedom than spiritual being from the restrictions of matter is the unbounded perfection of existence which, unlimited in itself since restricted by nothing, may be given or shared without diminishing the richness of its source.

Aquinas provides adequate solutions to the difficulties acknowledged by Plato in the *Parmenides*, with his application of participation to a newly conceived concept of existence, and with his distinction among essential forms (now transferred as perfections to the mind of God) between pure perfections, the names of which are applied properly to God, and those denoting imperfect modes of being which may only be affirmed symbolically of divine nature, or more adequately which are removed from God, but which have the merit of denoting his transcendence beyond the physical world.

The theory of Ideas was a flawed solution to the problem of stable and universal knowledge. Following the example of Aristotle, Aquinas rejected Plato's ultrarealism; he denies that natural individuals participate formally in extramental, universal, essences which determine 'what' they are. For Aquinas, beings participate in the perfection of existence, not in a universal quiddity. Yet, a problem still remains: how to account for the similarity of essence throughout a diversity of individuals, that is, their resemblance in *what* they are. The theory of abstraction does not respond to this question, but to the problem how we grasp a diversity of

similar individuals by means of a single concept. Aquinas finds a readymade solution to the deeper problem in Augustine, following a tradition already established in Middle Platonism:

> Imbued with the doctrines of the Platonists (*qui doctrinis Platonicorum fuerat imbutus*), whenever he found anything contrary to faith, he substituted something better; thus for Platonic forms he substituted the reasons (*rationes*) of all creatures existing in the divine mind.[96]

Following Augustine, Aquinas adapted Plato's theory of universals *ante rem* to the only level where it could be true. Aristotle had dismissed the Forms as birdlike 'twitterings' (τερετίσματα),[97] and explanations of participation as empty words and poetic metaphors.[98] It would be interesting to speculate how the *Thomas aristotelicus* of the handbook would evaluate the fortunes of this fertile theory. The 'twitterings' are now the thoughts of God, and participation — analogy more than metaphor — is the universal principle and structure joining all things in the universe, both to one another and to their divine source.

The Divine Good

A point of fundamental difference between Aquinas and Plato — and the entire Neoplatonist tradition — is the relation of being and goodness in the definition of the divine principle. For Plato the Good is beyond being (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας).[99] He attains the ground and unity of existence by transcending being and sacrificing the reality of sense objects; being is a participation in the Good. Influenced by Pseudo-Dionysius and the writer of the *Liber de Causis*, for whom being is the first created perfection, Aquinas arrived at an understanding of existence as the absolutely first of all perfections. Being is not only the first participation in a transcendent Good but is itself perfection unlimited: Being and the Good are identical. The excellence of Goodness, overstressed by Plato, is restored within the implicit meaning of Being, which on deeper reflection is revealed as primary. God is praised not

primarily as Good, but as Being. His proper name is *Qui est*; he is described by Aquinas as the 'infinite ocean of substance' (*pelagus substantiae infinitum*),[100] in a phrase borrowed from John Damascene, but which echoes powerfully Plato's praise of the Good in the *Symposium* as 'the great ocean of beauty'.[101]

Despite Plato's assertion that Good is 'beyond being', we cannot conclude that it is therefore non-existent. The passage indicates rather the difficulty of conveying its supremacy and excellence. The Good is something most real in itself:

> Every soul pursues it and does all that it does for its sake, with an intuition of its reality, yet baffled and unable to apprehend its nature adequately, or to attain to any stable belief about it as about other things.[102]

Most convincing are the phrases which describe the idea of the good as 'the brightest part of being' (τοῦ ὄντος τὸ φανότατον),[103] 'the most blessed part of being' (τὸ εὐδαιμονέστατον τοῦ ὄντος),[104] and 'what is best among things which are' (τὸ ἀρίστον ἐν τοῖς οὖσι).[105] As the origin of being and perfection, the Good constitutes the fullness of ontological perfection.

Why did Plato situate the Good beyond Being? Is not an *au-delà de l'être* inconceivable and contradictory? Aquinas sought to understand the reasons why Plato gave priority to goodness over being. Plato was unaware of the distinction between actual being and potential being and therefore classified matter with non-being.[106] Through its power of attraction, however, goodness extends its causality to matter and may therefore be said to embrace non-being.[107] From the perspective of final causality, goodness has wider extension than being, comprehending not only what actually is, but also potential being. As Aquinas understands the Platonist view, matter is strictly speaking non-being, but through its predisposition towards the good, 'partakes something of the good'.[108]

For Aquinas, the good is what is desired; desirability is rooted in the act of existence — nothing can be desired if it does not exist. Goodness and being are identical; what is potentially real is equally

only potentially good. Because goodness adds to being an explicit reference to purpose and will, it has a certain conceptual primacy. Goodness however is grounded in the deeper principle of being, not in existence as neutral observable fact, but in being as intrinsic power (*virtus essendi*) and actuality (*actus essendi*). Implicit in Aquinas' metaphysics, as noted above, are two notions of being, one logical, the other metaphysical. Goodness receives its radical explanation in a shift from the concept of being (*ens*), simply stating the fact that things exist, to the inner act of being (*esse*), which grounds the resources and perfection of each individual. *Bonum* exceeds *ens*, but acquires its fullest significance in *esse*, the act of all acts and perfection of all perfections. *Esse* is the existential abundance from which flows the self-diffusing activity of each individual, and which bestows every quality which makes it an object of desire.

Aquinas gives a plausible explanation for the primacy of το Ἀγαθὸν, but takes Plato's thought a stage further. W. K. C. Guthrie remarks on Plato:

> In his teleological world, if one knows that something *is*, or exists, there is always the further question, What is it *for*? What is the *good* of it? The good of a thing is the final explanation of its existence. But for Goodness itself there is no such further question. It is the justification of its own existence, like happiness in the *Symposium* (205a), where 'it is not legitimate to go on to ask, "Why does anyone want to be happy?" The answer is complete.'[109]

Aquinas can agree that in its explicit content the idea of goodness surpasses the primitive concept of being, which remains silent about purpose or finality. Etienne Gilson states:

> Precisely because it is essentially desirable, goodness is a final cause. Not only this, but it is both prime and ultimate in the order of purposiveness. Even being is only because it is for the sake of something, which is its final cause, its end. In the order of causality, then, goodness comes first, and it is

> in this sense that Platonism receives from Thomas Aquinas all the credit to which it is entitled.[110]

However, for Aquinas, there is no final goal which is extrinsic to the totality of the real; there is no separate Good. Divine subsistent being is the transcendent good from which all things emanate as efficient source, and the final cause which draws all creatures to itself. It is such because it is the unlimited and subsisting fullness of existence, containing to an infinite degree the perfections which are manifested in creatures. God is beyond being (*ens*) inasmuch as he is infinite being (*esse*) itself.[111]

As the origin of being, Plato's Good constitutes the fullness of ontological perfection. 'The nature of the Good is necessarily the most perfect of all things . . . and surpasses all others in sufficiency.'[112] This superabundance of perfection is the ultimate reason for the generation of both the natural and ideal worlds. His doctrine of the diffusion of goodness is illustrated in the myth of the Demiurge told in the *Timaeus*, where Plato wishes to relate as a 'likely story' how the cosmos was engendered. It is, we are told, the work of a master artisan who fashions the natural world according to an eternal order. While the artisan is assumed to be divine, he cannot truly be called 'creator' in the strict sense or be identified with the Good. It is more likely, as Proclus concluded, that the demiurge is related to the sensible world as the One or the Good is to the whole of reality. Nevertheless in this myth Plato introduces to Greek philosophy the first real account of the formation of the cosmos through divine agency.

Aquinas praises both Plato and Aristotle for surpassing the limited perspective of earlier thinkers to investigate the origin of all things. 'Plato, Aristotle and their disciples attained to the study of universal being: and hence they alone posited a universal cause of things.'[113] Previous philosophers adverted to accidental external change, or recognized only the causality of corporeal principles, although admittedly Empedocles discovered formal causality. 'But beyond this mode of becoming, it is necessary according to the teaching of Plato and Aristotle, to posit a higher one (*ponere alium*

altiorem).'[114] He further clarifies that although Plato and Aristotle supposed immaterial substances to have always existed, they did not deny they were caused in their being, or depart from the faith by holding them to be uncreated.[115] Aquinas thus attributes to both Plato and Aristotle the doctrine of a universal cause of the existence of all things (*univeralem causam rerum, a qua omnia alia in esse prodirent*).[116] In this sense he credits them with a doctrine of creation,[117] but clearly not the fully elaborated theory professed by himself.

A. E. Taylor suggests that the idea of creation out of nothing was intelligible to Plato. God causes all things without any pre-existing material. He remarks: 'The language, perhaps, must not be unduly pressed, but it proves at least that the idea of "creation *ex nihilo*" was quite intelligible to Plato.'[118] In the *Sophist*, Plato defines the productive arts as those which bring into being something which did not previously exist (ἄγειν εἰς οὐσίαν).[119] He divides the productive arts into the divine and the human. The human arts produce things which did not exist, by combining or moulding given materials (περὶ τὸ σύνθετον καὶ πλαστόν). It is tantalizing to speculate what meaning Aquinas would have attached to Plato's conception of divine production. It is worth quoting the Stranger's words in full:

> We said that every power is productive which causes things to come into being which did not exist before. . . There are all the animals, and all the plants that grow out of the earth from seeds and roots, and all the lifeless substances, fusible and infusible, that are formed within the earth. Shall we say that they came into being, not having been before, in any other way than through God's workmanship? Or, accepting the commonly expressed belief — that nature brings them forth from some self-acting cause, without creative intelligence. Or shall we say that they are created by reason and by divine knowledge that comes from God?[120]

In the *Timaeus* we encounter for the first time the motif of goodness as the origin and reason for creation. The fundamental

tenet, central to the Neoplatonist and Christian traditions, of the diffusive nature of the good, provided Aquinas with the ultimate answer to the question: 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' This received its classical formulation in the *Timaeus*. To the question 'Why did the artisan of the universe shape it at all?', Plato replies: 'He was good, and what is good has no particle of envy in it; without envy, therefore, he wished all things to be as like himself as possible.'[121] Plato's view of reality might well be characterized as a metaphysical optimism. All things are the generous outpouring of all-perfect Goodness which, self-sufficient and superabundant, wishes to share its perfection. Goodness is generous; it is generative. This Platonic motif of the self-bestowal of goodness is crystallized in the medieval principle *bonum diffusivum sui*: goodness is diffusive of itself. This is the radical reason given by Aquinas for creation.[122] Aquinas' primary source for this doctrine is Pseudo-Dionysius, whom he quotes as saying that 'the divine love did not allow itself to be without seed' (*divinus amor non permisit ipsum sine germine esse*).[123]

Aquinas famously adopted from the Pseudo-Dionysius the doctrine of the *triplex via* for naming God, based upon the positive likeness of creatures to God, the deficiency of this likeness and the pre-eminent transcendence of God beyond creation. He could not have been aware that this triple doctrine had its origins in diverse dialogues of Plato. The earliest known formulation is found in the *Didaskalikos* of Alcinous, second century AD, who is reporting a long established tradition within Platonism.[124] The approach to God in positive analogous terms, through causality, is anticipated by the simile of the sun in the *Republic*.[125] The negative step through the removal of attributes is prefigured in the First Hypothesis of the *Parmenides*.[126] Finally, the purified affirmation of transcendent perfection has its antecedent in the ascent of the soul from beautiful things to the 'vast ocean of beauty' in the *Symposium*.

In the celebrated passage of the *Symposium* Plato's Diotima describes the ascent of the philosophic soul to the plenitude of divine suprasensual beauty.[127] In the reply to an objection in the *Secunda*

Secundae there is a passage which has remarkable parallels. Aquinas refers to six steps whereby the soul rises by means of creatures to the contemplation of God. It is worth citing *in toto*:

> For the first step consists in the mere consideration of sensible objects; the second step consists in going forward from sensible to intelligible objects; the third step is to judge of sensible objects according to intelligible things; the fourth is the absolute consideration of the intelligible objects to which one has attained by means of sensibles; the fifth is the contemplation of those intelligible objects that are unattainable by means of sensibles, but which reason is able to grasp; the sixth step is the consideration of such intelligible things as reason can neither discover nor grasp, which pertain to the sublime contemplation of divine truth, wherein contemplation is ultimately perfected.[128]

On the lasting significance of Plato and his unique legacy, Gerard Manley Hopkins remarked:

> There have been in all history a few, a very few men, whom common repute, even where it did not trust them, has treated as having had something happen to them that does not happen to other men, as having *seen something*, whatever that really was. Plato is the most famous of these. . . Human nature in these men saw something, got a shock; wavers in opinion, looking back, whether there was anything in it or no; but is in a tremble ever since.[129]

Plato occupies a singular place in the spiritual history of humanity, challenging mankind to confront the transcendent mystery of reality. He bequeathed to humanity for evermore an abiding sense of self-awareness in the face of what is most great and magnificent. Aquinas was profoundly attuned to the mystery glimpsed by Plato. Had he been familiar with the dialogues, he would have seen how much they had in common. There is between them a latent but profound metaphysical sympathy, an underlying

congeniality regarding what is sublime and significant in human life. Fundamental for each is that the world of experience is insufficient in itself, and therefore dependent on an absolute principle; equally central for both thinkers is man's transcendent destiny, although their attitudes differ. Plato, in the words of Justin Martyr, has 'the air of one who has descended from above, and has accurately ascertained and seen all that is in heaven';[130] for him man is a creature not of earth but of heaven (φυτὸν οὐκ ἔγγειον, ἀλλ' οὐράνιον).[131] With Aquinas, man walks the earth in the promise and hope of beatitude, a *viator* travelling towards the transcendent mystery. For St Thomas, 'the most wonderful thing of all is that earthly and corruptible man may be promoted to the possession of spiritual and heavenly things'.[132]

Aquinas' philosophy was an original and creative synthesis of elements from all traditions; a thinker of vast erudition, he had at immediate recall to memory all the relevant literature available in his time: philosophical, theological, scriptural and secular. Vigorously active 'in the quick forge and working-house of thought', he took truth from every quarter. Aristotle remained the master *philosophus*, the guide on the path of safe discovery. But on occasion Aquinas recognized that although Aristotle's position is more certain (*certior*), it appears less satisfactory (*minus sufficiens*) than that of Plato.[133] Although secure it does not always lead to the depths of Plato's wisdom. Precisely because he emulated Aristotle, Aquinas could embrace the truth of others with greater certainty. Inspired frequently — sometimes consciously, sometimes unwittingly — by truths first disclosed by Plato, we can say with Aquinas: *amica veritas, ergo amicus Plato.*

2

Beauty from Plato to Aquinas

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — contemplate these things.

(Philippians 4:8)[1]

On a visit to the University of San Diego I was told about the founder of that splendid institution. As well as being a practical woman who created a magnificent university, Mother Rosalie Hill was a person of inspiring ideals. Her motivating vision was expressed: 'Three things are significant in education: beauty, truth and goodness. But the only one that attracts people on sight is beauty. If beauty attracts people, they will come and find the truth and have goodness communicated to them by the kind of people here.' Her words may be summarized: delight in Beauty, know the Truth, love the Good. They call to mind the motto on the façade of the neoclassical opera house in Frankfurt: '*Dem Wahren, Schönen, Guten*' ('To the True, the Beautiful, the Good'), words inspired by the city's most famous citizen, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who wrote of the spirit's progress to the eternity of the true, the good, the beautiful.[2] The American romantic R. W. Emerson wrote in similar vein: 'Truth, and goodness, and beauty, are but different

faces of the same All.'[3] This is probably as good a definition as one will find of what are known as the 'transcendental' perfections of being. Such properties are convertible with one another, and are co-extensive with the grand totality — the universe of the real.

There is, however, a danger in Emerson's statement — a pantheist peril. He seems to confuse the 'transcendent', as absolute, with the universal features of reality known as the 'transcendental' properties of being. Philosophers distinguish, on the one hand, between the unique and transcendent principle of the universe — the ultimate reality of Plato and Plotinus — named equally as the One, Beauty, and the Good, and, on the other, those characteristics of unity, goodness, beauty and truth that belong to all realities, both finite and infinite. Unity, goodness, and truth are recognized as the most important of the transcendentals; many readers of Aquinas add the property of beauty. The Presocratic thinker Heraclitus was the earliest recorded thinker to consider beauty a universal character of the real: 'To God, all things are beautiful, good, and just; but men have assumed some things to be unjust, others just.'[4] A century earlier the poet Sappho wrote: 'He who is beautiful, so far as we can discern, is good, and he who is good will immediately be also beautiful.'[5]

Plato (428/427–348/347 BC)

Among ancient philosophers Plato was the foremost champion of the Transcendent. He also implied a doctrine of transcendentals by stating that every being is good and beautiful.[6] Beauty, he believed, is supreme and gives to life its transcendent value. Diotima, in her lofty discourse on beauty in the *Symposium* proclaimed that 'a man finds it truly worth while to live, as he contemplates essential beauty'.[7] While beauty is easily experienced, its essence is difficult to define. Socrates remarks in the *Lysis*:

> I am quite dizzy myself with the puzzle of our argument, and am inclined to agree with the ancient proverb that the beautiful is friendly. It certainly resembles something soft and smooth and sleek; that is why, I daresay, it so easily

> slides and dives right into us, by virtue of those qualities. For I declare that the good is beautiful.[8]

In Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* Stephen Dedalus remarks: 'Plato, I believe, said that beauty is the splendour of truth. I don't think that it has a meaning, but the true and the beautiful are akin.'[9] While the definition of beauty as *splendor veri* is nowhere to be found in Plato, it captures well one of his most profound intuitions.[10] And despite Stephen's hesitation, the notion had most certainly a definite meaning for Plato. The Greek philosopher was the first to formulate what would become an important triad in the perennial tradition: Truth, Goodness, Beauty. In the *Phaedrus* he states: 'The divine is beauty, wisdom, goodness, and all such qualities.'[11] In the *Timaeus* he declares that the world is beautiful and its maker good.[12] The triad is affirmed, with some variation, in the *Philebus*:

> The power of the good has taken refuge in the nature of the beautiful; for measure and proportion are everywhere identified with beauty and virtue (μετριότης γὰρ καὶ συμμετρία κάλλος δήπου καὶ ἀρετὴ πανταχοῦ ξυμβαίνει γίγνεσθαι)... We said that truth also was mingled with them in the compound... Then if we cannot hunt the good with one idea only, let us run it down with three — beauty, proportion, and truth, and let us say that these, considered as one, may more properly than all other components of the mixture be regarded as the cause, and that through the goodness of these the mixture itself has been made good.[13]

Here, alongside goodness, beauty, and truth are introduced the requisites of proportion and its cognate 'measure', both of which are allied to beauty, truth and virtue. Beauty requires measure, harmony and symmetry. At *Philebus* 66a Plato groups 'proportion, beauty and perfection' (τὸ σύμμετρον καὶ καλὸν καὶ τὸ τέλεον).

Aquinas' celebrated description of beauty as *visum placens*, that which pleases when seen, has its remote roots in Plato's dialogue *Hippias Major*:

> That is beautiful which makes us feel joy; I do not mean all pleasures, but that which makes us feel joy through hearing and sight. For surely beautiful human beings, Hippias, and all decorations and paintings and works of sculpture which are beautiful, delight us when we see them; and beautiful sounds and music in general and speeches and stories do the same thing. . . The beautiful is that which is pleasing through hearing and sight.[14]

Apart from the *Enneads* of Plotinus, the *Hippias Major* is the only work in ancient philosophy to deal explicitly with the theme of beauty. Its author asks not just 'what is beautiful, but what the beautiful is'.[15] The fact that there is doubt about its authenticity does not diminish the validity of the definition offered in the dialogue. Discussing the nature of definition in the *Topics*, Aristotle cites as an example the definition of 'the beautiful as what is pleasant to sight or to hearing' (οἷον τὸ καλὸν τὸ δι᾽ ὄψεως ἢ τὸ δι᾽ ἀκοῆς ἡδύ).[16] Although grasped as symmetry by the eye, and as harmony by the ear, beauty is grasped ultimately by the soul; Plato relates beauty (καλόν) to intellect (διάνοια): 'This name, the beautiful, is rightly given to mind, since it accomplishes the works which we call beautiful and in which we delight.'[17]

It is therefore legitimate to attribute to Plato the notion, if not the formula, of beauty as *splendor veri*. Beauty shines through the brightness of truth. For Plato, beauty is the 'most radiant of all, and the loveliest (ἐκφανέστατον εἶναι καὶ ἐρασμιώτατον)'. Ἐκφανέστατον is what shines forth most powerfully; it is the fundamental 'epiphany'. Beauty is the clearest manifestation of the good, as confirmed in the *Phaedrus:*

> Beauty shone in brilliance among those visions; and since we came to earth we have found it shining most clearly through the clearest of our senses; for sight is the sharpest of the physical senses, though wisdom is not seen by it, for wisdom would arouse terrible love, if such a clear image of it were granted as would come through sight, and the same is true of

> the other lovely realities; but beauty alone has this privilege, and therefore it is most manifest and most lovely of all.[18]

Proportion had traditionally been recognized by the Greeks as a fundamental constituent of reality and beauty. According to Plato, nothing which is beautiful is without proportion; deformity and disproportion result in ugliness.[19] In the passage from the *Philebus* already quoted, Plato declares measure and proportion to be requisite elements of beauty; in the *Timaeus* he states: 'All that is good is beautiful, and what is beautiful is not without proportion; for an animal to be beautiful it must be well-proportioned.'[20] If an animal's parts are excessively large, it lacks due proportion and is consequently ugly. 'A body, for example, which is too long in the legs, or otherwise disproportioned owing to some excess, is not only ugly, but, when joint effort is required, it is also the source of much fatigue and many sprains and falls by reason of its clumsy motion, whereby it causes itself countless evils.'[21]

Plato refers on many occasions to the beauty of physical things, of animals (horses and apes); humans (boys and girls), inanimate materials such as wood, stone, ivory and gold.[22] Most beautiful and desirable of all, according to Plato, is the harmonious proportion and symmetry between soul and body: 'For with respect to health and disease, virtue and vice, there is no symmetry or want of symmetry greater than that which exists between the soul itself and the body itself.'[23] If body and soul are not appropriately fitted towards one another, 'then the creature as a whole is not beautiful (οὐ καλὸν ὅλον τὸ ζῶον), seeing that it is unsymmetrical in respect of the greatest of symmetries'. When soul and body are in proper harmony it is, for the one who has eyes to see, 'the most beautiful and admirable (κάλλιστον καὶ ἐρασμιώτατον)'.[24] Echoing Pythagoras' view of the relation between individual and cosmic beauty, Plato asserts that the living creature is most harmonious and beautiful when its parts mirror the form of the universe.[25] Drawing a practical conclusion from such a world-view, Plato urges that students of mathematics should develop bodily excellence by practicing gymnastics, while

those exhibiting physical excellence ought to cultivate music and philosophy — this 'if either is to deserve to be called truly both beautiful and good'.[26]

Plato sought not only to explain the reality of beautiful things and how they are experienced, but also to explain why they exist; this was the rationale for his theory of Forms. There must exist an absolute and transcendent ground for beauty, an essence of beauty in which beautiful individuals participate; beautiful things exist only because they share in the beauty derived from the generous and generative plenitude of subsistent Beauty which exists in itself. Not only are there beautiful things: there exists Beauty Itself.[27]

Aristotle (384–322 BC)

Asked why we spend so much time on beauty, Aristotle supposedly replied: 'That is a blind man's question.'[28] Beauty is a frequent theme throughout his work. Like Plato he believed it was ultimately a divine characteristic, but for different reasons. With his biologist's mind he perceived beauty as the perfection proper to natural substances in themselves. In the *Metaphysics* he generalizes and 'personifies' it, stating: 'In many cases the Good and the Beautiful are the beginning both of knowledge and of motion.'[29] While he does not appear to share with Plato and Aquinas a 'transcendental' concept, i. e. beauty as universally interchangeable with goodness, Aristotle occasionally attributes to it a higher status than to goodness, as when he states that goodness pertains to actions, whereas beauty is also in immovable things (τὸ δὲ καλὸν καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀκινήτοις).[30] According to Aristotle, beauty is desired in itself: 'The beautiful (καλὸν) is that which is both desirable for its own sake and also worthy of praise; or which, being good, is pleasant because it is good.'[31]

Καλὸν expresses for Aristotle not only what delights the eye and ear, but also what appeals to our higher ethical sensibility — a nuance sometimes conveyed in English translation by the word 'noble'. He recognizes a bond between the ethical and aesthetic. Discussing the virtue of magnificence in the *Nicomachean Ethics*

he compares the magnificent individual (μεγαλοπρεπὴς) with the artist, 'for he can see what is fitting and spend large sums tastefully... the magnificent man will spend such sums for the sake of the beautiful ... he will consider how the result can be made most beautiful and most becoming (πῶς κάλλιστον καὶ πρεπωδέστατον) rather than for how much it can be produced and how it can be produced most cheaply'.[32] He explains further:

> For a possession and a work of art have not the same excellence. The most valuable possession is that which is worth most, e. g. gold, but the most valuable work of art is that which is great and beautiful, for the contemplation of such a work inspires admiration, and so does magnificence; and a work has an excellence — a magnificence — which involves magnitude.[33]

Worthy of note here is that beauty elicits admiration, i. e. delight simply through knowledge. Such delight is characteristic of the self-sufficient person, who seeks to 'possess beautiful and profitless things (τὰ καλὰ καὶ ἄκαρπα) rather than profitable and useful ones'.[34] Joining adjacent phrases in the *Nicomachean Ethics* we may summarily define Aristotle's entire ethics: 'Virtue aims at the beautiful' (τοῦ καλοῦ ἕνεκα· τοῦτο γὰρ τέλος τῆς ἀρετῆς).[35] This empirical insight rejoins the exalted ideal of Plato's Diotima, who declared that the purpose of human life is to contemplate essential beauty.

Thus there is for Aristotle, as for Plato, a beauty that is proper to soul; he remarks: 'Beauty of the soul is not so easy to see as beauty of body.'[36] His most explicit statement regarding empirical beauty may be found in the *Metaphysics*, where we also find the suggestion of a cosmic role for essential Beauty:

> The main species of beauty are orderly arrangement, proportion, and definiteness (τοῦ δὲ καλοῦ μέγιστα εἴδη τάξις καὶ συμμετρία καὶ τὸ ὡρισμένον); and these are especially manifested by the mathematical sciences. And inasmuch as it is evident that these (I mean, e. g., orderly arrangement and definiteness) (συμμετρία καὶ τὸ

> ὡρισμένον) are causes of many things, obviously they must also to some extent treat of the cause in this sense, i. e. the cause in the sense of the Beautiful.[37]

The symmetry and proportion of empirical beauty result for Aristotle from the organic order of parts within the unified whole. The role of orderly proportion is illustrated by three examples in the *Politics*:

> A painter would not let his animal have its foot of disproportionately large size, even though it was an exceptionally beautiful foot, nor would a shipbuilder make the stern or some other part of a ship disproportionately big, nor yet will a trainer of choruses allow a man who sings louder and more beautifully than the whole band to be a member of it.[38]

The preeminent signs of beauty are for Aristotle integrity and order or proportion. Beauty pertains to the fitness of nature, in particular the inner teleology of natural substances which Aristotle ultimately regards as a manifestation of beauty.[39] Natural beauty however seems to reveal a deeper cause; in one of his biological works Aristotle attributes beauty to the productive power of the divine: 'Of the things which are, some are eternal and divine, others admit alike of being and not-being, and the beautiful and the divine acts always, in virtue of its own nature, as a cause which produces that which is better in the things which admit of it.'[40]

Aristotle associates beauty with completenesss or perfection (τὸ κάλλιστον καὶ ἄριστον . . . τὸ δὲ καλὸν καὶ τέλειον).[41] His account of 'perfection' is relevant to our discussion since, while it is possible to locate the notion of integrity in Dionysius (the acknowedged primary source for Aquinas' notions of beauty), it is more likely that Aquinas derived from Aristotle the notion of *integritas* as an essential prerequisite for beauty. The text from the *Metaphysics* may be helpfully divided as follows:

> We call complete (τέλειον):
>
> (1) That outside which it is not possible to find even one of the parts proper to it; . . .

> (2) That which in respect of excellence and goodness cannot be excelled in its kind, e. g. a doctor is complete and a flute-player is complete, when they lack nothing in respect of their proper kind of excellence. . . Excellence is a completion; for each thing is complete and every substance is complete, when in respect of its proper kind of excellence it lacks no part of its natural magnitude.
>
> (3) The things which have attained a good end are called complete; for things are complete in virtue of having attained their end, since the end is something ultimate. . . the ultimate purpose is also an end.
>
> Things, then, that are called complete in virtue of their own nature are so called in all these senses, some because they lack nothing in respect of goodness and cannot be excelled and no part proper to them can be found outside, others in general because they cannot be exceeded in their several classes and no part proper to them is outside.[42]

We have noted that Aristotle agrees with Plato in defining beauty by its effect, as that which gives delight. He also agrees that beauty is formally constituted by measure and proportion (μετριότης καὶ συμμετρία). By contrast with Plato, however, Aristotle does not include splendour among the criteria of beauty; in this he is at variance not only with his teacher but with the entire tradition of the West. As well as the primary characteristics of order, symmetry, and limit, he especially emphasizes perfection or integrity. For his part he adds the pre-requisite of magnitude; this is required for beauty both of natural substances and artistic works, as he explains in the *Poetics*:

> A beautiful object, whether an animal or anything else with a structure of parts, should have not only its parts ordered but also an appropriate magnitude: beauty consists in magnitude and order (τὸ γὰρ καλὸν ἐν μεγέθει καὶ τάξει ἐστίν), which is why there could not be a beautiful animal which was either minuscule (as contemplation of it, occurring

> in an almost imperceptible moment, has no distinctness) or gigantic (as contemplation of it has no cohesion, but those who contemplate it lose a sense of unity and wholeness), say an animal a thousand miles long. So just as with our bodies and with animals beauty requires magnitude, but magnitude that allows coherent perception, likewise plots require length, but length that can be coherently remembered.
>
> A limit of length referring to competitions and powers of attention is extrinsic to the art: for if it were necessary for a hundred tragedies to compete, they would perform them by water clocks, as they say happened once before. But the limit that conforms to the actual nature of the matter is that greater size, provided clear coherence remains, means finer beauty of magnitude.[43]

Aristotle's explanation in the *Nicomachean Ethics* for the need of a proper magnitude is literally an *argumentum ad hominem*: 'Beauty implies a good-sized body, and little people may be neat and well-proportioned but cannot be beautiful.'[44] Magnitude is not in itself a constituent of beauty, but a necessary prerequisite; only substances of an appropriate size may be deemed beautiful: neither too big nor too small, but in proportion to the capacity of human knowledge. The emphasis on order and magnitude is also conveyed in the *Politics* where the desirable size of the polis is illustrated by comparison with a ship:

> For law is order, and good law is good order; but a very great multitude cannot be orderly: to introduce order into the unlimited is the work of a divine power — of such a power as holds together the universe. Beauty is realized in number and magnitude, and the state which combines magnitude with good order must necessarily be the most beautiful. To the size of states there is a limit, as there is to other things, plants, animals, implements; for none of these retain their natural power when they are too large or too small, but they either wholly lose their nature, or are spoiled. For example,

> a ship which is only a span long will not be a ship at all, nor a ship a quarter a mile long; yet there may be a ship of a certain size, either too large or too small, which will still be a ship, but bad for sailing.[45]

Since for Aristotle the intrinsic order of anything results from its form, it follows that form (εἶδος) is the ultimate source and ground of an individual's beauty. The importance of form as a principle of unity and integrity is brought out in the following passage from the *Metaphysics*:

> While in a sense we call anything one if it is a quantity and continuous, in a sense we do not unless it is a whole, i. e. unless it has unity of form; e. g. if we saw the parts of a shoe put together in any way whatever we should not call them one all the same (unless because of their continuity); we do this only if they are put together so as to be a shoe and to have already a certain single form.[46]

When Aristotle states that a beautiful object must have an orderly arrangement of parts, he is referring to form. An individual's magnitude is likewise determined by its form; however not all forms are suited to manifest beauty to the human eye: they must be in proportion. Minuscule or gigantic objects are not proportioned to the capacities of the senses. In *De Anima* he is at pains to note that the senses also constitute a λόγος, i. e. ratio or proportion: there is a fitness between the perceiver and what can be perceived. Beauty is adapted to the receptive range of the sensory apparatus.

As with so many aspects of Aristotle's philosophy, analogy plays a pervasive role. We have seen that beauty depends on a suitable proportion between the senses and their object. Analogy emerges also at another level. Aristotle states that there is a beauty proper to each stage of a person's growth and development. This is suitably depicted in the *Rhetoric*:

> Beauty varies with each age. In a young man, it consists in possessing a body capable of enduring all efforts, either of the racecourse or of bodily strength, while he himself is pleasant

> to look upon and a sheer delight. This is why the athletes in the pentathlon are most beautiful, because they are naturally adapted for bodily exertion and for swiftness of foot. In a man who has reached his prime, beauty consists in being naturally adapted for the toils of war, in being pleasant to look upon and at the same time awe-inspiring. In an old man, beauty consists in being naturally adapted to contend with unavoidable labours and in not causing annoyance to others, thanks to the absence of the disagreeable accompaniments of old age.[47]

Plotinus (204–270)

One of the most profound discourses on beauty in classical philosophy is that of Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism. It is significant that Plotinus' treatise on beauty was chronologically the first of his *Enneads*, an indication that he regarded beauty as the primary reality and centre of the universe. Plotinus was the first to systematically discuss beauty and, via Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius, his influence stretched into the Middle Ages and beyond. Plotinus agreed with Plato and Aristotle that beauty is perceived primarily through sight and hearing, but refers also to the beauty of intellect and virtue. His treatise begins:

> Beauty is found for the most part in sight, but it is found also in hearing, both in the composition of words, as well as being found in music; indeed in all aspects of music, for both melody and rhythm are beautiful. And for those proceeding upwards from sense perception there are beautiful ways of life, actions, dispositions and items of knowledge as well as the beauty of the virtues. And if there is any beauty beyond even these, it will itself make it manifest.[48]

Plotinus begins by inquiring after the beauty that manifests itself through matter:

> Then what is it that has made us imagine bodies to be beautiful and our hearing to assent to sounds as being beautiful? And

> how can all the things that are directly concerned with soul be beautiful? . . . What is it that stirs the gaze of those who look and turns them towards itself, draws them and makes them delight in what they see?

Plotinus faithfully sums up the traditional definition of beauty: 'It is said by virtually all that symmetry of the parts to each other and to the whole with the addition of fine colour is the cause of visual beauty, and that for visible things and in general all other things being beautiful is being symmetrical and measured.'[49] However he rejects this definition as inadequate:

> For those who hold this view nothing simple but only a compound is of necessity beautiful. And for them the whole will be beautiful, while the parts will not have their beauty from themselves, but as contributing to make the whole beautiful. And yet if the whole is beautiful the parts too must be beautiful; for it certainly must not be made up of ugly parts, but beauty must have taken hold of all the parts. [50]

If symmetry alone were the criterion for beauty, simple things could not be beautiful. For Plotinus unity is a prior characteristic: the more unified an entity, the more beautiful it is. Whatever is utterly simple is most unified of all. Moreover, to define beauty as symmetry is to suggest that only what is composed of parts could be beautiful; this implies, paradoxically, that none of the parts can be beautiful, only the whole. This would lead to the absurd suggestion that a beautiful object could be entirely composed of ugly parts. According to Plotinus, the parts must also be beautiful; symmetry alone does not constitute beauty: 'One must say that being beautiful is something other than and beyond proportion, and that proportion is beautiful because of something else.' [51]

According to Plotinus, beautiful sense objects cause spiritual delight by virtue of the luminous presence of form which is the source of their inner unity. There is deep kinship between the soul's cognitive power and the intelligible form; both derive from the Soul, and ultimately from Intellect. Intelligible form is what is

beautiful.[52] Plotinus illustrates the importance of the intelligible form by contrasting a lump of stone with a statue modelled after an idea in the mind of the master.[53] The beautiful things of nature are likewise imbued with form, which is itself a sensible manifestation of Intellect. Plotinus remarks: 'Surely in each case [beauty] is form, which is the cause, which comes from the maker to the thing which comes into being.'[54]

Beauty ultimately derives from the Good. As Plotinus points out in his mature treatise VI 7, beautiful material things are desired not for their material element, 'but for the beauty imaged upon them. For each is what it is by itself; but it becomes desirable when the Good colours it, giving a kind of grace to them and passionate love to the desirers.' Intellect itself is not beautiful 'till it catches a light from the Good'.[55] He states succinctly: 'Beauty is what illuminates good proportions (συμμετρία) rather than the good proportions themselves, and this is what is lovable.'[56] The luminous presence of beauty is mediated through form, the most perfect of which is the living soul, which explains why 'there is more light of beauty on a living face, but only a trace of it on a dead one, even if its flesh and its proportions are not wasted away'. Thus, he asserts, an ugly living man is more beautiful than the statue of a beautiful man. He explains: 'The living is more desirable because it has soul; and this is because it has more the form of good; and this means that it is somehow coloured by the light of the Good.'[57]

Following Plato, Plotinus explains sensible beauty by its participation in the higher Forms, with Beauty at the apex: 'We affirm that things here are beautiful by participation in form. For everything which is formless but capable of receiving shape and form, as long as it is without a share of reason principle and form, is ugly and outside divine reason principle.'[58] Form is the decisive and determining principle of beauty, which dominates and unifies matter:

> The form draws near and arranges together the thing that is going to become composed as one from many parts, guides it to become a single complete entity and makes it one by the agreement [of its parts], since the form itself was one

> and what is formed must also be one as far as this is possible for something that is composed of many parts. Beauty is, then, established upon it once it has been brought together in unity and it gives itself to both parts and wholes. [59]

Ultimately, 'Beauty is in that higher world and comes from there.'[60] 'The greatest beauty in the world of sense is a manifestation of the noblest among the intelligibles.'[61] The ordered beauty of the cosmos is caused by the soul's presence in the sensible world: 'Just as rays from the sun light up a dark cloud, make it shine, and give it a golden appearance, so soul entered into the body of heaven and gave it life, gave it immortality, and wakened it from sleep.'[62]

In Plotinus' systematized universe, the source of all reality is the One, also named Beauty or the Good, which transcends everything finite and multiple; the One may also be termed Non-Being, by excess, since it shares none of the limits characteristic of beings. From it the entire universe of being emanates in a descending scale of diminishing perfection, order and beauty. From it flow forth the worlds of spirit, life and nature, down to unshaped matter — which is non-being through default. This world of material non-being is for Plotinus the realm of evil and ugliness. Pseudo-Dionysius would inherit this Plotinian scheme of things. More important, however, was the metaphysics of light which was central to Neoplatonism. Plotinus adopted Plato's famous analogy between the sun and the Good: as the sun illuminates the visible natural world, so the Good is the source of light and intelligibility throughout the entire universe. Light is the best analogue for reality in a world where being first occurs as the object of intellect. So understood, being is light, and light is being. Beauty is the luminous splendour of being. Plotinus' *Lichtmetaphysik* remained influential throughout the history of aesthetics.

Augustine (354–430)

The authorities most frequently cited by Aquinas in reference to beauty are St Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius, both in the tradition of Plato and Plotinus. While Pseudo-Dionysius stressed harmony and clarity, Augustine repeatedly emphasized the importance of number

as the foundation of such key elements as harmony, symmetry and proportion. The profound insight animating Augustine's aesthetic theory is summed up in his assertion that we can only love what is beautiful (*Num possumus amare nisi pulchra*?).[63] Beauty is not contemplated in the abstract, but experienced in loving delight at the realities admired in visible creation: 'Consider all creation, the earth and the sea, what is on the earth and on the sea. . . They move you? They clearly move you. Why? Because they are beautiful.'[64] Beauty elicits joy and love. Augustine asks: 'Do we love anything but the beautiful? What then is the beautiful? And what is beauty? What is it that allures and unites us to the things we love; for unless there were a grace and beauty (*decus et species*) in them, they could not possibly attract us to them?'[65]

Augustine even finds beauty in such things as cock fights, rats, mice, and worms; all such creatures are beautiful in their own kind (*video tamen omnia in suo genere pulchra esse*).[66] He is profoundly moved by countless examples of beautiful things in the world:

> Question the beauty of the earth, question the beauty of the sea, question the beauty of the air, amply spread around everywhere, question the beauty of the sky, question the serried ranks of the stars, question the sun making the day glorious with its bright beams, question the moon tempering the darkness of the following night with its shining rays, question the animals that move in the waters, that amble about on dry land, that fly in the air; their souls hidden, their bodies evident; the visible bodies needing to be controlled, the invisible souls controlling them; question all these things. They all answer you, 'Here we are, look; we're beautiful.' Their beauty is their confession. Who made these beautiful changeable things, if not one who is beautiful and unchangeable?[67]

Having relinquished Manicheism, discovered Platonism and converted to Christianity, Augustine's love shifted from the attractions of the flesh to a desire for God.[68] His aesthetics was influenced most profoundly by Plotinus, whose treatise *On Beauty*

he discovered in his early thirties (AD 385). The Neoplatonist's theory of transcendent beauty chimed with his newly found theism and guided his mature search for divine beauty. In one of the most celebrated of passages in Western spirituality Augustine lamented how he came late to the love of God, having been seduced in his youth by the beauty of things which would not exist, had they not been created by God:

> Late have I loved you, beauty so old and so new: late have I loved you. And see, you were within me and I was in the external world and sought you there, and in my unlovely state I plunged into those beautiful (*formosa*) created things which you made. You were with me, and I was not with you. The lovely things kept me far from you, though if they did not have existence in you, they had no existence at all.[69]

Enslaved as a youth to the pleasures and beauty of the physical world, and devoted as an adult to the mystery of divine beauty, beauty was a frequent theme in Augustine's writings, from his earliest to the latest, with frequent variations in the definitions provided. As with our familiarity with time, he acknowledges that beauty is easy to experience but difficult to define.

The definition of beauty proposed by Augustine in his early work *De Pulchro et Apto* was similar to that of Aristotle, namely that beauty is caused by integrity and proportion: 'I marked and perceived that in bodies themselves there was a beauty from their forming a kind of whole, and another from mutual fitness, as one part of the body with its whole.'[70] Beauty is primarily the harmony that suffuses the many aspects relating unity to diversity and diversity to unity in any individual, or in the totality of individuals. These relations are described variously by such terms as order, symmetry, proportion, mutual agreement, measure. Each of these terms implies all the others.

The many formulations of the elements of aesthetic appreciation in Augustine may be reduced to three: unity, order, and brightness.[71] While he deals explicitly with unity and order — frequently under the guise of the related aspects of number, proportion and measure — he

does not explicitly consider brightness. However he employs terms related to splendour, fulgence and brilliance with such frequency that it may be counted as one of his prerequisites for beauty.

For Augustine beauty consists primarily in harmony, i. e. the fitting proportion between parts suited to one another and which are mutually well ordered. Viewed in isolation parts may be unattractive, but together they form an ordered unity: 'though the parts may be imperfect the whole is perfect'.[72] Beauty therefore belongs primarily to the whole: 'Every beauty that is composed of parts is much more praiseworthy in the whole than in any part.'[73] This corresponds to Aristotle's emphasis on τέλειον, adopted by Aquinas as *integritas*. For Augustine the constituent elements that coalesce in the beauty of the whole are the cognate elements of harmony, order and unity; the three are inseparable: harmony results from the pleasing order of parts within the unity of the whole. Augustine sometimes refers only to one or other of these coordinates, but the three belong together. His statements that 'there is no ordered thing that is not beautiful' (*Nihil enim est ordinatum, quod non sit pulchrum*),[74] or that 'unity is the form of all beauty' (*Omnis porro pulchritudinis forma unitas*),[75] express different aspects of the same reality.

The harmony of music is for Augustine the paradigm for artistic or created beauty. In *De Musica* Augustine states summarily: Beauty pleases because of number: *pulchra numero placent*.[76] We find a clear exposé of the importance of number in *De Libero Arbitrio*: 'Look at the sky, the earth, and the sea, and at whatever in them shines from above or crawls, flies, or swims below. These have form because they have number. Take away these forms and there will be nothing. Whence are these except from number? Indeed they exist only insofar as they have numbers.'[77] Montague Brown explains: 'Number is not merely enumeration and measurement, but also (and more importantly) proportion, harmony, integrity, and order. These are the same characteristics that make things beautiful; they are to be found in all things, from the simplest fly to the order of the universe and even to history as ordered by divine providence. The one constant is that beauty is ordered unity; it

is the harmonious integration of constituent parts.'[78] Augustine expresses this as follows: 'In all the arts it is symmetry that gives pleasure, preserving unity and making the whole beautiful. Symmetry demands unity and equality, the similarity of like parts, or the graded arrangements of parts which are dissimilar.'[79]

Besides Plotinus, one of Augustine's greatest influences was Cicero, who cited two criteria for the beauty of the human body: proper proportion of limbs and softness of colour (*quaedam apta figura membrorum cum coloris quadam suavitate*).[80] St Augustine follows this verbatim: 'For all bodily beauty is the harmony of parts, with a certain softness of colour (*cum quadam coloris suavitate*). But when there is no harmony of parts a thing offends either because it is misshapen, or too small or too large.'[81] The core idea of Augustine's theory is that beauty is the harmonious relationship of parts. He illustrates this in a manner that is readily understood: 'In the visible appearance of a man, if one eyebrow be shaved off, how nearly nothing is taken from the body, but how much from the beauty! — for that is not constituted by bulk, but by the proportion and arrangement of the members (*parilitate ac dimensione membrorum*).'[82]

Bodily beauty is a good gift of God (*bonum Dei donum*).[83] Augustine had profound love and admiration for the beauty of creation, since it is what best reveals the creator; it is the clearest link between creatures and their creator. Radically all things are good, and therefore beautiful, because they are created. To the words of Genesis, 'God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good', Augustine adds: 'We also see the same, and behold, all things are very good.'[84] Bringing matter into existence God simultaneously, in the same act, gives it form — a multiplicity of forms — and thereby beauty.[85] Through form each thing receives the integrity of its nature.

The principle of form is fundamental in Augustine's metaphysics and central to his understanding of beauty. Form gives the individual its unity, shape and identity; it thus lies at the heart of beauty. To have a form or species is to be beautiful: 'every corporeal creature . . . is beautiful in its own way, for it is held together by form and

species'.[86] Among the Latin words for beautiful are *speciosus* and *formosus*, derived from the words for 'shape' (*species*) and 'form' (*forma*). There is for Augustine a hierarchy of beauty, determined by the various grades of perfection constituted by form. God is the most perfect Form, possessing the perfections of all others and therefore perfectly beautiful. Created forms are more or less perfect according to varying degrees, and whatever is deprived of form is devoid of beauty.

Augustine's approach to beauty is all-embracing. There is a hierarchy of beauty rising from the most lowly inanimate physical object, through the scale of living things — plants, animals, humans —, surpassed by the beauties of the soul, its perfections and virtues, which point as a cipher to supreme Beauty itself. All levels have their appropriate place within the hierarchy regardless of individual defects or ugly particularities: 'All have their offices and limits laid down so as to ensure the beauty of the universe. That which we abhor in any part of it gives us the greatest pleasure when we consider the universe as a whole.'[87] At the zenith is the divine plenitude of supernatural beauty. The origin and essence of beauty, from which all beautiful things derive, is divine Beauty. 'All things are beautiful because you made them, but you who made everything are inexpressibly more beautiful (*et pulchra sunt omnia faciente te, et ecce tu inenarrabiliter pulchrior, qui fecisti omnia*).'[88] Augustine echoes Plato, moreover, when he addresses God: 'My father, supremely good, beauty of all beauties. O truth, truth!'[89] God is the beauty from whom is all beauty.[90]

Pseudo-Dionysius (c. 500)

One of the most significant treatises in the entire history of Western theology was composed by an unknown writer of the fifth century, who for authorial enhancement adopted the literary persona of first-century Dionysius the Areopagite, convert of Saint Paul.[91] In his influential treatise *On Divine Names* the enigmatic writer contemplated the mystery of the unknown God and evaluated the language used to refer to the inscrutable divinity who transcends all

thought and utterance. Another work, *Mystical Theology*, described the mystical union of the soul with the hidden divinity. These writings rapidly acquired universal esteem due to the presumed authority of the writer who as *primus inter patres* enjoyed quasi-apostolic authority. Not until the Renaissance was it discovered that the author of these rich treatises had drawn upon the writings of the Neoplatonist Proclus († 485), and hence could not have been the first bishop of Athens. The writings themselves, however, were genuinely profound and expertly penned, exhibiting an authority independent of their putative authorship. Aquinas, as all medieval authors, assumed Dionysius to be the disciple of St Paul and regarded his writings with great reverence. His most extensive comments on beauty occur in his commentary on the Pseudo-Areopagite's treatise *On Divine Names*. He adopted from Dionysius the identity of divine beauty and goodness, and inherited the author's emphasis on harmony and clarity as formal constituents of beauty.

Although Dionysius does not define beauty explicitly, it is clear from the important passage of *Divine Names* 4 that he regarded harmony and splendour as its most important characteristics. Other qualities of transcendent beauty are its plenitude and stability, both akin to the third characteristic listed by Aquinas, *integritas*. Caroline Canfield Putnam has suggested: 'From the hints given him by Denis, St Thomas has probably drawn his notion of *integritas, sive perfectio* which he presents as one of the three requisites of beauty.'[92] Our earlier accounts suggest that Aristotle and Augustine were more likely sources since they placed explicit emphasis on unity and perfection; Aquinas' genius was to combine diverse streams of influence into an original synthesis.

Dionysius' starting point and central intuition is that it is God's essence to be the infinite plenitude of goodness and beauty. There is no distinction in him between Beauty and the Good. God's beauty is identical with his goodness; both names are affirmed conjointly.[93] Following the positive path of divine names, God is called Good because through goodness he creates the world, and Beauty because everything he causes is beautiful. Goodness and Beauty are together the primary names attributed to God. In

Chapter 4 of *On Divine Names* Dionysius elaborates upon the distinctive characteristics which these properties have in common, and notes their primary effects. God is through love the creative origin of all things, the source of universal harmony, and goal of all desire.[94] Dionysius' aim is to praise God as transcendentally good and beautiful, not to explain the human experience of beauty. Since, however, our knowledge of God can only be gained through perfections discerned in creation, and because our concept of beauty is given through experience, he refers to the beautiful effects of divine goodness; it is from these that we are led to affirm God's causal beauty. Dionysius also perceives beauty and goodness at the finite level as identical: 'There is nothing which lacks its own share of beauty, for as scripture rightly says, "Everything is good."'[95]

Beauty and Goodness are the ἀρχή and τέλος of all beings. Dionysius plays on the similarity of the word for beauty (κάλλος) with the word 'to call' (καλεῖν); the Good calls all things toward itself, wherefore it is called Beauty.[96] Beauty has the power of illumination, investing creatures with resplendence and lustre, constituting them as images of the absolute. Dionysius writes: 'The Good is praised by the sacred theologians as beautiful and as beauty, as love and as beloved, and with all other divine names as befit the source of loveliness and the flowering of grace (τῆς καλλοποιοῦ καὶ κεχαριτωμένης ὡραιότητος θεωνυμίαι).'[97] The word 'beauty' used here by Dionysius, ὡραιότης, has a special connotation: originally denoting the bloom of youth or ripeness of fruit, it expresses here the fullness of divine beauty. Dionysius has taken a word from nature and given it a supernatural spiritual meaning.[98]

The infinitely Good, according to Dionysius, is not only 'beautiful' but is 'beauty' itself. There is no distinction in the all-embracing transcendent Cause between the quality 'beautiful' and the essence of 'beauty'. In the case of beings we may distinguish between the perfection as such considered in itself without restriction and the finite measure manifest in creatures which have a limited share; by contrast, infinite beauty is infinitely beautiful. Creatures are beautiful, but the transcendent source is Beauty itself; only as essential and absolute beauty can it cause beautiful things:

> The supraessential Beautiful is called 'Beauty' because of the beauty it bestows on all things, each according to its nature; and because it is cause of the harmony and splendour in all things (ὡς τῆς πάντων εὐαρμοστίας καὶ ἀγλαΐας αἴτιον, *universorum consonantiae et claritatis causa*), flashing forth as a light on them all the beautifying transmissions of its fontal ray; it bids all things to itself (whence it is called 'beauty') and gathers all in all unto itself.[99]

The infinite Good-Beauty pre-contains 'supereminently within itself the fontal beauty of everything that is beautiful'.[100] In the simple and supernatural nature of all beautiful things, every beauty and everything beautiful causally pre-exist as one.[101] Dionysius repeats his reference to harmony: divine beauty and goodness are the source not only of harmonious proportion within a beautiful individual, but of the harmonious unity that pervades the entire universe. 'From this beauty comes the existence of all beings, each beautiful in its own manner; from beauty come the harmonies, sympathies and communities of all things; beauty unites all things.'[102]

Dionysius expresses the universal causality of Beauty in Aristotelian terms: 'Beauty is the principle (ἀρχὴ) of all things: as *efficient* cause (ποιητικὸν αἴτιον), moving and embracing the whole through love for its beauty; as the limit of all things and as desired; as *final* cause (τελικὸν αἴτιον), since all things come to be for sake of Beauty; as *exemplary* cause (παραδειγματικόν), since all things are determined (ἀφορίζεται) according to it.'[103] The Good, Dionysius states, 'gives form to the formless' (το ἀνείδεον εἰδοποιεῖ), thereby conferring beings with their perfection and intelligibility.[104] The lines immediately following, in which the identity of beauty and goodness are affirmed, and their exhaustive and comprehensive causation, are distinctively Platonic: 'Beauty is therefore the same as the Good, since all things in each mode of causality seek (ἐφίεται) the beautiful and the good; there is nothing among beings that does not share in the Beautiful and the Good.'[105] We may even dare to say that 'nonbeing also shares

in the Beautiful and the Good, because non-being, when applied transcendently to God in the sense of the denial of all things, is itself beautiful and good'.[106]

Of seminal significance for the subsequent tradition of Western aesthetics is Dionysius' identification of divine beauty with light, and his emphasis on its power of divine splendour. 'Thus the Good is also praised by the name "Light", just as an archetype is revealed in its image.'[107] Beauty is the illuminative presence and splendour of the Good, the clearest sensible paradigm for its all-infusive power and beneficence. Dionysius' use of the language and imagery of light is further evidence of profound Platonist influence.

When Dionysius states that transcendent Beauty is the cause of harmony, he has especially in mind the universal harmony among beings rather than the proportion between parts of a single individual — an aspect which, as we shall see later, was emphasised in his commentary by Aquinas. Dionysius affirms:

> From it derives the existence of everything as beings, what they have in common and what differentiates them, their identicalness and differences, their similarities and dissimilarities, their sharing of opposites, the way in which their ingredients maintain identity, the providence of the higher ranks of beings, the interrelationship of those of the same rank, the return upward by those of lower status, the protecting and unchanged remaining and foundations of all things amid themselves. Hence, the interrelationship of all things in accordance with capacity. Hence, the harmony and the love which are formed between them but which do not obliterate identity. Hence, the innate togetherness of everything. Hence, too, the intermingling of everything, the persistence of things, the unceasing emergence of things. Hence, all rest and hence, the stirrings of mind and spirit and body. There is rest for everything and movement for everything, and these come from that which, transcending rest and movement, establishes each being according to an appropriate principle and gives each the movement suitable to it.[108]

It is important to note the empiricism of Dionysius. Despite his emphasis on the primacy of negative theology, and the superiority of the mystical knowledge of God, Dionysius recognizes that our knowledge of divine nature is necessarily grounded in experience, mediated through our grasp of created perfections as participations in a transcendent source. We only know of God what is revealed in the limited reflections of creaturely participations. All divine realities, even those revealed to us, are known through their participations; what they are in their origin and ground is beyond intellect, being and knowledge. When we give to the divine hiddenness such names as 'life', 'being', 'light', or 'word', our mind grasps only the powers (δυνάμεις) descending to us from the divinity which cause being, light, and wisdom. We ourselves observe no life or being which resembles the absolutely transcendent Cause of all things.[109]

We have knowledge of participated perfections although we remain ignorant of the essential perfections themselves in their original plenitude. Although deficient such knowledge is necessary and valid: this is how God ordained things. There is a revealing passage in *The Celestial Hierarchy*, 1, 3:

> He modeled it on the hierarchies of heaven, and clothed these immaterial hierarchies in numerous material figures and forms so that, in a way appropriate to our nature, we might be uplifted from these most venerable images to interpretations and assimilations which are simple and inexpressible. For it is quite impossible that we humans should, in any immaterial way, rise up to imitate and to contemplate the heavenly hierarchies without the aid of those material means capable of guiding us as our nature requires. Hence any thinking person realizes that the appearances of beauty are signs of an invisible loveliness. The beautiful odours which strike the senses are representations of a conceptual diffusion. Material lights are images of the outporing of an immaterial gift of light. . . Order and rank here below are a sign of the harmonious ordering toward the divine realm.[110]

Beauty as a divine property is first disclosed, therefore, under the veil of material adornment. In this important passage Dionysius confirms that the initial experience of beauty is sensible and material. The renowned historian of aesthetics Władysław Tatarkiewicz is thus mistaken when he states that the aesthetics of the Pseudo-Dionysius was speculative, abstract, and removed from experience: 'Neither before nor since has there been an aesthetics more transcendental, more a priori, and more divorced from the real world and from normal aesthetic experience.'[111] That Dionysius, on the contrary, is well familiar with the devices of aesthetic experience is evident from the following corrective:

> We cannot, as mad people do, profanely visualize these heavenly and godlike intelligences as actually having numerous feet and faces. They are not shaped to resemble the brutishness of oxen or to display the wildness of lions. They do not have the curved beak of the eagle or the wings and feathers of birds. We must not have pictures of flaming wheels whirling in the skies, of material thrones made ready to provide a reception for the Deity, of multicolored horses, or of spear-carrying lieutenants, or any of those shapes handed on to us amid all the variety of the revealing symbols of scripture. The Word of God makes use of poetic imagery when discussing these formless intelligences but, as I have already said, it does so not for the sake of art, but as a concession to the nature of our mind. It uses scriptural passages in an uplifting fashion as a way, provided for us from the first, to uplift our mind in a manner suitable to our nature.[112]

Because Dionysius is best known for his devotion to transcendent realities, there is a temptation to assume he had little interest in the material world: this would be incorrect. This strong empirical side is doubtless of Aristotelian origin. Thus we read in *The Celestial Hierarchy*:

> Forms, even those drawn from the lowliest matter, can be used, not unfittingly, with regard to heavenly beings. Matter, after all,

> owes its subsistence to absolute beauty and keeps, throughout its earthly ranks, some echo of intelligible beauty. Using matter, one may be lifted up to the immaterial archetypes. Of course one must be careful to use the similarities as dissimilarities, as discussed, to avoid one-to-one correspondences, to make the appropriate adjustments as one remembers the great divide between the intelligible and the perceptible.[113]

In accordance with the path of positive naming (which rises from visible effects to their invisible source) Dionysius states that the transcendent Beautiful is called 'Beauty' because it confers beauty on all things, — on each according to its nature —, and because it is the cause of harmony and splendour in all things. The transcendent Beauty, he states, flashes forth its rays of beauty to all things, and in return calls all things together in unity towards itself. The supraessential Beauty is thus both the source and end of all creatures, their efficient and final cause.

While he employs the language of Aristotelian causality, the influence of Plato is particularly evident in Dionysius' emphasis on the absolute character of divine beauty:

> And they name it beautiful since it is the all-beautiful and the beautiful beyond all. It is forever so, unvaryingly, unchangeably so, beautiful but not as something coming to birth and death, to growth or decay, not lovely in one respect while ugly in some other way. It is not beautiful 'now' but otherwise 'then', beautiful in relation to one thing but not to another. It is not beautiful in one place and not so in another, as though it could be beautiful for some and not for others. Ah no! In itself and by itself it is the uniquely and the eternally beautiful (ἀλλ᾽ ὡς αὑτὸ καθ᾽ αὑτὸ μεθ᾽ αὑτοῦ μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν). It is the superabundant source in itself of the beauty of every beautiful thing.[114]

The passage borrows directly from Plato's *Symposium*:

> First, it always *is* and neither comes to be nor passes away, neither waxes nor wanes. Second, it is not beautiful this

> way and ugly that way, nor beautiful at one time and ugly at another, nor beautiful in relation to one thing and ugly in relation to another; nor is it beautiful here but ugly there, as if it were beautiful for some people and ugly for others... It is not anywhere in another thing... but existing itself forever, by itself and with itself, it is eternally one in form (ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸ καθ᾽ αὑτὸ μεθ᾽ αὑτοῦ μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὄν). All other beautiful things share in it, in such a way that while these come to be or pass away, it is neither diminished nor increased nor suffers any change.[115]

Dionysius exerted profound influence on Aquinas' theory of beauty. Dionysius' emphasis on the Platonist characteristics of harmony and splendour (εὐαρμοστία καὶ ἀγλαΐα) is an obvious source for two of Aquinas' constituents of beauty, *consonantia* and *claritas*. Aquinas' third requisite, *integritas*, although not specifically named, is also implicit in Dionysius' diagnosis of creatures. To state that the transcendent principle of Beauty confers beauty on each thing, in accordance with what it is in itself (οἰκείως ἑκάστῳ καλλονὴν),[116] indicates an interiority and selfhood within each creature which is aptly captured by the Latin *integritas*. The qualities of stability, plenitude, and constancy which mark the transcendent are likewise features of *integritas*.

Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274)

As his pupil in Cologne Aquinas transcribed Albert's commentary on Dionysius' treatise *On Divine Names* and was doubtless influenced by his master, who defined beauty as the 'splendour of form shining on the proportioned parts of matter' — a definition that included the important elements of splendour, form and proportion.[117]

A summary statement of Aquinas' theory of beauty, indicating his reliance on Dionysius, may be found in the *Secunda Secundae*:

> As may be gathered from the words of Dionysius (*Div. Nom.* iv), beauty or comeliness results from the concurrence of clarity and due proportion. For he states that God is said to

> be beautiful, as being 'the cause of the harmony and clarity of the universe'. Hence the beauty of the body consists in a man having his bodily limbs well proportioned, together with a certain clarity of colour. On like manner spiritual beauty consists in a man's conduct or actions being well proportioned in respect of the spiritual clarity of reason.[118]

Aquinas' most elaborate treatment of beauty is also to be found in his commentary on *The Divine Names*. Dispersed throughout many of his other works we find tangential remarks on beauty, *obiter dicta* in relation to diverse topics. Scholars have trawled his writings in an attempt to construct a Thomistic aesthetics. In so far as a comprehensive theory of beauty may be identified in Aquinas, it may be summarily expressed in the following assertions:

> *Pulchra enim dicuntur quae visa placent* ('Those things are said to be beautiful which please when seen.')[119]

and

> *Ad pulchritudinem tria requiruntur: integritas, consonantia, et claritas* ('Three things are required for beauty: integrity, harmony, and clarity'.)

The first statement is a nominal description of beautiful things, an empirical description or designation *per effectum* rather than an ontological explanation. The second is an analytic definition expounding the metaphysical properties or principles causing beauty. The first provides the subjective aspects of beauty as experienced, the second the objective elements which ground the experience.

According to Aquinas, God is the infinite essence of beauty, and every creature is in its own way beautiful. God is transcendent Beauty, beauty a universal quality of all creatures. Opinions are divided on the question whether or not Aquinas considered beauty a transcendental property of reality; at issue is the precise meaning of 'transcendental': does it suffice that beauty be co-extensive with goodness and truth — and by implication with being —, or must it make explicit an added concept to the notion of 'being'?[120] Aquinas states unambiguously that both goodness

and truth are transcendental qualities of being. 'Good' expresses a relation of reality to the will, 'truth' a relation to intellect. There is, however, no single faculty which has beauty as its unique and specific object; beauty is the joint object of the cognitive and appetitive faculties, and therefore related to both goodness and truth. In *ST* I, 5, 4 ad 1 Aquinas states that beauty and goodness are in reality identical, since both are rooted in form: 'goodness properly relates to the appetite... beauty relates to the cognitive faculty'. (*Bonum proprie respicit appetitum... Pulchrum autem respicit vim cognoscitivam.*)[121] This does not mean that beauty is simply goodness apprehended by intellect (that would abolish the distinction between *pulchrum* and *verum*), but is that which gives delight simply when known. When an individual is desired as good, its form functions as final end; when experienced as beautiful, form gives pleasure by the simple fact of being perceived. As Etienne Gilson notes, 'beauty relates to form as known, whereas goodness relates to form as desired'.[122]

It is important to clarify the significance for Aquinas of the metaphysical notion of form. *Forma* translates Aristotelian εἶδος and refers to the inner principle that determines the nature or essence of an individual; substantial form is the co-principle — along with prime matter — which constitutes the individual as a specific kind of substance. Together with the related term *species*, *forma* carries the connotation of beauty: *speciosa* and *formosa* both mean 'beautiful'. In order for something to be beautiful, it must first be complete in itself according to an appropriate nature: this is the function of *forma*. Form is not the outer shell or superficial shape of a thing, but its deepest and innermost defining element. It is the ontological root of a being's perfection, and the source of its intelligibility. Form is thus the ground of a being's existential and essential *integritas* as well as its intelligible *claritas*, since knowledge occurs through assimilation of form. Form is, moreover, the principle of organization whereby the parts of the individual are unified in harmonious *consonantia*. When something is determined within a particular species according to its appropriate form, it is by definition beautiful.[123]

Bonum and *pulchrum* are identical in reality but distinct in meaning. The good is that which is desired by the will and which, when possessed, satisfies the will; its nature is to calm the appetite when attained. By contrast it is the nature of beauty to appease the appetite simply by being known. The movement of the will towards the good is satisfied, its tendency arrested, when the object is possessed; the beautiful object, on the other hand, gives pleasure in the simple act of cognition, either sensory or intellectual. Desire and fulfilment are common to both: the good satisfies when possessed, beauty satisfies when apprehended. 'Beauty adds to the good a relation to the cognitive power (*vim cognoscitivam*), and hence that is said to be good which simply satisfies the appetite, while that is said to be beautiful, the mere apprehension of which pleases.'[124] To the attainment of goodness and the recognition of truth, beauty adds the experience of pleasure.[125]

Beauty is experienced in a cognitive act which begins in the senses but is fully achieved by intellect. When Aquinas defines *pulchrum* as '*id quod visum placet*', he understands *visio* to refer by extension not only to all sensual knowledge, but metaphorically to all knowledge whatsoever. He explains:

> Any word may be used in two ways — that is to say, either in its original application or in its more extended meaning. This is clearly shown in the word 'sight', originally applied to the act of the sense, and then, as sight is the noblest and most trustworthy of the senses, extended in common speech to all knowledge obtained through the other senses.[126]

All knowledge begins in the senses, but human knowledge is properly intellectual. There is increased intensity of pleasure as the experience of beauty deepens from the sensual to the intellectual. Beauty is indeed initially given to the senses but not fully grasped as such. While the senses enjoy a basic pleasure of physical beauty, they are incapable of grasping the deeper beauty-causing harmony that suffuses and governs a multiplicity of sense data distributed in space and time, such as a landscape or symphony. Beauty at its most complete and profound must

be experienced intellectually. Aquinas asserts that only humans can grasp the beauty of sensible realities. Following Plato and Aristotle, he gives priority to sight and hearing as the 'most cognoscitive' (*maxime cognoscitivi*) of the senses, since they are closer to intellect.[127] Beauty pertains primarily to the audible and visible. Sight and hearing are better equipped than the other senses to minister to reason. We speak of beautiful sights and sounds but not of beautiful tastes and odours. Sight and hearing have a more profound and universal scope than taste, smell or touch, which require physical contact with the object of sensation. Sight is particularly praised for its greater universality: [*Visus*] *est altior inter omnes sensus et universalior.*[128] At the start of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle states that we prize sight above the other senses because it is most revealing of the differences among the objects of experience.[129] Commenting on this passage, Aquinas states that it is the most knowing (*cognoscitivus*) of all our senses, hence the most spiritual, for the more immaterial a power is, the more perfectly it knows.[130] Sight has a special dignity; it is more spiritual and more subtle than any other sense.[131]

Beauty causes both sensual pleasure (*delectatio*) and intellectual delight (*gaudium*). Aquinas describes as natural love (*amor naturalis*) the movement of a faculty towards its connatural object; he distinguishes between sensitive and intellectual or rational love (*amor sensitivus vel intellectivus seu rationalis*).[132] Delight and pleasure are effected through the operation of sense and intellect: the more perfect the activity, the greater the delight.[133] Each faculty is perfected by objects proportionate to its capacity, and by the energy which actualizes it. There is an elemental pleasure in the simple experience of physical beauty. As Aquinas explains, 'the senses delight in things duly proportioned, as in what is after their own kind — because even sense is a sort of reason, just as is every cognitive faculty'.[134] There is thus a proportion and clarity proper to the sense faculties that perfects them in their activity. The proper object of the intellect is the essential form of the known object: in grasping the form it is perfected in its operation; form is moreover the objective source of beauty.

Intellectual delight is superior to emotional pleasure;[136] while the senses may perceive harmony and *claritas*, they are unable to grasp relationships among diverse elements or proportions between one thing and another; this is unique to reason and intellect.[136] Aquinas thus asserts that only humans can enjoy sensible beauty:

> The senses are given to man, not only for the purpose of procuring the necessaries of life for which they are bestowed on other animals, but also for the purpose of knowledge. Hence, whereas the other animals take delight in the objects of the senses only as ordered to food and sex, man alone takes pleasure in the beauty of sensible objects for its own sake.[137]

Aquinas explains elsewhere why beauty is properly the object of reason: 'Beauty consists in a certain clarity and due proportion. Now each of these has its roots in the reason, because the light that makes beauty seen, and the establishing of due proportion among things belongs to reason. Hence since the contemplative life consists in an act of the reason, there is beauty in it per se and essentially.'[138]

Integritas, Consonantia, Claritas

Dionysius had explicitly noted *consonantia* and *claritas* as the properties of beauty; Aquinas adds *integritas*. In his commentary on the *Sentences* he cites Aristotelian magnitude as a third requirement to complement Dionysian harmony and lustre. In the *Summa* he prioritizes *integritas* instead. Although he includes it only once among the three required characteristics, it could be argued that integrity or perfection is the ground of the other two; I have suggested that the integrity of the individual is rooted in substantial form. Harmony or *consonantia* can only be fully present if the object is perfect in itself according to its nature. Likewise, at the deepest level, *claritas* requires perfection of the object or completeness of form. Intelligibility derives from the form of the individual as exemplar of the defining essence; the individual is understood by the abstractive assimilation of the form present in the material conditions.

Francis J. Kovach refers to integrity or perfection as the *formal principle* of beauty; proportion, and clarity or splendour as its *material principles.*[139] Alternatively he refers to order as the 'synthetic principle' of beauty; and integrity, proportion, and clarity as its three 'analytical principles'.[140] He notes that Aquinas refers to order on its own in at least six texts on beauty; in eleven texts he refers to just one of the analytic principles; in six texts to two principles; and to all three in only three passages.[141] Despite the frequency with which the phrase '*tria requiruntur*' is cited as a resumé of his aesthetic theory, it is expounded in detail by Aquinas on only one occasion; this occurs, significantly, in a theological context, a fact often ignored by commentators. At *ST* I, 39 Aquinas asks if the Fathers of the Church have correctly assigned to the persons of the Blessed Trinity their essential properties or so-called 'appropriations': eternity, beauty, and joy. Aquinas refers to St Hilary, fourth-century bishop of Poitiers, who wrote: 'Nothing can be found lacking in that supreme union which embraces, in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, infinity in the eternal, his likeness in his image, our enjoyment in the gift.' (*Aeternitas in Patre, species in Imagine, usus in Munere*).[142] Having attributed eternity to the Father, Aquinas proceeds to explain why beauty is attributed to the Son, second member of the Trinity:

> Species or beauty has a likeness to the property of the Son. For beauty includes three conditions, 'integrity' or 'perfection', since things that lack something are by the very fact ugly; due 'proportion' or 'harmony'; and lastly, 'brightness' or 'clarity', whence things are called beautiful which have a bright colour.
>
> The first of these has a likeness to the property of the Son, inasmuch as he as Son has in himself truly and perfectly the nature of the Father (*habens in se vere et perfecte naturam patris*).
>
> The second agrees with the Son's property, inasmuch as he is the express image of the Father (*imago expressa patris*).

> Hence we see that an image is said to be beautiful, if it perfectly represents even an ugly thing (*aliqua imago dicitur esse pulchra, si perfecte repraesentat rem, quamvis turpem*). This is indicated by Augustine when he says 'Where there exists wondrous proportion and primal equality' (*tanta convenientia, et prima aequalitas*), etc.
>
> The third agrees with the property of the Son, as the Word, which is the light and splendour of the intellect (*quidem lux est, et splendor intellectus*), as Damascene says. Augustine alludes to the same when he says: 'As the perfect Word, not wanting in anything, and, so to speak, the art of the omnipotent God', etc.[143]

It is noteworthy that Aquinas at the outset introduces *pulchritudo* as the equivalent of *species*. With creative insight, Aquinas justifies Hilary's attribution of beauty to the second person of the Holy Trinity: Christ enjoys integrity or perfection because he 'has in himself truly and perfectly the nature of the Father' (*habens in se vere et perfecte naturam patris*). He has due 'proportion' or 'harmony' because 'he is the express image of the Father' (*imago expressa patris*), and has splendour or *claritas* since he is *Logos* or Word, signifying 'light and splendour of the intellect' (*quidem lux est, et splendor intellectus*).

Aquinas' statement '*Ad pulchritudinem tria requiruntur: integritas, consonantia, et claritas*' is correctly cited as his most comprehensive and satisfactory analytic definition of beauty. Most frequently he specifies only harmony and splendour, characteristics emphasized by Pseudo-Dionysius. In his early commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, he omits integrity, but includes magnitude as stipulated by Aristotle. He states:

> According to Dionysius, two things come together in the account of beauty, namely, consonance and lustre. For he says that God is the cause of all beauty insofar as he is the cause of consonance and lustre, just as we say that men are beautiful who have proportionate members and a resplendent

> colour. To these two the Philosopher adds a third when he says that beauty does not exist except in a sizable body; so that small men can be called well-proportioned and pretty, but not beautiful.[144]

It has been suggested that magnitude is the equivalent of *integritas*, but this is unconvincing; the concepts of *magnitudo* and *integritas* are distinct, Aquinas understands *integritas* as synomymous with *perfectio.*

Aquinas' Empirical Approach to Beauty

One of the few personal facts we know about Aquinas is that he was excessively corpulent. There is the dubious legend that he needed a circle cut into the table to allow him dine with comfort. Was he concerned with bodily appearance? It would be good to think that he was health-conscious, and appreciated that a healthy mind inhabits a healthy body. Was he vain? Given his legendary humility and piety, we may scorn the thought. In his prayer *Qua ad Caelum Adspirat* Aquinas, however, beseeches the Almighty to endow his body with 'beauty of splendour' (*da etiam corpori meo, largissime remunator, claritatis pulchritudinem*)![145] He is of course referring to the splendour of the glorified body (*claritas corporis gloriosi*). Aquinas' prayerful motivation is evidence against what in the past was a common charge — indeed a prejudice —, namely, that his philosophical theory of beauty lacked empirical foundation. It was supposed that he considered beauty in the abstract, applying an a priori definition, or merely transferred the notion of divine beauty to creatures. The charge does not fit well with his philosophic method since, as for his teacher Aristotle, it was axiomatic for Aquinas that knowledge necessarily begins in the senses. The sensible is a preamble to the intelligible;[146] only from sensible realities do we progress to a knowledge of the suprasensible.[147]

Aquinas states that the beauty of the body differs from that of the spirit, and differs for this and that body.[148] Throughout his writings we find multiple references to physical or sensible beauty. As an example of *claritas* he refers to the luminosity of

the Milky Way.[149] He remarks in his early *Commentary on the Sentences* that beauty enhances the marriage union.[150] In his mature treatise *De Veritate* he gives the example of a woman who by reason of her beauty merits marriage to a king.[151] He notes that 'the home of a lord looks better in the city than in the country'.[152] In his Commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aquinas endorses Aristotle's statement that the pleasure of the eye is the beginning of love, suggesting that 'pleasure at the sight of a woman is the beginning of love for her, for no one begins to love a woman unless he has been first delighted by her beauty'.[153]

The Metaphysics of Beauty

Aquinas' most explicit and extended remarks on beauty are to be found in his commentary on *The Divine Names* of Pseudo-Dionysius, in which God is praised as identically the Good and Beauty. It is also his most profound treatment of the question, since he is dealing with the foundation of beauty, i. e. its origin in God and the relation between the divine plenitude of essential beauty and its limited participations in creatures. Beauty is affirmed as the original and ultimate reason and purpose for creation.

While Aquinas' commentary is an elaboration upon Dionysius' brief remarks, it is clear that he endorses the author's approach to beauty. The central element in their common teaching is the Platonically inspired theory of participation, according to which beauty is affirmed differently of God and creatures. God is essentially beautiful and is Beauty itself; creatures are beautiful through their participation in beauty. Aquinas explains that in God, who is first cause, 'the beautiful and beauty are not to be divided as if the beautiful is other than beauty, since the first cause alone through its simplicity and perfection comprehends the whole, i. e. all things, in one'. Thus while that which is beautiful, and the essence of beauty, are in creatures distinct, 'God comprehends both in himself as one and the same.'[154] The reason is that a beautiful creature has only a limited share in beauty: it is beautiful, but is not the essence of beauty, whereas God is not only beautiful, but

is himself the essential plenitude of beauty. In creatures that which is beautiful and beauty itself are distinguished as participant and participated: the beautiful participates beauty, but beauty itself is a participation in the first cause that makes all things beautiful.[155] Participation is the metaphysical ground of similitude: the participant resembles the participated, since the effect resembles its cause; in causing the being of creatures, God imparts a share of his beauty.

Aquinas refers to the two primary characteristics of beauty which, according to Dionysius,[156] are caused by God, harmony and clarity (ὡς τῆς πάντων εὐαρμοστίας καὶ ἀγλαΐας αἴτιον): 'And he shows in what the meaning of beauty consists, when he adds that God so transmits beauty in so far as God is "the cause of harmony and clarity (*causa consonantiae et claritatis*)" in all. Thus we call a man beautiful because of a fitting proportion in size and position, and because he has a bright and shining colour.'[157] Aquinas emphasizes the proportional character of beauty: 'It should be taken proportionately in other things that each thing is called beautiful according as it has clarity of its own genus whether spiritual or corporeal, and in so far as it is constituted in due proportion.'[158] Aquinas explains that, according to Dionysius, God causes *claritas* because he imparts, as with a flash, to all creatures a share of his luminous ray which is the fountain of all light. The flashing emissions of the divine ray are participations in his likeness; it is these radiations that produce beauty in things.[159]

To Dionysius' briefest mention of *consonantia*, Aquinas elucidates that God causes a twofold harmony in things: firstly by ordering all creatures towards himself (Aquinas cites Dionysius' etymological explanation of the word for beauty (κάλλος) deriving from the word καλεῖν, ('to call') and, secondly, by establishing mutual harmony among creatures towards each other.[160] God gathers together all in all (*congregat omnia in omnibus*) towards himself as their common and final end. This is to be understood in terms of Platonist participation: 'Higher things are in the lower by participation, and lower things in the higher through a certain excellence; thus all things are in all. Because all things are found

in all according to a certain order, it follows that everything is ordered to the same final reality.'[161] A little later in his commentary Aquinas elaborates:

> It has been said that harmony (*consonantia*) belongs to the nature (*ratio*) of beauty, hence everything pertaining to harmony proceeds from divine beauty. And so he adds that through divine beauty there is concord among rational creatures in matters of intellect, for those who agree on the same opinion are in harmony. There is also friendship with regard to affection, and communion with regard to action and external matters. Universally all creatures, whatever union they have, they have by virtue of the beautiful.[162]

All harmony and concord among beings, their friendship, communion and unity, derive from the power of the beautiful. Divine beauty causes the existence of 'all the substantial essences' (πᾶσαι τῶν ὄντων αἱ οὐσιώδεις ὑπάρξεις),[163] not only in their unities or identities, but also in their differences and distinctions. Dionysius speaks of 'communions of contraries' and 'non-mixtures of unified things',[164] a *reconciliatio oppositorum* or unity of the similar and different. Even things that are dissimilar, Aquinas remarks, agree in some respect, and ultimately all things lead back to the causality of the beautiful, exhibiting consonance, which is of the essence of beauty.[165] Most fundamentally all parts of the universe, Aquinas notes, agree by virtue of their existence, which is the profound source of their affinity and unity.[166]

The beauty of the universe requires that there be diversity and gradation; a single being alone could not make manifest the infinite splendour of the Creator.[167] The universe constitutes an ordered and harmonious hierarchy, with due proportion and agreement among the various levels. Aquinas spoke of the 'wondrous connection of things' (*mirabilis rerum connexio*),[168] whereby the highest members of an inferior level touch the lower members of the next degree *supremum infimi ordinis attingit infimum supremi*. This he found in Dionysius' words αει τα τελη των προτερων συναπτουσα ταις αρχαις των δευτερων.[169] As harmony of sound results from a due

proportion of number, the component parts of the universe are fitted together to result in a harmonious whole: 'From all the parts of the universe one totality of things (*una rerum universitas*) is constituted.'[170] Aquinas asserts that the 'highest beauty' (*summus decor*) of things is the order among distinct grades among creatures, even suggesting that the perfection of the universe (*perfectio universi*) arises from the ordered unification of those beings that are perfectly good and those that are prone to evil.[171]

The beauty of the universe consists in the harmony, proportion, order and mutual solidarity of beings infused with a shared desire for their unique and universal end. All creatures 'conspire' to produce universal concord and harmony, through due order and proportion.[172] The order of the universe (*ordo universi*) is for Aquinas 'the ultimate and noblest perfection in things' (*ultima et nobilissima perfectio in rebus*).[173] Thus while beauty is first experienced in the sensible appreciation of a physical body which presents itself to our senses with clarity and proportion, exhibiting its proper integrity or wholeness, the highest appreciation of beauty is contemplated in the universal harmony of all creatures as a unified universe. The beauty of the universe is more than that of individuals: it is their community. To form such a community they must be adapted towards one another. As the harmony of music is caused by due numerical proportion, so also the order of things in the universe. There is profound solidarity and affinity among all beings because of their common participation in the first perfection of existence. Creatures produce together a diapason of universal harmony.

Aquinas brings his unique metaphysical insight to bear on Dionysius' statement that the existence (*esse*) of all things comes from divine beauty (πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσι τὸ εἶναι), by explaining *claritas* as the effect of *esse*, measured through the form of the individual being which partakes of divine splendour:

> Clarity is a feature of beauty, as has been said before. Every form, however, through which a thing has existence (*esse*) is a participation in divine brightness (*omnis autem forma,*

> *per quam res habet esse, est participatio quaedam divinae claritatis*). And he adds that individual things are beautiful according to their own nature, that is, according to their own form (*singula sunt pulchra secundum propriam rationem, idest secundum propriam formam*). Thus, it is obvious that the *esse* of all things comes from divine beauty.[174]

We may conclude from his commentary on *The Divine Names* that for Aquinas the beauty of a being is identical with its act of existing; beauty is not merely an ornament shimmering on the surface of things but is their very existence. In Chapter 4 of his commentary Aquinas states: 'The beauty of the creature is nothing other than the likeness of divine beauty participated in things.'[175] And in the following chapter he states: 'Created being itself (*ipsum esse creatum*) is a certain participation and likeness of God.'[176] Divine beauty is the source of existence in all things (*ex divina pulchritudine esse omnium derivatur*).[177] A being's existence is its beauty; its beauty is its existence. Each being is an irradiation of the divine brilliance, participating in divine being and beauty.[178]

Emphasizing the intimate connection between goodness and beauty, Aquinas refers to the importance of form: 'Nothing exists which does not participate in beauty and goodness, since each thing is beautiful and good according to its proper form.'[179] And again: 'A form is a certain irradiation coming forth from the first brightness; but brightness pertains to the essence of beauty.'[180] Etienne Gilson remarks, 'Everything is beautiful as having a form (through which it has *esse*), and this form is a sort of a participation of the divine clarity.'[181] The most important aspect or effect of beauty is brilliance or clarity. *Claritas*, or radiance, is the ontological splendour of form, which is the intelligible medium in which the actuality of existence is revealed. The ontological splendour of finite creatures shines through the brilliance of form. The bond between beauty and form may be understood in light of Aquinas' assertion in *Contra Gentiles* that 'form is nothing else than a divine likeness that is participated in things', citing Aristotle that form is 'something divine and desirable'.[182]

Aquinas emphasized the role of form as the ground of intelligibility, i. e. the intelligible clarity of the individual. Intellectual cognition is achieved through the assimilation of the intelligible form. So much Aquinas had in common with Aristotle, but he disagreed with Aristotle's doctrine that form or essence (*eidos*, *essentia*) is the deepest principle of actuality within the individual. Aquinas maintained that it is form which determines essence, but that of itself essence is powerless to be; it requires a deeper actualizing principle in order to exist. Form is the inner principle that determines what a thing is in its essence, but is itself in need of its own act of existing (*esse*) which causes it to be. Form is the instrumental medium through which the individual receives existence (hence beauty) according to a particular mode, but has of itself only potency towards existence. Aquinas deepened Aristotle's notion of actuality beyond that of form to affirm the actuality of existence, the act of being, *actus essendi*, which is denoted by the verbal infinitive, 'to be', Latin *esse*. Whereas for Aristotle the deepest level of actuality is a thing's form, determining its essence (*what* it is), for Aquinas the most profound and intimate actualizing principle is its act of being (*actus essendi*), which makes something be: not *what* it is, but in the first place to *exist*. It is this primordial, originative act, which is for Aquinas the real origin of a thing's *claritas*. He notes that 'the very actuality of a thing is as it were its light (*ipsa actualitas rei est quoddam lumen ipsius*)'.[183] Form, according to Aquinas, is the actualizing principle of essence, determining the material potency to be a certain *kind of thing*; it is the mediating principle, the measure through which a being receives its existence.[184] It is itself in turn, however, in need of actualization by the more primordial actuality of existence, the *actus essendi* or *esse*, which is the act of all acts and the perfection of all perfections.[185]

Esse, or *actus essendi*, is the radical source of beauty in all respects, since it is the cause of integrity, clarity, and harmony in each entity, and in the universal totality of beings. In his *Commentary on the Sentences* Aquinas stated: 'The integrity of a thing follows upon its primary perfection which is its very

existence.'[186] It endows each individual with its interior unity and organic wholeness. It is the original *claritas* conferring the radiance of actuality, i. e. beauty as the luminous splendour of being. Diversified throughout a multiplicity of forms, it is the root of universal harmony among creatures, since existence is what all things have in common.

Commenting on Dionysius, Aquinas provides the radical reason for the very existence of the universe, namely God's love of his own beauty. A finite cause, he explains, acts in order to acquire something that it lacks, whereas a perfect cause acts out of love for what it possesses. The passage reads:

> An agent cause acts by virtue of a desire of the end, because it is an imperfect agent and does not yet possess what it desires. However, it pertains to a perfect agent to act out of love for what it possesses, and for this reason Dionysius adds that Beauty itself which is God, is the efficient, moving and supportive cause, 'by love of its own beauty'. Since God possesses his own beauty, he wishes to multiply it as far as possible, namely through communication of his own likeness.[187]

Elaborating further on the causality of divine beauty, Aquinas explains that God is not only the efficient, but also the final and exemplary cause of all things. He is efficient cause because he gives to all things their *esse*, moving and preserving them in existence. God is final cause of the universe since 'all things are made so that they may imitate divine beauty in some way'.[188] He is also exemplary cause, 'for all things are distinguished in accord with the divinely beautiful, and a sign of this is that no one cares to make an image or representation, except for the sake of the beautiful'.[189] Aquinas touches here on the deepest reason for artistic creation, which he applies analogically to the creation of the world by the infinite artist. God creates the universe in order to share his beauty, and to draw us into the mystery of that gift. For Dionysius and Aquinas, divine beauty is the origin and purpose of creation: out of love for his beauty God multiplies it through the communication of his

likeness. He makes all things, that they may imitate divine beauty. As Jacques Maritain remarks, 'There cannot in fact be any purely "gratuitous" work of art—the universe excepted.'[190]

* * *

All humans by nature delight in the beautiful. From time out of mind, in all cultures and in every tradition, beauty has enchanted hearts and fascinated minds. The Greek proverbs, τὸ καλὸν φίλον ('beauty is a friend'),[191] and χαλεπὰ τὰ καλὰ ('beautiful things are difficult'), seem at variance, yet convey together a profound truth. Easy to love, beauty cannot be properly defined; beyond explanation, it is the primitive gift. Beauty is that which simply pleases when known; perception does not err, neither does intuition. Sensible beauty is love at first sight,[192] intellectual beauty love at first insight. Kant rightly defined the beautiful as that which universally gives pleasure without a concept.[193] Beauty is spontaneously experienced, without theory or practise. It is that character of being which attracts through loving admiration, and simultaneously appeases the desire it awakens. According to Aquinas beauty evokes joyous love and intellectual delight; it ennobles and exhilarates. He commends Aristotle's assertion that one cannot live without pleasure: those who find no joy in spiritual delight look to pleasures of the body: 'Every human being loves beauty: carnal people love carnal beauty, spiritual people love spiritual beauty.'[194] He declares: 'Nobody can live without delectation. That is why he who is deprived of spiritual delectation goes over to the carnal,'[195] and remarks that a person who without good reason abstains from all pleasures is as insensible as a rustic lout.[196]

Beauty is the highest aspect under which reality is experienced. We respond more immediately to the beautiful than to truth or goodness. Beauty embraces and exceeds the transcendental character of goodness and truth, which find in beauty their higher manifestation. Beauty adorns truth and goodness with a garland of glory. It is the luminous revelation of reality at its most sublime

and profound. Beauty brings us into immediate community with the transcendent; the simplest material beauty is a cipher of the infinite and absolute. Etienne Gilson has remarked: 'The beautiful is a transcendental of being, and to approach being as such is always to reach the threshold of the sacred.'[197] Beauty is the joyful glory of being, whether in the most humble sense reality or the deepest spiritual experience. Charles Baudelaire commented: 'It is the admirable, immortal, instinctive sense of beauty that leads us to look upon the spectacle of this world as a glimpse, a correspondence with heaven. Our unquenchable thirst for all that lies beyond, and that life reveals, is the liveliest proof of our immortality.'[198]

Dostoevsky's character Prince Myshkin reportedly proclaimed that beauty alone would save the world.[199] Interrogating the phrase in his Nobel lecture, Alexander Solzhenitsyn asked, 'What sort of a statement is that? For a long time I considered it mere words. How could that be possible? When in bloodthirsty history did beauty ever save anyone from anything? Ennobled, uplifted, yes — but whom has it saved?' Solzhenitsyn pointed to a peculiarity in the essence of beauty, namely its 'convincingness': it 'bears within itself its own verification . . . and forces even an opposing heart to surrender'. He concludes:

> So perhaps that ancient trinity of Truth, Goodness and Beauty is not simply an empty, faded formula as we thought in the days of our self-confident, materialistic youth? If the tops of these three trees converge, as the scholars maintained, but the too blatant, too direct stems of Truth and Goodness are crushed, cut down, not allowed through — then perhaps the fantastic, unpredictable, unexpected stems of Beauty will push through and soar to that very same place, and in so doing will fulfil the work of all three? In that case Dostoevsky's remark, 'Beauty will save the world', was not a careless phrase but a prophecy?[200]

Another of Dostoevsky's characters declares: 'Mankind can live without science, can live without bread; only without beauty can it not live, for then there would be nothing at all to do in the world!

The whole secret is here, the whole of history is here! Science itself would not exist for a moment without beauty.'[201] Beauty leads us indeed to the mystery of the universe. We love because we experience beings, especially persons, as beautiful, admired and loved for their own sake; our noblest ideals, deepest desires and loftiest aspirations find selfless pleasure in their intrinsic beauty. For the classical thinkers whom we have considered, the profound human impulse towards beauty was a cipher of a greater dimension of the cosmos. This assumed deeper meaning for Christian authors, for whom all existence derives from the infinite self-love of absolute Beauty who in a sharing of that love freely gifts to mankind a vestige of his being, a foregleam of infinite and eternal beauty.

3

Immortality of the Soul in Plato and Aquinas

Pale death with impartial foot knocks at the cottages of the poor and the palaces of kings.

(Horace)[1]

While death is one of the few certainties in life, its meaning remains forever a mystery. Some animals exhibit an instinctive terror before imminent death, but man alone ponders its ultimate significance. Heidegger's characterization of human existence as '*Sein zum Tode*' is well expressed by W. B. Yeats in the poem 'Death':

> Nor dread nor hope attend
> A dying animal;
> A man awaits his end
> Dreading and hoping all;
> Many times he died,
> Many times rose again. . .
> He knows death to the bone —
> Man has created death.

The prospect of total annihilation, that everything most precious and intimate about one's self will pass into utter nothingness, may arouse acute dread. At a minimum it should provoke self-questioning regarding one's own existence. Concern with death may equally prompt the question of possible survival. Diverse cultures have throughout the ages given expression, intellectual or symbolic, to the belief that human existence is not entirely extinguished at death. Gabriel Marcel remarked: 'The problem of the immortality of the soul is the pivot of metaphysic (*pivot de la métaphysique*).'[2] That was certainly the case with Plato, for whom the central questions of reality and knowledge, ultimately also of morality, are inextricably bound up with both the pre-existence and the survival of the soul.

The aim of the present essay is to consider the arguments offered by Plato and Aquinas in support of the soul's immortality. I will refer also to Aristotle, whose position is ambiguous, but who played an important part in transforming many of Plato's doctrines and transmitting them to Aquinas. He provided, moreover, the philosophical principles which enabled Aquinas to elaborate his own independent position, thereby overcoming what he perceived as weaknesses in Plato.

My suggestion of a rapprochement between Plato and Aquinas is speculative. While the *Phaedo, Meno,* and *Timaeus* were available in the thirteenth century, Aquinas had no direct knowledge of the dialogues. What he knew of Plato came through a variety of sources, principally Aristotle and Augustine, as well as other late classical and early medieval authors. It may be argued nonetheless that there are significant similarities in the approaches of Plato and Aquinas to the affirmation of immortality. Principal among these is the immateriality of the soul and the allied principle of kinship according to which like knows like.

It is impossible to pin down the meaning of soul (ψυχή), as understood by Plato, to any single, strict, exclusive sense. In its widest connotation, it refers to the basic principle that distinguishes living entities from the non-living. It is the element which defines all forms of life. In the case of humans, it is the intrinsic

principle which animates all vital functions, of body (nutrition, reproduction, and sensation) and mind. In a narrower sense the human ψυχή is identified with the highest intellectual element of mind (νοῦς), by which we directly grasp truth and know reality as it is in itself. Νοῦς also constitutes divine ψυχή; it is the essence of both the Maker of the cosmos (the Demiurge) and of the lesser gods, including the cosmic soul.

Ancient Greek mythology expressed belief in the immortality of the soul, the higher element of human nature. Such beliefs were motivated by the instinctive desire for self-preservation and fear of annihilation. Plato was the first to offer rational argument rather than allegorical myth. His main influence was Pythagoras rather than Socrates. Any consideration of the question of immortality in Plato, however, must place Socrates centre stage, not only because of the latter's apparent belief in a future life, but also because Plato's entire philosophy was motivated by the search for an adequate foundation for his master's belief in the existence of stable moral values. This was the question of universals and, as with every philosopher, Plato's solution to the question determined his entire system. Socrates, as presented by Plato, was convinced that there exist objective standards of morality which are independent of changing circumstances; this had decisive implications for his confidence in a future life of bliss. Extending this belief to include all truth, Plato postulated the existence of an a priori knowledge by which we judge the imperfect and mutable realities given in sense experience. Such knowledge requires the pre-existence of the soul and entails its immortality.

Neither the objects given in sensation, nor the faculty of sensation itself, can adequately account for our ability to interpret sense objects in the light of universal concepts. Plato was influenced by Heraclitus' view that physical nature is in perpetual flux, and cannot therefore provide the element of permanence required for knowledge.[3] To account for the necessary element in cognition Plato developed his doctrine of absolute forms or ideas which, he states, must be somehow present in the soul prior to sense experience. Francis Cornford remarked that the 'twin pillars of Platonism' are

the theory of Forms and the pre-existence of the soul.[4] It is within the framework of these theories that the argument for immortality is presented, especially in the *Phaedo*.[5]

In his address to the jury who condemned him to death, as reported in the *Apology*, Socrates expresses his optimistic belief that death is a benefit: 'There is good hope that death is a blessing, for it is one of two things: either the dead are nothing and have no perception of anything, or it is, as we are told, a change and a relocation for the soul from here to another place.'[6] If the former, it may be compared to a state of blissful uninterrupted sleep, and therefore 'a wonderful gain' (40d: θαυμάσιον κέρδος). If, on the other hand, death is a change of habitation, one can hope to join previous generations in the afterlife: 'What greater blessing could there be?' (40e) Socrates delights in the prospect of conversing with demigods Minos, Rhadamanthus, Aeacus and Triptolemus, mythic figures Orpheus and Musaeus, and such heroes as Hesiod and Homer. Life in their company would be wonderful. Socrates states that his greatest pleasure would be to spend his time examining and investigating people there, as he does in this life, to find out who among them is wise, and who thinks he is, but is not. (41b)

The question of immortality assumes emotional and existential urgency in the conversation, described in the *Phaedo*, which Socrates has with his friends in the final hours before his death, while 'the sun still shines upon the hills and has not yet set'. (116e) Socrates is himself aware of the shortness of time and asks Phaedo to help him, while there is still light, to respond to the objections of Cebes and Simmias. (89c) Socrates' friends are filled with grief, thinking of the pending misfortune that, deprived of a father, they will live the rest of our lives as orphans. (116a) It is Plato himself who speaks in the *Phaedo*, since the arguments depend upon his mature theories of reality and knowledge developed independently of Socrates.

Plato uses three different words to describe death as the release or separation of the soul from the body: ἀπαλλαγή, λύσις, and χωρισμός. (64c, 67d) It is the 'separate condition of the body by itself when it is released from the soul, and the separate condition

by itself of the soul when released from the body'.[7] We are quickly introduced to Plato's dualist theory of man and of knowledge which entirely determines his approach to immortality. Individuals in this life are composed of body and soul in a conflicted relationship in which the body, full of deceit, is an impediment to the acquisition of truth and virtue. The relation is one of opposition and struggle. The body is an obstacle to wisdom and goodness, and hinders our quest for reality. (66c)

The soul of the philosopher disdains the body and strives to be 'alone by itself'. (65d) Plato introduces his theory of Forms, asserting the existence of absolute justice, beauty and goodness: none of these, nor the true essence of any reality, is perceived by the senses, but by reason alone. (65e) Only the person who employs pure reason in his attempt to search out the pure, absolute, essences of things will attain knowledge of reality. (66a) The philosopher must distance himself from his senses, since they disturb the soul and hinder it from attaining truth and wisdom. The body is a source of evil and strife. 'If we are ever to have pure knowledge, we must escape from the body and observe things in themselves with the soul by itself.' (66d–e) Only when we are dead, the argument continues, can we possess pure knowledge, since only then will the soul be independent of the body. (66e–67a) Meanwhile we should, insofar as possible, avoid all intercourse and communication with the body. Free of contamination the soul will know truth in its purity: 'For it is not permitted to the impure to attain the pure.' (67a–b) Here is expressed the principle of kinship or affinity which is at the core of Plato's argument: only the pure can know that which is pure.

Cebes concedes that if the soul were to exist in itself by itself (αὐτὴ καθ᾽ αὑτὴν), freed from the evils of the body, there would be a great and beautiful hope (70a: πολλὴ ἂν εἴη ἐλπὶς καὶ καλή) that what Socrates says is true. However, he requires stronger proof that 'the soul still exists after death and retains some power and intelligence'. (70b)[8] The possibility of extinction, extolled as bliss in the *Apology*, elicits horror in Cebes, who fears that, like a puff of smoke, his soul will disperse and no longer exist anywhere.

Of the arguments which Socrates offers in favour of immortality I will concentrate on the argument from affinity (78b–84b) which is, I suggest, the one most congenial to the approach of Thomas Aquinas. The argument from affinity relies on the assumption that there is an intrinsic kinship between knower and known, a principle summarily formulated by Aristotle as 'like is known by like'.[9] The soul's realm is the invisible world of absolute essences, which are immutable and fully perfect in themselves. In the *Republic*, Plato's Socrates states that in order to know the soul as it really is (611b: οἷον δ᾽ ἐστὶν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ), 'we must realize what it grasps and longs to have intercourse with, because it is akin to the divine and immortal and what always is'.[10] Detached from its Platonist context, the principle of kinship in knowledge would find favour with Aquinas, who likewise stresses the soul's immaterial affinity with universal realities. This chimes with Aristotle's definition of soul as that which embraces the totality of being, a definition which Aquinas makes his own.[11]

Aquinas could never accept Socrates' argument from recollection, since for him it is axiomatic that all knowledge is rooted in the senses. He would agree, however, that true and certain knowledge cannot be exclusively explained by the senses: it exhibits a superior function that surpasses sense activity. Knowledge involves interpretation, classification, comparison, and predication in light of universal ideas; these go beyond the power and scope of the senses. From the Thomist point of view, Plato's argument from affinity has the merit of highlighting the superiority of conceptual over sense knowledge. Aquinas, however, found a more satisfactory solution in Aristotle's transformed theory of universals and his theory of abstraction.

Socrates' so-called argument from resemblance or affinity is intended to show that the soul is more akin to the eternal and perfect Ideas than to the perishable objects of sense experience. This leads, he argues, to the conclusion that the soul is likewise eternal and imperishable. We must first distinguish between those things which are subject to dispersion and those which are not; it will then be obvious to which class the soul belongs. (78b) The soul,

he suggests, is not the kind of thing that would naturally suffer dispersion. Whatever is composed is of its nature apt to decompose; what is uncompounded is by definition free from decomposition. (78b-c) 'The incomposite things are those that are always constant and unchanging, while the composite ones are those that are different at different times and never constant.'[12] Cebes agrees that absolute essences, such as equality itself and beauty itself, are true being (78d) and do not change, while physical things in the natural world are in constant flux. The former, which are invisible, are grasped only by reason, the latter are seen and touched. (79a) Cebes agrees with Socrates' inference that there are two classes of reality, one visible, the other invisible. (79b) We ourselves are composed of two parts, body and soul; it is manifestly obvious that the body is similar and more closely akin (ὁμοιότερον καὶ συγγενέστερον) to the visible, the soul to the invisible. (79b)

When the soul relies upon the senses in its search for truth, 'it is dragged by the body to the things that are never the same, and the soul itself strays and is confused and dizzy as if it were drunk'. (79c) By contrast: 'When the soul investigates by itself it passes into the realm of what is pure, ever existing, immortal and unchanging, and being akin to this, it always stays with it whenever it is by itself and can do so; it ceases to stray and remains in the same state as it is in touch with things of the same kind, and its experience then is what is called wisdom.' (79d) This confirms that the soul is more alike and more akin to that which always exists in the same state. (79e) Repetition of the words ὁμοιότερον καὶ συγγενέστερον emphasizes the conclusion.

Cebes finds Socrates' argument so convincing that he declares: 'On this line of argument any man, even the dullest, would agree that the soul is altogether more like that which always exists in the same state rather than like that which does not.' (79e) While Aquinas would not exhibit similar enthusiasm, we might expect him to give guarded approval to this assertion, since for him also, when the soul contemplates already established truths, it also to some extent participates in universal truth which has transcendent scope and value.

Commenting on the conjoined activity of soul and body, Socrates observes that because of its natural superiority the soul is destined to rule over the body, as the divine over the mortal. He declares: 'The soul is most like the divine, deathless, intelligible, uniform, indissoluble, always the same as itself, whereas the body is most like that which is human, mortal, multiform, unintelligible, soluble and never consistently the same.' He concludes: 'That being so, is it not natural for the body to dissolve easily, and for the soul to be altogether indissoluble, or nearly so?' (80b) Upon death the body decomposes and disintegrates, (80c) but the invisible soul, if it has pursued philosophy rightly in preparation for death, departs to a region of the same kind, noble and pure and invisible, to the good and wise god. (80d) Happiness awaits it on arrival and it will spend the rest of time with the gods.

Socrates' argument has so far concentrated on the soul's kinship with the permanent realities which are its object of knowledge, inferring that since 'like knows like', the soul must also be lasting and unchanging. In response to Cebes' objection that death should be defined not just as the destruction of the body, but of the soul itself, (91d) Socrates admits that 'the soul must be proved to be immortal and indestructible'. (95c) He concedes that so far he has only shown that 'the soul is strong, that it is divine, that it existed before we were born as men', (95c) which proves that it existed for a very long time, but not that it is immortal. In search for a deeper proof, he turns again to his theory of participation, arguing that it is the essence of soul to be alive, and therefore immortal, since it participates in its eternal Form. The soul causes the body to be alive, but is not identical with the life of the body. The Form is in essence the fullness of life and must by definition reject its opposite, so that when death enters the body, the soul withdraws: 'When death comes to man, the mortal part of him dies, it seems, but his deathless part goes away safe and indestructible, yielding the place to death.' (106e) The soul migrates to the afterworld: 'Therefore the soul is most certainly deathless and indestructible and our souls will really dwell in the underworld.'[13]

Plato's final argument for the immortality of the soul depends squarely upon the existence of the Forms. Its logic, however, is

questionable; it has even been described as 'a blatant *petitio principii*'.[14] Plato asserts no more than the obvious fact that if the soul exists it cannot be dead; the crucial question is whether or not it does exist.[18] Plato does not insist that his account of the soul's immortality is accurate in every detail; the cumulative effect of his various arguments, however, is the conviction that whereas individual mortals die the soul is immortal. The souls of those who live piously, purified by philosophy, will be released from their earthly prison and enter an abode whose beauty is not easy to describe. It is a goal worth aiming for, since 'the reward is beautiful and the hope is great (114c: καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἆθλον καὶ ἡ ἐλπὶς μεγάλη)'. Plato declares: 'I think it fitting for a man to risk the belief — for the risk is a noble one (καλὸς γὰρ ὁ κίνδυνος) — that this, or something like this, is true about our souls and their dwelling places, since the soul is evidently immortal, and a man should repeat this to himself as if it were an incantation, which is why I have been prolonging my tale.' (114d)

The dialogue *Phaedrus* also contains some of Plato's most significant statements regarding the soul's immortality, however summarily and abruptly affirmed. Without hesitation he declares: 'All soul is immortal (245c: ψυχὴ πᾶσα ἀθάνατος)', a statement that has caused much discussion, since it may either be translated 'Every soul is immortal', or 'The entire soul is immortal.' 'Soul', moreover, refers not only to the human soul but to a vast hierarchy of souls descending from the soul of the universe to the souls of lower living forms.

Plato's summary proof in the *Phaedrus* that the soul is immortal is simply to assert that it is ever-moving. To be in perpetual motion, however, it must be self-moving, and this, he affirms, is the very definition of soul: 'It is only what moves itself that never desists from motion, since it does not leave off being itself. In fact, this self-mover is also the source and spring of motion in everything else that moves; and a source has no beginning.'[19] This refers to all instances of soul, universal and divine as well as human. Plato's definition anticipates Aristotle's definition of *phusis* as that which has within itself its own principle of rest and motion.

Immortality of the Soul for Aristotle

According to Aristotle, all living things possess a principle which distinguishes them from non-living beings. His predecessors attributed three properties to soul: movement, perception, and incorporeality.[17] The latter is distinctive of human substances, because of their intellectual activity. Aristotle was greatly exercised by the question whether or not the intellect could operate independently of the body; the solution to this problem largely decides the question of the soul's immortality. Aristotle's position has given rise to much debate throughout the history of philosophy. Emphasizing the unicity of the individual substance, and the complementarity of body and soul, he himself raises the greatest obstacle to the independence of the soul and its survival after death: 'One can no more ask if the body and the soul are one than if the wax and the impression it receives are one.'[18] We are confronted with two fundamental and related problems: the unity of body and soul, and the possible independence of soul. The soul is for Aristotle the actualizing form of the body, i. e. the element which causes the body, in the first place, to be a body. The question is whether its full reality and activity are exhausted by that function, or whether it has autonomous independence beyond the role of animating the body. Is it a real particular in itself (τόδε τι) as well as form (εἶδος) of the body? Can it exist independently as an incorporeal reality? Immortality depends upon immateriality, but demands autonomous subsistence.

Early in *De Anima* Aristotle considers the possibility of the soul acting in separation from the body. Intellectual thought is the most likely evidence: 'If there is any way of acting or being acted upon proper to soul, soul will be capable of separate existence; if there is none, its separate existence is impossible.'[19] He tentatively proposes the immortality of intellect: '*Nous* seems to be an independent substance implanted in us, which cannot be destroyed.'[20] He argues that if the intellect, like the sense organs, were subject to decay, this would inevitably occur with the debility of old age. Unlike sensation which usually declines with the ageing

of the sense organs, the mind is unaffected since it has no physical organ; it may of course be affected indirectly, because its activity belongs to the individual, whose body deteriorates with age. The individual ceases to think only when the substance is corrupted at death, and the compound of body and soul has dissolved. 'Thinking, loving and hating are not affections of the mind, but of the individual man who possesses the mind.'[21] For Aristotle it is neither the soul nor body that thinks but the individual, just as it is the individual who perceives, loves and hates. The individual is a unity of body and soul. The dependence of intellect upon the body, however, is not the same as that of sensation. Aristotle makes an important distinction: memory and love terminate with the death of the individual, but thought (νοεῖν) and reflection (θεωρεῖν) are beyond destruction.[22] His most explicit statement in favour of the survival of the intellect is as follows:

> In the case of the mind and the thinking faculty nothing is yet clear; it seems to be a distinct kind of soul, and it alone admits of being separated, as the immortal from the perishable. But it is quite clear from what we have said that the other parts of the soul are not separable, as some say; though it is obvious that they are theoretically different; for there is a difference between the abstract faculties of sensation and opinion, just as feeling is different from opining.[23]

Strict hylomorphism (the unity of body and soul as matter and form) seems to require that the human soul should perish with the death of the individual. Intellect (νοῦς) may be an exception since it is not material, i. e. composed of parts, and cannot suffer disintegration. Aristotle's hylomorphism has been praised by some as best safeguarding the unity of the human individual,[24] for others it is linked to an outmoded physics and no longer sustainable. The current orthodoxy regards Aristotle's views on the immateriality of νοῦς as an awkward inconsistency. H. M. Robinson remarks: 'More often than not nowadays the favoured opinion is that Aristotle is essentially or in spirit some sort of materialist. I say that the favoured opinion is that he is a materialist *essentially* or *in spirit*

because few dare to say that he actually is a materialist, because few dare to deny that his doctrine of *nous* is immaterialist.'[25] Christopher Shields agrees that 'the majority of commentators have disregarded Aristotle's conception of an immaterial *nous*'.[26]

Referring to Anaxagoras, Aristotle states that, since the soul knows all things, it must be 'unmixed' (ἀμιγῆ), i. e. free of every particular mode of being.[27] There is good reason, he says, to affirm that it is not mixed with the body, but is non-corporeal or immaterial.[28] If it were corporeal, it would inevitably have a determinate quality (such as hot or cold), which would make cognition of its contrary impossible. It would also require a physical organ, similar to those of sensation (429a25–6). Were it material, it could not receive within itself the intelligible natures of all things; but since it is open to receive all reality intelligibly within itself, it is not restricted to any material mode, and is therefore immaterial, simple and impassible.[29] The soul, Aristotle states, has been well described as the 'place of forms' (429a27–8: τόπος εἰδῶν); this applies, not to the soul as a whole, but to its thinking element; and the forms are contained not actually, but potentially. He defines it also as the 'form of forms' (432a2: εἶδος εἰδῶν), since it assimilates the forms, i. e. intelligible natures, of all things.

The immateriality of the intellect is established in the first place by its universality; the clearest proof is its unlimited openness to every possible object. The sense faculties function, each infallibly in a particular domain, because they have a clearly limited range, determined by the receptivity of the sense organ. Sensation is directed towards a particular material object here and now, narrowly located in time and space. The intellect is open to the totality because it has no such organ. Its universality is a consequence of its immaterial capacity. Its target is universal reality — the unrestricted totality of beings in general (τὰ πάντα), as well as the universal concepts of those essences which are instantiated in countless substances (τὰ καθόλου). There is nothing that exists whose essence cannot become the object of intellect; universality is the mark of the immaterial psyche. While the senses grasp particular individuals, the intellect knows universal essences

according to their immaterial intelligibility.[30] Aristotle himself summarized his psychology with the statement: 'The soul is in a sense all things.' (ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ ὄντα πώς ἐστι πάντα).[31]

The non-material character of intellect, according to Aristotle, is confirmed by its impassibility: it cannot be affected by its object. Sense organs can be destroyed by violent stimulation, the ear by deafening sounds, the eye by excessive light.[32] The intellect is not impaired by intense thought; on the contrary, having struggled with difficult matters, Aristotle remarks that it reflects more easily upon simpler problems. This allows him to conclude that 'the faculty of sense is not apart from the body, whereas the mind is separable'.[33] Aristotle of course stresses that without initial sense activity, the intellect is empty of content. He emphasizes the unity of the human individual; the question is how both poles of human cognition, sensible and intellective, can belong to a single being.

Of its nature immaterial, and independent of a physical organ, the intellect has neither magnitude nor parts: these would be a hindrance to the process of thinking. The mind is one and simple; it is not a magnitude. 'For, if it is a magnitude, how will it think with any one of its parts?'[34] The mind must be single and complete, as are its thoughts which are simple and indivisible. Thoughts are grasped instantaneously and entire, not successively piece by piece, one aspect after another. If the mind were a material magnitude, it would have to know its object through its divisible parts.

Immortality of the Soul in Aquinas

Aristotle's view on the immortality of the soul is far from definitive. Its implicit ambiguity suggests that only the thinking function of the soul is immortal; this poses an obstacle for the unity of the individual and threatens the unity of the soul itself. Much debate and controversy would have been spared had Aristotle explained more carefully what he meant by 'separate'. Aquinas for one had no doubts about its meaning, and expressed surprise at the controversy it provoked:

> It is astonishing how easily some have let themselves be deceived by his calling the intellect 'separate'; for the text itself makes it perfectly clear what he means, — namely that, unlike the senses, the intellect has no bodily organ. For the nobility of the human soul transcends the scope and limits of bodily matter. Hence it enjoys a certain activity in which bodily matter has no share; the potentiality to which activity is without a bodily organ; and in this sense only is it a 'separate' intellect.[35]

As we shall see, Aquinas drew heavily on Aristotle's metaphysics and psychology in support of the immortality of the soul.

Aquinas also took inspiration from the Platonist tradition. Indeed one might expect him to find in Plato a natural ally in support of the Christian emphasis on the soul and its eternal destiny. In their zeal for man's supernatural destiny some Patristic authors denigrated the body; such exaggerated spiritualism, however, was alien to Aquinas, who emphasized the essentially corporeal character of human nature. Man, he states, inhabits 'the confines of the spiritual and corporeal' (*in confinio spiritualium et corporalium creaturarum*), on the horizon of matter and spirit.[36] Christ took on human flesh, and man's ultimate destiny is not immortality of the soul, but resurrection of the body, as affirmed in the Apostles' Creed.

Aquinas deals with the soul's immortality in a variety of locations. The central questions concern the spiritual nature of the soul, and its relation to the body. In his early Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard (1256), he referred to both Platonist and Aristotelian sources. He proposed three arguments for the soul's spirituality:

> First, because this operation covers all corporeal forms as its objects; therefore, it is necessary that the principle of this operation be free from all material forms. Second, because understanding concerns universals, whereas in a corporeal organ only individuated intentions can be received. Third, because the intellect understands itself; but this does not

> occur in a power whose operation is performed by means of a corporeal organ... This proof is touched upon in the *Liber de Causis*, in the fifteenth proposition: 'Every knower who knows his essence is one who bends back upon his own essence in a complete way.'[37]

The first two arguments cited here are basically the same, referring to the universality of intellectual knowledge; it is the argument of Aristotle. The proof from the complete reflexion of the mind is characteristically Neoplatonist. The *Liber de Causis* to which Aquinas refers may be dated to the 9/10th century, probably from the area of Baghdad; it was transmitted to the West via a translation from Arabic, but may have been written in Syriac. It was long taken to be Aristotle's lost theology, but is in fact a distillation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*, proposition 15 of which stated: 'All that is capable of reverting upon itself is incorporeal (ἀσώματον).' Proposition 171 states: 'Intellect is indeed truly incorporeal, which its reversion upon itself makes clear, for bodies are incapable of such reversion.' In his commentary on the *Liber de Causis* Aquinas quotes with approval Proclus' reason for the immateriality of intellect:

> No body is naturally suited to turn toward itself. For if that which turns toward something is in contact with that toward which it turns, then it is clear that all the parts of the body that turns toward itself will be in contact with all [the rest of its parts]. This is not possible for anything that has parts, because of the separation of the parts, each of which lies in a different place.[38]

In simple terms, what these authors have in mind is the inability of material reality, defined by mutual exteriority of parts (*partes extra partes*), to reflect back upon itself in an act of complete reversion. Put simply, parts get in the way. The components of any material object are external to one another; they have no cohesive unifying interiority. The soul's capacity for self-reflection, and its universality of scope, have traditionally been invoked as proof

of the spiritual character of human nature. Aquinas' arguments in the Commentary on the *Sentences* epitomize respectively the approaches of Platonism and Aristotelianism.

On the relation between soul and body Aquinas wrote in his *Commentary on the Sentences*:

> Regarding the union of the soul to the body there were two opinions among the ancients. According to one, the soul is united to the body as a complete being to a complete being, so that the soul would be in the body as a sailor in a ship. Thus, as Gregory of Nyssa [*recte* Nemesius][39] says, Plato held that man is not something constituted of soul and body, but is rather a soul that has clothed itself with a body (*anima corpore induta*). In this view a man's entire personality would consist of his soul, so that it could be truly said that the separated soul is a human being . . . and that the soul when separated is a person. But this opinion is untenable because it would mean that the body is accidentally joined to the soul. If that were so, the name man, which is understood to mean soul and body, would not signify something that is one essentially but only accidentally, and man would not belong to the class of substances.
>
> The second opinion is that of Aristotle, which all the moderns follow, according to which the soul is united to the body as form to matter. From this it follows that the soul is a part of human nature, and not a special nature in itself.[40]

Aquinas emphasizes that the separated soul cannot be called a person, since its nature is to be a part of the complete, unified, human individual which is both material and spiritual.

Aquinas criticized Plato's view of man as *anima utens corpore*, a soul using a body.[41] Plato considered the relation of soul and body not only as accidental, but antagonistic. Aquinas taught that they were essentially united in a mutually dedicated relationship, together constituting a single substance. Plato's man is a chimera abstracted from its embodiment in flesh and blood.

Aquinas followed the common-sense empirical method validated by Aristotle. He nonetheless sought to reconcile the position of Plato, according to which the soul is a spiritual substance capable of surviving the disintegration of the individual at death, with Aristotle's insistence that the relation between soul and body is not accidental, but intrinsic to their unity as a single individual. Plato's position guaranteed the immortality of the soul, but sacrificed the unity of body and soul; Aristotle's hylomorphism emphasized the substantial unity of body and soul but jeopardized the soul's survival. If, as in every other case of hylomorphic composition, the form is intrinsically linked to the body which it informs, it must necessarily cease to exist at the moment of dissolution. For this reason the Christian theologian Nemesius, in his treatise *On the Nature of Man*, rejected Aristotle's definition of the soul as the form of the body as incompatible with the Christian teaching.

To deal with this objection, Aquinas needed to establish that the soul can be at once both an autonomously existing entity — an intellectual substance in its own right — and the unique substantial form of the human body. To this purpose he pressed into service the metaphysics and psychology of Aristotle to establish a truth that far exceeded the conceptual framework of the Stagyrite. While his reconfigured synthesis of Plato and Aristotle may be found in various iterations throughout his work,[42] a succinct exposition is provided by St Thomas in his *Quaestio de Anima*, written probably in Spring 1269.[43] In the opening article he addresses the difficulty posed by Nemesius, and asks whether the human soul can be at once both the form of the body as well as a particular thing in itself (*hoc aliquid*). In article 14 he considers the soul's immortality.

Aquinas is concerned to affirm not only the autonomous existence of the soul, but equally its function as form of the body. Since man is defined as a rational animal, the soul is necessarily the essential form of a human being; because the soul relies upon the senses for the content of its intellectual knowledge, it must be united to the body while subsisting as an entity in itself.

The fact that the soul subsists in itself (*per se*) through its own act of existence is evident from the fact that it has its own operation

per se, namely intellection, which operates without a bodily organ.[44] (While the intellect initially depends on the senses for its content, intellectual activity transcends the limits of matter; its mode of existence is therefore non-material.) The soul's immaterial nature is clearly demonstrated by the operations of abstraction and intellection; through universal concepts the intellect grasps essences as free not only of matter but from all individuating, material conditions. No bodily organ has a share in these essential operations, which means that the intellective soul acts by itself (*per se*). Aquinas concludes: 'Since each being acts insofar as it is actual, it is necessary that an intellective soul possess an independent *per se* act of existing which is not dependent on its body.'[45] Although united to the body, the soul possesses an act of existence that is elevated above the body and does not depend on it.[46] Forms whose act of existing depends on matter are incapable of operations transcending matter. According to Aquinas, this led philosophers to conclude that the intellective part of the soul is something which subsists *per se*. Aristotle, he suggests, held that 'the intellect is a substance and is not corrupted' (*intellectus est substantia quaedam et non corrumpitur*). Aquinas attributes a similar doctrine to Plato: 'The soul is immortal and *per se* subsistent from the fact that it is self-moving. For Plato took motion in a broad sense to apply to any kind of operation, and thus it is to be understood that an intellect moves itself because it operates through itself.'[47] Aquinas has in mind Plato's assertion in the *Phaedrus*, cited above, that the soul is immortal because it is in perpetual self-motion.

Aquinas endorses Plato's view that the soul is immortal and self-subsistent, but denies that it constitutes a complete nature in itself. Although in its existence and operations it transcends the material conditions of the body, it is the nature of the soul to be united to the body. Thus although it survives death, the soul persists in an unnatural state until it is reunited with the body at the end of time; it cannot properly exercise its nature in isolation. Aquinas explains Plato's position: 'He held that the full nature of the species is in the soul, defining a human being not as something composed of soul and body but as a soul using a body, and thus the

relation of the soul to its body is that of a sailor to his ship or of a clothed man to his garments.'[48] Aquinas rejects Plato's view of the soul as a separate entity using a body as its instrument, to which it is related as a sailor to his ship. The bond between body and soul is intimate and intrinsic. The soul causes the body to be alive; and since for living things, to live means to exist, the soul is that by which a human body actually exists. Since it is through form that beings receive existence, the human soul is the form of its body.

Against Plato's view that the soul is present in the body as a sailor in a ship, Aquinas responds that if this were the case, it would not give to the body its specific nature. This, however, is belied by experience since upon death the various organs of the body no longer fulfil their proper function and retain their names only in an ambiguous sense: 'For the eye of a corpse, like the eye in a portrait or the eye of a statue, is only equivocally called an eye, and the same would be true of any other part of the body.' For Aquinas, the union of soul and body is essential to human nature: 'If a soul were in its body as a sailor is in a ship, it would follow that the union of soul and body is accidental. Consequently death, which signifies the separation of soul and body, would not be a substantial corruption, and this is obviously false.'[49] He concludes that the soul is a particular entity (*hoc aliquid*), subsisting *per se*, but without its own complete specific nature; its purpose rather is to perfect human nature as the form of a body. Aquinas thus establishes, against such objections as those of Nemesius, that the soul is at once both a form and an entity subsisting in itself.[50]

Aquinas considers the question of the soul's immortality in article 14 of *Quaestio de Anima*. The text is especially significant since Aquinas takes the argument beyond the nature of the soul, to a consideration of *existence* as its primary actuality. He brings into play his own original theory of being, which took Aristotle's distinction of act and potency beyond the composition of matter and form to the deeper constitution of essence and existence, which as co-principles together constitute the existing individual. Whereas form (εἶδος) was for Aristotle the deepest principle of actuality, Aquinas maintained that essence, determined by form

to be *what* it is, requires a more radical actualizing perfection which raises it out of nothingness, and makes it *be*. The notion of the act of being (*esse*) as the actuality of all actualities was beyond the scope both of Plato's eternal forms, and Aristotle's substance.

Aquinas begins by stating as an axiom that whatever belongs of its nature (*per se*) to anything cannot be removed from it. Animality, for example, cannot be removed from the nature of man, nor the fact that a number must be either odd or even. He considers how this applies to natural substances composed of matter and form. Such individuals have existence through their form, which is their principle of actuality. While the form cannot lose the act of existence through itself (*per se*), it does so accidentally when the composite becomes corrupted. This is the case with material forms, whose entire reality consists in its role of actualizing the individual: when the composite is corrupted, the form ceases to be. If, however, the form has its own act of existence, exceeding its role of informing the body, it is beyond corruption. Such a form possesses existence over and above its actuality as the form of a material substance. Aquinas argues:

> If there be a form which is in such a way that it possesses existence, it is necessary that such a form be incorruptible. For existence is not separated from something which possesses existence unless its form is separated from it. Hence, if that which possesses existence is the form itself, it is impossible that existence be separated from it. Now it is clear that the principle by which a human being understands is a form that possesses existence in itself (*in se*) and is not merely that by which something exists.[51]

In support of the immaterial nature of the soul, and its transcendence beyond the physical world, Aquinas refers to Aristotle's argument in *De Anima* 3, 4, outlined above, that intellectual knowing is not accomplished through a bodily organ. Only a cognitive capacity which itself has no sensible nature can receive the sensible natures of all things. The intellect, which has the capacity to know all things, acts according to its own nature and

manner of being (*actio sequitur esse*): 'It is clear that the intellective principle by which a human being understands possesses an existence that transcends its body and is not dependent upon its body.'[52] Aquinas emphasizes that such an intellective principle is not composed of matter and form, since the natures of things are received in an entirely immaterial way, grasped in their universal meaning abstracted from their material conditions. He infers: 'Therefore one can conclude that the intellective principle by which a human being understands is a form that possesses existence. Hence it necessarily follows that it is incorruptible.'[53] Aquinas refers his conclusion to Aristotle's remark that in its separate state the mind is immortal.[54] In a departure from Aristotle, however, he roots the transcendence and immortality of the soul in its mode of existence rather than in its essence. We might say that immortality (the incorruptibility of a living being) *is* a mode of existence, and that for Aquinas, this is *rooted* in the soul's essence as a subsistent form. Soul brings life and existence (the existence of a living thing *is* its life) *per se*, in virtue of its own nature.

Aquinas' argument that the soul cannot be separated from its existence, i. e. cannot of itself (*per se*) lose its act of existence, loosely resembles the final proof for immortality in the *Phaedo* (105c–106e), where Plato had argued that the soul is essentially what it is through participation in the Form of life, and since its essence is to live, its opposite is by definition excluded.[55] Aquinas views the matter, however, from a different ontological perspective. While Plato had in mind the nature of *what* the soul is, Aquinas considered not the soul's nature, but its first actualizing act of existence.[56] (Plato's argument moreover might equally apply to non-human souls.)[57] Only by establishing that the human individual in the primary actuality of its existence transcends the limits of corporeal matter can the soul's immortality be proved. It is from the soul, as its form, that the composite receives it existence, and since the soul subsists in itself, it remains unaffected by the dissolution of the body to which it is related as act to potency. For Aquinas, existence comes to the composite through the form. It is the act of being proper to the soul which causes the composite to

exist. The body shares in the soul's act of existence, but in its being the soul transcends its function as form; it constitutes in itself an autonomous spiritual substance that is beyond corruption.

The argument that the human soul is inseparable from its existence, and hence indestructible, is reiterated by Aquinas in a variety of contexts. In *De Potentia* he states: 'Where the form itself subsists in its own existence it will in no way be able not to exist; just as existence also cannot be separated from itself.'[58] In *Contra Gentiles* he remarks: 'In the intellectual substance there is no potentiality to non-being.'[59] In the same chapter there is an echo of Plato's argument from simplicity (*Phdr* 78b–c), that what is uncompounded is by definition free from decomposition. Aquinas states that the soul is simple and therefore incorruptible because it is not composed of matter and form.[60]

According to Aquinas, the soul has its own autonomous act of existence. Actualizing the body, determining it as a specific nature, it shares its being with the body within the unity of a single substance.[61] While initially dependent upon the body for the exercise of its activities, once its intellectual powers have been actualized it can perform the immaterial acts of intellection and reflection without recourse to a physical organ. While these operations clearly depend on the individual human substance, they do not involve the exercise of a material organ.[62] They proceed from the whole person as an intellectual being. But not only does the soul not depend upon a corporeal organ to exercise its capacities, much more significantly it does not depend upon the body for its existence. It has rather its own subsistent being; otherwise, it could not perform those activities that are not tied to the conditions of space and time that define bodily sense knowledge.

Unlike Aristotelian form,[63] the soul is for Aquinas not *forma immersa,* but *forma emergens*. If it were immersed or inherent in the body, it could not perform activities independently of bodily organs. The activities of eating, breathing, and seeing are inherent in the soul-body composite; the power of intellect and the activity of thinking are inherent in the soul, and therefore intrinsically non-corporeal. According to Aquinas' existential metaphysics, the

soul, while performing its work as actualizing principle of the body, is not absorbed in that function but exercises the deeper activity of existence. The human soul is *forma absoluta, non dependens a materia*. Unlike material forms it has its own act of existence (*habet esse per se quod non habent aliae formae corporales*).[64] In the treatise *On Spiritual Creatures* Aquinas states:

> The soul has subsistent actual being, inasmuch as its own actual being does not depend on the body, seeing that it is something raised above corporeal matter. And yet it receives the body into a share in this actual being in such a way that there is one actual being of soul and of body, which is the actual being of a man. Now if the body were united to it in consequence of another actual being, it would follow that this union was accidental.[65]

Plato held the latter position, which was for Aquinas an intractable error.

Plato and Aquinas share the conviction that mortals have an ineradicable aspiration for immortality. In the *Symposium*, Plato's dialogue on love, Diotima declares that love is ultimately a desire for immortality. Men love what is good, wishing it to be eternal. (206a) Love begets the beauty that confers immortality (206c) and gives to life its ultimate meaning. (211d) Although it is attained vicariously, physically in one's offspring, spiritually in artistic works and virtuous deeds, 'mortal nature ever seeks, as best it can, to be immortal'. Beauty is for Plato a cipher and foregleam of immortality.

Aquinas likewise invoked natural desire as proof for immortality.[66] The yearning, he states, is evidenced by the fact that what all desire is being itself (*esse*); existence is the first and final object of intellect. Animals apprehend being simply in the moment, but man apprehends it without qualification, *simpliciter*, in respect of all time. He is, in Plato's phrase, a 'spectator of all time and all existence'.[67] Aquinas appeals to the principle, inherited from Aristotle,[68] that a natural appetite cannot be in vain (*naturale autem desiderium non potest esse inane*); man's

desire for everlasting continuance, and affinity with the totality of being, can be fulfilled only in the perpetuity of his own existence. He explains in question 76 of the *Summa*:

> It is impossible for the intellectual soul to be corruptible. We may take a sign of this from the fact that everything naturally aspires to existence after its own manner. Now, in things that have knowledge, desire ensues upon knowledge. The senses indeed do not know existence, except under the conditions of here and now, whereas the intellect apprehends existence absolutely, and for all time; so that everything that has an intellect naturally desires always to exist. But a natural desire cannot be in vain. Therefore every intellectual substance is incorruptible.[69]

In *Quaestio de Anima* the argument is stated as follows:

> There are two sources of direct evidence in support of this assertion [that a human soul is incorruptible]. First, from the side of the intellect: for things which of themselves are corruptible are incorruptible insofar as they are perceived by an intellect. For an intellect is able to grasp things in a universal way according to which they are not subject to corruption. Secondly, from the fact of natural appetite which cannot be in vain wherever it is found. For we observe that there exists in human beings a desire for everlastingness, and this is a reasonable desire; for since existence is of itself desirable, an intelligent being who grasps existence without qualification and not merely existence here and now must naturally desire to exist without qualification and for all time. Hence it seems that this appetite is not in vain, but that a human being is incorruptible with respect to his intellective soul.[70]

A similar argument may be found implicitly in Aristotle who, having concluded that although human happiness consists in the virtuous exercise of activity in accordance with reason, remarks

that since this is beyond human attainment it can be achieved only through a higher agency:

> Such a life as this will be higher than the human level: not in virtue of his humanity will a man achieve it, but in virtue of something within him that is divine; and by as much as this something is superior to his composite nature, by so much is its activity superior to the exercise of the other forms of virtue. If then the intellect is something divine in comparison with man, so is the life of the intellect divine in comparison with human life.[71]

Man should aim for divine and immortal life. Aristotle criticizes those who counselled mortal men to confine their thoughts to mortal affairs and not to covet kinship with the gods. He countered: 'We ought so far as possible to achieve immortality (ἀθανατίζειν), and do all that man may to live in accordance with the highest thing in him; for though this be small in bulk, in power and value (δυνάμει καὶ τιμιότητι) it far surpasses all the rest.'[72]

While Aristotle recognized the natural tendency towards immortality, his philosophy of nature posed an apparently insurmountable obstacle. His oft repeated assertion that natural desires are not in vain clashed with his hylomorphic theory which required the inseparablity of matter and form in order to preserve the unity of the individual. Taking Aristotle's metaphysical distinctions and principles to a novel depth, Aquinas overcame the obstacle and gave a reasoned foundation to his arguments for the soul's immortaliy. It is another example of how he successfully joined the transcendent impulse of Platonism with the natural sensibility of Aristotle.

4

Jacques Maritain and the Metaphysics of Plato

An enduring image for the 'step beyond' which belongs to the impetus and dynamism of metaphysics is the ascent from Plato's cave: out of, and beyond, the subterranean unintelligible caverns of the imagination. A modern equivalent of the closed and seductive world of unreal images is the medium of television. The intelligible world of perception, the real world, is replaced by the virtual world of images. The image is not only the medium; it has become the reality: *homo sapiens* has become *homo zapiens*! Plato's challenge remains: to step beyond the world of the inauthentic and transitory to the plane of the enduring and the abiding. The soul must turn from darkness to light and ascend to real being; this is true philosophy.[1]

Jacques Maritain was one of the most inspiring metaphysicians of the twentieth century. T. S. Eliot referred to him as 'the most conspicuous figure and probably the most powerful force in contemporary philosophy'.[2] It is striking how he repeatedly engaged with the challenges, moral and political, of each decade and delighted in the newest discoveries of the natural sciences as a witness to the continuing unfolding of the perennial mysteries of the world, the concrete and the universal.[3] Against those, however, who would consign metaphysics to the graves of academe and lend absolute status to the science of the day, Maritain recognized

that scientific theories — in which he rejoiced — scarcely outlive their authors but that metaphysics indeed survives to bury its undertakers.[4]

Maritain had a profound admiration for Plato: 'Let us pity those who have never felt the flame rise within them upon reading Plato and Plotinus.'[5] He extolled what he considered the very poetry of Plato's thought.[6] Plato's phrase, 'music' of the spirit (μουσική),[7] conveyed for him the comprehensive universality of philosophy itself. Concretely, he shares Plato's fundamental attitude regarding the individual, personal, quest of philosophy: 'I am inclined, now more than ever, to think with Plato . . . that the most important thing for a philosopher is to "turn toward the internal city he bears within himself".'[8] What is here intended becomes clear through the contrast of philosophy with science. In science, intelligence

> functions, so to speak, separately, as detached from the personal roots of the thinking human subject. . . On the contrary, intelligence in wisdom functions in actual unity with the personal roots of the thinking human subject, in actual unity with the whole man; in this sense Plato was right in saying that we must philosophize *sun olé té psyche*; moreover, the entire being of the wise man is engaged in the work of wisdom, his body as well as his soul needs therefore a certain purification. [9]

On the intrinsic arduousness of philosophy, Maritain quotes Plato: 'Difficult are the beautiful things: they summon us to beautiful dangers.' *Chalepa ta kala* (χαλεπὰ τὰ καλά):[10] this Greek saying, cited by Plato, is quoted by Maritain at least half a dozen times. 'Plato has told us that beautiful things are difficult, but that we must not avoid the beautiful dangers. The human species would be placed in peril, and soon in despair, if it shed the beautiful dangers of intelligence and reason.'[11]

Maritain frequently refers to what he calls the 'natural Platonism of the human mind'. What is this so-called *anima naturaliter platonica*? He is explicit only on one occasion:

> I hasten to add (since in all else I am no platonist) that this platonism is reducible to what Plato was able to bring forth from a universally human ground. If I speak here of a platonism which is native to our minds, it is only in the degree to which we are naturally inclined to admit the existence of eternal and transcendental values.[12]

This echoes the view of James Adam, for whom the central doctrine of Plato's religious teaching is the essential divinity of the human soul: 'The doctrine of man's relationship to the divine is perhaps the most fundamental of Plato's doctrines . . . it is the ultimate source of all his idealism, religious and metaphysical.'[13]

Man, according to Plato, is a creature not of earth but of heaven (φυτὸν οὐκ ἔγγειον, ἀλλ᾽ οὐράνιον).[14] Plato's devotion to the eternal and transcendent is illustrated for Maritain in Raffaello's depiction of the School of Athens, and expressed by Goethe in the following word-portrait which he quotes at length:

> Plato seems to behave as a spirit descended from heaven, who has chosen to dwell a space on earth. He hardly attempts to know this world. He has already formed an idea of it, and his chief desire is to communicate to mankind, which stands in such need of them, the truths which he has brought with him and delights to impart. If he penetrates to the depths of things, it is to fill them with his own soul, not to analyse them. Without intermission and with the burning ardour of his spirit, he aspires to rise and regain the heavenly abode from which he came down. The aim of all his discourse is to awaken in his hearers the notion of a single eternal being, of the good, of truth, of beauty. His method and words seem to melt, to dissolve into vapour, whatever scientific facts he has managed to borrow from the earth.[15]

But herein, precisely, lies the peril. This natural élan towards eternal truth and transcendent value, the 'natural Platonism of the mind', brings with it the beautiful danger of metaphysical hubris, the gnostic temptation to oversteps its powers. The desire

and capacity to know outstretch the means and method which are our measure.

> The intelligence is made for being, and ours must seek it in corruptible things. It seeks Being, and, doing so, its glance falls on the sensible flux of the changing singular, on unseizable Becoming. What a deception! Heraclitus and Parmenides are scandalized, each in his own way. Plato, too, and he turns away from this deceiving flux. With him the intelligence turns back to a world of essences separated from things, and thus ends in a metaphysics of the *extra-real*, conceived in the image of mathematics. And so we have the sketch of a metaphysics. But what about a philosophy of nature? There is not, there cannot be, a philosophy of nature in a system like that of Plato. The sensible world is delivered over to opinion, to δόξα.[16]

To the question 'In what ways can the real enter into us?', Maritain replies there are but two, one natural, one supernatural: the senses, and the divine Spirit. The light which descends from heaven is not metaphysics, but the highest and most pure spiritual wisdom, whereby we open our soul to the gift of grace. Likewise the light which springs from earth is not metaphysics but an inferior wisdom which depends upon sense experience. Metaphysics lies midway between the purely spiritual and the sensible. 'It does not open directly, as the Platonists held, on an intuition of divine things. The intuition with which it deals is at the summit of the process of visualization or abstraction which starts from the sensible.'[17] This safer path was forged by Aristotle:

> But with Aristotle we have the genius of the West safeguarding among us intellectual respect for the being of the things we touch and see. His metaphysics is a metaphysics of the *intra-real*. It snatches from the very heart of sensible things the pure intelligibility of *being*, which it disengages as *being*, and divests of the sensible. If this is so for metaphysics, it is because the intelligibility of things is not transcendent but immanent in them.[18]

Plato and Aristotle both recognize the great truth that contemplation is of itself superior to action, but understand it differently. Plato seeks contemplation in an ecstasy where metaphysical eros attains through intuition the transcendent being by the light of the transcendent itself, Aristotle in an interiorization where wisdom makes being its own and attains to its causes by the light of the active intellect. Platonic contemplation is for Maritain one of natural mysticism — in the broad sense of a natural mystic aspiration to a vision of the absolute.[19]

In an essay entitled 'The Natural Mystical Experience and the Void', Maritain defines 'natural mystical experience' as a '*possession-giving experience of the absolute*'.[20] Suggesting that there is knowledge by intellectual connaturality due to the *habitus* of the speculative man as such, he claims that a metaphysician can arrive at his own natural contemplation of divine things. Such natural contemplation of divine things, however, is not a natural mystical *experience*. On the scope of natural contemplation and the nature of mystical experience, Maritain contrasts two approaches which are represented by certain twentieth-century Thomists. There are those, on the one hand, who exaggerate the Aristotelian doctrine *nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu*, and conclude that

> metaphysical effort, far from preparing us in some fashion for union with God, would rather make us despair of such a union. . . The philosopher as such cannot contemplate divine things; he is, as it were, an Icarus of contemplation, and the movement proper to him hopelessly casts him down into the realm of the multiple and the created.

He continues:

> Others, on the contrary, follow Platonic tendencies, even if they do not go so far as to admit that there is in the soul a door other than the senses whereby the soul naturally opens out over the real by an immediate existential contact; they believe that metaphysical effort can lead . . . either to a

> mystical experience in the natural order, a natural mystical union with that One or that Good which Plato placed above being, or else at least to a contemplation which, by its specific dynamism and in order to satisfy its constituent desire, demands that it pass over the threshold of supernatural realities, and that it become, by means of the gifts of grace, the supernatural mystical union, conceived above all as an intellectual intuition of the absolute Being.[21]

According to Maritain, Aquinas occupies a position midway between these extremes regarding philosophic speculation. The intellect is moved by its natural dynamism toward the cause of being, well aware that the divine reality infinitely exceeds all human means of knowing and that it cannot be circumscribed by human concepts. Yet it seeks a stable and simple meditation of that prime reality.

> Doubtless such a contemplation is more speculation than contemplation, and its fixity remains very imperfect with respect to the superior fixity of supernatural contemplation. 'It flies, it is not at rest,' whereas of mystical contemplation one must say: *Et volabo et requiescam*. Yet on its own account it merits the name of contemplation, albeit in an analogical fashion. St Thomas admits the existence of such a philosophical contemplation, and he admits that it has God for its object.[22]

This natural contemplation of God, however, is not a mystical experience, even in the natural order:

> It is not a possession-giving experience, it occurs at the summit of the powers of the abstractive ideation of the intellect, it knows God by means of things, at a distance, and in an enigmatic fashion . . . It is not the hidden God attained in His uncommunicable life by the experience of union. . . In short there is no natural intuition, as Plato would have had it, of the supersubstantial One. And the philosophical contemplation of divine things doubtless corresponds . . . to that natural

> desire to see the First Cause which . . . is at the deepest depth of spiritual creatures. . . The natural desire to see the Cause of being *derives* from the natural desire of knowing being; it is a corollary thereof; it is in no way identified therewith. From this it follows that every great metaphysic is indeed pierced by a mystical aspiration, but is not built thereon.[23]

Plato's root error is essentially one of method; it concerns the means whereby man discovers reality, and the nature of him who knows. Maritain criticizes Plato's spiritualism which, like that of Descartes, scorns the body and the sense faculties.[24] In his *Introduction to Philosophy*, Maritain states: 'The radical source of Plato's errors seems to have been his exaggerated devotion to mathematics, which led him to despise empirical reality.'[25] He also attributes these errors to an overambitious view of the scope of philosophy as the means of the purification and salvation of man. His judgment is harsh: 'It is on account of these false principles latent in his system that all those philosophic dreams which tend in one way or another to treat man as a pure spirit can be traced directly or indirectly to Plato.'[26]

Maritain indeed lays the blame for many of the deviations of the entire philosophical heritage at the feet of Plato:

> The great philosophical doctrines can be summarily divided into two groups. In the first group could be classed those philosophers who venerate the intellect and philosophy, but who limit themselves to considering essences, possibles and intelligibles contemplated in the heavens of abstraction and cut off from effective existence. Those philosophers, Descartes, Malebranche, Leibnitz, Spinoza, and Hegel, are all more or less enchanted by the magic flute of Plato. They have a knowledge, not of the universe, but of a picture book. They leaf through the pages of that lovely book and think they are touching reality. What an illusion! Reality, human life, the inner depths of man, these can be reached only by breaking through the book.[27]

The philosophers of the other group are the anti-Platonists, the great pessimists of the human will, or of the elemental life, such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, who shatter at the same time the picture book, philosophy and reason itself. Maritain declares: 'I honestly believe that between these two groups of philosophers there is only St Thomas who truly respects human life and the inner depths of man and reaches *existence* itself through the *intellect* itself.'[28]

In Maritain's view, the error of Platonism is to presume that there is a royal road to metaphysical truth, a revelation like that of the goddess to Parmenides, bestowed on one who is transported by divine messengers beyond the ways of men. The reality is that there is no high road to the transcendent for metaphysical speculation. But while Maritain rejects Plato's claim for a privileged intuition of the supersubstantial One, he concedes that he is privileged with that singular intuition, the intuition of being, which is the indispensable condition of the metaphysician, the bond of existence and intellect within the inner depths of man which, uniquely, Aquinas brought to full fruition. For Plato and Aquinas alike, the fully real is the fully intelligible, even if it remains mysterious and unknown. Being, though unnamed or disguised, is the aim and object of all endeavour and inquiry.[29] [See note p. 367]

On two occasions, *obiter dicens* — literally between dashes — Maritain credits Plato with the intuition of being. In a lecture 'Man's approach to God', delivered in 1951, he writes:

> True existentialism is the work of reason. It is so because the primary reality grasped by the intellect is the act of existing as exercised by some visible or tangible thing; and because it is the intuition of being — disengaged for its own sake, and perceived at the summit of an abstractive intellection — it is the intuition of being — even when it is distorted by the error of a system, as in Plato or Spinoza — which causes a human intellect to enter the realm of metaphysics and be capable of metaphysical intelligence.[30]

So Plato is a true existentialist! Let us recall the importance of this intuition for Maritain, as outlined so eloquently in *Existence*

and the Existent: 'A philosopher is not a philosopher if he is not a metaphysician. And it is the intuition of being — [here he repeats the remark concerning Plato and Spinoza] — that makes the metaphysician.'[31] There is no one single recipe for this intuition. It may 'spring unexpectedly like a kind of natural grace at the sight of a blade of grass or a windmill, or at the sudden perception of the reality of the self.'[32] It may proceed from the abrupt evidence of the implacability of things independent of ourselves:

> What counts is to take the leap, to release, in one authentic intellectual intuition, the sense of being, the sense of the value of the implications that lie in the act of existing.[33] What counts is to have seen that existence is not a simple empirical fact but a primitive datum for the mind itself, opening to the mind an infinite supra-observable field — in a word, the primary and superintelligible source of intelligibility... Let us call it a matter of luck, a boon, perhaps a kind of docility to the light. Without it man will always have an opining, precarious and sterile knowledge, however freighted with erudition it may be; a *knowledge about*. He will go round and round the flame without ever going through it... With it he will know the joy of discovery; he will owe both bewilderment and joy to the fact that he remains enraptured with being.[34]

All of this, it must be recalled, applies to Plato who despite all the excesses of an unwieldy system is graced with the intuition of being. Is it not, therefore, strange to read in an article published in 1968, entitled 'Réflexions sur la nature blessée et sur l'intuition de l'être', that, in contrast, Aristotle, 'notre vieux maître', 'la grande tête de la *philosophia perennis*', only had the intuition of being in an implicit and *virtual* manner? It was implicit without his awareness in the fundamental impulse of his realism:

> Aristotle must be called the great forefather of the *philosophia perennis*. Here we are dealing with an authentically realist or ontosophic philosophy. In him that quality of the intellect

> which is *rational solidity* reaches its peak; with the exception of St. Thomas, there is no greater organizer of concepts. In him there is intuitivity, boldness of vision as well, but in this last case we still find a certain level of deficiency... The immense universe of Aristotle's rational wisdom is a universe of essences grasped by the first operation of the mind, by simple apprehension, undoubtedly centred on being or existence, which, in fact, is there and imposes its primacy, but without being *formally* grasped; on the contrary, it is present to his thought only in a way that is still blind or *virtual*, without having been perceived in its full light. In short, Aristotle had the intuition of being in an entirely implicit and *virtual* mode, as if implied without his knowing it in the fundamental élan of his realism. He was not able to disengage the intuition of being itself from all the rest and to make of it the vivifying principle of his explicitly formulated doctrine.[35]

Aristotle indeed restored the metaphysical integrity of sensible things. This is well expressed in the words of the Northern Irish poet, Louis McNeice:

> Aristotle was better who watched the insect breed,
> The natural world develop,
> Stressing the function, scrapping the Form in Itself,
> Taking the horse from the shelf and letting it gallop.

However, despite his avowed commitment to the things of experience and his stated pursuit of the question of being — that which has been sought of old — he does not share the metaphysical passion of his master.

Maritain finds in Plato's theory of poetry a profound and complementary path to the transcendent.[36] He remarks: 'The famous passages from the *Phaedrus* and the *Ion* about the poets have such lyrical brilliance that we risk not paying sufficiently serious attention to their significance in the systematic context of Plato's philosophy.'[37] He elaborates:

> [Firstly], poetry, for Plato, is appendent to a supreme end which is beauty; poetry conveys here below, and gives a body to beauty, and beauty dwells in a world infinitely superior to man, the world of separate ideas, nay more, the world of the divine, where the Beautiful and the Good and the Wise and the True are united in harmony. Beauty, a sense-perceptible participation in which or a shadow of which human art affords us, is an absolute, a divine attribute, and it is because of its very transcendence that it requires madness from the poet, who is not concerned with truth, as the philosopher is, or with the just and the good, as the legislator is, but only with the beautiful (as reflected upon the shadowy world). Secondly, by the same token, the madness of the poet is madness from above, not from below.[38]

Maritain resolves Plato from the common charge of idealism. He declares:

> Nor can a philosopher be an idealist. I appear to be voicing an enormity, but it is an axiomatic truth I am stating. . . I am not thinking of Plato, for whom reality in itself had passed into the eternal Ideas (this was but a displacement, though a formidable one, of the life-center of philosophy, and a great intuition wrongly conceptualized). To him philosophy owes a flash of lightning which gave birth to it, and the propensity to go astray from which it might have died.[39]

In his seventh letter Plato describes the philosophic experience when 'at last, in a flash, understanding of each blazes up, and the mind, as it exerts all its powers to the limit of human capacity, is flooded with light.'[40] Compare these words of Plato with Maritain's account of the intuition of being in *A Preface to Metaphysics*:

> It is a sight whose content and implication no words of human speech can exhaust or adequately express and in which in a moment of decisive emotion, as it were, of spiritual conflagration, the soul is in contact, a living, penetrating and illuminating contact, with a reality which it touches and which takes hold of it.[41]

So if we take seriously Maritain's twice expressed admiration for Plato as a metaphysician graced with the intuition of being, the question remains why Aristotle, who only enjoys the intuition '*d'une façon aveugle*', is heralded as 'the old master' at the fountainhead of perennial wisdom. The answer lies essentially in the matter of method: Aquinas chose Aristotle as his guide, the *philosophus* who would lead along the path to wisdom. But in attaining the goal of speculation he finds that he shares much of the vision of Plato. He distinguishes between the *via Platonica* and a *positio Platonica*, sometimes arriving at a Platonic position via a more secure route under the guidance of Aristotle.[42] Maritain's admiration and admonition point to the ambivalence of the *chorismos*, the great dividing line, the tectonic faultline which sends a fissure deep down through the Platonic universe. His own emphasis on distinction — *distinguer pour unir* — rather than *separation* escapes the snare of Platonism: distinction rather than dichotomy or division. *Qui bene distinguit, bene docuit*. Aquinas would have found Maritain to be a good teacher!

Aristotle, Aquinas and Maritain alike reject Plato's deprecation of sensible being; it is for them the domain of our first encounter with the actuality of existence, of what really is and what is really known. They reject his ideal reality, subsisting in itself with the selfsame characteristics which it enjoys in thought — abstract, universal, unique, eternal, immaterial — and which is furthermore the true source of the reality of sense objects. They reject the unnatural dualism of Plato, his metaphysical and epistemological apartheid. With Plato, method triumphs over content; with Aristotle reality determines the method. Must one agree with Sertillanges, who invokes the 'great principle that, in philosophy, doctrine and method always coincide'?[43]

There is, however, one Platonist principle of method, a royal *via Platonica* embraced by Aquinas with enthusiasm: the principle of participation, which is the foundation and coping stone of Plato's vision. While he rejects the formal causality of subsistent Ideas, Aquinas agrees that when many individuals possess a common perfection, there must be a single causal source. He applies this

radically to the most universal and intimate perfection of being: the common perfection of existence requires a single creative cause. 'And this', he declares, 'seems to be the *ratio* of Plato.'[44]

Maritain's harshest pronouncement upon Plato may be found in *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*: 'Platonic dialectics succeeded in dividing; it was unable to unite. The sin of Platonism is separation, and a separatist conception of transcendence.'[45] Plato grounds the universe beyond being, in the Good; however, while he departs from being and sacrifices the reality of sense objects in a 'separatist transcendence', the Good is also fundamentally a principle of unity. The dominant aspiration of Platonism is the search for both unity and transcendence. The key to this quest is the synoptic, synthesising, principle of participation.

Aquinas attains a unified ground of all things by affirming a transcendent source, but without departing from being. He can do so because of his analogical grasp of being. Enthusiastically adopting the Platonist motif of participation, he recasts it within the primacy of the actuality of being, which is at once the plenitude of perfection. There is but one fullness which is shared through participation, namely subsistent divine being. In his corrective to Plato's theory of ideas, Aquinas had already the example of Augustine. Maritain writes:

> The really remarkable feature here, and one that should be regarded as a stroke of genius, of Augustine's holy genius, is the certainty of instinct, the supernatural tact with which, whilst remaining a Platonist and in strict dependence on Plotinus in philosophy, he avoids the most dangerous pitfalls of Platonism . . . magnificently setting his Greek masters right (as when he constructs the world of divine Ideas out of the Platonic exemplars).[46]

Given his criticisms of Plato, it may appear strange that Maritain expounded and endorsed the participation metaphysics of Aquinas long before the comprehensive studies of Cornelio Fabro (1939)[47] and L.-B. Geiger (1942).[48] In a wonderfully lucid and comprehensive article entitled 'Connaissance de l'être', published

as early as 1922 in the collection *Antimoderne*, we find a carefully articulated aperçu of the hierarchy of reality and the degrees of being, which is unmistakably Platonist/Neoplatonist in nature, and an argument for the existence of God, based on participation.[49]

Maritain endorses the dialectic of participation, reasoning from the many degrees in multiple beings to a single, supreme, plenitude which is the causal source of all finite individuals. He begins by remarking:

> Things which are in the world differ from one another by their very being, if one differs from the other by 'this' or 'that' which the other does not have; the first must have *more of being*; it must *be more* (in a certain respect) than the second, because 'this' or 'that' is itself being. I am obliged to say that things are more or less, or that being has degrees.[50]

Maritain recognizes the Platonist origin and Neoplatonist transmission of this doctrine. In *Approaches to God* (1953) he writes:

> It is a fact that there is a qualitative 'more or less', that there are degrees of value or perfection in things. There are degrees in the beauty of things (Plato saw this better than anyone); degrees in their goodness; in fine, things *are* to a greater or lesser degree. Knowledge is more highly and more perfectly knowledge in intelligence than in sense; life is more highly and more perfectly life in the free and thinking living thing than in the animal living thing, and in the animal living thing than in the vegetative living thing.[51]

In an article entitled 'Spontaneité et indépendance' (1942) he remarks: 'It is known that thomist metaphysics is a metaphysics of the degrees of being (*une métaphysique des degrés de l'être*), — which implies the double movement of procession or descent from the Source of being, and of conversion or re-ascent towards this Source.'[52] He notes that this idea was central to Plotinus and was further elaborated as a doctrine by the *philosophia perennis* under the impulse of Judeo-Christian revelation in a transfiguration of Plotinus.

The view of reality as a graded scale of being is detailed comprehensively in *Antimoderne*.

> When I say *more and less*, my imagination envisages things which are extended and measured. But here it is not a matter of quantity, but solely of being. I am simply saying that one thing *is more* than another when to pass from the first to the second, it is sufficient by thought to *deny* this or that, some intelligible determination, of the first. Thus defined, this notion of *more* or *less* is in itself, and for my intelligence, free from every consideration of space and quantity.[53]

The transcendental notion of *being*, considered as lacking nothing whatsoever, but implying fullness or achievement, is identical with the notion of *perfection*. 'To speak of degrees of being is, therefore, to speak of degrees of perfection.' Because there is diversity and inequality among beings, the perfection of being is analogous; it embraces in its amplitude all possible perfections: 'Being and perfection thus belong together.' Maritain immediately draws to its conclusion this insight into the nature of participation and its foundation: 'If a thing exists which, as it were, exhausts the entire plenitude of being, if a thing is Being itself, this thing is necessarily of infinite perfection.'[54]

He proceeds to explain this conclusion by reference to the distinction between essence (*that which* a being is, that which *has being*) and existence (the act of being). Existence is the act or perfection through which a thing is placed *extra nihil* or *extra causas*; this perfection of being must be recognized as the perfection *par excellence* since, through it, all that constitutes and characterises a thing is placed in reality, i. e. all 'other' perfections of that thing.

> According to the degree of perfection of essence which receives existence, this perfection par excellence, which consists in existing, is received with more or less plenitude and therefore measured to the measure of the essence which receives it. But suppose there were a thing which were Being

> itself, i. e., whose essence were to exist, in that case, this supreme perfection, which consists precisely in existing, would be measured by nothing, and the essence of such a thing, by the very fact that it does not measure or limit the perfection of existing, will contain in itself all the infinity of the perfection.[55]

The existence of such an infinite being is, as yet, a hypothesis. Maritain establishes its reality through the following four self-evident axioms:[56]

I. The greater cannot come from the lesser; that which has less being and less perfection cannot be the cause or *raison d'être* of that which has more being and more perfection.
II. The cause has more being and perfection than that of which it is the source (*que ce dont elle est la raison*).
III. That which does not exist *per se*, *per suam essentiam*, presupposes, (at least in priority of nature), that which exists *per se*.
IV. Everything which has being or perfection by participation is reduced to that which has this perfection through its essence, which is its principle and cause.

For our present purposes, let us consider more closely the nature of participation and the plenitude of metaphysical perfection.

Perfections such as humanity, whiteness or goodness may be considered, not as present according to a limited mode in a subject (e. g. Socrates), but as such in themselves, simply and without limit; there is thus a plenitude of being proper to these perfections. If each existed in reality, in its pure state, it would have this plenitude. Were Socrates as individual to constitute the fullness of man, he would have everything that could possibly belong to humanity: the wisdom of Aristotle, the art of Phidias, the science of Archimedes; he would have the myriad perfections dispersed throughout the multitude of men. If an individual lily were whiteness itself in its fullness, nothing could be whiter or have a different whiteness.[57]

Compared, however, to the plenitude of being which a perfection would necessarily have, were it to exist in a pure state, it is

diminished in the subjects which share it. It is not possessed by them with all the plenitude of which it is capable. This diminution occurs either when a perfection is shared by a multitude of individuals of the same degree (e. g. one individual is not more or less man), or according to different degrees: whiteness or goodness in themselves do not admit of more or less, but the things in which I see them *are* more or less white and more or less good. The quality itself of whiteness or goodness is present in things with more or less intensity or perfection.

> This perfection is in its subjects, not according to its total possible plenitude, but according to part. I would say that these subjects have part of this perfection, or that they participate rather than exhaust it; or again that this perfection is in them by participation. . . . On the contrary, a perfection which is in the subject according to all the plenitude of being which may belong to it, and which is thus exhausted by this subject, is in it through its essence, *per essentiam.* [58]

An individual may through its own essence possess a perfection while not itself being the very essence of that perfection. The distinction, expounded by Cajetan, between '*per suam essentiam*' and '*per essentiam*', Maritain suggests, together with the corrected notion of participation, allows Thomism to save the essence of Plato's thought.

A further distinction is necessary: between those analogous perfections, related to being itself, which do not imply any limit, but may exist in a mode other than finite, while retaining their proper name and intelligible value (goodness, beauty, intelligence) and those perfections which are restricted to determinate genres of being, such as whiteness or humanity. The latter cannot exist as other than finite and still retain their name and intelligible value. Maritain asks:

> Should I platonize and believe that there exists a suprasensible world of eternal archetypes, such as humanity in itself, in

> which 'participate', I know not how, the things of this world below? Do I not clearly see that there cannot be humanity in itself, or whiteness in itself? Because humanity can exist only in these flesh and bones, and whiteness only in things with surface and dimensions; they cannot exist in a pure state.[59]

The solution to this question lies in the modes whereby these distinct kinds of perfection are present in the plenitude of their single subsisting source. Intelligence, beauty and goodness exist *formally*, as such, with all their intelligible value. The restricted perfections of finite modes exist *virtually* or *eminently*, according to a *higher* mode, within the power of absolute Being, which is the plenitude of perfection. 'The essence of man, of the angel or lion, whiteness or light, the colour of the sky and the meadow, the freshness of flowing water, tastes and perfumes, all the perishable delights, all that is true in false goods':[60] all these have, as it were, a sublimated presence in God, in virtue of his causal power. Maritain declares: 'Because of all these perfections which are in things through participation, the natural movement of my reflection upon being has lead me straight to God,'[61] and concludes: 'Blessed be Plato for having divined these things. And even if he lost his head a little, a mythical Pygmalion, in the presence of the eternal Ideas, let us not forget that it is enough to situate the ideas in their true place, in the divine intelligence, in order for Platonism to become true.'[62]

Given the wholehearted endorsement in *Antimoderne* of the path to God via participation, the following remark by Maritain in *Degrees of Knowledge* will certainly appear enigmatic: 'The main difference between St. Augustine and St. Thomas in the philosophic and noetic order [is], as Father Gardeil has so well shown, the substitution of efficient causality, the dominant Aristotelian-Thomistic note, for *participation*, the dominant Augustinian note.'[63] As Maritain observes, Gardeil is commenting on and generalizing a thesis expounded by Etienne Gilson in his 1926 article '*Pourquoi Saint Thomas a critiqué Saint Augustin*'.

And since Maritain clearly accepts Gardeil's interpretation, we are entitled to ask if he also agrees with Gilson's conclusion that Aquinas

> was obliged to choose, once and for all, between the only two pure philosophies which can exist, that of Plato and that of Aristotle. Reduced to their bare essences, these metaphysics are rigourously antinomical; one cannot be for the one without being against all those who are with the other, and that is why Saint Thomas remains with Aristotle against all those who are counted on the side of Plato.[64]

This is a critical judgment, with profound consequences for the evaluation of Aquinas' reading of Plato. Did Aquinas choose efficient causality in preference to participation? Was he obliged in consequence to make a clear philosophical option for Aristotle over Plato? I suggest not: there is no antinomy or opposition, it seems to me, between efficient causality and participation. Participation is exactly how God, in creating the universe, excercises efficient causation. (At most one can suggest that Aquinas subsituted, as we have seen, a metaphysics of virtual or preeminent participation for the formal participation causation of Plato.) Maritain's remarks in *Degrees of Knowledge* refer, not to the metaphysics of being but to the metaphysics of cognition, that is, to the question how knowledge is achieved: through an illuminative participation in subsistent truth, or through the efficient causation of the agent intellect.

Before concluding, a brief note on the language of degrees. Maritain speaks of *grades of being*, a characteristically Neoplatonic notion; he is also familiar with the notion of *intensive magnitude*.[65] However, he does not bring the two concepts together; this would have been illuminating. In speaking of the 'more or less' intrinsic to being, we are dealing, he states, not with quantity but simply with being. However, Aquinas' distinction between 'intensive/virtual quantity' and 'extensive/dimensive quantity' allows precisely such language of quantity to be applied to existence. Aquinas, in the most disparate of contexts, exploits the concept of

intensive quantity or quantity of power (*quantitas virtutis*, virtual power) to express the gradation of perfection in whatever order of being. This provides him with the most suitable terminology to articulate the gradation of being itself. This has been brought to light by Cornelio Fabro. *Actus essendi* is thus identical with *esse intensivum*, or *virtus essendi*, of Dionysian inspiration: the power of being which is exercised in varying degrees of intensity, according to the measure of essences and determining the place of each within the grand scale of being.[66]

Much has been written on the mutual enrichment to be gained by fusing the wisdom of the Academy with that of the Lyceum. Aquinas took to heart the words of his teacher, the great Albert: 'You should know that a man only becomes perfect in philosophy through a knowledge of the two philosophies of Aristotle and Plato.'[67] The oeuvre of Jacques Maritain is a prism through which the genius of all three again appears in new light.

5

The *Triplex Via* of Naming God

Ultimately, the mystery of language brings us back to the inscrutable mystery of God himself.

(John Paul II)[1]

In a delightful short story entitled 'The Nine Billion Names of God', Arthur C. Clarke describes the task that the monks of a Tibetan monastery have set themselves, namely, to list all the possible names of God. This, they maintain, is the purpose for which the world was created, and they have been working on the project for three centuries, ever since the lamasery was founded. They believe that all of God's names can be written with not more than nine letters in a special alphabet they have devised. To speed up the job the high lama has hired a computer and engaged two operators to write a programme that can complete the task in a hundred days instead of fifteen thousand years. He explains the importance of the task:

> Call it ritual, if you like, but it's a fundamental part of our belief. All the many names of the Supreme Being — God, Jehovah, Allah, and so on — they are only man-made labels. There is a philosophical problem of some difficulty here, which I do not propose to discuss, but somewhere among all the possible combinations of letters, which can occur,

> are what one may call the real names of God. By systematic permutation of letters, we have been trying to list them all.[2]

Only when the computer is up and running, do the programmers learn the consequences of their work. Once the last of the divine names is deciphered, the universe will be extinguished:

> They believe that when they have listed all His names — and they reckon that there are about nine billion of them — God's purpose will have been achieved. The human race will have finished what it was created to do, and there won't be any point in carrying on. Indeed, the very idea is something like blasphemy.
>
> Then what do they expect us to do? Commit suicide?
>
> There's no need for that. When the list's completed, God steps in and simply winds things up. . . bingo![3]

Despite taking what one of them calls the 'Wide View', the computer experts are fearful of the outcome and anxious to depart. As they trek down the mountain road, under a sky 'ablaze with the familiar, friendly stars', one of them lifts his eyes to heaven: 'Overhead, without any fuss, the stars were going out.'[4]

The 'philosophical problem of some difficulty', to which the lama refers, has been a challenge for Western philosophy since the start: how to speak of the supernatural. When Thales declared that 'all things are full of the gods', he expressed an early and confused pantheism. The problem is to discern the divine, distinguish it from the natural, and somehow describe it in the only terms available, namely those of nature. One of the fundamental tasks of philosophical theology is to explain how it is possible to validly speak of God, whose nature must by definition lie beyond human cognition. The early philosophers and poets recognized the difficulty and ambiguities involved. According to the cryptic utterances of Heraclitus, for whom 'the way up and the way down are one and the same',[5] the Logos 'is both willing and unwilling to be called by the name of Zeus'.[6] Euripides has Hecuba proclaim: 'You who support the earth and have there your sanctuary, whoever you

are, you are difficult to know. Zeus, whether you are a necessity of nature or the mind of mortals, I pray to you.'[7]

The Greek philosopher Xenophanes identified the challenge when he observed that humans depict the gods in their own likeness:

> If oxen and horses and lions had hands or could draw with hands and create works of art like those made by men, horses would draw pictures of gods like horses, and oxen of gods like oxen, and they would make the bodies of their gods in accordance with the form that each species itself possesses. . . Ethiopians have gods with snub noses and black hair, Thracians have gods with grey eyes and red hair.[8]

It is no surprise that humans fashion the image of the gods in their own likeness: human nature is not only what we know best, but the best of what we know. Aristotle observes that 'as men imagine the gods in human form, so also they suppose their manner of life to be like their own'.[9] He refers to an early tradition that identified the heavenly bodies as gods, and notes significantly that in order to persuade the masses, subsequent mythology portrayed these gods in the form of humans or other animals.[10]

The danger of portraying the gods in human form is an anthropomorphism that would take the human likeness for the divine reality. The challenge is therefore to reconcile the similarity of creatures to God with the infinite distance between them. This divergence, which must be overcome, points to the grounding and unifying axiom that perfections exemplified in creatures are infinitely and pre-eminently present in their creator. These elements of similarity, difference, and infinite superiority led to the so-called *triplex via* or threefold path of divine names, based upon (a) the positive likeness of creatures to God, (b) the deficiency of this likeness, and (c) the preeminent transcendence and perfection of God beyond creation.

The aim of the present essay is to survey the tradition of the *triplex via* of divine names. The motif of path or *via* has been commonly used as a metaphor for knowledge, suggesting the advance from ignorance to insight. The use of 'way' as symbol for

the discovery of truth goes back to the origins of philosophy and was famously employed by Parmenides. The notion was later employed in the medieval conspectus of the *quadrivium* and *trivium*. In the so-called *triplex via* are crystalized the fundamental and central doctrines of Neoplatonist and Scholastic teaching concerning the knowledge of transcendent reality.

Alcinous and Celsus

The *triplex via* of divine names was well established in early Platonism, as evidenced by two second-century works of widely divergent purpose. Alcinous' *Handbook of Platonism* is the earliest synthesis of Plato's thought, composed as a manual for teachers of Platonism.[11] Celsus' *On the True Doctrine* was the first systematic philosophical attack on Christianity, in which the author contrasted Christian doctrine negatively to the superior theology of Plato. Because of their particular seminal importance, it is worth citing extensively from both texts. Alcinous writes as follows in his *Handbook*:

> The first way of conceiving God is by *abstraction* (κατὰ ἀφαίρεσιν) of these attributes, just as we form the conception of a point by abstraction from sensible phenomena, conceiving first a surface, then a line, and finally a point.
>
> The second way of conceiving him is that of *analogy* (κατὰ ἀναλογίαν), as follows: the sun is to vision and to visible objects (it is not itself sight, but provides vision to sight and visibility to its objects) as the primal intellect is to the power of intellection in the soul and to its objects; for it is not the power of intellection itself, but provides intellection to it and intelligibility to its objects, illuminating the truth contained in them.
>
> The third way of conceiving him is the following: one contemplates first beauty in bodies, then after that turns to the beauty in souls, then to that in customs and laws, and then to the 'great sea of Beauty', after which one gains an intuition of the Good itself and the final object of love and

> striving, like a light appearing and, as it were, shining out to the soul which ascends in this way; and along with this one also intuits God, in virtue of his *pre-eminence* in honour (διὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ τίμίῳ ὑπεροχήν).[12]

In his critique of Christianity Celsus outlines a comparable tripartite approach which he presents as the Platonist theory of naming the first principle. Although the work is lost, extensive quotations are contained in Origen's repudiation *Contra Celsum*. Because of its testimonial importance the text is here cited fully, with added emphasis on the threefold distinction:

> Then after this he refers us to *Plato* as *a more effective teacher of the problems of theology*, quoting his words from the Timaeus as follows: *Now to find the Maker and Father of this universe is difficult, and after finding him it is impossible to declare him to all men.* Then he adds to this: *You see how the way of truth is sought by seers and philosophers, and how Plato knew that it is impossible for all men to travel it. Since this is the reason why wise men have discovered it, that we might get some conception of the nameless First Being which manifests him either by synthesis with other things, or by analytical distinction from them, or by analogy* (τῇ συνθέσει τῇ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἢ ἀναλύσει ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἢ ἀναλογίᾳ), *I would like to teach about that which is otherwise indescribable.*[13]

Summarizing Celsus' teaching Origen adds a reference to the *Philebus*: 'Celsus thinks that God is known either by *synthesis with other things*, similar to the method called synthesis by geometricians, or by *analytical distinction* from other things, or also by *analogy*, like the method of analogy used by the same students, as if one were able to come in this way, if at all, "to the threshold of the Good".'[14] In this text cited by Origen, Celsus combined the negative approach of *analysis* through successive abstractions with the positive way of composition through *synthesis* (knowledge of the first cause in its effects), thus obtaining a third way, that of *analogy* (or eminence).[15]

As John Dillon has pointed out, this sequence of three methods to describe God had obviously long been established in the school tradition.[16] While the triads employed by Alcinous and Celsus differ in terminology, they refer to the same dialectical hierarchy. Alcinous speaks of ἀφαίρεσις, ἀναλογία, and ὑπεροχή, Celsus of ἀνάλῦσις, σύνθεσις, and ἀναλογία. Each triplet conveys the graded strategy of removal and attribution. Celsus' term 'loosening' corresponds roughly to Alcinous' 'removal'. His notion of 'addition', however, does not convey as richly as Alcinous' 'proportion' the manner in which positive names are transferred from creatures to God, that is, analogously, or in proportion to the finite or infinite status of their subject. The term ἀναλογία is indeed so central and far-reaching that it can equally convey the transcendent sense of terms applied to God, and it is in this sense that Celsus uses it to express the reality that Alcinous expresses with the more explicit term ὑπεροχή. Ἀναλογία conveys an aspect both of those names that are simply positive, and those that denote absolute and transcendent perfection. The perfections enjoyed by creatures in a limited measure are present in the transcendent first principle in their absolute and unlimited fullness. It is indeed significant that Plato himself declared analogy to be the most beautiful of bonds (δεσμῶν κάλλιστος ἀναλογία).[17]

Plato and Plotinus

The similarities of the threefold paths of Celsus and Alcinous to aspects of Platonic method are unmistakable. The first manner of conceiving God (*via negativa* or *remotionis*), which consists in the removal of attributes, is modeled on the first hypothesis of the *Parmenides*. In this dialogue, Plato speculates on the possibility of speaking intelligibly of the Parmenidean 'One'; one option is to remove all positive predicates. The second mode (anticipating the way of causation or *via causalitatis*) is that of analogy (αναλογία, κατ'αναλογίαν, *via analogiae*), illustrated in the *Republic* by the simile of the sun: as the sun is the source of growth, nourishment, and light in the natural world, so the transcendent Good is the

principle of reality, value, and intelligibility in the world of Ideas.[18] The apex of learning, described in Plato's *Republic*, is the affirmation of the transcendent Good. It is agreed that 'the greatest object of learning is the Idea of the Good'.[19] We have a natural but inexplicit awareness of its superiority. 'Every soul pursues it and does all that it does for its sake, with an intuition of its reality, yet baffled and unable to apprehend its nature adequately, or to attain to any stable belief about it as about other things.'[20] The third manner of approaching God, that of ἀναγωγή ('leading upwards', *via eminentiae*), resembles Plato's ascent, described in the *Symposium*, from beautiful things to the great sea of beauty,[21] resulting in a sudden illumination in the soul of the Good.[22]

A similar formulation of the three steps is found in Plotinus: 'We are taught about it by analogies and negations and knowledge of the things that come from it and certain methods of ascent by degrees.'[23] R. E. Witt rightly draws attention to 'the difference between the personal mysticism of Plotinus and the scholastic theology of [Alcinous]. According to the latter, God can be known only by dialectical processes. For Plotinus, while the value of these processes is not denied, the One or the Good can be known through an ecstatic experience of *unio mystica*.'[24] The *triplex via* was employed to both ends, dialectical and mystical, by the author who most influentially transmitted the doctrine to the Middle Ages. While elements of the Neoplatonic doctrine are found in an unsystematic way throughout early Christian writers, the definitive consolidation of the *triplex via* in the Western tradition is due to the influence of Pseudo-Dionysius, the enigmatic writer (c. 500) who adopted the literary mantle of Dionysius the Areopagite, convert of St Paul and first bishop of Athens.

Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite

Because of his quasi-apostolic authority Dionysius' influence was unparalleled.[25] His formula for the three-tiered path of naming God became a commonplace for subsequent theologians. In a celebrated passage of the treatise *On Divine Names* he brings

together the three paths towards knowledge of God: causality, negation, and eminence. Since God cannot be known in his nature, we can rise to the transcendent, insofar as possible, only through the order of creatures, 'by denying all things of him, surpassing all, to contemplate him as their cause'.[26] He offers more detailed variations on the *triplex via* in *Mystical Theology*, which begins with a plea to the Trinity:

> Lead us up to the highest peak of mystic scripture, beyond unknowing and light, where the pure, absolute and immutable mysteries of divine truth are shrouded in the dazzling obscurity of a secret silence, outshining all brilliance with the intensity of their darkness, wholly unsensed and unseen, overwhelming our sightless minds with splendours beyond beauty.[27]

Early in the treatise he explains:

> Since it is the Cause of all beings, we should posit and ascribe to it all the affirmations we make in regard to beings (καταφάσκειν), and, more appropriately, we should negate all these affirmations since it surpasses all being (ἀποφάσκειν). Now we should not conclude that the negations are simply the opposites of the affirmations, but rather that the cause of all is considerably prior to this, beyond privations, beyond every denial, beyond every assertion.[28]

Dionysius ends his treatise:

> Of it there is neither affirmation nor negation whatsoever. We make affirmations and denials of what is next to it, but neither affirm nor deny anything of it since as the perfect and unique cause of all it is beyond all affirmation, and by its preeminently simple and absolute nature it is free from all limitation and beyond every negation.[29]

Dionysius' primary distinction is between affirmative (*cataphatic*) and negative (*apophatic*) theology. By the affirmative method, reason progressively applies to God as their cause and supereminent

exemplar the intelligible attributes of creatures; by the negative method these attributes inversely are removed: not because God lacks these perfections, but because he possesses them superabundantly in a manner transcending the mode of creatures and the manner of human cognition. Negation (*negatio/remotio*) indicates not deficiency but supraplenitude: ἀφαίρεσις is accompanied by ὑπεροχὴ. The removal of creaturely perfections is superseded by the affirmation of their transcendent presence: negation is of value only because it is interior to the affirmation of transcendence. God is thus beyond both affirmation and negation.[30] Through negation, names are purified of all finite connotation and, in a union of affirmation and negation, their content is intensified towards infinity. Dionysius further distinguished between the negative *method* and transcendent *intention*, or purpose, of apophatic theology, thus articulating the third step of the threefold path of naming God.

Johannes Scottus Eriugena

Because of his perceived authority as disciple of St Paul and first bishop of Athens who taught that the true deity was the 'Unknown God', Pseudo-Dionysius enjoyed extraordinary authority for well over a thousand years. Johannes Eriugena, whose translation greatly helped the diffusion of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*, incorporated the Dionysian theory of divine names into his own very original system.[31] Affirmation and negation, he suggests, are 'the two most sublime parts of theology (*sublimissimas theologiae partes*)'.[32] Although they appear contrary to one another, they are in no way mutually opposed but fully in harmony when applied to divine nature.[33] God embraces all opposing parts of the universe 'by a beautiful and ineffable harmony into a single concord: for those things which in the parts of the universe seem to be opposed and contrary to one another and to be discordant with one another are in accord and in tune when they are viewed in the most general harmony of the universe itself'.[34] Names predicated of God by the addition of '*super*' or '*plus quam*', to denote transcendence and eminence, (for example, *superessentialis*, *plus quam veritas*, *plus*

quam sapientia) comprehend both positive and negative theology in their fullest sense; they are harmonized in superlative predication. 'In outward expression they possess the form of affirmation, but in meaning the force of negation.'[35] Thus the assertion 'It is essence' is an affirmation; 'It is not an essence' a negation; 'It is superessential' is both affirmation and negation together. While the latter superficially lacks negation, it is fully negative in meaning. However Eriugena explains that by saying 'It is superessential', one is not stating what it is but what it is not, that it is not essence but more than essence, without revealing what that is which is more than essence.[36] Eriugena refers to God as the 'supraessential' or 'transcendent' nothing (*nihil per superessentialitatem*, *nihil per excellentiam*).[37] He states that 'according to the rules of theology the power of negation is stronger than that of affirmation for investigating the sublimity and incomprehensibility of the divine nature'.[38] He suggests indeed that 'negation of the Word in the sense of transcendence of nature, though not in the sense of privation, is found in Scripture'.[39]

Eriugena even expresses the *triplex via* in verse. In a poem praising the cross of Christian salvation he affirms: 'All that is being, non-being, beyond-being worships you.'[40] In lines addressed to Charles the Bald — at whose request he translated the *Corpus Dionysiacum* — Eriugena instructs the king on the role of Christ as first principle of the universe:

> He is being, non-being, supra-being, he excels all things in respect of being,
>
> Who rules and encompasses the whole which he established,
>
> Himself being whole in wholeness, adhering to no divisions,
>
> Whose deepest nature is remote from all things,
>
> Although he is their simple and substantial essence:
>
> He is the end and beginning of all that has being;
>
> He is good and beautiful, beauty itself and the seal set upon the forms.

In the last two lines of this passage Eriugena reverts to the Greek of Dionysius Areopagite, the author whom he revered.[41]

Alexander of Hales

The twofold distinction of affirmative and negative theology was widely advocated by theologians of the twelfth century, without mention of the threefold path.[42] Thierry of Chartres (1100–1150/5) declared: 'Theologia vero duplex est: alia affirmationis alia negationis.'[43] The guiding principle is Dionysius' rule: 'Negationes enim in divinis verae, affirmationes vero incompactae.'[44] Historically the most influential theological writings of the twelfth century were the *Sentences* (*Libri Quattuor Sententiarum*) of Peter of Lombard (c.1095–1160), Master of the University of Paris and Archbishop of Paris. A compilation with commentary of theological texts from the Bible and Church Fathers, it became, possibly at the instigation of the English Franciscan theologian Alexander of Hales (c. 1185–1245), the standard textbook of theological instruction for the next three centuries, when it was replaced by the *Summa Theologiae* of Aquinas; trainee *doctores* were required to write expositions on the *Sentences*. Although Peter referred to Augustine rather than Dionysius in explaining the names of God, it became standard practice in the commentaries to refer to the *triplex via*. In succeeding centuries these provided a varied range of interpretations. In his commentary Alexander of Hales cited the classic text of *De Divinis Nominibus* 7 and in his exposition followed the same order as Dionysius:

> And thus through these three, removal, eminence and causality, he notes the triple way of knowledge; by removal, i. e. negatively: he is not this, he is not that etc; through eminence, the best of everything is attributed to him; as cause, inasmuch as we retrace things that move to the immobile, and essences to supreme existence.[45]

In his *Summa Theologica* Alexander succinctly recalls Dionysius' doctrine: 'Et tangit triplicem modum intelligendi sive nominandi Deum: ablatione, eminentia et causa.' The *triplex via*, he explains, focuses variously on the comparison of God and creation. The *via negationis* stresses the difference; the *via eminentiae* expresses the

agreement which allows all that is perfect to be attributed to God (*superexistens, optimus*); the *via causalitatis* names God from his activity (*potens, sapiens*) through a comparison with creation, as cause with effect.[46] Interestingly Alexander explains positive and negative knowledge of God as between *cognitio per modum positionis* and *cognitio per modum privationis*.[47] Very importantly he distinguishes between the *significatum* and the *modus significandi* of names;[48] the former alone properly belongs to God.[49]

St Bonaventure, Albertus Magnus

St Bonaventure (1221–1274) likewise follows the order of Pseudo-Dionysius, noting that each mode of nomination provides a rich variety of names:

> God is known to us in a threefold manner: through causality, by removal, and because of his excellence (*per causalitatem, per ablationem et per excellentiam*). There is thus a multitude of names: if named through causality there are many names because he has many effects; if named through removal there are many names because many things are removed, namely all created things; if he is named by virtue of excellence there are many names because he exceeds creatures in every manner of nobility.[50]

He similarly distinguishes between the *modus significandi / ratio innotescendi* of divine names and their *significatum / significatio / res significata*.[51]

Albertus Magnus elaborates upon the distinction between *res significata* and *modus significandi* to justify the *triplex via*, which he regards as essential (*necesse est ire triplici via*).[52] Because of the structure of language, there are only three ways of knowing God from creatures. We attribute names according to the mode whereby the thing signified (*res significata*) is known by intellect. There is thus a difference between the mode of signification of a name and the reality signified in things beyond intellect. The thing signified by the name (*res significata per nomen*) may thus be

considered (a) as exceeding the signification of the name (*modus per excessum*), (b) as present in the effect (*modus per causam*), or (c) in the cause which transcends the mode of human intellection (*modus per omnium ablationem*).[53]

St Thomas Aquinas

The most complete application of Dionysius' *triplex via* was elaborated by Albert's illustrious pupil Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), who referred to it on twenty-two occasions, presenting five diverse orderings of affirmation, negation, and preeminence.[54] The reversal of the Dionysian sequence (*remotio*, *ablatio*, *causa*) in his early commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard is indicative of Aquinas' preferred metaphysical and linguistic method of progressing from causal affirmation, through the refinement of negation to the affirmation of God's preeminent transcendence: 'Dicit enim quod ex creaturis tribus modis devenimus in Deum: scilicet per causalitatem, per remotionem, per eminentiam.'[55] Aquinas' variations upon the sequence of stages are occasioned by the context of his argument, yet common to all is the underlying affirmation of causality and the imperfect (yet genuine) similitude between creatures and God. The preeminent transcendence of God is affirmed but never adequately revealed. The affirmative way attributes to God through analogy the names of pure, metaphysical, perfections which are intrinsically free from limit (for example, life, wisdom, being, goodness): these belong primarily and properly to God as their cause and derivatively to creatures, in which they are manifest in limited measure. Names denoting the natures of particular creatures (for example, lion, stone, sun), and which therefore impose a limit upon being, may be applied to God only symbolically or metaphorically.[56]

Having been attributed affirmatively to God, however, all names must subsequently be removed: sensible attributes absolutely, and metaphysical perfections in respect of their creaturely character. Negations are absolutely true because both that which is signified (*res significata*) and the manner of signification (*modus significandi*) are

removed; affirmations are inadequate, i. e. relatively true, since only the *modus significandi* is denied: the pure perfection (*res significata*) is attributed to God in a manner beyond understanding.[57] All things may be affirmed and denied of God, since he is beyond human intellect by which affirmations and negations are composed.[58] Aquinas accords methodological primacy to causality, but grants ultimate significance to negation as indicating the transcendent preeminence of God beyond all human knowledge. Such 'agnosticism', however, is grounded in the affirmation of God's existence and of his essence as *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*. In light of his universal and transcendent notion of existence, Aquinas affirms absolute being as eminently intelligible, yet supremely mysterious and unknowable. All likeness of creatures to God is deficient: that which God himself is, remains hidden and unknown (*hoc ipsum quod Deus est remanet occultum et ignotum*),[59] 'not by virtue of his obscurity, but through an abundance of clarity'.[60]

According to Aquinas the supreme achievement of reason is to affirm with certainty the existence of an absolute divine being whose nature is utterly unknowable. Of God we know more what he is not than what he is.[61] Aquinas' agnosticism, however, comes after the causal affirmation of God's existence. Xenophanes' remark that man depicts God in his own image is interpreted in light of a profound metaphysics of being as well as a nuanced and differentiated semiotics, grounded upon causality and the similarity of cause and effect.

For Aquinas the validity of all our terms concerning God is grounded primarily in the relation of causality discerned through a reflection upon finite reality. It is necessary, secondly, to distinguish between the perfections in themselves, or that which is signified, and our way of signifying them.[62] The perfections as such are proper to God; our knowledge and manner of signifying them is appropriate to creatures. Concepts and names derive from our experience of finite things; they are transposed and analogically referred to God, signifying that he possesses in an infinitely superior degree the perfections apparent in creation. The perfections enjoyed by man are limited participations in the

being of God, who unites all perfection in his unlimited act of subsisting being.

As a child Aquinas pestered his nurse with the question, 'What is God?' Years later he cited the words of St Hilary (c. 310–c. 367): 'I am aware that I owe this to God as the chief duty of my life, that my every word and sense may speak of him.'[63] By the time of his early death at the age of forty-nine he had expended more than seven million words in an attempt, at least indirectly, to answer that question. The immensity of the task was clearly stated by Job, whom Aquinas cites at the start of book 4 of *Contra Gentiles*. Employing the language and imagery of 'ways' (*viarum eius*, μέρη ὁδοῦ), Job proclaimed: 'These things are said in part of his ways: and seeing we have heard scarce a little drop of his word, who shall be able to behold the thunder of his greatness?'[64] Aquinas regarded the achievements of theology as 'less than one small word, trickling silently, compared to the loudest clap of thunder'.[65] Finally he stopped writing, regarding his work as chaff compared to the divine mystery.

The *triplex via* of naming God through reason — the focus of the present essay — is, according to Aquinas, the first feeble step in an infinitely superior three-tiered scheme, in which every human effort is surpassed by the revelation of the divine word, until finally the human mind is raised to beatific union with God. Aquinas states this succinctly in Book 4 of the *Contra Gentiles*:

> There is in man a threefold knowledge of things divine. Of these, the first is that in which man, by the natural light of reason, ascends to a knowledge of God through creatures. The second is that by which the divine truth — exceeding the human intellect — descends on us in the manner of revelation, not, however, as something made clear to be seen, but as something spoken in words to be believed. The third is that by which the human mind will be elevated to gaze perfectly upon the things revealed.[66]

When Job speaks of the thunder of God's greatness he is referring, according to Aquinas, to the 'third kind of knowledge, in which

the first truth will be known, not as believed, but as seen. . . Nor will the truth be set before man hidden under any veils, but will be entirely manifest.'[67]

Ulrich of Strasbourg

Another of Albert the Great's Dominican pupils, the German theologian Ulrich of Strasbourg (1225–1277), who studied with Aquinas in Cologne (1248), elaborated five ways in which God is known by natural reason. First, the knowledge of God is implicit by natural instinct (*naturalis instinctus*) in the habitual light of the agent intellect — a similitude of God — and is actualized through the experience of causality. Ulrich's second, third and fourth ways of natural reason correspond to the three ways of Dionysius: negation, causality (God is universally perfect) and eminence. (To these correspond in Dionysius the different modes of theology: symbolic, affirmative and mystical.) Fifth, God is known through the conversion of the intellect to the divine light which is its source.[68]

Henry of Ghent

Henry of Ghent (c.1217–1293) relates Dionysius' *triplex via* to the tripartition of John Damascene (*imaginibus, formis et notis*).[69] The existence of God is demonstrated through causality (primarily) and eminence, but not through negation, since affirmation can never follow from pure negations.[70] That which God is, however, is known through remotion and eminence.[71] Henry emphasizes remotion (more than Aquinas) as the essential prerequisite for all investigation into the divine quiddity; negations suggest an affirmation which is supremely true, but incomprehensible to us, namely the higher truth of preeminence.[72]

Duns Scotus

Duns Scotus (1265/66–1308), interprets the *via negationis* as the ultimate step within Dionysius' *triplex via*,[73] but rejects negation in the knowledge of God: 'Negationes non summe amamus.'[74]

He demonstrates the infinity of God by efficient causality, intellectuality, final causality and eminence.[75] His fellow Franciscan and pupil, Francis of Meyronnes ('*princeps Scotistarum*', c. 1288–c. 1328), discerns in the words of Dionysius four modes of arriving at knowledge of God: efficient causality, final causality, eminence and remotion.[76] The *via remotionis* alone adequately establishes the infinity of divine being.[77] Also worthy of mention are Giles of Rome (Aegidius Romanus, 1243–1316)[78] and Richard of Middleton (Ricardus de Mediavilla, 1249–1308), both of whom drew on the *triplex via* with reference to Dionysius.[79]

Meister Eckhart

Meister Eckhart, the German Dominican theologian, cited Dionysius' *triplex via* in his sermon '*Quasi vas auri solidum*' ('Like a vase of solid gold'), preached in Paris on the feast of Saint Augustine in 1303.[80] He partially recalled the wider triple perspective proposed by Alexander of Hales on the knowledge of God that is available to humans, namely in the heavenly homeland (*in patria*), in prelapsarian innocence, and in our fallen state.[81] Eckhart contrasted our present knowledge (*per speculum et in aenigmate*)[82] with that bestowed through divine illumination (*per speculum et in lumine*). Knowledge of God in this life is acquired in three ways, through negation, eminence and causality (*fit tripliciter, scilicet ablatione, eminentia et causa*),[83] and here Eckhart follows the order of Dionysius. First, since human knowledge is by sense and intellect, and God is incorporeal and without intelligible form, he can be known only through the removal (*ablatio*) of form: 'distinctively select and selectively distinct from other things (*quasi ab aliis eligendo separatur et separando eligitur*)'.[84] Eckhart quotes Dionysius that affirmations about God are inadequate, negations are true.[85] God is known, second, by eminence (*eminentia*) when what is more noble and eminent in all things is attributed to him.[86] Third, God is known through causality (*causa vero cognoscitur*) when changing things are reduced to the changeless, and multiplicity to simple unity: *principium et causa est omnium*.[87] God is pure

Unity — a negative notion (absence of division) — and all negation must be removed. The negation proper to him is *negatio negationis* (*versagen des versagennes*).[88] Such double negation, however, is the strongest affirmation of God: 'The negation of negation is the kernel, purity and doubling of affirmation. (*Negatio autem negationis medulla, puritas et geminatio est affirmati esse.*)'[89] The *negatio negationis* rejoins, in negative form, the double affirmative of Exodus 3: 14: 'Ego sum qui sum.' In both, through a complete self-return, the absolute identity of being is affirmed.[90] God is not just named through a double negation, but is himself the very negation of all negation. Through self-affirmation he sublimates all negation positively within himself as the fullness of being.[91]

Nicholas of Cusa

Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), whose theology was greatly influenced by Meister Eckhart, referred to the *triplex via* of Dionysius in a sermon delivered in Koblenz on 1 January 1439, the feast of the circumcision of Our Lord. Taking as his theme the words from St Luke, 'Nomen eius Jesus', he reflected, appropriately for the occasion, on the mystery of the names given to God. Nicholas may have had in mind Eckhart's sermon in honour of St Augustine when he enlisted the latter in support of Dionysius:

> Therefore, according to Dionysius, we ascend unto God in a threefold way. [First, we ascend] by way of perceptible things qua things caused. According to Augustine, this fact [holds true] for several reasons: either (a) because nothing has brought itself into existence or (b) because from what is changeable we must come [inferentially] to what is unchangeable, from the imperfect we must come to the perfect, from what is good we must come to what is best, etc. Secondly, [we ascend] by way of eminence, so that we understand to be in the cause that which we find in the caused as perfecting the thing caused. Thirdly, [we ascend] by way of removal so that we remove from the excellence of the cause the defect which we find in what is caused.[92]

Cusanus elsewhere gives primacy to negation,[93] with its intention of eminence,[94] particularly in the sense of *negatio negationum* of Eckhart, [95] whom he quoted, practically word for word, in a sermon on the feast of the Epiphany, 1456, in Brixen: 'No negation or privation is appropriate to God; proper to him and him alone is the negation of negation, which is the marrow and apex of most pure affirmation.'[96] Ultimately, however, negation has as little value as affirmation, since all thought is circular.[97] God transcends both affirmation and negation in a coincidence of opposites,[98] beyond rational thinking which rests upon the principle of non-contradiction. Mystical theology (*secretissima theologia*) surpasses reason and alone is appropriate to divine darkness:[99] 'Where not-being is the necessity-to-be, and where the name of all things nameable is ineffable, there ignorance is perfect knowledge.'[100]

Denys the Carthusian

Approving the *triplex via* of Ps.-Dionysius,[101] Denys the Carthusian (1402–1471) elaborates a fourfold path: affirmative, negative, causal, and eminent, distinguishing between the affirmative way (God is goodness, life or substance) and the causal way (as their origin, God posseses all perfections revealed in creatures). These four ways, however, are reduced to two, since the causal way may be reduced to affirmation, and eminence to negation.[102]

Pico della Mirandola

The final exponent of the *triplex via* within the Platonist tradition is the famous Renaissance scholar, Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494). Pico writes in *De Ente et Uno* that while many things are affirmed and denied of him, 'God is all things, and is all in a most eminent and perfect manner. (*Deus omnia est et eminentissime atque perfectissime est omnia*).'[103] In the ascent to the cloud of total ignorance — the beginning of true knowledge — there are, he proposes, four steps stressing different degrees of negation and eminence, which conclude that God surpasses the transcendental concepts of one, true, being and good, as well as all other names which reason can conceive.[104]

René Descartes

The doctrine of the *triplex via* finds occasional expression also in modern thought, beginning with Descartes.[105] Etienne Gilson states that '[his] natural theology of divine attributes is clearly inspired by that of St Thomas, from whom Descartes borrows the traditional elements (affirmative method, negative method, analogical value of attributes)'. Gilson rightly remarks, however, that it is animated by a new spirit,[106] since it unfolds within an entirely different philosophical milieu. Having established the *cogito* as the ground of certainty, Descartes asks from where he has derived the concept of something more perfect than himself; he concludes that it must be caused 'by a nature which was in reality more perfect than mine, and which even possessed within itself all the perfections of which I could form any idea; that is to say, in a single word, which was God'.[107] Having established the existence of God as the necessary condition for the concept of perfection, Descartes considers in his *Discourse* the attributes which must pertain to the divine nature.[108] God, he notes, cannot possess any property that indicates imperfection, but must posssess every perfection. This assertion echoes the traditional theory of participation, here invoked to explain how ideas originate within the mind. 'God exists and is a perfect being . . . everything real and true within us comes from a perfect and infinite being.'[109] God must possess all the perfect properties that I can conceive; these are refined of their imperfection and affirmed of God in their infinite degree.

Immanuel Kant

Most importantly in modern philosophy, Kant in his *Lectures on Philosophical Theology* (*Vorlesung über Rationaltheologie*) recalls the doctrine of the *triplex via* to clarify the notion of God as *ens realissimum*. According to Kant we may readily apply to God those attributes pertaining to the concept of being in general, so-called ontological or transcendental predicates such as unity, simplicity, and infinity. Such concepts, however, are entirely abstract, whereas 'if we are to ascribe predicates to God

in concreto, we must take materials for the concept of God from empirical principles and empirical information (*aus empirischen Principien und Kenntnissen*)'.[110] The question is how to 'ascribe predicates to God which can be true only of objects of sense'.[111] To resolve this problem Kant has recourse to the traditional *triplex via*. The *via negationis* and *via eminentiae* will determine the choice and quality of predicates: 'I must first proceed *via negationis*; that is, I must carefully separate out everything sensible inhering in my representation of this or that reality, and leave out everything imperfect and negative, and ascribe to God the pure reality which is left over.'[112] These are then applied to God 'in the highest degree and with infinite significance. This is called proceeding *per viam eminentiae*. But I cannot proceed in this way unless I have first brought out the pure reality *via negationis*.'[113] Kant explains that unless concepts are freed of their inherent limitation by means of the *via negationis*, and magnified infinitely by the *via eminentiae*, they remain anthropomorphisms. Having clarified the choice and quality of predicates, he explains how these predicates are to be ascribed: 'This is the noble way of analogy (*Und dieses ist der herrliche Weg der Analogie*).'[114] He clarifies: 'Analogy does not consist in an imperfect similarity of things to one another (*in einer unvollkommenen Ähnlichkeit der Dinge untereinander*), as is commonly taken; for in this case that would be something very uncertain.'[115] In other words, the analogy required is not one of similarity between God and empirical objects, but one of 'perfect similarity of relations' (*die vollkommene Ähnlichkeit der Verhältnisse*):

> We can then form a concept of God and of his predicates which will be so sufficient that we will never need anything more. But obviously we will not assume any relations of magnitude (for this belongs to mathematics); but rather we will assume a relation of cause to effect, or even better, of ground to its consequence, so as to infer in an entirely philosophical manner. For just as in the world one thing is regarded as the cause of another thing when it contains the

> ground for this thing, so in the same way we regard the whole world as a consequence of its ground *in God*, and argue from the analogy.[116]

In his introduction Kant drew heavily on Johann August Eberhard's *Vorbereitung zur natürlichen Theologie*,[117] but his lectures are largely an expansion of the *Metaphysica* of Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten,[118] who also employed the *triplex via*. Kant expressed a preference for Baumgarten's *via analogiae*[119] over Eberhard's *via causalitatis*.

* * *

The human race owes an immeasurable debt of gratitude to the sixteenth-century Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator. By designing a unique projection of the earth's globe that was entirely counterintuitive he provided sailors with a reliable method of navigation. The secret of Mercator's projection was a conscious but controlled distortion, representing the earth's spherical surface as if it were flat. His method was to project, as from the centre of the globe, lines of latitude parallel to the equator and lines of longitude running North to South upon a chart tangential to the equator. The earth is thus portrayed as a cylinder rather than a sphere. The projection is a deliberate misrepresentation, but serves its purpose because it is consistent and consequential. Whereas in reality lines of longitude are curved and converge, Mercator depicted them as straight and parallel. Exploiting this distortion, a straight line represents with total exactitude the real course plotted by the mariner. To trace a journey by means of a curved line would be unfeasible, and impossible to follow. As it extends from the equator to the poles, however, the Mercator projection increasingly distorts size and shape, and distance becomes incommensurable.

Direction is identified on the Mercator map with the aid of a magnetized arrow pointing north. The compass bearing, however, is inconstant since the centre of magnetic gravity revolves at a snail's pace around the north pole. But because the rate of inconstancy is consistent, the directional bearing can be modified with accuracy

year after year; this is referred to as magnetic declination. If all this were not enough, further deviation is caused in most boats by ferrous metals that interfere with the magnetic pull of the compass; a corrective must be individually calculated for every vessel. Thus to correctly chart his course the navigator must take into account a threefold set of errors: the distortion of the Mercator chart, the declination from true North, and deviation caused by metal interference. Otherwise he could not correctly steer his vessel.

Aristotle remarked that a small action at the beginning of an activity can have great consequences at the finish: a small error may end in catastrophe. The slightest movement of the rudder causes the prow to turn and the boat to change course.[120] If I set sail from Piraeus with an incorrect bearing, I may land on Aegina instead of Salamis. This is not a major inconvenience since the distance is short, but if I set sail from Galway for Newfoundland with a faulty bearing, I might hit land on Tierra del Fuego. I must continually watch my bearing, compensating for distortion, declination, and deviation.

Mariners have for millennia harnessed the power of the wind in order to cross the seas. In early times the sail was tied at the edges, to form a billow that would catch the wind. A boat, however, could be sailed only in one direction, pushed by the wind from behind. The greatest advance in sailing, therefore, was the discovery how to use the wind in order to sail against the wind. Combining the opposing forces of compression and depression, controlling the difference in windflow between static and dynamic pressure on either side of the sail, sailors could accurately control their course in any direction. It is not possible to sail directly into the wind: the boat must traverse obliquely, tacking back and forth, continually moving upwind in a series of manoeuvres that counteract the opposing wind. In a perceptive observation Gottlieb Frege remarked: 'Signs have the same importance for thought as for seafaring the discovery of using the wind to sail against the wind.'[121] He was referring to the essence of language as symbolic. The analogy with maritime exploration is fitting.

On the Hill of the Muses,[122] on the opposite side of the Acropolis to the Areios Pagos where Dionysius heard St Paul

preach the unknown God,[123] an ancient graffito is carved into the rock: ἔπος δε φωνή, 'voice is word'. Aristotle defined voice as 'sound with meaning' (σημαντικὸς τις ψόφος).[124] Language is a material medium invested with metaphysical meaning; that is its marvel, in language words and wonders intertwine. Words encapsulate the sensible and intellectual unity of human nature; they epitomize man's impulse for self-transcendence. With sensible symbols he seeks to surpass the limits of the material world, to assert what is unlimited and universal, at times even the absolute and transcendent. There is an inner tension between the sensible quality of the symbol and the metaphysical meaning it seeks to convey. Meaning struggles with the physical sign; its tension derives from the dual character of symbol, and the impetus to assert a non-material meaning anchored in a material sign.

Our human language is inadequate to express the reality of the divine; this merely reflects to an infinite degree the intrinsic insufficiency of words to convey, even symbolically, the real nature of anything. Like the art of sailing which utilizes the opposing power of the wind to overcome the wind itself, conscious of the threefold error of its navigational method, the *triplex via* of divine names is an attempt through the linguistic strategies of affirmation, denial, and hyperbole to overcome the limits of language itself. Correcting its inbuilt errancy and deviance, it extrapolates beyond the given coordinates to assert an unknown reality beyond the realm that can be charted.

Of its nature language is oriented towards its own transcendence. This intentional character lies at the heart of all knowledge and symbol. Paradoxically the highest achievement of language is to signify a reality it cannot fully express. Herein lies the dialectic at the heart of language whereby it seeks to overcome its limits and complement its inadequacy in the face of the real which it fails adequately to comprehend. The transcendence of what is to be said, beyond what can be uttered, reaches deeply into the nature both of language and thought in their relationship to reality. The power of self-transcendence that we detect in language is symptomatic of man's capacity to reach beyond himself, to affirm and explore the

other as always something more. This occurs across the panorama of human challenge: in humour, historical enquiry, in all promise or commitment of hope to the future. At its most acute it occurs in face of the deepest questions of human existence, or when we struggle to express the highest realities.

With good reason Arthur Koestler chose the term 'oceanic sense' (borrowed from Freud, who used it only to belittle the experience as infantile) to describe the overwhelming feeling that one belongs to something ineffable and immeasurably greater than oneself.[125] Understandably the physical experience of finding oneself upon the vast horizonless seascape may provoke such a sensation. Nicholas of Cusa attributed the inspiration for his most famous tract *De Docta Ignorantia* to an overwhelming illumination that occurred during a stormy voyage to Venice during the winter of 1437–1438 in the company of the Emperor and Patriarch of Constantinople en route to the Council of Florence. In his dedication of the treatise to his patron Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini, Cusanus wrote:

> Accept now, Reverend Father, what for so long I desired to attain by different paths of learning but previously could not, until returning by sea from Greece when by what I believe was a celestial gift from the Father of Lights, from whom comes every perfect gift, I was led to embrace incomprehensibles incomprehensibly in learned ignorance, by transcending those incorruptible truths that can be humanly known.[126]

His modern biographer Erich Meuthen suggests that Cusanus was profoundly moved by the sense of his own infinitesimal insignificance amidst the immensity of the ocean during that tumultuous voyage.[127] Overawed by the infinity of the ocean, in contrast to his own minuteness, Cusanus emphasized in *De Docta Ignorantia* the dissimilarity between finite and infinite, between which there is no proportion. In this work, greatly indebted to Pseudo-Dionysius, he strove to articulate the illumination born of an experience that eluded the grasp of normal conceptual expression.

Six centuries before Cusanus set sail from Constantinople on his historic voyage to Venice, Johannes Scottus abandoned

caution to the wind and waves as he embarked on a journey from Ireland to Gaul, the open Atlantic being far more treacherous than the sheltered shores of the Mediterranean. This voyage likely suggested the image of seafaring to describe the challenge involved in describing 'the return of all things into that nature which neither creates nor is created' (*reditum omnium in eam naturam quae nec creat nec creatur*). The earlier parts of his treatise by comparison

> seem like a smooth sea upon which, because of the calmness of the waves, readers could sail without fear of shipwreck, steering a safe course. Now, however, we enter upon a voyage where the course has to be picked from a mass of tortuous digressions, where we have to climb the steeps of obscure doctrines, encounter the region of the Syrtes, that is to say, the dangers of the currents of unfamiliar teaching, ever in immediate danger of shipwreck from the obscurity of the subtlest intellects, which like concealed rocks may suddenly split our vessel. Nevertheless, with the mercy of God as our captain and steersman and our sails filled with the propitious wind of his divine spirit, we shall pick through all these dangers the true and safe course, and reach the harbour which we seek, free and unhurt after a smooth voyage.

The pupil responds:

> Let us spread sail, then, and set out to sea. For reason, not inexperienced in these waters, fearing neither the threats of the waves nor divagations nor the Syrtes nor rocks, shall speed our course: indeed she finds it sweeter to exercise her skill in the hidden straits of the ocean of divinity (*in abditis divini oceani*) than idly to bask in smooth and open waters, where she cannot display her power.[128]

Plato's motif of the great sea of beauty,[129] in which the soul loses itself in ecstatic union, no doubt inspired the Irish thinker to contemplate the ocean of divinity and the perils of navigating its profound mysteries.[130] Notwithstanding the panoply of linguistic ploys and the merits of a three-tiered strategy to name the divinity,

Eriugena saw that reason's ultimate achievement is to recognize its own inadequacy for the task: 'Nothing can properly be said about God, since he surpasses every intellect and all sensible and intelligible meanings; he is better known through unknowing, of him ignorance is the true wisdom.'[131] For Scottus and those thinkers whom we have considered, the supreme accomplishment of language is to express its own inability to articulate the ultimate mystery. They would doubtless agree with Plutarch that speech we learn from men, but silence from the gods.[132]

6

Evil as Privation: The Neoplatonic Background to Aquinas' *De Malo* 1

The Mystery of Iniquity is a pit too deep
for mortal eyes to plumb . . .
Be not too curious of Good and Evil.

T. S. Eliot, "The Rock"

Malum est privatio boni. The definition of evil proposed by St Thomas in *De Malo* (*QDM*) is far from original; it was already well developed by both St Augustine (354–430) and Pseudo-Dionysius (c. 500). Although Aquinas expounded the definition largely through Aristotelian categories, these two figures commanded for him the highest possible theological authority. Augustine was the most influential thinker of Christian antiquity; differing greatly in philosophical approach and personality, he exerted profound influence on Aquinas. Less well known was the enigmatic Dionysius; writing in the late fifth or early sixth century, he enjoyed quasi-apostolic authority throughout the entire Middle Ages by successfully assuming the pseudonymous identity of the first bishop of Athens and most famous disciple of St Paul. St Thomas wrote a detailed commentary on Dionysius' treatise *On the Divine Names* and cited him over 1,200 times throughout his writings, second only in frequency to Aristotle.

Aquinas was unaware that, for his treatment of evil, Dionysius had drawn extensively on the Neoplatonist author Proclus (412–485). The treatise *De Malorum Subsistentia* (*DMS*) was the most systematic and comprehensive treatment of evil until then by any author, and it became one of the most important, though hidden and indirect, sources for Aquinas' theory of evil. Proclus' treatise aptly illustrates the maxim '*habent sua fata libelli*'. It was lost sometime during the Middle Ages, but not before William of Moerbeke had completed a translation in 1280. The translation, or — perhaps better — William's word for word conversion, made it possible, in conjunction with Isaac Sébastocrator's eleventh-century compilation, to reconstruct the original text with credible accuracy. When we recall that Moerbeke's 1262 translation of Proclus' *Elements of Theology* revealed to Aquinas the true background of the *Liber de Causis*, correcting the assumption that it was Aristotle's theological tract, it is tantalizing to imagine his reaction had he lived barely six more years to read his confrère's rendition of *De Malorum Subsistentia*.

Proclus' main target was Plotinus (204–270), whose theory of evil he judged inconsistent. Through the vagaries of intellectual transmission, Plotinus' thought provided a separate and equally important undercurrent in Aquinas' approach to evil, since he, along with Porphyry, furnished Augustine with the kernel of his theory of evil. After Scripture, Augustine was Aquinas' most explicit authority in *QDM*, 1. Unaware of the common remote conceptual ancestry involved, Aquinas attributes the definition of evil as *privatio boni* to both Augustine and Dionysius, citing neither Plotinus nor Proclus, both of whom championed different versions of the doctrine. An adequate account of the sources for Aquinas' theory of evil must therefore take into account both Plotinus and Proclus, as also certainly Plato, who first raised the nature of evil and whose views influenced subsequent interpretations. Proclus in particular, applying many of Aristotle's insights, clarified and modified much of what he found in Plato and Plotinus. Aristotle's categorical differences, the distinction between primary and secondary causes, and his doctrine of privation were integral to Aquinas' definition of *malum* as *privatio boni*.

The first question of *De Malo* stands as a self-contained study on the nature of evil, outlining in five carefully constructed articles the metaphysical and moral background for the fifteen remaining questions which examine the gamut of human vice and wrongdoing. Question I considers two distinct topics: the reality of evil in the world, and the proximate source of human evil in voluntary action. Articles 1–3 investigate the nature, origin and efficacy of evil (*malum*); articles 4 and 5 clarify the distinction between the evils of moral blame and punishment (*culpa et pena*). In the first article Aquinas asserts the reality of evil, defined as the privation of a good properly due to an existing individual; in the second he argues that evil can reside only in an existing good; in the third he affirms that, since it is not in itself a positive reality, evil can only be caused by something that is good in itself. Having examined the place of evil in the universe as a whole, Aquinas proceeds in articles 4 and 5 to examine the distinction between moral guilt and punishment: both may be regarded as evil, but in opposing senses. At the centre of their distinction is the question of the freedom of the will. The definitions of *culpa* and *pena* are of secondary importance in the opening question; the distinction derives from St Augustine, although Aquinas clarifies the doctrine with references to Aristotle and Dionysius.

The present essay concentrates on the sources for the definition of evil as *privatio boni* as discussed in the first three articles of *QDM* 1. The key concept of *privatio* provides a leitmotif for these articles. Evil is not a positive reality, but a deprivation of an autonomously existing individual; it survives in dependence upon the good. Evil does not have independent, but 'parasitic' existence, an ontological status aptly conveyed by the Greek word παρυπόστασις. The term, first employed by Iamblichus, was exploited by Proclus in *DMS* and adopted by Dionysius. Unfortunately the quasi-existential sense of the term was not adequately conveyed by Sarracenus in his translation of Dionysius (where it is rendered *praeter existentiam*), so its subtlety was lost to Aquinas. It was from his reading of Plato's *Theaetetus* that Proclus derived the term παρυπόστασις, and it is with Plato that our investigation begins.

The Platonist Background to the Question of Evil

Proclus recommended that investigation into evil should start with Plato, thereby kindling a light to illumine further inquiry. Aside from its obvious merit, the advice is especially relevant to our present inquiry. Plato's scant remarks on evil inspired Plotinus, whose detailed treatise in turn influenced both Augustine and Proclus. It was largely as a refutation of Plotinus that Proclus wrote *De Malorum Subsistentia*, a pivotal work in the historical unfolding of the theory of evil, because of its influence on Pseudo-Dionysius, one of Aquinas' two main sources.

Plato nowhere developed a complete theory of evil, offering only disparate remarks in various dialogues. Discussion among his followers centred primarily on passages from the *Theaetetus*, *Republic*, and *Timaeus*. What seems like a passing comment by Socrates at *Theaetetus* 176a5–8 provoked great debate:

> It is impossible, Theodorus, that evil things will cease to exist, for it is necessary that the good always has its subcontrary (ὑπεναντίον γάρ τι τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἀεὶ εἶναι ἀνάγκη); nor have they any place in the divine world, but by necessity they revolve about our mortal nature and this place.[2]

This brief passage was seminal for the philosophical discussion of evil and inspired such Neoplatonist doctrines as: evil is necessary and will always exist; there is no evil in the divine world; evil is a subcontrary rather than the contrary of the good. Plato's use of ὑπεναντίον rather than ἐναντίον is highly significant, anticipating Proclus' solution that evil has not a positive existence (ὑπόστασις), but dependent parasitic existence (παρυπόστασις).

A number of passages in the *Republic* also gave rise to discussion. There Plato emphasizes that since God is the cause only of what is good and is not responsible for evil, we must seek other causes:

> The good isn't the cause of all things, then, but only of good ones; it isn't the cause of bad ones. . . Therefore, since a god is good, he is not — as most people claim — the cause of everything that happens to human beings, but of only a few

> things, for good things are fewer than bad ones in our lives. He alone is responsible (αἴτιος) for the good things, but we must find some other causes for the bad ones, not a god.[3]

Important here is the suggestion that while God is the unique cause of good things, evils arise from a variety of (accidental) causes. Proclus would later argue that evil results not from the intrinsic finality proper to genuine purposive causality, but from a multiplicity of indeterminate causes. The unicity of causation of the Good is a central doctrine of the *Republic*: the Good is the origin of all being, value and truth, and the goal of all human desire.

In the myth of Er, Plato emphasizes that souls are individually responsible: 'The responsibility lies with the one who makes the choice; the god has none.'[4] Proclus echoes Plato's verdict: 'Souls suffer what they ought to suffer when they have chosen badly.'[5] In making souls responsible, Proclus rejected Plotinus' view that matter is to blame for evil.[6]

The primacy and beneficence of the Good, depicted in the *Republic*, is paralleled at the lower level of nature by the goodwill of the Demiurge, described in the *Timaeus*. The craftsman who shaped the world wished it to be as perfect as possible:

> He was good, and one who is good can never become jealous of anything. And so, being free of jealousy, he wanted everything to become as much like himself as was possible. . . The god wanted everything to be good and nothing to be bad, so far as that was possible.[7]

The demiurge is not always successful in imposing order upon matter; the physical world is liable to imperfection and the way is open to evil. One of the most disputed questions in the Neoplatonist debate is the role of matter in the occurrence of evil. According to Plotinus, matter as entirely deprived of determination is the essence and source of evil. Augustine, Proclus, and Dionysius strongly disagreed.

Aristotelian Elements in the Theory of Evil

While Aristotle does not offer an extensive treatment of the question, his remarks are significant; his logic and subtle metaphysical distinctions furnish Aquinas with crucial elements. Aristotle states in the *Categories*: 'The contrary of good must be evil, and this can be proved by induction. . . Generally speaking, it is true that the contrary of evil is good.'[8] Thus, whereas in the *Theaetetus* Plato states that evil necessarily exists as the contrary of good, its existence for Aristotle is not an a priori necessity but must be ascertained by observation: 'It does not of necessity follow that, if one of the contraries exists, then the other too must also exist.'[9] Aristotle thus rejects Plato's view on the necessity of evil as the obverse of goodness. Plotinus would adopt the Platonist position, asserting evil to be the really existent contrary of goodness. Proclus regarded Plotinus' explanation of evil as contradictory and dualistic and reverted to Aristotle. Augustine too, committed to the Christian doctrine of creation, rejected Plotinus' view, which seemed to him dangerously similar to the Gnostic position he had abandoned.

As Aquinas notes in *QDM*, Aristotle's terminology is not entirely consistent, as he sometimes interchanges the terms contrariety and privation.[10] Perhaps the distinction was not of great importance in the context of the *Categories*, where evil is simply defined as the contrary of good; in the *Metaphysics*, however, Aristotle distinguished clearly between privation (στέρησις) and contrariety (ἐναντίωσις). In so doing he laid the groundwork for the traditional definition of evil.[11] Plotinus did not recognize the difference, maintaining that privation — identical with contrariety — is in some way a reality; in this he was motivated by *Theaetetus* 176a. For Aristotle privation (στέρησις) as such has no subsistence (ὑπόστᾶσις), but always requires a subject.

Although he had no great interest in the question, Aristotle effectively formulated what would become the classical doctrine of evil when he distinguished between the different kinds of privation. Noting that privation has as many meanings as the

negative prefix 'ἀ-', he distinguishes three senses.[12] Of interest to us is the difference he observes between the absence in a thing of a perfection that is not proper to its nature, and the absence in an individual of a perfection which of its nature it should possess. Thus we cannot say that a vegetable is blind because it is 'deprived' of sight, whereas a man is blind because he lacks a perfection that by nature he ought to possess.[13] Aquinas writes in similar vein when he points out in *ST* I, 48, 3, that the simple absence or negation of a good (*remotio boni negative accepta*) is not an evil, as that would mean non-existing beings are evil, or that something is bad because it lacks the good enjoyed by another individual. Only the *privative* absence of a good (*remotio boni privative accepta*) is evil, such as blindness; significantly Aquinas applies Aristotle's example of blindness as privation to illustrate the status of evil.[14]

Aristotle's categories and his concept of privation are central to Aquinas' opening statement of *QDM* 1: 'Evil can be understood in one way as the subject that is evil, and in this sense it is something real (*et hoc aliquid est*); in another sense it can be understood as the [quality of] evil itself: this is not a real entity, but the privation of a particular good.'[15] Aquinas illustrates the distinction with the parallel distinction, in the case of white, between the thing that is white (the subject that is white), and the whiteness itself (the accidental mode that inheres in it).

Among Aristotle's great philosophical discoveries were the allied concepts of potency and privation, both of which were indispensable in order to explain change. Aristotle's main criticism of Parmenides was the failure to recognize the reality of potency. In *Physics* 1, 9, he criticized Plato for failing to distinguish between matter and privation, a further distinction needed to explain change. Matter, according to Aristotle, is accidentally nonbeing and in a sense proximate to substance, whereas privation in no way is.[16] The Aristotelian notion of privation as entirely deprived of existence is fundamental to Aquinas' explanation of evil. In his commentary on *On the Divine Names* he notes that Dionysius follows Aristotle.[17]

Plotinus' Theory of Evil

Although Aquinas was not familiar with Plotinus' writings on evil, they were of immense background importance for his own theory. Plotinus introduced to Augustine the concepts of privation and nonbeing, and it was to refute Plotinus that Proclus wrote *DMS*, the work plagiarized by Pseudo-Dionysius. While indispensable for our study, it is possible to provide here only a minimal summary of Plotinus' theory of evil.

According to Plotinus, the entire universe emanates, whether directly or indirectly, from the One, the supreme first principle which is superabundantly good and absolutely perfect in itself. Finite beings come into existence through a descending hierarchy of causes, their perfection diminishing as they recede from their transcendent source. Since matter is the final product or most remote emanation, it is entirely deprived of perfection, and it is at this level that Plotinus locates evil. As the final echo of the One, matter is for Plotinus equivalent to nonbeing (not to be confused with non-existence, as we shall see), and identical with evil itself.

At the start of his treatise 'On what evils are and where they come from' Plotinus remarks: 'If, because opposites are known by one and the same kind of knowledge and evil is contrary to good (τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἐναντίον τὸ κακόν), the knowledge of good will also be knowledge of evil.'[18] Plotinus accepts Aristotle's definition of good as that to which all things aspire, and evil its contrary: evil is a lapse or falling away from the good (τὸ κακὸν ἔλλειψιν ἀγαθοῦ).[19] Goodness is equated with form (εἶδος), evil with the total lack of any (στέρησις). Their views diverge deeply, however, on the meaning of privation and contrariety (ἐναντίον), and on the precise nature of the opposition between good and evil. Whereas Aristotle distinguished between matter and privation, Plotinus regarded them as identical: matter is devoid of all determination, and being identical with privation, constitutes evil itself.

Plotinus was familiar with the explanation of evil in Aristotelian terms as the privation of a form which ought to be present, which would eventually be adopted as the traditional orthodox theory.

One of the objections he formulates against his own view is stated in Aristotelian terms: 'But the nature which is opposed to all form is privation; but privation is always in something else and has no existence by itself. So if evil consists in privation, it will exist in the thing deprived of form and have no independent existence.'[20] Plotinus hopes to overcome the logic of the objection and persists in identifying evil with matter as totally deprived of perfection. Identifying matter with privation, he adapts Aristotelian concepts to formulate a radically anti-Aristotelian theory of evil. Rejecting the distinction between matter and privation, he also rejects Aristotle's analysis of contrariety.

Two doctrinal shifts were indispensable for Plotinus' definition of evil: his rejection of Aristotle's distinction between matter and privation, and his idiosyncratic, novel, application of the concept of nonbeing proposed in Plato's *Sophist*.[21] To define evil as non-being, Plotinus creatively reinterprets the definition of non-being as otherness, proposed by Plato to resolve the impasse resulting from Parmenides' radical opposition between 'being' and 'non-being'. The Stranger asserts that there is a form that is, of 'what-is-not'.[22] This form of non-being is that part of otherness which, although it participates in being, is nevertheless opposed to being (since it is not identical with it). Defining evil as non-being, Plotinus draws on this Platonist concept of a '*form* of non-being' ('the form that turns out to be, of what is not'), as distinct from what *is not in any way at all*.[23] This paradoxical opposition is crucial to his position; while the Stranger has defined non-being as a 'part of otherness', the difference is that whereas in the *Sophist* the opposition was to 'the being of each thing', in the *Enneads* the opposition is to 'the beings properly so-called', that is, the 'forms' (*logoi*).[24]

Thus while it is defined as nonbeing, evil is not the absolute nonbeing of nothingness, but the opposite of goodness, insofar as it is identified as matter deprived of all determination. Plotinus begins by defining evil simply as the absence of form, but concludes that it is complete poverty.[25] This leads him to define evil, identified with matter, as complete deficiency: 'Evil is not in any sort of deficiency, but in absolute deficiency... When something is absolutely

deficient — and this is matter — this is essential evil wthout any share in good. For matter has not even being — if it had it would by this means have a share in good; when we say it "is" we are just using the same word for two different things, and the true way of speaking is to say it "is not".'[26] Matter is sheer lack; it is not just the absence of a particular quality or perfection, but is in itself total deficiency. For Plotinus matter is evil itself (αὐτοκακόν) because it is deprived of all determination and perfection.[27] Not only is it indeterminate, but it is also of its nature incapable of receiving any positive determination, for were it to do so it would no longer be matter. What we perceive as order is merely a reflection of the Forms; the cosmos, as Plotinus starkly puts it, is no more than a 'corpse adorned' (νεκρὸν κεκοσμημένον).[28] However, while Plotinus describes matter as nonbeing, he does not mean that it is non-existent. Were it so, the world we see around us could not exist. Matter, though evil and deprived of all good, nonetheless exists.

Plotinus identifies matter with privation and thus with evil itself. Both Proclus and Augustine disagree profoundly with Plotinus' definition of matter as evil. Since matter derives from the One, however indirectly and remotely, to identify it as evil contravenes the axiomatic truth that the Good causes only what is good. It is this contradiction that Proclus criticizes in *DMS* when he argues that matter is necessary for the universe. In *De natura boni* Augustine recalls the fundamental principle that every nature is good in itself and stresses that matter, 'which the ancients called *hyle*', is not evil.[29]

Augustine on Evil

There are three plausible explanations for Augustine's definition of evil as privation. The first and simplest — though least likely, for the simple reason that Augustine does not say so — is that he read the summary of Aristotle's theory given by Plotinus.[30] The passage contains all the elements of Augustine's position; one need look no further. Plotinus provided an excellent summary of Aristotle's

theory for the purpose of rejecting that view. He even refers to the 'privation of a form which ought to be present'.[31] It is unlikely, however, that these lines were Augustine's main inspiration.[32] A second, more convincing, motivation for Augustine's identification of evil with nonbeing is the doctrine of creation. Since everything is caused to exist by an infinitely good and powerful God, evil cannot be an independent reality in itself, but must be explained in some sense as nonbeing or absence of perfection: 'For you [God] evil does not exist at all.'[33] The third explanation, generally favoured by scholars, is that Augustine developed his philosophical explanation of evil through his engagement with Plotinus; this doubtless occurred in conjunction with the impetus received from Scripture, to which he was attracted partly under Neoplatonist influence.

Confessions 7, where Augustine reflects on evil and concludes it is nonbeing, is written in the mood of the *libri Platonicorum* that were decisive in his rejection of Manicheism.[34] Augustine does not explicitly state that he read the *Enneads* but many undeniable references have been identified in his writings. His main influence was Plotinus, although it must be pointed out that Augustine silently disengaged from the essentials of Plotinus' theory of evil. Plotinus understood nonbeing and privation in his own idiosyncratic sense which Augustine was obliged to repudiate, although employing the same vocabulary. Adopting the terminology of nonbeing and privation, he greatly transformed its meaning. Although Aquinas was probably familiar with most of Augustine's extant writings and could therefore draw on his wider teaching, he cites only occasional phrases from six of Augustine's important works in *QDM* 1.

***De Moribus Manichaeorum* (388)**

Shortly after his conversion Augustine wrote a personal defence of Christianity entitled *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*, accompanied by a suitably contrasting sequel, *On the Morals of the Manicheans*, intended as a refutation of the Manichean view of evil. As a disillusioned ex-Manichean Augustine was master of the attack. Aquinas refers to *De Moribus Manichaeorum* (*DMM*) in *QDM* 1, 1, obj. 6. He does not mention Augustine's

refutation, but cites only an incidental remark to support the objection he wishes to formulate. According to Augustine, once something exists, divine providence does not allow it to recede into nonbeing.[35] The objection as phrased by Aquinas argues that light does not fully cease when the sun no longer illumines the air, but remains in the subject as an imperfect disposition (*dispositio imperfecta*): darkness is thus a reality (*aliquid*) contrary to light, and not just a privation; similarly evil, the objection concludes, is not merely the absence or privation of good, but its contrary. In his *De Anima* Aristotle also asserted that darkness is the contrary of light, and he is quoted by Aquinas in the previous objection, together with Dionysius and Damascene who compare evil with darkness.[36] In reply to both objections claiming evil is an existent entity contrary to goodness and not its privation, Aquinas simply affirms that darkness is the privation of light and not its contrary: when darkness prevails, no light is present, only the potency for light. He makes the interesting observation that such potency is not darkness as such, but the subject of darkness. Aquinas explains that Aristotle frequently uses the term 'contrary' to describe privation, since privation is in a sense a contrary, and that the first contrariety is between the possession of a form and its privation.

The following statement from *DMM* is highly relevant to our topic, although it is not cited by Aquinas: 'Evil is that which falls away from essence and tends to non-existence.'[37] It should therefore follow logically that the ultimate evil would be non-existence, i. e. nothing. Evil is parasitic on being. Since each thing insofar as it exists is good, this means that nothing is absolutely evil; conversely what is absolutely evil is non-existent. Evil is always opposed to the nature of a subject of which it is an evil. Nature, insofar as it is a nature, is no evil.

It is surprising that Aquinas makes no reference to Augustine's argumentation in *DMM* that evil is not itself a nature, but what is contrary to nature. Augustine offers a wonderfully didactic refutation of the Manichees which aptly illustrates the naïveté of their argument. Arguing against those who maintain evil is not a substance, Manichaeus states that if he places a scorpion in such a

person's hand, the objector will immediately retract his hand and reject the scorpion as evil; but since the scorpion is clearly a substance, evil must be a substance. Augustine replies that what is poisonous for humans is good for the scorpion. The scorpion is good in itself, but injurious to man. Evil is not in itself a nature, but what is in some respect against a particular nature. If the poison were intrinsically or substantially evil, it would inevitably destroy the scorpion, whereas removal will in fact cause its death. The scorpion's good is our evil: its evil is to be deprived of what is evil for us. Evil is not itself a nature, but what is inimical, harmful or against nature.[38] Evil, according to Augustine, is *amissio*, *corruptio*, *defectus*, *privatio boni*.

The example of the scorpion illustrates two themes that are central to *QDM* 1, 2, where Aquinas argues that evil can exist only within goodness. Firstly, that what is good in one respect may be evil in another. More fundamentally it illustrates that evil needs a subject in which to reside. If the subject upon which it depends is abolished, so also is the defect. There is no blindness without eyes, lameness without legs, or illness without a living organism.

De Libero Arbitrio (388–395)

De Libero Arbitrio (*DLA*) was also written by Augustine as a response to the Manichean teaching which attributed moral evil to matter, thereby relieving humans of blame, but also depriving them of free will. In defending freedom of the will Augustine makes humans responsible for moral evil or sin and the ensuing evil of punishment. The work takes the form of a dialogue between Augustine and Evodius who begins by asking whether God is not the cause of evil. Distinguishing between the evil that people do, and the evil they suffer (sometimes legitimately and justly, in which case God may be regarded as the cause of punishment), Augustine replies that God can in no way be considered the cause of the evil done by humans. He makes the important distinction: 'We believe that everything that exists is from God and yet that God is not the cause of sins.'[39] This treatise by Augustine provided Aquinas with the fundamental distinction between moral evil and punishment, and motivated his conviction that sin is the source of

all human evil. It is therefore of considerable importance for *QDM* 1, aa. 4–5. Question 1 contains five references to *DLA*: two refer to the distinction between sin and punishment and three to man's responsibility for sin and the just punishments that follow.

This work may also have inspired St Thomas' third reason in *QDM* 1, 1 for rejecting evil as a positive reality. Aquinas asserts what amounts to an ontological axiom based on the general observation that each thing naturally desires to preserve its being: 'Being itself especially has the nature of desirable.'[40] Similar statements are to be found in Aristotle and Boethius, but the motif is presented with enthusiasm by Augustine in *DLA*, with many references to the soul's wanting-to-be (*esse velle*). It is for Augustine a natural evidence that all rational beings seek complete and perfect fulfillment; this equates, he suggests, to the desire for completeness of existence. It is translated into a sheer love of existence, which finds its highest expression in the desire for the highest eternal good. Paradoxically it is verified even in immoral behaviour, which desires the attainment of a real existing good. It is proven, Augustine also suggests, even in the case of the suicidal person, who believes that in dying he will attain complete peaceful serenity or rest (*quies*), free from the inconstancies of ephemeral realities. The suicidal person mistakes the wish for nothingness with the desire for peace, which is the plenitude of being.[41] Augustine's viewpoint is well expressed: 'Consider what a great good is existence itself (*ipsum esse*), inasmuch as both the unhappy and the happy want it.'[42] He urges: 'If you want to avoid unhappiness, love the will to exist which is in you.'[43] The notion of *esse velle* is the ontological root of the related motif *naturale desiderium quietis*.[44]

Besides Augustine, Aquinas could also find this doctrine in Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* with its repeated insistence that things naturally strive to preserve their existence and shun death and destruction.[45] Aristotle likewise declares that 'being is better than non-being'.[46] From the general observation that all things seek to preserve themselves in being, avoiding what is destructive of their existence, Aquinas concludes the first article of *QDM* 1 with what amounts to a fundamental law: 'existence,

insofar as it is desirable, is good'.[47] Since by definition evil is universally opposed to goodness, it is, he states, equally opposed to existence and cannot be counted among those things that are.

***De Natura Boni* (405)**

QDM 1 contains six allusions to *De Natura Boni* (*DNB*), a short work written as a refutation of the dualist doctrine of the Manicheans that there exists an absolute principle of evil opposed to goodness. Augustine's starting point is that God, the highest good, is the origin of all things, spiritual and corporeal; as omnipotent he has created all things from what is absolutely non-existent. He alone is immutable, creatures are changeable. Since all things have been created by God, they are necessarily good, including the lowest grades of reality. The core doctrine to refute the Manichees, he emphasizes, is that all nature, every spirit and every body, is naturally good. 'Every nature, insofar as it is a nature, is good.'[48] Augustine explains: 'No nature, therefore, as far as it is a nature, is evil; but to each nature there is no evil except to be diminished in respect of good. But if by being diminished it should be consumed so that there is no good, no nature would be left.'[49] Thus if, *per impossibile*, something were to become totally evil, it would cease to exist. Augustine's point is that nothing can ever be entirely deprived of all goodness: so long as its nature remains, it retains its intrinsic goodness. Evil requires a positively existing subject in which to reside.

The characteristics of goodness with which God has endowed creatures, according to Augustine, are measure, form, and order (*modus*, *species*, *ordo*); these determine the degree of a creature's goodness. They are the basic or general goods (*generalia bona*) found in things made by God, who is himself beyond measure, form, and order. When these generic goods are great, creatures are great; when small, creatures are small; when they are absent, there is no good. These qualities determine a thing's nature and Augustine affirms: 'Therefore all nature is good.'[50] According to Augustine, 'if all natures should guard their own proper measure and form and order, there would be no evil'.[51] Having listed the

qualities of goodness Augustine defines evil as 'nothing else than the corruption, either of the measure, or the form, or the order, that belong to nature'.[52] No being, however, can be entirely corrupted; so long as it retains its nature, to that degree it is good.[53]

Augustine rejects the fundamental Manichean doctrine that there are two natures, 'the one good, which they call God, the other evil, which God did not make' (*duas naturas, unam bonam, quam dicunt deum, alteram malum, quam non fecerit deus*).[54] The Manichees' sharp separation of matter and spirit had appealed to the young Augustine.[55] In *DNB* he decries the 'criminal blasphemy' by which they attribute to the supreme evil nature, the Prince of Darkness, such good things as life, virtue, measure, form and order, and to God, the supreme good, such evil things as death, deformity and perversity.[56] This offends the fundamental axiom that all things are created by a supremely powerful and benevolent divine cause. He likewise rejects the Manichean view of matter as evil, and their introduction of Hyle, a separate god that shapes corporeal beings: 'nobody can form and create corporeal beings but God alone'.[57] According to Augustine, matter is the passive principle, formless and without quality: it has a capacity for forms, which is in itself a good. 'And because every good is from God, no one ought to doubt that even matter has its existence from God alone.'[58]

Enchiridion (c. 421)

With seven references, the work most frequently cited by Aquinas in *QDM* 1, aa. 1–3, was the *Enchiridion* (*ENC*), a 'handbook' of Christian doctrine. Augustine presents his understanding of evil against the background of the goodness of creation. The universe contains evil; Augustine observes that 'faith may refer to evil things as well as to good, since we believe in both the good and evil'.[59] In a single paragraph Augustine outlines his core theory of evil. Firstly he situates the phenomenon of evil within the overall framework of the universe: 'In this universe, even what is called evil, when it is rightly ordered and kept in its place, commends the good more eminently, since good things yield greater pleasure and praise

when compared to the bad things.' Secondly he notes the profound reason for the very possibility of evil: God would not allow evil 'unless in his omnipotence and goodness, as the Supreme Good, he is able to bring forth good out of evil'. Thirdly he offers a definition: 'What, after all, is anything we call evil except the privation of good?'[60] This he explains by analogy with sickness, which is the privation of health and not something that exists in itself. When a person is cured, the disease does not migrate to another body: it ceases to exist. Evil, like disease, is not a substance.[61] Sickness is an accidental defect of the body which, as substance, is good. Defects of the soul are likewise accidents, privations of goods that belong naturally to the soul (*naturalium sunt privationes bonorum*).[62]

At the start of Chapter 4 of *ENC* Augustine elaborates upon the metaphysical foundation of evil, repeating the axiomatic position: all of nature is good, since the creator of all nature is supremely good.[63] Since by contrast nature is not supremely and immutably good, goodness in creatures can be diminished and increased. Evil is precisely the diminution of goodness in creatures; yet no matter how much it is diminished, something of its original nature persists as long as it exists.[64] If a creature were fully deprived of its nature, it would be annihilated. Insofar as a being is corrupted, it is evil; it cannot, however, be completely or exhaustively corrupted; otherwise it would cease to exist.[65]And insofar as it exists it is good; evil therefore exists only as the diminution of goodness in a substance which is fundamentally good.

Evil is for Augustine parasitic upon goodness, relying for its reality upon an existing good in which it inheres and from which it draws whatever efficacy it enjoys. Without goodness there is no evil. Evil abides within an existing reality; its essence is deficiency, i. e. the lack or absence of the measure of goodness by which the individual fails to attain the perfection proper to its nature. Nothing could exist were it entirely bereft of goodness; it would be an impossible contradiction. Insofar as something exists and has a nature, it is good; insofar as it is deprived of its proper perfection, it is evil. Evil thus inheres relatively as a negation within goodness.

Although Augustine has apparently clarified the manner in which the various categories are predicated, he draws the strange conclusion that 'in these two contraries we call evil and good, the rule of the logicians fails to apply'.[66] His reference is to the principle of noncontradiction which, he states, applies in almost all disjunctions, including dark and bright, sweet and sour, black and white: 'Nevertheless, while no one maintains that good and evil are not contraries, they can not only coexist, but the evil cannot exist at all without the good, or in a thing that is not a good. On the other hand, the good can exist without evil.'[67] Since evil depends upon goodness, we must accept that these contraries coexist. It is surprising that Augustine, who described the enthusiasm with which he read the *Categories*, did not recall Aristotle's statement that while a substance has no contrary, it can receive contraries.[68]

Aquinas' only challenge to Augustine is to the latter's rejection of the principle of contradiction which, he claims — if strictly observed — would require the mutual exclusion of good and evil in the same subject. In an objection formulated against his own position that evil exists only in the good, Aquinas cites Augustine's *ENC* that, insofar as what is evil exists in goodness (*in hoc quod malum est in bono*), the principle of noncontradiction does not hold.[69] The rule only fails, so goes the objection, if evil exists in the good as its opposite. But this is impossible, since opposites contradict each other; evil, therefore, cannot be in the good. The objection in fact reverses Augustine's argument. Whereas Augustine had maintained that the principle of noncontradiction does not hold in the case of evil in a good subject, the objection appeals to the principle to conclude that evil cannot exist in the good; Augustine had argued that evil does exist in the good, with the inevitable conclusion that the principle of noncontradiction cannot hold in this case. In his reply to the objection Aquinas declares that the principle does not really break down if evil exists in the good, since the good in which it resides is not contrary to it. He concedes that in a general way the principle *appears* to fail because, absolutely speaking, good and evil are contraries.[70]

Augustine displays faulty logic when he states that the principle of noncontradiction does not hold in the case of good and evil coexisting in the same subject, on the grounds that opposites are mutually exclusive. Aquinas points out that the evil in question does not oppose the good subject in which it resides, but only the particular good that it suppresses. Thus blindness does not oppose the eye, but sight, of which it is the privation.

In objection 14 of *QDM* 1, 1 Aquinas again makes reference to a minor phrase from Augustine's *ENC*. Augustine states that 'evil, rightly ordered and kept in its place (*malum suo loco positum*), commends the good more eminently'.[71] Anything that occupies a place, so the objection, must be a real entity. It has to be noted, again, that Aquinas does not draw on the very rich text of Augustine but only cites an incidental remark. In his reply Aquinas states that evil is situated in a place because of the goodness it retains; he agrees with Augustine's view that by its opposition evil 'commends' the good, i. e. it enhances by contrast the appeal of the good.

A recurring refrain throughout Augustine's writings is that insofar as something is, or has, a nature, it is good; insofar as its nature is corrupted, it is bad.[72] Since the devil also has a nature, even he too is good.[73] Augustine explains: 'For no nature, in so far as it is a nature, is bad, but rather good, without which good no evil is able to exist — for no flaw is able to exist except in some nature, whereas there can exist without flaw a nature never flawed or one healed.'[74] To the degree that a being is free of corruption, and its nature complete, it is good; in the measure that its nature is deficient, it is evil.[75]

Summarizing Augustine's role in *QDM*, we may conclude that Aquinas draws deeply on Augustine's theory of evil but complements it in important respects. Augustine's philosophy, rooted in the immediacy of personal experience and expressed with compelling rhetoric, occasionally lacks methodic rigour. Aquinas adds refined reflection to Augustine's effusive style, assisted by the analytical methods of Aristotle and the insights of Dionysius to compensate for Augustine's conceptual limitations. An example is

Augustine's imprecise definition of evil. Evil is the privation of a good, or the absence of being: the good is that which is, evil is that which is not. One may not, however, define every absence as bad, so, for example, the absence of wings on humans is not evil. Aquinas adds the crucial clarification that evil is the absence of a due good (*privatio boni debiti*): the absence of a good which should exist but does not, the lack of some power or quality which a thing by its nature ought to possess. This precision was not new; Anselm had previously introduced the term *debita* into his definition, although there is no evidence that Aquinas was influenced in this regard.[76] An alternative wording is the Scholastic formulation: *negatio perfectionis debitae*. The distinction between simple absence and privation is well expressed by Aquinas in other works, including the *Summa Theologiae*.[77] This crucial addition to Augustine's definition is also made in *QDM* 1, 1, where Aquinas defines evil as the absence of a *particular* good (*privatio alicuius particularis boni*).[78]

Proclus on Evil

Aristotle, Augustine, and Dionysius were the direct sources for Aquinas' theory of evil. Of at least equal historical importance was Proclus, whose influence St Thomas unknowingly received via Dionysius. Proclus expounded his own very individual perspective on evil, which blends elements from Plato and Aristotle while rejecting some of Plotinus' central doctrines. Proclus sums up his own theory in *DMS* which will effectively become that of Aquinas: 'Other privations are mere absences of dispositions, deriving no being from the nature to which they belong. But the good, because of the excellence of its power, gives power even to the very privation of itself.'[79]

Proclus argues that evil things must also have a measure of goodness, otherwise they could not exist.[80] There is an order in the generation of evils, which has a divine cause. Although the gods cannot cause evil, they are the source of order in things that are evil. 'Good things come directly from the gods, evil things only insofar as they, too, have received a portion of good and a power to be and a limit.'[81] Proclus' explanation that evil can only exist in

dependence on the good is taken up by Dionysius and becomes a central part of Aquinas' metaphysics of evil.[82]

Proclus considers the origin of evil from the fourfold perspective of Aristotelian causality. He notes that 'the efficient causes of evils are not reasons and powers, but lack of power, weakness, and a discordant communion and mixture of dissimilar things'.[83] Nor are there stable paradigms of evil; of their nature they are unlimited and indeterminate. Finally, Proclus states emphatically that there can be no final cause for evil. Final causality implies goodness, and it is unfitting that the good should be the goal of evils. It is true that we do evil because it appears good, but this is due to ignorance. Proclus therefore rules out efficient, final, and formal causality in the explanation of evil. The status of evil may be stated summarily: 'For the form of evils, their nature, is a kind of defect, an indeterminateness and a privation; their [mode of existence, or] ὑπόστασις, is, as it is usually said, more like a kind of [parasitic existence, or] παρυπόστασις.'[84] Augustine had already argued that a being that is evil in one respect is good in itself by virtue of its existence. He lacked, however, the subtlety of concept to adequately formulate this conjunction and distinction. Proclus is explicit in stating that παρυπόστασις is the correct term to describe the mode of being of evil.[85] Evil things do not have the autonomy of beings that originate in the purposiveness and finality of proper causation; evil realities 'have their being accidentally and on account of something else, and not from a principle of their own'.[86] Whereas we pursue ends out of desire for the good, we may by accident attain its contrary through weakness or malfunction. The resulting evil does not exist in its own right, but depends parasitically upon the proper order of natural causation.[87]

It is because of its combination with the good that evil can be the object of desire. Its power of attraction however is only apparent, since evil does not exist in its own right but is sustained by its contrary. Proclus reiterates his interpretation of the *Theaetetus*, stating that evil is neither the absolute privation of the good, nor its total contrary. Evil is a 'subcontrary' (ὑπεναντίον) which, although a privation, is 'not an absolutely complete privation, but a privation that, together

with a disposition and participating in the power and activity of this disposition, assumes "the part of the contrary". It is neither a complete privation, nor simple contrary to the good, but subcontrary to it.' With an oblique reference to Aristotle, Proclus emphasizes his own nuanced theory of evil: 'To those who are accustomed to listen attentively to what he says it is clear that παρυπόστασις is what is really meant.'[88] In order to explain change Aristotle distinguished between privation and the material substrate. Matter is a joint cause, with form, of what comes to be: 'But the other part of the contrariety may often seem, if you concentrate your attention on it as an evil agent (κακοποιός), not to exist at all.'[89]

In the concluding paragraphs of *DMS* Proclus considers the dilemma of evil versus providence, anticipating a standard objection of modern atheism: 'If there is evil, how will it not stand in the way of that which is providential towards the good? On the other hand, if providence fills the universe, how can there be evil in beings?'[90] Proclus notes that some thinkers adhere to one or other line of reasoning, denying either universal providence or the existence of evil. It is a question which troubles the soul (*inquietat animam*) and he aims to find a solution which will harmonize both points of view. It is to be found in Proclus' fundamental position that evil does not exist autonomously as a substance or essence in itself, but as an immanent lack that inheres in an intrinsically good entity. Proclus reconciles the reality of evil with divine providence by referring to the parasitic status of evil, and the action of secondary causes. The existence of evil is dependent upon the reality of what is primarily good in itself. Insofar as it ultimately derives from providence it is good; it is evil insofar as it is influenced by something in the realm of lower causes. A being that in one respect is evil may appear good.[91]

Dionysius on Evil

It would be difficult to exaggerate the influence of Proclus on Dionysius and, consequently, his indirect impact on Aquinas' theory of evil.[92] Aquinas was convinced that the author of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*

was the convert of St Paul, hence his writings had near-apostolic authority. His treatment of evil was in fact a farrago of passages culled from Proclus' treatise on evil substances. It is unfortunate that Aquinas was not aware of Dionysius' source, and could not benefit from the masterly treatment of the topic by Proclus.

Dionysius' discussion of evil is found in chapter 4 of his treatise *On the Divine Names* (*DN*), devoted to the primary names of God: goodness, beauty, and love. The question inevitably arises: if God is essential goodness itself, its plenitude and perfection, how can evil be present and operative in creation? At the end of the discussion on the positive names of God, Dionysius introduces a long deviation on the meaning of evil. One commentator had remarked that Dionysius has discussed the problem of evil 'at wearisome length'.[93] Indeed Dionysius himself admits that his treatment is repetitive.[94] The long section (*DN* 4, 18–35) fits badly into the chapter. Aquinas failed to notice the discontinuity of style and uneven nature of the chapter, the textual inconsistency involved, and the disproportionate importance given by Dionysius to evil in the chapter on divine names. What should have been a brief contrast with goodness and beauty became a lengthy excursus occupying a little more than half the chapter. It is highly likely that Dionysius had his own copy of Proclus' treatise *DMS*, which explains his excessive reliance upon it as a source. What he offers is an ill-styled paraphrase, altered so as to accommodate a few basic doctrinal changes. The style and method of this entire section jars with the rest of his treatise.

After Aristotle and Augustine, Dionysius is the next most frequently cited author in *QDM* 1. In the discussion of *malum* he is quoted fourteen times: seven in objections, once in a *sed contra*, once in a *corpus*, and five times in replies. In the discussion of *culpa et pena* he is cited only twice: once in an objection of no great significance, but decisively in the body of art. 5 for the assertion that 'suffering punishment is not evil, but being worthy of punishment is'.[95]

Having considered the divine names of goodness, beauty, and love, Dionysius raises the objection: if God is the infinite and universal object of desire, why does not the multitude of demons

desire the beautiful and good, but having lost their original identity as angels declined into matter, and become a cause of evil to themselves and others? Created good, how could they become evil? What caused them to change? The question of the demons leads Dionysius to repeat a series of clear questions: 'What in fact is evil itself? From what origin did it arise? In what beings does it reside?'[96] Further questions follow: Why did the Good cause evil? Having wished it, how could he produce it? More fundamentally, asks Dionysius: If there is another cause for evil, how can anything other than the Good be a cause? If Providence exists, how can evil exist; how can it have arisen and not be destroyed? And how can anything desire evil rather than the Good? Commenting on these questions, Aquinas notes that Dionysius follows a similar approach to Augustine, who states that one must first ask what evil is, and then whence it arises.[97]

Drawing heavily on Proclus, Dionysius developed a metaphysics of evil as a counterpoint to the Neoplatonic ontology of the Good. He follows loosely the order of *DMS*. Responding to the question, what is evil, he stipulates the advance premise that, since everything existing is good, evil cannot exist in itself: it is not therefore a substance but the opposite, namely the privation of a good which properly befits a being. It inheres in or latches onto a reality from whose integrity it detracts by its presence. It is thus not a positive existent.[98] As goodness is the source of being and fulfillment, evil is the source of damage and destruction.[99] Since everything that exists derives from the absolute Good, which cannot be the cause of its opposite, evil as such can have no proper reality in itself.

Regarding the origin of evil, Dionysius states that 'its origin is due to a defect rather than to a capacity'.[100] To the question why God allows evil, he replies that divine providence permits evil for the sake of the common good: 'Providence even makes good use of evil effects to turn these or others to good use individually and collectively.'[101] Evil thus contributes to the overall order of the cosmos. What is evil from a particular perspective may contribute to the greater universal order. Aquinas, however, could not endorse this latter aspect of Dionysius' theory, as it conflicts with Christian

teaching. Such a banal interpretation, akin to Stoicism, is more in accord with Plotinus' teaching that a particular evil contributes to the overall good.

On its location and how it acts, Dionysius excludes evil, grade by grade, from every level of reality, including matter.[102] In this he differs from Plotinus, since Dionysius does not regard matter as evil in itself. Evil cannot act on its own, since it has no independent existence. Instead it interferes with the proper action of its host, impeding the latter's action: it is not an efficient, but rather a deficient cause.[103]

Dionysius is concerned with the essence, origin, location, and possibility of evil, and whether it is consistent with divine providence. Replying to these questions Dionysius proceeds, as Josef Stiglmayr remarks, more in full rhetorical flow than in logical order.[104] Dionysius exhorts his readers to 'look to the truth of things'[105] — a variation of Proclus' 'aspicere ad rerum ypostasim'.[106] His opening response to the question of evil is to state axiomatically: 'Evil does not come from the Good. If it were from the Good it would not be evil.'[107] It is contradictory to suppose that Goodness is the source of evil.

The impossibility of evil is linked, according to Dionysius, to the conditions and demands of existence. Goodness and Being are reciprocally and intrinsically related: goodness coincides with being. Evil, on the other hand, has no being and can therefore not derive from the Good. The Good can cause only goodness, Being can cause only being; since evil has no being it has no power to produce anything. It survives and endures in dependence upon the reality from which it detracts; it draws its power from the subject in which it resides as defect, weakness and aberration. It is not complete privation, since that would render the subject totally powerless. Evil is privation which survives only in dependence upon the good. Dionysius examines the various levels of reality to show that evil abides in none. He concludes that evil has no subsistence of its own, but survives by inhering in a being that has positive existence. It only has accidental existence.[108] He adopts Proclus' term παρυπόστασις to describe this mode of dependent

existence. The concept of evil as parasitic provided him with a solution to the difficulties arising from the reality of evil, including the apparent conflict with Providence. The definition of evil as *privatio boni* is one of Dionysius' prime legacies to Aquinas.

Aquinas' use of Dionysius

In his commentary on *On the Divine Names* Aquinas provided an exhaustive analysis of Dionysius' theory of evil. There are only scattered references in *QDM*, yet these suffice to convey Dionysius' core doctrine. They may be summarized as follows.

1. Evil is the privation of good. Aquinas refers to Dionysius in explaining the existential status of evil. Evil does not exist as a subject in itself, but as a privation in an existing subject.[109] Evil is in the good not as a positive reality, but as the lack or absence in a being of a good that is its natural due.[110] To define evil as privation is simultaneously to state that it has no separate, independent, reality. In the opening objection of *QDM* 1, 2, Aquinas cites virtually verbatim Dionysius' statement that evil is neither an existing thing nor in existing things. The objection argues that since every existing thing is good, and since there can be no evil in goodness, there cannot be any evil in existing things; hence there is no evil in good.[111] Aquinas no doubt agrees with this statement from Dionysius, but not with the implication of the objection, that is, that evil has no reality whatsoever, or that evil does not somehow exist in dependence upon the good. Aquinas' position, relying on Dionysius, is that evil has the reality of a privation which inheres in a positively good subject. He explains the ambiguity latent in the objection: when Dionysius says that evil is not in an existing thing, he means it is not a positively existing reality but does not exclude that it exists as a privation in a subject.

In article 1, Aquinas had referred (without mentioning its Aristotelian source) to the distinction between an autonomously existing subject and an inherent characteristic or quality. This distinction is indispensable for Dionysius' view that evil is privation rather than a real being. Aquinas emphasizes that it is

important to distinguish between the positive ground, in virtue of which something is a real subject, and the evil in it which is not something real, but the privation of a particular good.[112] Expressed differently, the subject in which evil occurs 'is something; yet evil itself is not something (*aliquid*), but the privation of some particular good'.[113]

St Thomas was aware of the historical difficulty arising from the failure of Platonism to recognize the distinction between matter and privation.[114] Aquinas, following Aristotle, distinguishes between the two, and can thus explain the privation that is proper to matter. Material beings are all characterized by privation in a secondary, accidental, sense, but cannot be essentially identified as privation itself. Prime matter, devoid of determination and perfection, is a theoretically abstracted principle that must be posited at the origin of all material bodies in order to make sense of substantial change. Prime matter may potentially be determined by countless forms, but never exists as such in total potency: it is always determined by one form or another. It is true that, determined by one form, it is deprived of all others. It cannot be identified with privation as such, because it is never totally deprived: it only ever exists together with a determining form. Matter is not privation as such, since it is always determined by some form or other. In Aquinas' view, the Platonist equation of privation with matter prohibited a satisfactory solution to the question of evil.

In common with the authors whom we have examined, Aquinas maintains that, since evil is a privation and not an autonomous subject, it can only survive by inhering in an existing good. In an objection[115] to this position Aquinas cites Dionysius' teaching[116] that evil is neither an existing reality nor does it exist in things: since every existing thing is good, and there can be no evil in goodness, likewise there can be no evil in existing things. It is therefore obvious that there is no evil in good. In his reply, Aquinas explains the ambiguity implicit in the objection. When he says that evil is not in an existing thing, Dionysius means that it is not a positive reality existing of itself in a subject; evil is rather a privation in a subject.

2. Evil things are caused by good. Aquinas appeals to Dionysius to support the view that evil things ultimately derive their entire reality from goodness. He invokes Dionysius' authority in the *sed contra* statement of *QDM* 1, a. 3: 'The source and end of all evils is good'.[117] As universal cause, the Good is the source of all things, including the deficiencies of being. Dionysius is cited to contrary purpose in an objection: 'Evil does not come from good, and whatever comes from good is not evil.'[118] In his reply Aquinas explains that, according to Dionysius, the good is not the intrinsic cause of evil but rather, as stated later in the same chapter, its accidental cause.[119] The good cannot be the direct source of evil, since they are opposites and nothing can cause its contrary. That is the sense in which Dionysius cites Matt. 7:18: 'A good tree cannot bear evil fruit.'[120] The good may however be the accidental cause of evil.

Aquinas refers to Dionysius in clarifying how it is possible for the Good to be the ultimate source of evil. St Thomas wishes to affirm that the Good is the cause of all things, and to remove any suggestion of a separate cause of existence for evil things. God, he explains, is the universal cause of all things, even those that are deficient.[121] With his definition of evil as *privatio boni*, Aquinas is able to meet the objection that the existence of evil entails that God does not exist. Beings are evil insofar as they are deficient, but good because they possess (in limited measure) the perfection of being. If entirely deprived of goodness they would not exist. Paradoxically this means that since evil things exist, we must affirm the existence of goodness; it is this differentiation of good and evil that in *CG* allows Aquinas to proclaim: '*Si malum est, Deus est*.' There Aquinas refers to the objection reported by Boethius: '*Si Deus est, unde malum*?'[122] Since evils occur in the world, there can be no God. Aquinas replies: 'But it could be argued to the contrary: if evil exists, God exists. For, there would be no evil if the order of good were taken away, since its privation is evil. But this order would not exist if there were no God.'[123] Whatever power evil has, it draws from the good in which it parasitically resides. As Dionysius states in *DN* 4, 32, evil things are not totally evil in

every respect; whatever is totally lacking in goodness has no being or power. Thus evil draws from the host in which it dwells the very power with which it opposes that same subject.

Since evil has no positive existence, but is the privation of a perfection due to an actual entity, its 'activity' is likewise parasitic upon the agency of its host. In reply to another objection in *QDM* Aquinas interprets Dionysius: 'Evil as such corrupts, but it causes something to come to be insofar as it retains some good in it, not insofar as it is evil.'[124] To explain the 'causality' of evil, Aquinas combines the perspectives of Aristotle and Dionysius. An objection in Q. 1, art. 3 argues that since the good may *per accidens* cause evil, its causality extends to evil itself.[125] To illustrate accidental causality the objection cites Aristotle's example of someone digging a hole and accidentally finding a treasure.[126] In his reply Aquinas clarifies that accidental causation may be viewed either from the point of view of the cause (*ex parte causae*) or the point of view of the effect (*ex parte effectus*). Using the example of a builder, he explains (from the point of view of the cause) that if the builder is musical, we may say that a musician is the accidental cause of the house; if, quite independently of the builder's activity, the house turns out to be lucky or unlucky, although it is true to say that the builder is the accidental cause of an unlucky house, we cannot say that his causality extends to the misfortunes that befall the house.[127] In this sense, Aquinas explains, 'the action of the good does not extend to an evil result'.[128] He reinforces the point with an appeal to Dionysius: 'It is for this reason that Dionysius says in his work *On the Divine Names* that evil is not only contrary to the intention but also contrary to the course [of action] since motion does not of itself have evil as its goal.'[129] It is interesting that Aquinas adds Aristotle's concept of *motus* to Dionysius' text to bring out the notion of intrinsic and immanent finality. In an objection introducing article 5, Aquinas refers to similar statements.[130]

Aquinas' opening argument in the corpus of art. 3, that only the good can be cause of evil, combines elements from Aristotle and Dionysius. Adopting Aristotle's terminology he points out

that evil cannot have an intrinsic (*per se*) cause, but can occur only through accidental (*per accidens*) causality. As the discovery of a treasure by the gravedigger is beyond his intention (*praeter intentionem*) and therefore accidental, similarly, since evil cannot be directly intended or desired — otherwise it would be the same as goodness — it must lie beyond intention and desire. It can only be the unintended consequence of a perceived good. The remainder of Aquinas' account echoes Dionysius:

> Evil as such cannot be intended, nor in any way willed or desired, since being desirable has the nature of good, to which evil as such is contrary. And so we see that no person does any evil except intending something that seems good to the person. . . And so it remains that evil does not have an intrinsic (*per se*) cause.[131]

3. Primacy of goodness.[132] In article 2, which asks whether evil exists in good, Aquinas follows the reasoning of Dionysius in allowing that goodness has a certain priority before being.[133] This reasoning, I suggest, is questionable. It seems a concession to Dionysius, a rare case where Aquinas bows to the putative disciple of St Paul.[134] Aquinas' reasoning is that prime matter, devoid of determination, is ordained as potency towards actual fulfillment. He explains Dionysius' suggestion that goodness has greater extension than being as referring to the wider scope of goodness as final cause. This is to exploit an ambiguity in the meaning of goodness: besides referring to what is actual, it may also convey the attractiveness of what, as potential, still remains to be actualized. The good attracts that which is not yet actual, thus embracing the potential as well as the actual. This primacy, however, is only apparent. What is potential only has conceptual meaning in relation to what is actually in existence, and its desirability is only in prospect of it becoming actual. We may recall that its lack of form and determination is exactly why Plotinus regarded matter as essentially evil.

Authorities Compared

To the question, which is the most important authority for Aquinas' definition of evil in *QDM*, there are three possible answers.

(a) As the a priori foundation of all theological truth, the Bible is without qualification Aquinas' most authoritative source. Scripture, however, does not enter into the argumentation of *QDM* 1, but serves as a foil to explain particular points, or as pretext for supposed objections. As an explicit authority Scripture is cited twice in *sed contra* statements, once in response to an objection, but surprisingly in no less than ten opening counter arguments. Scripture is an important source not just for its obvious authority but, as the devil quotes the Bible for his own purposes, Aquinas recognizes that certain phrases may be suitably quoted in apparent contradiction of his own position. These he proceeds to interpret in their proper context by subtle analysis and distinction.

(b) If numerical frequency is the measure of authority, then Aristotle with twenty nine references is Aquinas' most important philosophical source in *QDM* 1, aa. 1–3. Eighteen occur in objections, two in a corpus (aa. 1–2), but a significant eight in replies. There is only one *sed contra* appeal to Aristotle. He features less in the discussion on *culpa et pena*, where he is cited in four objections and just once in a reply. Aristotle's influence in the first three articles, however, is far greater than suggested by frequency of citation.

(c) If the criterion for authority is explicit appeal as evidenced by *sed contra* statements, Augustine may be considered Aquinas' most important source in *QDM* 1. Compared to Aristotle's single *sed contra* appearance, Augustine features nine times, albeit once erroneously in a reference to *On Faith, to Peter*, established later as a work by Fulgentius of Ruspe. The overall importance of both Aristotle and Augustine is clear from the fact that Aquinas refers to each approximately 500 times in the entire *quaestio*.

To assess adequately the relative importance of the three suggested authorities, a more nuanced comparison than that of numerical frequency is required. It is important to distinguish between allusions in counter arguments, *sed contra* statements, the *corpus* of articles, and replies to objections. We may largely discount references in the preliminary objections, since these are generally quotations deliberately quoted out of context to bolster an objection conjured up by Aquinas. While not properly pertaining to his doctrine, the opening objections reveal his detailed knowledge of the works concerned, and the replies provide valuable clarifications of his position and attitude to sources. Confining, however, our count to 'positive' allusions, we note that there are fifteen references to Augustine, eleven to Aristotle, and eight to Dionysius. For the first three articles, dealing with the substantive question of *malum*, the comparison between Aristotle and Augustine is particularly interesting. Augustine is cited six times in *sed contra* statements, and only twice in the *corpus* of an article or reply; by contrast Aristotle is only invoked once *sed contra*, but nine times in the body of articles and in replies. It is noteworthy that in the lengthy corpus of art. 3, where Aquinas explains that evil is ultimately caused by the good, Augustine is cited only on a minor point. Thus it seems that while Augustine is invoked as the premier authority, Aristotle provides the logical and metaphysical vocabulary for Aquinas' argumentation. Of the nine positive references to Augustine in the substantive discussion of evil in the first three articles, six are in *sed contra* declarations, and only three enter into the fabric of Aquinas' argumentation. Aristotle is cited only once in *sed contra* support, but a total of nine times in Aquinas' analysis of *malum* as *privatio boni*.

The relatively few references to Dionysius — eight in total — do not reflect his importance for Aquinas in *QDM* 1. While he never wrote a commentary on a work by Augustine, Aquinas had years earlier written a close commentary on *On the Divine Names*. As a student he heard Albert's commentary on the complete *Corpus Areopagiticum*. He was intimately familiar with Dionysian thought, which deeply influenced his vision of the

universe. Dionysius strongly influenced the discussion of evil in the *Summa Theologiae*. St Thomas prefaces his definition of evil in the opening article of *ST* I, q. 48 with a *sed contra* statement from Dionysius: 'Evil is neither an existent nor a good.'[135] It is to Dionysius, moreover, that he refers the definition of evil as *quaedam absentia boni*, which he explains in the following manner. We learn about one opposite from the other (e. g. night and day), hence knowledge of the good is necessary to understand the meaning of evil.[136] The good, Aquinas continues, is that which all things desire,[137] and since what things most fundamentally desire is their existence and perfection, evil which is the opposite of goodness cannot refer to any real existence, form or nature. Evil must therefore be understood as the absence of good.[138] A survey of allusions in *ST* I, q. 48, aa. 1–4, which correspond thematically to the *QDM* 1, aa. 1–3, reveals that Dionysius occupies a greater status in the *ST* than in the *Quaestio*. As well as the *sed contra* statement (absent from *QDM*), he is mentioned in two objections, twice in the body of the article, and twice in replies to objections. With two *sed contra* references Augustine exerts more authority *sensu stricto*, but is otherwise limited to two objections.

It is especially remarkable that Aquinas omits all mention of Augustine in his lucid treatment of evil in *CG* 3, cc. 4–15. Some aspects of his doctrine are expressed, most importantly the distinction that evil has not an efficient, but a deficient cause.[148] Augustine is certainly the main source for Manichean doctrines with which Aquinas is primarily concerned, but he is nowhere mentioned by name. Aristotle is frequently cited, and there are three significant references to Dionysius. Given the pagan audience for whom the work was intended, Aquinas prudently tailored his text *ad modum recipientis*, omitting any mention of the Bishop of North Africa.

7

Aquinas on Pseudo-Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchy*

Dionysius the Areopagite was, after Scripture, Aquinas' most revered authority. In his early commentary on the *Sentences* St Thomas asserts that Dionysius 'was a disciple of Paul and is said to have written down his visions'.[1] He referred elsewhere to *beatus Dionysius*.[2] His belief in the quasi-apostolic authority of Dionysius remained constant throughout his life, up to his final treatise *On Spiritual Substances* where, having discussed the opinions of Plato and Aristotle, he states: 'It remains to show what the teaching of the Christian religion holds about each individual point. For this purpose, we shall use especially the writings of Dionysius who excelled all others in teaching what pertains to spiritual substances.'[3] Aquinas inherited the belief in Dionysius' Pauline authority from his teacher Albert the Great, who ascribed to Dionysius' *Mystical Theology* an importance equal to that of Scripture which, received through divine inspiration, contains no falsehood but is grounded in unshaken truth (*divina inspiratione, cui non potest subesse falsum, et indubitata veritate firmatur*).[4]

Despite the unmasking of his quasi-apostolic identity, the personality and works of the pseudonymous Dionysius remain forever a mystery. The author is as enigmatic as his literary corpus. The words of a late nineteenth-century scholar still hold: 'Like an Egyptian Sphinx, the spirit of these works loosed a centuries-long

enigma, and the veil has still not been lifted.'[5] Dionysius' exquisite style chimes with the sublime content of his writings. Joannes Sarracenus confessed that in translating *The Celestial Hierarchy* he was 'unable to express in Latin the elegances of diction of such an extraordinarily cultured and eloquent author'.[6] Centuries later Nicholas of Cusa referred to the 'disciple of the Apostle Paul . . . greatest seeker of divine things' (*maximus ille divinorum scrutator*).[7]

Besides writing an extensive and perceptive commentary on *The Divine Names*, Aquinas cited Dionysius more than 1700 times throughout his writings, referring almost nine hundred times to *The Divine Names*, and half that number again to *The Celestial Hierarchy*.[8] The former discusses the biblical names of God, the latter considers the biblical depiction of the angels. Thomas did not write a commentary on *The Celestial Hierarchy*, but his frequent use of the text, either as an authority or to explicate a point of doctrine, illustrates the importance he attributed to the shorter treatise. These references occur in the widest possible range of contexts, but relate primarily to transcendent (divine and angelic) realities. In this essay I refer, firstly, to Aquinas' reading of *The Celestial Hierarchy* on the ascent of knowledge from the material to the spiritual domain and, secondly, his interpretation of hierarchy both as a global principle of universal order and as the graded distinction between the angelic orders.

Drawing on Dionysius as authoritative source, Aquinas unwittingly absorbed significant Neoplatonist teachings. Dionysius had discovered a pagan equivalent of the doctrine of angels in Proclus' theory of quasi-divine intelligences which, with modification, he identified with the angels of Christianity. The alignment of Christian doctrine with Neoplatonist teaching was partly ready made by Dionysius, who — unbeknownst to Aquinas — had borrowed much from Proclus. As Joseph Ratzinger notes: 'Pseudo-Dionysius reinterpreted the world view of Proclus in a Christian sense, transformed his polytheism into the teaching about choirs of angels, and became, with his negative theology, one of the fathers of Christian mysticism.'[9]

In the opening chapter of his treatise *De Substantiis Separatis* Aquinas interprets as angels all creatures which in the world of the Platonists span the gap between the material world and God:

> In this way, therefore, between us and the highest God, it is clear that they posited four orders, namely, that of the secondary gods, that of the separate intellects, that of the heavenly souls, and that of the good or wicked demons. If all these things were true (*si vera essent*), then all these intermediate orders would be called by us 'angels', for Sacred Scripture refers to the demons themselves as angels. The souls themselves of the heavenly bodies, on the assumption that these are animated, should also be numbered among the angels, as Augustine determines in the *Enchiridion*.[10]

To reinterpret the intellectual beings of Neoplatonism as angels was in keeping with Aquinas' emphasis that angelic knowledge is essentially intellectual, which he frequently contrasted with rational human knowledge. Given their intellectual and spiritual nature, it was easy for Aquinas to identify the intelligences of Neoplatonism with the angels of Christian doctrine.

Aquinas merited the name of 'Angelic Doctor', not for the ethereal subtlety of his physical form, but for his devotion to the order of spiritual intelligences. (Bonaventure was known as *Doctor Seraphicus*.) St Thomas championed the existence of angels as necessary for the completeness of the universe: a perfect universe requires the existence of purely intellectual, immaterial, creatures between humans and God, otherwise there would be a hiatus in the graded scale of created perfection.[11] For Ockham, by contrast, the existence of angels was a matter of faith.

To illustrate the importance for Christian theology of the treatise on the celestial hierarchy we may recall the passage from the Canon of the Mass: *Quam laudant Angeli atque Archangeli, Cherubim quoque ac Seraphim: qui non cessant clamare quotidie, una voce dicentes: Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabbaoth, Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis. Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini, Hosanna in excelsis.*

The two sources for this ordering of the angelic hosts are Pseudo-Dionysius and Pope Gregory the Great (540–604).[12] Although he lived only a generation after the author of the *Celestial Hierarchy* (whose *terminus post quem* is dated from the death of Proclus, † 485), Gregory accepted the ancient provenance of his writings, referring to the Areopagite as *antiquus et venerabilis pater*,[13] an indication if ever of the rapidity with which the *Corpus Dionysiacum* acquired canonical status. Gregory had most likely in his possession the treatises of Dionysius, having spent six years as *apocrisiarius* (nuncio) in Constantinople.[14] Gregory's teaching dominated angelology up to the 12th century. David Luscombe explains: 'Denis's writings circulated among the clergy and the religious in Byzantium, and translations were made into Syriac, Armenian, and Arabic. Although his works were translated into Latin by 835 [by Hilduin], they were cited in the West only rarely before the twelfth century.'[15] By the thirteenth century, the situation had changed. Aquinas could choose between a number of improved translations, especially that of Sarracenus. Crucially he was influenced by his teacher Albert the Great, who introduced him to a close reading of the Dionysian corpus.

In his homily on the parable of the woman with nine drachmas Gregory discourses on the nine[16] orders of angels: 'I spoke of nine ranks of angels. We know from sacred Scripture that there are Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Dominations, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim.'[17] He refers to Dionysius' teaching on the status of those angels who intervene in human history:

> It is related that Denys the Areopagite, an ancient and venerable father, says that those who are sent forth, either visibly or invisibly, to carry out some function, are from among the lesser bands of angels, because either angels or archangels come to give comfort to human beings. The higher bands never withdraw from God, since those which are pre-eminent never have any external function.[18]

While grounded firmly in Scripture, Gregory elaborates his doctrine of angels in the light of Dionysius' interpretation.

Dionysius opens *The Celestial Hierarchy* with a verse from James the apostle which echoes and endorses the Platonist tradition of the gift and inspiration of light: 'Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights.' (James 1:17)[19] The introductory paragraph is a précis of the entire Neoplatonic design of the universe, which provided in turn the dynamic structure for Aquinas' *Summa*: its immanence in the divine plenitude, outward procession, and final return to its origin. It is significant that Dionysius begins his treatise *The Celestial Hierarchy* by enunciating the universal architectonic principle of *exitus* and *reditus*, i. e. the emanation of the cosmos from the supremely transcendent One and return to its fontal source. Latent but operative in this schema is the programmatic principle expressed in principle 35 of Proclus' *Elements*: 'Every effect remains in its cause, proceeds from it, and returns to it.' [20]

All things unfold from the unique and infinite plenitude of the divine origin into a multiplicity of participating creatures, each of which harbours an intrinsic desire to ascend and be reunited to its creative cause. The latter impulse is reflected in knowledge through the hidden power of material objects to raise us to a knowledge of spiritual realities and ultimately of their divine origin. Just as there is a gradation of perfection among creatures from the highest to the lowest, so the inverse discovery of God passes through a phased ascent from the material through the spiritual to divine reality. Angels, the immaterial beings which occupy the most elevated level among creatures, are known indirectly by analogy with material objects; in turn they have a revelatory function in disclosing to human knowledge, in limited measure, something of God's nature.

Dionysius expounds the verse of the apostle cited at the start of the treatise: 'Inspired by the Father, each procession of the Light spreads itself generously toward us, and, in its power to unify, it stirs us by lifting us up. It returns us back to the oneness and deifying simplicity of the Father who gathers us in. For, as the sacred Word says, "from him and to him are all things".'[21] The divine good is of its nature self-giving (121B: ἀγαθοπρεπῶς πληθυνομένη καὶ προϊοῦσα) but remains always ineradicably

self-united and complete. Here are expressed the emanation and return of the created universe, and the divine enlightenment which leads us back to a union with the transcendent source.

Dionysius invokes Jesus, 'Light of the Father', to help us contemplate the hierarchies of the celestial intelligences (121A: τῶν οὐρανίων νοῶν ἱεραρχίας) which are revealed for our upward elevation (121B: ἀναγωγή, ἀναγωγικῶς). Calling upon Jesus, he exhorts: 'To the best of our abilities, we should raise our eyes to the paternally transmitted enlightenment coming from sacred scripture and, as far as we can, we should behold the intelligent hierarchies of heaven in accordance with what scripture has revealed to us in symbolic and uplifting fashion.'[22] The author's stated purpose is to explain how it is possible for mortals to describe and understand the manner in which angels are revealed in Scripture. Although he asserts that we can only know divine realities through revelation, he interprets such knowledge in Neoplatonist terms; he has accordingly been characterized as both a Platonizing Christian and a Christianizing Platonist.[23]

Hierarchy is the divinely established order by which creatures are arranged according to their proximity to God. Occupying the highest rank, angels as purely spiritual creatures surpass our knowledge and can be known only indirectly. We are bodily beings, our cognition rooted in material reality; all knowledge begins in the senses but is invested with a supervenient meaning, hence the need for symbolic or figurative thought and language. This is the strategy employed by Scripture; the Father of Light 'through figurative symbols reveals to us the most blessed hierarchies of the angels'.[24] Knowledge of angels points in turn to knowledge of God; from them we rise 'with immaterial and steadfast eyes of the mind to the primal splendour of the divine origin itself'.[25]

God's mystery is such that he can enlighten us only if he remains hidden by a variety of veils that are suited to our nature: 'This divine ray can enlighten us only by being upliftingly concealed in a variety of sacred veils which the Providence of the Father adapts to our nature as human beings.'[26] Likewise our knowledge of angelic pure intelligences can only be expressed through material symbols.

Notable is Dionysius' emphasis on the empirical origin and nature of knowledge, which he also understands as a generous gift of God.[27] According to Dionysius, physical appearances of beauty are images of invisible loveliness (121D: τὰ μὲν φαινόμενα κάλλη τῆς ἀφανοῦς εὐπρεπείας ἀπεικονίσματα); beautiful odours are figures of intelligible diffusion (ἐκτυπώματα τῆς νοητῆς διαδόσεως); material lights are images for the gift of immaterial light (καὶ τῆς ἀΰλου φωτοδοσίας εἰκόνα τὰ ὑλικὰ φῶτα). The entire physical universe symbolically mirrors the supernatural realm: 'Order and rank here below are a sign of the harmonious ordering toward the divine realm. . . And so it goes for all the gifts transcendently received by the beings of heaven, gifts which are granted to us in a symbolic mode' (121D–124A).[28] Out of love for mankind, wishing to make us godlike, God revealed the heavenly hierarchies to us (124A: τὰς οὐρανίας ἱεραρχίας ἡμῖν ἀναφαίνουσα) in a manner proportionate to our nature. 'He revealed all this to us in the sacred pictures of the scriptures so that he might lift us in spirit up through the perceptible to the conceptual, from sacred shapes and symbols to the simple peaks of the hierarchies of heaven.' (124A)[29]

Dionysius' aim in *The Celestial Hierarchy* is to examine the manner in which angels are depicted in Scripture. He states: 'I must describe the sacred forms given to these heavenly ranks by scripture, for one has to be lifted up through such shapes to the utter simplicity of what is there.'[30] Since they are immaterial beings, the question arises how they can be known and named by humans whose cognitive activity is rooted in sense experience. A similar question arises regarding our knowledge of God, hence Aquinas' frequent references to Dionysius' approach to angels when dealing with language and thought about God.

Contrasting the Old and New Testaments Dionysius pithily remarked in *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*: 'The one wrote truth by way of images, while the other described things as they happened.'[31] Chapter 2 of *The Celestial Hierarchy* examines the images used in Scripture to refer to angels and God. Dionysius' main purpose is to defend the use of symbols, especially those which seem inappropriate or offensive. We should not impiously

believe, with the uneducated masses, he states, that the heavenly and godlike intelligences are many-footed and many-faced, are modelled on the stupidity of oxen or ferocity of lions, or that they have the curved beak of an eagle or the wings and feathers of a bird (137A). Scripture, Dionysius suggests, uses poetic imagery to depict formless intelligences (137B: ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσχηματίστων νοῶν) in a way that is suited to our mind (τὸν καθ' ἡμᾶς νοῦν). Its aim is to lift us up in a way that befits our nature; the word used by Dionysius, ἀναγωγή, expresses the function of theology in raising up or elevating human nature.

Dionysius considers the objection that it is incongruous to depict angels, who are intrinsically simple, unknown and inconceivable (137B: τῶν ἁπλῶν ἐφ' ἑαυτῶν ἀγνώστων τε καὶ ἀθεωρήτων ἡμῖν ὑπαρχόντων), by means of images. Would it not have been more appropriate to attribute to them forms akin to their nature, drawn from the most honourable, immaterial, and transcendent realities, instead of ascribing to what is utterly simple and godlike a muliplicity of the lowliest earthly forms?[32] Absurd unlikenesses (137C: ἀπεμφαινούσας ἀνομοιότητας) lead us towards what is absurd, counterfeit and emotional, whereas genuine 'dissimilar similarities' (ἀνόμοιοι ὁμοιότητες) truly reveal the divinity.[33]

In his reply Dionysius gives two reasons why forms are attributed to what is formless, and shapes to the shapeless. Firstly, we lack the capacity to directly ascend to intellectual visions and thus need an uplift suited to our nature to raise us to the forms of the shapeless and marvelous sights.[34] Secondly, it is proper for the mysteries of scripture that the sacred and secret truth of the celestial intelligences be hidden from the common crowd, since not everyone is holy and, as Scripture states, not everyone has knowledge.[35] To the accusation of incongruous representation, that it is shameful to ascribe base forms to the divine and holy ranks, Dionysius explains that divine revelation operates a double strategy, using both images which bear a true likeness to divine beings, as well as unlike forms that are dissimilar and absurd.[36] Examples of the first kind of names are 'Word', 'Mind', and 'Being' (ὡς λόγον καὶ νοῦν καὶ οὐσίαν): these reveal God's rationality and

wisdom, and that as subsisting existence he is cause of beings; he is portrayed as light, and praised as life. [37] These names, Dionysius acknowledges, while more honourable and vastly superior to those drawn from the material world, are likewise deficient, since God transcends all existence and life; no light can represent him; reason and intellect are incomparably deficient in their resemblance.[38]

Scripture also praises God through negative names such as 'invisible', 'infinite', and 'unlimited', and other designations which show not what he is, but what he is not.[39] This approach, Dionysius states, is more authoritative (κυριώτερόν) since, in accordance with the secret and sacred tradition, God in no way resembles any of the things that exist, and we have no knowledge of his supra-existential, incomprehensible, and unspeakable infinitude.[40] Negations regarding divine matters are therefore true while affirmations are unsuited to the secrets of the ineffable; it is more fitting that invisible realities be revealed through dissimilar representations.[41] Rather than degrade the heavenly ranks by describing them through unlikely resemblances, scripture conveys how much they transcend all things material. Incongruities, he suggests, will lift up our mind more than the similarities. Noble images could delude us with a false knowledge of the heavenly realm, which is why the sacred writers wisely introduced 'unseemly dissimilarities' (ἀπεμφαινούσας ἀνομοιότητας)[42] in order to incite the mind to rise above base matter. It should also be remembered, Dionysius notes, that there is nothing that is bereft of beauty, as affirmed by Genesis: 'Everything is very good.'[43]

Aquinas and *The Celestial Hierarchy*

Aquinas draws much inspiration and guidance from the early paragraphs of *The Celestial Hierarchy*. As well as noting Dionysius' emphasis on the primacy of negative theology, he cites the treatise on the importance of figurative or metaphoric language as the vehicle which conveys a knowledge of God through his likeness to creatures. The opening lines of *The Celestial Hierarchy* are cited in *ST* I, 9, which deals with the nature of God, specifically

with God's immutability. One of the objections which Aquinas raises against his own position cites the assertion in the Bible that wisdom is more mobile (*mobilior*) than any moving thing (Wisdom 7:24). But since God is wisdom itself, the objection concludes, he is therefore movable. In his reply Aquinas explains that wisdom is called mobile by way of similitude (*similitudinarie*). The ensuing explanation unmistakably conveys the spirit of the opening lines of *The Celestial Hierarchy*, blending the Neoplatonist theories of emanation, hierarchy, similitude and participation with the efficient and formal principles of Aristotelian causality. Aquinas explains:

> To call wisdom mobile is a metaphorical way of saying that wisdom diffuses its likeness even to the outermost of things; for nothing can exist which does not proceed from the divine wisdom by way of some kind of imitation, as from the first efficient and formal principle; as also works of art proceed from the wisdom of the maker. And so in the same way, since the likeness of the divine wisdom proceeds in degrees from the highest things, which participate more fully of its likeness, to the lowest things which participate of it in a lesser degree, there is said to be a kind of procession and movement of the divine wisdom to things; as when we say that the sun proceeds to the earth, inasmuch as the ray of light touches the earth. In this way Dionysius (*CH* 1) expounds the matter, that every procession of the divine manifestation comes to us from the movement of the Father of light.[44]

Aquinas relies heavily on the authority of Dionysius in affirming the valid use of metaphor in speaking about God. He approvingly quotes *CH* 1, that 'the divine glory shows us the angelic hierarchies under certain symbolic figures, and by its power we are brought back to the single ray of light', i. e. to the simple knowledge of the intelligible truth (*in simplicem cognitionem intelligibilis veritatis*).[45] Revealed in figurative images, angels lead us to the knowledge of God who is their original source. The concluding lines of the same paragraph are frequently cited by Aquinas to note the importance

of metaphor in scripture: 'This divine ray can enlighten us only by being upliftingly concealed in a variety of sacred veils which the Providence of the Father adapts to our nature as human beings.'[46] We may note that in Aquinas' view not only natural knowledge, but also revelation uses figurative language about God.

Aquinas' detailed discussions on metaphor in theology occur in his commentary on Book 1 of the *Sentences* (*In I Sent.* 34, 3, 1: *Utrum aliquid debeat dici translative de Deo*) and the first question of *Summa Theologiae* (*ST* I, 1, 9: *Utrum uti debeat metaphoricis vel symbolicis locutionibus*). Dionysius features throughout the discussion: in the initial objections, *Sed Contra* assertions, responses and replies. One of the objections in the commentary on the *Sentences*[47] cites Dionysius' statement that metaphors and symbols are veils of truth and therefore unsuited for use in theology. Acknowledging that truth is revealed according to the capacity of the recipients (*secundum proportionem recipientium*) Aquinas concedes that symbol or metaphor is for some a hindrance rather than a help, either because they would attack it out of impiety, or misunderstand it due to their simplicity. The truth of divine realities must be concealed to preserve its mystery, according to the instruction of Matthew 7, 6: 'Do not give what is holy to dogs.'[48] In the *Sed Contra* of the question Aquinas cites the Areopagite's assertion that the divine radiance can only shine upon us when veiled in a variety of likenesses. He explains: 'The divine ray is the truth of divine realities. It is therefore necessary that the truth of divine realities be presented to us under bodily likenesses.'[49] Aquinas' reply is based entirely on Dionysius, listing four reasons why it is fitting to designate the divine by bodily likenesses. These four reasons, he states, are given at the start of *The Celestial Hierarchy* and in Dionysius' letter to Titus. The primary reason is the lofty nature of the matter, which surpasses our intellectual capacity: we cannot comprehend divine truth as it is in itself, hence it must be presented to us according to our cognitive mode (*secundum modum nostrum*). It is natural for us to come to intelligible reality from sensible realities, as we come to what is

prior from what is posterior; intelligible realities are presented to us under the shape of sensible things, so that the mind may rise from the things which we know to those we do not.[50]

The second reason why the divine is represented through bodily images is the twofold nature of human cognition, both sensitive and intellectual. Divine wisdom has ordained that each should lead us to the divine according to its capacity; he therefore employed corporeal figures which the sensitive part can grasp, since it cannot comprehend the intellectual nature of divine things.[51] The third reason why divine realities are described through bodily likenesses is that we know of God more truly what he is not than what he is. Dionysius states that affirmations regarding divine realities are vague, while negations are true (*Dionysius dicit, quod in divinis affirmationes sunt incompactae, negationes verae*),[52] a statement cited with frequency by Aquinas in his theory of divine names.[53] Since things affirmed of God are to be understood not as they are present in creatures, but by imitation and according to their likeness, God's eminence is made more evident by reference to things that are most clearly removed from him. These are corporeal realities, hence it is more suitable that God be signified by bodily forms, so that the human mind, accustomed to them, might learn that what it affirms of God is affirmed only through a certain likeness, insofar as the creature imitates the creator. A weakness of this argument, it might be objected, is that God is denoted more satisfactorily by the removal of higher realities since these resemble him more closely. Aquinas' point seems to be that all likeness to God is through analogy and imitation, a fact that is more obvious in the case of names drawn from lower things.

The fourth reason given by Aquinas in his Commentary on the *Sentences* as to why divine realities are veiled in corporeal images is that divine truth should remain concealed; the profound mysteries of the faith are to be shielded from derision by infidels and errors of the simple-minded.[54] Aquinas seems to suggest that the obscure character of material symbols preserves the divine mysteries; they do not readily proclaim the truth to all and sundry but require informed interpretation.

In *ST* I, 1, 9 Aquinas also refers to Dionysius when approving the use of metaphor in theology:

> It befits scripture to present divine and spiritual realities under the likenesses of material things. For God provides for all things in a manner suited to their nature. Now it is natural to man to attain to intellectual truths through sensible objects, because all our knowledge has its origin in sense. Hence in sacred scripture, spiritual truths are fittingly taught under the metaphors of material things. This is what Dionysius says (*CH* 1): 'The divine ray cannot enlighten us unless it is hidden within the covering of many sacred veils.' It also befits Sacred Scripture . . . that spiritual truths be presented under bodily likenesses, so that even the simple who are unable to grasp intellectual things in themselves may be able to understand it.[55]

To the objection that theological truths are obscured rather than illuminated by physical likenesses, Aquinas replies:

> The ray of divine revelation is not extinguished by the sensible imagery with which it is veiled, as Dionysius says (*CH* 1); and its truth so far remains that it does not allow the minds of those to whom the revelation has been made, to rest in likenesses, but raises them to the knowledge of intelligible realities; and through those to whom the revelation has been made others also may receive instruction in these matters. Hence those things that are taught metaphorically in one part of Scripture, in other parts are taught more openly (*expressius exponuntur*). The very hiding of truth in figures is useful for the exercise of thoughtful minds and as a defense against the ridicule of the impious, according to the words 'Give not what is holy to dogs.' (Matthew 7:6)[56]

To the objection that representations of God should be taken primarily from higher creatures rather than lower, since they are closer to the divine likeness, Aquinas again cites Dionysius (*CH* 2) that it is more fitting that divine truths be presented under the figures of less noble than of nobler bodies. In support of Dionysius'

position he adduces three reasons, instead of the four offered in his earlier commentary on the *Sentences*. He states, firstly, that men's minds are better preserved from error if divine realities are described in more lowly forms: 'For then it is clear that these things are not literal descriptions of divine truths, which might have been open to doubt had they been expressed under the figure of nobler bodies, especially for those who could think of nothing nobler than bodies.' Secondly, metaphorical images based upon material objects are more in keeping with the knowledge we have of God in this life, since we know more of God what he is not than what he is; similitudes drawn from things furthest away from him convey better that he is above what we may say or think of him. The third reason, stated succinctly, is that when clothed in metaphor, divine truths are better hidden from the unworthy.[57]

Dionysius refers repeatedly to the creaturely terms attributed to God as 'unlike likenesses' or 'dissimilar similitudes'. Aquinas seems to interpret such deficient likeness or similitude simply as metaphor, which he contrasts with the proper likeness of analogy. In his early commentary on Book 2 of the *Sentences* he states:

> The divine properties are shown forth in creatures in two ways. Either they are shown forth according to **likeness of analogy**, as in the case of life, wisdom, and things of this sort, which befit God and creatures analogously. And in this way the divine properties are especially shown in the rational nature. Or they are shown forth according to **likeness of proportion**, insofar as spiritual properties are designated metaphorically by corporeal things (*spirituales proprietates corporalibus metaphorice designantur*). And in this way the divine properties are shown forth in fire, as has been said. But this likeness does make for the character of image. Hence Dionysius calls it an unlike likeness.[58]

In his commentary on Book 3 of the *Sentences* St Thomas writes:

> A created thing's likeness to God is of two sorts. One is according to participation in the divine goodness, just

> as all things partake of life by his living. In this way the rational creature, in whom is found being, living, and understanding, is most like God... Another likeness is according to proportion, as if one were to speak of a likeness between God and fire because just as fire consumes a body, so God consumes wickedness. And this likeness is needed in figurative speech and attributes; in the *Celestial Hierarchy* Dionysius calls this 'unlike likeness'.[59]

The contrast introduced here by Aquinas between likeness through participation and likeness through proportion invites comment. Does not likeness through participation correspond to the measure or proportion by which the creature receives the perfection imparted by God? Likeness by participation could equally be termed 'likeness by proportion'. What Aquinas refers to here as 'likeness according to proportion' is the limited likeness conveyed by metaphor, which is why he refers to it as figurative. It is indeed an 'unlike likeness' since what is conveyed, in the example given, is a pale similarity which conveys the distance between divine light and earthly fire, rather than their intrinsic kinship or similitude. Wisdom and life, on the other hand, are properly attributed both to God and to intelligent creatures, proportionately to the latter, infinitely to the creator. To understand the 'unlike likeness' of metaphor or figurative speech as a likeness of proportion (*similitudo proportionis*), as distinct from likeness of analogy (*similitudo analogiae*), which is the case with goodness, life or intelligence, is curious, since proportion is of the essence of analogy. Greek '*analogia*' is translated as '*proportio*'. There is an immeasurable difference between the attribution of a sensible likeness to God and the predication of such pure perfections as goodness, life and intelligence. The former is metaphoric and extrinsic; the latter intrinsic, analogical, and proportional in the proper sense.

In *ST* I, 88, 2 Aquinas gives his own refined reply to the question whether our intellect can understand immaterial substances from its knowledge of material objects. Against his own view that such knowledge is not possible, he anticipates an objection based on

Dionysius' authority: 'It would seem that our intellect can arrive at a knowledge of immaterial substances through the knowledge of material things. For Dionysius says that "the human mind cannot be raised up to immaterial contemplation of the heavenly hierarchies, unless it follows material guidance in a manner according to its nature". Therefore we can be led by material things to understand immaterial substances.'[60] In his reply Aquinas gives his own moderate position by clarifying Dionysius' intention: 'We can rise from material things to some kind of knowledge of immaterial things, but not to a perfect knowledge because there is not a sufficient proportion (*comparatio*) between material and immaterial realities. Likenesses, if they are taken from material realities in order to understand the immaterial, are very dissimilar, as Dionysius says.'[61] The *Sed Contra* of the question also refers to Dionysius: 'On the other hand, Dionysius says (*DN* 1, 1, 588) that intelligible objects cannot be known by sensible realities, nor simple objects by the composite, or the incorporeal by the corporeal.'[62]

Sensible figures cannot adequately represent the perfection of pure spirits; they denote certain notions, but imperfectly. Thomas draws from this idea of Dionysius, expressed many times, a more general theory of knowledge by analogy, both of God and pure spirits.[63] He clarifies that the relation between the material and immaterial varies according to each degree of being, and corresponding level of knowledge. Human nature, which has to God a resemblance of participation, is more suited to manifesting him than the purely sensible which has only a resemblance of improper (imagined or transferred) proportion. Likewise, our knowledge of angels, while also analogical, is less inadequate because as fellow creatures we are not disproportionately distinct, as both angels and men are from God.

Aquinas on Dionysian Hierarchy

An important concept which framed the background to Dionysius' understanding of angels is the principle of hierarchy, adopted from Proclus. In the global order, every creature occupies its allotted

place, fulfilling a specific function within the scale of beings and thus contributing to the perfection and beauty of the universe. According to the Neoplatonic concepts of hierarchy, unity and harmony, the diversity of creatures is ordered in a vertical scale from higher to lower: God at the summit, with creatures gradually descending in a cascade of decreasing perfection. Central to this conception were the allied principles of continuity and mutual cooperation, according to which the highest degree of the inferior order touches the lowest degree of its superior.[64] Dionysius states: '[Divine wisdom] is the cause of the indissoluble harmony and order of all things, perpetually uniting the ends of primary things to the beginnings of secondary things, thus producing the beauty of unity and harmony in the whole.'[65] Aquinas comments:

> The divine wisdom itself is the cause of concord and order in things in so far as things help each other in an order to the ultimate end; and further God is the cause of the indissolubility of this concord and of this order. . . [T]he ends of the first things, i. e. the lowest of the highest things, always conjoin to the principles of the secondary things, i. e. the highest of the lower things, in that mode in which the highest of corporeal creatures, namely the human body, is united to the lowest of intellectual natures, namely the rational soul. . . And thus is effected the beauty of the universe through one conspiracy, i. e. concord, and harmony, i. e. due order and proportion, of all things.[66]

Dionysius' notion of hierarchy remained a constant motif for Aquinas.[67] In *Contra Gentiles* 2 he wrote: 'We are able to contemplate the marvelous connection of things (*mirabilis rerum connexio*). For it is always found that the lowest in the higher genus touches the highest of the lower species. . . Blessed Dionysius says in his work *On the Divine Names* that 'divine wisdom has united the ends of higher things with the beginnings of the lower'.[68]

In *CH* 4, Dionysius provides a comprehensive statement of the radical origin of the created universe in God's diffusive goodness, as well as the diversity and hierarchy of beings:

> One truth must be affirmed above all else. It is that the transcendent Deity has out of goodness established the existence of everything and brought it into being. It is characteristic of the universal cause, of this goodness beyond all, to summon everything to communion with him to the extent that this is possible. Hence everything in some way partakes of the providence flowing out of this transcendent Deity which is the originator of all that is. Indeed nothing could exist without some share in the being and source of everything. Even the things which have no life participate in this, for it is the transcendent Deity which is the existence of every being. The living, in their turn, have a share in that power which gives life and which surpasses all life. Beings endowed with reason and intelligence have a share in that absolutely perfect, primordially perfect wisdom which surpasses all reason and all intelligence. And, clearly, these latter beings are nearer to God, since their participation in him takes so many forms.[69]

With obvious reference to this passage Aquinas (albeit in an objection) cites Dionysius as distinguishing between four grades of beings: 'intellectual, rational, sensible and simply existing' (*intellectualia, rationalia, sensibilia et simpliciter existentia*).[70] The distinction between intellectual and rational allows Aquinas to distinguish between human and angelic cognition.[71]

In the treatise on *Separated Substances*, having declared his intended reliance on Dionysius as the best guide in the investigation of angels, Aquinas also refers to this paragraph from *The Celestial Hierarchy*:

> First, as to the origin of the spiritual substances, Christian tradition teaches most firmly that all spiritual substances — like all other creatures — were made by God, and this is proved by the authority of the canonical scriptures. For it is said in the Psalms, 'Praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him all his hosts.' And after all the other creatures have been enumerated, it is added, 'For he spoke and they

> were created: he commanded and they were created.' And Dionysius explains this origin finely in the fourth chapter of *CH* (177C) when he says, 'In the first place, it is true to say that the super-essential dignity, by its universal goodness, in establishing the essences of all the things that are, brought them to being.' And after a few words he adds (4, 2, 180AB) that 'The celestial substances are first and in many ways made in the participation of God.'[72]

Another comprehensive perspective, inspired by Dionysius, occurs in *ST* I 57, 1:

> The established order of things is for the higher beings to be more perfect than the lower; and for whatever is contained deficiently, partially, and in manifold manner in the lower beings, to be contained in the higher eminently, and in a certain degree of fulness and simplicity. Therefore, in God, as in the highest source of things, all things pre-exist supersubstantially in respect of his simple being itself, as Dionysius says (*DN* 1). But among other creatures the angels are nearest to God, and resemble him most; hence they share more fully and more perfectly in the Divine goodness, as Dionysius says (*CH* 4). Consequently, all material things pre-exist in the angels more simply and less materially even than in themselves, yet in a more manifold manner and less perfectly than in God.[73]

Besides the general notion of hierarchy adopted from Dionysius, which became a constant in his global outlook, Aquinas recognized the special meaning attached to the hierarchic relationship between the angelic orders. It was to express this that Dionysius invented the term 'hierarchy', as defined in *The Celestial Hierarchy*:

> In my opinion a hierarchy is a sacred order, a state of understanding and an activity approximating as closely as possible to the divine. And it is uplifted to the imitation of God in proportion to the enlightenments divinely given to it.[74]

In coining the term Dionysius recognized three related iterations: order, understanding, and activity. Their common defining characteristic is proximity to God in the measure proper to each individual, and the knowledge of which each is capable according to its status. A more succinct definition a few lines later states: 'The goal of hierarchy is unity and similarity with God insofar as possible.'[75]

Aquinas is so convinced of the validity of Dionysius' definition of 'hierarchy' that he devotes an entire question to its defence in Book 2 of his commentary on the *Sentences*. He asks if Dionysius' definition of hierarchy is fitting (*Utrum definitio hierarchiae data a Dionysio, sit conveniens*).[76] In his formal response he explains that 'hierarchy' means 'sacred principate' (*sacer principatus*, from *hieron* + *archon*). Every principate requires 'degrees of power and of end'. Thus in a secular principate subjects are ordered to the good of the prince, as is an army to the good of its leader. He asserts: 'In a sacred principate the end must be assimilation to God.'[77] Aquinas applies this to the angelic hierarchy, confirming the suitability of Dionysius' definition: 'But the angels can only obtain this end through ordered action (*per ordinatam actionem*), for which ordered power (*ordinata potestas*) and directing knowledge (*scientia dirigens*) are needed. And thus the definition of hierarchy includes order, which expresses degrees of power, knowledge as directing, action as leading to the end, and likeness to God as the end intended.'[78]

Against the suitability of Dionysius' definition Aquinas raises seven objections. These, it may be said, are not of great significance, referring primarily to semantic aspects of the definition. I will refer only to the sixth objection. Since hierarchy implies an order of knowledge and action it cannot apply to God, so the argument, since the three divine persons have one knowledge and one action. In his reply Aquinas states that in the opinion of some there is a hierarchy among the divine persons which in turn is reflected in the celestial hierarchy and sub-celestial hierarchies of angels of men. This, he states, is not Dionysius' intention, since 'it is heretical to posit among the divine persons a preeminence of one

over another, or that the Father purifies the Son or illuminates or perfects him, or that what belongs to the Father is received by the Son in an inferior way'. Aquinas seems to refer to Christ in his human nature when he concedes:

> But these [relations] are required by the notion of hierarchy, according to Dionysius' intention and according to the meaning of the word. And thus we must say otherwise, namely, that it 'approaches God-likeness' (*similat deiforme*) inasmuch as perceived light is likened to the divine clarity, not indeed as on a level but in its own proportion — which is why he says *insofar as possible*. And every creaturely perfection is a likeness to the divine goodness, granted that one is more express than another.[79]

Hierarchy means literally sacred principle or holy origin. In its widest sense it refers to the descending order of creatures as they proceed from God, and their corresponding aspiration to ascend towards unity in the divine source. Applied to angels it expresses their order, understanding, and activity, in relation to God, each other, and the world. Assigning their functions and denominations Dionysius draws on the biblical names according to the functions with which they are associated in Scripture. The following is one possible explanation: Seraphim: love; Cherubim: knowledge; Thrones: abiding in the divine presence; Dominations: benevolent rule; Powers: courage; Authorities: concern for inferior angels; Principalities: manifest transcendent principles; Archangels: interpreters of divine enlightenment; Angels: revelation to the world.[80]

Angelic Hierarchy

Dionysius invented the term hierarchy ('sacred origin or principle') to denote the order, understanding, and activity of angels in relation to God, each other, and the world. In reply to the question 'How many ranks are there among the heavenly beings? What kind are they? How does each hierarchy achieve perfection?', Dionysius states that such knowledge is given only through divine revelation:

> Only the divine source of their perfection could really answer this, but at least they know what they have by way of power and enlightenment and they know their place in this sacred, transcendent order. As far as we are concerned, it is not possible to know the mystery of these celestial minds or to understand how they arrive at most holy perfection. We can know only what the Deity has mysteriously granted to us through them, for they know their own properties well. I have therefore nothing of my own to say about all this and I am content merely to set down, as well as I can, what it was that the sacred theologians contemplated of the angelic sights and what they shared with us about it. (*CH* 6, 1, 200C 13–16) [81]

Having emphasized that he is only describing what has been stated about angels in the Bible, Dionysius introduces the authority of his own 'sacred initiator' or 'famous teacher' who set out the diverse ranks among the angels:

> The word of God has provided nine explanatory designations for the heavenly beings, and my own sacred-initiator (ὁ θεῖος ἡμῶν ἱεροτελεστὴς) has divided these into three threefold groups. According to him, the first group is forever around God and is said to be permanently united with him ahead of any of the others and with no intermediary. Here, then, are the most holy 'thrones' and the orders said to possess many eyes and many wings, called in Hebrew the 'cherubim' and 'seraphim'. Following the tradition of scripture, he says that they are found immediately around God and in a proximity enjoyed by no other. This threefold group, says my famous teacher (ὁ κλεινὸς ἡμῶν καθηγεμών), forms a single hierarchy which is truly first and whose members are of equal status. No other is more like the divine or receives more directly the first enlightenments from the Deity. The second group, he says, is made up of 'authorities', 'dominions', and 'powers'. And the third, at the end of the heavenly hierarchies, is the group of 'angels', 'archangels', and 'principalities'. (*CH* 6, 2, 200D–201A)

Dionysius' classification of the celestial hierarchy became for the most part the ordering adopted as standard by subsequent theologians. He arranged them into three triads: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones; Powers, Lordships, Authorities; Principalities, Archangels, Angels.[82]

The 'famous teacher', referred to here as Hierotheus, and credited in *The Divine Names* with the 'splendid *Elements of Theology*',[83] is more than likely an invented character, perhaps an added detail in the author's fictive strategy. Dionysius was no doubt aware that Proclus 'had already assimilated the pagan gods into triads communicating light and knowledge to each other'.[84] The similarity between the names of the *Θεολογικὰς στοιχειώσεις* attributed to Hierotheus and the *Στοιχείωσις Θεολογική* of Proclus is undeniable; the only question is why the author betrayed such a pertinent hint.

Dionysius posited three triads within the celestial hierarchy, two in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; in the latter bishops occupied the summit and communicated directly with the lowest order of angels; there was thus continuity in the descending line of divine beneficence and enlightenment.[85] Dionysius conceived both the celestial and ecclesiastical hierarchies as a continuous scale of graded perfection determined by the proximity of the constituent triads to God, their knowledge of God, and the measure of their participation in his activity of enlightening and perfecting the inferior orders. The dynamism of *exitus-reditus*, the architectonic principle of the universe, is mirrored in the upward-downward interplay between the levels, a constant exchange of give-and-take: purification and being purified, enlightening and enlightened.

In his final work, the *Mystical Theology*, Dionysius gives a helpful survey of his writings which reflect the sweep of the universe, from its pinnacle to the nadir and its return:

> In the earlier books my argument traveled downward from the most exalted to the humblest categories, taking in on this downward path an ever-increasing number of ideas which multiplied with every stage of the descent. But my argument

> now rises from what is below up to the transcendent, and the more it climbs, the more language falters, and when it has passed up and beyond the ascent, it will turn silent completely, since it will finally be at one with him who is indescribable (*MT* 3, 1033C).[86]

Following his alleged celebrated and sacred teacher, Dionysius assigns to each angelic rank the biblical denomination according to the function with which it is associated. The Seraphim ('carriers of warmth') are characterized in the first place by their ardent love, the Cherubim by knowledge and wisdom (πλῆθος γνώσεως ἢ χύσιν σοφίας); the Thrones are free from every earthly defect and desire the supremely transcendent. (205BD) The Dominations (κυριότεις) are so called because of their benevolent rule, the Powers (δυνάμεις) for their courage, and the Authorities (ἐξουσίες) from their care of lower angels. (237D–240A) The Principalities are marked by their princely character and divine power in the heavenly order; the Archangels are interpreters of divine enlightenment, and Angels are messengers of God's word. (257B–260B)[87] The ranks differ according to the measure and degree in which they participate in, and in turn transmit to others, the divine light which shines most brightly in the highest order and gradually less strongly the further they are distant from the divine source.

Aquinas cites Dionysius that 'the names of the angels designate their properties'.[88] Their grades of perfection relate to the functions which they perform. His primary authority for the nine angelic orders, as for Dionysius however, is Scripture which he explicitly invokes in *ST* I, 108: 'The name *Seraphim* is found in Isaiah; *Cherubim* in Ezechiel; *Thrones* in Colossians; *Dominations*, *Virtues*, *Powers*, and *Principalities* in Ephesians; the name *Archangels* in Jude and *Angels* in many places of Scripture.'[89] Scripture thus guarantees the appropriate naming of the angelic orders. Aquinas relies closely on Dionysius, however, for his interpretation of the angelic ranks revealed by Scripture.[90] He quotes Dionysius (in an objection) that 'we can know nothing about the angels except what is handed down to us in sacred Scripture'.[91]

Aquinas invokes the authority of Dionysius (*CH* 6, 2, 200D) in asserting the existence of three distinct angelic hierarchies,[92] with each hierarchy comprising three orders.[93] Offering reasons for distinct grades he elaborates on Dionysius' definition of hierarchy as 'order, knowledge, action' (*ordo, scientia et actio*).[94] Firstly he makes an important distinction. In its broadest sense there is a single hierarchy of all angels and rational creatures capable of sharing in the sacred.[95] As spiritual beings, humans and angels enjoy a conscious relationship with God which is lacking in the rest of creation. Communion in divine gifts is the privilege of both angels and humans. They share alike in the gifts bestowed by God, belonging to a sacred order that binds them alike to their divine source: 'Therefore because there is one God, the ruler not only of all the angels but also of men and all creatures; so there is one hierarchy, not only of all the angels, but also of all rational creatures, who can be participators of sacred things.'[96] St Thomas clarifies, however, that although there is a common hierarchy of intellectual and rational beings, in a more radical sense they constitute different hierarchies, since they participate differently in the divine gifts.[97] Men and angels receive divine enlightenment (*divina illuminatio*) differently: angels in its full intelligibility (*in intelligibili puritate*),[98] men under material likenesses (*sub sensibilium similitudinibus*) as taught by Dionysius (*CH* 1, 124). He concludes: 'Therefore there must be a distinction between the human and the angelic hierarchy.'[99]

Parallel to the distinction between men and angels, there is an analogy of discovery between the distinction of hierarchy between angels and men, and the manner in which different angelic grades are distinguished.[100] Just as all angels have knowledge superior to that of men, so there are in the angelic ranks relative grades of inferior and superior knowledge. He refers to his earlier discussion (*ST* I, 55, 3) which invoked Dionysius' statement that 'the higher angels participate in a more universal knowledge than the inferior'.[101] In that article he had explained that things are greater according to their proximity and similarity to the primary unity which is God. God possesses the complete plenitude of knowledge

in the perfect unity of his divine essence; he knows all things in a single simple act. Lower intelligences, angelic and human, possess a limited and less simple measure of knowledge. Among intelligences the more superior an angel the fewer ideas he needs to know the universe of intelligible realities. Aquinas remarks, by illustration, that men of stronger intellect grasp many things with fewer ideas. For Aquinas there are distinct grades of angels, since they differ according to their nature; all men, by contrast, share the same identical nature.

In *ST* I, 108, 1, Aquinas again appeals to Dionysius in explaining the graded distinction between the angelic hierarchies according to the various degrees of universal knowledge. The highest order grasps the truths of things (*rationes rerum*) as they proceed from the first universal principle who is God. Such knowledge 'belongs to the first hierarchy, connected immediately with God, and, "as it were, placed in the vestibule of God", as Dionysius says'.[102] The second angelic rank knows things in their dependence on created universal causes, marked by a certain multiplicity. The third and lowest hierarchy of angels knows universal truths as they are reflected in the multiplicity itself of individual things and depend on particular causes.[103] The hierarchies are distinguished, remarks Aquinas, not in the manner in which they know God, since they all know him in the same way, i. e. through his essence, but according to the manner in which they know the diversity of things known.[104]

In the next article (*ST* I, 108, 2) St Thomas gives an analytic explanation of the meaning and nature of hierarchy, which he then applies to the triadic constitution of the angelic realm. The very meaning of hierarchy, he suggests, requires a diversity of orders based on differing offices and acts, as is clear in civic society. But while there are diverse orders, they may be reduced to the simple relationship of beginning, middle, and end. In cities there are three classes: the upper class or nobles (*supremi, ut optimates*), the middle or honourable class (*medii, ut populus honorabilis*) and, at the bottom, the common people (*infimi, ut vilis populus*). He concludes: 'So too, then, in each of the angelic hierarchies there are orders, distinct on the basis of diverse acts and offices, but

all reducible to three: the highest, the middle and the lowest. This is why Dionysius teaches that in each hierarchy there are three orders.'[105]

Interestingly Aquinas cites Dionysius' view that our knowledge of the angels and their offices is imperfect.[106] Dionysius had written:

> As far as we are concerned, it is not possible to know the mystery of these celestial minds or to understand how they arrive at most holy perfection. We can know only what the Deity has mysteriously granted to us through them, for they know their own properties well. I have therefore nothing of my own to say about all this and I am content merely to set down, as well as I can, what it was that the sacred theologians contemplated of the angelic sights and what they shared with us about it.[107]

In *ST* I, 108 Aquinas extrapolates regarding the 'known unknown' character of angels: 'But if we knew the offices and distinctions of the angels perfectly, we should know perfectly that each angel has his own office and his own order among things, much more so than any star, even though this would be hidden from us.'[108] In *Quodl.* 3 he remarks: 'We do not know the state of an angel's nature as it is in itself, since in this life we cannot know what angels are. But we can still come to know something about them based on their likeness to sensible things, as Dionysius says in chapters 1 and 2 of *The Celestial Hierarchy*. Hence, we can only come to know about their way of acting based on their likeness to sensible agents.'[109]

Dionysius rather than St. Gregory the Great is Aquinas' prime authority in assigning the diverse ranks of angels within the triadic orders. This is clear from his reply to the objection in *ST* I 108, 6, which stated that Gregory placed the Principalities above the Powers rather than immediately above the Archangels, as proposed by Dionysius in *CH* 9.[110] In the *Sed Contra* Aquinas states: 'Dionysius (*CH* 7) places in the highest hierarchy the *Seraphim* as the first, the *Cherubim* as the middle, the *Thrones* as the last; in the middle hierarchy he places the *Dominations*, as the first, the *Virtues* in the

middle, the *Powers* last; in the lowest hierarchy the *Principalities* first, then the *Archangels*, and lastly the *Angels*.'[111] In the corpus of the article he outlines the differences between Dionysius and Gregory. He is eager, however, to minimize the divergence and to acknowledge the scriptural authority of both. Comparing the two authors Aquinas writes:

> The grades of the angelic orders are assigned by Gregory (*Hom.* 24 *in Ev.*) and Dionysius (*CH* 7), who agree as regards all (*quantum ad alia quidem convenienter*) except the *Principalities* and *Virtues*. For Dionysius places the *Virtues* beneath the *Dominations*, and above the *Powers*; the *Principalities* beneath the *Powers* and above the *Archangels*. Gregory, however, places the *Principalities* between the *Dominations* and the *Powers*; and the *Virtues* between the *Powers* and the *Archangels*. Each of these placings may claim authority from the words of the Apostle, who (Eph. 1:20, 21) enumerates the middle orders, beginning from the lowest saying that God set him, i. e. Christ, on his right hand in the heavenly places above all Principality and Power, and Virtue, and Dominion. Here he places *Virtues* between *Powers* and *Dominations*, according to the placing of Dionysius. Writing however to the Colossians (1:16), numbering the same orders from the highest, he says: *Whether Thrones, or Dominations, or Principalities, or Powers, all things were created by him and in him.* Here he places the *Principalities* between *Dominations* and *Powers*, as does also Gregory.[112]

While he is largely guided by Dionysius, Aquinas repeatedly compares his position with that of Gregory, constantly at pains to achieve harmony between the two. In his detailed reply to the objection cited above he writes:

> A careful comparison will show that little or no difference exists in reality between the dispositions of the orders according to Dionysius and Gregory. For Gregory expounds the name 'Principalities' from their 'presiding over good

> spirits', which also agrees with the 'Virtues' according as this name expresses a certain strength, giving efficacy to the inferior spirits in the execution of the divine ministrations. Again, according to Gregory, the 'Virtues' seem to be the same as the 'Principalities' of Dionysius. For to work miracles holds the first place in the divine ministrations; since thereby the way is prepared for the announcements of the 'Archangels' and the 'Angels'.[113]

In *CG* 3, 80, where he treats in detail of the division among the angelic ranks, Aquinas comments: 'Gregory assigns a different ordering to the celestial spirits; for he numbers the Principalities among the intermediate spirits, immediately after the Dominations, while he puts the Virtues among the lowest, before the Archangels. But to people who consider the matter carefully the two ways of ordering them differ but slightly.'[114] Although largely guided by Dionysius when presenting the gradation of angelic natures he repeatedly compares his position with that of Gregory, and seems eager to pronounce harmony between the two.

Dante took a different view. Having in the *Convivio* followed Gregory, he adopted in *Paradiso*[115] the hierarchy prescribed by Dionysius whom he ranks, along with Aquinas, among the great souls of the blessed. He celebrates the Areopagite:

> Look at the burning candle next to him
> who, in the flesh, on earth saw to the depths
> of what an angel is and what it does.[116]

The celestial Beatrice guides the poet through the angelic hierarchy as established by Dionysius and tells how the great Gregory acknowledged his error with a smile:

> Dionysius set his mind to contemplate
> these ranks with so much holy zeal for truth,
> he named and ordered them the way I do;
> Gregory, later, disagreed with him,
> but when he died to waken in this heaven
> he saw the truth and laughed at his mistake.

And that such secrets were revealed by one
still living on the earth, you need not wonder:
the one who saw it here told him this truth
and many other truths about these rings.[117]

8

Virtus Essendi: Intensive Being in Pseudo-Dionysius and Aquinas

Although the term *esse intensivum* does not appear in the works of St Thomas, it expresses with admirable accuracy his notion of being as the exhaustive and comprehensive plenitude of the existential perfection of things. It has been coined by Cornelio Fabro after Aquinas' phrase *albedo intensive infinita*, which is used to illustrate the presence of a perfection in a cause which constitutes the essence and fullness of that perfection, in contrast to its limited participation by an effect.[1] It indicates the infinite intensity and simple fullness which precedes dispersion and division throughout any multiplicity. This is a pervasive background motif in both Dionysius and Aquinas: the cause possesses the perfection more eminently than that which has it as received. The effect is present *virtually*, i. e. according to a greater power; its perfection is contained *more intensely* in the source. Following from this is the pre-eminent presence of all perfections within the comprehensive plenitude of Being and, more originally and profoundly, their unlimited presence in absolute, infinite divine Being. Cornelio Fabro is the exponent of St Thomas whose work has contributed most to an appreciation of this aspect of Aquinas' original vision of being. Such an understanding of the profound significance of these texts, inspired in great measure by Dionysius, was closed to Durantel — who, in 1919, merely remarked: 'L'anteriorité de l'être doit s'entendre naturellement d'une anteriorité logique et non chronologique.'[2]

That Aquinas' notion of the eminence or intensity of perfection as virtually present within the cause is derived from Dionysius is clear from his early commentary on the *Sentences*:

> Predication according to essence is always more primary than predication by participation. For what is in an effect cannot be in the cause in the same manner but more eminently; and Dionysius explains this as follows: 'If anyone should say that life itself lives or that light itself is enlightened, he would not in my view speak correctly, unless this is expressed differently: since what are in effects pre-exist abundantly and substantially in their causes.' He calls life or light the cause, and what is living or enlightened the effect.[3]

As is well known, Aquinas praises Dionysius for rejecting the separate order of independent universal causes and for restoring all creative causality to the unique and universal cause. The Platonist motif, however, illustrates the fundamental principle that what is caused as an effect participates in its cause and that its perfection is preserved in it virtually according to a superior mode. A perfection which is received into a subject does not accrue or belong essentially to it of its own power. The key to Plato's affirmation of transcendent perfection is the recognition of the limited nature of the objects within our experience. A limited or incomplete measure of any perfection is unable to explain itself, to render reason for its existence. It is intelligible only through the indwelling presence of that fullness upon which, of its nature as finite, it places a limitation. A perfection embodied within an individual is measured to the capacity of that being. But such a limited measure is ultimately meaningful only in the light of a plenitude which, free from all restriction, is sufficient to itself and which is the source of its limited participations.

Virtual Quantity: The Language of *Esse Intensivum*

Aquinas adopts from Neoplatonism and in particular from Dionysius the doctrine of the intensity and plenitude of perfection;

he recognizes it as verified in a special way at the most intimate and ultimate level of *esse*. It is Dionysius' view of participation and pre-eminent presence which leads Aquinas to conceive of *esse* as the emergent fullness shared by all entitative characters. Aquinas' notion of intensive and emergent *esse* becomes in turn the core and foundation for his existential metaphysics of participation, as Fabro repeatedly emphasizes.[4] Dionysius understands being above all as the focus of participation by all things in divine Goodness. All things are preserved in the created fullness of Being.

Aquinas indeed himself exploits the idea of virtual intensity to convey the inward nature of things and the varying degrees of their perfection, especially that of being. It will be revealing to take a closer look at the language employed. Especially noteworthy is the manner in which Aquinas draws upon elements from Aristotle's concepts of power and virtue in the moral and physical spheres. These he takes far beyond their setting in Aristotle, to the deeper level of ontological fullness and divine subsistence propounded by Dionysius.

The nature of intensity is most frequently elaborated upon in the context of theological discussions: the equality and relations of the divine persons, the divine gifts of grace, the nature of angels, the virtue of charity, or the ability of human and angelic knowledge to comprehend divine nature. Intensity expresses the manner of quantity characteristic of metaphysical or spiritual actions, powers and realities: a mode which must differ from the kind of quantity proper to corporeal reality. A passage which appropriately illustrates our theme is found in *De Veritate*, where Aquinas responds to the question whether or not the grace of Christ is infinite.[5] He begins by noting that 'finite' and 'infinite' refer to quantity, and that quantity is of two kinds: 'dimensional' (*dimensiva*), which indicates extension, and 'virtual' (*virtualis*) which signifies an intensity or degree of perfection (*secundum intensionem*): 'the excellence or power — *virtus* — of a thing is its perfection' (*virtus enim rei est ipsius perfectio*), since, as Aristotle teaches, 'anything is perfect when it attains its proper excellence (*virtus*)'.[6] Thus the virtual quantity of each form is determined

by the measure of its perfection. While dimensional quantity comprises length, width, depth and number, 'virtual quantity' (*quantitas virtualis*) is distinguished into as many classes as there are natures and forms; it is their degree of perfection which determines their quantitative measure. Thus a white body, for example, has the virtual quantity of whiteness in so far as it embodies, or approximates to, the full perfection of whiteness; the virtual quantity of a sentient being is considered in respect of the perfection of sensation and so on. Thus, considered as a being, the virtual quantity of any thing is determined by its perfection of existing: *sicut ex hoc quod dicitur ens, consideratur in eo quantitas virtualis quantum ad perfectionem essendi*.[7] In one and the same object, distinct modes or measures of virtual quantity can be affirmed according to the different natures predicated of it. We can indeed conceive a white body which is infinite in dimension, but its whiteness will not thereby be infinite in intensity, but only in extension and accidentally.[8] That which is infinite in dimensive quantity necessarily has of itself a finite act of existence.[9] Even if we were to conceive of a sensitive soul, which has the full perfection of sensation, it would still be finite in essence, because its act of being (*esse*), even though infinite in its sentient power, is limited to a certain perfection of being, namely sensibility, which is exceeded by the perfection of intelligence.[10] We may note that while virtual quantity is present in all things, dimensive quantity resides only in bodies; in God and angels virtual quantity alone is present.[11]

With regard to the meaning or nature of being (*ratio essendi*), Aquinas affirms:

> Only what includes all the perfection of being (*omnis essendi perfectio*) can be infinite, since it is a perfection which may be diversified in an infinite number of different modes. And in this manner only God is infinite in his essence; because his essence is not limited to any determined perfection but embraces every mode of perfection to which the nature of being can extend; he is, therefore, essentially infinite.[12]

God alone has infinite intensity (*intensio infinita*).[13] The important notion of *quantitas virtualis* and the virtual perfection of being is thus given its maximum significance in referring to divine Being. (We will return to the notion of virtual fullness and intensity of divine being.) And while Aquinas begins this passage of *De Veritate* with a phrase from Aristotle, his vision of God as the infinite perfection or comprehensive intensity of Being is unmistakably Dionysian, even in formulation. Almost continuous in both text and context are some brief lines from *De Malo* which resumes Dionysius' corrected view of the Neoplatonist theme of separated perfections. The separated form which is pure act, namely God, is not limited to any one species or genus but possesses boundlessly the total power of being inasmuch as he is his own being. This is clear, states Aquinas, from Chapter 5 of *Divine Names*:

> The separate form which is pure act, namely God, is not determined to any species or genus, but has uncircumscribed the full power of being (*totam virtutem essendi*) since it exists as its own act of being, as is clear from Dionysius in Chapter 5 of *Divine Names*.[14]

From Dionysius, Aquinas attains the notion of the infinite and virtual intensity of perfection in God; being is the universal and fundamental power or perfection which comes to presence in individuals according to varied degrees. We encounter here a striking manner in which being is grasped as power or perfection, virtue or strength, which rather than possessing richness by way of extension or dominion beyond itself, is one of inner attainment, of self-actuality according to differing degrees of pitch or intensity.

The vocabulary and application of *virtus* is rich and extensive in itself. Most frequently it refers to the moral quality of human powers or faculties in their capacity to act. But it is clear that for Aquinas it is much broader. Following on Aristotle, the word *virtus* expresses for him the perfection of any power in relation to its final goal.[15] The following passage, although delivered in a discussion on human habits and dispositions, has a profound metaphysical meaning: 'Virtue denotes a determinate perfection of a power. The

perfection of anything, however, is considered especially in relation to its end. Yet the end of a power is its act. A power is said to be perfect, therefore, in so far as it is determined to its act.'[16]

Thus in its unqualified sense, *virtus* is the *ultimum potentiae* — the utmost to which a power can attain.[17] *Virtus*, however, also admits of degrees in relation to such an ultimate. Such quantity of virtue (*quantitas virtutum*) is most aptly exemplified in the domain of human habits and Aquinas again employs the vocabulary of participation and intensity. Greatness of virtues may be taken to refer to the intensity or slackness according to which it is shared by the subject.[18] Aquinas explains that the magnitude of *virtus* may be deemed greater or less (*major et minor*) in two ways: in itself, with respect to the things to which it extends, or on the part of the subject by which it is participated. It will be participated variously by different persons or by the same person at different times.[19] This is intensive greatness, the magnitude which is proper and unique to *virtus*: the inner measure and density of its presence embraced and embodied concretely in the individual. As examples Aquinas mentions knowledge and health, which are received in greater measure by one subject than by another, according to its nature and aptitude. Such habits and dispositions vary in intensive greatness, he explains since, as Aristotle has pointed out, they are judged in relation to a subject which possesses them (*secundum ordinem ad aliquid*).[20] Aristotle's analogy of health springs easily to mind here and while its parallel with being is far from the present context, it is exactly what we are concerned with.

In a significant passage of the *Summa*,[21] Aquinas grounds the virtual quantity of a being's perfection in its form. Here he points out that the quantity proper to material beings is *dimensive* in nature. This may be either continuous (extension in the literal sense, characteristic of time or space)[22] or discrete, which constitutes the nature of number. We may also speak, however, of the 'quantity of power' (*quantitas virtutis*) or excellence of a being, its *virtual quantity* — its perfection in respect of any aspect or determination. (The analogy used by Aquinas here is that of heat: hot things are said to be 'more' or 'less', according as they are more

or less perfect.) According to Aquinas, the virtual quantity of any being is first rooted in its nature or form; form confers upon it what Aquinas strikingly calls its 'spiritual greatness' (*magnitudo spiritualis*), endowing, on the analogy of heat, its intensity and perfection (*suam intensionem et perfectionem*).

Moreover, form further determines, as an effect, the virtual quantity of any being in two respects: inwardly, so to speak, it mediates or measures its act of being (*forma dat esse*), and outwardly it is the origin of the virtual quantity of a being's activities or operations, since in its action every agent acts in virtue of its form (*omne agens agit per suam formam*). In this passage Aquinas thus outlines summarily the three aspects under which we may speak of the 'virtual quantity' of beings: *esse* or the act of being, its form or nature, and its operations or activity. Form plays, moreover, a central role as in a sense the instrumental origin or source of the virtual perfection of the other two.[23] Aquinas states explicitly in *De Potentia* that the *virtus essendi* of each thing is proportionate to the measure and intimacy of its form.[24]

A similar threefold distinction is offered in *In I Sent.*, 19, 3, 1,[25] where Aquinas, faced with the question whether greatness can be applied to God, responds that in God there can only be quantity of power: *quantitas virtutis*. He follows Aristotle in saying that *virtus* is the ultimate achievement of a being, i. e. the attainment of its utmost potentiality. *Virtus* is synonymous with perfection: a thing is perfect when it attains its proper power or virtue. The virtue of a thing may be considered, therefore, with regard to every aspect in which it is open to attain fulfilment. This occurs in three ways: firstly, in those operations in which it is possible to find different degrees of perfection. Thus that which exercises a complete activity has the (full) virtue of action (*virtus ad operandum*). The virtue or power of a thing is also found 'with respect to the very existence of a thing' (*respectu ipsius esse rei*). Thus, in Aristotle's example, a thing may have the power to always exist.[26] Finally there is that virtue which is measured according to the plenitude of perfection with respect to the being itself (*respectu ipsius entis*), in so far as it attains the ultimate within its own nature — in other words,

according to its form. The power of God is clearly supreme in all three respects: manifestly, God has the operative power to act; eternity is itself the very power of his existence; and the fullness of the perfection itself of divine nature is his greatness, a magnitude, which Aquinas stresses, is not one of dimension but of virtue alone.[27]

Aquinas refers to Augustine's view in Chapter 6 of *De Trinitate*, that in beings whose greatness is not one of bulk, *to be more*, or greater, is *to be better*: *In his enim quae non mole magna sunt hoc est maius esse quod est melius esse*. Augustine dealt with the distinction of material and bodily magnitude at some length in *De Quantitate Animae*. As with Aquinas, the greatness of being of spiritual realities resides, according to Augustine, in their *virtus*: 'When we hear and speak of a great and strong soul, we ought not to think of its size, but of its power (*quantum possit*).'[28] Aquinas recognizes the distinction in Aristotle's evaluation of the intellect which, 'though small in bulk, surpasses by far all else in power and value'.[29] In his commentary on this passage from the *Ethics*, he simply notes that the magnitude of the intellect is one of virtual quantity, but does not elaborate.[30] In none of the passages where he outlines the distinction between virtual and dimensive quantity does Aquinas attribute the doctrine to any specific source.

The connection between the virtual quantity of beings and the intensive nature of perfection is brought out clearly by Aquinas when considering the intensity of action. Responding in *De Potentia* to the question whether the power of God is infinite,[31] Aquinas speaks of a certain intensity which belongs to the efficiency of action (*intensio secundum efficaciam agendi*), according to the manner whereby a being exercises its active powers.[32] A certain infinity may, he suggests, be ascribed to active power in a manner similar to that of quantity, both continuous and discrete. The 'quantity' of power is discrete when measured according to the number of its objects — whether they are many or few. This is called 'extensive quantity' (*quantitas extensiva*, which is of course synonymous with 'dimensive quantity'). The quantity of power is continuous when measured with respect to the slackness or

intensity of its action. This is its 'intensive quantity' (*quantitas intensiva*). Extensive quantity refers to the *objects* of power, intensive quantity to its *action*; active power is the principle of both. The former determines its extent (the number of its objects), the latter the measure of its presence, efficacy, and intimacy within them.

The powers and activities of the spirit, such as intellectual knowing and loving are thus measured in degrees of virtual, rather than dimensive quantity: they admit of greater or lesser levels of efficacy; they vary in the measure of their intensity. Intellectual comprehension, for example, admits only indirectly of dimensive quantity — inasmuch as it relies upon sensation for its object. Considered in itself, in its grasp of the intelligible, it varies in virtual quantity, according as it comprehends its object more or less perfectly and intimately.[33] Extensive quantity, Aquinas declares, is accidental to knowledge, whereas intensive quantity is essential to it.[34] (Note the identity of *quantitas virtualis* and *quantitas intensiva*.) Similarly, love is marked only extrinsically by extensive or dimensive quantity, i. e. as it attains to fewer or more numerous objects; intrinsically it is measured only by the intensity of its act (*secundum intensionem actus*), as it loves something to a greater or lesser degree. This is its virtual quantity and as such it varies *quantum ad intensionem actus*.[35] Now, divine power is infinite in both respects, since it never produces so many effects that it cannot produce more, nor does it ever act with such intensity that it cannot act even more intensely. Aquinas clarifies: 'The intensity of God's action is not measured according as it is in itself, since thus it is always infinite, since God's action is his essence, but according as it attains its effect; thus some things are moved by God more efficaciously, some less.'[36] (God is equally present to all things, but not present to all in equal measure.)

Since *esse* is what is most efficacious within each thing, grounding and actualizing its every perfection, it is, in the light of this passage, most appropriate to speak of the intensity of the act of being at the inner heart of the individual and of the comprehensive infinity of its existential intensity within *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*. From the

many texts and varied contexts in which Aquinas elaborates the notions of virtual quantity, denoting the intensity of action and existential and formal perfection, we can conclude that it is both valid and enlightening to speak of the virtual intensity of being and of *virtus essendi* as the intensive power or perfection of being. Cornelio Fabro does not seem to have exploited the wide wealth of texts by Aquinas on virtual quantity and the connection between *virtus* and intensity.[37] Perhaps this is not all too surprising, since it is indeed only *en passant* that Aquinas himself makes explicit the identity between 'virtual' and 'intensive' quantity (*Et similiter patet in quantitate virtuali vel intensiva*).[38] He does not dwell at any length on their fruitful association. These notions are present below the surface of his discourse; their profound kinship, their original and ultimate identity with respect to being, however, should be clear.

The text of *De Veritate* 29, 3 understands the notion of intensity in the Platonist sense of presence and plenitude of perfection; *De Potentia* I, 2 adopts it as a model for deepening the Aristotelian notion of operation and actuality. In the *Summa*, Aquinas attributes virtual quantity to the mediation of form.

Virtual Intensity of Being

These passages, particularly revealing of Aquinas' concept of Being as intensive *virtus,* power and excellence which is present in graded measures, as an inner quantity — one is tempted to speak of a 'qualitative quantity' — seem to have been overlooked by writers on thomistic being.[39] In an isolated remark Etienne Gilson draws attention to the Dionysian origin of the term *virtus essendi.*[40] In an article entitled precisely 'Virtus Essendi' he identifies *virtus essendi* with the *actus essendi* which each thing receives through its form, but denies that it can be present in diverse degrees of intensity. This is because of his failure to advert to Aquinas' distinction between 'dimensive' and 'virtual' quantity. He writes as follows:

> L'on ferait fausse route en cherchant dans saint Thomas une doctrine de l'être qui reconnaitrait à

> l'*esse* une intensité intrinsèque variable à laquelle correspondraient, dans la nature, les degrés differents de perfection qui distinguent les êtres. Le mouvement comporte des degrés de quantité qui permettent de le dire plus ou moins grand, l'être n'en a pas . . . Pour l'imagination, une *virtus*, une *dunamis* est une force, et si on en parle comme de quelque chose qui peut être donné dans sa totalité, ou ne se rencontrer que sous forme de participation limitée, il est inévitable que nous l'imaginions comme une quantité variable. Le plus simple est de lui attribuer divers degrés d'intensité. C'est justement là que l'erreur d'interprétation guette le lecteur. Il convient de ne transposer les attributs du physique dans l'ordre du métaphysique. Au delà de la nature il n'y a plus de matière, ni d'étendue, ni de quantité, ni de plus ou moins. L'*esse* échappe à toutes ces déterminations, mais comme malgré tout il y a des différences d'être nous nous représentons des degrés de pureté et d'actualité formelle sous l'aspect de degrés d'intensité quantitative qui ne conviennent aucunement à l'être.[41]

I cite this passage at length to show how far from the mark Gilson's remarks are. He takes his cue from the pronouncement *esse autem non habet aliquam extensionem quantitatis* in *Contra Gentiles.*[42] Being has no quantitative *extension*; Gilson, however, seems unfamiliar with Aquinas' phrase: *ex hoc quod dicitur ens, consideratur in eo quantitas virtualis quantum ad perfectionem essendi.*[43] The distinction which Aquinas makes is between *extensio quantitatis* and *quantitas virtualis*. This is precisely the meaning of the paragraph which Gilson only quotes in part. Aquinas illustrates the contrast in the continuation of the passage: *non oportet quod virtus essendi sit infinita in corpore finito, licet in infinitum duret.*[44] The inner power or virtue of being belongs to a dimension of beings other than that of quantitative measurement (spatial or temporal). This is what Aquinas means when he declares that the being of anything, considered in itself, is not a quantity (*non est*

quantum); it has no parts, but is at once complete.[45] In this sense it is invariable; a thing either is or it is not. Moreover, each being is one; existence and unity are convertible. Quantity belongs to the being of a thing only accidentally — in so far as it is subject to time and change, or if the thing itself has a determined quantity. Thus Aquinas completes the paragraph of *Contra Gentiles* 1, 20: 'There is no difference whether something endures through that power [*virtus essendi*] for an instant or for an infinite time, since its changeless being is not touched by time except by accident.'[46] In this sense we can understand Aquinas' profound statement: *Esse autem est aliquid fixum et quietum in ente.*[47]

Even if it were extended without limit, what is of its nature finite could never attain to infinity.[48] Extended endlessly in space, a bodily being would still remain finite in nature; and what is temporal, even were it to endure without beginning or end, would likewise remain limited in its being. What is finite, were it to exist eternally, would be eternally finite. Infinity is not attained by multiplying finitude *ad infinitum,* nor eternity simply by endlessly extending time. The *virtual* quantity of being is the vertical source in which the perfection of each thing is intensified and grounded, whereas *dimensive* quantity is the level at which the perfection of material being is dispersed across the axes of space and time. Intensified to infinity, the former constitutes the unique subsistence of simple and absolute Being; extended beyond limitation the latter would be formless and ever-finite matter, of itself powerless and inert.[49] (Later in *Contra Gentiles*,[50] Aquinas contrasts the 'dimensive quantity' of material things with the *virtus* of immaterial beings. A body possessed of infinite dimensive quantity would spatially be everywhere; an immaterial being having infinite power would be everywhere present. Through the immensity of his power — *immensitate suae virtutis* — God touches all things, as the universal cause of all things.)[51] It is because Aquinas uses the language of measure and quantity, proper in our initial experience to dimensive extension but here adapted to a more profound and inner metaphysical dimension, that he can make the following assertion, which, moreover, provides

the rule and founding principle for the inner and intensive measure and density of creatures: *Unumquodque tantum habet de esse, quantum [Deo] appropinquat.*[52] This is the language of quantity and distance, borrowed to express the participation of existence.

One cannot agree with M.-D. Philippe who, in his criticism of Gilson, states that by *virtus essendi* Aquinas means nothing more than *la capacité d'exister.*[53] Clearly, Aquinas does not simply attribute to God the 'capacity to exist', i. e. a possible existence. Aquinas does indeed speak of *potentia ad esse*, but this denotes something quite distinct. Referring to Aristotle's statement that some things have the power (δύναμις) to exist always,[54] — and recalling that *virtus* denotes *quamdam perfectionem potentiae* — Aquinas notes that *potentia* can be understood either with respect to *esse* or to *agere. Potentia ad esse*, and the corresponding *virtus ad esse* belong to matter; *potentia ad agere* and *virtus ad agere* reside in form, which is the *principium agendi. Virtus ad esse* thus stands in counterpoint to *virtus essendi*; it signifies the *ens in potentia* of matter, whereas *virtus essendi* is the actualizing perfection of *ens in actu,* the integral and complete individual being.[55] In *Contra Gentiles* 1, 20, (the passage from which Gilson draws the disputed phrase referred to), Aquinas contrasts the 'passive potency for being' (*potentia quasi passiva ad esse*), which is the potency of matter, with what is a kind of active potency (*potentia quasi activa*) which is the power of being — *virtus essendi.*[56] This belongs primarily, he asserts, to the potency or power of form, since each thing is through its form.[57]

Another term which Aquinas uses synonymously with *virtus* and which he invests with the same positive, 'quantitative', ontological significance is *posse.* It provides further confirmation of the qualitative measures which being may embody. 'Those things which merely exist are not imperfect because of any imperfection in absolute being. For they do not possess being according to its whole power (*secundum suum totum posse*); but rather they participate in it through a certain particular and most imperfect mode.'[58] Aquinas thus distinguishes between the *esse* of

things which are devoid of any perfection beyond simple existence and those which have a higher ontological density. Expressing the power and virtue of being, *posse* acquires its fullest and most proper significance as referring to God who is the full power of Being.

Aquinas indeed finds the phrase 'the power of being' in Aristotle's theory of the celestial bodies: these have the power always to be.[59] What Aristotle's concept expresses is the vehemence of reality, its basic undeniable presence or force. All things, in so far as they exist, have an irrefutable character; most, however, are subject to generation and corruption and their power of being is transitory. Heavenly bodies endure eternally in existence. Aquinas' notion of virtual, intensive being, which admits of varying degrees of inner perfection, however, goes beyond this fundamental rigour of being. In this step he is inspired by Dionysius. Aquinas finds the vocabulary of *virtus essendi* in Dionysius: αὐτου τοῦ εἶναι δύναμιν (*ipsius quod est esse virtutem*),[60] τὸ εἶναι δύναμιν εἰς τὸ εἶναι (*ipsum etiam esse virtutem ad hoc quod sit*).[61] But it is not so much this phraseology which inspires his appreciation of being as intensive, virtual perfection (he does not give any special consideration to the passage in his Commentary), as the teaching of Dionysius on the central role of being which suggests to Aquinas the nature of being as perfective, dynamic actuality and intensive plenitude: the power of being which is the comprehensive, energizing principle of all perfection.

Intensity of Being in Pseudo-Dionysius

The most explicit statement by Dionysius on the nature and status of being is to be found in Chapter 5 of the *Divine Names*, where he treats of the name 'Being' as applied to God. While for Dionysius, in accordance with the Neoplatonist tradition, Goodness is the proper name of God, Being is primary among created perfections and is therefore the most excellent of names drawn from creation which may be pronounced in praise of God. For Aquinas, on the other hand, Being is not only the primary perfection of finite reality

but also the very essence and proper name of God. In Dionysius' view, 'Good' is the universal and transcendent name which alone expresses God's nature; 'Being' expresses what is globally and primarily the first gift of creation. Of inestimable interest, however, is the significance which Dionysius gives to the value of being in itself as constitutive of the perfection of finite beings. This is found in his exposition of being as God's primary effect and first participation. We shall examine Dionysius' view in the context of Aquinas' Commentary, since there is here a close unity of meaning regarding this central and fundamental doctrine. (Indeed, as Van Steenberghen remarks, we find here, 'dans le commentaire de S. Thomas comme dans le texte de Denys, l'aspect le plus original de la doctrine de la participation à l'être.')[62]

As Aquinas notes, Dionysius gives two reasons why the name 'Being' or '*Qui est*' is applied most fittingly to God. These are in fact two aspects of the one relation of causality. Firstly, God is to be named according to his primary effect, i. e. from the most sublime perfection which he produces. (Dionysius must thus prove the paramount excellence of being within creation, in order to attribute Being to God before all other names.) Secondly, the argument is raised to the level of participation through an intensification of the value of being which has been disclosed in the first step of the argument: 'He says that God himself has prior and pre-eminent being in a prior and eminent way',[63] i. e. he possesses in the unity and abundance of his Being the unlimited measure of every perfection. This conclusion rests upon the first justification of the primacy of being.

We find in Dionysius a rational justification of the primacy of being, albeit in a less radical and profound form than in Aquinas. Dionysius establishes summarily the excellence of being and, once this position is attained, defends the priority of being on the ground of its divine origin and its immediacy as the causal presence of God within beings. He begins thus with a natural appreciation of the radical value of being and argues that for something to be wise or living, it must first of all be:

> Being is laid down (προβέβληται, *propositum*) or created before the other participations in God, and Being itself (αὐτὸ καθ᾽ αὑτὸ τὸ εἶναι) is anterior to life itself, wisdom or divine likeness; and all the other principles in which beings participate, first participate themselves in Being. Moreover, all of the subsistent principles in which beings participate, themselves participate in subsisting Being; and there is no being whose essence and eternity are not Being Itself.[64]

Although the primacy of Being is attained by Dionysius through a natural insight and justified by reasoned reflection, this justification occurs within the context of creation. Being is the first perfection to be created and that which first participates in God.

Being is taken by Dionysius from the outset as the principal, most ancient and venerable of God's gifts. The priority of existence among all the participations of the Good stems from its privileged position as radix of all specific perfections, in which they must first participate in order to be and to effect their presence within beings. Not only is Being the plenitude of perfection from which all individual beings derive, but it is the source of all the perfections which they share. In Dionysius we re-encounter the Platonist concept of universal causes, i. e. transcendent principles of perfection in which finite beings participate according to the various qualities which they enjoy. For the Pseudo-Areopagite, however, it serves as a model of reflection in order to conceive of the causality of distinct perfections and their exemplary presence in the Creator. The so-called transcendent principles are not distinct from Being, separate and apart from it, as it were, but are themselves participations in Being itself. 'For, indeed, all the principles of beings through their participation in Being both are and are principles; they first of all are and are then principles.'[65]

Thus, according to Dionysius if we suppose, for example, that Life itself (αὐτοζωή) is the principle of living things, and Similarity itself the principle of all things which bear resemblance, and Unity and Order the principles of all things which are unified and ordered; and likewise if we call 'Participations *per se*' (αὐτομετοχάς) all the

other principles in which beings participate, we will find that these participations first participate in Being; through Being they first of all subsist themselves and are subsequently principles of this or that. By participation in Being, therefore, they both subsist in themselves and permit things to participate in them. And if these principles exist through their participation in Being, much more so do those beings which in turn partake of them.[66] Through Being all things both are, and receive their determination as the kind of being which they are.[67]

This intensive unity of the qualities and perfections of a being in its very Being or its *to be*, and the superiority of Being is illustrated by the reply to a hypothetical but interesting objection. If Being transcends life and life exceeds wisdom, why, it is asked, are living and intelligent beings superior to things which merely exist, i. e. beings whose highest perfection is their simple existence; and why do intellectual and spiritual natures surpass all others and come closer to God, rather than those which have the primary richness of being. Should not those which participate exclusively and solely in the most sublime gift of God, namely existence, be superior and therefore transcend the rest?[68] But as Dionysius points out in his response, the objection assumes that intellectual beings do not also share in life and existence, whereas it is precisely as beings that they are effectively living and intelligent.[69] The perfections are not separate but spring from Being itself, are concentrated and rooted within it. Just as life includes virtually within itself as one of its possible determinations the perfection of wisdom, so does Being embrace life, although it extends beyond living things so as to contain also inanimate beings. Its extension is more universal, thus its perfection is more fundamental and creative. This text of Dionysius clearly illustrates the nature of virtual and intensive presence of all perfection in Being and is frequently invoked by Aquinas to explain both the intimate and intensive presence of *esse* throughout all things and the unified presence of all finite reality in God as the source of Being.[70] In a startling sentence, expressing what has more recently been termed the 'ontological difference', Dionysius emphasizes the distinction and primacy of

Being with respect to beings, and the priority of Being itself in the divine causation of that which is: 'He is the Being of beings; and not only beings, but the Being itself of beings is from the Being before the ages.'[71]

In his Commentary, Aquinas points out that beings which are endowed with life and intellection do not lack, but 'possess being more excellently'.[72] In the words of Dionysius, not only do they desire God's beauty and goodness more but, actually partaking of these perfections, 'are closer to the Good, participating in it more abundantly and receiving from it more abundant and greater gifts'.[73] In the same manner, rational beings surpass those which have mere perception, while the latter are superior to mere living beings, and these in turn to inanimate reality.

It is noteworthy that, in commenting upon these lines of Dionysius, St Thomas introduces the concept of *act* to explain the distinction between the desire for the Good in beings and their actual and effective possession of it, which, ultimately, is the necessary keynote of existence: *et non solum magis desiderant, quasi perfectius ordinatae in ipsum, sed eo magis participant, perfectiorem bonitatem actu habentes.*[74] (For Dionysius, even non-being, i. e. matter without form, is 'ordained' towards goodness; beings come into existence and possess Being precisely through love of Goodness.) Here, Aquinas ingeniously attributes the multiplicity of perfections within a being to the unique excellence of its own act of *esse*. The excellence of being enjoyed by any reality is relative to its possession in act of a greater measure of goodness. *Esse habent excellentius* is equivalent to *perfectiorem bonitatem actu habentes.* Aquinas is thus able to draw advantage from Dionysius' limitation of being to the possession in act of goodness to illustrate the primacy of the act of being: what matters ultimately is the actuality of perfection.

As noted earlier, the central meaning of being in Dionysius cannot be fully discovered simply from a reflection on finite beings alone. We must refer to its divine origin and its privileged role in creation. The primacy of being as a perfection among creatures stems from its immediacy as the creative medium by which

God is present in and to all creatures. This is noted by Aquinas who comments that, for Dionysius, *nomen vero entis designat processum essendi a Deo in omnia entia*.[75] Being, *ipsum esse* (αὐτὸ καθ᾽ αὑτὸ τὸ εἶναι), is for Dionysius the most dignified and privileged of creatures because it is the first participation in God. All perfections are perfections of Being and Being itself is the first perfection created. Thus it is in and through Being that all things participate in God.[76] As its first gift the absolute and self-subsisting Good brings forth Being itself.[77]

As Aquinas notes, the reason for Dionysius' view of the primacy of Being is its position as the principal and most worthy of God's effects and its role as mediatory focus of all subsequent effects. St Thomas gives an interesting interpretation of Dionysius' phrase πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων αὐτοῦ μετοχῶν τὸ εἶναι προβέβληται. He writes:

> Being itself is offered to creatures to be participated in before all the other participations of God. Whatever perfection a creature may have, it receives through a participation in God, who is, as it were, offered to all beings that they may participate in him; but he is first participated in with regard to Being itself (*ipsum esse*) prior to any other perfection: thus Being itself *per se* is more ancient, that is, more primary and noble than Life itself.[78]

Aquinas claims to discern two arguments in Dionysius in favour of the primacy and superior dignity of Being as such over Life, Wisdom and other such exemplary perfections. Firstly, whatever shares in other participations must partake first of Being. To this Aquinas adds the simple logical consideration that something is known as being before it is conceived as 'one', 'living', or 'wise'. What Aquinas calls the second argument for the primacy of being is a metaphysical explication of the first: Being is the first value participated in not only by individual beings, but is more immediately and profoundly the source of those perfections and princples of which, in the language of Neoplatonist metaphysics, each individual specifically partakes. Life and wisdom are certain ways of being; Being is, therefore, prior to and more simple than life and wisdom, and is

related to them, according to St Thomas, both *sicut participatum ad participans* and *ut actus eorum*.[79] Being is thus the principle of all principles participated in by beings. Dionysius concludes: 'No being exists whose substance and eternity is not Being itself (τὸ αὐτὸ εἶναι)'[80] or, as Aquinas puts it, Being is the 'form' participated in by all things with respect to their subsistence and duration.[81]

Here we have an example both of a major inspiration exercised by Dionysius and a masterly commentary by St Thomas. Dionysius uses neither the word 'act' nor 'perfection', but his sense is clear. The phrases πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων αὐτοῦ μετοχῶν τὸ εἶναι προβέβληται καὶ ἔστιν αὐτὸ καθ᾽ αὑτὸ τὸ εἶναι πρεσβύτερον and τὰ ἄλλα, ὅσων τὰ ὄντα μετέχοντα, πρὸ πάντων αὐτῶν τοῦ εἶναι μετέχει[82] could only have been interpreted by Aquinas in terms of participation in *esse* as the first perfection[83] and act of all beings.[84] Aquinas weaves together the causal principles of both Platonist and Aristotelian metaphysics, placing them under the primacy of being as their primary act which enriches, and the first perfection to be participated. Whether the form which determines a being is conceived as an immanent act or as a transcendent perfection which is participated, it must first be actualized by and participate in being. In perceiving the central value of Being, the supreme form and primary act, Aquinas discerns the focus and fulcrum uniting Platonist and Aristotelian metaphysics. Dionysius plays a significant role in this discovery.

For Dionysius, Being is the focal point, the radical and radial centre of God's action within beings. This is the ultimate source of its primacy. The power of creation touches most radically the central act of being and from here diffuses its presence and penetrates throughout all creation. This is the ontological primacy proper to the act of being. It is, as it were, the immediate and intimate medium through which God acts upon each being, actualizing its essence and all its features. As Dionysius writes: 'Being itself is never withdrawn from any being',[85] and Aquinas adds: 'since nothing can be said to exist unless it possesses *esse*'.[86] St Thomas summarizes the role of *esse* in creation: *Deus per ipsum esse omnia causat*.[87]

Virtual Plenitude of Divine Being

In light of this primacy of being as the fullness of finite perfection and its central role in the causality of creation, it is understandable why the phrase 'power of being' attains its fullest significance for both Dionysius and Aquinas when referring to the infinite pre-eminence of divine being. The motifs of intensive being and of *virtus essendi* here attain their full significance. Existence is at its highest intensity, and *virtus essendi* is complete in the being of God: *Dei magnitudo est esse eius*.[88] (This could be affirmed of all beings; the greatness of each thing is its being. What Aquinas intends here is that God's greatness is unlimited, because his being is boundless.) God is infinite in power, possessing in advance and by excess (προέχων καὶ ὑπερέχων) all strength and energy, causing both individually and universally the power of being itself. While Being is for Dionysius the very energy, dynamism and power of all things, it is itself empowered by the divine supra-ontological power. The relation is thus expressed: 'Being itself, if it is proper to say so, has the power to be (δύναμιν εἰς τὸ εἶναι) from the power which is beyond being (παρὰ τῆς ὑπερουσίου δυνάμεως).'[89] God is infinite in power because he is transcendent being. This is the understanding, moreover, which Dionysius brings to *Exodus* 3, 4: 'By a power beyond being, "He who is" (ὁ ὢν) is substantial cause of all being (εἶναι) and creator of that which is.'[90] Commenting on another important Neoplatonic text, the *Liber de Causis*, Aquinas declares: 'If anything had the infinite power of being (*infinitam virtutem essendi*), such that it did not participate in being from another, then it alone would be infinite, and this is God.'[91]

God is affirmed as essentially good because he embraces within his existence in an infinite and unlimited power all the perfections manifest in finite beings. In creatures the perfection of being is limited and diverse, in God it is absolute and simple. The principles of intensity, participation and pre-eminent presence, here determine the thought of both Dionysius and Aquinas. Aquinas emphasizes the determination of perfection as act, grounded universally in the actuality of existence. God is known to be all-perfect because he is

affirmed as cause of all things in their existence. It will be fruitful in this regard to have a closer look at these notions of causality and exemplarity in Aquinas' Commentary on *The Divine Names* and in other passages inspired by Dionysius.

Especially revealing of Dionysius' inspiration is Question 4 of *Summa Theologiae* I, where Aquinas considers the perfection of God; particularly article 2, where he reasons that God is universally perfect since in him are present the perfections of all things. Dionysius' influence is clear, firstly, from the appeal made to his authority in response to the objections which Aquinas advances against his own view. And considering in turn each of these objections, he again refers to Dionysius. God is perfect because, in Dionysius' words, he embraces all existing things in a primordial unity: *Deus in uno existentia omnia praehabet.*[92] In the corpus of the article Aquinas summarily repeats that the perfections of all things exist in God; he is said, therefore, to be totally or universally perfect, since he lacks none of the nobility of any nature.

St Thomas puts forward two lines of reflection to establish this view, suggesting that Dionysius has followed similar lines in his thought. The first argument recalls a principle which is commonplace in Dionysius, echoed throughout Aquinas' metaphysics and repeated with frequency in the Commentary on *The Divine Names*: 'Whatever perfection there is in an effect must be found in its efficient cause.'[93] As Aquinas explains, this can occur in two ways: firstly, an effect may be potentially present in its cause in a manner identical with its own nature: as when one man, for example, generates another. The cause is in this case 'univocal' with its effect; it anticipates the effect by its own natural form. An effect may also be pre-contained in an eminent or more perfect manner when the cause is of a different and superior nature (*agens aequivocum*), as when the sun's power produces objects bearing a certain derived likeness to the sun. It is evident, Aquinas states, that such an effect pre-exists virtually, i. e. potentially or within the power of its efficient cause and is present, moreover, in a pre-eminent and more perfect manner (*eminentiori modo*). He distinguishes between the superior, virtual presence of an effect

in an agent cause and potential presence in a material cause which is inferior. This entire article is pervaded by the notion of *virtus*: intensive, virtual or preeminent presence.[94] (In the following article Aquinas, in continuation of a passage from Dionysius, explains the deficiency of an effect in relation to its cause in terms of intensity or slackness — *secundum intensionem et remissionem* — and illustrates their difference with the example of things which are more or less white.[95] We find thus the juxtaposition of both *virtus* and *intensio* and the Neoplatonist theme of *albedo separata*).

Besides the example of the sun, which Dionysius had already adduced to illustrate the pre-eminent presence of effects within a superior cause, Aquinas cites in his Commentary the artistic causality of the architect or craftsman in whom the effect is anticipated and unified intentionally. In that case the cause bears only an extrinsic relation of similarity to its effect. The most perfect and profound presence is that of all beings within the fullness of their creative cause. However, Aquinas notes that there is a certain analogy not only between each cause and effect, but between the relation of different causes to their respective effects. There is a parallel between the relation which a particular cause has to its individual effect and the relation of the supreme cause towards its universal effects.[96] By this he means that each effect is imbued with greater or lesser perfection according to the existential wealth and resources of its cause. The more perfect and supreme a cause, the more universal will be its causative power and efficacy; the more intimate its immanence in its effects and the presence of its effects within itself. 'The more elevated a nature, the more intimate is that which proceeds from it.' Since existence or being is what is most universal and profound in all things, their common and primary source can be only Being Itself: *Ipsum esse per se subsistens*. As universal and supreme cause, God is most intimately and powerfully present within creatures. (Such presence must be correctly understood: Aquinas remarks that 'beings are more properly in God than God in things'.)[97] And concluding his first argument for God's infinite perfection in *ST*, I, 4, 2, he states: 'Since God is the first efficient cause of things, the perfections of all things must pre-

exist in God in a pre-eminent manner.'[98] St Thomas believes that this is the significance of Dionysius' statement: 'He is not this and not that, but he is all as cause of all.'[99]

The causality of beings derives in its totality through existence itself from the infinite plentitude of God's Being. All the goodness within beings thus flows from the singular perfection of their divine origin. Because he produces the perfection of all things, all perfection must pre-exist in God's own Being.[100] And not only must he possess perfection, but that he may originally cause perfection in the radical manner of creation, God must himself *be* the endless and subsistent perfection from which all created goodness flows. God is 'complete' (in his Being and Goodness) because he embraces universally all things within himself.[101] He is 'all in all' since he *is* causally the perfection of all things.[102]

The first argument proposed by Aquinas in *ST*, I, 4, 2 to illustrate God's universal perfection proceeds from the diversity of perfections throughout beings to their unique and pre-eminent presence in the creative cause. God is the fontal abundance from which all things receive their individual wealth of existence. The second way outlined by Aquinas reflects upon the nature of God whose existence has been established, whose essence is affirmed as self-subsisting Being, *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*. God does not *have* being or share in it according to any measure of its richness; he *is* Being Itself and embraces within his simple existence all the plenitude of the richness of Being: *Deus est ipsum esse per se subsistens: ex quo oportet quod totam perfectionem essendi in se contineat*.[103] God is infinitely perfect in himself and not merely as the cause of all finite perfection. He is not only the *Summum Bonum* of all things but is exhaustively and absolutely all-perfect in himself. He is infinitely and independently perfect. Existence is the perfection of all perfections and there is nothing more perfect than subsistent Being itself. God is indeed that than which no greater is possible or may be conceived.

To illustrate the infinite and universal perfection of God as subsistent being, Aquinas makes use of the Neoplatonic motif of separated perfection. He considers the hypothesis of subsistent heat:

a warm body does not possess the full perfection of heat because it does not partake of heat according to its full nature. But if there existed a heat which subsisted in itself, it would lack nothing of the power or perfection proper to heat as such. Transferring the analogy to being, St Thomas states that since God is subsistent being itself, nothing of the perfection of being can be lacking in him. 'Now the perfections of all things belong to the perfection of being,' he continues, 'since beings are perfect according to the manner in which they have existence. It follows, therefore, that God does not lack any perfection.' And Aquinas again credits Dionysius with this reasoning when he writes in Chapter 5 of *The Divine Names*, that God 'does not exist in a particular manner, but embraces primordially all being within himself simply and without limit', adding that 'he is the being of all that subsists'.[104] Elaborating upon this same passage[105] in his Commentary on *The Divine Names*, Aquinas likewise traces the absolute goodness and complete perfection of God to the subsistent identity of his Being. Here he illustrates it with the hypothesis not of heat but of subsistent whiteness. A perfection which has its own self-subsistent presence is infinite and unique; received into another it is multiplied and limited. Participation is thus the root of finitude. Aquinas writes:

> Dionysius shows that all things are in some manner unified in God. This is evident when we consider that every form when received into anything is limited and measured according to the capacity of the recipient; thus an individual white body does not possess the complete whiteness proper to the full power of whiteness. But were there to exist a separate whiteness, it would lack in nothing which belongs to the power of whiteness. Now, all other things have being (*esse*) as received or participated and do not, therefore, have being according to the full power of being; God alone, who is subsisting being itself, has being according to the full power of being (*secundum totam virtutem essendi, esse habet*).[106]

This, states Aquinas, is what Dionysius means when he says that God can be the cause of being to all things, since he 'does not exist in a particular way (οὐ πώς ἐστι, *non est existens quodam modo*)', that is, according to some limited and finite mode, but embraces the fullness of existence, anticipating Being universally and infinitely within himself, since it pre-exists in him as cause and proceeds from him to others.[107] The ultimate ground of divine unity, perfection and creativity, therefore, is the self-subsistence of God's Being, his identity in his own act of *esse*. As Aquinas points out, God can be cause of existence for all beings only because he is himself the inexhaustible plenitude of existence, lacking none of the perfection of Being. God exists, not according to one particular manner or mode but simply is, absolutely and infinitely, without condition or measure.[108] And he is unique through the self-subsistence of his Being: subsistent being can be one only; existence is limited when diffracted through a multiplicity of beings, as whiteness is likewise limited and multiplied when diversified amongst a variety of bodies. But if whiteness were subsistent and autonomous in itself with an independent and separate existence apart from all white objects, it would also of necessity be one.[109]

The intensive participation and pre-eminent presence both of all perfections at the finite level within the perfection of being and, universally, of the perfections of all beings within divine subsistent being is brought out clearly by Aquinas in his reply to one of the objections in *ST*, I, 4, 2. The objection is that which Dionysius had already raised, hypothetically, to illustrate his own view of being as fundamental and all-embracing perfection. The objection states that a living thing is more perfect than one which simply exists, and a wise being more perfect than one which is merely alive, since to live is more perfect than merely to exist and to be wise more perfect than to live. But, Aquinas develops the argument, if God's essence is existence itself, he does not have such perfections as life and wisdom. In reply Aquinas refers to Chapter 4 of *Divine Names* where Dionysius states that even though being itself is more perfect than life, and life as such is more perfect than wisdom — when these are considered abstractly in themselves as

distinguished by reason — nevertheless a living being, which both exists and is alive, is more perfect than one which simply exists; similarly, a wise being both exists and is alive.

> So, although to be existing does not include within it to be alive or to be wise (since it is not necessary that what participates in being should partake of it according to every mode of being), nevertheless the very being of God (*ipsum esse Dei*) embraces life and wisdom; since none of the perfections of being can be absent from him who is subsisting being itself.[110]

Aquinas, in reliance upon Dionysius, here understands being in the intensive sense of primary and universal value: both the finite act of *esse* of the individual existent in which all particular perfections are rooted and of which they partake, and the infinite subsistent Being itself in which the perfection of universal being is pre-eminently present in a unique superplenitude and intensity. As the essential plenitude of Being, divine being includes all life and wisdom since these are themselves participant modes of being. There is an analogy between the participation of all finite value in the primary perfection of created existence and the universal embrace at the heart of divine Being of all created goodness. This kinship rests upon the principle that the perfection of an effect is present virtually and to an eminent degree in its cause; *esse* is the principle at the interior of each individual and actualizes all its resources, as in the universal sphere God is the creative cause of all.[111]

The objection and the reply of Dionysius and Aquinas focus in fact upon two distinct aspects of the concept of being: on the one hand existence as intensive universal value embracing all other perfections such as life and wisdom which are but degrees of excellence within reality (thus one might say that to be wise is to *be* more, i. e. to exist in a more perfect manner) and on the other, the most general concept of being which abstracts universally from all perfections. The concept of being is thus at once the most abstract and impoverished, yet the richest and most significant.

Explicitly it expresses the minimum possible regarding any being, merely that it exists; latently, however, it embraces notionally in an absolute way the universal perfection of all that exists. It is this latter intelligibility, transposed to the transcendent level and intensified towards infinity, which provides the best conception within human grasp for the reality and goodness of God. The self-subsistent plenitude of the absolute Good may be expressed in a plurality of ways; although on first encounter the least expressive name is that of Being, it is ultimately the most significant denomination, allowing God to be understood as the pre-eminence and plenitude of perfection present in reality.

The subsistent identity of God in his Being is affirmed again as the source of God's universal perfection in a remarkable passage of *Contra Gentiles*, 1, 28, where Aquinas yet once more invokes *Divine Names* 5, 4. He writes: 'God who is not other than his being, is a universally perfect being. And I call "universally perfect" that which is not lacking in the nobility of any genus.'[112] Aquinas declares that the nobility of anything accrues to it by virtue of its being. A man does not have any nobility from his wisdom, for example, unless, through it he really is wise, i. e. unless his wisdom actually exists. The measure of nobility of anything is in accordance with its mode of being, for each thing is said to have a greater or lesser degree of excellence in so far as its act of existence is proportioned to some special nobility, of a greater or lesser degree. In other words, the excellence or nobility of each thing depends upon the measure in which it possesses the perfection of being; the perfection of every being is bestowed and determined in measure by its act of existence. If there is something, therefore, to which the whole power of being belongs (*tota virtus essendi*), it can lack none of the excellence of any being. Now anything which is its own act of being (*esse*) possesses being according to the total power of existence (*secundum totam essendi potestatem*). God, who *is* his own existence, has being, therefore, according to the complete power of being itself. Thus he cannot be lacking in any of the nobility which belongs to any thing. Aquinas again employs the model of subsistent whiteness, which, were it to exist

in separation from all objects and unlimited in its reception by the defect of any particular thing, would possess the full power of whiteness.[113] And once more he immediately aligns this manner of conceiving the infinite excellence of God as the subsistent identity and plenitude of Being with Dionysius' avowal: 'God does not exist in a certain way; he possesses and embraces primordially all being within himself absolutely and without limit.'[114]

In sum, Aquinas affirms under the inspiration of Dionysius, the intensity of presence and perfection within the intimacy both of finite and infinite being. Such presence occurs at the finite level in the concentration of the entire perfection of each being within the primary actuality and fullness of its act of being; and universally, in the exemplary and causal presence of all existing things in absolute subsistent Being. At the finite level, all secondary aspects of things partake of the primary perfection of being; within the universal horizon, the ensemble of realities is in turn embraced in a pre-eminent and exemplary manner in divine Being.

Everything is real through the actuality of *esse*: *Necesse est participare ipsum esse*. *Esse* is the primary and ultimate act, the *actus ultimus, qui participabilis est ab omnibus; ipsum autem nihil participat*.[115] It can itself partake of none, since it is the universal act and plenary form of all. There is nothing more original in which it may share. Within creation, therefore, *esse* is the similitude par excellence of God. It is infinite in relation to the things which exist, their endless plenitude which can be shared in an infinity of ways. The paradox, however, is that it does not subsist in itself, but abides only in existing things. It is in turn itself contained in subsistent divine Being. 'The first act [God] is the universal principle of all acts, since it is infinite, pre-containing all things within itself, as Dionysius says.'[116]

Dionysius' inspiration for both aspects of the universally similar and analogous intensive presence of existence is evident from Aquinas' commentary:

> All existing things are contained under common *esse* itself, but not God; rather is *esse commune* contained under his

> power, since divine power extends farther than created being itself; and this is what he says, that *esse commune* is in God himself as that which is contained in that which contains, not that God himself is in that which is *esse*.[117]

All things are stored up in the fullness of *esse commune* and *esse commune* abides within the fullness of subsistent divine Being.

Esse Intensivum: Primary Act and Perfection

In his unique and original vision of being, Aquinas brings together the Aristotelian primacy of actuality — carrying this doctrine to a profound level not glimpsed by Aristotle — and the Platonist principle of perfect plenitude. For St Thomas, *esse* is the actualizing and emergent plenitude of perfection to which all entitative determinations stand as potency towards act, as participant to perfect and pre-eminent fullness. Being is both primary actuality and universal formal perfection. Participation must be understood not as an act whereby a being 'has' something as its possession, i. e. as a having, but as a manner of existing or of being. In its metaphysical context, to participate is precisely to *be*. To participate in existence is to exercise the act of being even though this act has been received. Things abide *in se*, but not *per se*. As a value which is participated, being is the very act of being. Aquinas penetrates more profoundly, therefore, to the significance of both actuality and participation, discovering their profound meaning precisely in their unique identity as *esse*, the primary act and fullness of perfection in every thing.

This is made explicit by Aquinas in another context, where he gives it its radical foundation in infinite act: unlimited self-subsistent Being, the pure and perfect fullness in which all things (causally) participate:

> Everything which is participated is related to the participant as its act. Now whatever is proposed as a created form subsisting *per se* must participate in being; even life itself, or whatever is called thus, participates in being itself (*participat*

> *ipsum esse*), as Dionysius says in Chapter 5 of *Divine Names*. But participated being is limited to the capacity of the participant. Thus God alone, who is his own existence, is pure and infinite act.[118]

Being as participated in is the act of the participant. This is expressed elsewhere as follows: 'Everything which participates is related to what is participated as potency to act; thus the substance of any created thing is related to its existence as potency to act.'[119]

The intimacy of being throughout its ontic determinations may be understood by considering that in living things their being is very life itself. In the animal, life is not a principle distinct from its *esse*, but rather an increased and enriched manner of existing, a power or virtue of being more noble than the simple fact of existence or manner of being of the inanimate. It is by the same principle of actuality that I exist and by virtue of which I am alive. To be alive is the 'to be' of what is living. Here Aquinas rejoins Aristotle: *Vivere enim viventibus est esse*, *Vivere enim viventis est ipsum esse ipsius*.[120] There is no separation or cleft between the life of the animal and its existence. To be, for the living thing, is to be alive; to live is precisely to be, but according to a more intense mode of being.

Aquinas remarks: 'It is clear that a living body is more noble than a nonliving body.'[121] This is the evidence of immediate observation and not yet the fruit of reflection and metaphysical insight. The difference between the phenomenological and the metaphysical viewpoints may be expressed in an apparent paradox: even though the living being is more perfect and noble than the nonliving, i. e. a body which simply is, being is more noble a perfection than life. Being is more intimate within the living body than life itself. In Aquinas' striking phrase: 'being inheres more vehemently than life' (*Esse vehementius inhaeret quam vivere*).[122]

Life does not add a restriction to being but draws rather all the more deeply from its inexhaustible wealth. It is thus that we must interpret the assertion: *Vita nihil addat supra esse nisi determinatum modum essendi seu determinatam naturam entis*.'[123] Life is thus understood as a higher nobility of being: *Ea quae sunt*

et vivunt perfectiora (sunt) quam ea quae tantum sunt.[124] This is but a realistic evaluation of the objective hierarchy in the order of things. There are manifestly distinct degrees of value and perfection within the universe. Whereas matter is regarded as *esse debile*,[125] life and wisdom are praised by Aquinas as *nobilitates*. Already central to Dionysius' vision was the fundamental appraisal of the pattern whereby some things are more perfect in their existence than others according to their proximity and likeness to the Good. This is wholly espoused by Aquinas who attributes their excellence to the fecundity and abundance of *esse* which is their embodied similitude to God. *Esse* is the plenitude of perfection; susceptible of variant measures of strength or intensity it is for Aquinas the ultimate foundation of metaphysical participation: 'Whether a thing has a vigorous or a feeble share in the act of being, it has this from God alone; and because each thing participates in an act of existence given by God, the likeness of each is found in him.'[126] The participation of *esse* either *forte sive debile* is but confirmation of the intensive proportioning of existence.

Crucial in the formation of Aquinas' notion of *intensive esse* is Dionysius' manner of attributing all perfections to the simplicity and superiority of Being. All qualities and modes of reality are contained within the superabundance of existence (*praehabens et superhabens*). In particular, Dionysius' understanding of rational, living, intelligent things as a pre-excellence of being was of singular importance in shaping Aquinas' appreciation of being as fullness. Thus, it is through Being that the perfection of life is actualized; it first participates in being and draws upon the perfection of life which is stored within the thesaurus of existence. Only then does the virtue of life imbue the inanimate. *Esse* first pervades that-which-is, raising it from the utter absence which is nothingness; life then infuses it with an increased perfection, a more intense degree of being. We may say, therefore, that living things exist more intensely; they have a higher pitch of being: they *are more*. The flower growing unobserved and hidden in a crevice upon the highest mountain has a greater interiority and intensity of being; it is *more* than the mountain, greater in its inner perfection than

the giant and majestic beauty of the physical universe: it *is* more. In this light we may read Aquinas' remark: *nobilitas cuiusque rei est secundum suum esse.*[127]

All the perfections of a being are perfections of *esse*; this must not be understood as a tautology, but as expressing the depth of being as the intensity and fullness, the source and well-spring, of all that is present as positive in reality. *Esse* is the first and final perfection of things. Being penetrates with its presence to the intimate core of each thing and fills out its every aspect. It is *esse* which originally grants reality, which makes things present to themselves and inserts them into the universal order. This is the ontological difference between being as primary actuality and that which is in potency towards its participated actuality.

Intelligent beings, likewise, have a greater excellence of being; they are yet more elevated on the *scala entis* and are closer to infinite goodness, since they embody a greater measure of the power or efficacy of being; they have a greater *virtus essendi*. They harbour a more profound and inner depth of existential wealth. The same complete identity cannot, however, be affirmed between the rational character of man and his act of existence because he is not exclusively or exhaustively rational but embraces many non-rational activities. (Moreover, to identify the activity of knowing with the very act of being would be to identify the substance with its accident and would entail the identity of the knowing subject with its object). We can affirm nevertheless the inherence of cognition within existence as a richness which is born out of the heart of being as the actuality of the knower. To know is a more excellent mode of existing (*modus existendi*) but is included in being and proceeds from *esse*.[128] In the simplicity and perfect unity of God, there is sheer identity between the endless perfections of Being, Life and Intelligence: *Ipsum intelligere primi Intelligentis est vita eius et esse ipsius.*[129] (Remarkable is the ease with which Aquinas, in referring this doctrine to Aristotle, perceives the harmony of the two approaches.)

What we are here calling to mind is that in all beings, *esse* is not a dimension alongside all other aspects of things but is their fullness and foundation. It is identical with them in so far as they

are perfections — it is their very perfection — and transcends them in so far as they pose a limit to its infinity. Essence is thus a *modus essendi*, determining the nature of that which is. *Esse*, however, is not identical with its determinations, although it subsists alone in and through them. Being is the originative perfection which emerges to adopt the particular forms and determinations which constitute the individual. *Esse* infuses into all finite forms of the real a presence which actualizes them from within at their most profound and intimate depth, fulfilling them but surpassing also their grasp so that it is never consumed or exhausted even by their ensemble. It resembles the source which feeds the stream and impels its flow, but which as distinct is never exhausted in its outpouring. *Esse* is as the very illumination through which things first emerge and become manifest that they may appear and stand out in their own dimension and relief but which remains itself concealed; the universal and ubiquitous light which illumines all beings but cannot itself be seen. It is the silent and unceasing energy which nourishes and maintains the endless ferment of the universe. *Esse* is the quiet leaven (*aliquid fixum et quietum*) within the world of beings which, unobserved, perfects and harmonizes each and every one within the ensemble and which lies at the origin of the whole. It is the unseen interior of things which reaches outward towards their utmost bounds, but is never enveloped by them.

Being is not simply one other among the endless forms or perfections of the created universe but is the most fundamental of all, embracing all others as secondary and implicit. In its generality it forms the foundation of the pyramid, comprehending all things universally within its power. In its simplicity it is the apex, containing all in a virtual manner according to a higher, pre-eminent presence. Being, however, is not merely the sum of all perfections and forms, but is their total simplicity and plenitude. All other qualities which the earlier Platonists would have established as independent, individual forms in themselves, Dionysius united in the simplicity of the single and universal form of Being. In characterizing *esse* as intensive we view all perfections as contained eminently within the primary and plenary perfection

of being. These are active only as emerging from the actuality and ontological fullness of being. In turn *esse* emerges and shines through the medium of beings. *Esse* is the pre-eminence of all wealth; it constitutes in anticipation all the qualities which are diffracted and dispersed according to its manifold wealth throughout the entitative dimensions of each thing. *Esse* is the *thesaurus* of all riches and resources of whatever order found within any being.[130] In an analogous but superior manner, St Thomas discovers the unity of wealth of all finite being which is diffused and dispersed throughout the multiplicity and hierarchy of creation as present and anticipated in Infinite Subsisting Being.

In the individual existent, *esse* is genetically, so to speak, the abundance of existential perfection from which all subsequent characters and determinations unfurl, from which they blossom and spring forth. They are its manifestations or modes of presence. The act of being is not an empty, functional or efficient energy which in an instrumental manner simply effects into existence the modes of essence and accident of an individual, but is the wellspring which continually nurtures what-is in all its diverse activity. It is not merely *initium* but also *fons et origo*, and more importantly it is their *plenitudo essendi*. This is the significance of the distinction made between existence as the mere fact of being, and *esse* as the fullness of perfection and enduring source which constantly renews within each being the ever-present creative power of God who is Absolute Being. To assert being as existential plenitude is to recognize that the perfections within beings over and above their simple existence are themselves perfections of being itself and that in origin being constitutes their excellence and their abundance. The principle of intensity allows us to conceive the existential richness and diversity of all things, individually and universally, as preserved virtually and causally, according to a higher mode of presence within the primary perfection of *esse*.

Essence and accidents participate in *esse* and draw from it their constant energy. *Esse* is thus the plenitude both of actuality and form, the *actus actuum* and the *forma formarum*. As primary act and plenary perfection, Being is the treasure store of value, a resevoir

of richness and energy. *Esse* is thus at once both intensive and emergent act; it constitutes within an anterior simplicity and unity all the actuality and perfection of a being and diffuses it throughout its each and every aspect. *Esse* is the profound and inner pulsation which confers upon each thing its radical irruption and insurge, letting it stand out of and over against the void of nothingness. It is what is most intimate and fundamental within each thing,[131] what is most formal, since it includes every other determination. *Esse* is the exhaustive actuality, the inexhaustible source and fullness of the entire wealth which conjoins to establish and constitute each entity as a unique being and inserts it according to its due rank within the hierarchic order of the universe. Being is in each thing its first and final goodness, primary and supreme, fundamental and comprehensive, embracing all its entitative wealth and resources.

The Neoplatonic triad of Being, Life and Intelligence, taken from Proclus, Dionysius and the author of the *Liber de Causis*, is the frequent focus of Aquinas' reflection on the universal distribution and hierarchy of perfections. This is prominent in his Commentary on the *Liber de Causis*: *Considerandum est quod omnes gradus rerum ad tria videtur reducere, quae sunt: esse, vivere et intelligere*.[132] Aquinas' exposition of this is indeed ingenious. Each thing may be considered, he says, in three ways: firstly, in itself, in which respect *esse* is proper to it; secondly, in so far as it tends towards another: this is characteristic of life; and thirdly, in so far as it has within itself what is other. Now, to possess something according to its form, immaterially, is the most noble mode of possession and this is the characteristic of knowledge. To be the origin of one's own movement is the most noble of motions and this is the nature of life. Common to all of these, however, and primary among perfections is being: *esse igitur, quod est primum, commune est omnibus*. Not all things have the perfection of self-movement or of knowledge, but only the more perfect among beings (*perfectiora in entibus*). Aquinas summarizes the order of priority: *Intelligere praesupponit vivere et vivere praesupponit esse, esse autem non praesupponit aliquid aliud*. Being, therefore, is given through creation alone.

Dionysius, Source of Aquinas' Notion of Being

Aquinas' close reliance upon Dionysius and the inspiration of *DN* V, 1 is especially evident in the celebrated passage of *De Potentia*, 7, 2, ad 9.[133] This is not always recognized, however. Albert Keller, for example, concluding his excellent study of the relation between the terms *esse* and *existentia*, makes no mention of Dionysius as the source of the final phrase of this passage, which he then proceeds to interpret as the primary enunciation of *esse* as plenitude.[134] More perceptive is the explicit statement of A. Solignac:

> Une analyse philologique rigoureuse démontrerait sûrement que la source de la doctrine thomasienne de l'*esse* n'est autre que le De Divinis Nominibus ch. V, 1–7, c'est-à-dire le chapitre qui traite de l'être comme nom divin par excellence. Le texte célèbre et fondamental sur l'*esse* — nous voulons parler de De Pot. VII. 2 ad 9um — suffit d'ailleurs à mettre sur la voie un lecteur attentif. Si saint Thomas designe Dieu comme l'*Ipsum esse per se subsistens* — et c'est de l'idée de Dieu que dérive toute la doctrine de l'*esse* — c'est parce qu'il avait lu dans le PseudoDenys que l'*esse* est la participation première, fondement de toutes les autres.[135]

The passage begins with the declaration by Aquinas: *Hoc quod dico esse est inter omnia perfectissimum: quod ex hoc patet quia actus est semper perfectior potentia.*[136] It is *esse* which first and alone makes the forms of perfection to be actually real. These may abide latently within the potency of matter, virtually within the power of their efficient cause or intentionally within the intellect. But it is only by having *esse* that they actually exist in reality (*sed hoc quod habet esse, efficitur actu existens*). 'Wherefore it is clear that what I call *esse* is the actuality of all acts and therefore the perfection of all perfections.' Not only does *esse* actualize all things, constituting in its universal extension the actuality of all acts, but it comprehends also intensively within its fullness the many-graded perfections of all. This is, as Aquinas goes on to explain, because nothing can be added to *esse* as more formal, determining

it as act determines potency. Being (*esse*) is essentially (*secundum essentiam*) different from that to which it is added and whereby it is determined. *Esse* belongs to an utterly different order from that of essence; there is an intransgressible distance between the orders of *esse* and *essentia*. Nothing can be added to *esse* as extraneous to it, since outside it lies only non-being, which is neither form nor matter. Hence being (*esse*) is not determined by something distinct, as potency by act, but rather as act by potency, in the same way as form is determined by the matter proper to itself, and soul is defined as the act of an organic physical body.

Here Aquinas touches on two aspects which are significant for the relation of being to those perfections signified as form (*forma signata*). Being is, firstly, wholly and radically distinct from all its determinations. It constitutes an order unto itself. It may not be identified with matter, form, essence, substance or accident. As universal actuality, *esse* is determined, however, within every individual, and participated according to the capacity or potency of the principles of each. Moreover, the determinations of being, (i. e. the additions to the meaning of being whereby a thing is defined as a particular kind of being) emerge from the plenitude of being itself as concrete individual ways in which the universal actuality of being comes to presence. These determinations such as substance, genus, species, etc., through which beings are distinguished, are but so many *modi essendi*. The following passage from *De Veritate* is relevant:

> All the other conceptions of the intellect are had by additions to being. But nothing can be added to being as though it were something not included in being — in the way that a difference is added to a genus or an accident to a subject — for every reality is essentially a being. . . There are different modes of being according to which we speak when we speak of different levels of existence, and according to these grades different things are classified. Consequently, substance does not add a difference to being by signifying some reality added to it, but substance simply expresses a special manner of existing, namely, as a being in itself. The same is true of the other classes.[137]

Being is distinct from all of its determinations, it transcends them, is nevertheless their source. It is their plenitude and actuality anterior to being received in a unique mode within an individual which it thereby raises, not merely out of utter nothingness into existence but enthrones in its unique status of individual privilege and perfection according to the kind of being which it is determined to be. This is what Aquinas means when he states in the text of *De Potentia* which we are considering: 'Accordingly, this act of being (*esse*) is distinct from that *esse* inasmuch as it is the *esse* of this or that nature.' Here he is suggesting that there are degrees of perfection among the concrete acts of being which endow different individuals with perfection and actuality. Whereas prime matter is for Aquinas *esse debile*, living reality is more noble than what merely exists. And it is precisely to Dionysius that he here refers in favour of *esse* as the source and plenitude of perfection: *Et per hoc dicit Dionysius quod licet viventia sunt nobiliora quam existentia, tamen esse est nobilius quam vivere: viventia enim non tantum habent vitam, sed cum vita simul habent et esse*. Being is more excellent than life since life is itself a mode of being; life is precisely the mode of being within a living thing. Whatever has life has also as such within its virtue the perfection of existence. Being, however, is of wider extension than life; there are, therefore, beings which partake of existence but not of life. As Keller puts it, *esse* is more perfect than *vivere*, but *ens* does not excel *vivens*.[138] Another author explains it: 'The transition from *vivens perfectius ente* to *esse praeeminet vitae* is the transition from a principally logical to a strictly metaphysical understanding of being.'[139]

This doctrine of the intensive and comprehensive value of being Aquinas appropriates completely as his own, as is evident from the originality and invention with which he finds it verified in the most unlikely contexts. To the question, for example, whether human happiness consists in bodily goodness,[140] he proposes as a hypothetical objection the view of Dionysius referred to, that to be (*esse*) is better than to be alive, and that life is better than the other things which are consequent upon it. But to the being and life of man, and therefore to his beatitude, concludes the objection,

belongs most of all the health of the body. To this Aquinas brings the following distinction in the meaning of *esse*. Considered simply or absolutely in itself, as including all the perfection of existing, *esse* surpasses life and all subsequent perfections; in this sense being contains in itself all such secondary perfections which it transcends while embracing them.[141] This, says Aquinas, is the meaning intended by Dionysius. The objection posed presumes the alternative understanding of being, namely *esse* as participated in this or that thing which does not receive the full perfection of being, but which has *esse* in an imperfect manner, as is the minimum measure of being in any creature; in this case it is clear that being itself (*ipsum esse*) together with an additional perfection is more excellent. Because of this Dionysius can also say that living things are better than existing things and intelligent beings than living things.[142] Being, understood *secundum quod includit in se omnem perfectionem essendi*, is none other than the rich meaning of *esse* which Aquinas made the foundation and crowning of his metaphysics and natural theology. Dionysius and Aquinas here disclose a significant ambivalence in the notions 'living', 'wise' and 'being'. If 'wise' is taken as abstracting from the perfections of life and being, then it is less perfect than that which really is and lives. Referring to what is really wise, living and existent, the wise being is more perfect than the merely living or the simply existent. To be wise, however, is but a more perfect way of being. In both senses, therefore, being is more radical and fundamental.

Another interesting verification of the primacy of *esse* is found in his *Commentary on the Sentences*,[143] where Aquinas responds to the objection that charity (*caritas*) cannot be an accidental character of the soul, since it is through charity itself that the soul is perfect, and an accident cannot be more noble than its subject. Here too the radical significance of being is brought into clear focus, as well as the Dionysian provenance of this doctrine. Absolutely speaking, says Aquinas, the soul is more perfect than charity as any subject is superior to its accident; but *secundum quid* the reverse is the case. The reason for this is that *esse*, as Dionysius states, is more noble than everything else which follows

upon *esse*; thus *esse* absolutely speaking is more noble, for example, than understanding (*intelligere*) if it is possible to understand *intelligere* without *esse*. That which excels in *esse*, therefore, is more noble absolutely than all those which excel in any of the perfections which follow upon *esse*, although it may be less noble in another respect. And because the soul and every substance has a more noble existence (*nobilius esse*) than its accident, it is more noble absolutely. But regarding a specific *esse*, or in a certain respect, an accident may be more noble since it is related to substance as act to potency; this secondary goodness substance receives from accidents, but not the primary goodness of being, the *bonitas prima essendi*.[144] Being is the primary goodness of each thing, the substantial act of being, even though it may be further perfected in certain respects by its accidents to which it is related as potency in respect of these determinations. But these aspects of being are also themselves perfections of being. The priority and excellence of *esse* is thus reflected in the order of the principles which constitute being. All perfections 'follow upon' (*consequuntur*) *esse*; they are consequent to *esse* because they are implicit within it; they are stored up in advance within the treasury of being which is the universal fecundity of all.[145] Being is the fundamental power which each individual exercises according to its own unique and proper intensity, *forte sive debile*.

Conclusion

The conclusion to the present essay may be briefly stated: It is illuminating and legitimate to employ the language of intensity to express the varying grades of the inner richness of things; for Aquinas, moreover, the 'intensity of being' is identical with *virtus essendi*. In the development of both themes — fundamentally one — Dionysius exerted profound influence and inspiration upon St Thomas. The 'principle of intensity' and the pre-eminence of *virtus* are operative at the heart of finite being, where existence is seen as primary and comprehensive perfection and, more originally, at the source of all reality in the plenitude of divine power which

anticipates within its simplicity the existential wealth of all creatures.

Virtus essendi may be understood in a fundamental sense, literally as the basic force, strength or power 'exerted' by anything which exists: its *vehementia essendi*,[146] the resolute and irresistible manner with which something imposes itself within the order of reality. If something exists, it imposes itself with an absolute character. Try as we may, we cannot refute or flee from that which is. Each thing shares in the absolute character of existence; it exerts a sovereign and inescapable *puissance*.[147] This is the sense of *virtus essendi* which Aquinas finds in Aristotle; from Dionysius he acquires the enriching motif of intensity. It is indeed the same word *virtus* which is used by Moerbeke to translate ἀρετή in Aristotle and by Sarracenus to render δύναμις in Dionysius' text. This is most significant as revealing the richness in meaning of the concept of *virtus essendi* which Aquinas derived from his historical sources. *Esse* is nobility and excellence, power and dynamic actuality. It is the virtue of being which determines the intensity or degree of perfection endowed upon an individual within the universal scale of beings. *Esse* determines, as it were, the ontological density of each individual along the great chain of Being. Rising in the universal scale, beings are filled more and more with the richness and nobility of the universal perfection of existence: *gradus in ipso esse inveniuntur*.[148] Different genera have different modes of being; a more noble substance has a more noble being: *nobilioris substantiae nobilius esse*.[149]

The meaning of intensity is borne out moreover in everyday usage. We commonly speak of intense heat or cold; we use the language of intensity to convey depths and degrees of light or colour. (It is of course possible to measure such degrees of intensity instrumentally, but such quantification is not required or presumed in such transferred usage of the term.) It is not by chance that the examples chosen by Aquinas to clarify the Neoplatonic motif of separate perfections are precisely those of *albedo separata* and *calor separata*. We speak of the intensity of pain; it also makes sense conversely to speak of pleasure as more or less intense. Inner

states, spiritual or emotional, while not susceptible to numerical quantification, lend themselves to such description: joy, love, amazement, sadness, grief, despair — such feelings vary in intensity according to their ardour or lassitude. Running through such usage is the connotation of an increase or decrease in quantity, distinct from the dimensive aspect of a physical kind. The language of intensity here signifies an escalation of inner attainment, as distinct from that of outward extension or expansion. It indicates a heightening or gathering of concentration rather than a loss of external dissipation or dispersion. An individual increases in respect of a particular perfection or determination not by extending outwards but through an increase of inner achievement; not by expanding its power to more or other objects, but through an enrichment of its own actuality: it *is* more.[150]

Such everyday use of the notion of intensity, in particular as referring to spiritual qualities or realities, suggests the aptness and legitimacy of referring to existence as an actuality, perfection or power embodying varying measures of intensity. Being is a value; all value is grounded in and springs from existence. Being is the original power and perfection; conversely the value and power of being may be understood as a variable intensity enjoyed in its own measure by each individual.

9

Unity in Aquinas' Commentary on the *Liber de Causis*[1]

The theme of unity permeates the entire *Liber de Causis*; there is scarcely a proposition in which it does not feature, at least indirectly, either as a fundamental aspect of reality to be established, or as a principle invoked to elucidate the universe. The purpose of the treatise is to set out the order, hierarchy and relations which govern the distinct levels of causality in the universe; hence the definitive title by which it became known. Translated from Arabic by Gerald of Cremona († 1187) as *Liber de Expositione Bonitatis Purae*, its initial impact in the West was due to the mistaken belief that it expressed the theology of Aristotle, his final unified metaphysical vision. As such it was commented upon by Aquinas' master, Albert the Great (1206–1280), who suggested that it 'was assembled by a certain David the Jew from the sayings of Aristotle, Avicenna, Algazel and Alfarabi'.[2] With William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Elements of Theology* (completed 18th May 1268), Aquinas became aware that the *Liber* was in fact an adaptation and condensation of Proclus.[3] He simply refers to its unknown author as 'one of the Arab philosophers'.[4] Aquinas made liberal use of the *Liber* even in his earliest writings, citing it over two hundred and twenty times.[5] Even while he still believed it to be the work of Aristotle, he drew attention to its Platonic character.[6] His commentary, written in the first half of 1272,[7] is one of his last works and presents his mature evaluation of Neoplatonism.[8]

The Unity of Divine Causation

From Aquinas' point of view, the single most significant contribution of the *Liber de Causis* is its rejection, within a Neoplatonist milieu, of the multiplicity of gods or transcendent causes, schematized by Proclus, in favour of the unity of divine causation. In a major departure from Plotinus, Proclus had vastly multiplied the intermediaries between the transcendent One and finite beings, adding multiple ἑνάδες, 'henads' or units, which he termed 'gods' and placed on the first level in the hierarchy of being.[9] Thus between the unparticipated One or Good and the universe of participating beings (intelligent, animate, inanimate), he inserted the participated world of ideas, gods or henads. The henads mediate between the absolute transcendent unity of the pure One and the multiplicity of things which participate in the One.

The author of *De Causis*[10] drastically reduced Proclus' complex hierarchy, replacing it with one much more simple: the One, Intellect, Soul — the order already established by Plotinus. He silently, but systematically, suppresses Proclus' allusions to multiple gods or henads. Where Proclus speaks of the gods (οἱ θεοί) he refers to the 'first cause'.[11] Unlike Proclus and Plotinus, the author of *De Causis* sees the first principle as 'Pure Being', and interprets its causality as the universal creation of all being, without anything pre-existent. The transformation in perspective is radical: the primary cause is 'pure being' and its causality a *creatio ex nihilo*. The idea of creation would have appeared strange to Proclus: divine presence is diffused throughout the universe; there is no creation in the proper sense of causation out of nothing.[12]

The commitment by the Author to a unique God has profound implications for his understanding of being, and involves most crucially an advance towards the all-embracing unity of existence as the first created perfection. He simply removed all intermediaries as unnecessary in the relation of total and immediate production. While God is not participated in his divinity, but in his effect, his causation is nonetheless direct, requiring no intervening levels to mediate or transmit his action. All separate self-subsisting

forms, all diversity of divine causes is eliminated; creation is attributed to a unique source. Being becomes the first effect, the first participation in the created perfection of God: creation is the direct action of the single divine cause.

Aquinas' grasp of Platonism is, broadly speaking, that which he received from Aristotle: Plato of the χωρισμός and transcendent forms; his reading of Proclus supplied further details. As he understands it, there is for the '*Platonici*' a fourfold order in the universe. First is the order of the gods, that is, 'of the ideal forms, among which there is an order corresponding to the order of the universality of forms'.[13] Beneath the gods are the orders of separate intellects, souls and bodies.[14] These latter correspond to the hierarchy of understanding, life and being: bodies participate only being; souls participate being and living; intellects participate being, living and understanding. The perfections themselves, Aquinas asserts, are caused by the first, that is, the divine order, whether this be a plurality of gods ordered beneath the One, as conceived by the Platonists, or a single God, as he himself maintains.[15] Universal causality is for the Platonists the defining mark of the gods, since the more abstract a perfection, the more prior. Aquinas explains:

> Plato maintained that the universal forms of things were separate and *per se* subsistent. Because, according to him, such universal forms have a certain universal causality over particular beings that participate them, he consequently calls all such forms subsisting in this way 'gods'. For the word 'god' implies a certain universal providence and causality. Furthermore, among these forms he articulates this order: the more universal any form is, the simpler and more prior a cause it is, for it is participated by later forms, as when we assert that animal is participated by man and life by animal and so on. But the last, which is participated by all and itself participates nothing else, is the separate one and good itself, which he calls 'the highest god' and 'the first cause of all things'.[16]

Aquinas agrees that 'universality of causality is proper to God',[17] but departs from Proclus in proclaiming the unicity of divine causation: all universal causality belongs to a single God; the Platonist theory of abstract, separated, forms must be corrected. Aquinas appeals in the first place to Dionysius, who was for him *primus inter patres*,[18] but also repeatedly praises the *Liber de Causis* for abandoning Proclus' doctrine in favour of monotheism. The Author agrees with Dionysius in rejecting the diversity of divine beings (*multitudo deitatis*);[19] he retains, however, a diversity of universal principles or causes. As Aquinas notes, there are for the Author three kinds of universal cause: God, intelligences, and souls.[20] God is the unique first cause, and is therefore undivided; the others are unified by participation in the first. This is best illustrated in the case of the 'noble' or divine soul, which through its motion has a certain universal influence over material things; it is the principle of motion in nature. It is, however, through participation in the power of the first cause — 'the universal cause of all things' — that it exerts its influence over natural things. He may therefore conclude: 'The universality of the divine power is exemplified in that soul because, just as God is the universal cause of all beings, so that soul is the universal cause of natural things that are in motion.'[21]

Proposition 1 of *De Causis* deals with the hierarchy and unified action of the universal causes. As the Author explains, and Aquinas approves, the higher a cause the more powerful and intimate its activity. Equally, to the extent that a cause is prior, it extends to more things, and its proper effect is more common.[22] The more extensive a cause, the more intensive its efficacy. Thus, Being is more powerfully a cause of man than is life or reason, since it is presupposed by life and rationality; it embraces these and empowers them. The primary cause is more comprehensive, simpler and more unified.[23] Being is the most common of all effects. The unity of existence, i.e. the intensive unity of all perfections in the actuality or power of being is not articulated as such in the *Liber*; it is however operative, and necessarily presupposed, in the relationship between the universal causes, expounded in

the first proposition: 'Every primary cause infuses its effect more powerfully than does a universal second cause.' The Author allows one universal cause of being, or creator, yet professes a plurality of secondary universal causes, i. e. intelligences and souls, which act upon complete, but limited, realms of the universe. The first cause alone causes being; other, secondary causes, in co-operation with the first cause, confer additional qualities upon creatures. They do this, however, only in dependence upon the first cause. God is the unique cause of the existence of all beings — *prima rerum creatarum est esse* — but other transcendent beings, intelligences and souls, are the universal causes, not of being, but of entire realms of specific activities and perfections.[24]

The relation, hierarchy and scope of the respective universal causes may be illustrated simply: man exists because his being is caused by the first cause; he knows, because he is illuminated by a higher intelligence; he lives, because animated by a higher soul. The unity, order and hierarchy of these causes is governed by the Platonist principle that what is more common is ontologically prior; that which has greater causal extension is more intensely and intimately present and operative. Thus, even when the power of the second universal cause is removed, the efficacy of the first cause remains: it is deeper and anterior to the action of the second. This is verified by experience: even when a person loses his rationality he persists, not as man but rather as a living being; if life is removed, something still endures in being. This is not to be understood, however, simply as an incremental increase of added perfections brought about successively by secondary causation, but as an intensive concentration of those secondary perfections which are virtually and dependently present in the first cause. More profoundly, the first or remote cause is itself the very origin of the power of the secondary or proximate causes. The Author proclaims: 'It is, therefore, now clear and plain that the first remote cause is more comprehensively and more powerfully (*plus comprehendens et vehementius*) the cause of a thing than the proximate cause. For this reason, its activity comes to adhere more powerfully to the thing than the activity of the proximate cause.'[25]

The fundamental and proper effect of the first cause is being itself; in Aquinas' words, 'being, which is most common, is diffused into all things by the first cause'.[26] Understanding (*intelligere*), in contrast, is communicated by Intellect only to some beings, and presupposes the existence already received from the first cause. Aquinas stresses that this must be correctly understood if we are to avoid the Platonist error of separate causes for the distinct perfections which are predicated of individuals. According to a basic position (*radix positio*) of Platonism, 'what is common in anything is caused by one principle, while what is more proper is caused by another principle that is lower'.[27] Accordingly, a soul will have its being from the first cause, but its intellectual nature and relation to the body from a second cause or intelligence. This is rejected by Aquinas as contrary to truth and the philosophy of Aristotle: the soul has its intellectual character, its nature as a soul, and its active relationship towards the body, from the first cause — from which it has its being.[28] He cites Aristotle's objection in *Metaphysics* 3, that Plato's conception of causation would require Socrates to consist of multiple beings: Socrates as individual, Socrates as the species man, and Socrates as generic animal.[29] Aquinas thus confirms the unity of being which obtains respectively within the so-called universal causes, the perfections imparted, and the individual effects. Socrates receives soul, intellect and being alike from the first cause. Aquinas appeals both to Dionysius' view that the fundamental perfections of goodness, being, life, and wisdom are not separate or distinct, but ultimately identical in God, and to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 12, that God is life and intelligence. Thus, intellect and soul are not perfections added from without to Socrates' being: they are already contained in it, as modalities of existence which constitute his individuality.

One of the peculiarities of *De Causis* is the doctrine of creation '*mediante intelligentia*', that is, the universal mediation of Intellect between the first cause and the rest of the created universe.[30] The first cause directly creates a substance more noble and simple than any other, namely Intellect; for the creation of all other things, it employs the instrumental mediation of this first creature. The

idea of '*creatio mediante intelligentia*',[31] that is, creation with the help of a second principle, presented a challenge to medieval commentators. Is it possible to reconcile the mediating role of intellect with the immediate and absolute character of creation? St Bonaventure rejected it outright as heretical: '*Unde verbum illud De Causis tamquam hereticum est respuendum*.'[32] Others, including Albert the Great and Giles of Rome, commenting on the text, confined the causal activity of intelligence to the exercise of intellectual operations, and denied that the intellect could intervene in the production of the soul.[33]

Aquinas' commentary differs markedly from those of his fellow medievals, by harmonizing the creative action by the first cause with the universal mediation of Intellect.[34] He defends the Author from those who wrongly understand him (*male intelligentes*) to mean that intelligences were creative of the substances of souls.[35] Such a view would run counter to Platonist participation, according to which being itself is the cause of existing for all things, life itself the cause of living for everything that lives, and intelligence itself the cause of every understanding.[36] Being itself, therefore, can alone cause the being of the soul. Thus for the Author, as Aquinas explains, 'the soul's very essence was created by the first cause, which is its own being, but it has subsequent participations from some later principles, such that it has living from the first life and understanding from the first intelligence'.[37] Aquinas sums up the Author's position: 'The first cause alone created the essence of the soul, but that the soul is intellectual is due to the activity of an intelligence.'[38]

Aquinas' interpretation is subtle and discerning. The first cause has created everything *mediante intelligentia*, but the causality of God and Intellect belong to different orders. Proposition 18 repeats that all things have being through the first being, all living things have life from the first life, and all intellectual things have knowledge through the first intelligence. Aquinas distinguishes crucially between creation without a pre-existing subject (*nullo praesupposito*) and creation in consequence of something already given (*altero praesupposito*). The latter functions, *De Causis* states,

through the mode of form (*per modum formae*), or as Aquinas puts it, '*per informationem*' or '*per modum informationis*', that is, by informing something already given. Aquinas distinguishes between the causality of the first cause and that of secondary principles: being is the effect of causality by creation, and exclusively the work of the first cause, whereas life and thought are seen as forms added by secondary principles. According to *De Causis*, Intellect has no part in the creation of the soul, but acts in it '*per modum informationis*'.[39] The mediation of Intellect is thus a special form of causality, subordinated to the creative causality of the first principle and sustained by it. The causal action of Intelligence is a 'delegated' causality, in which a secondary cause is allowed to cooperate in God's direct and universal creation of the universe. God, needless to say, is intrinsically and intimately operative in such mediated causal efficacy.

The author of *De Causis* profoundly transforms the Neoplatonic notion of causality. He attributes to Primary Being a primordial causality which is the widest and most fundamental, and therefore radically different to all others. Whereas subordinate principles act upon their participants by communicating a form, Primary Being produces the very being of things which are derived; the Author equates such causality with creation out of nothing. 'The first being (*ens primum*) is . . . the cause of causes (*causa causarum*) and if it gives being to all things, then it gives it to them by way of creation.'[40] The causality of the first cause extends to absolutely everything: it creates Intelligence without a medium; and soul, nature, and everything else *mediante intelligentia*.[41] The Author speaks of other universal causes, but distinguishes their causal action from that of the first cause. Whereas the first being gives being to all things *per modum creationis*, 'the first life gives life to those which are under it, not by way of creation, but by way of form (*per modum formae*). Likewise, an intelligence gives knowledge and the remaining things to those which are under it by way of form.'[42] There are many universal causes, but only one creative cause; *De Causis* thus removes the polytheistic overtones of Proclus. The defining doctrine of the monotheist metaphysics

of the *Liber de Causis* is its insistence on the exclusive totality and unicity of divine creation. God alone causes existence in the manner of creation. Other universal, finite, causes may bestow various effects; but they are secondary. They mediate an efficacy which is originally rooted in and dependent upon divine causation. They cause, therefore, not in the unique mode of divine creative causation but through the bestowal of forms.

The Unity of Perfections and the Primacy of Being

For Aquinas, as for the author of *De Causis*, being is the first effect of creation: *prima rerum creatarum est esse*. In a much more emphatic manner, however, he highlights its radical role in creatures. For Aquinas, *esse* is not simply a preliminary and neutral perfection, to which others are subsequently added; rather it precontains all others as particular modes of itself. In causing being, the first cause also causes each individual richness. This is only another way of grasping the proportional correlation between the superiority of cause and the universality of effect: the more common an effect, the more fundamental its cause. Although the notion of being as act is not to be found in *De Causis*,[43] Aquinas finds the intensity of being, causation, and perfection already explicit from the first proposition: *Esse ergo vehementius est causa homini quam vivum*.[44]

The unity and comprehension of life and knowledge within the prior perfection of being are decisive not only for the singularity, unicity, unity and simplicity of God as creative cause, but also for the singularity of every creature. Socrates would otherwise not be a single individual. The unity of causation, rescued from the Platonist pitfall of separationism, confirms that the more universal a cause, the wider and more intimate is its effect. God, as universal cause, directly causes being; he alone can establish matter as the basis of life in animate beings. Thus the comprehensive presence of all perfections in *esse* guarantees both the unicity of God as single creative cause, and the unicity of each creature as a single entity; of individual man as a single substance endowed with distinct

perfections cohering in unison, and of every non-rational animal with respect to its animality and existence.

Commenting on Proposition 18, Aquinas offers an ingenious exposition of the gradation of perfections and their unity in being: 'We should note that all the grades of things seem to reduce to three: being, living, and knowing.'[45] Each being may be considered, he states, in three ways: firstly, *in itself*, in which respect existence (*esse*) is proper to it; secondly, insofar as it *tends towards* another, which is characteristic of life; and thirdly, insofar as it *has within itself what is other*. To possess something according to its form, that is, immaterially, is, he suggests, the most noble mode of possession and this is characteristic of knowledge. To be the origin of one's own movement is the most noble of motions and this is the nature of life. But common to all of these, and primary among perfections, is being (*Esse igitur, quod est primum, commune est omnibus.*) Not all things attain the perfections of life and knowledge, but only the more perfect among beings (*perfectiora in entibus*).[46] Aquinas proceeds to explain that the members of every genus are caused by what is first in the genus; thus all things have being through the first being, all living things have life through the first life, and all knowing things have knowledge from the first intellect. Proposition 18 of *De Causis* declares that all things have essence through the first being, all living things have life through first life, and all intellectual things have knowledge through first intelligence.[47] For Plato, Aquinas notes, these primary causes are separate, whereas for Dionysius, Aristotle, and Christian teaching they are one and identical. The author of *De Causis*, as we have seen, affirms the activity of three distinct universal causes; Intelligence and Soul, however, are dependent on the first cause. Aquinas is more emphatic and radical; he summarizes the order of priority: '*Intelligere praesupponit vivere et vivere praesupponit esse, esse autem non praesupponit aliquid aliud*.'[48] Being is the foundation of the other perfections, and is given through creation alone.

The importance for the Author of the intensive unity and mutual coherence of being, life and intelligence is such that he devotes to it an entire proposition: 'All of the first things are in one another in

the mode appropriate for one of them to be in another.'[49] He asserts: 'Life and intelligence are in being, and being and intelligence are in life, and being and life are in intelligence.' This is identical, Aquinas notes, with proposition 103 of the *Elements of Theology*: 'All things are in all things, but properly in each.' These three perfections, according to Proclus, are united in each according to its proper mode: in being as being (*enter*, literally 'beingly'); in intellect intellectually, and in life vitally. Aquinas is therefore able to correct *De Causis* by appeal to Proclus when the Author states: 'Being and life in intelligence are *two* intelligences, and being and intelligence in life are *two* lives, and intelligence and life in being are *two* beings.'[50] Because this is unacceptable to Aquinas he declares: 'In this book what is asserted seems to be corrupted and badly understood.'[51] It cannot be that the two received perfections retain their distinction in the third, constituting two separate entities. Aquinas refers also to Aristotle's declarations that 'to live' is for a living thing its very being (*vivere enim viventis est ipsum esse eius*),[52] and that the act of understanding is for the first intelligence its very life and existence. For Proclus too, the being of an intellect is knowing, and its life is knowledge.[53] Aquinas repeats here that the unity of being, life and intelligence excludes the incongruity imposed by Plato's theory of separate forms that Socrates would be three animals.[54]

Aquinas finds in Proclus a valid proof of the unity of the three primary perfections of being, life and intelligence. One thing can be in another in three ways: causally, essentially (that is, naturally), or through participation — thus heat, for example, is causally in the sun, essentially in fire, and according to a participated measure in a heated body. 'Thus, what is essentially in the first, is in the second and in the third by participation; while what is essentially in the second is causally in the first and in the last by participation; and what is essentially in the third is causally in the first and the second.'[55] All things can thus be in all things, according to the mode of the recipient. Proclus, however, understands this erroneously, in keeping with the Platonist theory of separate subsistent forms, according to which each is higher to the degree that it is

more universal and extends its participation to more beings (*unaquaeque tanto est altior, quanto est universalior et ad plura suam participationem extendens*).[56] But because the author of *De Causis* does not posit separate forms, he affirms the interwoven unity and coherence of being, life and intelligence, according to Aquinas, in concrete things which are endowed with being, living and intelligence. Aquinas gives an unequivocal statement of the unity and mutual presence of the three paramount perfections, based upon the primacy of being: 'For living and understanding are found causally in being itself according to its proper character, in the way in which it was said in Proposition 1 that being is the first cause, while living and understanding are posterior causes.'[57] Intelligence and life are not in being as two beings, but are identical with being itself. Conversely, he notes, 'being, insofar as it is in life, is life itself, since life adds nothing to being except a determined mode of existing, or the determined nature of a being'.[58]

Aquinas notes perceptively that, since for *De Causis* being, life and intelligence do not subsist in themselves as separate perfections, the Author also applies the principle 'All things in all' to realities which do subsist *per se*, that is, first being (God), intelligence, the intellectual soul, and the sensitive soul. Each is in the other in the manner proper to the recipient. There is a mutual presence (of cause and effect) between each one and its recipient; the relation, however, is asymmetrical. Thus God is infinitely active in the other three, but is present to them according to their limited capacity as effects. In each case 'the cause acts on the effect in the mode belonging to the cause itself, but the effect receives the action of the cause in its own mode'.[59] The lower is in the higher according to a superior mode, while the higher is in the lower according to an inferior mode. That which is in the senses in a sensible mode has an intellectual mode of presence in the intellect and vice versa. Moreover, all things are in the first cause according to its unique mode, that is, essentially or in its fullness.

The principle 'all things in all' is thus applied by *De Causis* both to the perfections of being, life and intelligence, as found in concrete individuals, and to the first realities of God, Intelligence

and Soul. In the former, these perfections are intensively present to one another; in the latter, they are mutually present to one another in the manner of cause and effect, following the principle of participation. The principle 'all in all' is equally verified in the knowledge which intelligences have of one another and of the first cause. Again this operates *secundum modum recipientis*: lower things are in the higher through a more excellent likeness, higher things are in the lower according to a more deficient likeness.[60]

The opening proposition of *De Causis*, as we have seen, states firstly that all perfections possessed by beings are reduced to the primary and common effect of existence; secondly, that all subsequent causality is intimately dependent upon the unique causation of the primary cause which bestows the first gift of being. This is confirmed in Proposition 4: *Prima rerum creatarum est esse et non est ante ipsam creatum aliud*: 'The first of created things is being, and there is nothing else created before it.' The reason for the primacy of being, according to the Author, is its priority over sense, soul and intelligence: there is no effect more extensive or prior (*latius neque prius*). It is therefore superior to all other created things and more intensely united. The reason for its superiority and unity, the Author indicates, is its 'proximity to pure Being and the true One, in which there is no multiplicity of any kind'.[61]

Aquinas notes the origin of this proposition in *Elements* 138: 'Being is the first and supreme of all that participate what is properly divine (πρώτιστόν ἐστι καὶ ἀκρότατον τὸ ὄν).' He explains the primacy of being through the Platonist principle that 'the more common something is the more it is separate and, as it were, in a prior way participated by what is posterior, and thus, that it is cause of posterior things'.[62] It must be noted that for the Author being has the status of the first *created* perfection, not of primary perfection *simpliciter*. For the Platonists, as Aquinas explains, the power of the One or the Good is more universal than being, because it extends to prime matter, which is rated as non-being, since Plato failed to distinguish between matter and privation. Hence the Platonists placed the separate One or Good at

the pinnacle of the universe as its first principle.[63] Aquinas explains the relative priority of being: 'But after the one and good nothing is found as common as being. For this reason they maintain that separate being itself is created, since it participates goodness and unity, but they maintain that it is first among all created things.'[64]

According to Aquinas, the proposition '*prima rerum creatarum est esse*' refers neither to Platonist separated being (*ens separatum*), nor to Dionysius' participated common being (*esse commune*), but to being as participated by the first grade of higher created beings, that is, intelligences and souls. The meaning of the proposition seems to be that although the first creature is of its nature entirely intellectual, it is first created with respect to its existence. What is stressed is that even in intelligences or souls, being is prior to the specific perfections of intelligence or soul.[65] The being in which intelligences participate is most united (*maxime unitum*) because of its nearness to the first cause, which is 'pure subsistent being and truly one'.[66] 'That which is nearer to what is one *per se* (*ei quod est per se unum*) is more united, as participating unity to a greater degree. Hence the intelligence that is nearest to the first cause has the most united being.'[67]

Infinity and Individuation: Participation and Diversity

Proposition 4 is pivotal to the structure of reality as outlined in the *Liber de Causis*. Having emphasized the primacy of being as the first effect of creation, closest to the One and therefore most profoundly unified in itself, the Author proceeds to explain the ground for the diversity of beings: created being is one in itself, but becomes multiplied ('*receives* multiplicity': *recipit multiplicitatem*),[68] because it is composed of the finite and infinite. This is possible, he states, because it is the nature of the first created being to be wholly intelligence, and to be therefore open to the diversity it receives through the multiplicity of intelligible forms (*apparent formae intelligibiles infinitae*).[69]

Aquinas explains this composition in terms of his own theory of participation. Division occurs in *esse* when it is conjoined to

an essence which determines it. On the analogy of the Platonic hypothesis of a separate and simple form, if there were a separate whiteness, it must be unique, free of all diversity and division; in fact, however, many whitenesses participate in whiteness. 'But, because first created being is being participated in the nature of an intelligence, it can be multiplied according to the diversity of those that participate it.'[70] Multiplicity follows participation; being does not exist in its fullness without restriction, but is determined as intelligence — that is to say, it is participated as intelligence — and can, therefore, be multiplied through the diversity of intellectual beings that participate it.

Aquinas attributes to Proclus the statement that first created being is many because it is composed of finite and infinite. Proposition 89 of the *Elements* states: 'All beingly being (ὄντως ὄν, *enter ens*) is of the finite and the infinite';[71] proposition 86 states that 'All beingly being is infinite, not according to multitude or magnitude, but according to power alone' — to which Aquinas significantly adds '*essendi*', by way of explanation. The introduction of '*potentia essendi*' is most significant, and sets the context for his subsequent interpretation, where Aquinas also refers synonymously to *virtus essendi*. Aquinas' understanding becomes clearer from his commentary on Proposition 16 of the *Liber*, 'All unlimited powers are dependent upon the first infinite, which is the power of powers.'[72] He explains that 'infinite power' (*infinita potentia*) is said of whatever always exists: things which can last longer have greater power of being (*virtus essendi*), hence those things which can last infinitely have infinite power of being.[73] Commenting on Proposition 4, he states: 'If something were to have infinite power of being such that it does not participate in being from another, then it alone would be infinite, and such is God.' By contrast, in the case of something which has infinite power for being that is participated from another (*infinitam virtutem ad essendum secundum esse participatum ab alio*), 'insofar as it participates being it is finite, because what is participated is not received in the one participating according to its entire infinity but in the manner of a particular'.[74] 'Infinite power for being' is the

power to always exist; in this sense a higher intelligence is infinite. It is not of itself, however, the fullness of being but participates its being; in this sense it is finite. 'Therefore an intelligence is composed of the finite and the infinite in its being, to the extent that *the nature of an intelligence is said to be infinite in its power of being*, but the very being that it receives is finite.'[75]

Because it is the nature of intelligence to participate being, that is, to have being, but not to exist as the fullness of being, it can be multiplied. This is equivalent to saying that it is composed of finite and infinite; it is constituted by the synthesis of two principles — for Aquinas, the perfection of existence, which of itself is unlimited, and a limiting principle (essence) which restricts the infinite perfection to the measure of the individual. He expresses as follows the point which is relevant to the problem: 'From this it follows that the being of an intelligence can be multiplied insofar as it is participated being, for the composition of the finite and the infinite signifies this.'[76] Although there are many intelligences, each one is, in the Author's phrase, an 'undivided substance' (*substantia quae non dividitur*).[77] For Aquinas, however, an intelligence is not utterly simple since its quiddity or essence is not identical with its act of existing (*sua quidditas vel essentia non est ipsum suum esse*), but subsists in its participated being.[78] This is what allows for the multiplication of intelligences in the one common perfection of being.

Infinite being excludes all diversity, since it is necessarily unique: finite being alone can be diversified, since multiplicity implies finitude. For Aquinas, composition is the key to the multiplicity not only of intelligences, but equally of all substances and accidents. Intelligences, which are free of matter, are multiplied through the composition of nature (that is, form) and participated being; their diversity depends upon a certain order among their natures. Matter is the source of diversity in material substances, since they share a common specific nature; material things are diversified through accidental modes of being. Intelligences differ, therefore, not materially but formally, through their specific nature, in accordance with their proximity to the first cause. Thus

Aquinas notes that, according to the Author, the intelligence that follows immediately upon the first cause has the full power of created being,[79] whereas a lower intelligence, while retaining the nature and specific character of intelligence, has a lesser power of being (*virtus essendi*).

The first cause is undivided (*indivisum*), because there can be only a single first cause;[80] the profound reason for its uniqueness, however, is that it is individuated through its own very infinity. The Author's remark that the first cause does not have a determining principle (*yliatim*), but is constituted by its own being (*quoniam ipsa est esse tantum*),[81] allows Aquinas to present his own perspective on the unicity and unity of God, turning the Author's emphasis on goodness to the service of his own commitment to the priority of being. Despite the difficulties associated with the term '*yliatim*', mistakenly understood by Aquinas as *hyle*,[82] his interpretation of divine being in terms of subsistent being is accurate and illuminating. According to the Author, whereas intelligences, souls and nature have *yliatim*, God has none. Although he relates it to *hyle*, Aquinas does not take the *yliatim* of intelligences or souls in the literal sense of matter, but as a principle functioning '*ad modum materiae*', that is, as fulfilling in immaterial substances a role analogous to that played by matter in the hylomorphic composition of material substances — that of individuation; *yliatim* is a limit or potency vis-à-vis the universal perfection or nature which it embraces. Aquinas, therefore, despite his mistranslation, correctly grasps the meaning of the Author, namely, that intelligences and souls are composed of being and a principle of determination.

For Aquinas, it is the hallmark of creatures to be composed; the fundamental composition of all finite beings, including spiritual substances, is that of essence and existence, while material essences are further composed of matter and form. The intelligences of *De Causis*, according to Aquinas, are not identical with their own being, but are forms subsisting in participated being (*subsistens in esse participato*), and are related to their *esse* as potency to act, or as matter to form.[83] Intelligences, according to the Author, are

composed of 'being and form';[84] for Aquinas this means that being actualizes form. Form is in potency to *esse*; receiving existence according to its own measure, it limits and so determines it to be a particular kind of being. Soul also is joined to a determining principle, because it is the form of a body; likewise nature, since natural bodies are composed of matter and form.[85] The first cause, however, has no *yliatim*: it is not determined by any principle of limitation or individuation. And yet, it must be individual; otherwise it could not act.[86] The first cause, however, as the Author points out, is individuated by the very purity of its being.

The composition of essence and existence, which is for Aquinas the mark of finitude, is ultimately based in participation:[87] '"Being" is called that which finitely participates "to be" (*Ens autem dicitur id quod finite participat esse*).'[88] 'Finite', in turn, acquires its meaning from the limitation of *esse*: 'Participated being he calls finite, because it is not participated according to the total infinity of its universality but according to the mode of the participating nature.'[89] Beings are composed of two principles, one bestowing a perfection which in itself is without limit, namely existence, and another which restricts or limits it. Finite being is not identical with being, but possesses it as a limited perfection. That which *has* being, but *is* not itself being, that is, limited, finite, participant, being depends on that which is essentially the pure and perfect fullness of being: 'Everything that is participated must be derived from what subsists purely through its essence.'[90] This is the core principle of Aquinas' *quarta via*, which is metonymic for Aquinas' kinship with the entire Platonist and Neoplatonist tradition.

As Richard C. Taylor points out, Aquinas concurs with *De Causis* that created beings are entities limited by form, whereas the first cause is beyond composition as pure being without any limiting form. In attaining this conclusion, however, Aquinas has inverted the categories of *De Causis* and imposed his own doctrine of being. For St Thomas being is act, and form is a 'material' or potential principle; according to *De Causis*, on the contrary, being is a 'potential substrate for formal determination [. . .] related to form as potency to formal specification and limitation, not as act to

potency'.[91] Aquinas understands *yliatim* as 'something that receives being' (*aliquid esse recipiens*), that is, a principle of potency and determinability which, within the composition, defines each being as an individual. Intelligence has *yliatim*, because it is composed of being and form (*esse et forma*); likewise soul and nature have *yliatim*, but the first cause does not have *yliatim*, because it is being alone (*quoniam ipsa est esse tantum*).[92] It needs no co-constitutive principle of individual determination, since it constitutes its own determination in and of itself. According to the Author, the individuating principle of the first cause is its own infinite being and goodness: 'its *yliatim* is infinite being and its individuality is pure goodness' (*yliatim id est suum esse infinitum, et individuum suum est bonitas pura*).[93]

Aquinas explains that the *bonitas pura* of the first cause is 'not a participated goodness, but the very subsisting essence of goodness, which the Platonists called the "good itself"'. It is the 'essentially, purely, and primarily good' (*essentialiter et pure et prime bonum*).[94] As such, it cannot be individuated in the same manner as a material being, that is, by a passive principle which is the recipient of participated perfection. Even a higher intelligence is individuated through its own form, which is a unique principle of potency. 'Because it is not its own being but subsists in participated being, the subsisting form itself is compared to participated being as potency to act, or matter to form.'[95] Such, however, cannot be the case for the primary cause, which is pure being and goodness. Aquinas explains: 'The first cause in no way has *yliatim*, because it does not have participated being but is itself pure being and consequently pure goodness', adding characteristically, 'because everything, inasmuch as it is a being, is good'.[96] The first cause does not need a limiting principle of individuation, but is individuated by its own sheer limitlessness. Aquinas remarks:

> The infinity of divine being (*ipsa infinitas divini esse*), inasmuch as it is not limited through some recipient, takes in the first cause the place of the *yliatim* that is in other things. This is so because just as in other things the individuation

> of a commonly received thing comes about through what the recipient is, so divine goodness, as well as being, is individuated by its very own purity through the fact that it is not received in anything.[97]

According to Aquinas, the Author thus precludes the erroneous interpretation that God as '*esse tantum*' is equivalent to *esse commune* (which is predicated of all things) and not something individual, distinct from all others (*aliquid individualiter ens et ab aliis distinctum*).[98] He explains that what is common or universal is individuated through its reception into something; it is the nature of a universal to be individuated and received in many things and not, as Plato maintained, to exist in itself as such. Something can be individual, Aquinas states, in one of two ways: either as received into a single subject (the whiteness of a particular body cannot be in another), or because it subsists in itself without a subject (the hypothesis of separate whiteness).[99] Not received into another, it subsists in itself as its own subject, constituting its own uniqueness and individuality. The first cause is subsistent being itself which is, therefore, unique and individual. God is neither individuated by matter, nor by his reception into a finite subject, but by his own purity and singularity of being. 'The first cause is not a nature subsisting in its own "to be" as participated. Rather, it is subsisting "to be" itself and so it is supersubstantial and absolutely indescribable.'[100]

Unity is the hallmark of ontological power and a prerequisite for the exercise of causation. *De Causis* states that because the first cause is 'individuated by its own purity, it has the ability to infuse the intelligence and other things with goodnesses'.[101] While the first cause is unified to the highest degree (*maxime una*), 'the more simple and one anything is, the closer it is to the first cause and the more it participates its proper activity'.[102] Subsequent levels of reality follow a descending scale of unity: the closer to the first cause, the greater their unity — and hence their power of being and operating ('*virtus essendi et operandi*').[103] Aquinas comments: 'It is clear that to the extent that something is more perfect, to

that extent is it nearer to the one that is the most perfect.'[104] An intelligence is the cause of lower things, because it receives its power from a higher cause and is therefore more powerfully united.[105] Intelligences have greater unity and simplicity than lower things.[106]

The Unity of Creation and the Hierarchy of Creatures

Aquinas finds ample opportunity in the text of *De Causis* to expound his own theory of creation, that is, the production by a unique God of a diverse and plural universe. He explains as follows the origin of diversity. Although God's being is one, 'he understands many things and because of this can produce many things, even though his understanding remains one and simple'.[107] God produces the universe through his being, which is identical with his understanding (*producit per suum esse, quia suum esse est suum intelligere*). He knows himself as imitable in limitless ways; creating all things in their being, he knows them in his simplicity. Since he encompasses all things virtually within his power, 'he himself alone knows all things through his essence without the participation of any other form'.[108]

We have already referred to Proposition 16 in which the first cause is described as the 'first infinite, which is the power of powers' (*infinitum primum quod est virtus virtutum*), upon which all 'unlimited powers' depend.[109] Aquinas, as we noted, equates power, including 'infinite power' (*infinita potentia*) with the power of being (*virtus essendi*); hence those things which can last infinitely have infinite power of being.[110] He then cites the Platonic principle (*platonica positio*): 'Anything that is found in many things must be reduced to something first, which is such through its essence, from which the others are said to be such through participation.'[111] This is the most fundamental doctrine which Aquinas adopted from Plato; his use of it, needless to say, differs from that of the *Platonici*. According to the latter, he explains, 'infinite powers are reduced to something first that is essentially the infinity of power, not because it is a power participated in some subsisting thing but because it subsists through itself'.[112] Aquinas points out

that the ideal infinite (the idea of the infinite: *infinitas idealis/ infinitatis idea*, *infinitum ideale*) of the Platonists, upon which all infinite powers depend, 'is an intermediary (*medium*) between the One and Good (*unum et bonum*), which is the first *simpliciter*, and Being (*ens*)'.[113] The author of *De Causis* rejects all diversity among such abstract ideal forms, which are affirmed according to their essence, and attributes all things to the first One, which is God. The first infinite, upon which all infinite powers depend, is the first absolutely, namely God.[114] God is, for the Author, in Aquinas' words the 'essentially existing infinite power' (*essentialiter existens virtus infinita*).[115] Intelligence, in contrast, is infinite 'participatively, but not essentially' (*participative, non autem essentialiter*).[116]

It is axiomatic for the Author that infinity of power in creatures occurs in strict correlation to their unity and proximity to the first cause, which is pure One. Proposition 17 declares: 'Every united power is more infinite than a multiple power.'[117] Aquinas discerns both an argument and a sign in support of the proposition. The argument makes explicit the dependence of all infinite powers upon the causality of the first infinite power, the 'power of powers'. A lower power participates infinity to the degree that it approaches the first power, and since the first power is essentially one, each thing has more infinite power to the degree that it is one. Intelligence therefore has greatest infinity of power because it is closest to the first one. Its knowing power is not divided into intellect and sense, as in human knowledge; intellect, likewise, because of its unity, is more powerful than sense, which is divided into many potencies. As well as the theoretical argument for the unity and infinity of power, the Author adds an empirical proof, declaring that the greater the unity of a power, the more wondrous and noble its activities. Aquinas concurs: 'We see in corporeal things, which are divisible into parts, that, when many are brought together and united, their power becomes stronger. From this, wondrous activities follow.' Many men together can drag a ship, whereas individually they could not drag it or its parts; a fire which has gathered together will burn an entire house, whereas isolated flames will not do so.[118]

The most comprehensive account of the diversity of creatures, and the unity of God's presence in creation is outlined in Proposition 24, with ample explanation and clarification in Aquinas' commentary, where he expounds, moreover, the radical reason for the creation of the universe. The proposition is concerned with the distinct ways in which the first cause and all things are present to one another. Aquinas begins with certain clarifications. One thing can be in another, he notes, in either of two ways: really (*realiter*), or according to a relation of action and passion (*secundum habitudinem actionis et passionis*). Considered with regard to their reality, all things are unitively present in the power of the first cause (effects are virtually in their cause: *sunt enim effectus virtute in sua causa*); for its part, the first cause really is in its effects in diverse ways: imprinting its likeness on them, 'diverse things receive the likeness of the first cause in diverse ways'.[119] From the point of view of causation (action and passion), however, the opposite is the case: the first cause acts upon all things, as the Author states, with one disposition, whereas effects do not receive the action of the first cause uniformly, but according to each one's potency, that is, in its individual measure. In an interpretation which, in its sympathetic reading, surpasses the synthetic perspective of the Author, Aquinas discerns in Proposition 24 three kinds of diversity: unity and multiplicity, eternity and time, spiritual and corporeal.[120] These distinctions provide moreover, according to Aquinas, the structure for the remainder of the *Liber*, dealing with the differences between corruptible and incorruptible things, simple and composed things, eternity and time. I will confine myself here to the general reasons offered by Aquinas for the existence of unity and diversity.

According to the Author, the first cause infuses all things equally with goodness according to a single mode; diversity is due, not to the first cause, but to the various modes in which goodnesses are received by beings. Aquinas remarks that an action is sometimes received differently because of the agent, sometimes because of the recipient. Diverse causes may produce different results in the same effect (water is frozen by cold and melted by heat), and the

same agent may cause diverse results in different recipients (the sun hardens mud and melts wax). Aquinas declares: 'Now, it is clear that the first cause is one, without diversity. But those things that receive the infusion of the first cause are diverse. Therefore, the diversity of reception is not due to the first cause, which is pure goodness infusing all things with goodness, but is because of the diversity of the recipients.'[121] However Aquinas makes a crucial distinction and explains, moreover, why diversity exists in the universe. The first cause, he explains, exercises a twofold action: firstly, it establishes things through creation (*instituit res, quae dicitur creatio*); having established them in being, it subsequently rules them. The fundamental diversity of creatures as such, he continues, cannot originate from the diversity of recipients themselves, otherwise some creatures would have a source other than the first cause, which contradicts Proposition 18 which states that all things have their essence through the first cause.[122] Aquinas' point can be clarified by stating that no creature could be caused by another, since no finite being could entirely cause another, that is, both in its essence and in its being; likewise it is impossible for something to pre-exist its own creation, so as to determine its own mode of participation in existence and goodness.

The first cause, therefore, causes the initial diversity of things. It does so, not because there is any diversity in it, but, as Aquinas explains, 'because it knows diversity' (*quia est diversitatem cognoscens*), and acts 'according to its knowledge' (*secundum suam scientiam*). The first cause, Aquinas states, produces the diverse grades of things for the completeness of the universe (*ad complementum universi*).[123] Aquinas thus provides the explanation, absent from *De Causis*, for the existence of variety in the universe: it is rooted in God's own knowledge of himself as imitable in various ways, and is motivated by his desire for a better universe. God's second action, his rule of the universe, Aquinas concludes, is diversified by the receptivity of creatures, whose manifold natures have been established through the original act of creation. The further question, why God created in the first place, was answered by Aquinas in his commentary on the

previous proposition: 'It is proper to God, who is the very essence of goodness, to communicate himself to other things. We see that everything, insofar as it is perfect and a being in act, transmits its likeness to other things. Hence what is essentially act and goodness, namely, God, essentially and originally communicates his goodness to things.'[124]

The first cause, as has been repeatedly emphasized, is unique and simple; unity is constitutive of its nature, and is a prerequisite for its activity as creative origin of the universe. Proposition 20, Aquinas notes, deals with the *manner* of universal rule by the first cause; proposition 21 deals with its *suitability* to rule. Unity is the key to both: as essential unity, the first cause is abundantly sufficient in itself and can bestow its goodness on others; its supreme and pure unity, moreover, is unaffected by the diversity of effects. Proposition 20 states: 'The first cause rules all created things without being mixed with them.' The Author explains that, on the one hand, rule of the universe does not weaken or destroy the unity of the first cause and, on the other, that its essential unity, separated from other things, does not prevent it from ruling. Aquinas notes the contrast with human experience, where the command of many may conflict with the unity of the individual (that is, personal harmony); a person who is free of the charge of others is more centred and unified within himself. Against this, Aquinas understands the author of *De Causis* to mean 'that these two things are not contrary in the first cause and that the universal rule of things and the supreme unity, by which God is exalted above all things, do not impede one another'.[125] There is mutual compatibility between the two aspects of the causal relationship: the unity of the first cause does not prevent it from ruling a diverse universe; diversity of effects does not jeopardize the unity of the first cause. Aquinas finds in Proposition 20 three arguments to clarify the unity of the first cause which, in the words of *De Causis* is 'fixed, ever abiding steadfastly with its pure unity' (*causa prima est fixa, stans cum unitate sua pura semper*).[126] The first argument discerned by Aquinas states: 'The first goodness infuses all things with goodnesses in one infusion. But each thing receives that

infusion according to the mode of its power and its being.'[127] Here the Author elucidates the relation of the multiple effects to the single source from the point of view of the effects. Commenting on this text, Aquinas inverts the argument and thus takes it a step deeper, declaring that 'all goodnesses that are found in things flow from the first cause'. To illustrate the diversified reception of the single infusion of the first cause, he uses the image of light, 'which proceeds from a luminous body in one way, but according to the way that different rays pass through variously coloured glass, the rays produce a different appearance'.[128]

Secondly, according to Aquinas, the Author clarifies the relation between the diverse infusions and their single source from the point of view of the cause. The first cause infuses goodness: it is the principle of goodness in all things.[129] 'But the goodness of the first cause is its very being and essence because the first cause is the very essence of goodness.'[130] The unity of causality is guaranteed by the identity of goodness and being. The first cause is the One and Good, together identical with its essence and existence (*esse*); its action is one, and the goodness which it bestows is one, even though it is diversely received by its effects: 'Things receive its infusion in different ways, some more and others less, each according to its proper character.'[131] Thirdly, Aquinas notes, the Author states that the first cause acts upon its effect through its own being, that is, directly, and not through some intermediate relation. Aquinas quotes Proposition 122 of Proclus' *Elements*, that the gods do not acquire any relation or disposition whereby they become adapted or proportioned to their effect. The first cause bestows goodness through its being; any relationship would be extrinsic to its being, or outside its nature, and would endanger its independence and unity vis-à-vis the effect.

Unity, Goodness and Abundance

Aquinas endorses Proposition 21, which explains the self-sufficiency and abundance of the first cause by virtue of its fundamental unity: *primum est dives propter seipsum et est dives magis*. The first is

rich owing to itself and it is more rich, through its unity which, the Author explains, 'is pure because it is simple in the extreme of simplicity' (*immo est unitas eius pura, quoniam est simplex in fine simplicitatis*).[132] The richness or self-sufficiency of essential unity, its independence and abundance, are evident by comparison with composite beings, which depend upon the principles of which they are composed. *De Causis* states: 'The one simple thing which is goodness is one, and its unity is goodness, and its goodness is one thing.'[133] The First is not divided or dispersed, but is pure unity and simplicity. It is absolutely self-contained and self-sufficient. Aquinas indicates the reliance of *De Causis* here on Proposition 127 of Proclus' *Elements*, which explains in greater detail that God's supreme self-sufficiency derives from his unity and simplicity: 'Every divine thing is simple in the first and greatest degree, and because of this it is self-sufficient in the greatest degree.' Proclus proves God's simplicity by reference to his unity; Aquinas explains: 'God is in the greatest degree one, since he is the first unity, just as he is the first goodness. But simplicity pertains to the notion of unity — for something is said to be simple that is one, not gathered together from many. Hence, to the extent that God is one in the first and greatest degree, to that extent he is also simple in the first and greatest degree.'[134] A composite being depends not only on its elements, as Proclus points out, but also, as Aquinas points out, on a cause which *combines* these elements, bringing them together as one.[135] Aquinas adds: 'Since God is simple in the first and greatest degree as having his whole goodness in a oneness that is most perfect, it follows that God is self-sufficient in the first and greatest degree.'[136]

De Causis takes God's simplicity — proven in detail by Proclus — for granted. But while Proclus had emphasized God's supreme self-sufficiency (αὐταρκέστατον), grounded in simplicity, the Author stresses his 'self-richness', thus conveying, notes Aquinas, not only his self-sufficiency, but an 'abundance that is able to redound upon others'. The addition of the words 'more rich' (*dives magis*), expresses the generous work of the One, which infuses its gifts into others, while itself receiving none. Other beings are not

'rich in themselves', hence they 'need to participate goodness from the first true one, which infuses them freely with all goodnesses and perfections, without anything being added to him thereby'.[137] God infuses other things, while nothing infuses him. *De Causis* thus emphasizes the diffusive power of the first true one which, without receiving any infusion, freely bestows upon creatures all goodnesses and perfections without gain for itself. The Neoplatonist first principle is not only 'One'; otherwise it would be forever locked within its own repleteness. It is also the Good and thus diffusive of itself, communicating its riches to others. Since other things receive their goodness from the One, they are not rich in themselves; theirs is a dependent richness.

Proposition 21 of *De Causis* gives the reason why the first cause is the source of being for everything else: more than sufficient in its unity and selfhood, it is 'more rich' (*dives magis*); it superabounds and shares its richness with others. Proposition 32, the final proposition of the treatise, considers the single unitary first cause, not as cause of being, but as the source of all unity: 'There must be a one which is cause that other unities are acquired, but which is not itself acquired.'[138] This has its source in Proposition 116 of the *Elements*: 'Every god is participable, except One': πᾶς θεὸς μεθεκτός ἐστι, πλὴν τοῦ ἑνός. Proclus makes this assertion, Aquinas explains, because in the Platonists' view there are many gods, but not all are equal: 'one is first, which participates nothing but is essentially the one and good' (*essentialiter unum et bonum*).[139] Aquinas explains that whatever participates in a perfection always presupposes the prior existence of that perfection itself in essence.[140] If the first god is one essentially, then all other gods must be one by participation. If One itself (*ipsum unum*) is the essence of the first, then the gods which exist after it cannot be one essentially, but through participation. It is necessary to affirm a primordial One, which does not participate its unity from another, and in which partakes whatever else is one.[141] There is thus a 'First True One': the essence of unity itself, from which all further unity, of whatever kind or nature, ultimately derives, and which is the uncaused cause of the unity shared by other things.

According to Aquinas, having indicated in Proposition 21 the *abundance* of divine goodness, the Author in Proposition 22 expounds its *excellence*. He states that the first cause is above every name by which it is named, because 'neither diminution nor mere completeness belong to it'. The true source of this Proposition is Plotinus;[142] Aquinas, however, links it to Proposition 115 of the *Elements of Theology*. 'Every god is supersubstantial, supervital, and superintelligent (ὑπερούσιος, ὑπέρζωος, ὑπέρνους).' Given this mistaken attribution, his interpretation of the proposition is of necessity (but needlessly) inventive, hence all the more revealing of Aquinas' attitude to the Neoplatonic concept of unity: God's excellence is rooted, he suggests, in his substantial unity. He finds two arguments in Proclus in support of this, one general and one specific. According to the general proof, God is a 'unity perfect in itself', whereas everything else is not unity itself, but partakes of unity; God is, therefore, beyond all such things. According to Proclus' 'special proof', as understood by Aquinas, it is not the same for a (finite) substance *to be*, to be a *substance*, and to be *one*: substances participate being and oneness. God, however, since he is oneness itself and being itself, is beyond substance — thus beyond life and intellect, since both of these presuppose substance. The Author, Aquinas suggests, presents only a general proof, showing that God is transcendently perfect and complete. Among the beings below the first cause, some exist as 'perfect' or 'complete', others as 'imperfect' or diminished. The perfect or complete, Aquinas identifies with self-subsisting substances, such as 'wise man' (*homo sapiens*), signified by concrete names; imperfect or incomplete substances are those which do not subsist in themselves, namely forms such as 'humanity' and 'wisdom', signified by abstract names. Aquinas points out that the imperfect cannot act, only the self-subsisting substance which is complete and perfect in itself; wisdom does not act, only the wise man. Even such a perfect or complete substance is, however, limited in its form and therefore restricted in its action — it cannot act in the radical and unrestricted manner necessary for creation, which causes the total production of other beings through a participation

in itself. This is unique to God, who is not only complete but 'more than complete' (*supra completum*). To the Author's declaration that God is 'goodness without limit', Aquinas adds that he is *subsistent* goodness itself and not limited to a participation, as are intelligences.[143] Aquinas claims that 'the entire force of this proof goes back to what Proclus briefly touched upon, namely, that God is unity itself, not something united'.[144]

* * *

As a metaphysical notion, unity is an analogous concept, variously realized according to an appropriate relationality in widely divergent contexts; there are levels or degrees of unity. For both Neoplatonism and Aquinas, the unity binding any diversity of beings, or elements of being, cannot itself be ultimate; it must be grounded in the simplicity of a single being which is totally indivisible in itself: division, Aquinas remarks, is 'a certain motion from unity to multiplicity'.[145] The universe is a hierarchy of unity: at its summit is the One, variously described as 'Pure Being' or 'Beyond Being'. It is consummately united in itself; only as such can it cause the lower levels of being, with their descending grades of unity.

The unity and universality of causality is inseparable from the unity and universality of being. In the finite domain, a diversity of causes produces a diversity of effects;[146] ultimately, however, all diversity must be reduced to an originary unity. This is the fundamental principle adopted by Aquinas from the Platonic tradition: *ab uno omnis multitudo*. What is required is a single cause which is the source of all diversity. This is inseparable from the reduction of diversity to the common unity of being. With the resolution of particular concepts into the universal concept of being, the diversity of beings is reduced to the single common perfection of being. Globally, existence is what all things have in common; being is the most universal concept, and existence the most basic and radical of all perfections. Through the global causation of being, the first cause institutes the universe in its

entirety, causing each thing in its unique particularity; the relation of the individual to the universe is thus grounded.

For the author of *De Causis*, unity is ultimately rooted in the universality of causality: the Good, or the One, is predicated not only of being, but also of non-being, that is, matter, and is therefore the foundation for the widest comprehension of diverse elements. For Aquinas, on the contrary, unity is grounded in being; existence is the perfection common to all things, hence the first effect through which all things participate in God, to whose nature as *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* uniquely it is proper to create, i. e. to radically cause being. Aquinas states clearly the difference between the respective positions: 'According to the Platonists, the first cause is above being inasmuch as the essence of goodness and unity, which is the first cause, also surpasses separated being itself. . . . But, according to the truth of the matter, the first cause is above being inasmuch as it is itself infinite "to be".'[147] The first cause, he explains, does not subsist in participated existence: 'Rather, it is subsisting "to be" itself and so it is supersubstantial and absolutely indescribable.'[148] Being and goodness are identical; God is both goodness itself and 'to be' itself, encompassing virtually in himself the perfections of all beings.[149]

Aquinas accepts the principle that the more common a perfection, the greater its priority. For Platonism, the more general (*communius*) a quality or perfection, the more real and unified it is; for Aquinas this is in a sense also true. He rejects, however, Plato's conclusion that the universal forms of things were separate and *per se* subsistent. The difference is that while for Plato these perfections exist separately, because they can be considered as distinct from one another, for Aquinas they reflect a comparative priority of perfections related in a hierarchy of existential intensity, but are ultimately identical with one another in the simple subsistence of divine being. This correction had already been made by the author of *De Causis*, who provided for Aquinas a clear example within Neoplatonism of the intrinsic unity both of finite individuals and of divine causation.[150]

10

Ciphers of Transcendence[1]

The vocabulary of the philosophical community has been enriched by a variety of words borrowed from the German language. One thinks readily of *Weltanschauung*, *Lebenswelt*, *Zeitgeist* or, of more recent currency, the brooding term *Angst*. Of happier association is the joyous word describing the volume present to hand. *Festschrift* is literally a 'festive writing' — a celebratory anthology, *florilegium*, or garland of writings. The dictionary defines *Festschrift* as a 'miscellaneous volume of writings from several hands for a celebration', especially 'one of learned essays contributed by students, colleagues and admirers to honour a fellow scholar'. The present volume is a congratulatory gift of admiration and gratitude which befits a circle of philosophers who wish to celebrate in a special way a dear and honoured master. The authors render festive tribute to Professor Patrick Masterson, expressing their esteem and affection for a distinguished friend, teacher and colleague.

Those familiar with the academic career of Patrick Masterson will recognize the significance of the title *Ciphers of Transcendence*. Specializing in the philosophy of religion Masterson has devoted much reflection to those aspects of experience which signpost the existence of God who, although transcendent, must in some manner — albeit indirectly — be accessible to humans. Religion in its myriad manifestations throughout history is concerned with the Transcendent, that is, a being enthroned beyond the realm of finite human experience, invariably called God. The origins of the

word 'religion' shed light on its significance. Cicero (106–43 BC) classically stated: 'Religion is that which brings men to serve and worship a higher order of nature which they call divine'.[2] Thomas Aquinas (one of Patrick Masterson's master thinkers) cites that definition as well as the etymology offered by Cicero, according to which 'a man is said to be religious from *religio*, because he often ponders over and, as it were, reads again (*relegit*), the things which pertain to the worship of God'. According to that etymology, Aquinas remarks, 'religion would seem to take its name from reading over those things which belong to divine worship because we ought frequently to ponder over such things in our hearts'.[3] Aquinas also cites a second etymology, equally classic and perhaps as plausible, which would have the term derive from '*religare*', 'to bind'. That etymology was proposed by the fourth-century Christian apologist Lactantius, who wrote:

> We are created on this condition, that we pay just and due obedience to God who created us, that we should know and follow him alone. We are bound and tied (*religati*) to God by this chain of piety, from which religion itself received its name, not, as Cicero explained it, from careful gathering. . . The name of religion is derived from the bond of piety, because God has tied man to himself, and bound him by piety; for we must serve him as a master, and be obedient to him as a father.[4]

St Augustine favoured this explanation,[5] and concluded his treatise *On True Religion* with the exhortation: 'Let our religion bind us to the one omnipotent God (*religet ergo nos religio uni omnipotenti deo*), because no creature comes between our minds and him whom we know to be the father and the truth, i.e. the inward light whereby we know him.'[6] While Lactantius' explanation may seem more obvious, the consensus of scholars seems to favour Cicero. Both explanations, however, convey important aspects of what is a ubiquitous, perennial, and distinctively human phenomenon.

Since it is axiomatic that God transcends human reality, the question of his existence and nature is problematic for human

understanding. Attitudes range from self-convinced theism, through sceptical agnosticism, to dogmatic atheism. In each position will be found nuanced and graded affirmations of transcendence. The dictionary translates the Latin verb *transcendo* with a variety of related terms such as 'to climb', 'pass', 'cross', 'step over', 'overstep', 'surmount', 'excel', 'exceed', 'surpass'. Basic to its meaning are the notions of 'crossing over' or 'going beyond' — both finding expression in classic philosophy in the terms 'transcendental' and 'transcendent'. Thinkers in ancient and medieval philosophy referred to the 'transcendental' characters of reality, that is, features not confined to any particular category or division of reality, but which extend beyond boundaries to everything that exists. Most important among these properties are goodness, truth, and unity (arguably also beauty), qualities which were in turn interpreted as ciphers or intimations of a supreme 'transcendent' reality which surpasses the entire finite universal realm, occupying a dimension beyond the range of human experience. The term 'transcendental' suggests a *horizontal* infinity that universally embraces all beings without limit in its comprehension. The term 'Transcendent' indicates a *vertical* direction, pointing ultimately towards a perfect being which surpasses in infinite measure the limits of finitude, and which is the creative cause of the finite universe. Man is at the centre-point of the world, the axis and fulcrum of the horizontal and vertical, but is born to ascend.

The vertical orientation of human life was significant in Greek philosophy. According to Plato's etymology, 'anthrôpos' (ἄνθρωπος), the Greek for man, means 'upward gazer': 'The word ἄνθρωπος implies that other animals never examine, or consider, or look up at what they see, but that man not only sees but considers and looks up at that which he sees, and hence he alone of all animals is rightly called ἄνθρωπος, because he looks up at (ἀναθρεῖ) what he has seen (ὄπωπε).'[7] Aristotle understood human anatomy as a function of man's higher destiny. Instead of forelegs and forefeet, he has hands and arms, which allow him turn his upper body toward the higher regions of the universe.[8] There is transcendent purpose in the distribution of limbs: 'Man is the

only animal that stands upright, and this is because his nature and essence are divine. Now the business of that which is most divine is to think and to be intelligent; and this would not be easy if there were a great deal of the body at the top weighing it down, for weight hampers the motion of the intellect.'[9] Aristotle declared that while 'man is the best of the animals . . . he is not the highest thing in the world'.[10] The poet Pindar expresses the contrast between man's ephemeral life and his brighter destiny: 'We are things of a day. What are we? What are we not? The shadow of a dream is man, no more. But when the brightness comes, and God gives it, there is a shining of light on men, and their life is sweet.'[11]

Affirmation of a Transcendent — however understood — is recognition of a reality beyond the here-and-now; it is to state that the physical world is not all there is, denying that 'the place we occupy seems all the world'.[12] Denial of the transcendent may be the result of lengthy theoretical reflection; alternatively — and frequently in the contemporary world — it may emerge as a form of habitual practice, from an absence of reflection on the deeper questions of human life and destiny. As the French writer Paul Bourget remarked: 'One should live as one thinks, otherwise sooner or later one ends up thinking as one has lived.'[13] Failure to reflect on deeper questions may lead to the assumption that there is no such deeper meaning; that there is nothing beyond the immediate sense world. Practice usurps reflection.

The French philosopher Ferdinand Alquié asserted: 'It is in the metaphysical affirmation of transcendence that man finds his most authentic truth.'[14] A century ago Max Weber lamented the loss of transcendence: 'The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the "disenchantment of the world" (*Entzauberung der Welt*).'[15] In an interview given in 2010 Seamus Heaney remarked: 'The biggest shift in my lifetime has been the evaporation of the transcendent from all our discourse and our sense of human destiny.' Having attributed this partially to the loss of authority suffered by the Catholic Church, he continued: 'But more bewildering still is exile into a universe with no up or down, no internalized system of

moral longitude or latitude, no sense of a metaphysical roof over our heads.'[16] Paul Hewson (U2's Bono), insists on the importance of transcendence: 'It is becoming clear that the material world is not enough for anybody. We had a century of being told by the intelligentsia that we're two-dimensional creatures, that if something can't be proved, it can't exist. That's over now. Transcendence is what everybody, in the end, is on their knees for, running at speed toward, scratching at, kicking at.'[17]

Modernity has robbed mankind of its gods and leeched the world of mystery. Our sense of wonder has largely evaporated; there is little that astonishes or startles us. The world has become all too familiar. We assume science has solved the great questions, with little residue for reflection. It could be argued that the lack of a sense of transcendence springs from the loss of wonder. St Thomas defines wonder (*admiratio*) as 'a kind of desire (*desiderium*) for knowledge; a desire which comes to man when he sees an effect of which the cause either is unknown to him, or surpasses his knowledge or faculty of understanding'.[18] Wonder is 'a kind of fear resulting from the apprehension of a thing that surpasses our faculties: hence it results from the contemplation of the sublime truth'. Wonder is the transcending movement of mind and heart together since, as Aquinas remarks, contemplation terminates in the affections.[19]

The Greeks attributed the origin of philosophy to wonder. Aristotle observed that men first wondered about immediate problems but gradually advanced to the greater realities of nature and finally to the origin of the universe itself.[20] Wonder is the reflective admiration of that which we know but do not fully comprehend; it contemplates the mysterious. To philosophize, as the German philosopher Josef Pieper points out, is to step beyond — to transcend — the workaday world of daily concerns and utility goals, to adopt a reflective attitude towards the totality of being.[21]

The term 'ciphers of transcendence' is most frequently associated with the thought of the twentieth-century German philosopher Karl Jaspers. Patrick Masterson has adapted the term to refer to those 'experimental clues that enable us to attain a rational or philosophical affirmation of God. But they are ciphers

which, as such, cannot directly disclose his existence. They have to be "deciphered" by philosophical argument which argues that his existence can be affirmed as a theoretical truth condition of these features of experience.'[22] In the following paragraphs 'transcendence' is taken to refer in the broadest sense to any dimension which surpasses the immediate level of sense experience here and now. The word 'cipher' indicates that the aspect of transcendence is not immediately given but must be extrapolated through reason and reflection. Ciphers are, in Wordsworth's phrase, 'murmurings from within' which 'impart authentic tidings of invisible things'.[23]

These remarks are set within the context of what Patrick Masterson refers to as 'metaphysical realism', more precisely the 'moderate rational realism developed effectively by Thomas Aquinas and which reaches back for its inspiration to Athens and Jerusalem, to Plato and Aristotle and Judeo-Christianity'.[24] I propose to consider transcendence as it may be discerned in three successive steps. These are: the affirmation of an intelligible independent reality beyond the isolated self; the affirmation of the universal realm of being to which I belong; and the affirmation of a creative infinite Being, who is the source of the finite universe. While the last of these is the most significant and far-reaching, the divergence between theism, agnosticism and atheism is largely determined by the initial methodic option regarding cognition and its relation to reality. Here precisely lies the divergence between classical and modern philosophy. Whereas ancient philosophy sought to disclose the hidden meaning of the cosmos, confident in the faith that an objective meaning could be discovered, the concern for modern philosophy was whether we can know anything whatsoever with certainty. The modern question centres, not upon the world, but upon human cognition; this preoccupation eventually led to the scepticism which has characterized much of philosophy ever since, and a turn away from the Transcendent.

For René Descartes (1596–1650) consciousness is a closed world, limited to internal ideas or representations: we know only what is *in* the mind. This principle was unquestioningly followed by the British empiricists and Immanuel Kant, who maintained that

what I directly know are not things themselves but appearances, impressions, or ideas of things. The direct realism of traditional philosophy gave way to an indirect realism, a position shared equally by Continental idealism and British empiricism. In the words of John Locke, 'the mind, in all its thoughts and reasonings, hath no other immediate object but its own ideas, which it alone does or can contemplate'.[25] If all we know are the contents of our mind, what grounds have we to affirm the reality of an independent world? The logical conclusion, drawn by the Irishman George Berkeley, was that reality itself consists of nothing but perceptions.[26]

Knowledge and Transcendence

The first moment of human transcendence is the act of knowledge, whereby the individual breaches the isolation of a solipsistic self in openness to the objective world beyond the senses. We are not, to quote Tennessee Williams, 'sentenced to solitary confinement inside our own skins'.[27] In any simple sensation I am in direct contact with the physical world here and now. Such at least is the common-sense conviction of mankind in general and was for the most part the assumed natural attitude of pre-modern philosophy. The question of the 'outside world' became a stumbling block because of the method adopted by the father of modern philosophy. Descartes prioritized the so-called principle of immanence, according to which, in order to be known, an object must be "in" the mind or consciousness, that is, the mind can know directly only its own contents.[28] There is a quantum of truth in this: in order to be known the object must be somehow present to the mind. Descartes' error was his failure to understand that when transferred from the physical domain, the word "in" assumes a different meaning. If the water is in the bottle it cannot simultaneously be in the bucket. The tradition of Aristotle, on the other hand, maintains that the water can be physically in the bottle but simultaneously, in a unique non-physical intentional mode, also "in" my consciousness: such is the marvel of knowledge.

Descartes' assumption was uncritically adopted by most modern philosophers, not only by idealists and rationalists such as Immanuel Kant, but even by many of a sensist, empirical, outlook

such as Locke and Hume. This position had defining consequences for the question of God. If the mind only knows its own contents, and is incapable of affirming the independent existence of an independent world beyond itself, it lacks the foundation for asserting an infinite reality beyond the realm of finite being. It cannot rely on the principle of causality to argue from the world as effect to the existence of a transcendent cause.

Descartes' inversion of the relation between reality and knowledge brought about what Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) appropriately termed a 'Copernican revolution' in philosophy. Kant overturned the meaning of the word 'transcendental', ascribing to it a meaning exactly the contrary of its traditional significance: 'I entitle *transcendental* all knowledge which is occupied not so much with objects as with the mode of our knowledge of objects in so far as this mode of knowledge is to be possible *a priori*.'[29] Instead of universal qualities pertaining objectively to all existent things whatsoever, the term came to denote the subjective capacities of all knowledge whatsoever. Kant reversed the assumption that cognition must conform to the object, requiring instead that the object must submit to our cognition. He argued that all we can know are phenomenal appearances and that we are incapable of knowing things as they are in themselves. Instead of the object making cognitive representation possible he asked how the representation makes the object possible. Judged from the point of view of traditional realism, Kant remained within the circle of Cartesian immanentism, a position that precluded him from affirming the independent existence of an objective world, and by implication of a divine transcendent cause.

Notwithstanding his immanentist interpretation of knowledge, Kant recognized the innate human inclination to posit transcendent realities. Man is possessed of a profound disposition towards metaphysics — a *metaphysica naturalis*: 'Human reason proceeds impetuously, driven on by an inward need, to questions such as cannot be answered by any empirical employment of reason, or by principles thence derived.'[30] Kant however is unable to pursue such questions realistically since there is no intuition of the

supra-sensible; sense knowledge alone has positive content. The principle of causality cannot be invoked to go beyond the world of appearances. He posits as 'regulative' the ideas of self, world, and God, which guide and order human inquiry; these are aspirational but have no actuality in themselves. The metaphysical impulse, though ineradicable, is void and illusory. While Kant recognizes our zeal to know God, the world, and the self, their reality lies beyond the competence of knowledge.[31]

Kant's transcendental idealism is diametrically opposed to the 'transcendental idealism' of Plato, which was in fact an exaggerated realism. Plato was the great oracle of transcendence in ancient philosophy. 'Transcendent' here refers to the realm of ideal forms with the Good at its zenith, which Plato posited beyond the sense world. It denotes thus an indispensable dimension of reality: reality is more than what is experienced by the senses. Plato viewed things in their profound dimensions: each thing is insufficient in itself; finite and fluctuating it cannot stand alone but reaches to a reality beyond, which, though transcendent, is innerly present to it. In Rilke's phrase, 'Transitoriness rushes everywhere into a profound Being.'[32] To guarantee the reliability of scientific knowledge Plato posited a world of subsistent Ideas beyond the empirical world. In his zeal to affirm the object of true knowledge, free from change and imperfection, he rejected the role of sense experience. His methodic error is suitably conveyed by Kant:

> The light dove cleaving in free flight the thin air, whose resistance it feels, might imagine that her movements would be far more free and rapid in airless space. Just in the same way did Plato, abandoning the world of sense because of the narrow limits it sets to the understanding, venture upon the wings of ideas beyond it, into the void space of pure intellect. He did not reflect that he made no real progress by all his efforts; for he met with no resistance which might serve him for a support, as it were, whereon to rest, and on which he might apply his powers, in order to let the intellect acquire momentum for its progress.[33]

The key to any satisfactory solution of the problem must lie between the extremes of Plato and Kant. This was provided by Aristotle.

Man is an ecstatic being. Human nature is not a closed system, but is open to the world at every level. We are nourished physically by our immediate environment and intellectually by the wider universe. We find fulfilment by traversing the frontiers of the self in engagement with the non-self. Paul Ricoeur remarked: 'I express myself in expressing the world; I explore my own sacrality in deciphering that of the world.'[34] Knowledge is a clear instance of ecstatic transcendence. Cognition occurs only when the human capacity is activated; of itself the cognitive apparatus is entirely passive. The intellect is a virginal slate on which characters must first be inscribed. Knowledge begins with the action of the physical objects on the senses. Descartes' pure *cogito* is an abstraction isolated from our first experience of the world. Aristotle's thinker is marked by openness to the world.

It is easy to see why divergence regarding the ultimate question of the existence of a transcendent God begins with the initial choice of philosophic method, in response to the question: what do I know? A. N. Whitehead remarked: 'The ancient world takes its stand upon the drama of the Universe, the modern world upon the inward drama of the Soul.'[35] For Descartes the unshaken ground of truth (*fundamentum inconcussum veritatis*) is the self-experience of subjective thought, as conveyed in his famous '*Cogito ergo sum*': 'I think, therefore I am.' For Aristotle and Aquinas, the foundation of truth is the datum of immediate sense experience: *Aliquid est*, 'Something is.' Rather than Descartes' *Cogito*, their motto would read: '*Res sunt, ergo cognosco, deinde cogito*': 'Things are, therefore I know, thus I think.' Descartes not only placed knowledge of the independent world in doubt but closed the path of metaphysical reasoning towards the Transcendent.

Compounding the problems stemming from Descartes' closed consciousness was his obsession with clear and distinct ideas. Jacques Maritain has remarked that the tragedy of modern philosophy has been the divorce of intelligibility from mystery.[36] Profound and sublime thoughts are rarely clear and distinct;

philosophy reflects most significantly upon the mysterious — those truths (*clair-obscurs*) that embrace, sustain and transcend us, rather than problems that lie detached before us. Leonard Cohen sang: 'There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in.' Ralph Waldo Emerson, the transcendentalist poet of the mid-nineteenth century, wrote: 'There is a crack in every thing God has made',[37] but qualified this in his journal: 'God has made nothing without a crack, except Reason. What can be better than this?'[38]

Finitude, the deep fracture in things, is a cipher whose transcendence reason illuminates.[39] Our mind, however, since it is measured for finite existence, is overwhelmed by the luminosity of sheer existence. William Blake asserted: 'If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is — infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things through narrow chinks of his cavern.'[40] There is a dissymmetry between the intellect's capacity to know and the intelligibility of being. Human cognition is dazed by the all-embracing and ever-present radiance of existence. Aristotle remarks: 'As the eyes of bats are to the light of day, so is the intellect of our soul towards the things which by nature are most manifest of all.'[41] The existence of things is what is most apparent of all, yet faced with the mystery of Being we approach the border between light and dark. Confronted by what is indefinite and undefined we are prone to metaphysical dizziness. Considered in respect of their origin creatures are shade and dark compared to the light of infinite Being. What is opaque in itself seems relatively clear, while the plenitude of luminosity overwhelms through excess. Our knowledge of God is eclipsed by the divine brightness, which blinds us into darkness. But light is best perceived out of the dark: whoever digs deep enough will view the stars even in daylight.

Transcendence to the World

Reflection on sensation provides valuable insight into the wider horizon of human transcendence, namely that of endless and unconditioned existence. Not only do I affirm the reality of the

sensed object, but in pronouncing the word 'is', I affirm the most universal and profound value possible for human knowledge: that of existence itself. There is more to perception than meets the eye. Not only do I comprehend the object as sensed here and now, but in affirming it as real I gain insight into the fact that the first activity exercised by the sense datum is existence itself: the first thing that each thing does is 'to be'. I recognize as fundamental the primary perfection and value of being. Reflecting on this affirmation I grasp the intransgressible distance between being and non-being. I recognize moreover that the object before me shares the fundamental act of existing with every other existing individual. The notion of being is verified in the sense-object acting upon my tongue, eye, or ear, but its meaning is not limited either to it or to any other possible object of knowledge. This is to discover the transcendental character of being: the value and perfection of existence is not limited to the here and now, or to any particular mode of being, but has unrestricted significance and value; it traverses all limits and categories. It has an absolute or infinite value.

In the simple affirmation of the humblest object we implicitly assert the transcendent and transcendental character of existence. This was the great intuition of the Greek thinker Parmenides, who first grasped the absolute character of reality hidden in the simple words, 'something is': Being IS. Parmenides' consent to the absolute character of Being is momentous. It is a simple intuition of the starkness with which reality imposes itself. 'It is necessary both to say and to think that being is; for being is and non-being cannot be.'[42] It is an insight into the absolute and enduring value of Being, removed from non-being, transcending all change and diversity. Being is at the origin of everything: there is nothing more elementary and nothing beyond it. Being is absolute: it is bounded or restricted by nothing (*ab-solutum*). Once Being is given, non-being is impossible. The recognition of Being as primordial, first wrought in reflective language by Parmenides, is faithfully captured by S. T. Coleridge:

> Hast thou ever raised thy mind to the consideration of EXISTENCE, in and by itself, as the mere act of existing? Hast thou ever said to thyself thoughtfully, IT IS! heedless in that moment whether it were a man before thee, or a flower, or a grain of sand? Without reference, in short, to this or that particular mode or form of existence? If thou hast indeed attained to this, thou wilt have felt the presence of a mystery, which must have fixed thy spirit in awe and wonder. The very words, There is nothing! or, There was a time, when there was nothing! are self-contradictory. There is that within us which repels the proposition with as full and instantaneous light, as if it bore evidence against the fact in the right of its own eternity.
>
> Not TO BE, then, is impossible: To BE, incom prehensible. If thou hast mastered this intuition of absolute existence, thou wilt have learnt likewise that it was this, and no other, which in the earlier ages seized the nobler minds, the elect among men, with a sort of sacred horror. This it was which first caused them to feel within themselves a something ineffably greater than their own individual nature.[43]

'Not to be': impossible; 'to be': incomprehensible. Louis Pasteur similarly remarked, 'The notion of infinity has the dual character that it imposes itself upon us and yet it remains incomprehensible.'[44] Such is the affirmation of existence: it imposes itself upon our consciousness, yet lies beyond our comprehension.

If we consider what occurs when we affirm the reality of what is given in sensation, we gain valuable insight into the meaning implicit in the basic concept that is involved: we invoke and activate the universal concept of being. Spontaneously and simultaneously I also implicitly affirm the totality of existence. My thought moves swiftly, deepens and expands, it shuttles from 'this is' to 'the totality of being is'. The absolute and necessary character of being is implicit in asserting the existence of the sense particular: 'This is.' 'This' refers to the sensible, particular, here and now; 'is' expresses a universal absolute. This was the value of Parmenides' discovery: Being has also an absolute character;

nothing limits or opposes it. The fact that there is now something in existence means that there was never a time or state in which there was nothing. Julie Andrews has reliably assured us: 'Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could.' Nor will there ever be a state of non-being, since being cannot pass in its entirety into its opposite, which would be total annihilation. The writer Francis Stuart liked to remark that everything would have been much simpler if nothing had ever existed![45] (Simpler for whom?) To ponder such a possibility is apt to induce mental vertigo, the incredible lightheadedness of non-being. Existence imposes itself with irrefutable vehemence; given even the most insignificant finite entity, we are obliged to affirm the totality of the universe as absolute and infinite. In pronouncing 'Reality is' I express a universal truth which holds without exception for everything in existence: I express a transcendent truth.

'Transcendence' in this context refers to the mind's unrestricted openness to reality as a whole; the intellect is *capax universi*, capable of universal knowledge. In cognition the human person transcends the here and now to embrace the totality. In adopting the universal attitude of cognition towards the universe of the real, by attending to such concepts as 'the totality of the real', 'the universe', 'being', 'everything that is', I transcend the limits of space and time and become, in Plato's phrase, a 'spectator of all time and existence'.[46] This universal capacity of human mind was for Aristotle the defining characteristic of the human soul. Concluding his treatise on psychology, he wrote: 'The soul is somehow all things.'[47] There is a correspondence between spirit and the totality. According to the Arab philosopher Avicenna (980–1037), the ultimate perfection which the soul can attain is to have delineated in it the entire order and causes of the universe. Cognitively or intentionally (in the order of knowledge) the ultimate horizon of reflection is the totality of the real, of all-which-is. Hamlet remarks: 'I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space.'[48] The protagonist in the Second World War film 'Pimpernel Smith' uses the inspiring password 'The mind of man is bounded only by the universe', as a signal to alert those he is about to spring from captivity.

The concept of being is 'transcendental' because it surpasses every category; it is not limited to any specific kind or particular manner of existing. When I affirm of anything, however insignificant, that it 'is', I recognize that the meaning or value expressed in the verb 'is', is not confined to the particular thing here and now: it can refer to anything whatsoever. Being cannot be reduced to any particular kind, determination or mode of being. All forms of a priori reductionism are unwarranted. There could be other worlds of which we are unaware, 'parallel universes' or modes of existence which surpass the measure of human thought. This is the ultimate marvel of existence: we cannot pin it down, or confine it to any category: it is a 'transcendental' perfection.

Being is the ultimate realm of human thought, the universal and ubiquitous element of the human spirit: the ebb and flow of all we do, the buoyancy and ballast of what we know, the keel on which rests each intellectual advance. It is the anchor of every affirmation, the north which guides our quest — equally each point which encompasses the boundless sphere both of what we know and what yet remains uncharted. Through his participation in universal being, man transcends time and space; he traverses all boundaries and categories. This is the enigma of human nature: man is finite in his being; he is not the whole of being, nevertheless, through cognition, he embraces the totality of the real. Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) remarked: 'By space the universe contains and engulfs me as a speck; by thought I comprehend it.'[49] Cognitively the ultimate horizon of reflection is the totality of the real, the entirety of all-that-is; human being has through spirit a unique relation to the totality. The mind has an unrestricted openness, both factually and imaginatively. This was understood by the poet Andrew Marvell (1621–1678):

> The Mind, that Ocean where each kind
> Does streight its own resemblance find,
> Yet it creates, transcending these,
> Far other Worlds, and other seas.[50]

The awareness that one personally participates in the grand totality is a source of abundant fascination. The realization that I share with everything the most fundamental perfection of existence — that I am part of a greater universe which evinces eternity, infinity and absoluteness — is an awesome thought. Arthur Koestler chose the term 'oceanic sense' to describe the overwhelming feeling that one belongs to something ineffable and immeasurably greater than oneself.[51] The comparison of finding oneself immersed within a fathomless realm without horizon provides an apt physical analogy. The sense of being part of 'something greater', cradled in the generous embrace of the Whole, is perhaps the sentiment of those who proclaim themselves to be 'spiritual rather than religious'. How does this differ from the transcendence that defines religion? Religion involves the third transcendence noted above, namely that of an infinite personal cause, creator of the finite universe, to whom one owes gratitude and obeisance. What distinguishes the 'religious' from the 'spiritual' person is that the former acknowledges existence as gift from a generous creator.

Man as Transcendent

Before passing on to the kind of reasoning which leads to the affirmation of a vertical transcendent just noted, it is worth considering the nature of transcendence that distinguishes human beings. There are indeed multiple layers of transcendence, corresponding to diverse graded perfections observed in the empirical world. This is to be observed in the ways in which individual beings rise above the limiting conditions of space and time, 'here and now'. A hierarchy of transcendence is to be observed in the world around us. At the basic level plants rise above the inert surroundings of the material world through the powers of nutrition and propagation. The miracle of transcendence is present in the weed growing in the cracked pavement. By contrast with matter, whose existence is entirely dispersed and extended throughout its constituent parts, plants have their own individual intrinsic principle — 'nature' — which allows them to inwardly construct

themselves and spontaneously establish relationships with their environment. They are endowed with a minimal interiority; in this measure vegetal reality transcends the material. Animals in turn rise above animate plant life with the added perfection of local self-motion; zoological life is more perfect than the botanical. There is moreover a hierarchy within the animal kingdom, some species exhibiting amazing powers of instinctive knowledge, activity which may analogically be described as clever. All animals, however, are captive within their environment; their behaviour is seasonal and instinctive. Man alone — to some degree — rises above the conditions of his environment. As Josef Pieper has formulated it, animals have an environment, man has his world.[52] That world is precisely the domain of being, the total universe of the real, as described in the previous paragraphs. Robert Bolt vibrantly portrayed the hierarchy of creation in the words of Sir Thomas More: 'God made the angels to show him splendour — as he made animals for innocence and plants for their simplicity. But Man he made to serve him wittily, in the tangle of his mind!'[53]

Man is a *microcosm* of the greater, universal, order of being. This may be understood in two ways: *intentionally* (explained above as cognitive transcendence) and *ontologically*: he unites in a single being the various levels of existence: material, biological, spiritual. A traditional motif in philosophy sees man as a 'frontier' being, occupying the horizon between two worlds, the material and spiritual. Various levels of transcendence are to be observed within human nature. Man uniquely embodies within the unity of the self the diverse levels of existence, material, animate and biological. In common with all living things he rises above the material conditions of the exclusively physical, and rising above the vegetable he shares with other animals the powers of self-movement and sensation. Can human nature be explained exhaustively in physical, material or biological terms? Human nature is manifestly corporeal and biological; is it exclusively so? It has been argued by many philosophers that a number of activities indicate that man is capable of processes which go beyond the limitation of material reality, thereby indicating the presence of a non-material principle.

That is to say, human reality cannot be entirely explained either by the physical or biological sciences, but exhibits the distinctively human quality of spirit.

Aristotle gave a number of reasons why the soul must be non-material. Referring to Anaxagoras he argued that the soul knows all things only because it is 'unmixed' (ἀμιγῆ)[54] with the body.[55] If it were corporeal, it would have a determinate quality (such as hot or cold), which would make cognition of its contrary impossible. It would also require a physical organ, similar to those of the senses.[56] The difference is clearly illustrated by the fact that a sense organ can be damaged if overused (the ear by loud sound, the eye by bright light), whereas the intellect cannot be affected in this way; the intellect is not impaired by thinking too intensely about difficult problems.

Aristotle declared: 'There is no such thing as face (πρόσωπον) or flesh without soul (ψυχή).'[57] An occasionally held view throughout the history of philosophy, which has increased in popularity and is today widespread, maintains on the contrary that there is no place for the soul: psychic life is a product of the brain, humans are exclusively material. This position may rest upon the assumption that all reality is essentially material in nature, a supposition that needs to be questioned. Friedrich Albert Lange famously began his 1866 study *The History of Materialism* with the statement: 'Materialism is as old as philosophy, but not older.'[58] The point of Lange's remark is that philosophy may sometimes be the source of its own problems. The doctrine of materialism, that human nature may be explained exclusively in terms of matter, rests upon the more fundamental belief that all reality is material. This is a metaphysical claim of great magnitude, one which derives, I suggest, from a simple methodic error, namely that reality or existence may be identified with one of its particular modes or determinations, specifically its perceptible mode. It is true that material bodies are the first objects of human cognition and the proper realm of human knowledge. It is a gratuitous assertion, however, to conclude a priori that material bodies are all that exist. The notion of existence does not exclude in advance the possibility of reality of a modality other than that of matter.

If it were material, the intellect could not receive within itself the intelligible natures of all things; but since it is open to receive all reality intelligibly within itself, it is not restricted to any material mode. The immateriality of the intellect is established in the first place by its universality, the clearest proof being its unlimited openness to every possible object. Whereas each of the sense faculties depends upon a specific sense organ, and is directed towards a particular material object here and now, located narrowly in time and space, the intellect is open to the totality because it has no such organ. Its universality is a consequence of its immaterial capacity. Its target is universal reality — the unrestricted totality of beings in general.[59] According to Aristotle, while sensation grasps the particular, the intellect understands the universal.[60] Sensation is confined to the here and now, while 'nimble thought can jump both sea and land'.

The cognitive openness of the human intellect to the totality of being is one of the key aspects of human transcendence. It has traditionally been taken as an indication of man's spiritual nature. The other main characteristic of the human spirit is reflection, that is, the ability of the mind to turn back upon itself and its contents. Along with the mind's universality of scope, the power of self-reflection has been regarded as proof of the spiritual character of human nature.[61] The power of self-reflection follows indeed from the soul's universality. Because of its universal scope, the intellect may introspectively and concomitantly know every cognitive act of the individual, whether sensible or intellectual. The intellect knows itself, Aristotle suggests, as it does any other immaterial object.[62] Reflexivity as an indication of the soul's immaterial nature was emphasized by the fifth-century Neoplatonist writer Proclus (410–485) and widely adopted in later philosophy.[63]

Through his conscious experience man possesses reflective self-experience, indicating an interior life which cannot be explained on materialistic principles. As for the difference between man and other animals, Teilhard de Chardin states compellingly:

> If we wish to settle this question of the 'superiority' of man over the animals . . . I can only see one way of doing so —

> to brush resolutely aside all those secondary and equivocal manifestations of inner activity in human behaviour, making straight for the central phenomenon, *reflection*... Admittedly the animal knows. *But it cannot know that it knows*: that is quite certain. If it could, it would long ago have multiplied its inventions and developed a system of internal constructions that could not have escaped our observation. In consequence it is denied access to a whole domain of reality in which we can move freely. We are separated by a chasm — or a threshold — which it cannot cross. Because we are reflective we are not only different but quite another. It is not merely a matter of change of degree, but of a change of nature, resulting from a change of state.[64]

Homo sapiens sapiens: Not only does he know, he knows that he knows.

Since human nature is a complex reality, displaying a diversity of capacities that exceed the bounds of the spatio-temporal existence, many philosophers have asserted that human destiny ultimately lies beyond the material world: that what is most distinctively human is not subject to the corruption that affects everything in the visible material world. At its ultimate, most fundamental and supreme level, the question whether or not man has a transcendent destiny (whether he participates in an absolute or infinite reality) is focused on the prospect of immortality. Is death the end, or is there persistence and personal survival? One author has put it well: 'The human participation in the infinite is captured by the belief in a non-physical soul. The existence of an immortal soul has been a fundamental axiom of philosophical thought since prehistory. The immortal soul is, in Wordsworth's term, "our life's star".'[65]

While the ultimate question of human transcendence is that of personal immortality, the fundamental and final question of transcendence, absolutely and *per se*, is whether there exists an infinite and eternal self-sufficient being who is the source of all existence and every created perfection. If there is such a cause it must of necessity be intelligent and personal, since a cause cannot

impart what it does not itself possess. Supporters and opponents alike agree that the most serious 'arguments' for the existence of God are the so-called 'cosmological' arguments, namely, those based on the existence and nature of the visible world, rather than on an analysis of ideas (the 'ontological argument'), or on the need for a final justification of morality. Common to cosmological 'demonstrations' is the conviction that finite reality is a sign — cipher — for the Transcendent. It is also agreed that the classic arguments for God's existence are Aquinas' Five Ways (*Quinque Viae*), each of which takes as its point of departure an empirical datum, which when analysed in light of the principles of identity, sufficient reason, and causality appeals to the existence of a transcendent cause.

Aquinas' Fourth Way (*Quarta Via*) takes as its point of departure the hierarchy of graded transcendence observed in the natural world.[66] Existence exhibits many degrees of perfection. This is manifest within our own experience; even within the mineral world we recognize levels of beauty and value. That which is living exercises greater powers than inanimate existence; in the vegetable realm there are objective grounds on which we judge some individuals to be more beautiful or more perfect than others. A greater degree of individuation is observed in the animal world, where self-movement and self-preservation are characteristics of the individual. Most marvellous of all, however, is the quantum leap — a *saltus qualitatis* — from beast to man. Incorporating within himself the properties of the inorganic, vegetal, and the animate, man rises beyond these and assumes a relationship towards all of reality. With the emergence of spirit there blossoms forth through self-reflection the vast world of human culture which opens upon the infinite and the eternal, the absolute and the universal. Each individual is obliged concretely to assume personal responsibilty for his ultimate destiny within the universal spectrum of existence.

Goodness is realized in diverse degrees. The universe displays an ascending scale of existential perfection: the plant is superior to the mineral, the animal is more perfect than the plant, man more noble than the beast. We observe basic qualities or perfections such

as life, beauty, goodness, truth, and unity; considered in themselves these imply no limit or imperfection. Aquinas argues that if such a quality or perfection is shared by a multiplicity of individuals according to diverse degrees, none of these can itself be the source of that perfection.[67] To do so it would need to be the source not only of the perfection, but also of the limit restricting the measure according to which it enjoys the perfection. It would be both cause and effect — an impossible contradiction. Since diverse individuals possess the shared perfection, yet none in virtue of itself, each must receive it from a source which as the essential fullness of that perfection itself contains its own explanation and self-sufficiency. Put another way, no individual which possesses imperfectly one of these pure perfections can itself be the adequate source of that perfection; its only source can be the very essence or unrestricted fullness of the perfection. Only a being which possesses a perfection without limit can cause the limitation of that perfection in those beings which receive it. As the plenitude of the perfection, it is also the maximum according to which greater and lesser are affirmed. Aquinas remarks: 'More and less are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in different ways something which is the maximum.'[68]

It is not possible here to detail the various aspects of this argument, which would need much more elaboration for its full significance and implications to be justified.[69] Central to the reflection lies the principle of participation which Aquinas inherited from Plato: finite beings share, each according to its individual limited measure, in the plenitude of a self-subsistent reality which is their cause. Aquinas applied Plato's principle without falling into the error of exaggerated realism. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange remarked that the Fourth Way, 'contains in condensed form all the dialectics of Plato', by which the soul convinces itself of the reality of the transcendental perfections.[70] It is a 'dialectic of the intellect' whereby reflection rises to the affirmation of a maximum perfection which is the cause of all limited instances. Garrigou-Lagrange also referred to the 'dialectic of love', which 'is within the reach of every soul eager for that Goodness which no particular

good can satisfy'. It is the eros described in the renowned passage of Plato's *Symposium* which portrays the soul's gradual ascent from the initial sensual love of particular bodies and forms to a love of bodies in general, then to the soul and its virtues, before finally gazing upon the vast ocean of Beauty itself, which exists eternally and absolutely, infinite and immutable, by and of itself.[71]

In the tradition of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, and the tradition which they inspire, such is the culmination of the philosophic quest: the affirmation that there really exists a transcendent destiny. Any attempt to decipher that transcendence must accord with man's nature as body and soul, matter and spirit, sense and intellect. Plato's flight of transcendence was inadequately grounded; man is, he stated, a creature not of earth but of heaven (φυτὸν οὐκ ἔγγειον ἀλλὰ οὐράνιον).[72] Orphism, one of the main sources of his inspiration, more correctly saw man as the child both of earth and starry heaven.[73]

Concrete Ciphers of Transcendence

It was suggested above that every being, by the simple fact of its existence, is a cipher of transcendence in so far as it reveals the transcendent character of universal being. All entities share in the absoluteness of the totality, which can be opposed by nothing. The transient and transitory betoken the transcendent, the infinitesimal reflects the infinite, the ephemeral heralds the eternal. As Aquinas remarks, there is nothing so contingent that it does not contain at least some necessity.[74] Such necessity derives from its participation in the infinite plenitude that is governed by the necessary laws of reality and thought.

Besides this universal token of transcendence discerned in every entity, we also observe objects or events which epiphanize the transcendent in particular ways — not only through their existence, but by virtue either of what they are or do. These may be understood initially in relation to the twin powers of the human soul, namely intellect and will; each of these faculties has an innate capacity for the infinite, under the mantle respectively of the true

and the good.[75] Aquinas remarks that 'the spiritual soul is capable of the infinite because it can grasp the universal.'[76] The mind thirsts for truth, the heart hungers for happiness.

Truth

Truth is the intellect's transcendent good.[77] Marked by a universal capacity (*capax universi*) the mind has an unrestricted need for truth. That is why the physicist seeks a 'Theory of Everything', and the philosopher asks the ultimate question 'Why does anything (or everything) exist?' Neither is satisfied with partial truths. The intellect pursues exhaustive understanding; regardless of how detailed our discoveries of the world, the drive to know remains unsatisfied with finite answers. The intellect's desire stretches to the infinite. While this may appear unattainable, or even illusory, as Kant assumed, we have a grounded guarantee that the totality is intelligible even if it exceeds our intelligence. The law of non-contradiction is a warrant that reality is not condemned to absurdity and will not deceive us. A concrete hallmark of the transcendent nature of truth is its independence from every condition and circumstance. If on 15 April 2019 there was a hailstorm on the Acropolis, the statement 'On 15 April 2019 there was a hailstorm on the Acropolis.' will be forever true.

The Good

Aristotle defined the good as that which all things seek. His definition applies to all agents, including animals which instinctively pursue goals to satisfy their needs. Humans act consciously in view of ends. Even if what we desire is harmful we do not desire it *because* it is injurious, but in so far as it promises an apparent good. As the faculty of the good the will is incapable of choosing evil as such: the good is a priori its normative object. Plato placed the Good at the apex of the Forms since it is the source of every value and the goal of all desire. In her celebrated address in the *Symposium* to those in search of Love, Diotima explains that the desire for beauty is finally fulfilled only in the complete possession of infinite beauty.

The attainment of a partial end gratifies a fleeting desire and provides passing satisfaction. The intellect, however, with its capacity for the infinite recognizes that finite goods are limited and that none can provide complete contentment. The will yearns for total happiness; heartened by 'the holy flame of discontent' we are not satisfied by ephemeral delights. Diotima expresses the élan of desire as it ascends from particular, limited, instances to the unique and infinite fullness of Beauty itself. Finite goods point towards a fullness they imperfectly reflect. A common motif in Western thought is God's total goodness and perfection as the goal of human desire. In his *Confessions* Augustine proclaims: 'You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.'[78] Aquinas expounds in detail:

> It is impossible for any created good to constitute man's happiness. For happiness is the perfect good, which wholly satisfies desire; else it would not be the last end, if something yet remained to be desired. Now the object of the will, i.e. of man's appetite, is the universal good; just as the object of the intellect is the universal true. Hence it is evident that nothing can satisfy man's will, except the universal good. This is to be found, not in any creature, but in God alone; because every creature has goodness by participation. Wherefore God alone can satisfy the will of man, according to the words of Psalm 102.5: 'Who fulfils your desire with good things.' Therefore God alone constitutes man's happiness.[79]

According to Aquinas, only in complete union of mind and will with the divine goodness and truth shall the mind of man be filled and his heart stilled.

Beauty[80]

Beauty is the fusion of truth and goodness. It is the epiphany of reality as it illuminates the mind and delights the will. It is the pre-eminent adumbration and foretaste of the Transcendent. Bernard Lonergan has remarked: 'The splendour of the world is a cipher,

a revelation, an unveiling, the presence of one who is not seen, touched, grasped, put in a genus, distinguished by a difference, yet is present.'[81] While every entity is theoretically an epiphany of Beauty — although sometimes difficult to recognize as such — some individuals are immediately appealing. In his novel *The Death of Virgil* Hermann Broch wrote: 'Certainly many instances of earthly beauty — a song, the twilit sea, the tone of the lyre, the voice of a boy, a verse, a statue, a column, a garden, a single flower — all possess the divine faculty of making man hearken unto the innermost and outermost boundaries of his existence.'[82] On seeing the exquisite beauty of the Parthenon marbles for the first time the artist Benjamin Robert Haydon stated: 'I felt as if a divine truth had blazed inwardly upon my mind.'[83]

Nature

We live our lives in intimate communion and exchange with our surrounding environment. Although we transcend the natural world in various ways, we are rooted in universal nature which nourishes and sustains us. Beyond the utility of survival the world draws us upward and outward by its beauty and majesty, suggesting something greater than ourselves. In mythology the powers of nature — birth, water, fire, growth, etc. — were personified and given theomorphic personalities. At a simple level humans have a natural affinity with the beauty of their natural surroundings; we are entranced by the mystery of the night sky, the simplicity of a sunlit dewdrop, the vastness of deserts or fertile plains, the majesty of mountain peaks and the subtle beauty of a flower in bloom. We marvel at the harmony across diverse domains of the world. The ecology of nature encapsulates in miniature the integrity of the metaphysical universe. The underlying marvel of nature is its indomitable power of self-renewal, which rather than atrophy or entropy renews itself season after season. In recent times we have become aware of the dangers we can inflict upon its delicate harmony and are conscious of our duty to the natural universe beyond ourselves. Contemporary concern for the environment is a

reminder of how in ancient times the Presocratics recognized the primordial value of basic elements such as earth, air and water.

Nature in its endless variety offers countless occasions of marvel and delight. In a remarkable passage on Aristotle's *Parts of Animals* we read the following praise of nature's beauty:

> Every realm of nature is marvelous. . . so we should venture on the study of every kind of animal without distaste; for each and all will reveal to us something natural and something beautiful. Absence of haphazard and conduciveness of everything to an end are to be found in Nature's works in the highest degree, and the resultant end of her generations and combinations is a form of the beautiful.[84]

Moral obligation

We evaluate our actions in light of standards which measure their ultimate value. We are sometimes required to choose between expedient advantage and higher value.[85] Our freedom may oblige us to accept what is disadvantageous, even physically harmful, out of regard for something greater. There are throughout history inspiring examples of individuals who sacrificed life rather than abandon their ideals. One might think of a mother who choses to be killed rather than smother her child whose crying will betray their hiding place. Death with dignity is prized above survival at any cost: life at such a price is not worth living.

Any moral assessment or evaluation involves detachment from the conditions of a particular situation. This may be no more than a utilitarian evaluation of possible consequences in order to weigh one course of action against another. Such is the case even where there is no consideration of so-called higher values, but simply the maximization of practical benefit. Properly, however, one can only speak of a transcendent dimension where there is a consideration of higher values, such as the intrinsic dignity of the person. Immanuel Kant proposed the principle that rational beings can never be treated as means to ends, but always as ends themselves. It is sometimes assumed that the basic moral command is to respect

the dignity of other persons, especially never to intend the direct killing of another. This is fine so far as it goes, but fails to recognize one's moral duties to oneself. Robinson Crusoe did not await the arrival of his man Friday in order to become moral.

One might regard as 'absolutist' the view that no innocent life should be unjustly sacrificed, even to secure the physical well-being of countless others. It was a fundamental principle of Roman law that justice must be done though the world might perish or the heavens fall.[86] Justice must be preserved regardless of consequences. The foundation of Socratic humanist ethics is that it is never right to do wrong.[87] While such a system may seem rigid and absolutist, a secure moral system requires such a bedrock which ultimately guarantees greater freedom.

Conscience

Conscience is often assumed to be a special faculty of moral evaluation and decision, an inner voice of private personal command; it is in fact simply the faculty of reason when applied to a particular action, the intellect as it judges a concrete situation.[88] It is the person's subjective norm of morality, relying on the habitual acceptance of an objective norm or standard. Such habitual knowledge is the summation of an individual's moral character, the self-knowledge of one's duty in the overall scheme of things. In assessing the moral value of an action, the person judges herself against deeply-held values. Metaphorically one may speak of an inner voice: Socrates referred to his personal daimon. Conscience is one's own most deeply-felt voice of self-evaluation in light of one's intimate and profound personal values. In this sense it is a cipher of transcendence. Cardinal Newman wrote:

> Conscience does not repose on itself, but vaguely reaches forward to something beyond self, and dimly discerns a sanction higher than self for its decisions, as is evidenced in that keen sense of obligation and responsibility which informs them. And hence it is that we are accustomed to speak of conscience as a voice . . . or the echo of a voice,

> imperative and constraining, like no other dictate in the whole world of our experience.[89]

Conscience denotes the deepest core of a person's self-evaluation, one's innermost sanctuary of self-worth and personal integrity. It is the compass and beacon of character. One's actions are meritorious because they are freely chosen and executed responsibly. Respect for freedom of conscience is thus a touchstone of the truly liberal society. The human commitment to truth and goodness transcends the social order. The dignity of the individual rises above one's role in society or history. That dignity comes from being an agent endowed with the freedom and obligation to determine one's conscious identity and autonomy, an identity which cannot be reduced to one's role within a socio-economic mechanism. It is the person's dignity to be an autonomous subject of moral decision and responsibility. Conscience has rights because it first has duties, namely the duty and obligation of each individual to shape her life for herself, in dependence upon and in cooperation with others. It is a duty that cannot be abdicated or delegated; no one else can do it on my behalf. The ultimate ground for moral obligation and universal duty is the status of each member of the human species as an individual consciously aware of his or her freedom within the totality of the real, and the inescapable demand to make one's life personally meaningful, with all the possibilities and limits of our common nature. The recognition of this demand in oneself and in others illumines the moral commands arising from our nature as free and rational beings, conscious of the need to make our way in the world, a task that confronts each and every human being.

There are many courageous examples in both literature and history of individuals who sacrificed life or physical well-being rather than abrogate the values they held supreme. To choose survival would be a negation of their deepest self; in choosing a higher value they transcended death. Holding divine law superior to that of the *polis*, Antigone — the exemplary heroine of moral defiance — was willing to suffer death by disobeying the decree of King Creon in order to give her brother Polynices a decent burial.

Socrates preferred to drink the hemlock rather than unjustly condemn his fellow citizens. Thomas More went joyously to death rather than renounce his religious beliefs. In the twentieth century there were inspiring examples of persons who died willingly rather than abdicate their deeply held values. The Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Jesuit philosopher Alfred Delp are only two of countless witnesses to transcendent principles of dignity and freedom. Such deaths make sense only in light of a belief in life beyond the poisoned cup, executioner's axe or gas chamber. By their actions those individuals were stating that continued physical existence was not worth living if basic values were disavowed, that there was a higher court. In our time it is not unknown for individuals to suffer personal or professional disadvantage by resisting coercive violence to conscience. In the political sphere to compel an individual to act against his or her conscientiously held beliefs is a dictatorship of democracy.

Time

Our awareness of time comes with movement. We are conscious of 'before' and 'after', according as events emerge out of the future, unfold in the momentary instant, and exit into the past. Our ability to relate anticipation, attention, and memory in a synthesis of the tenses indicates that we rise above the limits of time and movement. We are neither hostages of the past, captive to the present, nor debarred from the future. We transcend the moment in anticipation and reminiscence. Some animals have an estimative power analogous to memory but are unable to reminisce or consciously recall the past: they live in the timeless instant. They are unaware of the continuum that binds remembrance and expectation, the *Nacheinander* of remote past and distant future.

Plato described time as 'a moving image of eternity'.[90] He was fascinated by the instant, that unique moment of occurrence, the unheralded and unpredictable moment of becoming, which he referred to as the 'all-of-a-sudden' (ἐξαίφνης). It is the surprise moment poised between new and old. The 'sudden' or 'instant' is

the suspended intersection between rest and movement, movement and rest, the merging of presence with absence, the condition of time that is itself timeless: 'Rather, this queer creature, the instant, lurks between motion and rest — being in no time at all — and to it and from it the moving thing changes to resting and the resting thing changes to moving.'[91] It is 'that peculiar kind of unified presence which mediates between simple presence and simple absence'.[92] In such a moment occurs the sudden illumination of the Beautiful as revealed in Plato's *Symposium*.

Time ripens into eternity. The dynamic actuality of the 'now', intensified into a unity of the tenses, is a simulacrum of God's timeless and untimely perfection. Boethius defined eternity as the 'whole, simultaneous and perfect possession of endless life' (*interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*).[93] This concept allows us conceptually and imaginatively to adopt the stance '*sub specie aeternitatis*', which nowadays we might refer to as the 'view from nowhere', or better the 'view from everywhere'.

Art

James Joyce wrote in his student notebook: 'Art is the human disposition of sensible or intelligible matter for an esthetic end.'[94] All art seeks to reconfigure the given world through a physical medium, verbal or material. The artist transcends immediate experience by creating a new image or representation. While he makes use of many stratagems and techniques, his most valuable vehicle is symbol. Symbolization is a mental activity which unites two objects, whereby one suggests or represents the other; it is unique to human intelligence. Such a unifying function is possible only for an agent with the capacity to relate to all of reality. Animals can react to signs, many engage in the use of simple tools, but they can never create symbols. Symbolic activity is distinctively human, involving the transcendence of what is immediately given in order to relate it to something distant or dissimilar.

Language

Language encapsulates man's capacity and impulse for self-transcendence. Using sensible symbols he seeks to surpass the confines of the material world. As Frege well put it: 'Signs have the same importance for thought as for seafaring the discovery of using the wind to sail against the wind.'[95] Man's citizenship of two worlds, material and spiritual, is nowhere better epitomized than in the activity of language: a material medium invested with metaphysical meaning. There is an inner tension between the sensible quality of the symbol and the reality it seeks to convey. Meaning struggles with the physical sign; its tension derives from the dual character of symbol, and the impetus to convey a non-material meaning through a material sign. Words are somehow a summation of man's sensible and intellectual unity. Of its very nature language is oriented towards its own transcendence. This intentional character lies at the heart of all knowledge and symbol. The achievement of language is to denote a reality which it cannot exhaustively express; its supreme accomplishment is to recognize its inability to express the ultimate mystery.

Language never adequately expresses the reality of what is given in experience. Thus is inspired the continual dialectic at the heart of language whereby it seeks to overcome its own limits, to complement its own inadequacy in the face of the real which it cannot adequately comprehend. The transcendence of what is to be said beyond what remains unuttered reaches deeply into the nature both of language and thought in their relationship towards reality. This power of self-transcendence which we detect in language is but symptomatic of man's capacity to reach beyond himself, to affirm and explore the other as always something more.

There is much talk of both artificial language and artificial intelligence, most of it misconceived. To speak of 'artificial' intelligence is to describe analogously and by approximation a mechanistic calculation that feebly mimics human thought. Computers are equipped to translate lengthy passages of prose — more or less satisfactorily — but they could never create poetry.

They cannot conceive new metaphors nor, any more than animals, initiate or recognize symbolic behaviour. It is imaginable that a computer, encoded with complicated algorithms, might produce a formulaic 'poetry', but the result would derive ultimately from the human programmer. A computer could never recognize the seventy odd tropes that add nuance to human language. It could never distinguish between irony and litotes, much less detect if the use of litotes is itself ironic.

Music

Music may be described as the metaphysics of sound. Among the arts it has the most immediate power to raise the mind beyond the here and now. It is also the most emotive. Music enters the ear, affects the heart, and elevates the mind. Music is 'metaphysical sound' because of the manner in which it is organized, coordinating such essential elements as melody, rhythm, tone and harmony. Musical order is rooted in frequencies of physical vibration, resulting in ascending or descending pitch. Its meaning and appeal, however, rise above the physical to inspire profound insights; it has the power to convey emotions of grandeur and elation, or tragedy and sadness. The order and harmony of music are experienced as a continuity in the stream of time, but they have a presence that rises above the flow. It has a universality beyond language, to be shared by persons of every background. Music is in all cultures the clearest celebration of life.

Of the arts music most of all eludes definition. Is there meaning in music? Paraphrasing Aristotle, that is a deaf man's question.[96] Musical meaning is not propositional: it does not adhere to logic. Only rarely is it representational, as in Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony, but even here the meaning exceeds the images provoked. Music may be associative, evincing an emotional resonance, but this is personal and circumstantial. It is not possible, for example, to interrogate the meaning of the third movement of Sibelius' Fifth Symphony; any attempt would fail to grasp its inherent power and presence. Great music has the seductive ability to lead mind and

sentiment to a profound and sublime dimension, defying definition, of what is great and beautiful. That is its exhilaration.

The view that music has the power to signal transcendence was common among ancient and medieval thinkers. Influenced by the Orphic mysteries, Pythagoras taught that music made the soul attentive to the order and beauty of the cosmos. Plato believed that the gods endowed men with a sense of rhythm and harmony, which are an imitation of spiritual order and harmony.[97] According to Aristotle, music imitates the movement of human emotions.[98] He quotes the bard Musaeus: 'Song is to mortals of all things the sweetest.'[99] For Plotinus musical harmony reflects the beauty of the ideal realm. Music, he believed, transports the listener beyond the natural world to the highest beauty. Contemplating universal proportion in the intelligible realm the soul is beautified and becomes God-like.[100] For Augustine music is an analogue of transcendent beauty. He defined music as 'the science of measuring well' (*scientia bene modulandi*),[101] the 'modulation' (*modus* = measure) of rhythm and time in the movement of pleasing sounds, especially sweet and graceful song (*suavissime canens, et pulchre saltans*).[102] The right motion of music, with its well-ordered ratios which delight the ear, is desired for its own sake and is pleasing through itself.[103] Augustine regarded music as an intermediary between the corporeal and incorporeal, the earthly and the divine. Responding to its symmetry and rhythm, the soul discerns the order of creation, and is attuned to the 'hymn of the universe' (*carmen universitatis*).[104] The soul moves from the beauty of music, perceived by the senses, to spiritual contemplation of transcendent Beauty. Aquinas remarked: 'It is clear that the human soul is affected differently according to various melodies of sound... Hence song has been profitably used in the divine praises, in order to incite souls to greater devotion.'[105]

* * *

Watching via satellite after midnight on 17 April 2019 a performance of Berlioz's *Requiem* in Notre Dame, rebroadcast by the French-German station *Arte* in homage to the magnificent

edifice at her saddest hour, I could also look across the city of Athens to the floodlit temple dedicated to the virgin goddess Athena. The architects and masons of both votive monuments knew they were building, in Thucydides' phrase, a 'possession for all ages' (κτῆμά τε ἐς αἰεὶ),[106] content in the knowledge they would not live to see their work completed. Such is the transcendence of art, conveyed in the time-honoured adage *Ars Longa vita brevis*: Ὁ βίος βραχὺς, ἡ δὲ τέχνη μακρὴ. Horace defiantly declared the immortality of his work: *Non omnis moriar.*[107] In his celebrated prayer on the Acropolis, Ernest Renan minted the phrase 'Greek miracle' (*le miracle grec*) to extol the unprecedented achievements of the human will and intellect that blossomed in the ancient Hellenic world. That miracle is man's transcending power, the exploits of which have since flourished far and wide.

Some years ago, I had a frightening experience while sailing around the promontory of Mount Athos, when a furious storm threatened to send our small vessel to the bottom of the Aegean. As I held tight to the gunwale, beside me an elderly Orthodox monk sat calmly while the boat rose and sank, battered by wind and wave. Was he not afraid? His serene reply was the simplest and best assurance of transcendence I have heard: 'There is more than this, there is more than this!'

NOTES

Chapter One

1 This article was originally dedicated to W. Norris Clarke SJ in gratitude and admiration.

2 Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, p. 453.

3 Etienne Gilson, 'Pourquoi Saint Thomas a critiqué Saint Augustin', pp. 125–6: 'Si bien qu'à ses yeux, le problème de critiquer l'un quelconque des systèmes qui s'offrent à lui, se trouve résolu par le choix qu'il a dû faire, une fois pour toutes, entre les deux seules philosophies pures qui puissent exister, celle de Platon et celle d'Aristote. Réduites à leurs essences nues, ces métaphysiques sont rigoureusement antinomiques; on ne peut être avec l'une sans être contre tous ceux qui sont avec l'autre, et c'est pourquoi saint Thomas reste avec Aristote contre tous ceux qui se rangent du côté de Platon. . . Le thomisme serait donc né, en tant que philosophie, d'une décision philosophique pure. Opter contre la doctrine de Platon, pour celle d'Aristote, c'était s'obliger à reconstruire la philosophie chrétienne sur d'autres bases que celles de saint Augustin.' More balanced is Werner Beierwaltes' view, that Platonism and Aristotelianism compete productively in Aquinas. 'Primum est dives per se. Meister Eckhart und der Liber de Causis', p. 143.

4 The pioneering studies were those of Cornelio Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo S. Tomaso d'Aquino* (1939) and L.-B. Geiger, *La participation dans la philosophie de S. Thomas d'Aquin* (1942). Fabro published an expanded edition of his original study in 1950; his monumental *Paricipation et causalité selon S. Thomas d'Aquin* appeared in 1961. Worthy of mention is Arthur Little, *The Platonic Heritage of Thomism* (1950). R. J. Henle's work, *Saint Thomas and Platonism. A Study of the Plato and Platonici Texts in the Writings of Saint Thomas* (1956) is an indispensable research tool for the comparison of Aquinas with Plato; unfortunately

Henle examines only those texts in which Aquinas refers explicitly to Plato or the *Platonici*, neglecting the Platonism which is implicit in much of Aquinas' thought; consequently he minimizes Aquinas' Platonist influence (see Norris Clarke's review, noted below). More recent studies (noting only a selection) to examine the Platonic and Neoplatonic character of Aquinas' philosophy are: Klaus Kremer, *Die Neuplatonische Seinsphilosophie und ihre Wirkung auf Thomas von Aquin* (1966, 2nd ed. 1971); Pierre Faucon, *Aspects neoplatoniciens de la doctrine de saint Thomas d'Aquin* (1975); Edward Booth, *Aristotelian Aporetic Ontology in Islamic and Christian Thinkers* (1983); W. J. Hankey, *God in Himself. Aquinas' Doctrine of God as Expounded in the Summa Theologiae* (1987). Hankey has also published a large number of important articles which provide comprehensive and valuable bibliographical information; Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas* (1992 / 2005); Vivian Boland, *Ideas in God According to Saint Thomas Aquinas. Sources and Synthesis* (1996). Of major importance is Rudi A. te Velde's outstanding *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (1995). A valuable tool for the examination of Aquinas' Neoplatonist influence is the English translation of the *Commentary on the Book of Causes* by Vincent A. Guagliardo OP, Charles R. Hess OP, and Richard C. Taylor, (1966), with its excellent introduction and annotations. Worthy of special mention are the many writings, over half a century, of W. Norris Clarke, SJ. Particularly relevant are 'The Limitation of Act by Potency in St Thomas: Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism' and 'The Meaning of Participation in St. Thomas', initially published in 1952 and now available in *Explorations in Metaphysics*. An excellent summary of Aquinas' participation metaphysics may be found in part II of *The Philosophical Approach to God*. Of great importance to the discussion of Aquinas and Plato are Clarke's perceptive and critical reviews of Arthur Little, 'The Platonic Heritage of Thomism', and of Robert J. Henle, 'St Thomas and Platonism'. These reviews, unfortunately, have not received the attention they deserve.

5 Frederick Ferré, *Being and Value. Toward a Constructive Postmodern Metaphysics*, pp. 94, 98.

6 Josef Gredt OSB, *Elementa philosophiae aristotelico-thomisticae*.

7 R. J. Henle, *Saint Thomas and Platonism*, p. xxi. See James A. Weisheipl, 'Thomas' Evaluation of Plato and Aristotle', pp. 101–3.

8 For an excellent account of the Platonist influences on Aquinas, see Wayne J. Hankey's comprehensive exposé 'Aquinas and the Platonists'.

In light of Hankey's approach, I adopt here a speculative rather than historical approach.

9 *Met.* 7, 17, 1041b17.

10 I limit my remarks to Plato's influence in Aquinas' metaphysics and theory of knowledge; one should not overlook his role in the formation of Aquinas' ethics, especially the doctrine of the cardinal virtues, so-called by St Ambrose, but first canonized by Plato — articulating, it appears, a view already crystallized in Greek culture, a fact unknown to Aquinas. The distinction arguably is to be found in Pindar: 'And mortal life sets in motion four excellences, and bids us to think of what is at hand' (Nemean Ode 3, 74–5: ἐλᾷ δὲ καὶ τέσσαρας ἀρετὰς ὁ θνατὸς αἰών, φρονεῖν δ᾽ ἐνέπει τὸ παρκείμενον.)

11 Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 1, 39: A. Errare mehercule malo cum Platone, quem tu quanti facias scio et quem ex tuo ore admiror, quam cum istis vera sentire. M. Macte virtute! ego enim ipse cum eodem isto non invitus erraverim.

12 R. J. Henle's work *Saint Thomas and Platonism* has documented the important distinction between the *viae* and the *positiones* of Plato and their place in Aquinas' system. See W. Norris Clarke's important review in *Thought* 32 (1957), pp. 437–43.

13 *In I de An.* 8: Plato habuit malum modum docendi; omnia enim figurate dicit et per symbola, intendens aliud per verba, quam sonent ipsa verba.

14 David Knowles has provided an insightful perspective on St Thomas' harmonious assimilation of Platonic and Aristotelian elements: 'Aquinas admits far more from non-Aristotelian sources than appears at first sight. Thus the Platonic ideas, resolutely banished in their familiar form from epistemology and metaphysics, remain 'in the heavens' (to use a Platonic phrase) where Augustine had seen them, as the eternal, exemplary, creative ideas in what we call 'the mind of God'. Moreover, as we have seen, the 'exemplary' and participatory function of the ideas is assumed by the Thomist doctrine of essence and existence. . . . Indeed, Aquinas makes so much use of ways of thought that are ultimately Platonic that it may almost be said of him that he achieves that fusion of the Academy and the Lyceum that so many of his predecessors and contemporaries were attempting. He accomplishes this, however, not by a synthesis, but by using elements from Platonism mainly in the higher levels of metaphysics. Thus by his use of the principle that all creatures participate in being, though in varying measure, by his use of exemplarism in which the creature

reflects the creator, by his doctrine of metaphysical composition, and by his assertion of the self-sufficing being of God, he makes of God the centre and cause of a universe of manifold being, and in ethics the creator, lawgiver and providential Father of each human soul, thus placing the centre of gravity, so to say, at the summit of being, and revealing a radiating centre, a living principle and a final goal where Aristotle points merely to an abstract postulate. In this way he adds all that is true in Plato's idealism, other-worldliness and spirit of love to the common-sense, rationalistic empiricism of Aristotle.' See M. D. Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*, pp. 265–6.

15 *Subst. Sep.* 1, 4, trans, p. 38.

16 *ST* I 84, 2: Plato enim, quia perspexit intellectualem animam immaterialem esse et immaterialiter cognoscere, posuit formas rerum cognitarum immaterialiter subsistere. *ST* I 84, 1: Videtur autem in hoc Plato deviasse a veritate, quia, cum aestimaret omnem cognitionem per modum alicuius similitudinis esse, credidit quod forma cogniti ex necessitate sit in cognoscente eo modo quo est in cognito. See *ST* I 76, 2 ad 4.

17 *ST* I 85, 3 ad 4: Non autem est necesse quod omne quod est principium cognoscendi, sit principium essendi, ut Plato existimavit.

18 *CG* 2, 75: Nec tamen oportet quod, quia scientiae sunt de universalibus, quod universalia sint extra animam per se subsistentia, sicut Plato posuit. Quamvis enim ad veritatem cognitionis necesse sit ut cognitio rei respondeat, non tamen oportet ut idem sit modus cognitionis et rei.

19 *ST* I 84, 1: Primi philosophi qui de naturis rerum inquisiverunt, putaverunt nihil esse in mundo praeter corpus. Et quia videbant omnia corpora mobilia esse, et putabant ea in continuo fluxu esse, aestimaverunt quod nulla certitudo de rerum veritate haberi posset a nobis.

20 *ST* I 84, 1: Derisibile videtur ut, dum rerum quae nobis manifestae sunt notitiam quaerimus, alia entia in medium afferamus, quae non possunt esse earum substantiae, cum ab eis differant secundum esse.

21 *Spirit. Creat.* art. 10, ad 8: Aristoteles autem per aliam viam processit. Primo enim, multipliciter ostendit in sensibilibus esse aliquid stabile. Trans. *On Spiritual Creatures*, p. 122.

22 *Spirit. Creat.* art. 3: Quidam ad inquirendam veritatem de natura rerum, processerunt ex rationibus intelligibilibus, et hoc fuit proprium Platonicorum; quidam vero ex rebus sensibilibus, et hoc fuit proprium philosophiae Aristotelis. Trans. p. 47. See art. 9, ad 6; *ST* I 85, 3 ad 1.

23 *Subst. Sep.* 2, no 8, p. 43: Huius autem positionis radix invenitur efficaciam non habere. Non enim necesse est ea quae intellectus

separatim intelligit separatim esse habeant in rerum natura... Et ideo Aristoteles manifestiori et certiori via processit ad investigandum substantias a materia separatas, scilicet per viam motus.

24 *CG* 3, 84: Omnes autem sequentes philosophi, intellectum a sensu discernentes, causam nostrae scientiae non aliquibus corporibus, sed rebus immaterialibus attribuerunt, sicut Plato posuit causam nostrae scientiae esse ideas; Aristoteles autem intellectum agentem.

25 *ST* I 79, 3: Posuit enim Plato formas rerum naturalium sine materia subsistere, et per consequens eas intelligibiles esse: quia ex hoc est aliquid intelligibile actu, quod est immateriale. . . Sed quia Aristoteles non posuit formas rerum naturalium subsistere sine materia; formae autem in materia existentes non sunt intelligibiles actu. Sequebatur quod naturae seu formae rerum sensibilium, quas intelligimus, non essent intelligibiles actu. Nihil autem reducere de potentia in actum, nisi per aliquod ens actu, sicut sensus fit in actu per sensibile in actu. Oportebat igitur ponere aliquam virtutem ex parte intellectus, quae faceret intelligibilia in actu, per abstractionem specierum a conditionibus materialibus. Et haec est necessitas ponendi intellectum agentem. See *Spirit. Creat.* art. 9: Sed quia Aristoteles posuit ea non subsistere nisi in sensibilibus, quae non sunt intelligibilia actu, necesse habuit ponere aliquam virtutem quae faceret intelligibilia in potentia esse intelligibilia actu, abstrahendo species rerum a materia et conditionibus individuantibus; et haec virtus vocatur intellectus agens.

26 *ST* I 84, 1: Dicendum est ergo quod anima per intellectum cognoscit corpora cognitione immateriali, universali et necessaria.

27 *ST* I 85, 1 ad 2: Et quia Plato non consideravit quod dictum est de duplici modo abstractionis, omnia quae diximus abstrahi per intellectum, posuit abstracta esse secundum rem.

28 *ST* I 87, 1: Sic enim Platonici posuerunt ordinem entium intelligibilium supra ordinem intellectuum, quia intellectus non intelligit nisi per participationem intelligibilis; participans autem est infra participatum, secundum eos.

29 *Spirit. Creat.* art. 9: Et similiter non esset necesse ponere intellectum agentem, si universalia quae sunt intelligibilia actu, per se subsisterent extra animam, sicut proposuit Plato. Trans. p. 102; see art. 10, trans. pp. 114–24.

30 *ST* I 85, 1: Plato autem, attendens solum ad immaterialitatem intellectus humani, non autem ad hoc quod est corpori quodammodo unitus, posuit objectum intellectus ideas separatas; et quod intelligimus, non abstrahendo quidem, sed magis abstracta participando.

31 *Spirit. Creat.* art. 2: Unde dicebat Plato, ut dictus Gregorius refert, quod homo non est aliquid compositum ex anima et corpore, sed est anima utens corpore, ut intelligatur esse in corpore quodammodo sicut nauta in navi. Trans. p. 35. See *ST* I 75, 4. The soul, Plato also states, is united to the body as a motor (*ut motor*). See. *ST* I 76, 3; *ST* I 76, 7.

32 *ST* I 79, 4: Nulla autem actio convenit alicui rei, nisi per aliquod principium formaliter ei inhaerens. . . Oportet igitur virtutem quae est principium huius actionis, esse aliquid in anima.

33 Vivian Boland remarks: '[H]uman intellectual activity involves a kind of illumination or enlightenment because it is, ultimately, a participation in divine intelligence. For Saint Thomas this is especially clear in the functioning of the *intellectus agens* which he understands, not as an occasional or adventitious gift from God, but as an enduring capacity within human nature for appropriate intellectual activity.' *Ideas in God according to Saint Thomas Aquinas. Sources and Synthesis*, p. 328. See Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, pp. 96–7: 'It was the work of St. Thomas to show and insist that, because the human person is an ontologically perfect or fully equipped agent, master of his actions, the Illuminating Intellect cannot be separate, but must be an inherent part of each individual's soul and intellectual structure, an inner spiritual light which is a participation in the uncreated divine light, but which is in every man, through its pure spirituality ceaselessly in act, the primal quickening source of all his intellectual activity.'

34 *ST* I 79, 4: Et ideo Aristoteles comparavit intellectum agentem lumini, quod est aliquid receptum in aere. Plato autem intellectum separatum imprimentem in animas nostras, comparavit soli. . . Sed intellectus separatus, secundum nostrae fidei documenta, est ipse Deus, qui est creator animae, et in quo solo beatificatur. . . Unde ab ipso anima humana lumen intellectuale participat, secundum illud Psalmi 4: 'Signatum est super nos lumen vultus tui, Domine.'

35 *ST* I 79, 4: Supra animam intellectivam humanam necesse est ponere aliquem superiorem intellectum, a quo anima virtutem intelligendi obtineat. Semper enim quod participat aliquid, et quod est mobile, et quod est imperfectum, praeexigit ante se aliquid quod est per essentiam suam tale, et quod est immobile et perfectum.

36 Jacques Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 305.

37 Jacques Maritain, *Man's Approach to God*, p. 4. Aristotle whom Maritain describes as 'his old master', the 'grand head of the

philosophia perennis', had the intuition of being only implicitly, 'in a blind or virtual mode'. For a detailed account see Chapter 4, 'Maritain and the Metaphysics of Plato', pp. 102-21 in this volume.

38 There has been lively debate whether or not Plato discerned the diverse senses of being (existence, identity and the copula); a detailed examination of the question lies beyond our present scope. A. E. Taylor, J. L. Ackrill and Stanley Rosen are representative of those who believe he did; Michael Frede, G. E. L. Owen, W. G. Runciman, and J. Malcolm of those who believe that he did not. See J. L. Ackrill, 'Plato and the Copula: *Sophist* 251–59', pp. 210–12; Stanley Rosen, *Plato's Sophist. The Drama of Original and Image*, pp. 229–44; G. E. L. Owen, 'Plato on Not-Being', pp. 223–67; M. Frede, *Prädikation und Existenzaussage*; W. G. Runciman, *Plato's Later Epistemology*; J. Malcolm, 'Plato's Analysis of τὸ ὄν and τὸ μὴ ὄν in the *Sophist*', pp. 130–46. According to P. Shorey, Plato laid the foundations of logic by 'explicitly distinguishing the copula from the substantive *is*'. *What Plato Said*, p. 298. A. E. Taylor asserts that Plato clearly distinguished the 'logical' copula, or sign of assertion, from the existential sense of 'is'. *Plato. The Man and his Work*, p. 392. Taylor states:

> Plato has certainly laid the ghost of Eleatic monism by making a beginning with the discovery of the principle, familiar to us in Aristotle's formulation, that τὸ ὄν πολλαχῶς λέγεται. He has definitely distinguished the 'is' of the copula from the 'is' which asserts 'actual existence'... He has further discriminated the existential sense of *is* from the sense in which 'is' means 'is the same as', 'is identical with'. Beyond this we can hardly say that he has gone. (*Plato. The 'Sophist' and the 'Statesman'*, pp. 81–2).

See also I. M. Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines* 2, pp. 498–516; J. M. E. Moravcsik, 'Being and Meaning in the Sophist', 23–78.

39 *Phdr.* 247c.

40 *Rep.* 478a: ἐπιστήμη μέν γέ που ἐπὶ τῷ ὄντι, τὸ ὂν γνῶναι ὡς ἔχει;

41 *Rep.* 485a-b: τοῦτο μὲν δὴ τῶν φιλοσόφων φύσεων πέρι ὡμολογήσθω ἡμῖν ὅτι μαθήματός γε ἀεὶ ἐρῶσιν ὃ ἂν αὐτοῖς δηλοῖ ἐκείνης τῆς οὐσίας τῆς ἀεὶ οὔσης καὶ μὴ πλανωμένης ὑπὸ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς.

42 *Rep.* 480a: τοὺς αὐτὸ ἄρα ἕκαστον τὸ ὂν ἀσπαζομένους φιλοσόφους ἀλλ᾽ οὐ φιλοδόξους κλητέον;

43 *Rep.* 521c: ψυχῆς περιαγωγὴ ἐκ νυκτερινῆς τινος ἡμέρας εἰς ἀληθινήν, τοῦ ὄντος οὖσαν ἐπάνοδον, ἣν δὴ φιλοσοφίαν ἀληθῆ φήσομεν εἶναι.

44 *Rep.* 486a: τοῦ ὅλου καὶ παντὸς ἀεὶ ἐπορέξεσθαι θείου τε καὶ ἀνθρωπίνου. . . μεγαλοπρέπεια καὶ θεωρία παντὸς μὲν χρόνου, πάσης δὲ οὐσίας.

45 *Rep.* 479d.

46 *Ep.* 7, 344b: ἅμα γὰρ αὐτὰ ἀνάγκη μανθάνειν καὶ τὸ ψεῦδος ἅμα καὶ ἀληθὲς τῆς ὅλης οὐσίας. Trans. Post, *Collected Dialogues*, p. 1591.

47 *Theaet.* 186c: οἷόν τε οὖν ἀληθείας τυχεῖν, ᾧ μηδὲ οὐσίας;

48 *Theaet.* 152c: αἴσθησις ἄρα τοῦ ὄντος ἀεί ἐστιν καὶ ἀψευδὲς ὡς ἐπιστήμη οὖσα.

49 *Theaet.* 186d: ἐν μὲν ἄρα τοῖς παθήμασιν οὐκ ἔνι ἐπιστήμη, ἐν δὲ τῷ περὶ ἐκείνων συλλογισμῷ· οὐσίας γὰρ καὶ ἀληθείας ἐνταῦθα μέν, ὡς ἔοικε, δυνατὸν ἅψασθαι, ἐκεῖ δὲ ἀδύνατον. See 186e: ὦι γε, φαμέν, οὐ μέτεστιν ἀληθείας ἅψασθαι· οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐσίας.

50 *Theaet.* 187a: ὥστε μὴ ζητεῖν αὐτὴν ἐν αἰσθήσει τὸ παράπαν ἀλλ᾽ ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ ὀνόματι, ὅ τί ποτ᾽ ἔχει ἡ ψυχή, ὅταν αὐτὴ καθ᾽ αὑτὴν πραγματεύηται περὶ τὰ ὄντα.

51 *Theaet.* 185a.

52 *Theaet.* 186b: τὴν δέ γε οὐσίαν καὶ ὅ τί ἐστὸν καὶ τὴν ἐναντιότητα πρὸς ἀλλήλω καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν αὖ τῆς ἐναντιότητος αὐτὴ ἡ ψυχὴ ἐπανιοῦσα καὶ συμβάλλουσα πρὸς ἄλληλα κρίνειν πειρᾶται ἡμῖν.

53 *Theaet.* 185c–e: οὐσίαν λέγεις καὶ τὸ μὴ εἶναι, καὶ ὁμοιότητα καὶ ἀνομοιότητα, καὶ τὸ ταὐτόν τε καὶ τὸ ἕτερον. . . αὐτὴ δι᾽ αὑτῆς ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ κοινά μοι φαίνεται περὶ πάντων ἐπισκοπεῖν.

54 *Theaet.* 185a: περὶ δὴ φωνῆς καὶ περὶ χρόας πρῶτον μὲν αὐτὸ τοῦτο περὶ ἀμφοτέρων ἦ διανοεῖ, ὅτι ἀμφοτέρω ἐστόν;

55 *Theaet,* 186a: μάλιστα ἐπὶ πάντων παρέπεται.

56 *Soph.* 254a.

57 *Soph.* 254a–b: ὁ δέ γε φιλόσοφος, τῇ τοῦ ὄντος ἀεὶ διὰ λογισμῶν προσκείμενος ἰδέᾳ, διὰ τὸ λαμπρὸν αὖ τῆς χώρας οὐδαμῶς εὐπετὴς ὀφθῆναι· τὰ γὰρ τῆς τῶν πολλῶν ψυχῆς ὄμματα καρτερεῖν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον ἀφορῶντα ἀδύνατα.

58 *Rep.* 505a: ἐπεὶ ὅτι γε ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα μέγιστον μάθημα.

59 *Soph.* 253c–254a: τῆς μεγίστης ἐπιστήμης. . . τοῦ ὄντος ἰδέα.

60 Aquinas deals briefly with the importance of the judgment of separation for metaphysical knowledge in *In de Trin.* 5, 3. See the excellent pages by John F. Wippel in his monumental work, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 44–62:

> Through separation one does not deny that beings of this or that kind also fall under being. On the contrary, by denying that being

> must be limited to any one of its actual or possible kinds, one opens the way for considering these, including the differences which are realized in each, within the realm of being, and as being. (p. 49)

61 *Soph.* 253c: διὰ πάντων εἰ συνέχοντ᾽ ἄττ᾽ αὖτ᾽ ἐστιν, ὥστε συμμείγνυσθαι δυνατὰ εἶναι, καὶ πάλιν ἐν ταῖς διαιρέσεσιν, εἰ δι᾽ ὅλων ἕτερα τῆς διαιρέσεως αἴτια;

62 *Soph.* 259a: τό τε ὂν καὶ θάτερον διὰ πάντων καὶ δι᾽ ἀλλήλων διεληλυθότε τὸ μὲν ἕτερον μετασχὸν τοῦ ὄντος ἔστι μὲν διὰ ταύτην τὴν μέθεξιν, οὐ μὴν ἐκεῖνό γε οὗ μετέσχεν ἀλλ᾽ ἕτερον.

63 *Soph.* 247d-e: δύναμιν εἴτ᾽ εἰς τὸ ποιεῖν . . . εἴτ᾽ εἰς τὸ παθεῖν.

64 See *Soph.* 249d–250d.

65 See Fran O'Rourke, *Aristotelian Interpretations*, pp. 148–50.

66 A separate problem is the need in finite beings for transitive action in order to attain complete actuality.

67 *De Pot.* 7, 2 ad 9: Hoc quod dico esse est actualitas omnium actuum, et propter hoc est perfectio omnium perfectionum.

68 *ST* I, 48, 2.

69 *Soph.* 248e–249a: τί δὲ πρὸς Διός; ὡς ἀληθῶς κίνησιν καὶ ζωὴν καὶ ψυχὴν καὶ φρόνησιν ἢ ῥᾳδίως πεισθησόμεθα τῷ παντελῶς ὄντι μὴ παρεῖναι, μηδὲ ζῆν αὐτὸ μηδὲ φρονεῖν, ἀλλὰ σεμνὸν καὶ ἅγιον, νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον, ἀκίνητον ἑστὸς εἶναι; See Pierre Hadot's classic study 'Être, vie, pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin', *Les sources de Plotin*, 105–41.

70 For a detailed treatment, see Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, pp. 174–87.

71 *Rep.* 596a: εἶδος γάρ πού τι ἓν ἕκαστον εἰώθαμεν τίθεσθαι περὶ ἕκαστα τὰ πολλά. See also *Rep.* 507b; *Meno* 72d; *Crat.* 439cd–440b.

72 *Rep.* 507b: καὶ αὐτὸ δὴ καλὸν καὶ αὐτὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ οὕτω περὶ πάντων ἃ τότε ὡς πολλὰ ἐτίθεμεν, πάλιν αὖ κατ᾽ ἰδέαν μίαν ἑκάστου ὡς μιᾶς οὔσης τιθέντες, 'ὃ ἔστιν' ἕκαστον προσαγορεύομεν.

73 *Phd.* 74a.

74 *Phd.* 75c.

75 *Phd.* 77a; see 78d. W. Norris Clarke conveys well the importance of Plato's inspired intuition:

> The breakthrough to discover the abiding presence of this transcendent dimension of reality, for the first time in the history of Western thought, must have been a powerful, almost intoxicating, experience for him, as though a veil had been pulled aside to reveal at last the splendor of the truly real, in comparison with which our changing world of sensible objects

was only a shadowlike imperfect image. No modern neo-Kantian or analytic philosophy reinterpretation of the theory of ideas as merely conceptual or linguistic categories should be allowed to vitiate the strength of Plato's ontological commitment to the objective reality of ideas, however this be finally interpreted. ('The Problem of the Reality and Multiplicity of Divine Ideas in Christian Neoplatonism', p. 110).

76 *Phd.* 101c: καὶ μέγα ἂν βοῴης ὅτι οὐκ οἶσθα ἄλλως πως ἕκαστον γιγνόμενον ἢ μετασχὸν τῆς ἰδίας οὐσίας ἑκάστου οὗ ἂν μετάσχῃ.

77 *Phd.* 100d: οὐκ ἄλλο τι ποιεῖ αὐτὸ καλὸν ἢ ἡ ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ εἴτε παρουσία εἴτε κοινωνία.

78 *Phd.* 100d-e: ὅτι τῷ καλῷ πάντα τὰ καλὰ γίγνεται καλά. . . ὅτι τῷ καλῷ τὰ καλὰ γίγνεται καλά.

79 For a brief exposé see *ST* I 65, art. 4.

80 *ST* I 65, art. 4: Et secundum ordinem formarum ponebant platonici ordinem substantiarum separatarum: puta quod una substantia separata est quae est equus, quae est causa omnium equorum; supra quam est quaedam vita separata, quam dicebant per se vitam et causam omnis vitae; et ulterius quandam quam nominabant ipsum esse, et causa omnis esse.

81 *Subst. Sep.* 1, 5, p. 39: Id autem quod primo est in intellectu est unum et bonum. Nihil enim intelligit qui non intelligit unum; unum autem et bonum se consequuntur. Unde ipsam primam ideam unius quod nominabat secundum se unum et secundum se bonum, primum rerum principium esse ponebat et hanc summum bonum esse dicebat.

82 *Subst. Sep.* 1, 6, p. 40.

83 *ST* I 84, 4: Has igitur formas separatas ponebat participari et ab anima nostra, et a materia corporali; ab anima quidem nostra ad cognoscendum, a materia vero corporali ad essendum; ut sicut materia corporalis per hoc quod participat ideam lapidis, fit hic lapis, ita intellectus noster per hoc quod participat ideam lapidis, fit intelligens lapidem.

84 *ST* I 84, 5. Posuit autem Plato formas rerum per se subsistere a materia separatas, quas 'ideas' vocabat, per quarum participationem dicebat intellectum nostrum omnia cognoscere; ut sicut materia corporalis per participationem ideae lapidis fit lapis, ita intellectus noster per participationem eiusdem ideae cognosceret lapidem.

85 Norris Clarke (*Thought* 32, p. 442) gives the following assessment in the context of his evaluation of Henle's verdict of the importance of Platonist participation for Aquinas:

> It seems most significant to me that in all his criticisms of the Platonic system the Angelic Doctor always studiously excludes from attack the principle itself that every many requires a one and the resulting laws of participation. . . Granted that St. Thomas differs specifically from the Platonists in operating the reduction to unity through efficient and not merely formal causality, it does not follow that Thomistic participation is really only a synthesis of the causalities already found in Aristotle. No Aristotelian causal theory can deliver that every 'many', precisely because it is 'many', requires *one* cause, nor determine the mode of possession of the common perfection in the cause and the participants, since there is no theory of the limitation of act by potency in Aristotle. Yet St. Thomas could find all this most explicit in the line of Proclus, the Pseudo-Dionysius, Boethius, the *Liber de Causis*, etc., all stemming from Plotinus, and no matter how profoundly St. Thomas modified the Platonic 'many-one'principle, it seems to me impossible completely to 'de-Platonize' it.

See also pp. 440–1:

> There is one basic element of the *via Platonica* itself which St. Thomas considers sound and fruitful enough to be taken over and applied to the order of existence to explain the necessity of a unique First Cause and the relations of all other beings to it. This is the principle of participation, namely, that wherever there is a 'many,' that is, many subjects possessing some common perfection, there must be a 'one,' that is, one source or cause of this common property in all the participants, such that the common perfection is possessed by the source according to identity of essence and unlimited plenitude and by the participants according to varying modes of limitation and composition.

86 *In Joh. Prologus*, n. 5: Quidam autem venerunt in cognitionem dei ex dignitate ipsius dei: et isti fuerunt Platonici. Consideraverunt enim quod omne illud quod est secundum participationem, reducitur ad aliquid quod sit illud per suam essentiam, sicut ad primum et ad summum...Cum ergo omnia quae sunt, participent esse, et sint per participationem entia, necesse est esse aliquid in cacumine omnium rerum, quod sit ipsum esse per suam essentiam, idest quod sua essentia sit suum esse: et hoc est deus, qui est sufficientissima, et dignissima, et perfectissima causa totius esse, a quo omnia quae sunt, particpant esse.

87 L.-B. Geiger, *La participation dans la philosophie de Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, pp. 11, 13n1.

88 W. Norris Clarke, *Explorations in Metaphysics*, p. 90.

89 W. Norris Clarke, pp. 71–2.

90 *De Pot.* 3, 5: Oportet enim, si aliquid unum communiter in pluribus invenitur, quod ab aliqua una causa in illis causetur; non enim potest esse quod illud commune utrique ex se ipso conveniat, cum utrumque, secundum quod ipsum est, ab altero distinguatur; et diversitas causarum diversos effectus producit. Cum ergo esse inveniatur omnibus rebus commune, quae secundum illud quod sunt, ad invicem distinctae sunt, oportet quod de necessitate eis non ex se ipsis, sed ab aliqua una causa esse attribuatur. Et ista videtur ratio Platonis, qui voluit, quod ante omnem multitudinem esset aliqua unitas non solum in numeris, sed etiam in rerum naturis. See *ST* I 44, 1: Unde et Plato dixit quod necesse est ante omnem multitudinem ponere unitatem.

91 *De Pot.* 3, 5: Nam ea quae positive secundum magis et minus dicuntur, hoc habent ex accessu remotiori vel propinquiori ad aliquid unum: si enim unicuique eorum ex se ipso illud convenirent, non esset ratio cur perfectius in uno quam in alio inveniretur... Est autem ponere unum ens, quod est perfectissimum et verissimum ens. While Aquinas attributes to Aristotle the argument that the lesser members of a genus are caused by what is primary and perfect, the argument finds it full power in the metaphysics of participation.

92 Mary T. Clarke, *An Aquinas Reader*, p. 31. Cornelio Fabro declares: 'Whatever may have been the obscurities, deviations and contradictions of Plato's thought and its developments within Platonism, it remains a fact that his fundamental intuition of participation has resisted all attacks, and is still conserved today — after modern thought and all its research into the dialectic of act and the subjectivity of being — as the sole formula capable of expressing the relation of parts to whole, finite to infinite, of beings to Being itself.' *Paricipation et causalité selon S. Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 194. My trans.

93 Fabro, p. 193: 'One must recognize that if Aristotle has the merit of having discovered the knowledge of substance and of cause, it is Plato who has laid down the foundations of the transcendental structure of substance and of cause, and it is thanks to this doctrine that one can establish the relations of concrete dependence of the finite to the Infinite.' My trans.

94 *Parm.* 130b.

95 *Parm.* 130c.

96 *ST* I 84, 5. See *ST* I 15; I 46; I 65, 4 ad 2; I 83. Augustine was drawing on a modification already established in Middle Platonism, as early

as the first century BC. See Vivian Boland, *Ideas in God according to Saint Thomas Aquinas. Sources and Synthesis*, pp. 22–3.

97 *An. Post.* 1, 22, 4, 83a32–34.

98 *Met.* 1, 991a20–23: τὸ δὲ λέγειν παραδείγματα αὐτὰ εἶναι καὶ μετέχειν αὐτῶν τἆλλα κενολογεῖν ἐστὶ καὶ μεταφορὰς λέγειν ποιητικάς.

99 *Rep.* 509b: οὐκ οὐσίας ὄντος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ἀλλ᾽ ἔτι ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας πρεσβείᾳ καὶ δυνάμει ὑπερέχοντος.

100 *ST* I 13, 11: Hoc nomen 'qui est' nullum modum essendi determinat, sed se habet indeterminate ad omnes; et ideo nominat ipsum pelagus substantiae infinitum. See *In I Sent.* 8, 1, 1 ad 4.

101 *Symp.* 210d: τὸ πολὺ πέλαγος . . . τοῦ καλοῦ.

102 *Rep.* 505d–e: ὃ δὴ διώκει μὲν ἅπασα ψυχὴ καὶ τούτου ἕνεκα πάντα πράττει, ἀπομαντευομένη τι εἶναι, ἀποροῦσα δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσα λαβεῖν ἱκανῶς τί ποτ᾽ ἐστὶν οὐδὲ πίστει χρήσασθαι μονίμῳ οἵᾳ καὶ περὶ τἆλλα.

103 *Rep.* 518c.

104 *Rep.* 526e.

105 *Rep.* 532c. See Werner Beierwaltes, *Lux intelligiblis. Untersuchung zur Lichtmetaphysik der Griechen*, pp. 46, 65; Matthias Baltes, 'Is the Idea of the Good in Plato's *Republic* Beyond Being?', p. 353.

106 Aristotle's recognition of the metaphysical importance of matter, with the allied discovery of potency, merited high praise from Cajetan, who referred to him as '*divus Aristoteles, quia invenit materiam*'. Cited by James A. Weisheipl, *St. Thomas Aquinas, Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John* I, p. 464.

107 *De Malo* 1, 2: Et quia Platonici non distinguebant inter materiam et privationem, ordinantes materiam cum non ente, dicebant, quod bonum ad plura se extendit quam ens. Cf. *De Ver.* 21; Aristotle, *Phys.* 1, 9, 191b35–192b4.

108 *ST* I, 5, 3 ad 3: Dicendum quod materia prima, sicut non est ens nisi in potentia, ita nec bonum nisi in potentia. Licet, secundum Platonicos, dici possit quod materia prima est non ens, propter privationem adiunctam. Sed tamen participat aliquid de bono, scilicet ipsum ordinem vel aptitudinem ad bonum.

109 W. K. C. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol 4, p. 507.

110 Etienne Gilson, *The Elements of Christian Philosophy*, p. 169.

111 *In DC* 6, ed. Saffrey, p. 47: Sed secundum veritatem causa prima est supra ens inquantum est ipsum esse infinitum.

112 *Phil.* 20d.

113 *De Pot.* 3, 5: Posteriores vero philosophi, ut Plato, Aristoteles et eorum sequaces, pervenerunt ad considerationem ipsius esse universalis; et ideo ipsi soli posuerunt aliquam univeralem causam rerum, a qua omnia alia in esse prodirent.

114 *Subst. Sep.* 9, no. 48, p. 86: Sed ultra hunc modum fiendi necesse est secundum sententiam Platonis et Aristotelis ponere alium altiorem.

115 *Subst. Sep.* 9, no. 51, p. 90: Non ergo existimandum est quod Plato et Aristoteles propter hoc quod posuerunt substantias immateriales seu etiam coelestia corpora semper fuisse, eis subtraxerunt causam essendi. Non enim in hoc a sententia catholicae fidei deviarunt quod huiusmodi posuerunt increata, sed quia posuerunt ea semper fuisse, cuius contrarium fides catholica tenet.

116 *De Pot.* 3, 5.

117 See Mark Johnson, 'Aquinas's Changing Evaluation of Plato on Creation', pp. 81–8.

118 A. E. Taylor, *Plato. The Man and his Work*, p. 391.

119 *Soph.* 219b.

120 *Soph.* 265b-c: ποιητικήν . . . πᾶσαν ἔφαμεν εἶναι δύναμιν ἥτις ἂν αἰτία γίγνηται τοῖς μὴ πρότερον οὖσιν ὕστερον γίγνεσθαι. . . ζῷα δὴ πάντα θνητά, καὶ δὴ καὶ φυτὰ ὅσα τ᾽ ἐπὶ γῆς ἐκ σπερμάτων καὶ ῥιζῶν φύεται, καὶ ὅσα ἄψυχα ἐν γῇ συνίσταται σώματα τηκτὰ καὶ ἄτηκτα, μῶν ἄλλου τινὸς ἢ θεοῦ δημιουργοῦντος φήσομεν ὕστερον γίγνεσθαι πρότερον οὐκ ὄντα; Trans. Fowler.

121 *Tim.* 29e–30a. The pagan philosopher and physician Galen favours the cosmology of the *Timaeus* over the belief of Moses that everything is arbitrarily possible to the will of God. 'Plato and the other Greeks who have treated correctly of natural principles' hold that 'some things are naturally impossible and God does not attempt these at all but chooses from among the possible what is best to be done.' *De usu partium* II, XI, 14, pp. 158–9. See Galen, *On the Usefulness of the Parts of the Body*, p. 533.

122 See Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, pp. 241–54.

123 *CG* 4, 20. Aquinas also finds evidence for love as a universal cause in Aristotle's account of his predecessors: Ostensum est enim in superioribus quod bonitas Dei est eius ratio volendi quod alia sint, et per suam voluntatem res in esse producit. Amor igitur quo suam bonitatem amat, est causa creationis rerum; unde et quidam antiqui Philosophi amorem deorum causam omnium esse posuerunt, ut patet in I metaph. (1, 4, 984b20–29); et Dionysius dicit, iv cap. De div. Nom.

(708b), quod divinus amor non permisit ipsum sine germine esse. See also *De Pot*, Q. 6, art. 9, ad 9: [Deus], qui ad omnia quae in creaturis operatur, ex amore movetur. Nam divinus amor non permisit eum sine germine esse, ut dicit Dionysius.

124 Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* X, H 165, pp. 16–34. See John Whittaker, Introduction, *Alcinoos, Enseignement des doctrines de Platon*, pp. 24–5, 106–7; John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, p. 284; John Dillon, *Alcinous. The Handbook of Platonism*, pp. 18–19, 109–10; Werner Beierwaltes, *Platonismus im Christentum*, pp. 135–6; See Chapter 5, 'The *Triplex Via* of Naming God', below.

125 Pierre Aubenque, 'Néoplatonisme et analogie de l'être' in *Neoplatonisme. Mélanges offerts à Jean Trouillard*, p. 72: 'Le paradigme de l'analogie métaphysique n'est pas à chercher dans les analyses philosophico-linguistiques d'Aristote, mais dans le discours allégorique de la *République* platonicienne.'

126 Plato's negative theology is likewise explicit at *Tim.* 28c, where he states 'The father and maker of all this universe is past finding out, and even if we found him, to tell of him to all men would be impossible.'

127 *Symp.* 210a–d.

128 *ST* II–II, 180, 4 ad 3: Per illa sex designantur gradus quibus per creaturas in dei contemplationem ascenditur. Nam in primo gradu ponitur perceptio ipsorum sensibilium; in secundo vero gradu ponitur progressus a sensibilibus ad intelligibilia; in tertio vero gradu ponitur diiudicatio sensibilium secundum intelligibilia; in quarto vero gradu ponitur absoluta consideratio intelligibilium in quae per sensibilia pervenitur; in quinto vero gradu ponitur contemplatio intelligibilium quae per sensibilia inveniri non possunt, sed per rationem capi possunt; in sexto gradu ponitur consideratio intelligibilium quae ratio nec invenire nec capere potest, quae scilicet pertinent ad sublimem contemplationem divinae veritatis, in qua finaliter contemplatio perficitur.

129 Gerard Manley Hopkins, *A Hopkins Reader*, p. 224. Emphasis in original.

130 See Christoph Riedweg (ed.), *Ps.-Justin* (*Markell von Ankara?*), *Ad Graecos de vera religione* (*bisher 'Cohortatio ad Graecos'*), 5.2, p. 537: Πλάτων μὲν γὰρ, ὡς ἄνωθεν κατεληλυθῶς, καὶ τὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἅπαντα ἀκριβῶς ἑωρακὼς.

131 *Tim.* 90a.

132 *In Job*, 37: Hoc autem est inter omnia maxime admirandum quod homo terrenus et corruptibilis ad spiritualium vel caelestium possessionem promoveatur. Theologically, the incarnation of Christ is for Aquinas

the 'miracle of miracles' (*miraculum miraculorum*), to which all other miracles are directed. *De Pot*, Q. 6, art. 9, ad 9: 'Omnia alia miracula ad incarnationem Christi ordinantur, quae est miraculum miraculorum.' In his sermon *Beatus Vir* for the feast of St Martin, referring to the words '*fecit mihi magna*' in the Magnificat, Aquinas comments: 'It was the Blessed Virgin who said "He has done great things to me", meaning the greatest miracle of miracles (*miraculum miraculorum maximum*), that in her womb God should become man, and that she, a virgin, should bear a child.' (*Beatus Vir*, pars 2, *Corpus Thomisticum*, § 86769).

133 *Subst. Sep.* 2, § 11, p. 46: Haec autem positio Aristotelis positio certior quidem videtur esse eo quod non multum recedit ab his quae sunt manifesta secundum sensum, tamen minus sufficiens videtur quam Platonis positio.

Chapter Two

1 Philippians 4.8: Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί, ὅσα ἐστὶν ἀληθῆ, ὅσα σεμνά, ὅσα δίκαια, ὅσα ἁγνά, ὅσα προσφιλῆ, ὅσα εὔφημα, εἴ τις ἀρετὴ καὶ εἴ τις ἔπαινος, ταῦτα λογίζεσθε.

2. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 'Epilog zu Schillers Glocke', *Werke* I, p. 257: 'Indessen schritt sein Geist gewaltig fort / Ins Ewige des Wahren, Guten, Schönen.' Albert Einstein wrote: 'The ideals which have always shone before me and filled me with the joy of living are goodness, beauty, and truth.' *Living Philosophies*, p. 4.

3 R. W. Emerson, *Nature*, p. 24.

4 Heraclitus, Frg. 102: τῷ μὲν θεῷ καλὰ πάντα καὶ ἀγαθὰ καὶ δίκαια, ἄνθρωποι δὲ ἃ μὲν ἄδικα ὑπειλήφασιν ἃ δὲ δίκαια. Trans. Freeman, p. 31.

5 Sappho, *Lyr.* Frg. 50: ὀ μὲν γὰρ κάλος ὄσσον ἴδην πέλεται <κάλος>, / ὀ δὲ κἄγαθος αὔτικα καὶ κάλος ἔσσεται.

6 *Tim.* 53b, *Lysis* 216d: λέγω γὰρ τἀγαθὸν καλὸν εἶναι· σὺ δ᾽ οὐκ οἴει; λέγω τοίνυν ἀπομαντευόμενος, τοῦ καλοῦ τε καὶ ἀγαθοῦ φίλον εἶναι τὸ μήτε ἀγαθὸν μήτε κακόν. See also the implied suggestion in *Theaet.* 186a.

7 *Symp.* 211d: ἐνταῦθα τοῦ βίου, ὦ φίλε Σώκρατες, ἔφη ἡ Μαντινικὴ ξένη, εἴπερ που ἄλλοθι, βιωτὸν ἀνθρώπῳ, θεωμένῳ αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν. Trans. Lamb, p. 207.

8 *Lysis* 216cd: ἀλλὰ μὰ Δία, ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, οὐκ οἶδα, ἀλλὰ τῷ ὄντι αὐτὸς εἰλιγγιῶ ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ λόγου ἀπορίας, καὶ κινδυνεύει κατὰ τὴν

ἀρχαίαν παροιμίαν τὸ καλὸν φίλον εἶναι. ἔοικε γοῦν μαλακῷ τινι καὶ λείῳ καὶ λιπαρῷ· διὸ καὶ ἴσως ῥᾳδίως διολισθαίνει καὶ διαδύεται ἡμᾶς, ἅτε τοιοῦτον ὄν. λέγω γὰρ τἀγαθὸν καλὸν εἶναι. Trans. Lamb, p. 49.

9 James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, p. 183.

10 Commenting on Plato, Marsilio Ficino refers to beauty as the *splendour of the good*. Beautiful things, he states, desire truth for its beauty. Marsilio Ficino, *Platonic Theology*, vol. 3, p. 244: Sed neque in illis est prima, tum quia illae secundum se deformes sunt, nisi formentur a bono cuius splendor est pulchritudo, tum quia illae veritatem appetunt tamquam pulchram.

11 *Phdr.* 146e: τὸ δὲ θεῖον καλόν, σοφόν, ἀγαθόν, καὶ πᾶν ὅ τι τοιοῦτον.

12 *Tim.* 29a: εἰ μὲν δὴ καλός ἐστιν ὅδε ὁ κόσμος ὅ τε δημιουργὸς ἀγαθός.

13 *Phil.* 64e–65a: νῦν δὴ καταπέφευγεν ἡμῖν ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ δύναμις εἰς τὴν τοῦ καλοῦ φύσιν. μετριότης γὰρ καὶ συμμετρία κάλλος δήπου καὶ ἀρετὴ πανταχοῦ συμβαίνει γίγνεσθαι. . . καὶ μὴν ἀλήθειάν γε ἔφαμεν αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ κράσει μεμεῖχθαι. . . οὐκοῦν εἰ μὴ μιᾷ δυνάμεθα ἰδέᾳ τὸ ἀγαθὸν θηρεῦσαι, σὺν τρισὶ λαβόντες, κάλλει καὶ συμμετρίᾳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ, λέγωμεν ὡς τοῦτο οἷον ἓν ὀρθότατ᾽ ἂν αἰτιασαίμεθ᾽ ἂν τῶν ἐν τῇ συμμείξει, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὡς ἀγαθὸν ὂν τοιαύτην αὐτὴν γεγονέναι. Trans. Fowler, pp. 389–91.

14 *Hipp. Maj.* 297e–298a: καὶ γὰρ οὖν δή τι καὶ οἶμαι ἄρτι ηὐπορηκέναι. ὅρα γάρ· εἰ ὃ ἂν χαίρειν ἡμᾶς ποιῇ, μήτι πάσας τὰς ἡδονάς, ἀλλ᾽ ὃ ἂν διὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς καὶ τῆς ὄψεως, τοῦτο φαῖμεν εἶναι καλόν, πῶς τι ἄρ᾽ ἂν ἀγωνιζοίμεθα; οἵ τέ γέ που καλοὶ ἄνθρωποι, ὦ Ἱππία, καὶ τὰ ποικίλματα πάντα καὶ τὰ ζωγραφήματα καὶ τὰ πλάσματα τέρπει ἡμᾶς ὁρῶντας, ἃ ἂν καλὰ ᾖ· καὶ οἱ φθόγγοι οἱ καλοὶ καὶ ἡ μουσικὴ σύμπασα καὶ οἱ λόγοι καὶ αἱ μυθολογίαι ταὐτὸν τοῦτο ἐργάζονται. . . τὸ καλόν ἐστι τὸ δι᾽ ἀκοῆς τε καὶ δι᾽ ὄψεως ἡδύ. Trans. Fowler, p. 399.

15 *Hipp. Maj.* 287de: ἐρωτᾷ γάρ σε οὐ τί ἐστι καλόν, ἀλλ᾽ ὅ τί ἐστὶ τὸ καλόν.

16 *Top.* 6, 7, 146a22.

17 *Crat.* 416d: ὀρθῶς ἄρα φρονήσεως αὕτη ἡ ἐπωνυμία ἐστὶν τὸ ‘καλὸν’ τῆς τὰ τοιαῦτα ἀπεργαζομένης, ἃ δὴ καλὰ φάσκοντες εἶναι ἀσπαζόμεθα. Trans. Fowler, p. 113.

18 *Phdr.* 250c–e: περὶ δὲ κάλλους, ὥσπερ εἴπομεν, μετ᾽ ἐκείνων τε ἔλαμπεν ὄν, δεῦρό τ᾽ ἐλθόντες κατειλήφαμεν αὐτὸ διὰ τῆς ἐναργεστάτης αἰσθήσεως τῶν ἡμετέρων στίλβον ἐναργέστατα. ὄψις γὰρ ἡμῖν ὀξυτάτη τῶν διὰ τοῦ σώματος ἔρχεται αἰσθήσεων, ᾗ φρόνησις οὐχ

ὁρᾶται—δεινοὺς γὰρ ἂν παρεῖχεν ἔρωτας, εἴ τι τοιοῦτον ἑαυτῆς ἐναργὲς εἴδωλον παρείχετο εἰς ὄψιν ἰόν—καὶ τἆλλα ὅσα ἐραστά· νῦν δὲ κάλλος μόνον ταύτην ἔσχε μοῖραν, ὥστ᾽ ἐκφανέστατον εἶναι καὶ ἐρασμιώτατον. Trans. Fowler, p. 485, slightly modified.

19 See *Soph.* 228a: ἀλλ᾽ αἶσχος ἄλλο τι πλὴν τὸ τῆς ἀμετρίας πανταχοῦ δυσειδὲς ἐνὸν γένος;

20 *Tim.* 87c: πᾶν δὴ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καλόν, τὸ δὲ καλὸν οὐκ ἄμετρον· καὶ ζῷον οὖν τὸ τοιοῦτον ἐσόμενον σύμμετρον θετέον. My trans. after Donald J. Zeyl, p. 1286.

21 *Tim.* 87e: οἷον οὖν ὑπερσκελὲς ἢ καί τινα ἑτέραν ὑπέρεξιν ἄμετρον ἑαυτῷ τι σῶμα ὂν ἅμα μὲν αἰσχρόν, ἅμα δ᾽ ἐν τῇ κοινωνίᾳ τῶν πόνων πολλοὺς μὲν κόπους, πολλὰ δὲ σπάσματα καὶ διὰ τὴν παραφορότητα πτώματα παρέχον μυρίων κακῶν αἴτιον ἑαυτῷ. Trans. R. G. Bury, p. 239.

22 See Francis J Kovach, *Philosophy of Beauty*, p. 217.

23 *Tim.* 87c–d: πρὸς γὰρ ὑγιείας καὶ νόσους ἀρετάς τε καὶ κακίας οὐδεμία ξυμμετρία καὶ ἀμετρία μείζων ἢ ψυχῆς αὐτῆς πρὸς σῶμα αὐτό. Trans. Bury, pp. 237–9.

24 *Tim.* 87d–e: καὶ ὅταν αὖ τοὐναντίον ξυμπαγῆτον τούτω, οὐ καλὸν ὅλον τὸ ζῶον—ἀξύμμετρον γὰρ ταῖς μεγίσταις ξυμμετρίαις—, τὸ δὲ ἐναντίως ἔχον πάντων θεαμάτων τῷ δυναμένῳ Εκαθορᾷν κάλλιστον καὶ ἐρασμιώτατον.

25 *Tim.* 88c–d.

26 *Tim.* 88c: εἰ μέλλει δικαίως τις ἅμα μὲν καλός, ἅμα δὲ ἀγαθὸς ὀρθῶς κεκλῆσθαι. Trans. Bury, p. 241, modified.

27 See *Phd.* 100c: φαίνεται γάρ μοι, εἴ τί ἐστιν ἄλλο καλὸν πλὴν αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν, οὐδὲ δι᾽ ἓν ἄλλο καλὸν εἶναι ἢ διότι μετέχει ἐκείνου τοῦ καλοῦ. The ascent to absolute beauty through love is described by Plato in the *Symposium* (210a–d).

28 Diogenes Laertius 5, 1, 20: πρὸς τὸν πυθόμενον διὰ τί τοῖς καλοῖς πολὺν χρόνον ὁμιλοῦμεν, τυφλοῦ, ἔφη, τὸ ἐρώτημα.

29 *Met.* 5, 1, 1013a22: πολλῶν γὰρ καὶ τοῦ γνῶναι καὶ τῆς κινήσεως ἀρχὴ τἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλόν. Trans. Tredennick, p. 211.

30 *Met.* 13, 3, 1078a32.

31 *Rhet.* 1, 9, 1366a33–5, trans. Roberts in *CW* 2, p. 2174, and Freese, p. 91.

32 *EN* 4, 2, 1122a34–1122b10: ὁ δὲ μεγαλοπρεπὴς ἐπιστήμονι ἔοικεν· τὸ πρέπον γὰρ δύναται θεωρῆσαι καὶ δαπανῆσαι μεγάλα ἐμμελῶς... δαπανήσει δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα ὁ μεγαλοπρεπὴς τοῦ καλοῦ ἕνεκα ... καὶ πῶς κάλλιστον καὶ πρεπωδέστατον σκέψαιτ᾽ ἂν μᾶλλον ἢ πόσου καὶ πῶς ἐλαχίστου. Trans. Ross, *CW* 2, p. 1771.

33 *EN* 4, 2, 1122b14–18: οὐ γὰρ ἡ αὐτὴ ἀρετὴ κτήματος καὶ ἔργου· κτῆμα μὲν γὰρ τὸ πλείστου ἄξιον τιμιώτατον, οἷον χρυσός, ἔργον δὲ τὸ μέγα καὶ καλόν (τοῦ γὰρ τοιούτου ἡ θεωρία θαυμαστή, τὸ δὲ μεγαλοπρεπὲς θαυμαστόν)· καὶ ἔστιν ἔργου ἀρετὴ μεγαλοπρέπεια ἐν μεγέθει. I follow the original Ross translation rather than *CW2*.

34 *EN* 4, 3, 1125a11–12, trans. Ross, *CW* 2, p. 1775.

35 *EN* 3, 7, 1115b12–13.

36 *Pol.* 1, 5, 1254b38–9: ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὁμοίως ῥᾴδιον ἰδεῖν τό τε τῆς ψυχῆς κάλλος καὶ τὸ τοῦ σώματος. Trans. Jowett, *CW* 2, p. 1991.

37 *Met.* 13, 3, 1078a36–78b5: τοῦ δὲ καλοῦ μέγιστα εἴδη τάξις καὶ συμμετρία καὶ τὸ ὡρισμένον, ἃ μάλιστα δεικνύουσιν αἱ μαθηματικαὶ ἐπιστῆμαι. καὶ ἐπεί γε πολλῶν αἴτια φαίνεται ταῦτα (λέγω δ᾽ οἷον ἡ τάξις καὶ τὸ ὡρισμένον), δῆλον ὅτι λέγοιεν ἂν καὶ τὴν τοιαύτην αἰτίαν τὴν ὡς τὸ καλὸν αἴτιον τρόπον τινά. μᾶλλον δὲ γνωρίμως ἐν ἄλλοις περὶ αὐτῶν ἐροῦμεν. Trans. Tredennick, p. 193.

38 *Pol.* 3, 8, 1284b8–13: οὔτε γὰρ γραφεὺς ἐάσειεν ἂν τὸν ὑπερβάλλοντα πόδα τῆς συμμετρίας ἔχειν τὸ ζῷον, οὐδ᾽ εἰ διαφέροι τὸ κάλλος, οὔτε ναυπηγὸς πρύμναν ἢ τῶν ἄλλων τι μορίων τῶν τῆς νεώς, οὐδὲ δὴ χοροδιδάσκαλος τὸν μεῖζον καὶ κάλλιον τοῦ παντὸς χοροῦ φθεγγόμενον ἐάσει συγχορεύειν. Trans. Rackham, p. 245.

39 For Aristotle on the beauty of nature see *Part. An.* 1, 5, 645a16–26.

40 *Gen. An.* 2, 731b24–7: ἐπεὶ γάρ ἐστι τὰ μὲν ἀίδια καὶ θεῖα τῶν ὄντων, τὰ δ᾽ ἐνδεχόμενα καὶ εἶναι καὶ μὴ εἶναι, τὸ δὲ καλὸν καὶ τὸ θεῖον αἴτιον ἀεὶ κατὰ τὴν αὑτοῦ φύσιν τοῦ βελτίονος ἐν τοῖς ἐνδεχομένοις. Trans. Peck, p. 129.

41 *Met.* 12, 7, 1072b32–4.

42 *Met.* 5, 16, 1021b12–1022a1: τέλειον λέγεται ἓν μὲν οὗ μὴ ἔστιν ἔξω τι λαβεῖν μηδὲ ἓν μόριον (οἷον χρόνος τέλειος ἑκάστου οὗτος οὗ μὴ ἔστιν ἔξω λαβεῖν χρόνον τινὰ ὃς τούτου μέρος ἐστὶ τοῦ χρόνου), καὶ τὸ κατ᾽ ἀρετὴν καὶ τὸ εὖ μὴ ἔχον ὑπερβολὴν πρὸς τὸ γένος, οἷον τέλειος ἰατρὸς καὶ τέλειος αὐλητὴς ὅταν κατὰ τὸ εἶδος τῆς οἰκείας ἀρετῆς μηθὲν ἐλλείπωσιν. οὕτω δὲ μεταφέροντες καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κακῶν λέγομεν συκοφάντην τέλειον καὶ κλέπτην τέλειον, ἐπειδὴ καὶ ἀγαθοὺς λέγομεν αὐτούς, οἷον κλέπτην ἀγαθὸν καὶ συκοφάντην ἀγαθόν· καὶ ἡ ἀρετὴ τελείωσίς τις· ἕκαστον γὰρ τότε τέλειον καὶ οὐσία πᾶσα τότε τελεία, ὅταν κατὰ τὸ εἶδος τῆς οἰκείας ἀρετῆς μηδὲν ἐλλείπῃ μόριον τοῦ κατὰ φύσιν μεγέθους. ἔτι οἷς ὑπάρχει τὸ τέλος, σπουδαῖον ὄν, ταῦτα λέγεται τέλεια· κατὰ γὰρ τὸ ἔχειν τὸ τέλος τέλεια, ὥστ᾽ ἐπεὶ τὸ τέλος τῶν ἐσχάτων τί ἐστι, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ φαῦλα μεταφέροντες λέγομεν τελείως ἀπολωλέναι καὶ τελείως

ἐφθάρθαι, ὅταν μηδὲν ἐλλείπῃ τῆς φθορᾶς καὶ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ τῷ ἐσχάτῳ ᾖ. διὸ καὶ ἡ τελευτὴ κατὰ μεταφορὰν λέγεται τέλος, ὅτι ἄμφω ἔσχατα. τέλος δὲ καὶ τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα ἔσχατον. τὰ μὲν οὖν καθ᾽ αὑτὰ λεγόμενα τέλεια τοσαυταχῶς λέγεται, τὰ μὲν τῷ κατὰ τὸ εὖ μηδὲν ἐλλείπειν μηδ᾽ ἔχειν ὑπερβολὴν μηδὲ ἔξω τι λαβεῖν, τὰ δ᾽ ὅλως κατὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ὑπερβολὴν ἐν ἑκάστῳ γένει μηδ᾽ εἶναί τι ἔξω. Trans. Ross, *CW* 2, p. 1613, slightly amended.

43 *Poet.* 7, 1450b34–1451a11: ἔτι δ᾽ ἐπεὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ ζῷον καὶ ἅπαν πρᾶγμα ὃ συνέστηκεν ἐκ τινῶν οὐ μόνον ταῦτα τεταγμένα δεῖ ἔχειν ἀλλὰ καὶ μέγεθος ὑπάρχειν μὴ τὸ τυχόν· τὸ γὰρ καλὸν ἐν μεγέθει καὶ τάξει ἐστίν, διὸ οὔτε πάμμικρον ἄν τι γένοιτο καλὸν ζῷον (συγχεῖται γὰρ ἡ θεωρία ἐγγὺς τοῦ ἀναισθήτου χρόνου γινομένη) οὔτε παμμέγεθες (οὐ γὰρ ἅμα ἡ θεωρία γίνεται ἀλλ᾽ οἴχεται τοῖς θεωροῦσι τὸ ἓν καὶ τὸ ὅλον ἐκ τῆς θεωρίας) οἷον εἰ μυρίων σταδίων εἴη ζῷον· ὥστε δεῖ καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῶν σωμάτων καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ζῴων ἔχειν μὲν μέγεθος, τοῦτο δὲ εὐσύνοπτον εἶναι, οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν μύθων ἔχειν μὲν μῆκος, τοῦτο δὲ εὐμνημόνευτον εἶναι. τοῦ δὲ μήκους ὅρος <ὁ> μὲν πρὸς τοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν οὐ τῆς τέχνης ἐστίν· εἰ γὰρ ἔδει ἑκατὸν τραγῳδίας ἀγωνίζεσθαι, πρὸς κλεψύδρας ἂν ἠγωνίζοντο, ὥσπερ ποτὲ καὶ ἄλλοτέ φασιν. ὁ δὲ κατ᾽ αὐτὴν τὴν φύσιν τοῦ πράγματος ὅρος, ἀεὶ μὲν ὁ μείζων μέχρι τοῦ σύνδηλος εἶναι καλλίων ἐστὶ κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος. Trans. Halliwell, pp. 55–7.

44 *EN* 4, 3, 1123b7–8: ἐν μεγέθει γὰρ ἡ μεγαλοψυχία, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸ κάλλος ἐν μεγάλῳ σώματι, οἱ μικροὶ δ᾽ ἀστεῖοι καὶ σύμμετροι, καλοὶ δ᾽ οὔ. Trans. Ross, *CW* 2, p. 1773. See Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, dist. 31, q. 2, a. 1. See note 138 below.

45 *Pol.* 7, 4, 1326a29–b2: ὅ τε γὰρ νόμος τάξις τίς ἐστι, καὶ τὴν εὐνομίαν ἀναγκαῖον εὐταξίαν εἶναι, ὁ δὲ λίαν ὑπερβάλλων ἀριθμὸς οὐ δύναται μετέχειν τάξεως, θείας γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο δυνάμεως ἔργον, ἥτις καὶ τόδε συνέχει τὸ πᾶν. διὸ καὶ πόλιν ἧς μετὰ μεγέθους ὁ λεχθεὶς ὅρος ὑπάρχει, ταύτην εἶναι καλλίστην ἀναγκαῖον· ἐπεὶ τό γε καλὸν ἐν πλήθει καὶ μεγέθει εἴωθε γίνεσθαι, ἀλλ᾽ ἔστι τι καὶ πόλεως μεγέθους μέτρον, ὥσπερ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων πάντων, ζῴων φυτῶν ὀργάνων· καὶ γὰρ τούτων ἕκαστον οὔτε λίαν μικρὸν οὔτε κατὰ μέγεθος ὑπερβάλλον ἕξει τὴν αὑτοῦ δύναμιν, ἀλλ᾽ ὁτὲ μὲν ὅλως ἐστερημένον ἔσται τῆς φύσεως ὁτὲ δὲ φαύλως ἔχον, οἷον πλοῖον σπιθαμιαῖον μὲν οὐκ ἔσται πλοῖον ὅλως, οὐδὲ δυοῖν σταδίοιν, εἰς δὲ τὶ μέγεθος ἐλθὸν ὁτὲ μὲν διὰ σμικρότητα φαύλην ποιήσει τὴν ναυτιλίαν, ὁτὲ δὲ διὰ τὴν ὑπερβολήν. Trans. Jowett, *CW* 2, p. 2105.

46 *Met.* 5, 6, 1016b11–16: ἔτι δ᾽ ἔστι μὲν ὡς ὁτιοῦν ἕν φαμεν εἶναι ἂν ᾖ ποσὸν καὶ συνεχές, ἔστι δ᾽ ὡς οὔ, ἂν μή τι ὅλον ᾖ, τοῦτο δὲ ἂν μὴ τὸ εἶδος ἔχῃ ἕν· οἷον οὐκ ἂν φαῖμεν ὁμοίως ἓν ἰδόντες ὁπωσοῦν τὰ μέρη συγκείμενα τοῦ ὑποδήματος, ἐὰν μὴ διὰ τὴν συνέχειαν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐὰν οὕτως ὥστε ὑπόδημα εἶναι καὶ εἶδός τι ἔχειν ἤδη ἕν. Original Ross translation amended.

47 *Rhet.* 1, 5, 1361b7–14: κάλλος δὲ ἕτερον καθ᾽ ἑκάστην ἡλικίαν ἐστίν. νέου μὲν οὖν κάλλος τὸ πρὸς τοὺς πόνους χρήσιμον ἔχειν τὸ σῶμα τούς τε πρὸς δρόμον καὶ πρὸς βίαν, ἡδὺν ὄντα ἰδεῖν πρὸς ἀπόλαυσιν, διὸ οἱ πένταθλοι κάλλιστοι, ὅτι πρὸς βίαν καὶ πρὸς τάχος ἅμα πεφύκασιν· ἀκμάζοντος δὲ πρὸς μὲν πόνους τοὺς πολεμικούς, ἡδὺν δὲ εἶναι δοκεῖν μετὰ φοβερότητος· γέροντος δὲ πρὸς μὲν πόνους τοὺς ἀναγκαίους ἱκανόν, ἄλυπον δὲ διὰ τὸ μηδὲν ἔχειν ὧν τὸ γῆρας λωβᾶται. Trans. Freese, p. 55.

48 *Ennead* I 6 [1] 1.1–6: Τὸ καλὸν ἔστι μὲν ἐν ὄψει πλεῖστον, ἔστι δ᾽ ἐν ἀκοαῖς κατά τε λόγων συνθέσεις, ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἐν μουσικῇ καὶ ἁπάσῃ· καὶ γὰρ μέλη καὶ ῥυθμοί εἰσι καλοί· ἔστι δὲ καὶ προιοῦσι πρὸς τὸ ἄνω ἀπὸ τῆς αἰσθήσεως καὶ ἐπιτηδεύματα καλὰ καὶ πράξεις καὶ ἕξεις καὶ ἐπιστῆμαί τε καὶ τὸ τῶν ἀρετῶν κάλλος. Εἰ δέ τι καὶ πρὸ τούτων, αὐτὸ δείξει. Trans. Smith, p. 45.

49 I 6 [1] 1.20–5: Λέγεται μὲν δὴ παρὰ πάντων, ὡς εἰπεῖν, ὡς συμμετρία τῶν μερῶν πρὸς ἄλληλα καὶ πρὸς τὸ ὅλον τό τε τῆς εὐχροίας προστεθὲν τὸ πρὸς τὴν ὄψιν κάλλος ποιεῖ καὶ ἔστιν αὐτοῖς καὶ ὅλως τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσι τὸ καλοῖς εἶναι τὸ συμμέτροις καὶ μεμετρημένοις ὑπάρχειν. Trans. Smith, p. 46.

50 I 6 [1] 1.25–30: οἷς ἁπλοῦν οὐδέν, μόνον δὲ τὸ σύνθετον ἐξ ἀνάγκης καλὸν ὑπάρξει· τό τε ὅλον ἔσται καλὸν αὐτοῖς, τὰ δὲ μέρη ἕκαστα οὐχ ἕξει παρ᾽ ἑαυτῶν τὸ καλὰ εἶναι, πρὸς δὲ τὸ ὅλον συντελοῦντα, ἵνα καλὸν ᾖ· καίτοι δεῖ, εἴπερ ὅλον, καὶ τὰ μέρη καλὰ εἶναι· οὐ γὰρ δὴ ἐξ αἰσχρῶν, ἀλλὰ πάντα κατειληφέναι τὸ κάλλος. Trans. Smith, p. 46.

51 I 6 [1] 1.38–40: πῶς οὐκ ἄλλο δεῖ ἐπὶ τῷ συμμέτρῳ λέγειν τὸ καλὸν εἶναι, καὶ τὸ σύμμετρον καλὸν εἶναι δι᾽ ἄλλο; Trans. Smith, p. 47.

52 See I 6 [1] 6.13–32.

53 V 8 [31] 1.7–19.

54 V 8 [31] 2.14–15: Ἆρ᾽ οὐκ εἶδος μὲν πανταχοῦ τοῦτο, ἧκον δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ γενόμενον ἐκ τοῦ ποιήσαντος. Trans. Smith, p. 46, modified.

55 VI 7 [38] 22.5–12: ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἐμφανταζομένου κάλλους ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῖς. ἔστι γὰρ ἕκαστον ὅ ἐστιν ἐφ᾽ αὑτοῦ· ἐφετὸν δὲ γίνεται ἐπιχρώσαντος αὐτὸ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, ὥσπερ χάριτας δόντος αὐτοῖς καὶ εἰς τὰ ἐφιέμενα

ἔρωτας... ἀργόν τε γὰρ τὸ κάλλος αὐτοῦ, πρὶν τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ φῶς λάβῃ. Trans. Armstrong, vol. 7, pp. 155–7.

56 VI 7 [38] 22.25–27: διὸ καὶ ἐνταῦθα φατέον μᾶλλον τὸ κάλλος τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ συμμετρίᾳ ἐπιλαμπόμενον ἢ τὴν συμμετρίαν εἶναι καὶ τοῦτο εἶναι τὸ ἐράσμιον. Trans. Armstrong, p. 157.

57 VI 7 [38] 22. 27–34: διὰ τί γὰρ ἐπὶ μὲν ζῶντος προσώπου μᾶλλον τὸ φέγγος τοῦ καλοῦ, ἴχνος δ᾽ ἐπὶ τεθνηκότος καὶ μήπω τοῦ προσώπου ταῖς σαρξὶ καὶ ταῖς συμμετρίαις μεμαρασμένου; καὶ τῶν ἀγαλμάτων δὲ τὰ ζωτικώτερα καλλίω, κἂν συμμετρότερα τὰ ἕτερα ᾖ; καὶ αἰσχίων ζῶν καλλίων τοῦ ἐν ἀγάλματι καλοῦ; ἢ ὅτι τοδὶ ἐφετὸν μᾶλλον· τοῦτο δ᾽ ὅτι ψυχὴν ἔχει· τοῦτο δ᾽ ὅτι ἀγαθοειδέστερον· τοῦτο δ᾽ ὅτι ἀγαθοῦ ἀμηγέπῃ φωτὶ κέχρωσται. Trans. Armstrong, pp. 157–9.

58 I 6 [1] 2.13–15: Μετοχῇ εἴδους φαμὲν ταῦτα. Πᾶν μὲν γὰρ τὸ ἄμορφον πεφυκὸς μορφὴν καὶ εἶδος δέχεσθαι ἄμοιρον ὂν λόγου καὶ εἴδους αἰσχρὸν καὶ ἔξω θείου λόγου. Trans. Smith, p. 48.

59 I 6 [1] 2.18–24: Προσιὸν οὖν τὸ εἶδος τὸ μὲν ἐκ πολλῶν ἐσόμενον μερῶν ἓν 20συνθέσει συνέταξέ τε καὶ εἰς μίαν συντέλειαν ἤγαγε καὶ ἓν τῇ ὁμολογίᾳ πεποίηκεν, ἐπείπερ ἓν ἦν αὐτὸ ἔν τε ἔδει τὸ μορφούμενον εἶναι ὡς δυνατὸν αὐτῷ ἐκ πολλῶν ὄντι. Ἵδρυται οὖν ἐπ᾽ αὐτοῦ τὸ κάλλος ἤδη εἰς ἓν συναχθέντος καὶ τοῖς μέρεσι διδὸν ἑαυτὸ καὶ τοῖς ὅλοις. Trans. Smith, pp. 48–9.

60 V 8 [31] 13.22: ἐκεῖ οὖν κἀκεῖθεν τὸ καλόν. Trans. Smith, p. 68, modified.

61 IV 8 [31] 6.23–4: δεῖξις οὖν τῶν ἀρίστων ἐν νοητοῖς τὸ ἐν αἰσθητῷ κάλλιστον. Trans. Armstrong, vol. 4, p. 417.

62 V 1 [10] 2.20–2: οἷον σκοτεινὸν νέφος ἡλίου βολαὶ φωτίσασαι λάμπειν ποιοῦσι χρυσοειδῆ ὄψιν διδοῦσαι, οὕτω τοι καὶ ψυχὴ ἐλθοῦσα εἰς σῶμα οὐρανοῦ ἔδωκε μὲν ζωήν, ἔδωκε δὲ ἀθανασίαν, ἤγειρε δὲ κείμενον. Trans. Gerson, p. 535.

63 *De Musica* 6, 13, 38: Dic, oro te, num possumus amare nisi pulchra? Nam etsi quidam videntur amare deformia, quos vulgo Graeci σαπροφίλους vocant, interest tamen quanto minus pulchra sint quam illa quae pluribus placent. Nam ea neminem amare manifestum est, quorum foeditate sensus offenditur. Latin quotations are taken from *Patrologia Latina* at https://www.augustinus.it (accessed 1 June 2024), checked against available revised editions. Trans. Taliaferro, p. 363.

64 *Sermo* 19, 5: Considerate, Carissimi, universam creaturam caelum, terram mare, quae in caelo, quae in terra, quae in mari, quam pulchra, quam mira, quam digne ordinateque disposita. Movent vos ista? Movent plane. Quare? Quia pulchra sunt.

65 *Conf.* 4, 13, 20: Num amamus aliquid nisi pulchrum? Quid est ergo pulchrum? Et quid est pulchritudo? Quid est quod nos allicit et conciliat rebus, quas amamus? Nisi enim esset in eis decus et species, nullo modo nos ad se moverent. Trans. Pilkington, p. 52.

66 *De Genesi Contra Manichaeos* (*GCM*)1, 16, 26: Ego vero fateor me nescire mures et ranae quare creatae sint, aut muscae aut vermiculi: video tamen omnia in suo genere pulchra esse. See *De Vera Religione* (*Vera Rel.*) 41, 77: 'We must admit that a weeping man is better than a happy worm. And yet I could speak at great length without any falsehood in praise of the worm. I could point out the brightness of its colouring, the slender rounded shape of its body, the fitness of its parts from front to rear, and their effort to preserve unity as far as is possible in so lowly a creature.' Trans. Burleigh, pp. 74–5.

67 *Sermo* 241, 2: Interroga pulchritudinem terrae, interroga pulchritudinem maris, interroga pulchritudinem dilatati et diffusi aeris, interroga pulchritudinem coeli, interroga ordinem siderum, interroga solem fulgore suo diem clarificantem, interroga lunam splendore subsequentis noctis tenebras temperantem, interroga animalia quae moventur in aquis, quae morantur in terris, quae volitant in aere; latentes animas, perspicua corpora; visibilia regenda, invisibiles regentes: interroga ista, Respondent tibi omnia: Ecce vide, pulchra sumus. Pulchritudo eorum, confessio eorum. Ista pulchra mutabilia quis fecit, nisi incommutabilis pulcher? Trans. Hill, p. 71.

68 For an excellent discussion of the role of beauty in Augustine's conversion, see Carol Harrison, *Beauty and Revelation in the Thought of Saint Augustine*, pp. 3–53. A helpful survey of Augustine's sources is K. Svoboda, *L'Esthetique de saint Augustine et ses sources*.

69 *Conf.* 10, 27, 38: *Sero te amavi, pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova, sero te amavi! Et ecce intus eras et ego foris et ibi te quaerebam et in ista formosa, quae fecisti, deformis irruebam. Mecum eras, et tecum non eram. Ea me tenebant longe a te, quae si in te non essent, non essent.* T*rans.* Chadwick, p. 201, slightly modified.

70 *Conf.* 4, 13, 20: Et animadvertebam et videbam in ipsis corporibus aliud esse quasi totum et ideo pulchrum, aliud autem, quod ideo deceret, quoniam apte accommodaretur alicui, sicut pars corporis ad universum suum aut calciamentum ad pedem et similia. Trans. Pilkington, p. 52.

71 See Montague Brown, 'Augustine on Beauty, Number, and Form'.

72 *Vera Rel.* 40, 76: Ista enim, quae propterea sunt infima, quia partibus imperfectis tota perfecta sunt. Trans. Burleigh, p. 73.

73 *GCM* 1, 21, 32. The text continues: 'In the case of the human body, if we praise the eyes alone, or the nose, or the cheeks, or the head, or the hands, or the feet, and we praise the remaining beautiful parts individually and by themselves, how much more should we praise the whole body to which all the members, which individually are beautiful, contribute their beauty? If a beautiful hand, which we praise even by itself in the body, is separated from the body and loses its attractiveness, the other members also are ugly without it. The force and power of integrity and unity are so great that many good things are pleasing only when they come together and form a universe (*universum*). A universe gets its name from unity.' (Omnis enim pulchritudo quae partibus constat, multo est laudabilior in toto quam in parte: sicut in corpore humano, si laudamus oculos solos, si nasum solum, si solas genas, aut solum caput, aut solas manus, aut solos pedes, et caetera si pulchra singula et sola laudamus; quanto magis totum corpus, cui omnia membra, quae singula pulchra sunt, conferunt pulchritudinem suam: ita ut manus pulchra, quae etiam sola laudabatur in corpore, si separetur a corpore, et ipsa amittat gratiam suam, et caetera sine illa inhonesta sint? Tanta est vis et potentia integritatis et unitatis, ut etiam quae multa sunt bona tunc placeant, cum in universum aliquid conveniunt atque concurrunt. Universum autem ab unitate nomen accepit.) Trans. Teske, p. 80.

74 *Vera Rel.* 41, 77, my trans. See Burleigh, p. 74.

75 *Ep.* 18, 2, *PL* 33 col. 85. Trans. Teske, p. 51.

76 *De Musica* 6, 13, 38. Trans. Taliaferro, p. 363.

77 *De Libero Arbitrio* (*DLA*) 2, 16, 42: Intuere coelum et terram et mare, et quaecumque in eis vel desuper fulgent, vel deorsum repunt vel volant vel natant; formas habent, quia numeros habent: adime illis haec, nihil erunt. A quo ergo sunt, nisi a quo numerus; quandoquidem in tantum illis est esse, in quantum numerosa esse? Trans. Benjamin and Hackstaff, p. 73.

78 Montague Brown, p. 34.

79 *Vera Rel.* 30, 55: Sed cum in omnibus artibus convenientia placeat, qua una salva et pulchra sunt omnia; ipsa vero convenientia aequalitatem unitatemque appetat, vel similitudine parium partium, vel gradatione disparium. Trans. Burleigh, pp. 51–2.

80 Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 4, 31. See *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. King, pp. 358–60.

81 *De Civitate Dei* (*CD*) 22, 19: Omnis enim corporis pulchritudo est partium congruentia cum quadam coloris suavitate. Ubi autem non est

partium congruentia, aut ideo quid offendit quia pravum est, aut ideo quia parum, aut ideo quia nimium. Trans. Green, p. 293. See *Epistola* 3, 4, *PL* 33, col. 65: Quid laudant in corpore? Nihil aliud video quam pulchritudinem. Quid est corporis pulchritudo? Congruentia partium cum quadam coloris suavitate. Trans. p. 9.

82 *CD* 11, 22: Sicut in specie visibilis hominis, si unum radatur supercilium, quam propemodum nihil corpori, et quam multum detrahitur pulchritudini, quoniam non mole constat, sed parilitate ac dimensione membrorum! Trans. Dods, p. 163.

83 *CD* 15, 22: [Pulchritudo] corporis . . . bonum Dei quidem donum est.

84 *Conf*. 13, 28, 340: Et vidisti, Deus, omnia quae fecisti, et *ecce bona valde*, quia et nos videmus ea, et *ecce* omnia *bona valde*. See *Genesis* 1.31.

85 *Conf*. 13, 33, 344. See also *De Vera Religione* 18, 36, and *Genesi ad Litteram* I, 1, 15: 29.

86 *Vera Rel.* 20, 40: Omnis corporea creatura, si tantummodo possideatur ab anima quae diligit Deum, bonum est infimum, et in genere suo pulchrum; quoniam forma et specie continetur. Trans. Burleigh, p. 35.

87 *Vera Rel.* 40, 76: Ita ordinantur omnes officiis et finibus suis in pulchritudinem universitatis, ut quod horremus in parte, si cum toto consideremus, plurimum placeat. Trans. Burleigh, p. 73.

88 *Conf*. 13, 20, 28: Et pulchra sunt omnia faciente te, et ecce tu inenarrabiliter pulchrior, qui fecisti omnia. Trans. Chadwick, p. 289.

89 *Conf*. 3. 6, 10: Mi pater summe bone, pulchritudo pulchrorum omnium. O veritas, veritas. Trans. Pilkington, p. 33, modified.

90 *Liber de Diversis Quaestionibus* 83, 44: Quia omne pulchrum a summa pulchritudine est, quod Deus est.

91 On Pseudo-Dionysius, see pp. 182-3 in this volume.

92 Caroline Canfield Putnam, *Beauty in the Pseudo-Denis*, p. 88n89.

93 See *On Divine Names* (*DN*) 4, 7, 704B, 141–2; 4, 8, 704D, 147; 4, 9, 705A, 148; 4, 10, 705B–708A, 151–5); 4, 18, 713D, 185. References are to chapter, paragraph, page and section of *Patrologia Graeca* III, and the Greek text as printed in Thomas Aquinas, *In Librum Beati Dionysii De Divinis Nominibus* (*In DN*), ed. Ceslas Pera (Turin: Marietti, 1950).

94 Dionysius treats of beauty in Chapter 4 of *On Divine Names*. See *DN* 4, 7–8, 701C–704D, 132–48; *DN* 4, 10, 705B–708B, 151–9.

95 *Celestial Hierarchy* (*CH*) 2. 3, 141C: Ἄλλως τε καὶ τοῦτο ἐννοῆσαι χρὴ τὸ μηδὲ ἓν τῶν ὄντων εἶναι καθόλου τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ μετουσίας ἐστερημένον, εἴπερ ὡς ἡ τῶν λογίων ἀλήθειά φησι «Πάντα καλὰ λίαν». Trans. Luibheid, p. 150.

96 *DN* 4, 7, 701C, 135. Dionysius here relies on Plato's *Crat.* 416c.

97 *DN* 4, 7, 701C, 134: Τοῦτο τἀγαθὸν ὑμνεῖται πρὸς τῶν ἱερῶν θεολόγων καὶ ὡς καλὸν καὶ ὡς κάλλος καὶ ὡς «ἀγάπη» καὶ ὡς ἀγαπητὸν καὶ ὅσαι ἄλλαι εὐπρεπεῖς εἰσι τῆς καλλοποιοῦ καὶ κεχαριτωμένης ὡραιότητος θεωνυμίαι.

98 See Caroline Canfield Putnam, pp. 17–18.

99 *DN* 4, 7, 701C, 135: Τὸ δὲ ὑπερούσιον καλὸν κάλλος μὲν λέγεται διὰ τὴν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσι μεταδιδομένην οἰκείως ἑκάστῳ καλλονὴν καὶ ὡς τῆς πάντων εὐαρμοστίας καὶ ἀγλαΐας αἴτιον δίκην φωτὸς ἐναστράπτον ἅπασι τὰς καλλοποιοὺς τῆς πηγαίας ἀκτῖνος αὐτοῦ μεταδόσεις καὶ ὡς πάντα πρὸς ἑαυτὸ καλοῦν. Trans. Rolt, p. 95, modified.

100 *DN* 4, 7, 704A, 138: ὡς παντὸς καλοῦ τὴν πηγαίαν καλλονὴν ὑπεροχικῶς ἐν ἑαυτῷ προέχον. Trans. Rolt, p. 96, modified.

101 *DN* 4, 7, 704A, 138: Τῇ γὰρ ἁπλῇ καὶ ὑπερφυεῖ τῶν ὅλων καλῶν φύσει πᾶσα καλλονὴ καὶ πᾶν καλὸν ἑνοειδῶς κατ' αἰτίαν προϋφέστηκεν.

102 *DN* 4, 7, 704A, 139: Ἐκ τοῦ καλοῦ τούτου πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσι τὸ εἶναι κατὰ τὸν οἰκεῖον λόγον ἕκαστα καλά, καὶ διὰ τὸ καλὸν αἱ πάντων ἐφαρμογαὶ καὶ φιλίαι καὶ κοινωνίαι, καὶ τῷ καλῷ τὰ πάντα ἥνωται. My trans. after Luibheid.

103 *DN* 4, 7, 704AB: καὶ ἀρχὴ πάντων τὸ καλὸν ὡς ποιητικὸν αἴτιον καὶ κινοῦν τὰ ὅλα καὶ συνέχον τῷ τῆς οἰκείας καλλονῆς ἔρωτι καὶ πέρας πάντων καὶ ἀγαπητὸν ὡς τελικὸν αἴτιον, τοῦ καλοῦ γὰρ ἕνεκα πάντα γίγνεται, καὶ παραδειγματικόν, ὅτι κατ' αὐτὸ πάντα ἀφορίζεται. My trans.

104 *DN* 4, 3, 697A, 111.

105 *DN* 4, 7, 704AB, 141: Διὸ καὶ ταὐτόν ἐστι τἀγαθῷ τὸ καλόν, ὅτι τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ κατὰ πᾶσαν αἰτίαν πάντα ἐφίεται, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι τι τῶν ὄντων, ὃ μὴ μετέχει τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ. My trans.

106 *DN* 4, 7, 704B, 141: Τολμήσει δὲ καὶ τοῦτο εἰπεῖν ὁ λόγος, ὅτι καὶ τὸ μὴ ὂν μετέχει τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ, τότε γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν, ὅταν ἐν θεῷ κατὰ τὴν πάντων ἀφαίρεσιν ὑπερουσίως ὑμνεῖται. Trans. Luibheid.

107 *DN* 4, 4, 697BC, 113: Διὸ καὶ φωτωνυμικῶς ὑμνεῖται τἀγαθὸν ὡς ἐν εἰκόνι τὸ ἀρχέτυπον ἐκφαινόμενον. Trans. Luibheid.

108 *DN* 4, 7, 704BC, 143–5: Ἐκ τούτου πᾶσαι τῶν ὄντων αἱ οὐσιώδεις ὑπάρξεις, αἱ ἑνώσεις, αἱ διακρίσεις, αἱ ταὐτότητες, αἱ ἑτερότητες, αἱ ὁμοιότητες, αἱ ἀνομοιότητες, αἱ κοινωνίαι τῶν ἐναντίων, αἱ ἀσυμμιξίαι τῶν ἡνωμένων, αἱ πρόνοιαι τῶν ὑπερτέρων, αἱ ἀλληλουχίαι τῶν ὁμοστοίχων, αἱ ἐπιστροφαὶ τῶν καταδεεστέρων,

αἱ πάντων ἑαυτῶν φρουρητικαὶ καὶ ἀμετακίνητοι μοναὶ καὶ ἱδρύσεις, καὶ αὖθις αἱ πάντων ἐν πᾶσιν οἰκείως ἑκάστῳ κοινωνίαι καὶ ἐφαρμογαὶ καὶ ἀσύγχυτοι φιλίαι καὶ ἁρμονίαι τοῦ παντός. Trans. Luibheid.

109 *DN* 2, 7, 645AB, 56: Οἷον, εἰ τὴν ὑπερούσιον κρυφιότητα θεὸν ἢ ζωὴν ἢ οὐσίαν ἢ φῶς ἢ λόγον ὀνομάσαιμεν, οὐδὲν ἕτερον νοοῦμεν ἢ τὰς εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐξ αὐτῆς προαγομένας δυνάμεις ἐκθεωτικὰς ἢ οὐσιοποιοὺς ἢ ζωογόνους ἢ σοφοδώρους. Αὐτῇ δὲ κατὰ τὴν πασῶν τῶν νοερῶν ἐνεργειῶν ἀπόλυσιν ἐπιβάλλομεν οὐδεμίαν ὁρῶντες πασῶν τῶν νοερῶν ἐνεργειῶν ἀπόλυσιν ἐπιβάλλομεν οὐδεμίαν ὁρῶντες θέωσιν ἢ ζωὴν ἢ οὐσίαν, ἥτις ἀκριβῶς ἐμφερής ἐστι τῇ πάντων ἐξῃρημένῃ κατὰ πᾶσαν ὑπεροχὴν αἰτίᾳ.

110 *CH* 1. 3, 121C–124A: Διὸ καὶ τὴν ὁσιωτάτην ἡμῶν ἱεραρχίαν ἡ τελετάρχις ἱεροθεσία τῆς τῶν οὐρανίων ἱεραρχιῶν ὑπερκοσμίου μιμήσεως ἀξιώσασα καὶ τὰς εἰρημένας ἀΰλους ἱεραρχίας ὑλαίοις σχήμασι καὶ μορφωτικαῖς συνθέσεσι διαποικίλασα παραδέδωκεν, ὅπως ἀναλόγως ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν ἱερωτάτων πλάσεων ἐπὶ τὰς ἁπλᾶς καὶ ἀτυπώτους ἀναχθῶμεν ἀναγωγὰς καὶ ἀφομοιώσεις, ἐπεὶ μηδὲ δυνατόν ἐστι τῷ καθ' ἡμᾶς νοῖ πρὸς τὴν ἄϋλον ἐκείνην ἀναταθῆναι τῶν οὐρανίων ἱεραρχιῶν μίμησίν τε καὶ θεωρίαν, εἰ μὴ τῇ κατ' αὐτὸν ὑλαίᾳ χειραγωγίᾳ χρήσαιτο τὰ μὲν φαινόμενα κάλλη τῆς ἀφανοῦς εὐπρεπείας ἀπεικονίσματα λογιζόμενος καὶ τὰς αἰσθητὰς εὐωδίας ἐκτυπώματα τῆς νοητῆς διαδόσεως καὶ τῆς ἀΰλου φωτοδοσίας εἰκόνα τὰ ὑλικὰ φῶτα καὶ τῆς κατὰ νοῦν θεωρητικῆς ἀποπληρώσεως τὰς διεξοδικὰς ἱερὰς μαθητείας καὶ τῆς ἐναρμονίου πρὸς τὰ θεῖα καὶ τεταγμένης ἕξεως τὰς τῶν ἐνθάδε διακοσμήσεων τάξεις καὶ τῆς Ἰησοῦ μετουσίας τὴν τῆς θειοτάτης εὐχαριστίας μετάληψιν, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα ταῖς οὐρανίαις μὲν οὐσίαις ὑπερκοσμίως, ἡμῖν δὲ συμβολικῶς παραδέδοται. Trans. Luibheid.

111 Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *History of Aesthetics*, vol. 2, pp. 27–8.

112 *CH* 2, 1, 137AB: ὅπως μὴ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὡσαύτως τοῖς πολλοῖς ἀνιέρως οἰώμεθα τοὺς οὐρανίους καὶ θεοειδεῖς νόας πολύποδας εἶναί τινας καὶ πολυπροσώπους καὶ πρὸς βοῶν κτηνωδίαν ἢ πρὸς λεόντων θηριομορφίαν τετυπωμένους καὶ πρὸς ἀετῶν ἀγκυλόχειλον εἶδος ἢ πρὸς πτηνῶν τριχώδη πτεροφυίαν διαπεπλασμένους καὶ τροχούς τινας πυρώδεις ὑπὲρ τὸν οὐρανὸν φανταζώμεθα καὶ θρόνους ὑλαίους τῇ θεαρχίᾳ πρὸς ἀνάκλισιν ἐπιτηδείους καὶ ἵππους τινὰς πολυχρωμάτους καὶ δορυφόρους ἀρχιστρατήγους καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα πρὸς τῶν λογίων ἡμῖν ἱεροπλάστως ἐν ποικιλίᾳ τῶν ἐκφαντορικῶν συμβόλων παραδέδοται. Καὶ γὰρ ἀτεχνῶς ἡ θεολογία ταῖς

ποιητικαῖς ἱεροπλαστίαις ἐπὶ τῶν ἀσχηματίστων νοῶν ἐχρήσατο τὸν καθ' ἡμᾶς ὡς εἴρηται νοῦν ἀνασκεψαμένη καὶ τῆς οἰκείας αὐτῷ καὶ συμφυοῦς ἀναγωγῆς προνοήσασα καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀναπλάσασα τὰς ἀναγωγικὰς ἱερογραφίας. Trans. Luibheid. See also the continuation of this important passage, 137B–D.

113 *CH* 2, 4, 144BC: Ἔστι τοιγαροῦν οὐκ ἀπᾳδούσας ἀναπλάσαι τοῖς οὐρανίοις μορφὰς κἀκ τῶν ἀτιμωτάτων τῆς ὕλης μερῶν, ἐπεὶ καὶ αὐτὴ πρὸς τοῦ ὄντως καλοῦ τὴν ὕπαρξιν ἐσχηκυῖα κατὰ πᾶσαν αὐτῆς τὴν ὑλαίαν διακόσμησιν, ἀπηχήματά τινα τῆς νοερᾶς εὐπρεπείας ἔχει καὶ δυνατόν ἐστι δι' αὐτῶν ἀνάγεσθαι πρὸς τὰς ἀΰλους ἀρχετυπίας, ἀνομοίως ὡς εἴρηται τῶν ὁμοιοτήτων ἐκλαμβανομένων καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν οὐ ταὐτῶς, ἐναρμονίως δὲ καὶ οἰκείως ἐπὶ τῶν νοερῶν τε καὶ αἰσθητῶν ἰδιοτήτων ὁριζομένων. Trans. Luibheid.

114 *DN* 4, 7, 701D–704A, 136–8: καλὸν δὲ ὡς πάγκαλον ἅμα καὶ ὑπέρκαλον καὶ ἀεὶ ὂν κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως, δὲ ὡς πάγκαλον ἅμα καὶ ὑπέρκαλον καὶ ἀεὶ ὂν κατὰ τὰ αὐτὰ καὶ ὡσαύτως καλὸν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον, οὐδὲ τῇ μὲν καλόν, τῇ δὲ αἰσχρὸν οὐδὲ τοτὲ μέν, τοτὲ δὲ οὔ, οὐδὲ πρὸς μὲν τὸ καλόν, πρὸς δὲ τὸ αἰσχρὸν οὔτε ἔνθα μέν, ἔνθα δὲ οὗ ὡς τισὶ μὲν ὂν καλόν, τισὶ δὲ οὐ καλόν, ἀλλ' ὡς αὐτὸ καθ' ἑαυτὸ μεθ' ἑαυτοῦ μονοειδὲς ἀεὶ ὂν καλὸν καὶ ὡς παντὸς καλοῦ τὴν πηγαίαν καλλονὴν ὑπεροχικῶς ἐν ἑαυτῷ προέχον. Trans. Luibheid.

115 *Symp.* 210e–211b, trans. Nehamas and Woodruff, p. 493, modified.

116 *DN* 4, 7, 701C, 135. See note 96.

117 Albertus Magnus, Super Dionysium De Divinis Nominibus, Cap. 4, p. 182, 38–47: Dicendum, quod pulchrum in ratione sua tria claudit, scilicet splendorem formae substantialis vel accidentalis super partes materiae proportionatas et terminatas sicut corpus dicitur pulchrum ex resplendentia coloris supra membra proportionata, et hoc est quasi differentia specifica complens rationem pulchri; secundum est, quod trahit ad se desiderium, et hoc habet, inquantum est bonum et finis; tertium est, quod congregat omnia, et hoc habet ex parte formae, cuius resplendentia facit pulchrum.

118 *ST* II-II, 145, 2: Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut accipi potest ex verbis Dionysii (*DN* 4, lect. 5) ad rationem pulchri sive decori concurrit et claritas et debita proportio. Dicit enim quod Deus dicitur pulcher, sicut universorum consonantiae, et claritatis causa. Unde pulchritudo corporis in hoc consistit quod homo habeat membra corporis bene proportionata cum quadam debiti coloris claritate. Et similiter pulchritudo spiritualis in hoc consistit quod conversatio hominis

sive actio eius sit bene proportionata secundum spiritualem rationis claritatem.

119 *ST* I, 5, 4 ad 1. For an alternative formulation see *ST* I-II, 27, 1 ad 3: Pulchrum autem dicatur id cuius ipsa apprehensio placet. ('Beauty is said to be that, the very apprehension of which pleases').

120 See Francis J. Kovach, *Scholastic Challenges to Some Mediaeval and Modern Ideas*, p. 89: 'There are two reasons for calling beauty a unique transcendental. For beauty is the only relative transcendental of two termini (the intellect and the will) and the only transcendental that includes all the other transcendentals.' The most comprehensive discussion of the transcendentals in Aquinas remains Jan Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals. The Case of Thomas Aquinas*. For an insightful discussion see Alice M. Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals. Truth, Goodness, and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective*, pp. 147–68. By the same author, 'Beauty, Mind, and the Universe' in *Beauty, Art, and the Polis*, ed. Alice Ramos, pp. 70–84.

121 *ST* I, 5, 4 ad 1: Aquinas repeats verbatim his distinction between *pulchrum* and *bonum* in his commentary on *The Divine Names*. See *In DN* IV, v, 356: Quamvis autem pulchrum et bonum sint idem subiecto, quia tam claritas quam consonantia sub ratione boni continentur, tamen ratione differunt: nam pulchrum addit supra bonum, ordinem ad vim cognoscitivam illud esse huiusmodi.

122 Etienne Gilson, *The Elements of Christian Philosophy*, p. 175.

123 *Formosa* ('finely formed', 'shapely'), is synonymous with *pulcher*; Cicero coined the word *formositas* for beauty. Formosa is the former name of the island of Taiwan, so called by Portuguese sailors who, when they sighted the island in 1542, referred to it as *Ilha Formosa*, 'beautiful island'. The modern Greek word for beautiful, όμορφος, is related to μορφή (shape/form). See Γεώργιος Δ. Μπαμπινιώτης, *Λεχικό της Νέας Ελληνικής Γλώσσας*, entry for όμορφος, p. 1269: αυτός που είναι ελκυστικός λόγω τής ωραιότητας τής μορφής του. Contrarily, the modern word for 'ugly', άσχημος, retains the meaning of ancient Greek ἀσχήμων, 'misshapen' or 'unformed'.

124 *ST* I-II, 27, 1 ad 3: Ad tertium dicendum quod pulchrum est idem bono, sola ratione differens. Cum enim bonum sit quod omnia appetunt, de ratione boni est quod in eo quietetur appetitus, sed ad rationem pulchri pertinet quod in eius aspectu seu cognitione quietetur appetitus. Unde et illi sensus praecipue respiciunt pulchrum, qui maxime cognoscitivi sunt, scilicet visus et auditus rationi deservientes, dicimus enim pulchra visibilia et pulchros sonos. In sensibilibus autem aliorum sensuum,

non utimur nomine pulchritudinis, non enim dicimus pulchros sapores aut odores. Et sic patet quod pulchrum addit supra bonum, quendam ordinem ad vim cognoscitivam, ita quod bonum dicatur id quod simpliciter complacet appetitui; pulchrum autem dicatur id cuius ipsa apprehensio placet.

125 See *ST* II-II, 145, 2 ad 1: Ad primum ergo dicendum quod obiectum movens appetitum est bonum apprehensum. Quod autem in ipsa apprehensione apparet decorum, accipitur ut conveniens et bonum, et ideo dicit Dionysius, IV cap. de Div. Nom., quod *omnibus est pulchrum et bonum amabile*. Unde et ipsum honestum, secundum quod habet spiritualem decorem, appetibile redditur.

126 *ST* I, 67, 1: Respondeo dicendum quod de aliquo nomine dupliciter convenit loqui, uno modo, secundum primam eius impositionem; alio modo, secundum usum nominis. Sicut patet in nomine visionis, quod primo impositum est ad significandum actum sensus visus; sed propter dignitatem et certitudinem huius sensus, extensum est hoc nomen, secundum usum loquentium, ad omnem cognitionem aliorum sensuum.

127 *ST* I-II, 27 a. 1 ad 3 (cited note 118 above). See Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism and The Frontiers of Poetry*, p. 23. See Plato, *Hipp. Maj.* 297e–98a.

128 *De An.* art. 13: Unde visus est altior inter omnes sensus et universalior. See also *In Psalm.* 44, 2; *In 2 de An.* 14, 417–8; *In 3 de An.* 6, 668: Dicit ergo quod visus est praecipuus inter alios sensus, eo quod est spiritualior; *CG* 3, 53, 2302; *ST* I, 91, 3 ad 3. (Detailed references are to Marietti editions.) Augustine conveys the thoughts of both Plato and Aristotle by noting that vision and hearing are the most noble senses, resembling reason to some extent in grasping their objects as wholes. See *De ord.* 2, 11, 32–3; *De lib. arb.* 2, 7, 16–19; 14, 38.

129 *Met.* 1, 1, 980a24–27.

130 *In 1 Meta.* 1, 5: Ille sensus maxime ab omnibus diligitur, qui magis cognoscitivus est, qui est visus, quem diligimus non solum ad agendum aliquid, sed etiam si nihil agere deberemus. Cuius causa est, quia iste sensus, scilicet visus, inter omnes magis facit nos cognoscere, et plures differentias rerum nobis demonstrat. See also nn 6–9.

131 *In 2 de An.* 14, 415–18.

132 *ST* I-II, 26, 1.

133 *ST* I-II, 32, 1; also I, 4, 1; I-II, 3, 2.

134 *ST* I, 5, 4 ad 1: Unde pulchrum in debita proportione consistit, quia sensus delectatur in rebus debite proportionatis, sicut in sibi similibus; nam et sensus ratio quaedam est, et omnis virtus cognoscitiva.

135 See *ST* I-II, 31, 4 ad 3: Ad tertium dicendum quod in nobis non solum est delectatio in qua communicamus cum brutis, sed etiam in qua communicamus cum Angelis. Unde ibidem Dionysius dicit quod sancti homines multoties fiunt in participatione delectationum angelicarum. Et ita in nobis est delectatio non solum in appetitu sensitivo, in quo communicamus cum brutis; sed etiam in appetitu intellectivo, in quo communicamus cum Angelis.

136 *ST* II-II 58, 4c: Apprehensio sensitiva non se extendit ad hoc quod considerare possit proportionem unius ad alterum, sed hoc est proprium rationis.

137 *ST* I 91, 3 ad 3: sensus sunt dati homini non solum ad vitae necessaria procuranda, sicut aliis animalibus; sed etiam ad cognoscendum. Unde, cum cetera animalia non delectentur in sensibilibus nisi per ordinem ad cibos et venerea, solus homo delectatur in ipsa pulchritudine sensibilium secundum seipsam. Trans. Dominican Fathers, *The Summa Theologica* I, p. 487.

138 *ST* II-II 180, 2 ad 3: Ad tertium dicendum quod pulchritudo, sicut supra dictum est, consistit in quadam claritate et debita proportione. Utrumque autem horum radicaliter in ratione invenitur, ad quam pertinet et lumen manifestans et proportionem debitam in aliis ordinare. Et ideo in vita contemplativa, quae consistit in actu rationis, per se et essentialiter invenitur pulchritudo. Trans. Dominican Fathers, *The Summa Theologica* II, p. 609.

139 Kovach, *Philosophy of Beauty*, p. 162.

140 Kovach, p. 163. See *In DN* IV, xxi, 554: Requiritur enim ad pulchritudinem et claritatem forma et commensuratio quae ad ordinem pertinet.

141 Francis J. Kovach, *Die Ästhetik des Thomas von Aquin*, p. 105n8.

142 *ST* I, 39, 8, obj. 1: Dicit enim Hilarius, Aeternitas est in Patre, species in imagine, usus in munere.

143 *ST* I, 39, 8: Species autem, sive pulchritudo, habet similitudinem cum propriis filii. Nam ad pulchritudinem tria requiruntur. Primo quidem, integritas sive perfectio, quae enim diminuta sunt, hoc ipso turpia sunt. Et debita proportio sive consonantia. Et iterum claritas, unde quae habent colorem nitidum, pulchra esse dicuntur. Quantum igitur ad primum, similitudinem habet cum proprio filii, inquantum est filius habens in se vere et perfecte naturam patris. . . Quantum vero ad secundum, convenit cum proprio filii, inquantum est imago expressa patris. Unde videmus quod aliqua imago dicitur esse pulchra, si perfecte repraesentat rem, quamvis turpem. Et hoc tetigit Augustinus

cum dicit, ubi est tanta convenientia, et prima aequalitas, et cetera. Quantum vero ad tertium, convenit cum proprio filii, inquantum est verbum, quod quidem lux est, et splendor intellectus, ut Damascenus dicit. Et hoc tangit Augustinus cum dicit, tanquam verbum perfectum cui non desit aliquid, et ars quaedam omnipotentis Dei, et cetera.

144 *In I Sent.* 31, 2, 1: Ad rationem autem pulchritudinis duo concurrunt, secundum Dionysium, scilicet consonantia et claritas. Dicit enim, quod Deus est causa omnis pulchritudinis inquantum est causa consonantiae et claritatis, sicut dicimus homines pulchros qui habent membra proportionata et splendentem colorem. His duobus addit tertium philosophus ubi dicit, quod pulchritudo non est nisi in magno corpore; unde parvi homines possunt dici commensurati et formosi, sed non pulchri.

145 *Op. Theol.* II, p. 288 (Oratio. Qua ad caelum adspirat): Da etiam corpori meo, largissime remunator, claritatis pulchritudinem, agilitatis promptitudinem, subtilitatis aptitudinem, impassibilitatis fortitudinem. See *The Aquinas Prayer Book. The Prayers and Hymns of St. Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 52–3. On the glorified body see *ST* III, 45, 2; *ST* Suppl. 85, 2.

146 *In DN* IV, ix, 414: Sensibilia sunt praeambula ad intelligibilia.

147 For references see Francis J. Kovach, *Scholastic Challenges*, p. 203n11: Aristotle: *Post. An.* 2, 19, 100a3–14; *Met.* 1, 1, 980a28–981a12; Thomas: *In 2 Post. An.*, lect. 20, n592; *In 1 Met.* lect. 1, nn 10–17; *In 1 Post. An.* lect. 42, n 378, and lect. 30, n 251.

148 *In DN* 4, 5, 339: Alia enim est pulchritudo spiritus et alia corporis, atque alia huius et illius corporis.

149 *In Meteor.* 1, 12 (Marietti, pp. 433–5, nn 77–85).

150 *In III Sent.* 2, 2, 1: Medium congruentiae est quod facit ad decentem conjunctionem extremorum, quae tamen nihilominus sine illo esse posset, sicut pulchritudo facit ad decentem conjunctionem matrimonii, qua tamen amissa, matrimonium non solvitur. See also *ST* III, 6, 1 ad 3: Ad tertium dicendum quod nihil prohibet aliquid esse causam alicuius quantum ad aptitudinem et congruitatem, quo tamen remoto, id non tollitur, quia, etsi fieri alicuius dependeat ex aliquo, postquam tamen est in facto esse, ab eo non dependet. Sicut, si inter aliquos amicitia causaretur aliquo mediante, eo recedente adhuc amicitia remanet, et si aliqua in matrimonium ducitur propter pulchritudinem, quae facit congruitatem in muliere ad copulam coniugalem, tamen, cessante pulchritudine, adhuc durat copula coniugalis. Et similiter, separata anima, remanet unio verbi Dei ad carnem. (Nothing prevents one

thing being the cause of the aptitude and congruity of another, and yet if it be taken away the other remains; because although a thing's becoming may depend on another, yet when it is in being it no longer depends on it, just as a friendship brought about by some other may endure when the latter has gone; or as a woman is taken in marriage on account of her beauty, which makes a woman's fittingness for the marriage tie, yet when her beauty passes away, the marriage tie still remains. So likewise, when the soul was separated, the union of the Word with flesh still endured.)

151 *De Ver.* 26, 6: Sicut si dicamus, mulierem ratione pulchritudinis mereri coniugium regis.

152 *In Psalm.* 18, 3: Domus alicujus domini pulchrius stat in civitate quam in rure.

153 *In EN* 9, 5, 1824: Nullus enim incipit amare aliquam mulierem nisi prius fuerit delectatus in eius pulcritudine, nec tamen statim tunc cum gaudet in aspectu formae mulieris amat eam.

154 *In DN* IV, v, 336: Dicit ergo primo quod in causa prima, scilicet Deo non sunt dividenda pulchrum et pulchritudo, quasi aliud sit in eo pulchrum et pulchritudo; et hoc ideo quia causa prima propter sui simplicitatem et perfectionem sola comprehendit tota, idest omnia in uno, unde etsi in creaturis differant pulchrum et pulchritudo, Deus tamen utrumque comprehendit in se, secundum unum et idem.

155 *In DN* IV, v, 337: In existentibus, pulchrum et pulchritudo distinguuntur secundum participans et participatum ita quod pulchrum dicitur hoc quod participat pulchritudinem; pulchritudo autem participatio primae causae quae omnia pulchra facit: pulchritudo enim creaturae nihil est aliud quam similitudo divinae pulchritudinis in rebus participata.

156 *DN* 4, 7, 701C, 135. See note 96.

157 *In DN* IV, v, 339: Et in quo consistat pulchritudinis ratio, ostendit subdens quod sic Deus tradit pulchritudinem, inquantum est *causa consonantiae et claritatis* in omnibus: sic enim hominem pulchrum dicimus, propter decentem proportionem in quantitate et situ et propter hoc quod habet clarum et nitidum colorem.

158 *In DN* IV, v, 339: Unde proportionaliter est in caeteris accipiendum, quod unumquodque dicitur pulchrum, secundum quod habet claritatem sui generis vel spiritualem vel corporalem et secundum quod est in debita proportione constitutum.

159 *In DN* IV, v, 340: Quomodo autem Deus sit causa claritatis, ostendit subdens, quod Deus immittit omnibus creaturis, cum quodam fulgore, traditionem sui radii luminosi, qui est fons omnis luminis; quae

quidem traditiones fulgidae divini radii, secundum participationem similitudinis sunt intelligendae et istae traditiones sunt pulchrificae, idest facientes pulchritudinem in rebus.

160 *In DN* IV, v, 340: Rursus exponit aliud membrum, scilicet quod Deus sit causa consonantiae in rebus; est autem duplex consonantia in rebus: prima quidem, secundum ordinem creaturarum ad Deum et hanc tangit cum dicit quod Deus est causa consonantiae, *sicut vocans omnia ad seipsum*, inquantum convertit omnia ad seipsum sicut ad finem, ut supra dictum est et propter hoc pulchritudo in Graeco callos dicitur quod est a vocando sumptum; secunda autem consonantia est in rebus, secundum ordinationem earum ad invicem; et hoc tangit cum subdit, quod congregat omnia in omnibus, ad idem.

161 *In DN* IV, v, 340: Et potest hoc intelligi, secundum sententiam Platonicorum, quod superiora sunt in inferioribus, secundum participationem; inferiora vero sunt in superioribus, per excellentiam quamdam et sic omnia sunt in omnibus; et ex hoc quod omnia in omnibus inveniuntur ordine quodam, sequitur quod omnia ad idem ultimum ordinentur.

162 *In DN* IV, v, 349: Similiter etiam dictum est quod de ratione pulchritudinis est consonantia, unde omnia, quae, qualitercumque ad consonantiam pertinent, ex divina pulchritudine procedunt; et hoc est quod subdit, quod propter pulchrum divinum sunt omnium rationalium creaturarum concordiae, quantum ad intellectum; concordant enim qui in eamdem sententiam conveniunt; et amicitiae, quantum ad affectum; et communiones, quantum ad actum vel ad quodcumque extrinsecum; et universaliter omnes creaturae, quantamcumque unionem habent, habent ex virtute pulchri..

163 *DN* 4, 6, 704B, 143.

164 *DN* 4, 6, 704B, 144: αἱ κοινωνίαι τῶν ἐναντίων, αἱ ἀσυμμιξίαι τῶν ἡνωμένων.

165 *In DN* IV, vi, 361: Observatur autem hoc in rebus, quod et dissimilia in aliquo conveniunt: sicut contraria, in genere et materia; et quae uniuntur secundum aliquid, manent distincta: sicut partes in toto; et ideo subdit: communiones contrariorum, quantum ad primum; et incommixtiones unitorum, quantum ad secundum. Haec autem omnia ad causalitatem pulchri reducuntur, quia pertinent ad consonantiam, quae est de ratione pulchritudinis.

166 *In DN* IV, vi, 364: Omnes partes universi conveniunt in ratione existendi.

167 *CG* 3, 97, 2724. See Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, pp. 261–8.

168 *CG* 2, 68, 1453.

169 *DN* 7, 3, 324. *De Spirit. Creat.* 2: Attingitur autem a materia corporali ea ratione quod semper supremum infimi ordinis attingit infimum supremi, ut patet per Dionysium VII cap. de Divin. Nomin.; *CG* 2, 91, 1775: Natura superior in suo infimo contingit naturam inferiorem in eius supremo. For other multiple references see O'Rourke, p. 264.

170 *In DN* IV, vi, 364: Ex omnibus partibus universi constituitur una rerum universitas; et hoc est quod subdit: in omni, idest in universo, concretiones. Trans. James F Anderson, *An Introduction to the Metaphysics of St Thomas Aquinas*, p. 97.

171 *CG* 3, 71: Tolleretur etiam summus decor a rebus, si ab eis ordo distinctorum et disparium tolleretur. Et quod est amplius, tolleretur multitudo a rebus, inaequalitate bonitatis sublata: cum per differentias quibus res ad invicem differunt, unum altero melius existat; sicut animatum inanimato, et rationale irrationali. Et sic, si aequalitas omnimoda esset in rebus, non esset nisi unum bonum creatum: quod manifeste perfectioni derogat creaturae. Gradus autem bonitatis superior est ut aliquid sit bonum quod non possit a bonitate deficere: inferior autem eo est quod potest a bonitate deficere. Utrumque igitur gradum bonitatis perfectio universi requirit.

172 *In DN* VII, iv, 733: Ipsa divina sapientia est omnium causa effectiva, inquantum res producit in esse et non solum rebus dat esse, sed etiam esse cum ordine in rebus, inquantum res invicem se coadunant in ordinem ad ultimum finem; et ulterius, est causa indissolubilitatis huius concordiae et huius ordinis, quae semper manent, qualitercumque rebus immutatis. Modum autem huius ordinis subiungit, quia semper fines primorum, idest infima supremorum, coniungit principiis secundorum, idest supremis inferiorum, ad modum quo supremum corporalis creaturae scilicet corpus humanum, infimo intellectualis naturae, scilicet animae rationali unit; et simile est videre in aliis; et sic operatur pulchritudinem universi per unam omnium conspirationem, idest concordiam et harmoniam, idest debitum ordinem et proportionem.

173 *CG* 2, 45.

174 *In DN* IV, v, 349: Claritas enim est de consideratione pulchritudinis, ut dictum est; omnis autem forma, per quam res habet esse, est participatio quaedam divinae claritatis; et hoc est quod subdit, quod singula sunt pulchra secundum propriam rationem, idest secundum propriam formam; unde patet quod ex divina pulchritudine esse omnium derivatur.

175 *In DN* IV, iv, 337: Pulchritudo enim creaturae nihil est aliud quam similitudo divinae pulchritudinis in rebus participata.
176 *In DN* V, ii, 660: Ipsum esse creatum est quaedam participatio Dei et similitudo Ipsius.
177 *In DN* IV, v, 349. See note 168.
178 *In DN* IV, v, 340. See note 153.
179 *In DN* IV, v, 355: Nihil est quod non participet pulchro et bono, cum unumquodque sit pulchrum et bonum secundum propriam formam.
180 *In DN* IV, vi, 360: Forma autem est quaedam irradiatio proveniens ex prima claritate; claritas autem est de ratione pulchritudinis.
181 Gilson, *Elements of Christian Philosophy*, p. 177.
182 *CG* 3, 97: Ex diversitate autem formarum sumitur ratio ordinis rerum. Cum enim forma sit secundum quam res habet esse; res autem quaelibet secundum quod habet esse, accedat ad similitudinem Dei, qui est ipsum suum esse simplex: necesse est quod forma nihil sit aliud quam divina similitudo participata in rebus; unde convenienter Aristoteles, in I Physic., de forma loquens, dicit quod est divinum quoddam et appetibile.
183 *In DC* 6, 168. According to Aristotle the certainty of knowledge is grounded in actuality. See *Met.* 9, 10, 1051b25–32.
184 *ST* I, 77, 6: Forma substantialis facit esse simpliciter, et eius subiectum est ens in potentia tantum.
185 See the celebrated passage of *De Pot.* 7, 2 ad 9: Hoc quod dico esse est actualitas omnium actuum, et propter hoc est perfectio omnium perfectionum.
186 *In IV Sent.* 26, 2, 4: Integritas attenditur secundum perfectionem primam, quae consistit in ipso esse rei.
187 *In DN* IV, v, 352: Dicit ergo primo quod pulchrum quidem est principium omnium sicut causa effectiva dans esse; et sicut causa movens et sicut causa continens, idest conservans omnia; haec enim tria videntur ad rationem causae efficientis pertinere: ut det esse, moveat et conservet. Sed causa agens, quaedam agit ex desiderio finis, quod est agentis imperfecti, nondum habentis quod desiderat; sed agentis perfecti est ut agat per amorem eius quod habet et propter hoc subdit quod pulchrum, quod est Deus, est causa effectiva et motiva et continens, amore propriae pulchritudinis. Quia enim propriam pulchritudinem habet, vult eam multiplicare, sicut possibile est, scilicet per communicationem suae similitudinis.
188 *In DN* IV, v, 353: Omnia enim facta sunt ut divinam pulchritudinem qualitercumque imitentur.

189 *In DN* IV, v, 354: Tertio, est causa exemplaris, quia omnia distinguuntur secundum pulchrum divinum et huius signum est quod nullus curat effigiare vel representare, nisi ad pulchrum.
190 Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism and The Frontiers of Poetry*, p. 73. See *Art et Scolastique*, p. 125: 'Il ne peut pas y avoir d'oeuvre d'art purement "gratuite", — l'univers excepté.'
191 *Lysis* 216c.
192 The Irish novelist Margaret Wolfe Hungerford, née Hamilton (1855–1897), is credited with the phrase 'Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.' See William Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act 2, Scene 1: 'Beauty is bought by judgment of the eye, / Not uttered by base sale of chapmen's tongues.'
193 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 104. *Kritik der Urteilskraft* in *Kants Werke* V, p. 219: 'Schön ist das, was ohne Begriff allgemein gefällt.'
194 *In Psalm.* 25, 5: Bonum et pulchrum est omnibus diligibile. Unde omnis homo amat pulchrum carnales amant pulchrum carnale, spirituales amant pulchrum spirituale.
195 *ST* II-II, q. 35, a. 4 ad 2.
196 *ST* II-II 152, 2 ad 2: Ad secundum dicendum quod ille qui abstinet ab omnibus delectationibus praeter rationem rectam, quasi delectationes secundum se abhorrens, est insensibilis, sicut agricola.
197 Etienne Gilson, *The Arts of the Beautiful*, p. 182.
198 Charles Baudelaire, *Selected Writings on Art and Artists*, p. 204.
199 Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, p. 402.
200 https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1970/solzhenitsyn/lecture/ (Accessed 1 June 2024).
201 Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Demons*, p. 486 (adapted).

Chapter Three

1 Horace, *Odes* I, 4, 13–14: Pallida mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas regumque turres.
2 Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, p. 11.
3 See Aristotle, *Met.* 1, 6, 987a32–987b1.
4 Francis M. Cornford, *The Republic of Plato*, p. xxvii.
5 Unless otherwise stated, translations are from G. M. A. Grube.
6 *Apol.* 40c.
7 *Phd.* 64c, trans. Tredennick, *The Last Days of Socrates*, p. 117.
8 Trans. Tredennick, p. 124, amended.

9 *De An.* 1, 2, 405b15: γινώσκεσθαι τὸ ὅμοιον τῷ ὁμοίῳ. See also 3, 3, 427b5. Aristotle (404b11–18) found the principle in primitive form in Empedocles, who maintained that we know the elements because we are ourselves composed of them: 'By Earth we see Earth, by Water Water, By Air the divine Air, by Fire destroying Fire, Love by Love, and Strife by bitter Strife.' (Frg 109) A more refined formulation was given by Plotinus: 'One must come to the sight with a seeing power made akin and like (συγγενὲς καὶ ὅμοιον) to what is seen. No eye ever saw the sun without becoming sun-like, nor can a soul see beauty without becoming beautiful. You must become first all godlike and all beautiful if you intend to see God and beauty.' (I 6, 29–34, trans. Armstrong, p. 261) Johann Wolfgang von Goethe conveyed the natural assimilation as follows: 'Wär nicht das Auge sonnenhaft, die Sonne könnt es nie erblicken.' *Gedichte und Epen* I, p. 367.

10 *Rep.* 611e: εἰς τὴν φιλοσοφίαν αὐτῆς, καὶ ἐννοεῖν ὧν ἅπτεται καὶ οἵων ἐφίεται ὁμιλιῶν, ὡς συγγενὴς οὖσα τῷ τε θείῳ καὶ ἀθανάτῳ καὶ τῷ ἀεὶ ὄντι. See *Rep.* 490b, *Tim.* 90d, *Laws* 899d.

11 *ST* I 14, 1: Manifestum est quod natura rei non cognoscentis est magis coarctata et limitata, natura autem rerum cognoscentium habet maiorem amplitudinem et extensionem. Propter quod dicit philosophus, 3 *De Anima*, quod anima est quodammodo omnia. See *CG* 3, 112: Naturae autem intellectuales maiorem habent affinitatem ad totum quam aliae naturae: nam unaquaeque intellectualis substantia est quodammodo omnia, inquantum totius entis comprehensiva est suo intellectu. See Aristotle *De An.* 3, 8, 431b21: ἡ ψυχὴ τὰ ὄντα πώς ἐστι πάντα.

12 *Phd.* 78c, trans. Hackforth.

13 *Phd.* 106e–107a: παντὸς μᾶλλον ἄρα ψυχὴ ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀνώλεθρον, καὶ τῷ ὄντι ἔσονται ἡμῶν αἱ ψυχαὶ ἐν Ἅιδου.

14 J. B. Skemp, *The Theory of Motion in Plato's Later Dialogues*, p. 8. Dorothea Frede argues that the argument is 'formally correct'. See 'The Final Proof of the Immortality of the Soul in Plato's "Phaedo" 102a–107a', p. 39.

15 The argument has been compared to Anselm's ontological argument for the existence of God. See Denis O'Brien, 'The Last argument of Plato's *Phaedo*. I', p. 198. Also Joseph Moreau, 'L'"argument ontologique" dans le *Phédon*', pp. 320–43.

16 *Phdr.* 245c–d, trans. Nehamas and Woodruff, p. 524.

17 *De An.* 1, 2, 405b10–12.

18 *De An.* 2, 1, 412b6–8, trans. Hett, p. 68.

19 *De An.* 1, 1, 403a7–12, trans. J. A. Smith, p. 642.

20 *De An.* 1, 3, 408b18–19, my trans.
21 *De An.* I, 4, 408b25–7, my trans.
22 *De An.* 2, 4, 408b24, 408b27–8.
23 *De An.* 2, 2, 413b24–31, trans. Hett.
24 Enrico Berti, 'Aristote était-il un penseur dualiste?', p 97.
25 H. M. Robinson, 'Aristotelian Dualism', p. 123.
26 Christopher Shields, 'Some Recent Approaches to Aristotle's *De Anima*', p. 165.
27 *De An.* 2, 4, 429a18.
28 *De An.* 3, 4, 429a24–5.
29 *De An.* 3, 4, 429b23.
30 *De An.* 2, 5, 417b22–3.
31 *De An.* 3, 8, 431b21.
32 *De An.* 3, 4, 429a30–429b5; 3, 13, 435b7–16.
33 *De An.* 3, 4, 429b4–5, trans. Hett.
34 *De An.* 1, 3, 407a10–11, trans. Hett.
35 *In de An.* 3, 7, 699: Mirum est autem quomodo tam leviter erraverunt, ex hoc quod dicit quod intellectus est separatus, cum ex litera sua huius rei habeatur intellectus, dicit enim separatus intellectus, quia non habet organum, sicut sensus. Et hoc contingit propter hoc, quia anima humana propter suam nobilitatem supergreditur facultatem materiae corporalis, et non potest totaliter includi ab ea. Unde remanet ei aliqua actio, in qua materia corporalis non communicat. Et propter hoc potentia eius ad hanc actionem non habet organum corporale, et sic est intellectus separatus. Trans. Foster & Humphries, Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, p. 410.
36 *ST* I, 77, 2.
37 *In II Sent.* 19, 1, 1: Primo, quia haec operatio est omnium formarum corporalium sicut objectorum; unde oportet illud principium cujus est haec operatio, ab omni forma corporali absolutum esse. Secundo, quia intelligere est universalium; in organo autem corporali recipi non possunt nisi intentiones individuatae. Tertio, quia intellectus intelligit se; quod non contingit in aliqua virtute cujus operatio sit per organum corporale. . . Et haec probatio tangitur in libro de causis in illa propositione 15: omnis sciens qui scit essentiam suam, est rediens ad essentiam suam reditione completa. Trans. Gyula Klima, 'Aquinas on the Materiality of the Human Soul and the Immateriality of the Human Intellect', p. 173. On self-reflexivity see *In I Sent.* 1, 2, 1 ad 2: 'By the same operation I understand what is intelligible and understand that I understand.' (Eadem operatione intelligo intelligibile

et intelligo me intelligere). Also *CG* 2, 49: 'The action of no body is self-reflexive. . . But in acting the intellect reflects on itself, not only as to a part, but as to the whole of itself. . . Just as the intellect knows a thing, so does it know that it knows.' ('Nullius corporis actio reflectitur super agentem. . . Intellectus autem supra seipsum agendo reflectitur: intelligit enim seipsum non solum secundum partem, sed secundum totum. Non est igitur corpus. . . Intellectus enim, sicut intelligit rem, ita intelligit se intelligere.) Trans. Anderson, p. 148.

38 Proclus, *The Elements of Theology* XV, trans. Robert Pasnau, *On Human Nature*, p. 194.

39 The work attributed by Aquinas to Gregory of Nyssa (c.335–c.395) was written by Nemesius of Emesa (*fl.* c.390).

40 *In III Sent.* 5, 3, 2, my trans.

41 See *Alc.* 129e–130a.

42 See especially *CG* 2, 49–59.

43 See James A. Weisheipl OP, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino. His Life, Thought and Work*, p. 365. I refer to it in the singular since it is a *quaestio unica*, with twenty one articles. James H. Robb entitled his translation *Questions on the Soul*, which he has divided into twenty one questions.

44 *Q de An.* 1, *Sed contra*: Unumquodque sortitur speciem per propriam formam. Sed homo est homo in quantum est rationalis. Ergo anima rationalis est propria forma hominis. Est autem hoc aliquid et per se subsistens, cum per se operetur. Non enim est intelligere per organum corporeum, ut probatur in III de anima. Anima igitur humana est hoc aliquid et forma.

45 *Q de An.* 1. Et quia unumquodque agit secundum quod est actu, oportet quod anima intellectiva habeat esse per se absolutum non dependens a corpore.

46 *Q de An.* 1: Si igitur anima humana, in quantum unitur corpori ut forma, habet esse elevatum supra corpus non dependens ab eo, manifestum est quod ipsa est in confinio corporalium et separatarum substantiarum constituta.

47 *Q de An.* 1: Et in idem redit dictum Platonis ponentis animam immortalem et per se subsistentem, ex eo quod movet seipsam. Large enim accepit motum pro omni operatione, ut sic intelligatur quod intellectus movet seipsum, quia a seipso operatur.

48 *Q de An.* 1: Ponebat enim totam naturam speciei in anima esse, dicens hominem non esse aliquid compositum ex anima et corpore, sed animam corpori advenientem; ut sit comparatio animae ad corpus sicut nautae ad navem, vel sicuti induti ad vestem. Trans. p. 47.

49 *Q de An.* 1: Et praeterea, si anima esset in corpore sicut nauta in navi, sequeretur quod unio animae et corporis esset accidentalis. Mors igitur, quae inducit eorum separationem, non esset corruptio substantialis; quod patet esse falsum.

50 For a detailed discussion see Anton Charles Pegis, *St. Thomas and the Problem of the Soul in the Thirteenth Century*; Pegis, *At the Origins of the Thomistic Notion of Man*. Also Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, pp. 168–88.

51 *Q de An.* 14: Si ergo sit aliqua forma quae sit habens esse, necesse est illam formam incorruptibilem esse. Non enim separatur esse ab aliquo habente esse, nisi per hoc quod separatur forma ab eo; unde si id quod habet esse, sit ipsa forma, impossibile est quod esse separetur ab eo. Manifestum est autem quod principium quo homo intelligit est forma habens esse in se, et non solum sicut quo aliquid est. Trans. pp. 176–7.

52 *Q de An.* 14: Sic igitur patet quod principium intellectivum quo homo intelligit, habet esse elevatum supra corpus, non dependens a corpore. Trans. p. 177.

53 *Q de An.* 14: Relinquitur ergo quod principium intellectivum quo homo intelligit, sit forma habens esse; unde necesse est quod sit incorruptibilis. Trans. p. 177.

54 Where Aristotle states 'immortal and everlasting' (*De An.* 3, 5, 430a23: ἀθάνατον καὶ ἀΐδιον), Aquinas wrote *divinum et perpetuum*.

55 On the similarity to Plato's argument see Lawrence Dewan: 'Anyone reading the later writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, for example the *Disputed Questions on the Soul*, can have no doubt as to the importance accorded, in the argument for the incorruptibility of the human soul, to the doctrine that existence is the inseparable associate of form... Let us begin by recalling the elements of the argument for incorruptibility as found in the mature writings. One premise is that the soul is form having its own existence independently of the corporeal composite: the rational soul is *subsisting* form. The other premise is that form, by its very nature, is inseparable from existence: existence accompanies form, just because of the sort of thing form is: the rational soul is subsisting *form*... In passing, we might note that these elements correspond fairly closely to the ultimate argument of Plato's *Phaedo* (which St. Thomas did not know directly): in the face of Simmias, who wonders whether the soul is not a harmony, it is argued that the soul is a subsisting thing; in the face of Cebes, wondering whether this subsisting thing might not eventually cease to exist even though it outlasts the body, it is argued that the soul has a nature of something indissociable from life or existence.'

According to Dewan, Aquinas' developed doctrine is expressed in *ST* I, 75, 6: 'For it is clear that what belongs to a thing by virtue of itself is inseparable from it; but existence belongs to a form, which is an act, by virtue of itself. Wherefore matter acquires actual existence as it acquires the form; while it is corrupted so far as the form is separated from it. But it is impossible for a form to be separated from itself; and therefore it is impossible for a subsistent form to cease to exist.' (Manifestum est enim quod id quod secundum se convenit alicui, est inseparabile ab ipso. Esse autem per se convenit formae, quae est actus. Unde materia secundum hoc acquirit esse in actu, quod acquirit formam, secundum hoc autem accidit in ea corruptio, quod separatur forma ab ea. Impossibile est autem quod forma separetur a seipsa. Unde impossibile est quod forma subsistens desinat esse.) See Lawrence Dewan, *Form and Being: Studies in Thomistic Metaphysics*, pp. 175–6. I cite the translation of the English Dominican Fathers in preference to that provided by Dewan.

56 Joseph Moreau's criticism of Plato points in the direction of Aquinas' approach to the soul's immortality from the primacy of existence as its first actuality. See 'L'"argument ontologique" dans le *Phédon*', p. 328: 'Cette démonstration s'appuie sur de purs concepts, sur des relations entre des essences; elle montre que l'attribut *mortel* est exclu par la définition du sujet *âme*; elle procède par une méthode logique, tirant de l'essence ses propriétés. Mais la conclusion qu'elle veut établir, le caractère impérissable de l'âme, ne se réduit pas à un attribut, à une propriété de l'essence; c'est une modalité de l'existence, la durée infinie de l'existence. Elle déborde donc la compétence de la méthode logique, du pur raisonnement, qui ne lie que des concepts.'

57 In *ST* I 75, 3 Aquinas considers whether the souls of brute animals subsist; he replies that they would if, as Plato taught, sensation did not have a bodily organ.

58 *De Pot.* 5, 3. See *CG* 2, 55; *Comp. Theol.* I, 74; *ST* I, 75, 6; *In DC* 26.

59 *CG* 2, 55, 1301.

60 *CG* 2, 55, 1298.

61 See *CG* 2, 68, 1450.

62 Aquinas maintains, however, that in the present life any intellectual act, including reflection upon knowledge already attained, involves the exercise of imagination, which provides a phantasm (See *ST* I, 84, 7; also 75, 2 ad 3).

63 An exception must be made for the intellectual soul, as is clear from Aristotle's remark in *Gen. An.*, that the soul enters, as it were, 'through the

door' (θύραθεν): 'It remains, then, that intellect alone enters from outside, and that it alone is divine, because physical activity has nothing whatever to do with the activity of intellect.' (*Gen. An.* 2, 3, 736b28–9: λείπεται δὴ τὸν νοῦν μόνον θύραθεν ἐπεισιέναι καὶ θεῖον εἶναι μόνον· οὐθὲν γὰρ αὐτοῦ τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ κοινωνεῖ σωματικὴ ἐνέργεια). Trans. Peck, modified. See also *Met.* 12, 3, 1070a21–7: 'The moving causes exist as things preceding the effects, but causes in the sense of definitions are simultaneous with their effects. For when a man is healthy, then health also exists; and the shape of a bronze sphere exists at the same time as the bronze sphere. But we must examine whether any form also survives afterwards. For in some cases there is nothing to prevent this; e. g. the soul may be of this sort — not all soul but intellect; for presumably it is impossible that all soul should survive.' (εἰ δὲ καὶ ὕστερόν τι ὑπομένει, σκεπτέον· ἐπ᾽ ἐνίων γὰρ οὐδὲν κωλύει, οἷον εἰ ἡ ψυχὴ τοιοῦτον, μὴ πᾶσα, ἀλλ᾽ ὁ νοῦς· πᾶσαν γὰρ ἀδύνατον ἴσως) Trans. Ross, slightly modified.

64 *In I Sent.*, d. 8 q. 5 a. 2 ad 1.

65 *Spirit. Creat.* 2 ad 3, trans. p. 37.

66 *CG* 2, 55, 13; *Q de An.* 14; *ST* I, 75, 2.

67 *Rep.* 6, 486a.

68 The principle that nature does nothing in vain is frequently repeated by Aristotle: *Gen. An.* 5, 8, 788b20–2: 'Nature is neither lacking in providing what is necessary, nor does it work anything which is superfluous or in vain' (ἐπεὶ δὲ τὴν φύσιν ὑποτιθέμεθα, ἐξ ὧν ὁρῶμεν ὑποτιθέμενοι, οὔτ᾽ ἐλλείπουσαν οὔτε μάταιον οὐθὲν ποιοῦσαν τῶν ἐνδεχομένων περὶ ἕκαστον). *De Caelo*, 1, 4, 271a33: 'Nature and God do nothing in vain' (ὁ δὲ θεὸς καὶ ἡ φύσις οὐδὲν μάτην ποιοῦσιν). Also *De Caelo* 291b 13–14; *De An.* 432b21, 434a 41; *Part. An.* 3, 1, 661b24; 4, 11, 691b 4–5; 4, 12, 694a15; 4, 13, 695b19–20; *Gen. An.* 2, 4, 739b19; 2, 5, 741b4; 2, 6, 744a37–8. See James G. Lennox, 'Nature does nothing in vain. . .'.

69 *ST* I, 75, 6: Impossibile est ergo quod anima intellectiva sit corruptibilis. Potest etiam huius rei accipi signum ex hoc, quod unumquodque naturaliter suo modo esse desiderat. Desiderium autem in rebus cognoscentibus sequitur cognitionem. Sensus autem non cognoscit esse nisi sub hic et nunc, sed intellectus apprehendit esse absolute, et secundum omne tempus. Unde omne habens intellectum naturaliter desiderat esse semper. Naturale autem desiderium non potest esse inane. Omnis igitur intellectualis substantia est incorruptibilis.

70 *Q de An.* 14: Unde relinquitur animam humanam esse incorruptibilem. Signum autem huius ex duobus accipi potest. Primo quidem, ex parte intellectus: quia ea etiam quae sunt in seipsis corruptibilia, secundum

quod intellectu percipiuntur, incorruptibilia sunt. Est enim intellectus apprehensivus rerum in universali, secundum quem modum non accidit eis corruptio. Secundo, ex naturali appetitu qui in nulla re frustrari potest. Videmus enim hominibus appetitum esse perpetuitatis. Et hoc rationabiliter: quia cum ipsum esse secundum se sit appetibile, oportet quod ab intelligente qui apprehendit esse simpliciter, et non hic et nunc, appetatur esse simpliciter, et secundum omne tempus. Unde videtur quod iste appetitus non sit inanis; sed quod homo secundum animam intellectivam sit incorruptibilis. Trans. p. 178. For a longer treatment see also *CG* 2, 55, 13, which begins: 'It is impossible for natural desire to be in vain, "since nature does nothing in vain." But every intelligent being naturally desires to be forever; and to be forever not only in its species but also in the individual.' (Impossibile est naturale desiderium esse inane: natura enim nihil facit frustra. Sed quilibet intelligens naturaliter desiderat esse perpetuum: non solum ut perpetuetur esse secundum speciem, sed etiam individuum.)

71 *EN* 10, 7, 1177b26–31: ὁ δὲ τοιοῦτος ἂν εἴη βίος κρείττων ἢ κατ᾽ ἄνθρωπον. οὐ γὰρ ᾗ ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν οὕτω βιώσεται, ἀλλ᾽ ᾗ θεῖόν τι ἐν αὐτῷ ὑπάρχει· ὅσον δὲ διαφέρει τοῦτο τοῦ συνθέτου, τοσοῦτον καὶ ἡ ἐνέργεια τῆς κατὰ τὴν ἄλλην ἀρετήν. εἰ δὴ θεῖον ὁ νοῦς πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ὁ κατὰ τοῦτον βίος θεῖος πρὸς τὸν ἀνθρώπινον βίον. Trans. Rackham, p. 617.

72 *EN* 10, 7, 1177b31–1178a2: οὐ χρὴ δὲ κατὰ τοὺς παραινοῦντας ἀνθρώπινα φρονεῖν ἄνθρωπον ὄντα οὐδὲ θνητὰ τὸν θνητόν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐφ᾽ ὅσον ἐνδέχεται ἀθανατίζειν καὶ πάντα ποιεῖν πρὸς τὸ ζῆν κατὰ τὸ κράτιστον τῶν ἐν αὑτῷ· εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῷ ὄγκῳ μικρόν ἐστι, δυνάμει καὶ τιμιότητι πολὺ μᾶλλον πάντων ὑπερέχει. Trans. Rackham, p. 617.

Chapter Four

1 *Rep.* 521c.

2 T. S. Eliot, *The Harvard Crimson*, 3 December 1938.

3 *Science and Wisdom*, pp. 64–5: 'The splendid renewal which physics owes to Lorentz, Poincaré and Einstein on the one hand and to Planck, Louis de Broglie, Dirac and Heisenberg on the other has renewed and stimulated a sense of the ontological mystery of the world of matter.'

4 See Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, p. 306.

5 *Approches sans Entraves*, p. 320. *ŒC* XIII, p. 861: 'Plaignons toutefois ceux qui n'ont jamais senti monter en eux la flamme à la lecture de Platon ou de Plotin.' See *Untrammled Approaches*, p. 266.

6 *ŒC* XII, p. 957. See *The Peasant of the Garonne*, p. 220: 'There is an admirable poetry in the life of a Christopher Columbus or a Benedict Labre, in the thought of a Plato or an Einstein, in the movement of the galaxies.'

7 *Rep.* 376e: ἡ δ᾽ ἐπὶ ψυχῇ μουσική.

8 *The Social and Political Philosophy of Jacques Maritain*, p. 14. See *Rep.* 591e: πρὸς τὴν ἐν αὑτῷ πολιτείαν.

9 *ŒC* VII, p. 1050. See also p. 1180 and *ŒC* XI, p. 173.

10 Plato, *Crat.* 384b; *Hipp. Maj.* 304e; *Rep.* 435c.

11 *ŒC* XI, p. 15: 'Platon nous a dit que les choses belles sont difficiles, et que nous ne devons pas esquiver les beaux dangers. L'espèce humaine serait mise en peril, et serait bientôt au désespoir, se elle se dérobait aux beaux dangers de l'intelligence et de la raison.'

12 *True Humanism*, p. 33. For the original see *Humanisme intégral*, p. 49; *ŒC* VI, p. 342.

13 James Adam, *The Vitality of Platonism*, pp. 3, 131.

14 *Tim.* 90a.

15 *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 68n1. Original in *Elements de Philosophie I. Introduction Générale a la Philosophi*e, p. 208n55; *ŒC* II, p. 89. See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Naturwissenschaftliche Schriften* II/3, pp. 141–2.

16 *Challenges and Renewals*, pp. 6–7. For original text see *Science et Sagesse*, pp. 70–71(*ŒC* VI, p. 49). Alternative translation in *Science and Wisdom*, p. 36. An earlier version occurs in *La philosophie de la nature*, p. 4, trans. *Philosophy of Nature*, p. 4.

17 Ibid. p. 6. *Science et Sagesse*, p. 70. Alternative trans. *Science and Wisdom*, p. 36. *ŒC* VI, pp. 48–49.

18 Ibid. p. 7. *Science et Sagesse*, p. 71–2. Alternative trans. *Science and Wisdom*, pp. 36–7; *ŒC* VI, pp. 49–50.

19 *Questions de conscience*, p. 99 (*ŒC* VI, p. 682). See p. 121n1: '. . . la contemplation de type platonicienne peut être appellée une contemplation mystique naturelle, — je dis mystique en un sens impropre et élargi, parce qu'elle est "donnée", comme l'inspiration du poète, et parce qu'elle répond à une aspiration mystique naturelle à la vision de l'absolu.' (*ŒC* VI, p. 701n29).

20 *Redeeming the Time*, p. 225. Emphasis in original. Original in *Quatre Essais sur l'esprit dans sa condition charnelle*, p. 132; *ŒC* VII, p. 160.

21 *Redeeming the Time*, pp. 227–8. Original in *Quatre essais sur l'esprit*, pp. 135–6. He remarks: 'In Plato and Plotinus is to be found, I believe, a combination of philosophic contemplation, of the poetic experience,

and of the natural mystical experience, the role of the latter being, although more or less hidden, far greater with Plotinus than with Plato.' Ibid. pp. 248–9.

22 Ibid. p. 228. *Quatre essais sur l'esprit*, pp. 136–7; *ŒC*, pp. 162–3.

23 Ibid pp. 229–30. *Quatre essais sur l'esprit*, pp. 137–9; *ŒC*, pp. 164–5.

24 *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, p. 246. For original see *La philosophie bergsonienne*, p. 254; *ŒC* I, p. 399.

25 *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p 60. Original, *Elements de Philosophie I. Introduction Générale à la Philosophi*e, p. 50; *ŒC* II, p. 80.

26 Ibid. pp. 60–61. *Elements de Philosophie I. Introduction Générale a la Philosophi*e, p. 50; *ŒC* II, p. 80.

27 'The Humanism of St Thomas Aquinas', p. 296. For original see *De Bergson à Thomas d'Aquin*, pp. 248–9; *ŒC* VIII, pp. 154–5.

28 'The Humanism of St Thomas Aquinas', p. 297. Original in *De Bergson à Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 308. This charge is also expressed in the following passage of *Science and Wisdom*, where Maritain gives a wonderful reading of the grand sweep of Greek philosophy, its limitations and the dangers to which neoplatonism succumbs:

> The peculiar beauty of Greek wisdom is that of a sketch or draft, a creation of genius whose outline and essential points are traced with infallible art. It could not finish the work and the work is nowhere complete. It is incomplete on the metaphysical side. We know how Aristotle, faced with the questions that concern the spiritual realities shut his eyes: we know his errors and how small a following his great speculative discoveries won in the ancient world. . . . And when this human wisdom tried to complete itself by its own unaided efforts, it took a bad turn. It was not content to fulfil its mission and affirm the ontological consistency and value of creatures. Instead of paying honour to the principle of created being, as shown in created things themselves, it divinised them. For this it earned the condemnation of St. Paul. In the end it called in vain for the help of the East, of a syncretism without existential roots, and sought a remedy for the great melancholy of paganism in mystagogy and magic. It renounced the realism in orienting thought to which its original strength had lain: and contented itself with a substitute, a dialectical world in which the search is only for an ideal procession of essences, and for an ecstasy which lies beyond being. The neglect of the singular, and more profoundly of existing things, the primacy of the generic and the logical which it is the fashion (quite wrongly) to blame on Aristotle — really

> represents what was a temptation for Greek philosophy and finally brought about its defeat when it showed itself no longer capable of sustaining Aristotle. The Renaissance of platonic idealism during the Alexandrine period was a punishment on human wisdom which had grown degenerate. And I am not sure that the same cannot be said of every platonist revival during the course of history.

Science and Wisdom, pp. 12–14. For original see *Science et Sagesse*, pp. 32–4, *ŒC* VI, pp. 27–8.

29 See section 'Being', pages 8–15 above, with corresponding footnotes, for a detailed account of Plato's commitment to the primacy of being. Some paragraphs were included in the original essay on Maritain and Plato reproduced here.

30 *Man's Approach to God*, p. 18. For English and French texts see *ŒC* XVI, pp. 200–1.

31 *Existence and the Existent*, p. 19. For the original see *Court traité de l'existence et de l'existant*, pp. 37–8; *ŒC* IX, p. 29.

32 Ibid. p. 21. On the intuition of being see the essays by John P. Hittinger, John F. X. Knasas, and Bertrand Rioux in *Jacques Maritain. The Man and his Metaphysics*, ed. John F. X. Knasas. Also Yves Floucat, 'Jacques Maritain et l'intuition de l'acte d'être'.

33 Compare St Thomas, *ST* I, 75, 6: 'The senses indeed do not know existence, except under the conditions of here and now, whereas the intellect apprehends existence absolutely, and for all time.'

34 *Existence and the Existent*, pp. 21–2. For the original see *Court traité de l'existence et de l'existant*, pp. 41–2; *ŒC* IX, pp. 30–1.

35 'Réflexions sur la nature blessée et sur l'intuition de l'être', p. 17:

> Avec lui nous avons affaire à une philosophie authentiquement réaliste ou ontosophique. . . . L'immense univers de la sagesse rationelle aristotélicienne est un univers d'essences saisies par la première opération de l'esprit, la simple apprehension, et sans doute centrées sur l'être, ou l'exister, qui, de fait, est là, et impose sa primauté, mais sans que celle-ci ait été *formellement* saisie; au contraire, elle n'est présente à la pensée que d'une façon encore aveugle ou *virtuelle*, sans avoir été perçue en pleine lumiére. Bref, Aristote n'a eu l'intuition de l'être que par mode tout implicite et *virtuel*, comme impliquée sans qu'il le sût dans l'élan foncier de son réalisme; il n'a pas été capable de la dégager pour elle-même et d'en faire vivre sa doctrine explicitement formulée.

Reprinted in *Approches Sans Entraves*, pp. 263–4; *ŒC* XIII, pp. 786–7, trans. *Untrammeled Approaches*, p. 219.

36 See *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, pp. 81–92.
37 *Creative Intuition*, p. 85.
38 *Creative Intuition*, p. 86.
39 *The Peasant of the Garonne*, p. 100.
40 *Ep.* 7, 344b–c: ἐξέλαμψε φρόνησις περὶ ἕκαστον καὶ νοῦς, συντείνων ὅτι μάλιστ᾽ εἰς δύναμιν ἀνθρωπίνην. See also 341c–d: 'There is no way to put it in words, unlike other studies. Acquaintance with it must come rather after a long period of attendance on instruction in the subject itself and of close companionship, when, suddenly, like a blaze kindled by a leaping spark, it is generated in the soul and at once becomes self-sustaining.' (ῥητὸν γὰρ οὐδαμῶς ἐστιν ὡς ἄλλα μαθήματα, ἀλλ᾽ ἐκ πολλῆς συνουσίας γιγνομένης περὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα αὐτὸ καὶ τοῦ συζῆν ἐξαίφνης, οἷον ἀπὸ πυρὸς πηδήσαντος ἐξαφθὲν φῶς, ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ γενόμενον αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ ἤδη τρέφει.) Trans. L. A. Post, *Collected Dialogues*, ed. Hamilton and Cairns, pp. 1591, 1589.
41 *A Preface to Metaphysics*, p. 46. *Sept Leçons sur l'être*, p. ??. *ŒC* V, p. 574
42 See pp. 3-4 above.
43 A. M. Sertillanges, *St Thomas Aquinas and his Work*, p. 91.
44 *De Pot.* 3, 5. See quotations from W. Norris Clarke's review of Henle's *St. Thomas and Platonism*, cited in note 85 of the essay 'Aquinas and Platonism', pp. 330-1, above.
45 *Creative Intuition*, p. 88.
46 *Les degrés du savoir*, pp. 585–6. I follow the translation given in 'St. Augustine and St. Thomas', p. 204. See *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 61: 'But of Plato himself we may say that his false principles grew in an atmosphere too pure to allow them to yield their full fruit and poison the essence of his thought. St Augustine was therefore able to extract from Plato's gold-mine the ore of truth.' Original, *Elements de Philosophie I. Introduction Générale a la Philosophie*, pp. 50–1; *ŒC* II, p. 80.
47 Cornelio Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo S. Tomaso d'Aquino.*
48 Geiger thanks Maritain for carefully reading the manuscript of his book (*La participation dans la philosophie de S. Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 8.) Since Maritain did not consider himself primarily as a historian of philosophy, one need not be surprised that he does not consider the conclusions of contemporary research regarding the Platonic element in Aquinas — a charge which, on the contrary, one might justifiably make of Etienne Gilson. Maritain cites Geiger's book on participation in support of the view that 'the metaphysical concept of being is an

eidetic visualisation of being apprehended in judgment', and refers to his book *Le problème de l'amour chez saint Thomas d'Aquin* for a discussion of the Thomist positions on love (*ŒC* XI, 813n90). Maritain praises Fabro as one of the best interpreters of Kierkegaard (*Moral Philosophy*, p. 358n3; *La philosophie morale*, p. 445n3; *ŒC* XI, p. 858n10) but does not refer to his studies on Thomist participation. Both Maritain and Fabro took part in a colloquium in Rome in the late 1940s, when Maritain gave a lecture entitled '*L'existentialisme de saint Thomas*'. Maritain also comments on a negative review by Arthur Little of *Art and Scholasticism*, but makes no reference to his work *The Platonic Heritage of Thomism.* It is remarkable that Maritain in later writings does not attribute the same importance to the theory of Thomist participation. John Wippel has suggested to me as a possible explanation that participation was not emphasized by John of St Thomas, upon whom Maritain greatly relied in his reading of Aquinas.

49 Albert Keller notes: 'From this Platonic thought, close to the doctrine of participation, Maritain arrives at an understanding of being as perfection.' (*Sein oder Existenz? Die Auslegung des Seins bei Thomas von Aquin*, p. 108). Peter Nickl, in what is one of the most thorough investigations of Maritain's metaphysics in any language, points out that Maritain's earliest reference to the ontology of participation occurs in *Art et scolastique* (1920). See Peter Nickl, *Jacques Maritain. Eine Einführung in Leben und Werk*, p. 153.

50 *Antimoderne*, p. 179; *ŒC* II, p. 1064.

51 *Approaches to God*, pp. 49–50; *Approches de Dieu*, p. 58; *ŒC* X, pp. 44–5. Emphasis in original.

52 'Spontaneité et indépendance', p. 23; *ŒC* VIII, p. 95.

53 *Antimoderne*, p. 179; *ŒC* II, p. 1064.

54 *Antimoderne*, p. 180; *ŒC* II, p. 1065.

55 *Antimoderne*, pp. 180–1; *ŒC* II, pp. 1065–6.

56 *Antimoderne*, pp. 181–7; *ŒC* II, 1066–75.

57 *Antimoderne*, p. 184; *ŒC* II, p. 1069.

58 *Antimoderne*, pp. 185–6; *ŒC* II, p. 1070.

59 *Antimoderne*, p. 191; *ŒC* II, p. 1073.

60 *Antimoderne*, pp. 191–2; *ŒC* II, p. 1075.

61 *Antimoderne*, p. 191; *ŒC* II, p. 1075.

62 *Antimoderne*, p. 192; *ŒC* II, p. 1075.

63 *Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 305 (emphasis in original). For original see *Distinguer pour unir ou Les degrés du savoir*, p. 605; *ŒC* IV, pp. 809–10.

64 Etienne Gilson, 'Pourquoi Saint Thomas a critiqué Saint Augustin', pp. 125–6. See pp. 1-2 above.

65 *Bergsonian Philosophy and Thomism*, p. 255: 'There is an *intensive quantity* (*quantitas virtutis*) which differs completely from quantity properly so-called, from *dimensive quantity* (*quantitas molis*), for it also belongs to the transcendental order, and refers to the being itself, of the things concerned without adding to them any accident (as is quantity properly so-called or spatiality), so that this *intensive quantity* cannot be mathematically measured, at least in itself.' (Emphasis in original). For original see *La philosophie bergsonienne*, pp. 269–70; *ŒC* VII, pp. 420–1. In a footnote (ibid.) he remarks: 'A notion is transcendental when it is defined in relation to being. Now in order to define the more and the less one may say that one being is more than another when in order to become that other it would have to cease to be in some manner. The idea of degrees of being or perfection is thus a transcendental notion, defined solely by means of the notions of being and non-being, and in itself independent of any idea of dimensive quantity and space.'

66 See Chapter 8 in this volume.

67 Albertus Magnus: Scias quod non perficitur homo in philosophia nisi ex scientia duarum philosophiarum, Aristotelis et Platonis. *Metaphys.*, lib. 1, tract. c. 15, *Opera Omnia* XVI, 1, p. 89.

Chapter Five

1 Pope John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery*, p. 7.

2 Arthur C. Clarke, *Collected Stories*, p. 418.

3 Clarke, p. 420.

4 Clarke, p. 422.

5 Heraclitus, Frg. 60: ὁδὸς ἄνω κάτω μία καὶ ὡυτή. All translations are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

6 Heraclitus, Frg. 32: ἓν τὸ σοφὸν μοῦνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα.

7 Euripides, *The Trojan Women*, ll. 884–8: ὦ γῆς ὄχημα κἀπὶ γῆς ἔχων ἕδραν, / ὅστις ποτ᾽ εἶ σύ, δυστόπαστος εἰδέναι, / Ζεύς, εἴτ᾽ ἀνάγκη φύσεος εἴτε νοῦς βροτῶν, / προσηυξάμην σε.

8 Xenophanes, Frgs. 15, 16. Trans. Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, p. 22.

9 Aristotle, *Pol.* 1, 2, 1252b26–7: ὥσπερ δὲ καὶ τὰ εἴδη ἑαυτοῖς ἀφομοιοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οὕτω καὶ τοὺς βίους τῶν θεῶν. Trans. Rackham, p. 9.

10 Aristotle, *Met.* 12, 8, 1074b3–7: τὰ δὲ λοιπὰ μυθικῶς ἤδη προσῆκται πρὸς τὴν πειθὼ τῶν πολλῶν καὶ πρὸς τὴν εἰς τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὸ συμφέρον χρῆσιν: ἀνθρωποειδεῖς τε γὰρ τούτους καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων ὁμοίους τισὶ λέγουσι.

11 According to John Dillon, 'Alcinous may not be a very distinguished philosophical mind, but his book does read like the work of a committed and well-informed Platonist.' *Alcinous. The Handbook of Platonism*, p. xii.

12 Alcinous, *The Handbook of Platonism* 10.165.16–34. Trans. Dillon, pp. 18–19. See also John Whittaker, *Alcinoos. Enseignement des doctrines de Platon*, p. 106. Still maintaining the earlier — since revised — attribution of the work to Albinus, Hampus Lyttkens has written: 'Undoubtedly, [Alcinous'] three ways of learning to know God are the beginnings of the doctrine of the 'three ways' — *via negationis*, *via causalitatis*, and *via eminentiae* — later propounded by Dionysius Areopagita and the medieval theologians. Even if [Alcinous'] three ways cannot be directly identified with these, there are important agreements. [Alcinous] does not examine the relation of negative to positive knowledge of God. His second and third ways are moreover later merged into one, thereby giving to analogy a richer content. Notwithstanding these and other differences, however, [Alcinous] must be said to have introduced the material used by subsequent Christian theologians in their attempt to describe what characterizes our knowledge of God.' Lyttkens, *The Analogy between God and the World*, pp. 104–5. See also p. 103.

13 Origen, *Contra Celsum*, ed. Marcel Borret, *Origène contre Celse* IV, 7.42, pp. 110–12: Εἶτα μετὰ ταῦτα ὡς ἐπὶ *ἐνεργέστερον διδάσκαλον τῶν θεολογίας πραγμάτων* ἀναπέμπει ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ *τὸν Πλάτωνα,* παρατιθέμενος αὐτοῦ τὰς ἀπὸ *τοῦ Τιμαίου* λέξεις οὕτως ἐχούσας· *«Τὸν μὲν οὖν ποιητὴν καὶ πατέρα τοῦδε τοῦ παντὸς εὑρεῖν τε ἔργον καὶ εὑρόντα εἰς πάντας ἀδύνατον λέγειν.»* Εἶτ' ἐπιφέρει τούτοις λέγων· *Ὁρᾶτε ὅπως ζητεῖται θεοπρόποις καὶ <φιλοσόφοις> ἀληθείας ὁδός, καὶ ὡς ᾔδει Πλάτων ὅτι ταύτῃ βῆναι πᾶσιν «ἀδύνατον». Ἐπειδὴ δὲ τούτου χάριν ἐξηύρηται σοφοῖς ἀνδράσιν, ὡς ἂν τοῦ ἀκατονομάστου καὶ πρώτου λάβοιμέν τινα ἐπίνοιαν, διαδηλοῦσαν αὐτὸν ἢ τῇ συνθέσει τῇ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄλλα ἢ ἀναλύσει ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἢ ἀναλογίᾳ, τὸ ἄλλως ἄρρητον θέλω <μὲν> διδάξαι θαυμάσαιμι δ' ἂν εἰ ἀκολουθῆσαι δυνήσεσθε, παντελῶς τῇ σαρκὶ ἐνδεδεμένοι καὶ μηδὲν καθαρὸν βλέποντες.* Trans. Henry Chadwick, Origen: *Contra Celsum*, pp. 429–30. Italics in original.

14 Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 7.44, p. 116: Κέλσος μὲν οὖν ἤτοι τῇ συνθέσει τῇ ἐπὶ τὰ ἄλλα (ἀνάλογον τῇ παρὰ τοῖς γεωμέτραις καλουμένῃ συνθέσει) ἢ τῇ ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων ἀναλύσει ἢ καὶ ἀναλογίᾳ (ἀνάλογον τῇ παρὰ τοῖς ἀναλογίᾳ) οἴεται γινώσκεσθαι τὸν θεόν, ἐπὶ τὰ πρόθυρα εἰ ἄρα τοῦ ἀγαθοθῦ δυναμένου τινὸς οὕτως ἐλθεῖν. Trans. Chadwick, pp. 431–2. See Plato, *Phil.* 64c: ἐπι μεν του ἀγαθου προθύροις.

15 Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 7.42, p. 112. See trans. Chadwick, pp. 429–30; Vladimir Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God*, p. 19; A.-J. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste, IV, Le dieu inconnu et la gnose*, pp. 115–23. For references to elements of the threefold approach in Maximus of Tyre, Diss. 11.6–12 H, see Festugière, pp. 109–15; also Hans Joachim Krämer, *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik*, pp. 105–8. On Clement of Alexandria see Raoul Mortley, *Connaissance religieuse et herméneutique chez Clément d'Alexandrie*, pp. 86–102. For parallels in Origen, see Hal Koch, *Pronoia und Paideusis: Studien über Origenes und sein Verhältnis zum Platonismus*, pp. 256–8; Giuseppe Invernizzi, *Il Didaskalikos di Albino*, vol. 1, chap. 5; vol. 2, pp. 131–3.

16 John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists*, p. 284. Dillon attributes the *Didaskalikos* to the second-century Middle-Platonist philosopher Albinus, pupil of Gaius and teacher of Galen. (p. 268). In the introduction to his translation of the *Handbook* (1993), he accepts the arguments of John Whittaker for reassigning it to Alcinous. See Dillon, *Alcinous. The Handbook of Platonism*, pp. ix–xiii.

17 *Tim.* 31c.

18 *Rep.* 508b–509b.

19 *Rep.* 505a2: ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα μέγιστον μάθημα.

20 *Rep.* 505d11–e3: Ὃ δὴ διώκει μὲν ἅπασα ψυχὴ καὶ τούτου ἕνεκα πάντα πράττει, ἀπομαντευομένη τι εἶναι, ἀποροῦσα δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἔχουσα λαβεῖν ἱκανῶς τί ποτ' ἐστὶν οὐδὲ πίστει χρήσασθαι μονίμῳ οἵᾳ καὶ περὶ τἆλλα.

21 *Symp.* 210a–d.

22 *Ep.* 7, 341c–d, 344b–c. See Reginald Eldred Witt, *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism*, p. 132; here Witt refers to *Republic* 508b, *Symposium* 208e, and *Seventh Letter* 341c–d. See Werner Beierwaltes, *Platonismus im Christentum*, pp. 135–7. Deirdre Carabine remarks: 'There is no transcendent, unknowable God in Plato, but there is a hint of the idea of a transcendent, unknowable good. . . . On the basis of the texts where Plato uses negative terms to describe the highest reality, I

think it is possible to say that the good and beauty are, each in some way, transcendent and indescribable. The final condition necessary for a fully-developed negative theology, that of the unknowability of the highest cause, is not explicit in Plato's philosophy.' Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God. Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition: Plato to Eriugena*, pp. 33–4.

23 Plotinus, *Enneads* VI 7 [38] 36.6–8: διδάσκουσι μὲν οὖν ἀναλογίαι τε καὶ ἀφαιρέσεις καὶ γνώσεις τῶν ἐξ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναβασμοί τινες. Trans. Arthur H. Armstrong, slightly modified.

24 R. E. Witt, *Albinus and the History of Middle Platonism*, p. 133.

25 On the figure of Dionysius the Areopagite, see Chap. 7 below, p. NN. On Dionysius and the *triplex via* see Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, pp. 14–21.

26 *Divine Names* 7, 3, 869D–872A. *Corpus Dionysiacum* I, pp. 197–8: Μήποτε οὖν ἀληθὲς εἰπεῖν, ὅτι θεὸν γινώσκομεν οὐκ ἐκ τῆς αὐτοῦ φύσεως, ἄγνωστον γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ πάντα λόγον καὶ νοῦν ὑπεραῖρον, ἀλλ' ἐκ τῆς πάντων τῶν ὄντων διατάξεως ὡς ἐξ αὐτοῦ προβεβλημένης καὶ εἰκόνας τινὰς καὶ ὁμοιώματα τῶν θείων αὐτοῦ παραδειγμάτων ἐχούσης εἰς τὸ ἐπέκεινα πάντων ὁδῷ καὶ τάξει κατὰ δύναμιν ἄνιμεν ἐν τῇ πάντων ἀφαιρέσει καὶ ὑπεροχῇ καὶ ἐν τῇ πάντων αἰτίᾳ.

27 *Mystical Theology* (*MT*) 1.1, 997AB. *Corpus Dionysiacum* II, p. 142–3: ἴθυνον ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τὴν τῶν μυστικῶν λογίων ὑπεράγνωστον καὶ ὑπερφαῆ καὶ ἀκροτάτην κορυφήν· ἔνθα τὰ ἁπλᾶ καὶ ἀπόλυτα καὶ ἄτρεπτα τῆς θεολογίας μυστήρια κατὰ τὸν ὑπέρφωτον ἐγκεκάλυπται τῆς κρυφιομύστου σιγῆς γνόφον, ἐν τῷ σκοτεινοτάτῳ τὸ ὑπερφανέστατον ὑπερλάμποντα καὶ ἐν τῷ πάμπαν ἀναφεῖ καὶ ἀοράτῳ τῶν ὑπερκάλων ἀγλαϊῶν ὑπερπληροῦντα τοὺς ἀνομμάτους νόας. My trans. after Luibheid.

28 *MT* 1.2, 1000B. *Corpus Dionysiacum* II, p. 143: δέον ἐπ' αὐτῇ καὶ πάσας τὰς τῶν ὄντων τιθέναι καὶ *καταφάσκειν* θέσεις, ὡς πάντων αἰτίᾳ, καὶ πάσας αὐτὰς κυριώτερον *ἀποφάσκειν*, ὡς ὑπὲρ πάντα ὑπερούσῃ, καὶ μὴ οἴεσθαι τὰς ἀποφάσεις ἀντικειμένας εἶναι ταῖς καταφάσεσιν, ἀλλὰ πολὺ πρότερον αὐτὴν ὑπὲρ τὰς στερήσεις εἶναι τὴν *ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν καὶ ἀφαίρεσιν καὶ θέσιν*. Trans. Luibheid.

29 *MT* 5, 1048AB. *Corpus Dionysiacum* II, p. 150: οὔτε ἐστὶν αὐτῆς καθόλου *θέσις οὔτε ἀφαίρεσις*, ἀλλὰ τῶν μετ' αὐτὴν τὰς θέσεις καὶ ἀφαιρέσεις ποιοῦντες αὐτὴν οὔτε τίθεμεν οὔτε ἀφαιροῦμεν, ἐπεὶ καὶ ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν θέσιν ἐστὶν ἡ παντελὴς καὶ ἑνιαία τῶν πάντων αἰτία καὶ *ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἀφαίρεσιν ἡ ὑπεροχὴ* τοῦ πάντων ἁπλῶς ἀπολελυμένου καὶ ἐπέκεινα τῶν ὅλων. My translation after Rolt and Luibheid.

30 See René Roques, *Denys L'Aréopagite. La Hiérarchie Céleste*, pp. xxvi–xxvii: 'Il faut que la négation ait pénétré au coeur même de l'affirmation pour que l'affirmation vaille. Et c'est dans cette affirmation transcendante et purifiée que la négation elle-meme se justifie. Par là, la théologie négative se présente comme une théologie éminente (ὑπεροχικῶς), comme la vraie théologie de la Transcendance.'

31 See Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God*, pp. 301–22. William of Malmesbury, wrote of Eriugena: 'He may be pardoned for certain points in which he wandered off the paths of the Latins whilst he kept his eyes sharply focused on the Greeks.' (. . . si tamen ignoscatur ei in aliquibus a Latinorum tramite deviavit dum in Graecos acriter oculos intendit.) *De Gestis Regum Anglorum* II, § 122, p. 131.

32 *Periphyseon* I, 461A.

33 *Periphyseon* I, 461BC: Nam cum ad perfectae ratiocinationis contuitum perveneris, satis clarum considerabis haec duo quae videntur inter se esse contraria nullo modo sibimet opponi dum circa divinam naturam versantur, sed per omnia in omnibus sibi invicem consentiunt.

34 *Periphyseon* I, 517C: Haec enim omnia pulchra ineffabilique armonia in unam concordiam colligit atque componit. Nam quae in partibus universitatis opposita sibimet videntur atque contraria et a se invicem dissona, dum in generalissima ipsius universitatis armonia considerantur convenientia consonaque sunt. Trans. I. P. Sheldon-Williams, *Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae Periphyseon* I, p. 207.

35 *Periphyseon* I, 462C: Haec nomina quae adiectione 'super' vel 'plus quam' particularum de deo praedicantur, ut est superessentialis plus quam veritas plus quam sapientia et similia, duarum praedictarum theologiae partium in se plenissime sint comprehensiva, ita ut in pronuntiatione formam affirmativae, intellectu vero virtutem abdicativae obtineat.

36 *Periphyseon* I, 14, 462 C–D; see III, 663C, 684D–685A.

37 *Periphyseon* III, 681A: Dum ergo incomprehensibilis intelligitur per excellentiam nihilum non immerito vocitatur; V, 897D: qui propter superessentialitatem suae naturae nihil dicitur.

38 *Periphyseon* III, 684D–685A. Trans. I. P. Sheldon-Williams, *Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae Periphyseon* III, pp. 175–7. See *Super Ierarchiam Caelestem S. Dionysii*, 154B–156C.

39 *Periphyseon* III, 663C: Negatio enim verbi per excellentiam naturae, non autem per privationem substantiae in theologia reperitur. Trans. I. P. Sheldon-Williams, p. 129.

40 *Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae Carmina*, ed. Michael W. Herren, p. 64: 'Est <quod>, quod non est, te colit omne super.'

41 *Eriugenae Carmina*, p. 86: Est, non est, super est, qui praestitit omnibus esse, / Qui regit atque tenet totum, quod condidit ipse, / Totus per totum qui nullis partibus haeret, / Cuius summa procul cunctis natura remota, / Cum sit cunctorum substans essentia simplex. / ὢν τέλος ὢν ἀρχὴ πάντων ὦν ὄντα τὰ εἰσίν, / ὢν ἀγαθὸς καὶ καλός, καλλός, μορφῶν τε χαρακτήρ.

42 See Nikolaus M. Häring, 'Die Theologische Sprachlogik der Schule von Chartres im zwölften Jahrhundert', pp. 930–6.

43 Thierry of Chartres, *Tractatus de trinitate*, § 26. (*Commentaries on Boethius by Thierry of Chartres*, ed. Häring, p. 309). See *Contra Euthychen* III, § 62: Est autem theologia de summo deo duplex: est per affirmationem quando scilicet aliqua deo attribuantur per similitudinem: et est per negationem quando a deo aliqua removentur per privationem. (Häring, p. 246). Also *Commentarius Victorinus de Trinitate*, §§ 99–110, (Häring, pp. 501–04).

44 *Celestial Hierarchy* 2, 3, 141A: αἱ μὲν ἀποφάσεις ἐπὶ τῶν θείων ἀληθεῖς, αἱ δὲ καταφάσεις ἀνάρμοστοι τῇ κρυφιότητι τῶν ἀπορρήτων. See Hugh of Saint Victor, PL 175, 974B; Alanus de Insulis, PL 210, 630AB; Simon of Tournai, *Expositio Symboli* VI, 17–22, pp. 178–9.

45 Alexander of Hales, *Glossa in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi* I, p. 39: Et sic per haec tria: ablationem, eminentiam et causam, notat triplicem modum cognoscendi; per ablationem, sicut negative: non est hoc, non est illud etc.; per eminentiam, optimum in unoquoque sibi attribuendum; causa, in quantum resolvimus mobilia ad immobile, essentias ad summum esse.

46 *Summa Theologica* I-II, inq. 1, tract. un., q. 1, cap. 2, art. 1 co., vol. 1, no. 334, p. 495a: Et tangit triplicem modum intelligendi sive nominandi Deum: ablatione, eminentia et causa. Unus enim modus est per ablationem sive abnegationem, sicut cum dicitur aeternus, immensus: et hic modus est a comparatione divini esse ad creaturam secundum differentiam; alius modus per eminentiam, sicut cum dicitur superexistens, optimus et huiusmodi: et hic modus est a comparatione divini esse ad creaturam secundum convenientiam quae est per proportionem, secundum communem animi conceptionem 'optimum in unoquoque est Deo tribuendum'; tertius modus est per causam, sicut cum dicitur 'Deus', quod imponitur ab operatione, sicut dicit Damascenus, potens, sapiens et huiusmodi: et hoc sumitur ex comparatione divini esse ad creaturam secundum comparationem quae est effectus ad causam. Compare *Glossa Sent*. I. d. 3. 3. f., 39. In *Summa Theologica* II Alexander offers another threefold perspective on human

knowledge of God: Triplex enim est cognitio, scilicet per speciem et lumen, per speculum et in lumine, per speculum in aenigmate: prima est patriae, secunda erat in statu innocentiae, tertia in statu natura lapsae. *Summa Theologica* II-Id), inq. 4, tract. 3, q. 3, tit. 2, cap. 1, art. 1 co., vol. 2, no. 512, p. 753a. See 752b: Unde videre per speculum est videre per creaturas aliquas, in quibus similitudo Dei relucet. It is now accepted that Alexander's *Summa* is a later compilation by a number of editors based on the writings of Alexander. See Kenan B. Osborne, 'Alexander of Hales', pp. 1–38.

47 *Summa Theologica* I, q. 2, membrum 1, cap. 2, n. 9, vol. 1, p. 17: Dicendum quod est cognitio de Deo per modum positionis et per modum privationis. Per modum privationis cognoscimus de Deo quid non est; per modum positionis cognoscimus quid est. Divina ergo substantia in sua immensitate non est cognoscibilis ab anima rationali cognitione positiva, sed est cognoscibilis cognitione privativa.

48 *Summa Theologica* I-II, inq. 2, tract. 1, q. 4, cap. 1, resp., vol. 1, no. 369, p. 547: Est considerare dupliciter nomen Dei: aut quantum ad significatum aut quantum ad modum significandi. Considerando significatum, omnia huiusmodi nomina, sive operationis sive privationis sive consequentia naturam sive habitudinis, ostendunt naturam. Considerando vero modum significandi qui est sicut in creatura, dicit Damascenus quod non significant naturam, sed consequentia naturam, quia ad similitudinem dicuntur eorum quae sequuntur naturam in creaturis et non significant substantiam, sed proprietatem substantiae: significant enim divinam naturam ut qualitatem sive ut habitum. Also I *Sent*. d. 22. q. 2. See Simon of Tournai (ca. 1130–1216), *Expositio Symboli* VI, 20, p. 178: Deus ergo proprie est bonus sed improprie dicitur bonus ut sit proprietas essendi, non dicendi.

49 *Summa Theologica* I-II, n. 369, p. 547b: Quia ergo nomen positivum in divinis acceptum est ab effectu, ideo dicitur quantum ad modum significandi non significare naturam.

50 *I Sent*. d. 22. q. 2, p. 393: Nam Deus innotescit nobis tripliciter, scilicet per causalitatem, per ablationem et per excellentiam; et secundum hoc est multitudo nominum. Si enim nominentur per causalitatem, multa sunt nomina, quia multos habet effectus; si per ablationem, multa sunt nomina, quia multa removentur, scilicet omnia creata; si per excellentiam, multa, quia in multis, in omnibus scilicet conditionibus nobilitatis, excedit creaturas. See *I Sent*. d. 22. q. 3, p. 396: Cum enim nos cognoscamus Deum tripliciter, scilicet per effectum, per excellentiam et per ablationem, constat quod omnibus his modis

contingit Deum nominare. Si per effectum, nulla est ibi translatio; similiter, si per ablationem, quoniam translatio attenditur secundum aliquam similitudinem; omnes enim transferentes secundum aliquam similitudinem transferunt. In *De triplici via*, Bonaventure deals with a distinct *triplex via* (*purgatio*, *illuminatio*, *perfectio*), also of Neoplatonic — especially Dionysian — inspiration.

51 *I Sent*. d. 22. q. 2, p. 393: Dicendum, quod in nomine tria sunt, scilicet vox et significatio et ratio innotescendi. . . . Aliquando nomen accipitur pro re significata, ut cum dicitur: bonum et honestum sunt idem nomine; et sic in divinis quodam modo est dicere nomen unum, quodam modo plura. Si enim res significata dicatur essentialiter, sic omnia unum; si personaliter, sic plures et plura nomina correspondentia. Aliquando nomen accipitur pro ipso notamine sive ratione innotescendi; et sic dicendum, quod quodam modo nomen unum, quodam modo plura. Si enim accipitur ratio innotescendi ex parte Dei, sic innotescit per virtutem, quae una et magna est; et sic unum nomen Dei est et magnum sive maximum. . . . Si autem accipiatur ratio innotescendi ratione effectuum sive creaturarum, sic diversa sunt nomina. *I Sent*. d. 22. q. 3, p. 397: Quaedam sunt nomina, quae significant rem, cuius veritas est in Deo et oppositum in creatura, ut immensus et aeternus; et talia nullo modo transferuntur, nec secundum rem, nec secundum impositionem. Quaedam significat rem, cuius veritas est in Deo et similitudo eius in creatura, ut potentia, sapientia et voluntas; et talia nomina transferuntur a creaturis ad Deum, non secundum rem, sed secundum impositionem; quia prius imposita sunt creaturis quam Deo, licet prius sunt in Deo. Quaedam sunt nomina, quae significant rem, cuius veritas est in creatura et consimilis proprietas in Deo, ut lapis et leo — res enim significata est in creatura, sed similitudo proprietatis, ut stabilitas et fortitudo in Deo est.

52 *Summa Theologica*, Tract. 14, q. 59, *Opera Omnia* 31, p. 595.

53 *Super Dionysium De Divinis Nominibus* 7, *Opera Omnia* 37/1, p. 358. See *Summa Theologica*, tract. 3, q. 16, vol. 31, p. 112; *Summa Theologica*, tract. 14, q. 59, vol. 31, p. 595. See Francis J. Catania, '"Knowable" and "Namable" in Albert the Great's Commentary on the Divine Names', pp. 97–128; Edouard Wéber, 'Negativité et Causalité: leur articulation dans l'apophatisme de l'école d'Albert le Grand', pp. 51–90.

54 See M. B. Ewbank, 'Diverse Orderings of Dionysius's Triplex Via by St. Thomas Aquinas'; O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, pp. 31–41.

55 *In I Sent*. 3.

56 *Prooemium*, *In DN*, ed. Pera, p. 1.

57 *In DC* I, 6; *De Pot.* 7, 5 ad 2; *In I Sent.* 22, 1, 2 ad 1. See Durantel, *St Thomas et le Pseudo-Denys*, pp. 73–4; O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, pp. 50–1.

58 *In DN* 2, lect. 2, n. 143, p. 46.

59 *Prooemium*, *In DN*, p. 1.

60 *In DN* 1, lect. 3, n. 82: Non enim est ignota propter obscuritatem, sed propter abundantiam claritatis.

61 *In I Sent.* 34, 3, 1. *De Ver.* 8, 1, ad 8.

62 *ST* I, 13, 3.

63 *CG* 1, 2: Ego hoc vel praecipuum vitae meae officium debere me Deo conscius sum, ut eum omnis sermo meus et sensus loquatur. The text is from *De Trinitate* 1, 37.

64 Job, 26:14: Ecce, haec ex parte dicta sunt viarum eius, et cum vix parvam stillam sermonum eius audiverimus, quis poterit tonitruum magnitudinis eius intueri. Greek: ἰδοὺ ταῦτα μέρη ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ ἰκμάδα λόγου ἀκουσόμεθα ἐν αὐτῷ σθένος δὲ βροντῆς αὐτοῦ τίς οἶδεν ὁπότε ποιήσει.

65 *In Iob*, cap. 26: Quasi dicat: omnium quae nunc dicta sunt de effectibus divinae potentiae, minor est comparatio ad divinam potentiam quam unius parvi sermonis quasi silenter stillantis ad maximum tonitrui sonum.

66 *CG* 4, 1: Est igitur triplex cognitio hominis de divinis. Quarum prima est secundum quod homo naturali lumine rationis, per creaturas in Dei cognitionem ascendit. Secunda est prout divina veritas, intellectum humanum excedens, per modum revelationis in nos descendit, non tamen quasi demonstrata ad videndum, sed quasi sermone prolata ad credendum. Tertia est secundum quod mens humana elevabitur ad ea quae sunt revelata perfecte intuenda.

67 *CG* 4, 1: Ad tertiam cognitionem pertinet, qua prima veritas cognoscetur, non sicut credita, sed sicut visa: *videbimus enim eum sicuti est*, ut dicitur I Ioan. 3: 2. . . . Non autem proponetur veritas homini aliquibus velaminibus occultata, sed omnino manifesta.

68 *De Summo Bono* I, ed. Burkhard Mojsisch, (Hamburg: Meiner, 1989), Chaps. 3–7, 10–20. See Alain de Libera, *Introduction à la mystique rhénane d'Albert le Grand à Mâitre Eckhart*, pp. 104–12.

69 *Summa*, art. 20, q. 1, ed. Parisiis 1520, I, fol. 120vT.

70 *Summa*, art. 22, q. 1, fol 130rO; art. 22, q. 4, fol. 132vL;

71 *Summa*, art. 24, q. 4, fol. 140rE; art. 24, q. 6, fol. 142vS; art. 24, q. 6, fol. 143rV–Y; art. 24, q. 7, fol. 144rF.

72 *Summa* (*Quaestiones Ordinariae*), art 32, q. 4, *Opera Omnia* 27, pp. 58–62, 68–9.

73 *Ordinatio* I, d. 8, p. 1, q. 3, p. 172, § 49.

74 *Ordinatio* I, d. 3, p. 1, q. 1, p. 5, § 10. See Rolf Schönberger, '*Negationes non summe amamus.* Duns Scotus Auseinandersetzung mit der negativen Theologie'.

75 *Ordinatio* I, d. 2, p. 1, q. 2, 189, § 111.

76 *In Libros Sententiarum*, I, d. 2, q. 8, 19K: Circa quam intelligendum est quod Dionysius, *De divinis nominibus*, et *Angelica hierarchia*, et in pluribus aliis locis ostendit quatuor modos deveniendi in cognitionem divinorum, scilicet per viam causalitatis effectivae, procedendo in inquisitione causarum donec veniamus ad primum efficiens; secundo per viam causalitatis finalis, eodem modo procedendo; tertio per viam eminentiae; quarto per viam remotionis, quando ab ente perfectissimo removentur omnes imperfectiones. As Armand Maurer observes, 'Meyronnes reads Dionysius as a scholastic, using the language of the scholastics and not that of Dionysius himself.' See Armand Maurer, *Being and Knowing* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990), p. 353n64.

77 *Sent*. I, d. 2, q. 8, 20AB. See Maurer, pp. 355–6.

78 Giles of Rome, *In Primum Librum Sententiarum*, dist. 22, 4, fol. 121.

79 Richard of Middleton, *Super Quatuor Libros Sententiarum* I, dist. 22, art. 1, q. 2: Nomina etiam, quae significant Deum in comparatione ad creaturas, et multiplicantur: quia secundum beatum Dionysium, libro de divinis nominibus c.vlt. Deum per creaturas tripliciter cognoscimus, aut per ablationem conditionum imperfectarum, quae inveniuntur in creaturis, aut per supereminentiam conditionum perfectarum, aut per causalitatem creaturarum: et secundum hoc Deum in comparatione ad creaturas tripliciter nominamus. (Brescia, 1591, reprint Frankfurt am Main, 1963), p. 203.

80 See *Meister Eckhart: Teacher and Preacher*, ed. Bernard McGinn, 1986, pp. 275–9.

81 See footnote 46, pp. 375-6, above.

82 See 1. Cor. 13:12: Videmus nunc per speculum et in aenigmate (δι' εσόπτρου εν αινίγματι), tunc autem facie ad faciem.

83 *Sermo die Beati Augustini Parisius habitus. Lateinische Werke* 5, p. 92, ll. 3–5.

84 *Sermo die Beati Augustini*, p. 92, ll. 6–11: Ablatione in hunc modum procedendo: nullum corpus est deus; nullum intelligibile creatum est deus. Et cum demonstratio de re cognoscibile fiat ad sensum vel ad intellectum, de deo autem cognoscendo non potest fieri demonstratio

ad sensum, quia est incorporeus, nec ad intellectum, quia forma nobis cognita caret, sed per solam alterius formae remotionem: quasi ab aliis eligendo separatur et separando eligitur.

85 *Sermo die Beati Augustini*, 92, 13–15: Unde Dionysius dicit quod affirmationes de deo factae vel dictae incompactae sunt, negationes vero verae.

86 *Sermo die Beati Augustini*, 93, 1–2: Eminentia cognoscitur, quando in unoquoque, quod nobilius est et eminentius, deo attribuitur.

87 *Sermo die Beati Augustini*, p. 93, ll. 6–9.

88 'Unus Deus et Pater Omnium', *Deutsche Werke* 1, p. 361, l. 10. *Deutsche Werke* 1, p. 364, ll. 1–4: 'In dem daz ich gote versage etwaz — versage ich gote güete, ich enmac gote niht versagen — in dem daz ich gote versage, dâ begrîfe ich etwaz von im, daz erniht enist; daz selbe muoz abe. Got ist ein, er ist ein versagen des versagennes.' See Werner Beierwaltes, *Proklos*, pp. 395–8; Beierwaltes, *Platonismus im Christentum*, pp. 112–13.

89 *Exp. in Io.*, c., f. 121. See *Exp. in Ex.*, c., f. 46; *Exp. in Io.*, *Lateinische Werke* 3, p. 175, n. 207, ll. 5–9: Et propter hoc ipsi [Deo] nulla privatio aut negatio convenit, sed propria est sibi, et sibi soli, negatio negationis, quae est medulla et apex purissimae affirmationis, secundum illud: 'ego sum qui sum', Exodi 3. See Armand Maurer, *Master Eckhart, Parisian Questions and Prologues*, pp. 32–3. *In Exodum*, *Lateinische Werke* 2, p. 77, ll. 9–12: Nulla ergo negatio, nihil negativum deo competit, nisi negatio negationis, quam significat unum negative dictum: 'deus unus est'. Negatio vero negationis purissima et plenissima est affirmatio: 'ego sum qui sum'.

90 *Lateinische Werke* 2, pp. 77–8; *Lateinische Werke* 3, p. 175.

91 Beierwaltes, *Platonismus im Christentum*, p. 114. Also *Platonismus und Idealismus*, pp. 12–67.

92 *Nomen eius Jesus*, Sermo XX, Opera XVI/3, n. 5, p. 303, ll. 5–17. Quare triplici via secundum Dionysium ad Deum ascendimus, scilicet ab istis visibilibus ut a causatis, et hoc multiplici argumento secundum Augustinum: aut quia nihil se ipsum produxit, aut quia de mobili ad immobile pervenire necesse est, de imperfecto ad perfectum, de bono ad optimum, etc.; secundo per eminentiam, ut in causa id eminenter comprehendamus, quod in causato reperitur ipsum causatum perficiens; tertio per remotionem, ut defectum, quem reperimus in causato, ab eminentia causae removeamus. Trans. Jasper Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa's Early Sermons: 1430–1441*, p. 330. On affirmative theology see *De docta ignorantia*, I, c. 24, pp. 48–51; for negative theology I, c. 26, pp. 54–6.

93 *Dies sanctificatus*, *Sermo* XXII, Opera XVI/4, n. 10, p. 338, ll. 25–30. See *De Beryllo*, XI/1, c. 11, p. 12, ll. 10–12: Recte igitur, ut Proculus recitat in commentariis Parmenidis, Plato omnia de ipso principio negat. Sic et Dionysius noster negativam praefert theologiam affirmativae. See *Metaphysical Speculations. Six Latin Texts*, trans. Jasper Hopkins, p. 40.

94 *De Venatione Sapientiae*, Opera XII, cap. 22, n. 64, pp. 61–2. See 'On the Pursuit of Wisdom', in Nicholas of Cusa, *Metaphysical Speculations*, p. 197.

95 See Paul Wilpert, Nikolaus von Kues, *Vom Nichtanderen*, p. 171.

96 *Ubi est qui natus est rex iudaeorum?* (*Sermo* 216), Opera XIX, p. 89, n. 16, ll. 16–21: Unde Deo nulla convenit negatio seu privatio, sed propria est sibi et sibi soli negationis negatio, quae est medulla et apex purissimae affirmationis, secundum illud: 'Ego sum qui sum', Exodi 3. See n. 89 above for Eckhart's text.

97 *De Docta Ignorantia*, *Opera Omnia* I, I, c. 21, p. 44; II, c. 3, p. 72.

98 *Directio Speculantis seu De Non Aliud*, *Opera Omnia* XIII, c. 4, p. 9.

99 Nicholas of Cusa, letter to Caspar Aindorffer, in 'Autour de la docte ignorance', pp. 114–15: Tradidit autem Dyonisius in plerisque locis theologiam per disiunctionem, scilicet quod aut ad deum accedimus affirmative aut negative. Sed in hoc libello, ubi theologiam misticam et secretam vult manifestare possibili modo, saltat supra disiunctionem usque in copulacionem et coincidenciam seu unionem simplicissimam que est non lateralis, sed directe supra omnem ablacionem et posicionem, ubi ablacio coincidit cum posicione et negacio cum affirmacione. Et illa est secretissima theologia, ad quam nullus phylosophorum accessit neque accedere potest stante principio communi tocius phylosophie, scilicet quod duo contradictoria non coincidant. See *De Non Aliud*, *Opera Omnia* XIII, c. 8, pp. 17–18. See Beierwaltes, *Platonismus im Christentum*, pp. 130–71.

100 *Trialogus De Possest*, *Opera* XI/2, p. 64, n. 53, ll. 13–15: Ibi ignorantia est perfecta scientia, ubi non-esse est essendi necessitas, ubi ineffabile est nomen omnium nominabilium.

101 *In I Sent.*, d. 22, q. 2, *Opera Omnia* 20, p. 140B; *Commentaria in Librum De Divinis Nominibus*, cap. 7, art. 77, *Opera Omnia* 16, 258A'; *Difficultatum Praecipuarum Absolutiones*, art. 2, *Opera Omnia* 16, 488AB.

102 *De Natura Aeterni et Veri Dei*, art. 13, *Opera Omnia* 34, 26C'–27C'. See also art. 30–1, 51D'–55B; *Elementatio Theologica*, *Opera Omnia* 33, 119A–C; *De Contemplatione*, *Liber* 3, art. 4, *Opera Omnia* 41, 258B'–259C. See also *Commentaria in Librum De Mystica Theologia*, *Opera Omnia* 16, 450A'–C'.

103 Pico della Mirandola, *De Ente et Uno*, p. 214.
104 *De Ente et Uno*, pp. 214–16.
105 Given his predilection for triadic models of thinking, it is not surprising that scholars have sought echoes (at least) in Hegel of the *triplex via*. Transposed modes of negation and eminence certainly operate within his system, but there are no real correspondences with the traditional *triplex via*. As Albert Chapelle has remarked, 'les perspectives de Hegel et de Thomas d'Aquin demeurent irréductibles'. See A. Chapelle, *Hegel et la religion II. La dialectique*, p. 43n63. See Emilio Brito: *Dieu et l'être d'après Thomas d'Aquin et Hegel*, pp. 57–83.
106 Etienne Gilson (ed.), René Descartes, *Discours de la Méthode*, pp. 336–7: 'Cette théologie naturelle des attributs de Dieu est manifestement inspirée de celle de saint Thomas, dont Descartes conserve les éléments traditionnels (méthode affirmative, méthode négative, valeur analogique des attributs). Mais elle est animée d'un esprit nouveau.' For an exhaustive list of Descartes' treatment of divine attributes and possible sources in Aquinas see Gilson, *Index Scolastico-Cartésien*, pp. 79–81.
107 *Discours de la Méthode*, AT 6:34: 'il restait qu'elle eût été mise en moi par une nature qui fût véritablement plus parfaite que je n'étais, et même qui eût en soi toutes les perfections dont je pouvais avoir quelque idée, c'est à dire, pour m'expliquer en un mot, qui fût Dieu.'
108 See *Discours de la Méthode*, AT 6:35. See also AT 7:137.
109 *Discours de la Méthode*, AT 6:38–9: 'Dieu est ou existe, et qu'il est un être parfait, et que tout ce qui est en nous vient de lui. . . . tout ce qui est en nous de réel et de vrai vient d'un être parfait et infini.'
110 Ak XXVIII:1020. *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion*, in Immanuel Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, p. 364. ('Ak' refers to the critical edition of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1900—).
111 *Lectures on Philosophical Doctrine of Religion*, p. 365.
112 Ibid. See Ak XXVIII: 1021: 'Daher muß ich zuerst *via negationis* verfahren, d.h. ich muß alles Sinnliche, was meinen Vorstellungen von dieser oder jener Realität inhäriret, sorgfältig absondern, alles Unvollkommene, alles Negative weglassen, und das reine Reale, was übrig bleibt, Gott beilegen.'
113 *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion*, 366.
114 Ak XXVIII:1023, *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion*, 366.
115 Ibid.

116 Ak XXVIII, 1023, *Lectures on the Philosophical Doctrine of Religion*, 366–7.

117 Compare Ak XXVIII:1033. Johann August Eberhard (1739–1809) was professor of Philosophy at Halle. A rationalist follower of Christian Wolff, he was Kant's most severe critic, disputing the status of synthetic *a priori* cognition and questioning the originality of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Eberhard's theology was typical of the kind Kant wanted to replace with his own moral theology. In the section of his *Vorbereitung* entitled 'Drei Arten der Bestimmungen in Gott' (26), Eberhard writes: 'Was wir also Gott beilegen, das legen wir ihm 1) durch Verneinung (*via negationis*), 2) durch Erhebung, auf eine vorzügliche Art, oder in unendlich ausnehmender Bedeutung (*via eminentiae*), 3) durch den Weg der Causalität (*via causalitatis*) bei.' Kant wrote the following Reflection (§ 6286) on this passage in Eberhard:

> Der Deist legt dem *enti summo* nur alle Realität *in abstracto* bei, aber keine *in concreto*. Wie soll nun der Theist verfahren, um sie *in concreto* Gott beizulegen? Wir verfahren mit der Wahl der Realitäten *via tam negationis quam eminentiae*, aber in der Art, wie wir dem höchsten Wesen die Realitäten *in concreto* beilegen, *secundum analogia. Per analogiam.* Realitäten lassen sich nicht *in concreto* durch bloßen Verstand denken, sondern sie sind immer mit Bedingungen der Sinnlichkeit affiziert; zuerst also werde ich *via reductionis* die Realität von dem, was ihr als Phaenomenon zukommt (*adhaerentibus sensitivis*), nach Möglichkeit befreien, denn sonst kommen Anthropomorphismen heraus. Darauf aber das sie als *realitas noumenon* (sollten auch alle besondere Bestimmungen *in concreto* wegfallen) *per eminentiam* unendlich erhöhen. (Vor der Reduktion muß der Weg der *eminentia* nicht genommen werden; denn auch menschliche Vollkommenheit könnte ins Unendliche wachsen, ohne der Spezies nach verschieden zu sein.) Weil aber die Aufhebung alles Sensitiven auch den Begriff *in concreto* aufhebt, welches allen Theism in einen bloßen Deism verwandeln würde, so bleibt der Weg der Anwendung nach der Analogie übrig, nach welcher ich gestehe nicht zu wissen, wie die göttlichen Eigenschaften an sich beschaffen sind, sondern nur, daß sie eben so im Verhaltnis zur Welt gedacht werden, wie menschliche Eigenschaften zu ihren Produkten.

Ak, XVIII, 554–5 with German spelling updated. Translation in Johann August Eberhard, *Preparation for Natural Theology with Kant's Notes and the Danzig Rational Theology Transcript*, pp. 114–15:

> The deist ascribes all reality to the supreme being only abstractly, but none concretely. How should the theist now proceed to ascribe these concretely to God? We proceed with the selection of realities through negation as through eminence, but in the way that we concretely ascribe realities to the supreme being according to analogy, through analogy. Realities cannot be thought concretely through mere understanding, but rather are always affected by the conditions of sensibility; thus whenever possible I will first free the reality through reduction from what belongs to it as phenomenon (i. e. from what adheres sensibly to it), for otherwise anthropomorphisms emerge. But thereafter I will elevate them infinitely as noumenal reality (should all concrete particular determinations be eliminated) through eminence. (The path of eminence must not be taken before reduction; for human perfection could also increase *ad infinitum*, without being different according to species.) But because the abolishment of everything sensitive also abolishes the concrete concept, which would transform all theism into a mere deism, the way of application according to analogy remains, according to which I confess not to know how the divine properties are constituted in themselves, but only that they are thought in relation to the world in the same way as human properties to their products.

118 Kant, *Religion and Rational Theology*, p. 337.

119 Alexander Gottllieb Baumgarten, *Metaphysica* §826, p. 337: Si quid in ente necessario deprehendimus, quod repraesentatis in ente contingenti partialiter simile, partialiter diversum ab iis est, discrimina tamen non satis intelligimus, nec nomen ipsi peculiare invenimus: illud dicimus eius, quod in ente contingenti simile notavimus, analogon, deoque tribuitur per analogiam, si realitates in eius conceptu regnare videntur, per eminentiam (excellentiam), si negationes, per reductionem (via negationis).

120 *Motu An.* 7, 701b25–8.

121 Gottlob Frege, *Begriffsschrift und andere Aufsätze*, p. 107: 'Die Zeichen sind für das Denken von derselben Bedeutung wie für die Schifffahrt die Erfindung, den Wind zu gebrauchen, um gegen den Wind zu segeln.'

122 Since the second century AD it bears the name of the Roman consul Philopappos, lover and benefactor of Greek culture. A monument was erected in his honor in 119 AD, of which only the ruins survive.

123 In light of our present topic it is interesting to contrast Paul's preaching regarding the unknown God with the opening of his letter to the Hebrews: 'In old days, God spoke to our fathers in many ways and by many means (πολυμερῶς καὶ πολυτρόπως πάλαι ὁ θεὸς λαλήσας τοῖς πατράσιν ἐν τοῖς προφήταις).'

124 *De An.* 2, 8, 420b.

125 Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, pp. 225–6. Koestler refers to a state 'which the mystics called "ecstasy" and saints "contemplation"; the greatest and soberest of modern psychologists had recognized this state as a fact and called it the "oceanic sense". And, indeed, one's personality dissolved as a grain of salt in the sea; but at the same time the infinite sea seemed to be contained in the grain of salt. The grain could no longer be localized in time and space. It was a state in which thought lost its direction and started to circle, like the compass needle at the magnetic pole; until finally it cut loose from its axis and travelled freely in space, like a bunch of light in the night; and until it seemed that all thoughts and all sensations, even pain and joy itself, were only the spectrum lines of the same ray of light, disintegrating in the prism of consciousness.'

126 *De Docta Ignorantia*, *Opera Omnia* I, p. 163, ll. 7–11: 'In mari me ex Graecia redeunte . . . ad hoc ductus sum, ut incomprehensibilia incomprehensibiliter amplecterer in docta ignorantia, per transcensum veritatum incorruptibilium humaniter scibilium.' Nicholas of Cusa, *Selected Spiritual Writings*, pp. 205–6. See Beierwaltes, *Platonismus im Christentum*, p. 146.

127 Erich Meuthen, *Nikolas von Kues, 1401–1464: Skizze einer Biographie*, pp. 52–3. Cusanus in a sense gave the lie to Horace's declaration *Caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare current*.

128 *Periphyseon* 4, 743C–744B. Trans. John J. O'Meara, Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae, *Periphyseon* (*De Divisione Naturae*), pp. 5–7.

129 *Sym.* 210d: τὸ πέλαγος τετραμμένος τοῦ καλοῦ.

130 Centuries earlier Origen employed the marine analogy to convey the immensity of the divine mystery: 'The further we progress in reading, the greater grows the accumulation of mysteries for us. And just as if someone should embark on the sea borne by a small boat, as long as he is near land he has little fear. But, when he has advanced little by little into the deep and has begun either to be lifted on high by the swelling waves

or brought down to the depths by the same gaping waves then truly great fear and terror permeate his mind because he has entrusted a small craft to such immense waves. So also we seem to have suffered, who, small in merits and slight in ability, dare to enter so vast a sea of mysteries. But if by your prayers the Lord should see fit to give us a favorable breeze of his Holy Spirit we shall enter the port of salvation with a favorable passage of the word.' Origen, *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus*, trans. Ronald E. Heine, p. 148. See *Homilien zum Hexateuch in Rufins Übersetzung* I: *Die Homilien zu Genesis*, p. 136: Quantum legentes progredimur, tantum nobis sacramentorum cumulus augetur. Et ut si quis exiguo vectus navigio ingrediatur mare, donec terrae vicinus est, minus metuit; cum vero paulatim in altum fuerit progressus et undis intumescentibus vel in excelsum attolli coeperit vel eisdem dehiscentibus in ima deduci, ibi vero mentem pavor ingens et formido percurrit, quod exiguam ratem tam inmensis fluctibus credidit: Ita etiam nos pati videmur, qui exigui meritis et ingenio tenues inire tam vastum mysteriorum pelagus audemus. Sed si orantibus vobis Dominus dignetur Spiritus sui sancti auram nobis prosperam dare, secundo verbi cursu portum salutis intrabimus. Elsewhere Origen compared Scripture to a vast forest; cf. PL 25, 720D: *latissimam Scripturae silvam. Homélies sur Ézéchiel*, p. 156). St Jerome (347–420), referred to its infinite forest of meanings; compare *Epistulae* I, p. 609, § 19: *infinitam sensuum silvam*. Jerome, mixing his metaphors, combined the images of ocean and labyrinth (*oceanum, et mysteriorum Dei, ut sic loquar, labyrinthum*) to suggest the immense impenetrability of the divine reality; compare *Commentariorum in Hiezechielem libri XIV*, p. 677. He cites Virgil: 'As once, in ancient days, so it is said, the labyrinth in high Crete had a path built out of blind walls, an ambiguous maze of a thousand ways, a winding course that mocked all signs of finding a way out, a puzzle that was irresolvable and irretaceable.' *Aeneid* 5, 588–91, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, pp. 127–8; Latin: 'Hic labor ille domus, et inextricabilis error. / De quo et in alio loco idem poeta decantat / Ut quondam Creta fertur labyrinthus in alta: / Parietibus textum caecis iter, ancipitemque / Mille viis habuisse dolum, qua signa sequendi / Falleret indeprensus, et irremeabilis error.'

131 *Periphyseon* I, 510B: Qui melius nesciendo scitur, cuius ignorantia vera est sapientia. Trans. I. P. Sheldon-Williams, *Iohannis Scotti Eriugenae Periphyseon* I, p. 191, slightly modified. See Augustine, *De Ordine* 16, 44: Deus qui melius scitur nesciendo.

132 Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol. 6, p. 416: τοῦ μὲν λέγειν ἀνθρώπους τοῦ δὲ σιωπᾶν θεοὺς διδασκάλους ἔχομεν.

Chapter Six

1 *Theaet.* 176a5–8: Ἀλλ' οὔτ' ἀπολέσθαι τὰ κακὰ δυνατόν, ὦ Θεόδωρε — ὑπεναντίον γάρ τι τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἀεὶ εἶναι ἀνάγκη — οὔτ' ἐν θεοῖς αὐτὰ ἱδρῦσθαι, τὴν δὲ θνητὴν φύσιν καὶ τόνδε τὸν τόπον περιπολεῖ ἐξ ἀνάγκης.

2 *Rep.* 2, 379b15–c7: Οὐκ ἄρα πάντων γε αἴτιον τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀλλὰ τῶν μὲν εὖ ἐχόντων αἴτιον, τῶν δὲ κακῶν ἀναίτιον. Παντελῶς γ', ἔφη. Οὐδ' ἄρα, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, ὁ θεός, ἐπειδὴ ἀγαθός, πάντων ἂν εἴη αἴτιος, ὡς οἱ πολλοὶ λέγουσιν, ἀλλὰ ὀλίγων μὲν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις αἴτιος, πολλῶν δὲ ἀναίτιος· πολὺ γὰρ ἐλάττω τἀγαθὰ τῶν κακῶν ἡμῖν, καὶ τῶν μὲν ἀγαθῶν οὐδένα ἄλλον αἰτιατέον, τῶν δὲ κακῶν ἄλλ' ἄττα δεῖ ζητεῖν τὰ αἴτια, ἀλλ' οὐ τὸν θεόν. Trans. Grube (Cooper 1018).

3 *Rep.* 617e4–5: αἰτία ἑλομένου· θεὸς ἀναίτιος. Trans. Grube.

4 *DMS* 33, 29–30: Propter debilitatem patiuntur quae oportet tales pati male eligentes. References are to page and line numbers of the Latin translation by William of Moerbeke, Proclus, *Tria opuscula (De Providentia, Libertate, Malo). Latine Guilelmo de Moerbeka vertente et Graece ex Isaacii Sebastocratoris aliorumque scriptis collecta*, ed. Helmut Boese. Trans. Opsomer and Steel, Proclus, *On the Existence of Evils*, p. 82.

5 See Jan Opsomer, 'Proclus vs Plotinus on Matter (*De mal. subs.* 30–7)' and Denis O'Brien, 'La matière chez Plotin: son origine, sa nature'.

6 *Tim.* 29e1–30a3: ἀγαθὸς ἦν, ἀγαθῷ δὲ οὐδεὶς περὶ οὐδενὸς οὐδέποτε ἐγγίγνεται φθόνος· τούτου δ' ἐκτὸς ὢν πάντα ὅτι μάλιστα ἐβουλήθη γενέσθαι παραπλήσια ἑαυτῷ. . . βουληθεὶς γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἀγαθὰ μὲν πάντα, φλαῦρον δὲ μηδὲν εἶναι κατὰ δύναμιν. (Trans. Zeyl, p. 1236).

7 *Cat.* 11, 13b36–14a6: Ἐναντίον δέ ἐστιν ἀγαθῷ μὲν ἐξ ἀνάγκης κακόν, — τοῦτο δὲ δῆλον τῇ καθ' ἕκαστον ἐπαγωγῇ . . . ἐπὶ δὲ τῶν πλείστων ἀεὶ τῷ κακῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐναντίον ἐστίν. Trans. Cooke and Tredennick, p. 97.

8 *Cat.* 11, 14a7–8: ἔτι τῶν ἐναντίων οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον, ἐὰν θάτερον ᾖ, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν εἶναι. ἔτι τῶν ἐναντίων οὐκ ἀναγκαῖον, ἐὰν θάτερον ᾖ, καὶ τὸ λοιπὸν εἶναι.

9 See *QDM* 1, 1, ad 5 (*Editio Leonina* XXIII, p. 7.311–15): Aristotiles frequenter utitur nomine contrarii pro privatione quia ipse dicit quod priuatio quodammodo est contrarium, et quod prima contrarietas est privatio et forma. (Further references to *QDM* contain in parentheses page and line numbers of the Leonine edition.)

10 Aristotle distinguishes between four principal kinds of opposition (ἀντίθεσις): contradiction (ἀντίφασις), contrariety (ἐναντίωσις),

relation (πρός τι), and privation (στέρησις). *Met.* 5, 10, 1018a20–21: ἀντικείμενα λέγεται ἀντίφασις καὶ τἀναντία καὶ τὰ πρός τι καὶ στέρησις. Also *Met.* 10, 4, 1055a33–1055b29. See Aquinas, *In 5 Meta.* 12, (ed. Marietti, 247, no. 922).

11 *Met.* 5, 22, 1022b32–3: καὶ ὁσαχῶς δὲ αἱ ἀπὸ τοῦ α ἀποφάσεις λέγονται, τοσαυταχῶς καὶ αἱ στερήσεις λέγονται.

12 *Met.* 5, 22, 1022b22–1023a6.

13 *ST* I 48, 3. See Charles Journet, *The Meaning of Evil*, p. 42.

14 *QDM* 1, 1 (5.165–9): Et similiter malum uno modo potest intelligi id quod est subiectum mali, et hoc aliquid est; alio modo potest intelligi ipsum malum, et hoc non est aliquid, sed est ipsa privatio aliquid alicuius particularis boni.

15 *Phys.* 192a3–7: ἡμεῖς μὲν γὰρ ὕλην καὶ στέρησιν ἕτερόν φαμεν εἶναι, καὶ τούτων τὸ μὲν οὐκ ὂν εἶναι κατὰ συμβεβηκός, τὴν ὕλην, τὴν δὲ στέρησιν καθ' αὑτήν, καὶ τὴν μὲν ἐγγὺς καὶ οὐσίαν πως, τὴν ὕλην, τὴν δὲ οὐδαμῶς.

16 *In DN* IV, lect. 21: Sciendum est quod apud multos antiquorum vulgariter dicebatur quod materia est secundum se mala et hoc ideo quia non distinguebant inter privationem et materiam; privatio autem est non-ens et malum. Unde, sicut Plato, dicebant materiam esse non-ens et ita quidem materiam esse secundum se malum. Sed Aristoteles in *I Physic.* dicit quod materia non est non-ens nec malum, nisi per accidens, idest ratione privationis quae ei accidit; et hoc est etiam quod hic Dionysius dicit quod in materia non est malum, secundum quod est materia. (ed. Marietti, 207, no. 559).

17 *Enneads* I 8 [51] 1.13–16: Ἀλλ' εἰ, ὅτι τῶν ἐναντίων ἡ αὐτὴ γένοιτ' ἂν ἐπιστήμη καὶ τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἐναντίον τὸ κακόν, ἥπερ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, καὶ τοῦ κακοῦ ἔσται. Trans. A. H. Armstrong, Vol. I, p. 279, with minor alteration (Armstrong translates ἐναντίον with 'opposite'.)

18 III 2 [47] 5.26.

19 I 8 [51] 6.1–3; 16–18: 'We must consider, too, what Plato means when he says "Evils can never be done away with," but exist "of necessity"; and that "they have no place among the gods, but haunt our mortal nature and this region for ever.". . . Socrates answers that "evils must exist of necessity, since the good must have its contrary."' Trans. Armstrong. Plotinus amends Plato's term 'subcontrary' (ὑπεναντίον) to 'contrary' (ἐναντίον).

20 Other senses of non-being for Plotinus are the distinction between Forms, and the difference between sensible and intelligible reality.

21 See Introduction, *Plotin. Traités 51–54*, trans. and notes, Luc Brisson et al., p. 15.

22 I 8 [51] 6.33.

23 I 8 [51] 16.1–3: 'Is matter, then, the same thing as otherness? No, rather it is the same thing as the part of otherness which is opposed to the things which in the full and proper sense exist.'

24 *Cat.* 7, 6a17–18: τὰ γὰρ πλεῖστον ἀλλήλων διεστηκότα τῶν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ γένει ἐναντία ὁρίζονται.

25 I 8 [51] 6.37–45: Τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλα ἐναντία ἢ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ εἴδει ὄντα ἢ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ γένει καὶ κοινοῦ τινός ἐστι μετειληφότα ἐν οἷς ἐστιν· ὅσα δὲ χωρίς ἐστι, καὶ ἃ τῷ ἑτέρῳ ἐστὶ συμπληρώσει τοῦ ὅ ἐστι, τούτων τὰ ἐναντία ἐν τῷ ἑτέρῳ ἐστί, πῶς οὐ μάλιστα ἂν εἴη ἐναντία, εἴπερ ἐναντία τὰ πλεῖστον ἀλλήλων ἀφεστηκότα; Πέρατι δὴ καὶ μέτρῳ καὶ [τὰ ἄλλα] ὅσα ἔνεστιν ἐν τῇ θείᾳ φύσει, ἀπειρία καὶ ἀμετρία καὶ τὰ ἄλλα, ὅσα ἔχει ἡ κακὴ φύσις, ἐναντία· ὥστε καὶ τὸ ὅλον τῷ ὅλῳ ἐναντίον.

26 I 8 [51] 11.1–5: Ἀλλ' ἡ ἐναντία τῷ εἴδει παντὶ φύσις στέρησις·στέρησις δὲ ἀεὶ ἐν ἄλλῳ καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῆς οὐχ ὑπόστασις· ὥστε τὸ κακὸν εἰ ἐν στερήσει, ἐν τῷ ἐστερημένῳ εἴδους τὸ κακὸν ἔσται· ὥστε καθ' ἑαυτὸ οὐκ ἔσται. Trans. Armstrong.

27 I 8 [51] 3.38; 6.47.

28 *Soph.* 257b, 258d.

29 I 8. [51] 3. 4.

30 I 8. [51] 3.14; 3.31; 8. 21.

31 Denis O'Brien, 'Plotinus on the Making of Matter, Part III: The Essential Background', p. 31n10 offers the text and translation: '*Sophist* 258e2–3: τὸ πρὸς τὸ ὂν ἑκάστου μόριον αὐτῆς [*sc.* τῆς θατέρου φύσεως] ἀντιτιθέμενον ἐτολμήσαμεν εἰπεῖν ὡς αὐτὸ τοῦτό ἐστιν ὄντως τὸ μὴ ὄν. Literally: 'Of that part of the nature of the other (τὸ [. . .] μόριον αὐτῆς [sc. τῆς θατέρου φύσεως]) that is opposed to the being of each thing (πρὸς τὸ ὂν ἑκάστου [. . .] ἀντιτιθέμενον), we dared to say (ἐτολμήσαμεν εἰπεῖν) that just that (ὡς αὐτὸ τοῦτό) *is really* (ἐστιν ὄντως) what *is not* (τὸ μὴ ὄν).'

32 *Soph.* 258d: τὸ εἶδος ὃ τυγχάνει ὂν τοῦ μὴ ὄντος.

33 *Soph.* 237b: τὸ μηδαμῶς ὄν.

34 O'Brien, 'Plotinus on the Making of Matter', p. 32n13: '*Enn.* II 4 [12] 16.1–3: . . . μορίῳ ἑτερότητος ἀντιταττομένῳ πρὸς τὰ ὄντα κυρίως, ἃ δὴ λόγοι [*sc.* ἡ ὕλη ταὐτόν ἐστι]. "Matter is the same (ἡ ὕλη ταὐτόν ἐστι, taken over from the words preceding) as a part of otherness (μορίῳ ἑτερότητος) set in opposition (ἀντιταττομένῳ) to the beings properly so-called (πρὸς τὰ ὄντα κυρίως), that are none other than *logoi* (ἃ δὴ λόγοι)."'

35 See I 8 [51] 3.12–16: Ἤδη γὰρ ἄν τις εἰς ἔννοιαν ἥκοι αὐτοῦ οἷον ἀμετρίαν εἶναι πρὸς μέτρον καὶ ἄπειρον πρὸς πέρας καὶ ἀνείδεον πρὸς εἰδοποιητικὸν καὶ ἀεὶ ἐνδεὲς πρὸς αὔταρκες, ἀεὶ ἀόριστον, οὐδαμῇ ἑστώς, παμπαθές, ἀκόρητον, πενία παντελής.

36 See I 8 [51] 5.6–14: Ἢ οὐκ ἐν τῇ ὁπωσοῦν ἐλλείψει, ἀλλ' ἐν τῇ παντελεῖ τὸ κακόν· τὸ γοῦν ἐλλεῖπον ὀλίγῳ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ οὐ κακόν, δύναται γὰρ καὶ τέλεον εἶναι ὡς πρὸς φύσιν τὴν αὐτοῦ. Ἀλλ' ὅταν παντελῶς ἐλλείπῃ, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἡ ὕλη, τοῦτο τὸ ὄντως κακὸν μηδεμίαν ἔχον ἀγαθοῦ μοῖραν. Οὐδὲ γὰρ τὸ εἶναι ἔχει ἡ ὕλη, ἵνα ἀγαθοῦ ταύτῃ μετεῖχεν, ἀλλ' ὁμώνυμον αὐτῇ τὸ εἶναι, ὡς ἀληθὲς εἶναι λέγειν αὐτὸ μὴ εἶναι. Ἡ οὖν ἔλλειψις ἔχει μὲν τὸ μὴ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι, ἡ δὲ παντελὴς τὸ κακόν.

37 See I 8 [51] 8.38–44: Ἔστω δὴ πρώτως μὲν τὸ ἄμετρον κακόν, τὸ δ' ἐν ἀμετρίᾳ γενόμενον ἢ ὁμοιώσει ἢ μεταλήψει τῷ συμβεβηκέναι αὐτῷ δευτέρως κακόν· καὶ πρώτως μὲν τὸ σκότος, τὸ δὲ ἐσκοτισμένον δευτέρως ὡσαύτως. Κακία δὴ ἄγνοια οὖσα καὶ ἀμετρία περὶ ψυχὴν δευτέρως κακὸν καὶ οὐκ αὐτοκακόν· οὐδὲ γὰρ ἀρετὴ πρῶτον ἀγαθόν, ἀλλ' ὅ τι ὡμοίωται ἢ μετείληφεν αὐτοῦ.

38 II 4 [12] 5.16–19: ἡ μὲν γὰρ θεία λαβοῦσα τὸ ὁρίζον αὐτὴν ζωὴν ὡρισμένην καὶ νοερὰν ἔχει, ἡ δὲ ὡρισμένον μέν τι γίγνεται, οὐ μὴν ζῶν οὐδὲ νοοῦν, ἀλλὰ νεκρὸν κεκοσμημένον.

39 *DNB* 18: *Hylen*, quae rerum informis materies antiquis dicebatur, non esse malum.

40 I 8 [51] 11.1–5, cited above, note 26.

41 I 8 [51] 11.10–11 (Armstrong, I: 307). Armstrong notes: 'This is the Aristotelian doctrine, implying the distinction between matter and privation which forms the basis of Aristotle's criticism of the Platonic doctrine of matter (*Physics* I.9) and which is attacked by Plotinus in II.4.14.' (306–7n1).

42 See Robert J. O'Connell, *Images of Conversion in St Augustine's 'Confessions'*, p. 108.

43 *Conf.* 7, 13 , 19: Et tibi omnino non est malum.

44 *Conf.* 7, 9, 13: Procurasti mihi per quendam hominem immanissimo typho turgidum quosdam platonicorum libros ex graeca lingua in latinam versos.

45 See *De Moribus Manichaeorum* (*DMM*) 7, 9 (*PL* 32, 1349): Nihil per divinam providentiam ad id ut non sit pervenire permittitur.

46 *De Anima* 2, 418b18–20: δοκεῖ τε τὸ φῶς ἐναντίον εἶναι τῷ σκότει· ἔστι δὲ τὸ σκότος στέρησις τῆς τοιαύτης ἕξεως ἐκ διαφανοῦς, ὥστε δῆλον ὅτι καὶ ἡ τούτου παρουσία τὸ φῶς ἐστιν.

47 *DMM* 2, 2 (*PL* 32: 1346): Idipsum ergo malum est... deficere ab essentia et ad id tendere ut non sit. Trans. Richard Stothert, p. 70.
48 See *DMM* 8, 11 (*PL* 32: 1349).
49 *De Libero Arbitrio* (*DLA*) 1, 2, 4 (CCSL 29: 213): Credimus autem ex uno deo esse omnia quae sunt et tamen non esse peccatorum auctorem deum.
50 *QDM* 1, 1 (6.228–9): Ipsum esse maxime habet rationem appetibilis.
51 *DLA* 3, 8, 23 (CCSL 29: 289).
52 *DLA* 3, 7, 20 (CCSL 29: 287): Considera igitur, quantum potes, quam magnum bonum sit ipsum esse, quod et beati et miseri volunt. Trans. Benjamin and Hackstaff, *On Free Choice of the Will*, pp. 102–3.
53 *DLA* 3, 7, 21 (CCSL 29: 287): Si vis itaque miseriam fugere, ama in te hoc ipsum quia esse vis. Trans. Benjamin and Hackstaff, p. 103. See also *De Civitate Dei* (*CD*) 11, 27 (CCSL 48: 346).
54 See Emilie Zum Brunn, *St Augustine: Being and Nothingness*, p. 40.
55 *De Consolatione Philosophiae* 3, pr. 11. See *De Ver.* 21, 2; *ST* I, 5, 2, ad 4; *ST* I 5, 2 ad 3; *Comp. Theol.* 116; *CG* 3, 3, arg. 7.
56 *Gen. et Corr.* 2, 336b28–9: βέλτιον δὲ τὸ εἶναι ἢ τὸ μὴ εἶναι.
57 *QDM* 1, 1 (6.232–3): Ipsum esse in quantum est appetibile est bonum.
58 *De Natura Boni* (*DNB*) 1: Quia ergo bona omnia, sive magna, sive parva, per quoslibet rerum gradus, non possunt esse nisi a Deo, omnis autem natura in quantum natura est, bonum est; omnis natura non potest esse nisi a summo et vero Deo: quia omnia etiam non summa bona, sed propinqua summo bono, et rursus omnia etiam novissima bona, quae longe sunt a summo bono, non possunt esse nisi ab ipso summo bono. Omnis ergo spiritus etiam mutabilis et omne corpus a Deo: et haec est omnis facta natura. Omnis quippe natura aut spiritus, aut corpus est. Spiritus incommutabilis Deus est. (CSEL 25, p. 855).
59 *DNB* 17: Non ergo mala, in quantum natura est, ulla natura, sed cuique naturae non est malum nisi minui bono. Quod si minuendo absumeretur, sicut nullum bonum, ita nulla natura relinqueretur. (CSEL 25, pp. 861–2). Trans. 'On the Nature of the Good' in P. Schaff, ed. *A Select Library of Nicene and post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: A New Series*, p. NN.
60 *DNB* 3 (CSEL 25, p. 857): Omnis ergo natura bona est.
61 *DNB* 37 (CSEL 25, p. 873): Proinde si custodiant omnes naturae modum et speciem et ordinem proprium, nullum erit malum.
62 *DNB* 4 (CSEL 25, p. 857): Nihil aliud est quam corruptio vel modi vel speciei vel ordinis naturalis.

63 See *DNB* 4, 9, 10 (CSEL 25), pp. 857–9.
64 *DNB* 41 (CSEL 25, p. 874).
65 See *Conf.* 5, 10, 18; *Conf.* 4, 3, 4; *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 140, 9–10.
66 See *DNB*, c. 41 (CSEL 25, pp. 874–6).
67 *DNB* 18 (CSEL 25, p. 862, l. 10): Nemo enim formare et creare corpora nisi Deus potest.
68 *DNB* 18 (CSEL 25, p. 862): Et quia omne bonum a Deo, neminem oportet dubitare etiam istam, si qua est, materiem non nisi esse a Deo.
69 *Enchiridion* (*ENC*) 2, 8: Est itaque fides et malarum rerum et bonarum, quia et bona creduntur et mala. (CCSL 46), p. 51. Trans. Albert C. Outler, p. 340.
70 *ENC* 3, 11: In qua etiam illud quod malum dicitur, bene ordinatum et loco suo positum, eminentius commendat bona, ut magis placeant et laudabiliora sint dum comparantur malis. Neque enim Deus omnipotens quod etiam infideles fatentur: Rerum cui summa potestas cum summe bonus sit, ullo modo sineret mali esse aliquid in operibus suis nisi usque adeo esset omnipotens et bonus ut bene faceret et de malo. Quid est autem aliud quod malum dicitur, nisi privatio boni? (CCSL 46, p. 53). Trans. Outler, p. 342.
71 A medical professor of my acquaintance reminds his students: 'Diseases do not exist. patients exist.'
72 See *ENC* 3, 11 (CCSL 46, p. 54).
73 See *ENC* 4, 12 (CCSL 46, p. 54): Naturae igitur omnes, quoniam naturarum prorsus omnium conditor summe bonus est, bonae sunt.
74 See *ENC* 4, 12 (CCSL 46, p. 54): Sed quia non sicut earum conditor summe atque imcommutabiliter bonae sunt, ideo in eis et minui bonum et augeri potest. Sed bono minui malum est, quamvis quantumcumque minuatur remaneat aliquid necesse est (si adhuc natura est), unde natura sit. Neque enim, si qualiscumque et quantulacumque natura est, consumi bonum quo natura est, nisi et ipsa consumatur potest.
75 *ENC* 4, 12 (CCSL 46, p. 54): Quam si penitus totamque consumpserit, ideo nullum bonum inerit quia natura nulla erit. Quocirca bonum consumere corruptio non potest nisi consumendo naturam. Omnis ergo natura bonum est, magnum si corrumpi non potest, parvum si potest; negari tamen bonum esse, nisi stulte atque imperite, prorsus non potest. Quae si corruptione consumitur, nec ipsa corruptio remanebit, nulla ubi esse possit subsistente natura. See *ENC* 4, 13 (CCSL 46, pp. 54–5): Nullum malum, nisi quod et bonum sit. Ac per hoc nullum est quod dicitur malum si nullum sit bonum. Sed bonum omni

malo carens, integrum bonum est; cui verum inest malum, vitiatum vel vitiosum bonum est. Nec malum unquam potest esse ullum ubi bonum est nullum.

76 *ENC* 4, 14 (CCSL 46, p. 55): Quapropter in his contrariis quae mala et bona uocantur illa dialecticorum regula deficit qua dicunt nulli rei duo simul inesse contraria.

77 *ENC* 4, 14 (CCSL 46: 55): Cum autem bona et mala nullus ambigat esse contraria, non solum simul esse possunt, sed mala omnino sine bonis et nisi in bonis esse non possunt, quamuis bona sine malis possint.

78 See *Conf*. 4, 16, 28.

79 *QDM* 1, 2, arg. 5 (9.40–50).

80 *QDM* 1, 2, ad 5 (12.258–64); See *ENC* 4, 14.

81 *QDM* 1, 1. (4.93–4).

82 *DLA* 3, 13, 36 (CCSL 29, p. 297). Trans. Benjamin & Hackstaff, p. 117. See also *DNB*, cc. 1, 17, 19.

83 See *Contra Iulianum* 6, 20, 63 (*PL* 44: 861), trans. pp. 374–5, and *CD*, 19, c. 13 (CCSL 48, 679).

84 *Opus imperfectum contra Julianum* 3, 206 (CSEL 85.1, p. 501; *PL* 45, 1334): Nulla enim natura, in quantum natura est, malum est, sed prorsus bonum, sine quo bono ullum esse non potest malum, quia nisi in aliqua natura ullum esse non potest vitium, quamvis sine vitio possit esse vel nunquam vitiata, vel sanata natura. Trans. Teske et al. *Unfinished Work in Answer to Julian*, p. NN.

85 *Contra epistolam Manichaei*, c. 33. See also c. 35.

86 See St Anselm, *Dialogus de casu diaboli*, c. 9: Quam cum deseruit magnum aliquid perdidit, et nihil pro ea nisi privationem eius quae nullam habet essentiam, quam iniustitiam, suscepit. (*Opera omnia* 1, p. 247) See *De conceptu virginali*, c. 5 (*Opera omnia* 2, pp. 146–7). Trans. Anselm of Canterbury, *Why God Became Man and The Virgin Conception and Original Sin*, pp. 177–8.

87 *ST* I, 48, 3. See *In EN* 4, l. 13.

88 *QDM* 1, 1, c. (5.168–9). See also *CG* 3, 5–7; *CG* 3, 13.

89 *DMS* 7, 31–4: Aliae quidem enim privationes absentiae solum sunt habituum, nihil a suis ad esse assumentes; bonum autem ergo propter potentiae excellentiam potentificat et sui ipsius privationem (C 205, 7–11, P 19). References preceding quoted texts are to paragraph and line numbers in Helmut Boese's critical edition; these numbers are reproduced by Opsomer and Steel. Numbers in brackets after the quoted texts refer to column and line numbers in Victor Cousin's 1864 edition, and the paragraph number in the appendix to Ceslas Pera's Marietti edition of

Aquinas' *In De Divinis Nominibus*, pp. 378–98. I cite the text according to Boese, with occasional minor spelling alterations. See Victor Cousin, *Procli Philosophi Platonici Opera Inedita*; Helmut Boese, *Procli Opuscula*.

Carlos Steel and Jan Opsomer provide the following helpful summary of Dionysius' reliance on Proclus for his doctrine of evil: 'In his celebrated work, *On the divine names*, ps.-Dionysius makes extensive use of Proclus' treatise, *On the existence of evils*. The long digression on evil in 4,18–34 can be considered as an adaptation and a summary (often a very mediocre one) of Proclus' arguments in *DMS*. Whereas in his other works, Dionysius cleverly attempts to hide his debt to the pagan Proclus, in this section his dependence is evident to the point of becoming embarrassing (it even made some scholars suppose the whole digression on evil to be a later interpolation). Dionysius follows Proclus step by step, here and there adding a critical remark so as to modify his views in a Christian way. One major divergence from Proclus is to be found in his treatment of demons. Dionysius upholds the view that the demons were created good (Proclus would have accepted this), but that they fell away from their creator through their own sin. Evil then starts in the universe with the fall of the angels, who by falling become demons. For Proclus, it is impossible that demons or other "superior kinds" would ever lose their initial perfection. Only the particular souls descending in the bodies can "fall". Another important divergence consists in Dionysius' denial that there is evil in irrational animals and in bodies. Although in both these cases he uses the same examples as Proclus, he has twisted the argument so that it leads to the opposite conclusion. By doing so, Dionysius has aligned himself with the Christian orthodoxy, according to which evil can originate only in beings that can make free choices. Apart from these doctrinal differences, Dionysius follows Proclus so closely that his work can even be used for the reconstruction of parts of the lost Greek text of *DMS*.

'Whatever Dionysius intention may have been, the plagiarising summary and adaptation of Proclus' doctrine in *On the divine names* gave Proclus' little treatise a publicity and worldwide readership he could never have dreamed of at the time of writing, the author being but a marginalised pagan philosopher in Athens. Thanks to Dionysius, Proclus' argument of evil as a *parupostasis* of the good became known and was studied not only in Byzantium, but also in the Latin West both through the translations of Hilduin, John Scot Eriugena, and Saracenus, and through the numerous commentators. Until the nineteenth century, Proclus' Neoplatonic doctrine of evil

as a kind of privation or a shortcoming would continue to dominate the philosophical debates on evi1.' Opsomer & Steel, *Proclus. On the Existence of Evils*, pp. 4–5.

90 *DMS*, 41, 18–19.

91 *DMS* 42, 5–7: . . . bonis quidem per se ex diis dare generationem, malis autem secundum quod boni partem acceperunt et haec et potentiam ad esse et finem (C 244.31–4; P: 112).

92 *DMS* 42, 7–12: Non enim sine mixtura malum le malum, sicut dictum est saepe, sed sic quidem malum, sic autem bonum; et ut quidem bonum ex diis, ut autem malum ex alia causa impotente: omne enim malum propter impotentiam generatur et defectum, quoniam et bonum ex potentia et in potentia ypostasim accepit: ipsius enim potentia et in ipso (C 244.34–245.6; P. 113). Trans. Opsomer & Steel: 'Evil is not unmixed evil [. . .] but it is evil in one respect and good in another. And insofar as it is good, it is from the gods; but insofar as it is evil, it is from another, impotent, cause. For all evil comes about through impotence and lack, just as the good gets its existence from and in power, for the power is of and in the good.'

93 *DMS* 48, 16–17: Neque igitur factiva malorum rationes et potentiae, sed impotentia et debilitas et similium <in>commensurata communio et mixtio.

94 *DMS* 49, 7–11: Et forte utique bene habebit neque faciens principale poni malorum neque exemplar secundum naturam neque quod cuius gratia secundum se: et enim species et natura ipsorum defectus est et indeterminatio et privatio, et hypostaseos modus, qua utique ut dicere consueverunt, parypostasi magis assimilatur. Unde utique et involuntarium esse malum saepe dictum est (C 252.9-18; P 126).

95 *DMS* 50, 3–9: Quis autem modus et qualiter subsistit malum ex hiis causisque et non causis entibus consequenter nobis dicendum, dictam parypostasim hic ponentibus. Non enim est aliter subsistere quod neque ex principali causa factum etiam qualitercumque neque in determinatum finem et le cuius gratia relationem habens neque secundum se eum qui in esse progressum sortiens, oportune ipsum principaliter substans et quodcumque ex causa fieri secundum naturam: omni enim impossibile sine causa generationem habere et ad aliquem finem ordinem generationis ipsius referre (C252.30–253.9; P 128). Trans, p. 94: 'We must next consider what the mode of evil is and how it comes into existence from the above-mentioned causes and non-causes. Here we have to bring in the aforementioned *parupostasis* [i. e.

parasitic existence]. For there is no other way of existing for that which neither is produced, in any way whatever, from a principal cause, nor has a relation to a definite goal and a final cause, nor has received in its own right an entry into being, since anything whatever that exists properly must come from a cause in accordance with nature — indeed, without a cause it is impossible for anything to come about — and must relate the order of its coming about to some goal.'

96 *DMS* 50, 9–11: Utrum igitur malum ponendum, aut horum quibus esse secundum accidens et propter aliud et non ex principio proprio? (C 253.9–12; P 128).

97 *DMS* 50, 22–5: aut subsistere quidem eorum que ex principio in finem progredientium erat, παρυφίστασθαι [idest iuxta subsistere] autem eorum que neque ex principio secundum naturam apparent neque in determinatum aliud consummantium. (C 253.30–254.1; P 130).

98 *DMS* 54, 17–22: . . . sed sic aliqualiter subcontrarium ipsum nominare, quod secundum se quidem est privatio; quia autem non omnino perfecta est privatio, sed simul cum habitu transumens de potentia inde et de operari, in contrariationis partem constituitur, et neque privatio est perfecta neque contrarium, sed subcontrarium bono, et parypostasi aut veritate significante non otiose audire ipsum consuetis (C 258.45–259.8; P 145).

99 *Phys.* 1, 192a14–16: ἡ δ' ἑτέρα μοῖρα τῆς ἐναντιώσεως πολλάκις ἂν φαντασθείη τῷ πρὸς τὸ κακοποιὸν αὐτῆς ἀτενίζοντι τὴν διάνοιαν οὐδ' εἶναι τὸ παράπαν.

100 *DMS* 58, 2–4: Sive enim est malum: qualiter providentia ad bonum non instabit? Sive providentia plenum universum: qualiter in entibus malum? (C 261.4-7; P 155).

101 *DMS* 61, 5–10: Neque enim possibile est esse malum non contrarium fantasiatum ut bonum, quoniam boni gratia omnia, etiam ipsum malum. Sed omnia gratia boni, et divinum incausativum malorum: nusquam enim malum qua malum inde, sed ex aliis causis et quibus generare non secundum potentiam, sed propter debilitatem existere dictum est (C 266.16–267.1; P 168–9).

102 See Laurent Sentis, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin et le mal. Foi chrétienne et théodicée*, pp. 345–59.

103 C. E. Rolt, Introduction, Dionysius the Areopagite, *The Divine Names and The Mystical Theology*, p. 20.

104 *DN* 4, 35, 179.11 (736A): ὡς πολλάκις εἰρήκαμεν. References to *DN* are to *Corpus Dionysiacum*, vol. 1, *De divinis nominibus*, ed. Beate Regina Suchla, and (in brackets) volume 3 of *Patrologia Graeca*.

105 *QDM* 1, 5, c. (23.172–3): Puniri non est malum, sed fieri pena dignum. See *DN* 4, 22, 170.8–9 (724B).
106 *DN* 4, 18, 162.14–163.2 (716A): Καὶ τί τὸ κακῦναν αὐτὸ καὶ ὅλως τί τὸ κακόν ἐστι, καὶ ἐκ τίνος ἀρχῆς ὑπέστη, καὶ ἐν τίνι τῶν ὄντων ἔστιν;
107 *In DN* IV, xiii, 467. See Augustine, *DNB*, c. 4: Proinde cum quaeritur unde sit malum, prius quaerendum est quid sit malum. Also *Contra epistolam Manichaei* 36, 41.
108 See *DN* 4, 18–19.
109 See *DN* 4, 19–20.
110 *DN* 4, 34, 178.18–20 (733C): Οὐκ ἄρα ὂν τὸ κακόν, οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς οὖσι τὸ κακόν. Οὐδαμοῦ γὰρ τὸ κακόν, ᾗ κακόν. Καὶ τὸ γίνεσθαι τὸ κακὸν οὐ κατὰ δύναμιν, ἀλλὰ δι' ἀσθένειαν.
111 *DN* 4, 33, 178.8–10 (733B): Ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς γινομένοις κακοῖς ἀγαθοπρεπῶς ἡ πρόνοια κέχρηται πρὸς τὴν αὐτῶν ἢ ἄλλων ἢ ἰδικὴν ἢ κοινὴν ὠφέλειαν καὶ οἰκείως ἑκάστου τῶν ὄντων προνοεῖ. See Plotinus, III.2 [47], 5, 23–6.
112 *DN* 4, 22–9.
113 *DN* 4, 30–2.
114 Josef Stiglmayr, 'Der Neuplatoniker Proclus als Vorlage des sogen. Dionysius Areopagita in der Lehre vom Übel', p. 256.
115 *DN* 4, 19, 163.8 (716B): ἐις τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων ἀλήθειαν ἀποβλέπειν.
116 *DMS*, 4, 3–4: ἀποβλέπειν ἐις τὴν τῶν πραγμάτων ὑπόστασιν.
117 *DN* 4, 19, 163.9–10 (716B): τὸ κακὸν οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τἀγαθοῦ καὶ εἰ ἐκ τἀγαθοῦ ἐστιν οὐ κακόν.
118 See *DN* 4, 32, 177.3–4 (732C): κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς καὶ δι' ἄλλο καὶ οὐκ ἐξ ἀρχῆς οἰκείας.
119 *QDM* 1, 2, args. 1 and 2; 1, 2, ad 1 & ad 3. *DN* 4, 20, 166.9–167.24 (720 B–D); 21, 168.12–22 (721C).
120 *QDM* 1, 2, arg. 1; 1, 2, ad 1; *DN* 4, 20, 166.9–167.24 (720B–D).
121 *QDM* 1, 2, arg. 1 (9.2–4); see *DN* 4, 167.16–17 (720D), and also 4, 21, 168.12–14 (721C).
122 See *QDM* 1, 1, c.
123 *QDM* 1, 1 c. (6.237–40).
124 *QDM* 1, 2, c.
125 *QDM* 1, 2, arg. 1.
126 *DN* 4, 20, 166.9–167.24 (720B–D).
127 *QDM* 1, 3, s. c. (14.137–8): Omnium malorum principium et finis est bonum. See *DN* 4, 31, 176.13–14 (732B): πάντων καὶ των κακῶν ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος ἔσται τὸ ἀγαθόν.

128 *QDM* 1, 3, arg. 5 (13.18–19): Malum non est ex bono; et si ex bono est, non est malum. *DN* 4, 19, 163.9–10 (716B): τὸ κακὸν οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τἀγαθοῦ καὶ εἰ ἐκ τἀγαθοῦ ἐστιν οὐ κακόν.

129 *QDM* 1, 3, ad 5. See *DN* 4, 32, 177.3–4 (732C).

130 *DN* 4, 21, 168.17–18 (721C).

131 See *CG* 3, 71, where Aquinas argues that divine providence does not entirely exclude evil from things: 'But, if evil were removed from some parts of the universe, much perfection would perish from the universe, whose beauty arises from an ordered unification of evil and good things. In fact, while evil things originate from good things that are defective, still, certain good things also result from them, as a consequence of the providence of the governor. Just as silent pauses add delight to a song. Therefore, evil should not have been excluded from things by divine providence.' (Sed si malum a quibusdam partibus universi subtraheretur, multum deperiret perfectionis universi, cuius pulchrtudo ex ordinata malorum et bonorum edunatione consurgit, dum mala ex bonis deficientibus proveniunt, et tamen ex eis quaedam bona consequuntur, ex providentia gubernantis: sicut et silentii interpositio facit cantilenam esse suavem. Non igitur per divinam providentiam debuit malum a rebus excludi.) Trans. Vernon J. Bourke, modified.

132 *De Consolatione Philosophiae* 3, pr. 4.

133 *CG* 3, c. 71: Esset autem e contrario arguendum: Si malum est, Deus est. Non enim esset malum sublato ordine boni, cuius privatio est malum. Hic autem ordo non esset, si Deus non esset. The translation is from Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3/1, p. 241.

134 *QDM* 1, 1, ad 16. See *DN* 4, 20, 164.22–165.8 (717B).

135 *QDM* 1, 3, arg. 14.

136 See *Met*. 5, 30, 1025a14–19. Aristotle speaks of someone digging a hole for a plant, Aquinas of a gravedigger.

137 See *Met*. 11, 8, 1064b19–20.

138 *QDM* 1, 3, ad 14 (17.411–12): Actio boni non pertingit ad malum terminum.

139 *QDM* 1, 3, ad 14 (17.412–15): Propter quod Dionysius dicit IV cap. *De divinis nominibus* quod malum non solum est preter intentionem, sed etiam preter viam, quia motus non per se terminatur ad malum. See *DN* 4, 32, 177.7–10 (732C).

140 *QDM* 1, 5, arg. 10 (22.67–70). See *DN* 4, 19, 163.15–19 (716C); 31, 176.13–177.2 (732B); 32, 177.7–10 (732C).

141 *QDM* 1, 3, c. (14.149–58). See *DN* 4, 19, 163.11–19 (716C); 32, 177.3–4 (732C).
142 *QDM* 1, 2, c. See *DN* 4, 3, 146.6–12 (697A).
143 Dionysius had followed Proclus in this (*DMS* 32–8).
144 This may be an example of what David Knowles referred to Aquinas' 'unexpected tolerance of Dionysian elements of thought'. See M. D. Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought*, p. 267.
145 *ST* I 48, 1, s. c: Malum non est existens neque bonum. *DN* 4, 165.11 (717C): Τὸ μὲν οὖν αὐτοκακὸν οὔτε ὂν οὔτε ἀγαθὸν.
146 See *ST* I, 48, 1; *ST* I, 14, 10, ad 4; *CG* 1, 71.
147 In *CG* 3, 3, besides the usual source in Aristotle, Aquinas also refers to Dionysius that all things crave what is good and best; see *DN* 4, 4, 152.7–8 (704B).
148 See *ST* I 48, 1, c.
149 See *CG* 3, 10. See Augustine, *CD*, 12, c. 7 (CCSL 48: 362).

Chapter Seven

1 *In II Sent.* 10, 1, 2.
2 *Quodl.* VI, Q 2, art 1.
3 *Subst. Sep.* XVIII, trans. Lescoe, p. 134.
4 Albert the Great, *Commentary on Dionysius' Mystical Theology* (*Commentarii In De Mystica Theologia*), Proemium. See Albert and Thomas, *Selected Writings*, ed Tugwell, pp. 134–5.
5 Joseph Langen, 'Die Schule des Hierotheos', p. 590: 'Gleich einer ägyptischen Sphynx hat der Geist dieser seltsamen Werke Jahrhunderten Rätsel zu lösen gegeben, und der Schleier ist immer noch nicht gelüftet.' A recent volume on the lives of the saints of the Orthodox Church perpetuates the belief that the author of the *Corpus Dionysiacum* was the first bishop of Athens. The reading for the saint's feastday on October 3rd ('Memory of the Holy Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite') states: 'Some people have accused Saint Dionysius of borrowing the terminology of the Neoplatonic philosophers, but the Orthodox Church, enlightened by his divine teaching, believes that he used the philosophical language of his age, while utterly reversing the fundamental theses of pagan philosophy.' A footnote states: 'The question of the identity of the author of the writings ascribed to St Dionysios the Areopagite has been the subject of bitter disputes among the specialists. Lying behind this debate is not so much simple historical information that is at stake, but more the recognition of

these writings that Church Tradition has used as a basis for its spiritual theology. The author's identity has, in this case, more of an "iconic" function than a strictly historical one.' The account concludes: 'Saint Dionysius' skull is now venerated in the Monastery of Dochiariou on Mount Athos, to which it was given by the Emperor Alexus Comnenus in the eleventh century.' *The Synaxarion. The Lives of the Saints of the Orthodox Church*, vol. 1, pp. 290–1.

6 Quoted by Peter Caramello in his introduction to Pera's edition of Aquinas' commentary on *De Divinis Nominibus*, p. xvi. Trans. Doherty, p. 80.

7 *De Beryllo* 11, *De Docta Ignorantia* I.16.43, also *De non aliud*, c. 14. Cusanus refers to 'divinus' and 'magnus Dionysius', *Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae* 10. Not everyone accorded to Dionysius the same elevated status. In his treatise 'On The Babylonian Captivity of the Church' Martin Luther (1483–1546) wrote: 'Indeed, to speak more boldly, it greatly displeases me to assign such importance to this Dionysius, whoever he may have been, for he shows hardly any signs of solid learning. I would ask, by what authority and with what arguments does he prove his hodge-podge about the angels in his *Celestial Hierarchy* — a book over which many curious and superstitious spirits have cudgeled their brains? If one were to read and judge without prejudice, is not everything in it his own fancy and very much like a dream? But in his *Theology*, which is rightly called *Mystical*, of which certain very ignorant theologians make so much, he is downright dangerous, for he is more of a Platonist than a Christian. So if I had my way, no believing soul would give the least attention to these books. So far, indeed, from learning Christ in them, you will lose even what you already know of him. I speak from experience. Let us rather hear Paul, that we may learn Jesus Christ and him crucified. He is the way, the life, and the truth; he is the ladder by which we come to the Father, as he says: "No one comes to the Father, but by me."' (*Selected Writings of Martin Luther 1517–1520*, p. 461). John Calvin (1509–1564) spoke of the 'monkish trifles' and 'wicked speculations' of Dionysius' writings. (*In Acta Apostolorum*, p. 167).

8 Jean Durantel, *Saint Thomas et le Pseudo-Denis*, p. 60. Aquinas made use of two translations, those of Eriugena and Sarracenus, frequently noting the different nuances of both.

9 Joseph Ratzinger, *Truth and Tolerance. Christian Belief and World Religions*, p. 225n22. See Werner Beierwaltes, 'Dionysios Areopagites — ein christlicher Proklos?', in *Platonismus im Christentum*, pp.

44–84. David Luscombe elaborates: 'Proclus, in explaining how beings descend from the One, presented a procession of grades or hierarchies arranged into triads which participate in the level of being both above and below themselves. All reality, therefore both emanates from and returns to the One, which is itself beyond being. But, whereas Proclus hereby explained the role of the pagan gods, Denis used Proclus' ideas to explain the orders of angels in a Christian universe and also the orders and grades in the church on earth, which is an extension of the chain of beings which fill the invisible spiritual world. None of Denis' angelology would have seemed unfamiliar to many contemporary or earlier Greek Christian writers. Already in the time of Origen (*c*.184/5–254) speculation on the role of angels was well advanced. But in the fourth century Christian thought drew closer together in the work of Marius Victorinus (d. *c*.363) and Gregory of Nyssa. Denis was more systematic in his classification of being, and he was to become known in the medieval West.' *Medieval Thought*, pp. 24–5.

In his essay on hierarchy in medieval philosophy, Luscombe gives the following helpful account: 'Denis portrayed the harmonious angelic hierarchy as a magnificent, vertical arrangement of nine orders divided into three superimposed triads according to their levels of knowledge and purity and of participation in God's secrets and goodness. Each triad and within it each order mediates purification, illumination, and perfection between the order above and the order below. The process is both a descending and an ascending one, a going out and a coming back, as spirits are brought closer to God through their purification, illumination, and perfecting by the higher orders. The measure of the resemblance of spirits to God — their deiformity — is the order they occupy in the hierarchy. For the division of the angels into groups of three, Denis claimed the authority of a certain Hierotheus (otherwise unknown), but Proclus had already assimilated the pagan gods into triads communicating light and knowledge to each other; Denis adapted this in effect and presented three triads of orders of angels. He also presented two triads of orders of human beings, with bishops occupying the highest grade and communicating directly with the lowest order of angels above.' Luscombe, 'Eternity and Hierarchy', p. 61.

10 *Subst. Sep.* 1, 7: Sic igitur patet quod inter nos et summum Deum quatuor ordines ponebant: scilicet deorum secundorum, intellectuum separatorum, animarum caelestium, et Daemonum bonorum seu malorum. Quae si vera essent, omnes huiusmodi medii ordines apud nos Angelorum nomine censerentur. Nam et Daemones in

sacra Scriptura Angeli nominantur, ipsae etiam animae caelestium corporum, si tamen sint animata, inter Angelos sunt connumerandae, ut Augustinus definit in Enchiridion. Trans. Lescoe, p. 42.

See Aquinas' *Commentary on the Book of Causes*, prop. 19: 'According to the Platonists, a fourfold order is found in things. The first is the order of the gods, i. e. of the ideal forms, which have among themselves an order corresponding to the order of the universality of forms, as was said before. Beneath this order is the order of separate intellects. Beneath that is the order of souls. Again, beneath that is the order of bodies.' (trans. p. 117). The division into gods, intellects, and souls seems to be taken directly from Proclus, *The Elements of Theology*, Props. 12, 13, 20, 113, 116, 119, 121, 184, 189, 190, 196 (pp. 15, 17, 23, 101–107, 161, 165, 167, 171). See St Thomas, *In DC*, Props. 2–5, Saffrey, pp. 10–41.

11 *ST* I, q. 50 a. 1: Ad perfectionem universi requiritur quod sint aliquae creaturae intellectuales.

12 Concluding his account of the cult of angels in history, Voltaire (1694–1778) remarked: 'The writers known by the names of Dionysius the Areopagite and Gregory I fixed the number of the angels at nine choirs, forming three hierarchies; the first consisting of the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; the second of the Dominations, Virtues and Powers; and the third of the Principalities, Archangels and lastly the Angels, who give their denomination to all the rest.' He concludes by remarking, perhaps not without sarcasm: 'It is hardly allowable for any one but a pope, thus to settle the different ranks in heaven.' (M. De Voltaire, *A Philosophical Dictionary*, p. 157.) Voltaire proposed that the doctrine of angels is one of the oldest in the world, preceding even that of the immortality of the soul. This is unsurprising, he suggests, since philosophy is required to believe that the soul of mortal man is immortal, whereas imagination and weakness suffice to invent superior beings who will protect or persecute us. (p. 155). Interestingly Voltaire referred to Aquinas: 'St Thomas, at question cviii. article 2, says, that the Thrones are as near to God as the Cherubim and Seraphim, because it is upon them that God sits.' (p. 159) A final comment reveals his sceptical attitude: 'It is not known precisely where the angels dwell — whether in the air, in the void, or in the planets. It has not been God's pleasure that we should be informed of their abode.' (p. 160).

13 Gregory the Great, *In Evang.* 34.12, *PL* 76, 1254B.

14 Kevin Corrigan, 'Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite', *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

15 David Luscombe, 'Hierarchy', pp. 62–3.

16 The tenth drachma, which had been lost by the woman in the parable, has been interpreted as referring allegorically to the human race.

17 Gregory the Great, *In Evang.* 34.7 *PL* 76, 1249D: Novem vero angelorum ordines diximus, quia videlicet esse, testante sacro eloquio, scimus angelos, archangelos, virtutes, potestates, principatus, dominationes, thronos, cherubim, atque seraphim. The text continues: 'Nearly every page of Scripture testifies to the existence of angels and archangels. The books of the prophets, as we know, speak of cherubim and seraphim. Paul lists the names of four ranks when he says to the Ephesians: Far above all principality and power and virtue and domination. (Eph. 1:21). Writing to the Colossians he says: Whether thrones or dominations or principalities or powers. (Col. 1:16) He had already mentioned the dominations, principalities and powers to the Ephesians, but when he was going to list them for the Colossians as well he put in first place the thrones, whom he had not mentioned to the Ephesians. When we add thrones to the four ranks he listed for the Ephesians, that is, principalities, powers, virtues and dominations, we have five ranks he has particularly mentioned. When we add angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim to these, we find nine ranks of angels.' Trans. Hurst, pp. 285–6.

18 Gregory the Great, *In Evang.* 34.12, *PL* 76, 1254B: Fertur vero Dionysius Areopagita, antiquus videlicet et venerabilis pater, dicere quod ex minoribus angelorum agminibus foras ad explendum ministerium vel visibiliter vel invisibiliter mittuntur, scilicet quia ad humana solatia ut angeli aut archangeli veniunt.

19 Aquinas cites approvingly in an early question of the *Summa*: Omnis processus divinae manifestationis venit ad nos a patre luminum moto. (*ST* I, 9, a. 1).

20 Proclus, *Elements*, Prop. 35: Πᾶν τὸ αἰτιατὸν καὶ μένει ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ αἰτίᾳ καὶ πρόεισιν ἀπ' αὐτῆς καὶ ἐπιστρέφει πρὸς αὐτήν. See Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius. A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence*, p. 51.

21 *CH* 1, 1, 120B–121A. Translations of Dionysius are from Colm Luibheid, *Pseudo-Dionysius, The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1987). References within the text (*CH*) are to Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 3. Translations of Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* are taken (with occasional modifications) either from the Blackfriars edition (London: Eyre & Spottiswode, 1964–1966), or that of the English Dominican Fathers [Laurence Shapcote OP] (rev. ed., Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1991).

22 *CH* 1, 2, 121A: ἐπὶ τὰς τῶν ἱεροτάτων λογίων πατροπαραδότους ἐλλάμψεις ὡς ἐφικτὸν ἀνανεύσωμεν καὶ τὰς ὑπ' αὐτῶν συμβολικῶς ἡμῖν καὶ ἀναγωγικῶς ἐκφανθείσας τῶν οὐρανίων νοῶν ἱεραρχίας ὡς οἷοί τέ ἐσμεν ἐποπτεύσωμεν.

23 On Dionysius' close dependence on Plato, see Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464): 'Plato in his book *The Republic* takes the sun [as a symbolic illustration] and takes note of its power in perceptible objects. And from the likeness of the sun he elevates himself to the light-of-intelligence of the Creator-Intellect. The Great Dionysius imitates Plato (*Quem magnus Dionysius imitatur*).' *De Beryllo* 27, trans. Jasper Hopkins, p. NNN. Also *Apologia Doctae Ignorantiae* 10: 'Prior to [Avicenna] the divine Plato, in the *Parmenides*, more keenly made such an attempt to open a way to God. The divine Dionysius imitated Plato to such an extent that he is quite frequently found to have cited Plato's words in series.' Trans. Jasper Hopkins, *A Defense of Learned Ignorance from one Disciple to Another*, p. 466. (. . . sed acutius ante ipsum divinus Plato in Parmenide tali modo in Deum conatus est viam pandere; quem adeo divinus Dionysius imitatus est, ut saepius Platonis verba seriatim posuisse reperiatur.) See David Luscombe, 'Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite in the Writings of Nicholas of Cusa, Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola', p. 98. In the dialogue *De Non Aliud*, Nicholas of Cusa assures Peter Balbi, translator of Proclus: 'It is certain, Peter, that your Proclus was later in time than Dionysius the Areopagite. But it is uncertain whether he saw the writings of Dionysius.' Trans. Jasper Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa on God as Not-Other*, p. 1151. Nicholas had perhaps an early suspicion regarding the authorship of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*, anticipating the definitive verdict of Italian Renaissance scholar Lorenzo Valla (1407–1457) and Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1466–1536), regarding Dionysius' textual dependence on Proclus. Cusanus emphasized the continuity of Plato, Proclus, and Dionysius. He notes that Dionysius imitates Plato in asserting that 'negations that are not privative assertions, but excellent and abundant affirmations, are truer than affirmations'; Proclus in turn, Cusanus believed, follows the teaching of Dionysius. Cusanus praises all three as 'wonderful hunters' (*mirandos venatores*) of wisdom, worthy of further study. (Dionysius, qui Platonem imitatur, in campo unitatis similem venationem fecit et negationes, quae non sunt privationes, sed excellentiae et praegnantes affirmationes, veriores dicit affirmationibus. Proclus vero, qui Origenem allegat, post Dionysium venit. Dionysium sequendo, unum et bonum — licet ita Plato primum nominaverit —

de primo negat, quod penitus est ineffabile. Hos mirandos venatores sequendos laudandosque esse cum arbitrer, ad ipsorum nobis relictam in scriptis diligentiam studiosum remitto. (*De Venatione Sapientiae* 22, p. 62.) Hopkins trans: 'Dionysius, who imitates Plato, . . . says that negations that are not privative assertions but are excellent and abundant [negative assertions] are truer than are affirmations. Proclus, however, who cites Origen, comes after Dionysius. Following Dionysius, he denies of the First, which is altogether ineffable, that it is one and good — although Plato called the First one and good. . . . I think that these marvelous pursuers are to be followed and praised.' https://www.jasper-hopkins.info/ (p. 1319), accessed 1 May 2024.

24 *CH* 1, 121B: ἢ τὰς τῶν ἀγγέλων ἡμῖν ἐν τυπωτικοῖς συμβόλοις ἐκφαίνει μακαριωτάτας ἱεραρχίας.

25 *CH* 1, 121B: ἀΰλοις καὶ ἀτρεμέσι νοὸς ὀφθαλμοῖς εἰσδεξάμενοι πάλιν ἐξ αὐτῆς ἐπὶ τὴν ἁπλῆν αὐτῆς ἀναταθῶμεν ἀκτῖνα.

26 *CH* 1, 2, 121BC: Καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ δυνατὸν ἑτέρως ἡμῖν ἐπιλάμψαι τὴν θεαρχικὴν ἀκτῖνα μὴ τῇ ποικιλίᾳ τῶν ἱερῶν παραπετασμάτων ἀναγωγικῶς περικεκαλυμμένην καὶ τοῖς καθ' ἡμᾶς προνοίᾳ πατρικῇ συμφυῶς καὶ οἰκείως διεσκευασμένην. See *Ep.* 9, 1108AB; *DN* 1, 1, 592B and Aquinas' commentary, *In DN* 1, 2, 64–5. Also *ST* I-II 99, 3 ad 3; *ST* III 60, 4; *In de Trin.* 6, 3. For a comprehensive treatment see Serge Thomas Bonino OP, '"Les voiles sacrés": À propos d'une citation de Denys'.

27 Aquinas refers at length to Dionysius in Question 6, article 3, of his commentary on Boethius' *De Trinitate* which asks whether our intellect can behold the divine form itself. Aquinas provides a moderate response. Replying in the *Sed Contra* to those objections which reject all knowledge of divine nature, he replies: 'Dionysius says (*CH* 2, 5, 145B) that "the human mind gradually becomes accustomed to rise from the world of sense to the heights beyond this world", which are nothing else than the separate forms.* Therefore we can somehow know the separate forms. . . The intellect can directly conceive the quiddity of a sensible reality but not of an intelligible reality. Thus Dionysius says (*CH* 2, 2, 140A): "According to our way of knowing, we cannot immediately attain to the contemplation of the invisible." There are some invisible things, however, whose quiddity or nature is perfectly revealed by the known quiddities of sensible things; and we can know what these intelligible objects are, although indirectly. . . But the sensible natures known to us do not adequately reveal the Divine Essence or even other separate essences, since naturally considered they do not belong to one genus; and *quiddity* and all such terms are

predicated almost equivocally of sensible things and of these substances. That is why Dionysius (*CH* 2, 4, 141C) calls the likenesses of sensible things, transferred to immaterial substances, "unlike likenesses, which intellectual beings participate in one way and sensible things in another".' Trans. Armand Maurer, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, pp. 73–5. *Maurer explains that by 'separate forms' Aquinas refers to God and the angels, spiritual beings separate from matter (p. 73n9).

28 *CH* 1, 3, 121D–124A: τὰς διεξοδικὰς ἱερὰς μαθητείας καὶ τῆς ἐναρμονίου πρὸς τὰ θεῖα καὶ τεταγμένης ἕξεως τὰς τῶν ἐνθάδε διακοσμήσεων τάξεις . . . καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα ταῖς οὐρανίαις μὲν οὐσίαις ὑπερκοσμίως, ἡμῖν δὲ συμβολικῶς παραδέδοται.

29 *CH* 1, 3, 124A: ὅπως ἂν ἡμᾶς ἀναγάγοι διὰ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἐπὶ τὰ νοητὰ κἀκ τῶν ἱεροπλάστων συμβόλων ἐπὶ τὰς ἁπλᾶς τῶν οὐρανίων ἱεραρχιῶν ἀκρότητας.

30 *CH* 2, 2, 136D–137A: ἑπομένως τε τούτοις εἰπεῖν ὁποίαις ἱεραῖς μορφώσεσι τὰς οὐρανίας σχηματίζουσι διακοσμήσεις αἱ τῶν λογίων ἱερογραφίαι, καὶ πρὸς ποίαν ἀναχθῆναι χρὴ διὰ τῶν πλασμάτων ἁπλότητα.

31 *EH* 3, 5, 432B: έκείνη μέν έν είκόσι την άλήθειαν εγραψεν, αϋτη δέ παρουσαν ύπέδειξεν.

32 *CH* 2, 2, 137C: καὶ ὡς δυνατὸν συγγενέσιν ἀναπλάττειν τε καὶ ἐκφαίνειν σχηματισμοῖς ἐκ τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν τιμιωτάτων καὶ ἀΰλων ποσῶς καὶ ὑπερκειμένων οὐσιῶν καὶ μὴ ταῖς οὐρανίαις καὶ θεοειδέσιν ἁπλότησι τὰς ἐπὶ γῆς ἐσχάτας περιτιθέντας πολυμορφίας.

33 *CH* 2, 2, 137C: ὅσα πρὸς τὸ ἄτοπον καὶ νόθον καὶ ἐμπαθὲς ἀποκλιθεῖσαι διαγράφουσιν αἱ κατὰ πᾶν ἀνόμοιοι τῶν δῆθεν ἐκφαντορικῶν λογίων ὁμοιότητες.

34 *CH* 2, 2, 140A: Ὅτι μὲν γὰρ εἰκότως προβέβληνται τῶν εἰκότως προβέβληνται τῶν ἀτυπώτων οἱ τύποι καὶ τὰ σχήματα τῶν ἀσχηματίστων, οὐ μόνην αἰτίαν φαίη τις εἶναι τὴν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἀναλογίαν ἀδυνατοῦσαν ἀμέσως ἐπὶ τὰς νοητὰς ἀνατείνεσθαι θεωρίας καὶ δεομένην οἰκείων καὶ συμφυῶν ἀναγωγιῶν, αἳ τὰς ἐφικτὰς ἡμῖν μορφώσεις προτείνουσι τῶν ἀμορφώτων καὶ ὑπερφυῶν θεαμάτων. For further references to this 'double rationale', see Rorem, Pseudo-Dionysius. *Complete Works*, p. 149n18.

35 *CH* 2, 2, 140AB: ἀλλ' ὅτι καὶ τοῦτο τοῖς μυστικοῖς λογίοις ἐστὶ πρεπωδέστατον τὸ δι' ἀπορρήτων καὶ ἱερῶν αἰνιγμάτων ἀποκρύπτεσθαι καὶ ἄβατον τοῖς πολλοῖς τιθέναι τὴν ἱερὰν καὶ κρυφίαν τῶν ὑπερκοσμίων νοῶν ἀλήθειαν.

36 *CH* 2, 3, 140C: ὁ μὲν ὡς εἰκὸς διὰ τῶν ὁμοίων προϊὼν ἱεροτύπων εἰκόνων, ὁ δὲ διὰ τῶν ἀνομοίων μορφοποιῶν εἰς τὸ παντελῶς ἀπεοικὸς καὶ ἀπεμφαῖνον πλαττόμενος.

37 *CH* 2, 3, 140C: αἱ μυστικαὶ παραδόσεις ποτὲ μὲν ὡς λόγον καὶ νοῦν καὶ οὐσίαν ὑμνοῦσι, τὴν θεοπρεπῆ λογιότητα καὶ σοφίαν αὐτῆς δηλοῦσαι καὶ ὄντως οὖσαν ὕπαρξιν καὶ τῆς τῶν ὄντων ὑπάρξεως αἰτίαν ἀληθινήν.

38 The examples given here are not images of physical objects, but (with the exception of light) pure perfections free of intrinsic limitation. As such they may be affirmed of God by proper analogy rather than symbolically. In the continuation Dionysius addresses the attribution of incongruous images and dissimilar likenesses to God. See Aquinas, *In II Sent*. 16, 1, 2 ad 5, cited note 58 below.

39 *CH* 2, 3, 140D: ποτὲ δὲ ταῖς **ἀποφατικαῖς** ἐκφαντορίαις ὑπὸ τῶν αὐτῶν λογίων ὑπερκοσμίως ὑμνεῖται, ἀόρατον αὐτὴν καὶ ἄπειρον καὶ ἀχώρητον ἀποκαλούντων καὶ τὰ <λοιπὰ> ἐξ ὧν οὐ τί ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ τί οὐκ ἔστιν σημαίνεται. (Suchla). De Gandillac has **ανομοίοις** instead of **ἀποφατικαῖς**, which he translates 'par des révélations sans ressemblance'; Luibheid translates 'dissimilar revelations'. ἀποφατικαῖς is obviously correct since Dionysius is here contrasting negative names with the positive which are cited in the previous lines.

40 *CH* 2, 3, 141A: Τοῦτο γὰρ ὡς οἶμαι καὶ κυριώτερόν ἐστιν ἐπ' αὐτῆς, ἐπείπερ, ὡς ἡ κρυφία καὶ ἱερατικὴ παράδοσις ὑφηγήσατο, τὸ μὲν οὐκ εἶναι κατά τι τῶν ὄντων αὐτὴν ἀληθεύομεν, ἀγνοοῦμεν δὲ τὴν ὑπερούσιον αὐτῆς καὶ ἀνόητον καὶ ἄρρητον ἀοριστίαν.

41 *CH* 2, 3, 141A: Εἰ τοίνυν αἱ μὲν ἀποφάσεις ἐπὶ τῶν θείων ἀληθεῖς, αἱ δὲ καταφάσεις ἀνάρμοστοι τῇ κρυφιότητι τῶν ἀπορρήτων, οἰκειοτέρα μᾶλλόν ἐστιν ἐπὶ τῶν ἀοράτων ἡ διὰ τῶν ἀνομοίων ἀναπλάσεων ἐκφαντορία.

42 *CH* 2, 2, 137C, 141B: ἀπεμφαινούσας ἀνομοιότητας. 137D–140A: ἀνόμοιοι . . . ὁμοιότητες.

43 *CH* 2, 2, 141C: Ἄλλως τε καὶ τοῦτο ἐννοῆσαι χρὴ τὸ μηδὲ ἓν τῶν ὄντων εἶναι καθόλου τῆς τοῦ καλοῦ μετουσίας ἐστερημένον, εἴπερ ὡς ἡ τῶν λογίων ἀλήθειά φησι 'Πάντα καλὰ λίαν'.

44 *ST* I, 9, 1 ad 2: Ad secundum dicendum quod sapientia dicitur mobilis esse similitudinarie, secundum quod suam similitudinem diffundit usque ad ultima rerum. Nihil enim esse potest, quod non procedat a divina sapientia per quandam imitationem, sicut a primo principio effectivo et formali; prout etiam artificiata procedunt a sapientia artificis. Sic igitur inquantum similitudo divinae sapientiae gradatim

procedit a supremis, quae magis participant de eius similitudine, usque ad infima rerum, quae minus participant dicitur esse quidam processus et motus divinae sapientiae in res, sicut si dicamus solem procedere usque ad terram, inquantum radius luminis eius usque ad terram pertingit. Et hoc modo exponit Dionysius, cap. I *Cael. Hier.*, dicens quod omnis processus divinae manifestationis venit ad nos a patre luminum moto. Aquinas bases his reading on the translation of Eriugena: 'Sed et omnis, patre moto, manifestationis luminum processio in nos optime ac large proveniens.'

45 *ST* II-II, 180, 5 ad 2: Et hoc non solum in cognitione naturali, sed etiam in eis quae per revelationem cognoscimus, dicit enim Dionysius, I cap. *Cael. Hier.*, quod Angelorum hierarchias manifestat nobis divina claritas in quibusdam symbolis figuratis; ex cuius virtute restituimur in simplum radium, idest in simplicem cognitionem intelligibilis veritatis. Dionysius, *CH* 1, 2, 121B: ἣ τὰς τῶν ἀγγέλων ἡμῖν ἐν τυπωτικοῖς συμβόλοις ἐκφαίνει μακαριωτάτας ἱεραρχίας, ἀΰλοις καὶ ἀτρεμέσι νοὸς ὀφθαλμοῖς εἰσδεξάμενοι πάλιν ἐξ αὐτῆς ἐπὶ τὴν ἁπλῆν αὐτῆς ἀναταθῶμεν ἀκτῖνα. Durantel (*Saint Thomas et le Pseudo-Denis*, p. 69) points out that Aquinas follows Eriugena's translation in preference to that of Sarracenus, which differs significantly. Eriugena renders: Patris claritatem quae angelorum nobis in figuratis symbolis manifestat beatissimas hierarchias, immaterialibus et non trementibus mentis oculis recipientes, iterum ex ipsa in simplum suum restituimur radium.

46 *CH* 1, 2, 121BC. See Durantel, p. 69. For text see notes 26, 28 above.

47 *In I Sent.* 34, 3, 1, arg. 3: Sed hujusmodi metaphorae, vel symbolicae locutiones, sunt quasi quaedam velamina veritatis, ut dicit Dionysius. Ergo eis non videtur utendum in theologia.

48 *In I Sent.* 34, 3, 1, ad 3: Ad 3: Ad tertium dicendum, quod manifestatio veritatis est facienda secundum proportionem recipientium; et quia quibusdam potius manifestatio veritatis officeret quam prodesset, dum vel ex impietate impugnarent, vel ex simplicitate deficerent; ideo est divinorum veritas occultanda, ut dicitur Matth. 7, 6: *nolite sanctum dare canibus*.

49 *In I Sent.* 34, 3, 1: Contra est quod dicit Dionysius: neque possibile est nobis aliter superlucere divinum radium, nisi varietate similitudinum circumvelatum. Divinus radius autem est veritas divinorum. Ergo oportet quod sub similitudinibus corporalibus, nobis divinorum veritas proponatur. For Dionysius' text see notes 26, 28 and 60. Aquinas also, *De Ver.* 12, 7, sed contra. In the treatise *On Separate Substances* Aquinas refers to Dionysius on the attribution of material

figures to immaterial realities: In primo etiam capitulo caelestis hierarchiae dicit quod divina dispositio immateriales angelorum hierarchias materialibus figuris varias tradidit; et in secundo capitulo eiusdem libri quaerit, quare sacri doctores ad corporalem formationem incorporalium, id est angelorum, venientes non figuraverunt ea pretiosissimis figuris sed immaterialibus et deiformibus simplicitatibus terrenas figuras ante posuerunt. ('He likewise says in the first chapter of the *Celestial Hierarchy* (*CH* 1, 3, 121C) that the divine government made certain material figures to stand for the various immaterial hierarchies of angels. And in the second chapter of the same book he asks why the Sacred Doctors, coming to the corporeal representation of incorporeal beings, i. e. the angels, did not picture them with the most resplendent figures but gave earthly figures to immaterial and Godlike simple beings.' Text and trans. Lescoe, *Subst. Sep.* 18, §100, pp. 145–6.

50 *In I Sent.* 34, 3, 1: Respondeo dicendum, quod convenientissimum est divina nobis similitudinibus corporalibus designari, cujus ratio potest assignari quadruplex: prima et principalis propter materiae altitudinem, quae nostri intellectus capacitatem excedit; unde non possumus veritatem divinorum secundum modum suum capere; et ideo oportet quod nobis secundum modum nostrum proponatur. Est autem nobis connaturale a sensibilibus in intelligibilia venire, et a posterioribus in priora; et ideo sub figura sensibilium intelligibilia nobis proponuntur, ut ex his quae novimus ad incognita animus surgat.

51 *In I Sent.* 34, 3, 1: Secunda ratio est, quia cum in nobis sit duplex pars cognoscitiva, scilicet intellectiva et sensitiva: providit divina sapientia ut utraque pars, secundum quod possibile esset, in divina reduceretur; et ideo figuras corporalium adhibuit, quae sensitiva parte capi possunt, quia ipsa intellectualia divinorum non poterat attingere.

52 *In I Sent.* 34, 3, 1: Tertia ratio est, quia de Deo verius cognoscimus quid non est, quam quid est; unde Dionysius dicit, quod in divinis affirmationes sunt incompactae, negationes verae; et ideo cum de omnibus quae de Deo dicimus, intelligendum sit quod non eodem modo sibi conveniunt sicut in creaturis inveniuntur, sed per aliquem modum imitationis et similitudinis; expressius ostendebatur hujusmodi eminentia Dei, per ea quae sunt magis manifesta ab ipso removeri. Haec autem sunt corporalia; et ideo convenientius fuit speciebus corporalibus divina significari, ut his assuefactus humanus animus disceret, nihil eorum quae de Deo praedicat, sibi attribuere nisi per quamdam similitudinem, secundum quod creatura imitatur creatorem.

See *In I Sent.*, d. 4 q. 2 a. 1, ad 2: Ad secundum dicendum, quod affirmativae propositiones pro tanto dicuntur incompactae in divinis, quia nihil eorum quae praedicantur de ipso significant ipsum per modum quo ipse est, sed per modum quo intellectus noster accipit ex rebus creatis informatus. Unde oportet quod nomina illa praedicata de Deo intelligantur praedicari remotis illis modis quibus de creaturis praedicantur. Unde Dionysius omnes divinas praedicationes ita docet exponere: Deus est sapiens, et non sapiens, scilicet sicut alia, ut differat in eo sapientia a sapiente; sed est supersapiens, inquantum est in ipso nobiliori modo sapientia quam significetur per nomen.

See also (among others) the following passages where Aquinas explicates the meaning of Dionysius' statement:

De Potentia, q. 7 a. 5 ad 2: Ad secundum dicendum, quod ita Dionysius dicit negationes horum nominum esse veras de Deo quod tamen non asserit affirmationes esse falsas et incompactas.

De Pot. q. 9, art. 7: Nam et Dionysius dicit, quod negationes sunt maxime verae in Deo; affirmationes vero sunt incompactae. Non enim scimus de Deo quid est, sed magis quid non est, ut Damascenus dicit.

In DC lectio 6: Per narrationem autem oportet affirmationem intelligi, quia quidquid de Deo affirmamus non convenit ei secundum quod a nobis significatur; nomina enim a nobis imposita significant per modum quo nos intelligimus, quem quidem modum esse divinum transcendit. Unde Dionysius dicit II capitulo caelestis hierarchiae quod *negationes in divinis sunt verae, affirmationes vero incompactae vel inconvenientes*. (ed. Saffrey p. 43.12–18).

ST I-II, 122, 2: In divinis negationes praeferuntur affirmationibus propter insufficientiam nostram.

53 *In I Sent.* 34, 3, 1. See Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*, p. 50. On the translations used by Aquinas, see J. Durantel, *Saint Thomas et le Pseudo-Denis*, p. 73: 'S. Thomas, comme il l'énonce fréquemment et le fait encore plus souvent sans le dire, a consulté les deux traductions. Il cite Sarrazin. Scot a expressément: *depulsiones in divinis verae, intentiones vero incompactae*. Et Sarrazin: *Negationes in divinis verae, affirmationes vero inconvenientes*.'

54 *In I Sent.* 34, 3, 1: Quarta ratio est propter occultationem divinae veritatis: quia profunda fidei occultanda sunt et infidelibus, ne irrideant, et simplicibus, ne errandi occasionem sumant: et hae omnes causae assignantur a Dionysio in principio *Cael. Hier.* et in epistola ad Titum.

55 *ST* I, 1, 9: Respondeo dicendum quod conveniens est sacrae Scripturae divina et spiritualia sub similitudine corporalium tradere. Deus

enim omnibus providet secundum quod competit eorum naturae. Est autem naturale homini ut per sensibilia ad intelligibilia veniat, quia omnis nostra cognitio a sensu initium habet. Unde convenienter in sacra Scriptura traduntur nobis spiritualia sub metaphoris corporalium. Et hoc est quod dicit Dionysius, I cap. caelestis hierarchiae, *impossibile est nobis aliter lucere divinum radium, nisi varietate sacrorum velaminum circumvelatum*. Convenit etiam sacrae Scripturae, quae communiter omnibus proponitur (secundum illud ad Rom. I, *sapientibus et insipientibus debitor sum*), ut spiritualia sub similitudinibus corporalium proponantur; ut saltem vel sic rudes eam capiant, qui ad intelligibilia secundum se capienda non sunt idonei. See *CH* 1, 2, 121BC, cited above note 26.

See also the following passages from Aquinas:

De Malo 16, 8, arg. 4: Sed contra est quod Dionysius dicit IV cap. caelestis hierarchiae quod impossibile est nobis aliter lucere divinum radium, nisi varietate sacrorum velaminum circumvelatum. Sacra autem velamina dicit similitudines sensibiles. Ergo etiam in his quae nobis divinitus revelantur, indigemus phantasticis similitudinibus sensibilium rerum; et sic omnes cogitationes nostras Daemon potest videre.

De Trin. 6, 2, arg. 3: Praeterea, divina nobis innotescunt maxime per illustrationem divini radii. Sed, sicut dicit Dionysius in 1 c. caelestis hierarchiae, *impossibile est nobis aliter superlucere divinum radium nisi varietate sacrorum velaminum circumvelatum*; et vocat sacra velamina sensibilium imagines. Ergo in divinis oportet ad imaginationes deduci.

De Trin. 6, 3: Unde dicit Dionysius in 1 c. *Caelestis hierarchiae* quod impossibile est nobis superlucere divinum radium nisi circumvelatum varietate sacrorum velaminum.

De Ver. 12, 12, arg. 9: Praeterea, sicut dicit Dionysius, I cap. caelestis hierarchiae, *impossibile est nobis aliter superlucere divinum radium nisi varietate sacrorum velaminum circumvelatum*.

De Ver. 19, 1, arg. 2: Ut enim dicit Dionysius I cap. caelestis hierarchiae: *impossibile est nobis aliter lucere divinum radium nisi varietate sacrorum velaminum circumvelatum*; et appellat velamina ipsas corporales formas sub quibus spiritualia, revelantur.

See also *ST* II-II, 180, 5, ad 2. For Dionysius' text, *CH* 1, 121B, see note 45 above.

56 *ST* I, 1, 9 ad 2. Ad secundum dicendum quod radius divinae revelationis non destruitur propter figuras sensibiles quibus circumvelatur, ut dicit Dionysius, sed remanet in sua veritate; ut mentes quibus fit

revelatio, non permittat in similitudinibus permanere, sed elevet eas ad cognitionem intelligibilium; et per eos quibus revelatio facta est, alii etiam circa haec instruantur. Unde ea quae in uno loco Scripturae traduntur sub metaphoris, in aliis locis expressius exponuntur. Et ipsa etiam occultatio figurarum utilis est, ad exercitium studiosorum, et contra irrisiones infidelium, de quibus dicitur, Matth. VII, *nolite sanctum dare canibus*.

57 *ST* I, 1, 9 ad 3: Ad tertium dicendum quod, sicut docet Dionysius, cap. II *Cael. Hier.*, magis est conveniens quod divina in Scripturis tradantur sub figuris vilium corporum, quam corporum nobilium. Et hoc propter tria. Primo, quia per hoc magis liberatur humanus animus ab errore. Manifestum enim apparet quod haec secundum proprietatem non dicuntur de divinis, quod posset esse dubium, si sub figuris nobilium corporum describerentur divina; maxime apud illos qui nihil aliud a corporibus nobilius excogitare noverunt. Secundo, quia hic modus convenientior est cognitioni quam de Deo habemus in hac vita. Magis enim manifestatur nobis de ipso quid non est, quam quid est, et ideo similitudines illarum rerum quae magis elongantur a Deo, veriorem nobis faciunt aestimationem quod sit supra illud quod de Deo dicimus vel cogitamus. Tertio, quia per huiusmodi, divina magis occultantur indignis.

58 *In II Sent.* 16, 1, 2 ad 5: Ad quintum dicendum, quod proprietates divinae ostenduntur in creaturis dupliciter: vel secundum similitudinem analogiae, sicut vita, sapientia, et hujusmodi, quae analogice Deo et creaturis conveniunt; et sic divinae proprietates praecipue ostenduntur in rationali natura; vel secundum similitudinem proportionis, secundum quod spirituales proprietates corporalibus metaphorice designantur; et hoc modo in igne ostenduntur proprietates divinae, ut in 1 Lib., dist. 33, dictum est. Sed haec similitudo non facit rationem imaginis; unde Dionysius vocat eam dissimilem similitudinem.

59 *In III Sent.* 2, 1, 1, ad 3: Ad tertium dicendum, quod duplex est similitudo creaturae ad Deum. Una secundum participationem alicujus divinae bonitatis sicut ab eo vivente omnia vitam participant: et sic creatura rationalis in qua invenitur esse, vivere et intelligere, maxime Deo assimilatur. . . Alia similitudo est secundum proportionem, ut si dicatur similitudo inter Deum et ignem, quia sicut ignis consumit corpus, ita Deus consumit nequitiam; et haec similitudo requiritur in figurativis locutionibus, et appropriationibus: quam Dionysius in secundo cap. *CH* vocat dissimilem similitudinem: et de hac similitudine procedit objectio.

60 *ST* I 88, 2, arg. 1: Ad secundum sic proceditur. Videtur quod intellectus noster per cognitionem rerum materialium possit pervenire ad intelligendum substantias immateriales. Dicit enim Dionysius, I cap. *Cael. Hier.*, quod *non est possibile humanae menti ad immaterialem illam sursum excitari caelestium hierarchiarum contemplationem, nisi secundum se materiali manuductione utatur*. Relinquitur ergo quod per materialia manuduci possumus ad intelligendum substantias immateriales. (Trans. Shapcote revised). Dionysius *CH* 1, 3, 121CD: ἐπεὶ μηδὲ δυνατόν ἐστι τῷ καθ' ἡμᾶς νοῖ πρὸς τὴν ἄϋλον ἐκείνην ἀναταθῆναι τῶν οὐρανίων ἱεραρχιῶν μίμησίν τε καὶ θεωρίαν, εἰ μὴ τῇ κατ' αὐτὸν ὑλαίᾳ χειραγωγίᾳ χρήσαιτο.

61 *ST* I 88, 2 ad 1: Ad primum ergo dicendum quod ex rebus materialibus ascendere possumus in aliqualem cognitionem immaterialium rerum, non tamen in perfectam, quia non est sufficiens comparatio rerum materialium ad immateriales, sed similitudines si quae a materialibus accipiuntur ad immaterialia intelligenda, sunt multum dissimiles, ut Dionysius dicit, II cap. Cael. Hier. (Trans., Blackfriars) See *CH* II, 5, 145A: έκ τών άπεμφαινονσών άνομοίων όμοιοτήτων.

62 *ST* I, 88, 2: Sed contra est quod Dionysius dicit, I cap. *de Div. Nom.* (*PG* 3, 588), quod *sensibilibus intelligibilia, et compositis simplicia, et corporalibus incorporalia apprehendi non possunt*. Trans. Blackfriars, vol. 12, p. 131. The older Dominican translation incorrectly renders *compositis simplicia* as 'composite things through simple'.

63 See J. Durantel, *Le retour à Dieu par l'intelligence et la volonté dans la philosophie de S. Thomas*, II and III.

64 See Bernard Montagnes, 'L'axiome de continuité chez saint Thomas'. Revealingly, Aquinas often cites the *Liber de Causis* in this respect, especially prop. 19 (ed. Saffrey, p. 106.18–24). See also *In II Sent.*, d. 39 q. 3 a. 1; ST, I 22 a. 3; q. 103 a. 6; CG, 3 cc. 69, 77, 78, 97 esp. n. 2725; De Pot., q. 5 a. 8.

65 *DN* 7, 3, 872B: αὕτη γάρ ἐστι κατὰ τὸ λόγιον ἡ πάντων ποιητικὴ καὶ ἀεὶ πάντα ἁρμόζουσα καὶ τῆς ἀλύτου τῶν πάντων ἐφαρμογῆς καὶ τάξεως αἰτία καὶ ἀεὶ τὰ τέλη τῶν προτέρων συνάπτουσα ταῖς ἀρχαῖς τῶν δευτέρων καὶ τὴν μίαν τοῦ παντὸς σύμπνοιαν καὶ ἁρμονίαν καλλιεργοῦσα. My translation, relying on Rolt. See *De Ver.* 15, 1: Quamvis cognitio humanae animae proprie sit per viam rationis, est tamen in ea aliqua participatio illius simplicis cognitionis quae in superioribus substantiis invenitur, ex quo etiam intellectivam vim habere dicuntur; et hoc secundum illum modum quem Dionysius, VII cap. de Divin. Nomin., assignat dicens, quod divina sapientia semper

fines priorum coniungit principiis secundorum; hoc est dictu: quod inferior natura in sui summo attingit ad aliquid infimum superioris naturae. Et hanc quidem differentiam Angelorum et animarum Dionysius, VII cap. de Divin. Nomin., ostendit, sic dicens: *ex ipsa*, scilicet divina sapientia, *intellectuales angelicarum mentium virtutes, simplices et bonos habent intellectus, non a divisibilibus aut sensibus, aut sermonibus diffusis congregantes divinam cognitionem; sed uniformiter intelligibilia divinorum intelligunt*. Postea subiungit de animabus: *propter divinam sapientiam et animae rationale habent diffusive quidem, et circulo circa existentium veritatem circumeuntes, divisibili varietate deficientes ab unitivis mentibus; sed per convolutionem multorum ad unum, sunt dignae habitae intellectibus aequalibus angelicis, in quantum animabus est proprium et possibile*; quod ideo dicit, quia illud quod est superioris naturae, non potest esse in inferiori natura perfecte, sed secundum quamdam tenuem participationem; sicut in natura sensitiva non est ratio, sed aliqua rationis participatio, in quantum bruta habent quamdam prudentiam naturalem, ut patet in principio Metaphysic. See also *In I Sent.* 3, 4, 1, ad 4; *De Ver.* 8, 15; *CG* 3, 97.

66 *In DN* VII, iv, 733: ipsa divina sapientia est omnium causa effectiva, inquantum res producit in esse et non solum rebus dat esse, sed etiam esse cum ordine in rebus, inquantum res invicem se coadunant in ordinem ad ultimum finem; et ulterius, est *causa* indissolubilitatis huius concordiae *et* huius *ordinis*, quae semper manent, qualitercumque rebus immutatis. Modum autem huius ordinis subiungit, quia *semper fines primorum*, idest infima supremorum, coniungit *principiis secundorum*, idest supremis inferiorum, ad modum quo supremum corporalis creaturae scilicet corpus humanum, infimo intellectualis naturae, scilicet animae rationali unit; et simile est videre in aliis; et sic operatur pulchritudinem universi per unam omnium conspirationem, idest concordiam et harmoniam, idest debitum ordinem et proportionem.

67 Another Neoplatonist source was the *Liber de Causis*. See Prop. 31.

68 *CG* 2, 68: Hoc autem modo mirabilis rerum connexio considerari potest. Semper enim invenitur infimum supremi generis contingere supremum inferioris generis: sicut quaedam infima in genere animalium parum excedunt vitam plantarum, sicut ostrea, quae sunt immobilia, et solum tactum habent, et terrae in modum plantarum adstringuntur; unde et beatus Dionysius dicit, in VII cap. De div. Nom., quod divina sapientia coniungit fines superiorum principiis inferiorum.

69 *CH* 4, 1, 177CD: Πρῶτον δ' ἁπάντων ἐκεῖνο εἰπεῖν ἀληθές, ὡς ἀγαθότητι πάσας ἡ ὑπερούσιος θεαρχία τὰς τῶν ὄντων οὐσίας ὑποστήσασα πρὸς τὸ εἶναι ὑπερούσιος θεαρχία τὰς τῶν ὄντων οὐσίας ὑποστήσασα πρὸς τὸ εἶναι παρήγαγεν. Ἔστι γὰρ τοῦτο τῆς πάντων αἰτίας καὶ ὑπὲρ πάντα ἀγαθότητος ἴδιον τὸ πρὸς κοινωνίαν ἑαυτῆς τὰ ὄντα καλεῖν, ὡς ἑκάστῳ τῶν ὄντων ὥρισται πρὸς τῆς οἰκείας ἀναλογίας. Πάντα μὲν οὖν τὰ ὄντα μετέχει προνοίας ἐκ τῆς ὑπερουσίου καὶ παναιτίου θεότητος ἐκβλυζομένης· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἦν, εἰ μὴ τῆς τῶν ὄντων οὐσίας καὶ ἀρχῆς μετειλήφει. Τὰ μὲν οὖν ἄζωα πάντα τῷ εἶναι αὐτῆς μετέχει (τὸ γὰρ εἶναι πάντων ἐστὶν ἡ ὑπὲρ τὸ εἶναι θεότης), τὰ δὲ ζῶντα τῆς αὐτῆς ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ζωὴν ζωοποιοῦ δυνάμεως, τὰ δὲ λογικὰ καὶ νοερὰ τῆς αὐτῆς ὑπὲρ πάντα καὶ λόγον καὶ νοῦν αὐτοτελοῦς καὶ προτελείου σοφίας. Δῆλον δὲ ὅτι περὶ αὐτὴν ἐκεῖναι τῶν οὐσιῶν εἰσιν ὅσαι πολλαχῶς αὐτῆς μετειλήφασιν.

70 *In I Sent.*, 3, 4, 1 arg. 4: Secundum enim Dionysium, distinguuntur quatuor gradus entium, scilicet intellectualia, rationalia, sensibilia et simpliciter existentia. Homo autem non continetur sub intellectualibus, sed sub rationalibus. Cum igitur hic quaeratur quid sit imago, secundum quod est in homine, videtur quod intelligentia ad imaginem non pertineat. See *In II Sent*, 9, 1, 8 arg. 1: Videtur quod homines nunquam ad ordines Angelorum assumantur. Quia, secundum Dionysium, distinguuntur quatuor gradus rerum, scilicet intellectualium, in quo comprehenduntur Angeli; rationalium, in quo sunt homines; sensibilium, in quo sunt bruta animalia; et existentium, in quo sunt res insensibiles. Sed sensitiva nunquam possunt pertingere ad gradum rationalium. Ergo rationalia nunquam possunt pertingere ad gradum intellectualium; et ita homines non assumuntur ad ordines Angelorum. See *In DN* IV, 1, 272: Deinde, cum dicit: *propter istos* et cetera, ostendit quomodo bonitas inveniatur in creaturis a Deo diffusa: et primo, quomodo inveniatur in Angelis; secundo, quomodo inveniatur in animabus rationalibus, ibi: sed et post illas et cetera; tertio, quomodo inveniatur in aliis creaturis corruptibilibus, ibi: sed et de ipsis et cetera; quarto, quomodo inveniatur in materia prima, ibi: si autem et super omnia et cetera, quinto, quomodo inveniatur in corporibus coelestibus, ibi: sed quod nos et cetera.

71 See Julien Peghaire, *Intellectus et Ratio*, pp. 38–50.

72 *Subst. Sep.* 18, Lescoe, pp. 134–5: Primum quidem igitur circa spiritualium substantiarum originem firmissime docet Christiana traditio omnes spirituales substantias, sicut et ceteras creaturas, a Deo esse productas. Et hoc quidem canonicae Scripturae auctoritate

probatur. In Psalmo enim dicitur: laudate eum omnes Angeli eius, laudate eum omnes virtutes eius; et enumeratis aliis creaturis subditur: quia ipse dixit, et facta sunt: mandavit, et creata sunt. Sed et Dionysius, quarto capitulo caelestis hierarchiae, hanc originem subtiliter explicat, dicens: primum illud dicere verum est, quod bonitate universali superessentialis divinitas eorum quae sunt essentias substituens, ad esse adduxit; et post pauca subdit, quod ipsae caelestes substantiae sunt primo et multipliciter in participatione Dei factae; et in quarto capitulo de divinis nominibus dicit, quod propter divinae bonitatis radios substiterunt intelligibiles et intellectuales omnes et substantiae et virtutes et operationes. Propter istos sunt et vivunt et vitam habent indeficientem. See *De Pot.*, 3 a. 16 arg 19 : Diversitas creaturarum et multitudo attenditur secundum hoc quod plus vel minus recipiunt de donis divinis, ut patet in IV cap. *Cael. Hierar.*

73 *ST* I 57, 1: Respondeo dicendum quod talis est ordo in rebus, quod superiora in entibus sunt perfectiora inferioribus, et quod in inferioribus continetur deficienter et partialiter et multipliciter, in superioribus continetur eminenter et per quandam totalitatem et simplicitatem. Et ideo in Deo, sicut in summo rerum vertice, omnia supersubstantialiter praeexistunt secundum ipsum suum simplex esse, ut Dionysius dicit, in libro *de Div. Nom.* Angeli autem inter ceteras creaturas sunt Deo propinquiores et similiores, unde et plura participant ex bonitate divina, et perfectius, ut Dionysius dicit, IV cap. *Cael. Hier.* Sic igitur omnia materialia in ipsis Angelis praeexistunt, simplicius quidem et immaterialius quam in ipsis rebus; multiplicius autem et imperfectius quam in Deo. Omne autem quod est in aliquo; est in eo per modum eius in quo est. Angeli autem secundum suam naturam sunt intellectuales. Et ideo, sicut Deus per suam essentiam materialia cognoscit, ita Angeli ea cognoscunt per hoc quod sunt in eis per suas intelligibiles species. See *ST* III 27, 5: Aliquid magis appropinquat principio in quolibet genere, tanto magis participat effectum illius principii, unde dicit Dionysius, IV cap. *Cael. Hier.*, quod Angeli, qui sunt Deo propinquiores, magis participant de bonitatibus divinis quam homines. Trans. Shapcote.

74 *CH* 3, 1, 164D: ἔστι μὲν ἱεραρχία κατ᾽ ἐμὲ τάξις ἱερὰ καὶ ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἐνέργεια πρὸς τὸ θεοειδὲς ὡς ἐφικτὸν ἀφομοιουμένη καὶ πρὸς τὰς ἐνδιδομένας αὐτῇ θεόθεν ἐλλάμψεις ἀναλόγως ἐπὶ τὸ θεομίμητον ἀναγομένη.

75 *CH* 3, 2, 165A: Σκοπὸς οὖν ἱεραρχίας ἐστὶν ἡ πρὸς θεὸν ὡς ἐφικτὸν ἀφομοίωσίς τε καὶ ἕνωσις αὐτὸν ἔχουσα πάσης ἱερᾶς ἐπιστήμης τε

καὶ ἐνεργείας. Sarracenus' translation cited by Aquinas: Hierarchia est ad Deum, quantum possibile est, unitas et similitudo. Eriugena translates: Interpretatio igitur Ierarchiae est, ad Deum, quantum possibile, similitudo et unitas. See *ST* I, 108, 1: 'Hierarchia est sacer principatus.'

76 *In II Sent.* 9, 1.

77 *In II Sent.* 9, 1, 1: Respondeo dicendum, quod hierarchia dicitur quasi sacer principatus a hieron, quod est sacrum, et archon, quod est princeps. In omni autem principatu requiritur gradus potestatis et finis; unde in sacro principatu oportet hujusmodi sacra et divina esse: et ideo, sicut in principatu saeculari finis est ut subjecta multitudo pacifice disponatur ad bonum intentum a principe, sicut patet in exercitu, qui, secundum philosophum, ordinatur ad bonum ducis sicut ad finem ultimum; ita oportet quod in sacro principatu finis sit assimilatio ad Deum.

78 *In II Sent.* 9, 1, 1: Hunc autem finem non est possibile angelos consequi nisi per ordinatam actionem, ad quam exigitur ordinata potestas et scientia dirigens: et ideo in definitione hierarchiae ponitur ordo, in quo exprimitur gradus potestatis, et scientia sicut dirigens, et actio sicut ad finem inducens, et Dei similitudo sicut finis intentus.

79 *In II Sent.* 9, 1, 1 ad 6: Ad sextum dicendum, quod secundum quosdam in divinis personis est quaedam hierarchia, quam dicunt supercaelestem, quae attenditur secundum ordinem naturae in personis divinis, quam assimilat hierarchia caelestis Angelorum et subcaelestis hominum. Sed hoc non est conveniens, nec secundum intentionem Dionysii: quia in divinis personis principatum ponere unius ad alterum, est haereticum; aut quod pater purget filium, vel illuminet vel perficiat, vel quod id quod patris est, recipiatur in filio inferiori modo: quae tamen requiruntur ad rationem hierarchiae, secundum intentionem Dionysii et secundum vocabuli significationem. Et ideo dicendum est aliter; scilicet quod, similat deiforme, inquantum per lumen perceptum divinae claritati assimilatur, non quidem per aequiparantiam, sed secundum suam proportionem: propter quod dicit: *quantum possibile est*. Omnis etiam perfectio creaturae est similitudo divinae bonitatis, licet quaedam sit expressior alia.

80 Adapted from Ewert H. Cousins, Preface, *Angelic Spirituality: Medieval Perspectives on the Ways of Angels*, p. xx.

81 *CH* 6, 1, 200C: Ὅσοι μέν εἰσι καὶ οἷοι τῶν ὑπερουρανίων οὐσιῶν οἱ διάκοσμοι καὶ ὅπως αἱ κατ' αὐτοὺς ἱεραρχίαι τελοῦνται, μόνην ἀκριβῶς εἰδέναι φημὶ τὴν θεωτικὴν αὐτῶν τελεταρχίαν, προσέτι

καὶ αὐτοὺς ἐγνωκέναι τὰς οἰκείας δυνάμεις τε καὶ ἐλλάμψεις καὶ τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἱερὰν καὶ ὑπερκόσμιον εὐταξίαν. Ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἡμᾶς εἰδέναι τὰ τῶν ὑπερουρανίων νοῶν μυστήρια καὶ τὰς ἁγιωτάτας αὐτῶν τελειώσεις, εἰ μή που φαίη τις ὅσα δι'αὐτῶν ἡμᾶς ὡς τὰ οἰκεῖα καλῶς εἰδότων ἡ θεαρχία μεμυσταγώγηκεν. Οὐκοῦν ἡμεῖς μὲν οὐδὲν αὐτοκινήτως ἐροῦμεν· ὅσα δὲ τῶν ἀγγελικῶν θεαμάτων ὑπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν θεολόγων ἐθεωρήθη, ταῦτα μυηθέντες ἡμεῖς ὡς οἷοί τέ ἐσμεν ἐκθησόμεθα.

82 On the grouping of angels into three hierarchies and nine choirs, three in each hierarchy, see T. C. O'Brien: 'The division was already given by the 4th century (Cyril of Jerusalem, John Chrysostom, Ambrose) and in medieval theology was accepted as a datum. The problem was to reconcile the various patristic accounts; for St Thomas that meant particularly the classifications of Dionysius and of Gregory.' (*Summa Theologiae*, Blackfriars ed., vol. 14, p. 125, note a). Paul Rorem, *Biblical and Liturgical Symbols*, p. 3: 'The Areopagite, after all, is credited with the definitive late medieval arrangement of the celestial beings in three triads: seraphim, cherubim, and thrones; powers, lordships, and authorities; principalities, archangels, and angels.' D. E. Luscombe lists the middle triad as follows: Dominations, Virtues, Powers. ('Hierarchy', p. 61).

83 *DN* 3, 2, 681A: Καὶ τοῦτο δὲ ἴσως ἀπολογίας ἄξιον, ὅτι τοῦ κλεινοῦ καθηγεμόνος ἡμῶν Ἱεροθέου τὰς *Θεολογικὰς στοιχειώσεις* ὑπερφυῶς συναγαγόντος ἡμεῖς ὡς οὐχ ἱκανῶν ἐκείνων ἄλλας τε καὶ τὴν παροῦσαν θεολογίαν συνεγραψάμεθα.

84 Luscombe, 'Hierarchy', p. 61.

85 Luscombe, 'Hierarchy', p. 62.

86 *MT* 3, 1033 C: Κἀκεῖ μὲν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἄνω πρὸς τὰ ἔσχατα κατιὼν ὁ λόγος κατὰ τὸ ποσὸν τῆς καθόδου πρὸς ἀνάλογον πλῆθος κατιὼν ὁ λόγος κατὰ τὸ ποσὸν τῆς καθόδου πρὸς ἀνάλογον πλῆθος ηὐρύνετο· νῦν δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν κάτω πρὸς τὸ ὑπερκείμενον ἀνιὼν κατὰ τὸ μέτρον τῆς ἀνόδου συστέλλεται καὶ μετὰ πᾶσαν ἄνοδον ὅλως ἄφωνος ἔσται καὶ ὅλως ἑνωθήσεται τῷ ἀφθέγκτῳ.

87 See Ewert H. Cousins, Preface, *Angelic Spirituality: Medieval Perspectives on the Ways of Angels*, ed. Steven Chase p. xx.

88 *ST* I, 106, 2, arg. 2: Sicut Dionysius dicit (*CH* 7, 1, 205B), nomina angelorum designant eorum proprietates. Seraphim autem incendentes dicuntur, aut calefacientes, quod est per amorem, qui ad voluntatem pertinet. Also *ST* I, 112, 4: Proprietates autem angelorum ex eorum nominibus manifestantur, ut Dionysius dicit 7 cap. *Cael. Hier.*

89 *ST* I, 108, 5, Sed Contra.

90 *In II Sent.* 6, 1, 1; *ST* I 63, 7; *ST* I 108, 1; *ST* I 108, 2; *ST* I 108, 4.
ST I 63, 7: Ordo Cherubim est sub ordine Seraphim.
In II Sent., dist. 6, q. 1, art. 1: Ordo Cherubim secundum Dionysium non est supremus ordo.
ST I 108, 4: Interpretatur (nomen Cherubim) plenitudo scientiae, quod Dionysius exponit quantum ad quator: quantum ad perfectionm Dei visionis; quantum ad plenam susceptionem divini luminis; quantum ad hoc quod in ipso Deo contemplantur pulchritudinem ordinis rerum; quantum ad quod ipsi. . . , pleni huius cognitione, eam copiose in alios diffundunt.

91 *In II Sent.* 3, 1, 3, arg. 5: Praeterea, de Angelis, secundum Dionysium nihil scire possumus, nisi ea quae nobis in sacra Scriptura traduntur.

92 *ST* I, 108, 1, *Sed Contra*: Dionysius distinguit tres hierarchias angelorum.

93 *ST* I 108, a. 2: In qualibet hierarchia Dionysius ponit tres ordines.

94 *ST* I, 108, 1, arg. 2.

95 *ST* I, 108, 1.

96 *ST* I, 108, 1: Quia igitur unus est Deus princeps non solum omnium Angelorum, sed etiam hominum, et totius creaturae; ideo non solum omnium Angelorum, sed etiam totius rationalis creaturae, quae sacrorum particeps esse potest, una est hierarchia. Trans Shapcote.

97 *ST* I, 108, 1: Quia igitur unus est Deus princeps non solum omnium Angelorum, sed etiam hominum, et totius creaturae; ideo non solum omnium Angelorum, sed etiam totius rationalis creaturae, quae sacrorum particeps esse potest, una est hierarchia.

98 On the intellectual nature of angels, and Aquinas' reference to Dionysius, see *Quodl.* 6, 2, 1: 'The human soul is not wholly intellectual: it has an intellect by participation. Hence, it has powers and actions unrelated to its intellectual nature, which is especially clear with the powers and actions related to the vegetative soul. But an angel has a wholly intellectual nature, and thus all its actions must be intellectual. Hence in chapter 4 of *The Divine Names*, blessed Dionysius says that angels have intellectual natures and powers and activities.' (Anima enim humana non est totaliter intellectus, sed participat intellectualitatem; unde est in ea aliqua virtus et actio quae non pertinet ad intellectualem naturam, sicut praecipue patet in his quae pertinent ad animam vegetabilem. Sed Angelus est totaliter intellectualis naturae; et ideo oportet quod omnis eius actio sit secundum intellectum; unde beatus Dionysius dicit, IV capit. de Divin. Nomin., quod Angeli habent substantias et virtutes et operationes intellectuales). Trans. Nevitt &

Davies, p. 313. In *Quodl.* 7 Aquinas states: 'The higher the created intellect, the fewer forms it needs in order to know many things. This is what Dionysius says in chapter 12 of *The Celestial Hierarchy* — namely that higher ranks have more universal knowledge than lower ones (*CH*, c. 12). And the *Book of Causes* says that higher intelligences have more universal forms. (Prop. 9)' *Quodl.* VII, Q 1, art 3, trans. Nevitt & Davies, p. 10. Aquinas cites Dionysius in asserting that the nature of an angel has no shape. This statement occurs in an objection in *De Veritate*; in his reply he explains: 'The essence of an angel does not have a material shape, but his intellect is, as it were, shaped by its intelligible forms.') See *De Ver* 9, 4, arg. 14: Angeli natura, quae est alteri Angelo naturaliter nota, est infigurabilis, ut dicit Dionysius. ('As Dionysius says, the nature of an angel, naturally known by other angels, has no shape.') See *De Ver* 9, 4, ad 14: Ad decimumquartum dicendum, quod essentia Angeli non est figurabilis figura corporali; sed intellectus eius quasi figuratur forma intelligibili. ('The essence of an angel does not have a material shape, but his intellect is, as it were, shaped by its intelligible forms.')

99 *ST* I, 108, 1: Manifestum est autem quod homines alio modo divinas illuminationes percipiunt quam angeli, nam angeli percipiunt eas in intelligibili puritate, homines vero percipiunt eas sub sensibilium similitudinibus, ut Dionysius dicit I cap. *Cael. Hier.* Et ideo oportuit distingui humanam hierarchiam ab angelica.

100 *ST* I, 108, 1: Et per eundem modum in angelis tres hierarchiae distinguuntur.

101 According to Dionysius the Cherubim shares in a higher wisdom and knowledge: ἡ τῶν ἁγίων Χερουβὶμ τάξις μετέχει σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ὑψηλοτέρας. *CH* 12, 2, 292CD.

102 *ST* I, 108, 1: Et per eundem modum in Angelis tres hierarchiae distinguuntur. Dictum est enim supra, dum de cognitione Angelorum ageretur, quod superiores Angeli habent universaliorem cognitionem veritatis quam inferiores. Huiusmodi autem universalis acceptio cognitionis secundum tres gradus in Angelis distingui potest. Possunt enim rationes rerum de quibus Angeli illuminantur, considerari tripliciter. Primo quidem, secundum quod procedunt a primo principio universali, quod est Deus, et iste modus convenit primae hierarchiae, quae immediate ad Deum extenditur, et quasi in vestibulis Dei collocatur, ut Dionysius dicit VII cap. *Cael. Hier.* (*CH* 7, 2, 208A).

103 *ST* I, 108, 2: Secundo vero, prout huiusmodi rationes dependent ab universalibus causis creatis, quae iam aliquo modo multiplicantur,

et hic modus convenit secundae hierarchiae. Tertio autem modo, secundum quod huiusmodi rationes applicantur singulis rebus, et prout dependent a propriis causis, et hic modus convenit infimae hierarchiae. Quod plenius patebit, cum de singulis ordinibus agetur. Sic igitur distinguuntur hierarchiae ex parte multitudinis subiectae.

104 *ST* I, 108, 1 ad 2: Et per eundem modum in Angelis tres hierarchiae distinguuntur. Dictum est enim supra, dum de cognitione Angelorum ageretur, quod superiores Angeli habent universaliorem cognitionem veritatis quam inferiores. Huiusmodi autem universalis acceptio cognitionis secundum tres gradus in Angelis distingui potest. Possunt enim rationes rerum de quibus Angeli illuminantur, considerari tripliciter. Primo quidem, secundum quod procedunt a primo principio universali, quod est Deus, et iste modus convenit primae hierarchiae, quae immediate ad Deum extenditur, et quasi in vestibulis Dei collocatur, ut Dionysius dicit VII cap. *Cael. Hier.*

105 *ST* I, 108, 2: Unde et in civitatibus triplex ordo hominum invenitur, quidam enim sunt supremi, ut optimates; quidam autem sunt infimi, ut vilis populus; quidam autem sunt medii, ut populus honorabilis. Sic igitur et in qualibet hierarchia angelica ordines distinguuntur secundum diversos actus et officia; et omnis ista diversitas ad tria reducitur, scilicet ad summum, medium et infimum. Et propter hoc in qualibet hierarchia Dionysius ponit tres ordines. Cf *CH* 6, 1, 200D. See *ST* I, 108, 3 ad 1: Dionysius dicit, 10 cap. *Cael. Hier.*, quod in uno et eodem ordine Angelorum, est accipere primos, medios et ultimos. (*CH* 10, 273B).

106 *ST* I, 108, 3: Nos autem imperfecte angelos cognoscimus, et eorum officia, ut Dionysius dicit 6 cap. *Cael. Hier.*

107 *CH* 6, 1, 200C: Ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἡμᾶς εἰδέναι τὰ τῶν ὑπερουρανίων νοῶν μυστήρια καὶ τὰς ἁγιωτάτας αὐτῶν τελειώσεις, εἰ μή που φαίη τις ὅσα δι᾽αὐτῶν ἡμᾶς ὡς τὰ οἰκεῖα καλῶς εἰδότων ἡ θεαρχία μεμυσταγώγηκεν. Οὐκοῦν ἡμεῖς μὲν οὐδὲν αὐτοκινήτως ἐροῦμεν· ὅσα δὲ τῶν ἀγγελικῶν θεαμάτων ὑπὸ τῶν ἱερῶν θεολόγων ἐθεωρήθη, ταῦτα μυηθέντες ἡμεῖς ὡς οἷοί τέ ἐσμεν ἐκθησόμεθα.

108 *ST* I, 108, 3: Si autem perfecte cognosceremus officia angelorum, et eorum distinctiones, perfecte sciremus quod quilibet angelus habet suum proprium officium et suum proprium ordinem in rebus, multo magis quam quaelibet stella, etsi nos lateat. (Trans New Advent, slightly modified.)

109 *Quodl.* III, Q 3, art 2, trans. Nevitt & Davies, p. NN.

110 *ST* I, 108, 6, arg. 4. *ST* I 108, 6: Praeterea, Gregorius ponit principatus supra potestates. Non ergo collocantur immediate supra Archangelos, ut Dionysius dicit.

111 *ST* I, 108, 6, Sed Contra: Dionysius ponit, in prima quidem hierarchia. Seraphim ut primos, Cherubim ut medios, thronos ut ultimos; in media vero, dominationes ut primos, virtutes ut medios, potestates ut ultimos; in ultima, principatus ut primos, Archangelos ut medios, Angelos ut ultimos.

112 *ST* I, 108, 6: Respondeo dicendum quod gradus angelicorum ordinum assignant et Gregorius et Dionysius, quantum ad alia quidem convenienter, sed quantum ad principatus et virtutes differenter. Nam Dionysius collocat virtutes sub dominationibus et supra potestates, principatus autem sub potestatibus et supra Archangelos, Gregorius autem ponit principatus in medio dominationum et potestatum, virtutes vero in medio potestatum et Archangelorum. Et utraque assignatio fulcimentum habere potest ex auctoritate apostoli. Qui, medios ordines ascendendo enumerans, dicit, Ephes. I, quod Deus constituit illum, scilicet Christum, *ad dexteram suam in caelestibus, supra omnem principatum et potestatem et virtutem et dominationem*, ubi virtutem ponit inter potestatem et dominationem, secundum assignationem Dionysii. Sed ad Coloss. I, enumerans eosdem ordines descendendo, dicit, *sive throni, sive dominationes, sive principatus, sive potestates, omnia per ipsum et in ipso creata sunt*, ubi principatus ponit medios inter dominationes et potestates, secundum assignationem Gregorii.

113 *ST* I, 108, 6 ad 4.

114 *CG* 3, 80: Assignat autem et Gregorius aliter caelestium spirituum ordinationem: nam principatus inter medios spiritus connumerat, post dominationes immediate; virtutes vero inter infimos, ante Archangelos. Sed, diligenter inspicientibus, utraque ordinatio in modico differt. Nam secundum Gregorium, principatus dicuntur, non qui gentibus praeponuntur, sed *qui etiam ipsis bonis spiritibus principantur*, quasi primi existentes in ministeriorum divinorum executione: dicit enim quod *principari est inter alios priorem existere*. Hoc autem, secundum assignationem ante dictam, diximus ad virtutum ordinem pertinere. Virtutes autem, secundum Gregorium, sunt quae ad quasdam particulares operationes ordinantur, cum in aliquo speciali casu, praeter communem ordinem, oportet aliqua miraculose fieri. Secundum quam rationem satis convenienter cum infimis ordinantur.

115 In the *Convivio* (II, vi) Dante followed the hierarchy of Gregory: Seraphim, Cherubim, Powers, Principalities, Virtues, Dominions, Thrones, Archangels, Angels (See Mark Musa, trans. *Paradise*, p. 340).

116 *Paradiso*, X, 115–17. trans. Mark Musa, p. 122.

117 *Paradiso* XXVIII, 130–9:
E Dïonisio con tanto disio
a contemplar questi ordini si mise,
che li nomò e distinse com' io.
Ma Gregorio da lui poi si divise;
onde, sì tosto come li occhi aperse
in questo ciel, di sé medesmo rise.
E se tanto secreto ver proferse
mortale in terra, non voglio ch'ammiri:
ché chi 'l vide qua sù gliel discoperse
con altro assai del ver di questi giri.
(Trans. Mark Musa, p. 334).

Chapter Eight

1 *De Ver.* 29, 3: Si enim intelligatur corpus album infinitum non propter hoc albedo *intensive* infinita erit, sed solum extensive, et per accidens. This distinction between *intensive* and *extensive* corresponds to that between *virtualis* and *dimensiva*, which we will consider in detail in the following pages. See Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et causalité selon S. Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 253n18.

2 J. Durantel, *Saint Thomas et le Pseudo-Denis*, p. 180.

3 *In I Sent.* 22, 1, expositio textus (ed. Mandonnet, pp. 544–5): Semper autem principalior praedicatio est quae est per essentiam, quam quae est per participationem. . . Non enim quid est in causato, oportet esse in causa eodem modo, sed eminentiori; et sic exponit Dionysius sic dicens: 'Vivere si quis dicat vitam, aut illuminare lumen, non recte secundum meam rationem dicit; sed secundum alium modum ista dicuntur: quia abundanter et substantialiter ea quae sunt causatorum, prius insunt causis'; dicit causam vitam vel lumen, causatum, vivens vel illuminatum. Dionysius' text: περισσῶς καὶ οὐσιωδῶς προένεστι τὰ τῶν αἰτιατῶν τοῖς αἰτίοις (*Divine Names* 2, 8, 58). References to Dionysius' *Divine Names* (*DN*) and to Aquinas' *In Librum Beati Dionysii De Divinis Nominibus* (*In DN*) are according to C. Pera's edition (Turin, Marietti: 1950); they are distinguished by using Arabic numerals for chapter and paragraph of Dionysius' work, and Roman numerals for chapter and *lectio* in Aquinas' Commentary. The third number (Arabic) refers to the paragraph in the Marietti edition. For a detailed examination of the influence of the Pseudo-Dionysius on St Thomas, see Fran O'Rourke, *Pseudo-Dionysius and the Metaphysics of Aquinas*.

4 *Participation et causalité*, p. 195: 'Cette "notion intensive" de l' *esse* . . . est le veritable fondement de la métaphysique thomiste de la participation.'

5 *De Ver.* 29, 3: Est autem duplex quantitas: scilicet dimensiva, quae secundum extensionem consideratur; et virtualis, quae attenditur secundum intensionem: virtus enim rei est ipsius perfectio, secundum illud Philosophi in VII Physic: Unumquodque perfectum est quando attingit propriae virtuti. Et sic quantitas virtualis uniuscuiusque formae attenditur secundum modum suae perfectionis. Utraque autem quantitas per multa diversificatur: nam sub quantitate dimensiva continetur longitudo, latitudo, et profundum, et numerus in potentia. Quantitas autem virtualis in tot distinguitur, quot sunt naturae vel formae; quarum perfectionis modus totam mensuram quantitatis facit. Contingit autem id quod est secundum unam quantitatem finitum, esse secundum aliam infinitum. Potest enim intelligi aliqua superficies finita secundum latitudinem, et infinita secundum longitudinem. Patet enim hoc, si accipiatur una quantitas dimensiva, et alia virtualis. Si enim intelligatur corpus album infinitum, non propter hoc albedo intensive infinita erit, sed solum extensive, et per accidens; poterit enim aliquid albius inveniri. Patet nihilominus idem, si utraque quantitas sit virtualis. Nam in uno et eodem diversa quantitas virtualis attendi potest secundum diversas rationes eorum quae de ipso praedicantur; sicut ex hoc quod dicitur ens, consideratur in eo quantitas virtualis quantum ad perfectionem essendi; et ex hoc quod dicitur sensibilis, consideratur in eo quantitas virtualis ex perfectione sentiendi; et sic de aliis. See *In I Sent.* 17, 2, 1: Quantitas autem dicitur dupliciter: quaedam virtualis, quaedam dimensiva.

6 *Phys.* 7, 3, 246a13–15: ἡ μὲν ἀρετὴ τελείωσίς τις — ὅταν γὰρ λάβῃ τὴν αὑτοῦ ἀρετήν, τότε λέγεται τέλειον ἕκαστον. Moerbeke translates: 'Virtus enim quaedam perfectio est: unumquodque enim tunc maxime perfectum est, cum attingit propriae virtuti.' See Aquinas, *In Physic.* 7, vi, 920. The reference given in *De Ver.* 29, 3 of the Marietti edition (p. 557) to chapter 8 is incorrect. This is reprinted in the Frohmann Holzboog *Opera Omnia*. See *In Meta.* 5, 18, 1037–8 for an interesting explanation of the perfection of a natural being in terms of its proper measure of magnitude (*magnitudo naturalis*) — both of its continuous dimensions and of its natural ability or power. From Aquinas' example of a horse, it seems that with the first sense he has in mind some ideal physical range, admitting of variation, and determined no doubt by the form of the species. We can thus best understand Aquinas' statement that both forms of perfection (*quantitas dimensiva sibi naturaliter*

determinata and *quantitas virtutis sibi debitae secundum naturam*) belong to the interior perfection of a being.

7 *De Ver.* 29, 3.

8 See also *De Ver.* 2, 9: Si aliquod corpus infinitum ponamus esse album, quantitas albedinis extensiva, secundum quam dicitur quanta per accidens, erit finita; quantitas autem per se, scilicet intensiva, nihilominus esset finita.

9 *De Ver.* 2, 9, ad 9: Illud quod est infinitum quantitate, habet esse finitum.

10 *De Ver.* 29, 3: Si ergo intelligatur aliqua anima sensibilis quae habeat in se quidquid potest concurrere ad perfectionem sentiendi qualitercumque, illa quidem anima erit finita secundum essentiam, quia esse suum est limitatum ad aliquam perfectionem essendi, scilicet sensibilem, quam excedit perfectio intelligibilis; esset tamen infinita secundum rationem sensibilitatis, quia eius sensibilitas ad nullum determinatum modum essendi limitaretur. The English version (*Truth*, Vol. 3, p. 413) mistranslates the last phrase as 'any definite mode of *sensing*'.

11 *In I Sent.* 19, 3, 1: In Deo non potest esse quantitas nisi virtutis. See Ibid. ad 3. *ST* I, 8, 2 ad 1: Incorporalia non sunt in loco per contactum quantitatis dimensivae, sicut corpora: sed per contactum virtutis. *ST* I, 52, 1: (Dimensiva quantitas) . . . in angelis non est; sed est in eis quantitas virtualis. See *Quodlib.* 1, 3, 1. In the *Summa*, Aquinas makes a related distinction between quantitative and virtual totality or 'whole' (I 76, 8; I, 8, 2 ad 3).

12 *De Ver.* 29, 3: Quantum igitur ad rationem essendi, infinitum esse non potest nisi illud in quo omnis essendi perfectio includitur, quae in diversis infinitis modis variari potest. Et hoc modo solus Deus infinitus est secundum essentiam; quia eius essentia non limitatur ad aliquam determinatam perfectionem, sed in se includit omnem modum perfectionis, ad quem ratio entitatis se extendere potest, et ideo ipse est infinitus secundum essentiam.

13 *De Ver.* 2, 9. The validity of referring this term to God may be extrapolated from the context. See Francis of Meyronnes, *Conflatus in librum Sententiarum*, I, d. 37, q. 1, f. 114v, col. a, ll. 55–57; col. b, ll. 75–78: 'Nam dicunt aliqui quod, sicut Deus est intensive infinitus, ita extensive, non quod habeat partem extra partem, sed quod potest coexistere infinitis locis. [. . .] Potest ergo dici, quod licet Deus habeat infinitatem intensivam, non tamen habet infinitatem vel magnitudinem extensivam, quam imaginantur praedictae rationes, ideo non concludunt.'

14 *QDM* 16, 9 ad 6: Forma separata, quae est purus actus, scilicet Deus, non determinatur ad aliquam speciem vel genus aliquod; sed

incircumscripte habet totam virtutem essendi, utpote ipsum suum esse existens, sicut patet per Dionysium cap. V De divinis nominibus. *In DC* 9, 2, 232: Eius virtus excedit omnem virtutem et Eius esse omne esse. See Ibid. 4, 109.

15 *De Caelo* 1, 11, 281a, 10–19: δέον ὁρίζεσθαι πρὸς τὸ τέλος καὶ τὴν ὑπεροχὴν τὴν δύναμιν... Ἡ δὲ δύναμις τῆς ὑπεροχῆς ἐστίν· ... διωρίσθω γὰρ κατὰ τῆς ὑπεροχῆς τὸ τέλος λεγόμενον τὸ κυρίως δυνατόν.

16 *ST* I-II, 55, 1: Dicendum quod virtus nominat quamdam potentiae perfectionem. Uniuscuiusque autem perfectio praecipue consideratur in ordine ad suum finem. Finis autem potentiae actus est. Unde potentia dicitur esse perfecta, secundum quod determinatur ad suum actum. *ST* I-II, 55, 3: Virtus importat perfectionem potentiae. *In I Sent.* 29, 3, 1: Virtus autem, secundum Philosophum, est ultimum in re de potentia.

17 *ST* I-II 55, 1 ad 1: Unde quando dicitur quod virtus est ultimum potentiae, sumitur virtus pro objecto virtutis. Id enim in quod ultimo potentia potest est id quod dicitur virtus rei.

18 *ST* I-II, 66, 2: Quantitas virtutum ... potest attendi secundum participationem subjecti, prout scilicet intenditur vel remittitur in subjecto. For similar terminology, see *ST* I-II, 52, 1, which treats 'de intensionibus habituum' (66, 1): intensio et remissio, magis et minus, plus vel minus, intensior et remissior.

19 *ST* I-II 66, 1: Si vero consideretur virtus ex parte subjecti participantis, sic contingit virtutem esse majorem vel minorem, sive secundum diversa tempora in eodem, sive in diversis hominibus.

20 *ST* I-II 52, 1: Sic igitur patet quod, cum habitus et dispositiones dicantur secundum ordinem ad aliquid ut dicitur in VII Physic., dupliciter potest intensio et remissio in habitibus et dispositionibus considerari. Uno modo, secundum se: prout dicitur major vel minor sanitas; vel major vel minor scientia quae ad plura vel pauciora se extendit. Alio modo, secundum participationem subjecti: prout scilicet aequalis scientia vel sanitas magis recipitur in uno quam in alio, secundum diversam aptitudinem vel ex natura vel ex consuetudine. See Aristotle *Phys.* 7, 3, 246b3–4: ἔτι δὲ καί φαμεν ἁπάσας εἶναι τὰς ἀρετὰς ἐν τῷ πρός τι πὼς ἔχειν. Note that *virtus* translates both δύναμις and ἀρετή.

21 *ST* I, 42, 1 ad 1: Ad primum ergo dicendum quod duplex est quantitas. Una scilicet quae dicitur quantitas molis vel quantitas dimensiva, quae in solis rebus corporalibus est; unde in divinis personis locum non habet. Sed alia est quantitas virtutis, quae attenditur secundum perfectionem

alicuius naturae vel formae. Quae quidem quantitas designatur secundum quod dicitur aliquid magis vel minus calidum inquantum est perfectius vel minus perfectum in tali caliditate. Huiusmodi autem quantitas virtualis attenditur primo quidem in radice, idest in ipsa perfectione formae vel naturae, et sic dicitur magnitudo spiritualis, sicut dicitur magnus calor propter suam intensionem et perfectionem. Et ideo dicit Auqustinus, quod in his quae non mole magna sunt, hoc est maius esse quod est melius esse, nam melius dicitur quod perfectius est. Secundo autem attenditur quantitas virtualis in effectibus formae. Primus autem effectus formae est esse, nam omnis res habet esse secundum suam formam. Secundus autem effectus est operatio, nam omne agens agit per suam formam. Attenditur igitur quantitas virtualis et secundum esse et secundum operationem; secundum esse quidem inquantum ea quae sunt perfectioris naturae sunt majoris durationis; secundum operationem vero inquantum ea quae sunt perfectioris naturae sunt magis potentia ad agendum.

22 See *ST* I, 42, 1, obj.1: In divinis autem personis non invenitur neque quantitas continua intrinseca, quae dicitur magnitudo; neque quantitas continua extrinseca, quae dicitur locus et tempus; neque secundum quantitatem discretam invenitur in eis aequalitas, quia duae personae sunt plures quam una.

23 In this regard see also *CG* 2, 55, 1299: Esse autem per se consequitur ad formam . . . unumquodque autem habet esse secundum quod habet formam. *De Ver.* 29, 3 ad 4: Forma est principium actus. Secundum autem quod habet esse in actu, non est possibile quod a forma cuius est essentia finita, procedat actio infinita secundum intensionem. On the role of form, see Klaus Riesenhuber, *Die Transzendenz der Freiheit zum Guten*, Chapter 9: 'Die Form als Ursprung des Seins'; also Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et causalité*, pp. 343–62.

24 *De Pot.* 5, 4 ad 1: Nam quantum unicuique inest de forma, tantum inest ei de virtute essendi. See the texts cited in footnotes 55–7 below. Tomás Melendo Granados, *Ontología de los opuestos*, p. 186: '. . . hay que admitir un *magis et minus* en las formas sustanciales. *Magis et minus* que se origina, no por la intensificación o remisión de una misma forma, sino por la diversidad jerárquica entre las formas sustanciales, que provoca una mayor o menor intensidad en la posesión del acto de ser.' See *In I Gen. et Corrupt.* 8, 62.

25 *In I Sent.* 19, 3, 1: Respondeo dicendum, quod in Deo non potest esse quantitas nisi virtutis; et cum aequalitas attendatur secundum aliquam speciem quantitatis, aequalitas non erit nisi secundum virtutem.

Virtus autem, secundum Philosophum, est ultimum in re de potentia. Unde etiam dicitur in VII Physic. quod virtus est perfectio quaedam, et tunc unumquodque perfectum est quando attingit propriam virtutem. Omnibus igitur illis modis quibus contingit pertingere ad ultimum est considerare virtutem rei. Hoc autem contingit tripliciter: primo in operationibus in quibus contingit gradus perfectionis inveniri. Unde dicitur habere virtutem ad operandum quod attingit completam operationem, prout dicitur II Ethic. quod virtutis est quae bonum facit habentem, et opus eius bonum reddit. Secundo respectu ipsius esse rei, secundum quod etiam Philosophus dicit, quod aliquid habet virtutem ut semper sit. Item secundum plenitudinem perfectionis respectu ipsius entis, secundum quod attingit ultimum naturae suae. . . Si igitur virtus divina consideretur secundum perfectionem ad opus, erit virtus potentiae operativae. Si autem consideretur perfectio quantum ad ipsum esse divinum, virtus eius erit aeternitas. Si autem consideretur quantum ad complementum perfectionis ipsius naturae divinae, erit magnitudo. Quod patet ex hoc quod ipse probat aequalitatem in magnitudine ex hoc quod tota plenitudo naturae Patris est in Filio; secundum quem etiam modum Augustinus dicit quod in his quae non mole magna sunt, idem est maius esse quod melius, secundum quod etiam dicimus aliquem hominem esse magnum, qui est perfectus in scientia et virtute.

26 Aquinas frequently uses the phrase *virtus essendi* to express the power of some beings (heavenly bodies) to endure eternally in existence (*CG* 2, 33, 1098, *De Caelo et Mundo* 1, 6, 62). Though related, this is not the full, intensive, meaning of *esse* as a virtual perfection. For the texts of Aristotle, *De Caelo*, see note 54 below.

27 *In I Sent.* 19, 3, 1 ad 3.

28 *De Quantitate Animae* 17: Non igitur magnum vel ingentem animum cum audimus aut dicimus, quantum loci occupet, sed quantum possit, cogitandum est.

29 *EN* 10, 7, 7, 1177b34–1178a2: εἰ γὰρ καὶ τῷ ὄγκῳ μικρόν ἐστι, δυνάμει καὶ τιμιότητι πολὺ μᾶλλον πάντων ὑπερέχει. In the translation of William Moerbeke: Si enim et mole parvum est, potentia et pretiositate multum magis omnibus superexcellit.

30 *In EN* 10, 11, 2107: Quamvis enim hoc optimum sit parvum mole, quia est incorporeum et simplicissimum, et per consequens caret magnitudine molis, tamen quantitate virtutis et pretiositatis multum excedit omnia quae in homine sunt.

31 *De Pot.* 1, 2: In actione etiam invenitur quaedam intensio secundum efficaciam agendi, et sic potest potentiae activae attribui quaedam

infinitas secundum conformitatem ad infinitatem quantitatis et continuae et discretae. Discretae quidem secundum quod quantitas potentiae attenditur secundum multa vel pauca obiecta; et haec vocatur quantitas extensiva: continuae vero, secundum quod quantitas potentiae attenditur in hoc quod remisse vel intense agit; et haec vocatur quantitas intensiva. Prima autem quantitas convenit potentiae respectu obiectorum, secunda vero respectu actionis. Istorum enim duorum activa potentia est principium. The reference given to *De Pot.* 1, 3 in Fabro, *Participation et causalité*, p. 253, is incorrect.

32 Aristotle compares the magnitude of powers in a somewhat similar manner, measuring them in terms of time: 'The greater power is always that which produces an equal effect in less time, whether it be heating, sweetening, throwing or, in general, effecting any kind of change.' *Phys.* 8, 10, 266a26–8: ἔστω γὰρ ἡ πλείων δύναμις ἀεὶ ἡ τὸ ἴσον ἐν ἐλάττονι χρόνῳ ποιοῦσα, οἷον θερμαίνουσα ἢ γλυκαίνουσα ἢ ῥιπτοῦσα καὶ ὅλως κινοῦσα.

33 *De Ver.* 8, 2: Per se autem non comparatur ad intellectum intelligible secundum quantitatem dimensivam, cum intellectus sit virtus non utens organo corporali; sed per se comparatur ad ipsum, solum secundum quantitatem virtualem. Et ideo in his quae per se intelliguntur sine coniunctione ad sensum, non impeditur comprehensio intellectus nisi propter excessum quantitatis virtualis; quando scilicet quod intelligitur, habet modum intelligendi perfectiorem quam sit modus quo intellectus intelligit.

34 *De Ver.* 20, 4 ad 14: Quantitas extensionis est scientiae accidentalis; quantitas autem intensiva est ei essentialis.

35 *ST* II-II, 24, 4 ad 1: Dicendum quod caritati non convenit quantitas dimensiva, sed solum quantitas virtualis. Quae non solum attenditur secundum numerum obiectorum, ut scilicet plura vel pauciora diligantur: sed etiam secundum intensionem actus, ut magis vel minus aliquid dili gatur. Et hoc modo virtualis quantitas caritatis augetur. See also *In I Sent.* 17, 2, 1, *Solutio* and ad 2: Quantitas autem dicitur dupliciter: quaedam virtualis, quaedam dimensiva. Virtualis quantitas non est ex genere suo quantitas, quia non dividitur divisione essentiae suae; sed magnitudo eius attenditur ad aliquid divisibile extra, vel multiplicabile, quod est obiectum vel actus virtutis... Quantitas virtutis attenditur dupliciter: vel quantum ad numerum obiectorum, et hoc est per modum quantitatis discretae; vel quantum ad intensionem actus super idem obiectum, et hoc est sicut quantitas continua; et ita excrescit virtus charitatis. Similarily, the spiritual gifts of love,

knowledge, charity and grace are measured in terms of their virtual or intensive quantity — secundum maiorem et minorem perfectionem virtutis (*In I Sent.* 17, 2, 1 ad 3). See *De Ver.* 29, 3 ad 4: Forma est principium actus. Secundum autem quod habet esse m actu, non est possibile quod a forma cuius est essentia finita, procedat actio infinita secundum intensionem. Unde et meritum Christi non fuit infinitum secundum intensionem actus: finite enim diligebat et cognoscebat; sed habuit quamdam infinitatem ex circumstantia personae, quae erat dignitatis infinitae. See also *De Ver.* 29, 3 ad 4.

36 *De Pot.* 1, 2: Utroque autem modo divina potentia est infinita. Nam nunquam tot effectus facit quin plures facere possit, nec unquam ita intense operatur quin intensius operari possit. Intensio autem in operatione divina non est attendenda secundum quod operatio est in operante, quia sic semper est infinita, cum operatio sit divina essentia; sed attendenda est secundum quod attingit effectum; sic enim a Deo moventur quaedam efficacius, quaedam minus efficaciter.

37 Citing *De Ver.* 29, 3, he writes: 'En conclusion: de la quantité dimensive l'analogué métaphysique est passé à la *quantitas virtualis* qui est la perfection d'être, et il s'est placé au sommet dans l'Acte d'être comme plenitude de perfection.' (*Participation et causalité,* p. 259). See note 150 below.

38 *De Ver.* 29, 3 ad 5: Quod enim finitum aliquid per continuum augmentum possit attingere ad quantumcumque finitum, veritatem habet, si accipiatur eadem ratio quantitatis in utroque finito; sicut si comparemus lineam ad lineam, vel albedinem ad albedinem; non tamen si accipiatur alia et alia ratio quantitatis. Et hoc patet in quantitate dimensiva: quantumcumque enim linea augeatur in longum, nunquam perveniet ad latitudinem superficiei. Et similiter patet in quantitate virtuali vel intensiva: quantumcumque enim cognitio cognoscentis Deum per similitudinem proficiat, nunquam potest adaequari cognitioni comprehensoris, qui videt Deum per essentiam.

39 An exception is James F. Anderson, who mentions it briefly in *The Bond of Being*, pp. 295–6. By the same author, see *The Cause of Being,* pp. 122–3, for an outline of Aquinas' distinction between quantitative, essential, and virtual totality. The present essay is a partial response to the suggestion of L.-B. Geiger: 'Aristote s'était contenté, nous l'avons dit, de poser au-dessus des êtres *mobiles,* des substances *immobiles* et eternelles. Saint Thomas approfondit cette manière de voir en mettant

en évidence une sorte d'intensité croissante ou de perfection en quelque sorte qualitative de *l'actus essendi.* Une étude de son vocabulaire, a cet égard, serait des plus révélatrices. L'*esse* comporte une *virtus,* une *perfectio* qui va croissant, à mesure qu'on s'élève dans l'échelle des êtres (idée qui êut sans doute paru inintelligible à Aristote). Et cette croissance n'est rien d'autre que la réalisation de moins en moins imparfaite, de plus en plus purement actuelle, de l'*actus essendi* lui-même, selon toute sa plénitude intensive, *secundum totum suum posse.* (*Philosophie et spiritualité* I, pp. 149–50). See *La participation dans la philosophie de Saint Thomas* d'Aquin, p. 198n2, where Geiger, with a reference to Dionysius, speaks of *virtus essendi,* 'sorte de plénitude intensive de *l'esse.*' See p. 373n2: 'Cette notion de: *nature de l'être (entitas, natura entis, virtus essendi),* demanderait à être précisée. Elle suppose une vue de l'être, où de prime abord celui-ci apparaît comme doué d'une densité qualitative, qui permet de lui appliquer les données générales valables pour les formes ou les essences.' Geiger quotes *In DN,* V, i, 629 as an example of this understanding of being.

40 Etienne Gilson, *Le Thomisme*, p. 194n8: 'La notion de *virtus essendi,* d'origine dionysienne, signifie l'aptitude intrinsèque de la forme à l' existence.'

41 Etienne Gilson, 'Virtus Essendi', pp. 8–9. Much of what I am attempting to convey here is brought out much more admirably by Gilson himself in *The Elements of Christian Philosophy*, pp. 210–12, where the influence of Dionysius on Aquinas' appreciation of being is highlighted. Gilson comes closest to affirming existence as a variable, virtual and intensive value when he speaks of quality and quantity as inseparable in reality: there is thus a 'quality of quantity'. However, only 'if we agree to *imagine* [his emphasis] essences as various quantities of actual being [will] the ontological density of each essence [. . .] determine a qualitative specification proper to it.' Gilson interprets Aristotle's view that 'a definition is a sort of number' to suggest that 'The Philosopher seems to have conceived (or imagined) each specific essence (stone, plant, animal, etc.) as a certain quantity of being. . . Translated into the language of Thomas Aquinas, this would mean that each essence represents the quantity of actual being (*esse*) participated in by a specifically defined substance. . . There is less being in a material form, limited to be itself only because of its matter, than in an intellectual substance capable of becoming any other given being.' My only disagreement with Gilson is that

rather than a concession to imagination, such a view of being as a virtual quantity exhibiting varying degrees of intensity is conceptually compelling and is, moreover, textually based in the works of Aquinas. Indeed Joseph Owens considers that Aquinas' advance beyond Aristotle (whose philosophy of being is marked by 'the absence of any treatment of *existence*') may be expressed in Gilson's words from *Le Thomisme* (1944, pp. 54–5): 'Chaque essence est posée par un acte d'exister qu'elle n'est pas et qui l'inclut comme son autodétermination . . . c'est donc la hiérarchie des actes d' exister qui fonde et règle celle des essences, chacune d'elles n'exprimant que l'intensité propre d'un certain acte d'exister.' (Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*, p. 466n41). See A. Solignac, 'La doctrine de l'*esse* chez saint Thomas est-elle d'origine néoplatonicienne?', pp. 449–50: 'La densité d'être, si l'on peut dire, la densité de valeur de chaque acte d'*esse*, est variable selon chaque être; c'est pourquoi il y a une *scala entis*, une échelle des degrés d'être.'

42 *CG* l, 20, 175.

43 *De Ver.* 29, 3.

44 *CG* l, 20, 175.

45 *In de Caelo* 1, 6, 62: Ipsum autem esse alicuius rei secundum se consideratum non est quantum: non enim habet partes, sed totum est simul.

46 *CG* l, 20, 175.

47 *CG* l, 20, 179.

48 For an interesting discussion on Aristotle's principle that an infinite power cannot reside in a finite magnitude (*Phys.* 8, 10, 266a27–8: οὐκ ἐνδέχεται ἐν πεπερασμένῳ μεγέθει ἄπειρον εἶναι δύναμιν) see Carlos Steel, '*Omnis corporis potentia est finita.* L'interprétation d'un principe aristotélicien: de Proclus à S. Thomas', pp. 213–24.

49 See *De Pot.* 1, 2: Dicendum quod infinitum dicitur dupliciter. Uno modo privative; et sic dicitur infinitum quod natum est habere finem et non habet: tale autem infinitum non invenitur nisi in quantitatibus. Alio modo dicitur infinitum negative, id est quod non habet finem. Infinitum primo modo acceptum Deo convenire non potest, tum quia Deus est absque quantitate, tum quia omnis privatio imperfectionem designat, quae longe a Deo est. See *De Pot.* l, 2 ad 5.

50 *CG* 3, 68, 2424: Res enim corporea est in aliquo sicut in loco secundum contactum quantitatis dimensivae; res autem incorporea

in aliquo esse dicitur secundum contactum virtutis, cum careat dimensiva quantitate. Sic igitur se habet res incorporea ad hoc quod sit in aliquo per virtutem suam, sicut se habet res corporea ad hoc quod sit in aliquo per quantitatem dimensivam. Si autem esset aliquod corpus habens quantitatem dimensivam infinitam, oporteret illud esse ubique. Ergo, si sit aliqua res incorporea habens virtutem infinitam, oportet quod sit ubique.

51 *CG* 3, 68, 2430. On the nature of divine immensity, M. Curtin writes: 'God is not only beyond continuous quantity but also, by reason of his fullness of being, he is beyond the possibility of measurement; he is immeasurable, immense. What measure or independent standard could really be applied to him? His immensity, an absolute attribute, must be distinguished from his omnipresence which is a relative attribute; if God had not created the world, he would still be immense; but he would not be omnipresent because there would be no world for him to be present in.' 'God's Presence in the World. The Metaphysics of Aquinas and some Recent Thinkers', p. 129.

52 *ST* I, 3, 5 ad 2.

53 Marie-Dominique Philippe, 'Analyse de l'être chez Saint Thomas', p. 28n88.

54 *De Caelo* 1, 12, 281b 25–32: Ἅπαν ἄρα τὸ ἀεὶ ὂν ἁπλῶς ἄφθαρτον . . . δυνατὸν τὸ ἀεὶ ὂν . . . δύναται εἶναι . . . δύνασθαι εἶναι.

55 *ST* I-II, 55, 2: Dicendum quod virtus ex ipsa ratione nominis importat quamdam perfectionem potentiae. Unde cum duplex sit potentia, scilicet potentia ad esse, et potentia ad agere, utriusque potentiae perfectio virtus vocatur. Sed potentia ad esse se tenet ex parte materiae, quae est ens in potentia; potentia autem ad agere se tenet ex parte formae, quae est principium agendi, eo quod unumquodque agit, inquantum est actu.

56 *CG* 1, 20, 174: Etsi detur quod in corpore caelesti non sit potentia quasi passiva ad esse, quae est potentia materiae, est tamen in eo potentia quasi activa, quae est virtus essendi: cum expresse Aristoteles dicat, in I Caeli et Mundi, quod caelum habet virtutem ut sit semper. See also *De Pot.* 5, 4 ad 1: Potentia ad esse non solum accipitur secundum modum potentiae passivae, quae est ex parte materiae, sed etiam secundum modum potentiae activae, quae est ex parte formae, quae in rebus incorruptibilibus deesse non potest. Nam quantum unicuique inest de forma, tantum inest ei de virtute essendi; unde et in I Caeli et Mundi Philosophus vult quod quaedam habeant virtutem et potentiam ut semper sint.

57 *In de Caelo* 1, 6, 62: (Averroes) fuit autem deceptus per hoc quod existimavit virtutem essendi pertinere solum ad potentiam passivam, quae est potentia materiae; cum magis pertineat ad potentiam formae, quia unumquodque est per suam formam. Unde tantum et tamdiu habet unaquaeque res de esse, quanta est virtus formae eius. Et sic non solum in corporibus caelestibus, sed etiam in substantiis separatis est virtus essendi semper.

58 *CG* 1, 28, 262: Illa vero quae tantum sunt, non sunt imperfecta propter imperfectionem ipsius esse absoluti: non enim ipsa habent esse secundum suum totum posse, sed participant esse per quendam particularem modum et imperfectissimum.

59 *CG* 1, 20, 174. See note 54 above. On the infinite power of being to endure infinitely in Proclus and the *Liber de Causis*, see *In DC* 4: Omne enim immobiliter ens infinitum est secundum potentiam essendi; si enim quod potest magis durare in esse est maioris potentiae, quod potest in infinitum durare in esse est quantum ad hoc infinitae potentiae. Ibid. 16: Ea quae plus durare possunt, habent maiorem virtutem essendi; unde illa quae in infinitum durare possunt, habent quantum ad hoc infinitam potentiam.

60 *DN* 8, 2, 332.

61 *DN* 8, 3, 334. The phrase τοῦ εἶναι δύναμιν occurs three times in Proclus' *Commentary on the Timaeus* (Ed. Diehl, I, 267, 15; I, 268, 3; II, 131, 1–2: ἄπειρον τοῦ εἶναι δύναμιν). Is it possible that this is the source of Dionysius' phrase?

62 Fernand Van Steenberghen, 'Prolégomènes à la *quarta via*', p. 104.

63 *In DN* V, i, 636: Hoc ergo est quod dicit quod ipse Deus *praeesse et superesse* praehabet et superhabet. See *DN* 5, 5, 267: καὶ γάρ τὸ προείναι καὶ ὑπερεῖναι προέχων καὶ ὑπερέχων.

64 *DN* 5, 5, 266: καὶ πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων αὐτοῦ μετοχῶν τὸ εἶναι προβέβληται καὶ ἔστιν αὐτὸ καθ᾽ αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι πρεσβύτερον τοῦ αὐτοζωὴν εἶναι καί αὐτοσοφίαν εἶναι καὶ αὐτοομοιότητα θείαν εἶναι, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα, ὅσων τὰ ὄντα μετέχοντα.

65 *DN* 5, 5, 267: καὶ γοῦν αἱ ἀρχαὶ τῶν ὄντων πᾶσαι τοῦ εἶναι μετέχουσαι καὶ εἰσὶ καὶ ἀρχαὶ εἰσὶ καὶ πρῶτον εἰσίν, ἔπειτα ἀρχαὶ εἰσίν.

66 *DN* 5, 5, 267: τὰς αὐτομετοχὰς εὑρήσεις τοῦ εἶναι πρῶτον αὐτὰς μετεχούσας καὶ τῷ εἶναι πρῶτον μὲν οὔσας, ἔπειτα τοῦδε ἢ τοῦδε ἀρχὰς οὔσας καὶ τῷ μετέχειν τοῦ εἶναι καὶ οὔσας καὶ μετεχομένας.

67 *DN* 5, 7, 274: τὰ ἄλλα, ὅσα τῷ εἶναι ὄντα τὰ ὄντα πάντα χαρακτηρίζει.

68 *DN* 5, 3, 259.

69 *DN* 5, 3, 260: ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἀνούσια καὶ ἄζωά τις ὑπετίθετο τὰ νοερά, καλῶς ἂν εἶχεν ὁ λόγος.

70 E.g. *ST* I, 4, 2 ad 3.

71 *DN* 5, 4, 264: ἀλλ' αὐτός ἐστι τὸ εἶναι τοῖς οὖσι· καὶ οὐ τὰ ὄντα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι τῶν ὄντων ἐκ τοῦ προαιωνίως ὄντος.

72 *In DN* V, i, 615: Sed divinae mentes Angelorum non carent esse, quinimmo habent excellentius super alia existentia creata. Living things are clearly 'more noble' than non-living bodies (*ST* I, 3, 1).

73 *DN* 5, 3, 260.

74 *In DN* V. i. 615. Pierre Faucon writes: 'Invité par Denys à concevoir l'être comme le fondement ou la source originelle de toutes les perfections, Thomas d' Aquin exploite le vocabulaire d' Aristote: l'être est l'acte actuant et fondamental d'où jaillissent les perfections à mesure qu'elles sont éduites de la potentialité. Cette explication de la pensée dionysienne en termes aristotéliciens manifeste l'originalité de l'exégèse thomiste: recueillant les doctrines de ses devanciers, Saint Thomas procède au moyen de confrontations doctrinales qui mettent en relief les complementarités. La preuve est ainsi faite qu'au moment où il rédige son commentaire, Saint Thomas n'hesite pas à se servir de la philosophie d' Aristote pour soutenir son option en faveur du platonisme dionysien.' Pierre Faucon, *Aspects néoplatoniciens de la doctrine de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 235.

75 *In DN* V, i, 610.

76 *DN* 5, 5, 266: πρὸ τῶν ἄλλων αὐτοῦ μετοχῶν τὸ εἶναι προβέβληται.

77 *DN* 5, 6, 267: πρώτην οὖν τὴν τοῦ αὐτὸ εἶναι δωρεὰν ἡ αὐτοϋπεραγαθότης προβαλλομένη.

78 *In DN* V, i, 633: Hoc est ergo quod dicit, quod ipsum esse propositum est creaturis ad participandum ante alias Dei participationes. Quamcumque enim perfectionem creatura habeat, fit per hoc in Dei participatione, qui quasi proponitur et offertur omnibus ad participandum; sed per prius participatur quantum ad ipsum esse, quam quamcumque aliam perfectionem: et ipsum per se esse est senius, idest primum et dignius eo quod est per se vitam esse.

79 *In DN* V, i, 635: Quod autem per se esse sit primum et dignius quam per se vita et per se sapientia, ostendit dupliciter: primo quidem, per hoc quod quaecumque participant aliis participationibus, primo participant ipso esse: prius enim intelligitur aliquod ens quam unum, vivens, vel sapiens. Secundo, quod ipsum esse comparatur ad vitam, et alia huiusmodi sicut participatum ad participans: nam etiam ipsa vita est ens quoddam et sic esse, prius et simplicius est

quam vita et alia huiusmodi et comparatur ad ea ut actus eorum. Referring to this passage from the Commentary on Dionysius, Fabro writes: 'Saint Thomas, et lui seul, proclame l'émergence absolue de l'*esse* comme acte de tous les actes et de toutes les formes. Formes et actes "retombent" dans la condition de puissance ou de "capacité" receptive de l'acte d'être.' *Participation et causalité*, p. 618.

80 *DN* 5, 5, 266.

81 *In DN* V, i, 635.

82 *DN* 5, 5, 266.

83 *In DN* V, i, 633.

84 *In DN* V, i, 635.

85 *DN* 5, 8, 278: τὸ δὲ εἶναι αὐτὸ τῶν ὄντων πάντων οὐδέποτε ἀπολείπεται.

86 *In DN* V, ii, 659: Nihil potest dici existens nisi habeat esse.

87 *In DN* V, i, 639.

88 *In DN* IX, i, 808.

89 *DN* 8, 3, 334. Sarracenus translates: 'et ipsum etiam esse, si fas est dicere, virtutem ad hoc quod sit, habet a supersubstantiali virtute'.

90 *DN* 5, 4, 262: ὁ ὢν ὅλου τοῦ εἶναι κατὰ δύναμιν ὑπερούσιός ἐστιν ὑποστάτις αἰτία καὶ δημιουργὸς ὄντος.

91 *In de Causis* IV, 109: Si autem aliquid sic haberet infinitam virtutem essendi quod non participaret esse ab alio, tunc esset solum infinitum et tale est Deus.

92 *ST* I, 4, 2. See *DN* 5, 10, 284: ἐν ἑνὶ γάρ . . . τὰ ὄντα πάντα καὶ προέχει καὶ ὑπέστησε. Sarracenus translates: 'In uno enim . . . existentia omnia et praehabet et subsistere facit.' The Marietti and Blackfriars editors give 5, 9 as the source of Aquinas' quotation. Durantel (p. 183) also cites *DN* 5, 10.

93 *ST* I, 4, 2: Quidquid perfectionis est in effectu oportet inveniri in causa effectiva; IV, iv, 331: Causa superior praehabet in se quod in effectibus inferioribus invenitur; V, i, 631: Causa praeeminet effectibus . . . sicut effectus virtute praeexistunt in causa; IX, iv, 846: Omnes enim effectus praeexistunt virtualiter in sua causa. See note 3 above.

94 *ST* I, 4, 2: Manifestum est enim quod effectus praeexistit virtute in causa agente: praeexistere autem in virtute causae agentis, non est praeexistere imperfectiori modo, sed perfectiori.

95 *ST* I, 4, 3 ad 1.

96 *In DN* V, iii, 662: Eadem autem est proportio causae particularis ad suos particulares effectus et causae universalis ad suos.

97 *ST* I, 8, 3, 3.

98 Cum ergo Deus sit prima causa effectiva rerum oportet omnium rerum perfectiones praeexistere in Deo secundum eminentiorem modum. Et hanc rationem tangit Dionysius dicens de Deo quod non hoc quidem est hoc autem non est, sed omnia est ut omnium causa.

99 *DN* 5, 8, 280: οὐ τόδε μὲν ἔστι, τόδε δὲ οὐκ ἔστιν . . . ἀλλὰ πάντα ἐστὶν ὡς πάντων αἴτιος.

100 *In DN* V, ii, 662: Sic enim omnia praeexistunt in Deo, sicut Ipse omnium est productivus.

101 *In DN* II, i, 113: Ipsa Deitas . . . dicatur tota, quasi praehabens in se universa.

102 *In DN* I, iii, 99: 'Omnia in omnibus', inquantum omnis perfectio est ipse Deus causaliter.

103 *ST* I, 4, 2.

104 *ST* I, 4, 2: Manifestum est enim quod, si aliquod calidum non habeat totam perfectionem calidi, hoc ideo est, quia calor non participatur secundum perfectam rationem: sed si calor esset per se subsistens, non posset ei aliquid deesse de virtute caloris. Unde, cum Deus sit ipsum esse subsistens, nihil de perfectione essendi potest ei deesse. Omnium autem perfectiones pertinent ad perfectionem essendi: secundum hoc enim aliqua perfecta sunt, quod aliquo modo esse habent. Unde sequitur quod nullius rei perfectio Dei desit. Et hanc etiam rationem tangit Dionysius, cap. 5 de Div. Nom., dicens quod Deus non quodammodo est existens, sed simpliciter et incircumscripte totum in seipso uniformiter esse praeaccipit: et postea subdit quod ipse est esse subsistentibus.

105 *DN* 5, 4, 263–4: καὶ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς οὐ πώς ἐστιν ὤν, ἀλλ' ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀπεριορίστως ὅλον ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸ εἶναι συνειληφὼς καὶ προειληφώς. Διὸ καὶ βασιλεὺς λέγεται τῶν αἰώνων ὡς ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ περὶ αὐτὸν παντὸς τοῦ εἶναι καὶ ὄντος καὶ ὑφεστηκότος καὶ οὔτε ἦν οὔτε ἔσται οὔτε ἐγένετο οὔτε γίνεται οὔτε γενήσεται, μᾶλλον δὲ οὔτε ἐστίν. Ἀλλ' αὐτός ἐστι τὸ εἶναι τοῖς οὖσι καὶ οὐ τὰ ὄντα μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ εἶναι τῶν ὄντων ἐκ τοῦ προαιωνίως ὄντος,

106 V, i, 629: Ostendit quod omnia conveniunt Deo, quodammodo. Ad cuius evidentiam considerandum est quod omnis forma, recepta in aliquo, limitatur et finitur secundum capacitatem recipientis; unde, hoc corpus album non habet totam albedinem secundum totum posse albedinis. Sed si esset albedo separata, nihil deesset ei quod ad virtutem albedinis pertineret. Omnia autem alia, sicut superius

dictum est, habent esse receptum et participatum et ideo non habent esse secundum totam virtutem essendi, sed solus Deus, qui est ipsum esse subsistens, secundum totam virtutem essendi, esse habet.

107 *In DN* V, i, 629.

108 *ST* I, 7, 1: Cum igitur esse divinum non sit esse receptum in aliquo, sed ipse sit suum esse subsistens; manifestum est quod ipse Deus est infinitus et perfectus.

109 *ST* I, 44, 1: Deus est ipsum esse per se subsistens . . . esse subsistens non potest esse nisi unum: sicut si albedo esset subsistens, non potest esse nisi una, cum albedines multiplicuntur secundum recipientia.

110 *ST* I, 4, 2 ad 3: Ad tertium dicendum quod, sicut in eodem capite idem Dionysius dicit, licet ipsum esse sit perfectius quam vita, et ipsa vita quam ipsa sapientia, si considerentur secundum quod distinguuntur ratione: tamen vivens est perfectius quam ens tantum, quia vivens est etiam ens; et sapiens est ens et vivens. Licet igitur ens non includat in se vivens et sapiens, quia non oportet quod illud quod participat esse, participet ipsum secundum omnem modum essendi: tamen ipsum esse Dei includit in se vitam et sapientiam; quia nulla de perfectionibus essendi potest deesse ei quod est ipsum esse subistens.

111 See Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et causalité*, pp. 428–9.

112 *CG* 1, 28, 259: Deus tamen qui non est aliud quam suum esse, est universaliter ens perfectum. Et dico universaliter perfectum, cui non deest alicuius generis nobilitas.

113 *CG* 1, 28, 260: Omnis enim nobilitas cuiuscumque rei est sibi secundum suum esse: nulla enim nobilitas esset homini ex sua sapientia nisi per eam sapiens esset, et sic de aliis. Sic ergo secundum modum quo res habet esse, est suus modus in nobilitate: nam res secundum quod suum esse contrahitur ad aliquem specialem modum nobilitatis maiorem vel minorem, dicitur esse secundum hoc nobilior vel minus nobilis. Igitur si aliquid est cui competit tota virtus essendi, ei nulla nobilitatum deesse potest quae alicui rei conveniat. Sed rei quae est suum esse, competit esse secundum totam essendi potestatem: sicut si esset aliqua albedo separata, nihil ei de virtute albedinis deesse potest. . . . Deus igitur, qui est suum esse, habet esse secundum totam virtutem ipsius esse. Non potest ergo carere aliqua nobilitate quae alicui rei conveniat. See also 1, 28, 261–2.

114 *CG* 1, 28, 267: Dionysius etiam, in V cap. de Div. Nom. dicit: Deus non quodam modo est existens, sed simpliciter et incircumscriptive

totum esse in seipso accepit et praeaccepit. See *In I Sent.* 8, 2, 3: Divinum esse, ut dicit Dionysius, De Divinis nominibus, V, 4, praeaccipit sicut causa in se omne quantum ad id quod est perfectionis in omnibus.

115 *De An.* 6 ad 2. See *In de Hebd.* 2, 24: Ipsum esse est communissimum . . . unde relinquitur quod id quod est, aliquid possit participare; ipsum autem esse non possit aliquid participare.

116 *ST* I, 75, 5, ad 1: Primus actus est universale principium omnium actuum quia est infinitum, virtualiter in se omnia praehabens, ut dicit Dionysius.

117 *In DN* V, ii, 660: Omnia existentia continentur sub ipso esse communi, non autem Deus, sed magis esse commune continetur sub eius virtute, quia virtus divina plus extenditur quam ipsum esse creatum; et hoc est quod dicit, quod esse commune est in ipso Deo sicut contentum in continente et non e converso ipse Deus est in eo quod est esse.

118 *ST* I, 75, 5 ad 4: Omne participatum comparatur ad participans ut actus eius. Quaecumque autem forma creata per se subsistens ponatur, oportet quod participet esse: quia etiam ipsa vita, vel quidquid sic diceretur, participat ipsum esse, ut dicit Dionysius, 5 cap. de Div. Nom. Esse autem participatum finitur ad capacitatem participantis. Unde solus Deus, qui est ipsum suum esse, est actus purus et infinitus.

119 *Quodl.* 3, 8, 1: Omne autem participans se habet ad participatum, sicut potentia ad actum; unde substantia cuiuslibet rei creatae se habet ad suum esse, sicut potentia ad actum.

120 *In DC* 12, 278.

121 *ST* I, 3, 1: Corpus vivum manifestum est quod est nobilius corpore non vivo.

122 *In III Sent.* 30, 2.

123 *In DC* 12, 281.

124 *CG* 1, 28, 259.

125 *De Ver.* 2, 5, arg. 12: Materia prima habet minimum de esse. *Corpus:* Materia autem, propter debilitatem sui esse, quia est ens in potentia tantum, non potest esse principium agendi. Ad 12: Illa quae habent deficiens esse. . .

126 *De Ver.* 2, 5: Res autem, sive forte sive debile esse participet, hoc non habet nisi a Deo; et secundum hoc similitudo omnis rei in Deo existit quod res illa a Deo esse participat. Trans. *Truth*, Vol. I, p. 88.

127 *CG* 1, 28, 260.

128 *In DC* 12, 281: Haec duo (vivere et intelligere), prout sunt in ipso esse non sunt aliud quam esse.

129 *In DC* 12, 278.

130 See Albert Keller, *Sein oder Existenz? Die Auslegung des Seins bei Thomas van Aquin*, p. 246.

131 *In Ev. Johannis* 1, 5, 183: Cum ergo esse sit intimum cuilibet rei.

132 *In DC* 18, 338–9. See *In III Sent*. Prol.

133 Hoc quod dico esse est inter omnia perfectissimum: quod ex hoc patet quia actus est semper perfectior potentia. Quaelibet autem forma signata non intelligitur in actu nisi per hoc quod esse ponitur. Nam humanitas vel igneitas potest considerari ut in potentia materiae existens, vel ut in virtute agentis, aut etiam ut in intellectu: sed hoc quod habet esse, efficitur actu existens. Unde patet quod hoc quod dico esse est actualitas omnium actuum, et propter hoc est perfectio omnium perfectionum. Nec intelligendum est, quod ei quod dico esse, aliquid addatur quod sit eo formalius, ipsum determinans, sicut actus potentiam: esse enim quod huiusmodi est, est aliud secundum essentiam ab eo cui additur determinandum. Nihil autem potest addi ad esse quod sit extraneum ab ipso, cum ab eo nihil sit extraneum nisi non-ens, quod non potest esse nec forma nec materia. Unde non sic determinatur esse per aliud sicut potentia per actum, sed magis sicut actus per potentiam. Nam et in definitione formarum ponuntur propriae materiae loco differentiae, sicut cum dicitur quod anima est actus corporis physici organici. Et per hunc modum, hoc esse ab illo esse distinguitur, in quantum est tails vel talis naturae. Et per hunc modum hoc esse ab illo esse distinguitur, in quantum est talis vel talis naturae. Et per hoc dicit Dionysius quod licet viventia sint nobiliora quam existentia, tamen esse est nobilius quam vivere: viventia enim non tantum habent vitam, sed cum vita simul habent et esse.

134 Albert Keller, *Sein oder Existenz?*, p. 246.

135 A. Solignac, 'La doctrine de l'*esse* chez saint Thomas est-elle d'origine néo-platonicienne?', p. 448. See Pierre Faucon, *Aspects néoplatoniciens de la doctrine de Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 448. Cornelio Fabro concludes his analysis of Chapter 5 of Aquinas' Commentary on *De Divinis Nominibus* with the following verdict: 'La source principale de la notion thomiste d'*esse* intensif est done avant tout le mystérieux Auteur des *Areopagitica*' (*Participation et causalité,* p. 229), thus confirming his earlier view: 'L' Angelico ama riferire all' Areopagita alcuni degli aspetti piu profondi del suo sistema quali la nozione "intensiva" dell'*esse*.' (*La nozione metafisica di partecipazione*, pp.

89–90). Fabro estimates that this notion, which Aquinas received from Dionysius came to constitute more and more profoundly the central axis of thomist metaphysics (*Participation et causalité*, p. 220). Again: 'Toute la métaphysique thomiste de la participation est basée sur cette notion simple et inépuisable de l'*esse*; l'*esse* est l'acte premier intensif qui embrasse et contient tout.' (*Participation et causalité,* p. 508).

136 The Marietti edition incorrectly reads *perfectio.*

137 *De Ver.* 1, 1: Omnes aliae conceptiones intellectus accipiuntur ex additione ad ens. Sed enti non potest addi aliquid quasi extranea natura, per modum quo differentia additur generi, vel accidens subiecto, quia quaelibet natura essentialiter est ens; . . . Sunt enim diversi gradus entitatis, secundum quos accipiuntur diversi modi essendi, et iuxta hos modos accipiuntur diversa rerum genera. Substantia enim non addit supra ens aliquam differentiam, quae significet aliquam naturam superadditam enti, sed nomine substantiae exprimitur quidam specialis modus essendi, scilicet per se ens; et ita est in aliis generibus.

138 Keller, *Sein oder Existenz?*, p. 246. See Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione*, p. 202.

139 Bernard Kelly, *The Metaphysical Background of Analogy*, p. 5.

140 *ST* I-II, 2, 5.

141 *ST* I-II, 2, 5 ad 2: Esse simpliciter acceptum, secundum quod includit in se omnem perfectionem essendi, praeeminet vitae et omnibus subsequentibus: sic enim ipsum esse praehabet in se omnia subsequentia.

142 *ST* I-II, 2, 5 ad 2: Sed si consideretur ipsum esse prout participatur in hac re vel in illa, quae non capiunt totam perfectionem essendi, sed habent esse imperfectum, sicut est esse cuiuslibet creaturae; sic manifestum est quod ipsum esse cum perfectione superaddita est eminentius. Unde et Dionysius ibidem dicit quod viventia sunt meliora existentibus, et intelligentia viventibus.

143 *In I Sent.* 17, 1, 2, ad 3. The reference given by Durantel (*Saint Thomas et le Pseudo-Denis,* p. 179) is incorrect.

144 *In I Sent.* 17, 1, 2, ad 3: Esse secundum Dionysium, V cap. De div. nominibus, est nobilius omnibus aliis quae consequuntur esse: unde esse simpliciter est nobilius quam intelligere, si posset intelligi intelligere sine esse. Unde illud quod excedit in esse, simpliciter nobilius est omni eo quod excedit in aliquo de consequentibus esse; quamvis secundum aliud possit esse minus nobile. Et quia anima et quaelibet substantia habet nobilius esse

quam accidens, ideo simpliciter nobilior est. Sed quantum ad aliquod esse, secundum aliquod, accidens potest esse nobilius, quia se habet ad substantiam sicut actus ad potentiam; et hanc bonitatem consequentem habet substantia ab accidentibus, sed non bonitatem primam essendi.

145 In the following *Quaestio* (*In I Sent.* 17, 2, 2, *Sed Contra*) we find yet a further affirmation by Aquinas of the primacy of being which is inspired by Dionysius: Secundum Dionysium, V cap. De Div. Nom., tantum distat inter ipsas Dei participationes et participantes, quod participatio quanto simplicior est tanto nobilior, participans vero quanto majorem habet compositionem donorum participatorum, tanto nobilius est; sicut esse est nobilius quam vivere, et vivere quam intelligere, si unum sine altero intelligatur: omnibus enim esse praeeligeretur.

146 The term used by the Latin translator of Avicenna to denote necessary being, which exists of itself. See Timothy McDermott, *Existence and Nature of God*, Volume 2, *Summa Theologiae* p. 202. I have noted above how Aquinas, on at least one occasion (*In III Sent.* 30, 2), uses this term to express the intensive sense of being. See page NN and note 122.

147 With a reference to Aquinas' Commentary on *De Divinis Nominibus*, De Raeymaeker writes: 'In al wat is, in elk zijnde, hoe broos het anderzijds ook weze, schuilt bijgevolg een onwrikbaar taaie kracht, een onoverwinbaar weerstandsvermogen, kortom een kracht die tegen alles is opgewassen, de absoluutsterke zijnskracht, *virtus essendi*', 'Zijn en Absoluutheid', p. 199.

148 *ST* I, 48, 2.

149 *CG* 2, 68, 1451.

150 See Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et causalité,* p. 260: 'On pourrait presque dire, en termes hégéliens, que tandis que la *quantitas extensiva* se manifeste comme "rapport à l'autre", la *quantitas virtualis* s'actualize comme "rapport à soi" en un complet retour sur soi comme le nouvel infini positif.' Fabro remarks: 'Pour Hegel aussi, comme pour saint Thomas, cet infini est simplement l'*esse*', and cites the following passage with Hegel's emphasis: '. . . Die *einfache Beziehung auf sich,* welche *Sein* ist. Aber es ist nun auch *erfülltes Sein,* der sich begreifende Begriff, das Sein als die konkrete, ebenso schlechthin *intensive* Totalität.' (*Wissenschaft der Logik* ed. Lasson, II, p. 504).

Chapter Nine

1 References to the *Liber de Causis* (abbreviated *DC*) are given according to the number of the proposition, page and line numbers(s) in Saffrey's edition, paragraph in Pera's edition, and page of the translation printed in the English translation of Aquinas' *Commentary*. As Alexander Fidora and Jordi Pardo Pastor point out, Pera's division of the text into 219 sentences is an 'editorial fiction' (*Liber de Causis*, Spanish translation, p. 133); it provides nonetheless a helpful reference aid. References to Aquinas' Commentary (abbreviated *In DC*) are given according to both page and line in Saffrey's edition, paragraph in Pera's edition, and page number of the English translation. Aquinas followed the Latin manuscripts which divided into two the Arabic version of Proposition 4, thus rendering a total of 32 propositions rather than the original 31. It should also be noted that there are frequent differences between the text of the *Liber* used by Aquinas and the critically established text.

2 Albertus Magnus, *De Causis et Processu Universitatis a Prima Causa*, p. 59: Accipiemus igitur ab antiquis, quaecumque bene dicta sunt ab ipsis, quae ante nos David Iudaeus quidam ex dictis Aristotelis, Avicennae, Algazelis et Alfarabi congregavit, per modum theorematum ordinans ea quorum commentum ipsemet adhibuit, sicut et Euclides in Geometricis fecisse videtur.

3 Clemens Vansteenkiste has suggested that either Moerbeke, translating the *Elements* on his own initiative, recognized its kinship with the *Liber* and conveyed this to Aquinas; or that Aquinas himself, suspecting the importance of Proclus (suggested by some other text, or perhaps by a Greek scholar at the papal court) requested his confrère to provide a Latin version. See 'Il *Liber de Causis* negli scritti di San Tommaso', p. 364. Since Aquinas refers to Proclus in only two works, his Commentary on *De Causis* and *De Substantiis Separatis* (H. D. Saffrey, *Super Librum de Causis Expositio*, p. xxxv), both dated after 1270 (Saffrey dates both to 1272), one may wonder why, had Aquinas himself requested the translation, he left it unused during the intervening period. See Helmut Boese, *Wilhelm von Moerbeke als Übersetzer der Stoicheiosis Theologike des Proclus*, pp. 48–50, also his introduction to Proclus, *Elementatio Theologica. Translata a Guillelmo de Morbecca*.

4 There is no agreement on the identity of the author. He is most widely believed to have been active during the ninth or tenth century in the

Baghdad area — in which case it is also possible that the work was composed in another language, such as Syriac, and subsequently translated into Arabic. Albert's suggestion of Ibn Daoud (a twelfth century Spanish Jew), championed in recent years by Adriaan Pattin, is untenable in light of the discovery of its use in the tenth century. See E. K. Rowson, 'An Unpublished Work by al-'Amiri and the Date of the Arabic *De Causis*', and Richard Taylor, 'The Kalam fi mahd al-khair (*Liber de causis*) in the Islamic Philosophical Milieu', p. 41. Cf. Adriaan Pattin, 'Over de Schrijver en de Vertaler van het *Liber de Causis*', and 'Autour du *Liber de Causis*. Quelques réflexions sur la récente littérature'.

5 See C. Vansteenkiste, 'Il *Liber de Causis*', pp. 325–74.

6 Cf. Cristina D'Ancona Costa, *Tommaso D'Aquino, Commento al 'Libro delle Cause'*, pp. 80–81.

7 Saffrey, *Super Librum de Causis Expositio*, pp. xxxiii–xxxvi.

8 Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et Causalité*, 223n91: 'Le Commentaire dionysien est de la jeunesse de saint Thomas, celui du *de Causis* de la pleine maturité. La méthode est dans les deux celle du commentaire littéral (*expositio*) comme il est toujours pratiqué par saint Thomas; mais alors que le commentaire du de divinis Nominibus n'abandonne jamais la lettre du texte, celui du *de Causis* forme une traité complet de métaphysique, et est constellé de continuelles questions et comparaisons doctrinales.'

9 Proclus adopts the theory of henads from Syrianus; see Saffrey and Westerink, Proclus, *Théologie Platonicienne*, III, pp. li–lii: '[. . .] l'inventeur de cette théorie des hénades divines est Syrianus [. . .] c'est un fait que nous trouvons chez Proclus la théologie des hénades divines dans cet état achevé.' Cf. H. D. Saffrey, 'Nouveaux liens objectifs entre le Pseudo-Denys et Proclus', p. 15, according to whom Proclus is 'le grand diffuseur de cette doctrine'. See Cornelia De Vogel, 'Some reflections on the *Liber de Causis*', p. 72.

10 Named hereafter as 'the Author', where the title of the work is not given.

11 See propositions 6, 7, 19, 20, 21, 24. On the simplification by *De Causis* of Proclus' polytheism, see D'Ancona Costa, *Recherches sur le Liber de Causis*, p. 45.

12 See D'Ancona Costa, *Recherches*, p. 77; Elders, 'Saint Thomas d'Aquin et la métaphysique du "Liber de Causis"', p. 430. Saffrey refers to 'la transposition du système néoplatonicien des "processions" en celui d'une véritable création'. (*Super Librum de Causis Expositio*, p. xxxi).

See the detailed discussion of Leo Sweeney, 'Doctrine of Creation in *Liber de Causis*', pp. 274–89. On the limits of the theory of creation in *De Causis*, see Werner Beierwaltes, 'Der Kommentar zum "Liber de Causis" als neuplatonisches Element in der Philosophie des Thomas von Aquin', p. 194. Referring to Sweeney's conclusions he writes: 'So ist est durchaus zutreffend zu sagen, im liber de causis werde der proklische Begriff der processio durch den der creatio ersetzt, wenn mitbedacht ist, daß der Grund und Ursprung dieser creatio freilich nicht die seiende Personalität und Freiheit Gottes ist, insgleichen nicht Zeitlichkeit, Geschichtlichkeit und Nichts für das faktisch-verursacht Seiende konstitutiv sein können. Auch darin zeigt sich der Unterschied des liber de causis zur elementatio theologica, daß durch dessen monotheistischen Grundzug die vielfältigen Henaden in das Eine Sein der ersten Ursache aufgehoben sind.'

13 *In DC* 19, Saffrey 106.6–7, Pera 351, trans. p. 117, slightly modified. Saffrey 106.4–13: Ad cuius evidentiam sciendum est quod secundum Platonicos quadruplex ordo invenitur in rebus. Primus erat ordo deorum, id est formarum idealium inter quas erat ordo secundum ordinem universalitatis formarum, ut supra dictum est; sub hoc autem ordine est ordo intellectuum separatorum, sub quo est ordo animarum, sub quo iterum est ordo corporum. Et hii tres inferiores ordines accipiuntur secundum tria quae in praemissa propositione sunt tacta; nam corpora participant esse tantum, animae autem secundum propriam naturam participant ulterius esse et vivere, intellectus autem participant esse, vivere et intelligere.

14 *In DC* 19, Saffrey 106.4–9, Pera 351, trans. p. 117. See also *In DC* 3, Saffrey 18.23–19.9, Pera 67, trans. p. 21.

15 *In DC* 19, Saffrey 106.13–16, Pera 352: Causalitas autem horum ad ordinem divinum pertinet, sive ponantur multi dii ordinati sub uno secundum Platonicos, sive unus tantum in se omnia habens secundum nos: universalitas enim causalitatis propria est Deo. Trans. p. 118.

16 *In DC* 3, Saffrey 18.8–21, Pera 65–6: Ad cuius evidentiam sciendum est quod Plato posuit universales rerum formas separatas per se subsistentes. Et, quia huiusmodi formae universales universalem quamdam causalitatem, secundum ipsum, habent supra particularia entia quae ipsas participant, ideo omnes huiusmodi formas sic subsistentes 'deos' vocabat; nam hoc nomen 'deus' universalem quamdam providentiam et causalitatem importat. Inter has autem formas hunc ordinem ponebat quod quanto aliqua forma est universalior, tanto est magis simplex et prior causa; participatur enim a posterioribus formis, sicut si ponamus

animal participari ab homine et vitam ab animali et sic inde; ultimum autem quod ab omnibus participatur et ipsum nihil aliud participat, est ipsum unum et bonum separatum quod dicebat 'summum deum' et 'primam omnium causam'. Trans. pp. 20–21.

17 *In DC* 19, Saffrey 106.16–17, Pera 352: Universalitas enim causalitatis propria est Deo. Trans. p. 118.

18 *In DC* 5, Saffrey 20.5–11, Pera 72–3: Hanc autem positionem corrigit Dionysius quantum ad hoc quod ponebant ordinatim diversas formas separatas quas 'deos' dicebant, ut scilicet aliud esset per se bonitas et aliud per se esse et aliud per se vita et sic de aliis. Oportet enim dicere quod omnia ista sunt essentialiter ipsa prima omnium causa, a qua res participant omnes huiusmodi perfectiones, et sic non ponemus multos deos sed unum. Trans. p. 22. Dionysius declares the unity of all pure perfections in God: 'Good is not one thing, being another, and life or wisdom another, nor are there many causes . . . but all good processions are of the one God.' (*PG* 3, 816 CD; see *In DC* 3, Saffrey 20.11–15, Pera 73, trans. p. 22). The crucial principle for Dionysius is the intensive presence of all perfections in divine goodness and being; as Aquinas notes: 'Since God is being itself and the very essence of goodness, whatever belongs to the perfection of goodness and being belongs essentially to him as a whole, so that he is the essence of life, wisdom, power, and the rest.' (*In DC* 3, Saffrey, 20.16–19, Pera 74: Quia cum Deus sit ipsum esse et ipsa essentia bonitatis, quicquid pertinet ad perfectionem bonitatis et esse, totum ei essentialiter convenit, ut scilicet ipse sit essentia vitae et sapientiae et virtutis et ceterorum. Trans. p. 22). This is expressed by Dionysius: 'For God is not somehow existent, but he prepossesses the whole of being in himself in an absolute and uncircumscribed way' (*DN* V, 4, 817D: Καὶ γὰρ ὁ θεὸς οὐ πώς ἐστιν ὤν, ἀλλ᾽ἁπλῶς καὶ ἀπεριορίστως ὅλον ἐν ἑαυτῷ τὸ εἶναι συνειληφὼς καὶ προειληφώς.)

19 *In DC* 3, Saffrey 20.21–24, Pera 75: Et hoc sequitur auctor huius libri. Non enim invenitur inducere aliquam multitudinem deitatis, sed unitatem in Deo constituit, distinctionem autem in ordine intellectuum et animarum et corporum. Trans. p. 23; also *In DC* 6, Saffrey 44.17–20, Pera 164, trans. p. 48: 'The author of this book does not agree with the Platonists in asserting other separated ideal natures but asserts only one, the first.' (Et quia auctor huius libri non concordat cum Platonicis in positione aliarum naturarum separatarum idealium, sed ponit solum primum.) On the possible influence of the Pseudo-Dionysius on the author of *De Causis*, see Cristina D'Ancona Costa, *Recherches*, pp. 65–72, 147–52.

20 *In DC* 2, Saffrey 11.8–10, Pera 45: Causae autem universales rerum sunt trium generum, scilicet causa prima quae est Deus, intelligentiae et animae. Trans. p. 13.

21 *In DC* 3, Saffrey 21.14–17, Pera 77: Exemplificatur enim in praedicta anima universalitas divinae virtutis, quod scilicet, sicut Deus est universalis causa omnium entium, ita praedicta anima est universalis causa naturalium rerum quae moventur. Trans. p. 23.

22 *In DC* I, Saffrey 8.5–8, Pera 29: Hoc autem uno medio Proclus sic probat. Causa prima est magis causa quam secunda; ergo est perfectioris virtutis. Sed quanto virtus alicuius causae est perfectior, tanto ad plura se extendit; ergo virtus causae primae ad plura se extendit quam virtus causae secundae. Sed id quod in pluribus est, prius est in adveniendo et ultimum in recedendo; ergo impressio causae primae primo advenit et ultimo recedit. Trans. p. 9. Also *In DC* I, Saffrey 8.21–23, Pera 34: Manifestum est enim quod, quanto aliqua causa efficiens est prior, tanto eius virtus ad plura se extendit; unde oportet ut proprius effectus eius communior sit. Causae vero secundae proprius effectus in paucioribus invenitur, unde et particularior est. Ipsa enim causa prima producit vel movet causam secundo agentem, et sic fit ei causa ut agat. Trans. p. 10.

23 On Neoplatonic *resolutio*, see Eileen C. Sweeney, 'Three Notions of *Resolutio* and the Structure of Reasoning in Aquinas', pp. 197–243.

24 *In DC* 3, Saffrey 21.14–17, Pera 77: Sicut Deus est universalis causa omnium entium, ita praedicta anima est universalis causa naturalium rerum quae moventur. Trans. p. 23.

25 *DC* 1, Saffrey 4, Pera 12–13: Iam ergo manifestum est et planum quod causa prima longiqua est plus comprehendens et vehementius causa rei quam causa propinqua. Et propter illud fit eius operatio vehementioris adhaerentiae cum re quam operatio causae propinquae. Trans. p. 6. See continuation (Saffrey 4, Pera 14): Et causa prima adiuvat causam secundam super operationem suam, quoniam omnem operationem quam causa efficit secunda, prima etiam causa efficit; verumtamen efficit eam per modum alium, altiorem et sublimiorem. Trans. p. 6: 'The first cause aids the second cause in its activity, because the first cause also effects every activity that the second cause effects, although it effects it in another way [which is] higher and more sublime.'

26 *In DC* 3, Saffrey 23.17–18, Pera 82, trans. p. 25: Esse enim quod est communissimum, diffunditur in omnia a causa prima. *In DC* 18, Saffrey 101.20–21, Pera 339, trans. p. 113: Esse igitur, quod est primum, commune est omnibus.

27 *In DC* 5, Saffrey 38.7–9, Pera 139, trans. p. 40: Platonici posuerunt quod ab alio principio causatur in aliqua re id quod est commune, et ab alio inferiori principio id quod est magis proprium.

28 See *In DC* 5, Saffrey 38.9–20, Pera 140–1: Secundum hoc igitur anima per se stans suum esse habet a prima causa, quod autem sit intellectualis et quod sit anima habet a secundis causis quae sunt intelligentiae; unde, cum ad rationem animae pertineat quod sit corpori impressa, consequens erit quod haec anima ab intelligentia habeat scilicet quod sit corpori impressa. Sed, quia, sicut supra ostendimus, praedicta positio veritatem non habet et contrariatur sententiae Aristotelis, oportet dicere quod a prima causa a qua talis anima habet suum esse habeat etiam quod sit intellectualis et quod sit anima et per consequens quod sit corpori impressa; est ergo secundum hoc anima non ex impressione intelligentiae sed ex impressione causae primae. Trans. p. 40.

29 *In DC* 3, Saffrey 23.21–24.1, Pera 83: Sed etiam haec positio, si non sane intelligatur, repugnat veritati et sententiae Aristotelis qui arguit in III Metaphysicae contra Platonicos ponentes huiusmodi ordinem causarum separatarum secundum ea quae de individuis praedicantur. Quia sequitur quod Socrates erit multa animalia, scilicet ipse Socrates et homo separatus et etiam animal separatum: homo enim separatus participat animal et ita est animal; Socrates autem participat utrumque, unde et est homo et est animal; non igitur Socrates esset vere unum si ab alio haberet quod esset animal et ab alio quod esset homo. Trans. p. 25.

30 For the historical background to this teaching, see D'Anconca Costa, *Recherches*, pp. 73–95; also Richard C. Taylor, 'Aquinas, the *Plotiniana Arabica*, and the Metaphysics of Being and Actuality', pp. 224–5.

31 *DC* 3, Saffrey p. 17, Pera 32; *DC* 9, Saffrey, p. 57, Pera 87, 91.

32 II *Sent*. d. 18, a. 2, q. 3 concl. *Opera Omnia* II, 452–453, cited D'Ancona Costa, *Recherches*, p. 73n1.

33 For a detailed account of this debate, see D'Ancona Costa, *Recherches*, pp. 73–95.

34 However in *De Pot.* 3, 4, written less than a decade earlier, Aquinas had rejected this teaching as erroneous. See for example his reply *ad decimum*: 'Error iste expresse in libro *de Causis* invenitur, quod creaturae inferiores creatae sunt a Deo superioribus mediantibus: unde in hoc auctoritas illius non est recipienda.' Susan C. Selner-Wright explains Aquinas' change of mind as follows: '[W]e can assume that the commentary represents a more careful study and consideration of the *Liber de causis*. The *De potentia*'s interpretation appears to be an

immediate response to what the text seems literally to mean. In the intervening time though, several things have happened. First, Thomas has worked through his own metaphysics of creation more thoroughly, as represented in the *De potentia* itself, among other works. With that understanding, upon the careful reading of the *Liber de causis* required for preparation of his commentary on it, Thomas finds in the text of the *Liber de causis* itself principles which he had already shown run counter to the understanding of secondary causality presented in propositions 3 and 9. That is, Thomas finds an inconsistency in the text and resolves that inconsistency by offering a milder interpretation of those propositions which obviously hold for mediated creation.' 'Thomas Aquinas and the Metaphysical Inconsistency of the *Liber de Causis*', p. 335.

35 *In DC* 3, Saffrey 22.4–7: Hoc autem quod hic dicitur quod *causa prima creavit esse animae mediante intelligentia* quidam male intelligentes, existimaverunt secundum auctorem istius libri quod intelligentiae essent creatrices substantiae animarum. Pera 79, trans. p. 24.

36 *In DC* 3, Saffrey 22.7–16, Pera 80: Sed hoc est contra positiones platonicas. Huiusmodi enim causalitates simplicium entium ponebant secundum participationem; participatur autem non quidem id quod est participans, sed id quod est primum per essentiam suam tale: puta, si albedo esset separata, ipsa albedo simplex esset causa omnium alborum in quantum sunt alba, non autem aliquid albedinem participans. Secundum hoc ergo Platonici ponebant quod id quod est ipsum esse est causa existendi omnibus, id autem quod est ipsa vita est causa vivendi omnibus, id autem quod est ipsa intelligentia est causa intelligendi omnibus. Trans. p. 4.

37 *In DC* 3, Saffrey 22.21–23.2, Pera 81: Est ergo intelligendum quod ipsa essentia animae, secundum praedicta, creata est a causa prima quae est suum ipsum esse, sed consequentes participationes habet ab aliquibus posterioribus principiis, ita scilicet quod vivere habet a prima vita et intelligere a prima intelligentia. Trans. p. 24 (modified).

38 *In DC* 3, Saffrey 23.5–8, Pera 81: Sic ergo intelligit quod *prima causa creavit esse animae mediante intelligentia* quod causa prima sola creavit essentiam animae; sed, quod anima sit intelligibilis, hoc habet ex operatione intelligentiae. Trans. p. 25.

39 *In DC* 18, Saffrey 104.14–16, Pera 348: Ex quo patet quod, cum supra dixit intelligentiam esse causam animae, non intellexit quod esset causa eius per modum creationis, sed solum per modum informationis. Trans. p. 115.

40 *DC* 18, Saffrey p. 100, Pera 148: Redeamus autem et dicamus quod ens primun est quietum et est causa causarum, et, si ipsum dat rebus omnibus ens, tunc ipsum dat eis per modum creationis. Trans. p. 111 (slightly modified).

41 *DC* 9, Saffrey p. 57, Pera 87: Verumtamen est creans intelligentiam absque medio et creans animam et naturam et reliquas res mediante intelligentia. Trans. p. 65.

42 *DC* 18, Saffrey, p. 100, Pera 148: Vita autem prima dat eis quae sunt sub ea vitam non per modum creationis immo per modum formae. Et similiter intelligentia non dat eis quae sunt sub ea de scientia et reliquis rebus nisi per modum formae. Trans. p. 111.

43 H. D. Saffrey, p. xxxi: 'Ce que est sûr, c'est que le concept d'existence' n'est pas degagé, ni dans le système de Plotin, ni dans celui de Proclus, ni dans le *Liber de Causis*.' Richard C. Taylor points out that 'Being' for the author of *De Causis* is the 'formal substrate on the basis of which further perfections such as life and intelligence are received. In the *De Causis* there is no notion of being as the act of existence such as we find it in the thought of St. Thomas. What we do find in the *De Causis* are words which St. Thomas accommodates to his own position. . . . The notion of being as act seems to be totally lacking in the *De Causis*.', 'St. Thomas and the and the *Liber de causis* on the Hylomorphic Composition of Separate Substances', pp. 506–7, 513.

44 *DC* 1, Saffrey, 4, Pera 9, 10, 15, trans. p. 6; *DC* 4, Saffrey 26, Pera 39, 44, trans. pp. 28–9. Aquinas also uses the word 'vehementius' to express the intensive character of *esse*. Cf. *In III Sent*., 30, 2: Esse vehementius inhaeret quam vivere.

45 *In DC* 18, Saffrey 101.8–10, Pera 338, trans. p. 112: Considerandum est quod omnes gradus rerum ad tria videtur reducere, quae sunt: esse, vivere et intelligere. See *In III Sent*., Prol.

46 *In DC* 18, Saffrey 101.20–23, Pera 339: Esse igitur, quod est primum, commune est omnibus, sed non omnia pertingunt ad illam perfectionem ut sint suiipsorum motiva; unde non omnia sunt viventia, sed quaedam quae sunt perfectiora in entibus. Trans. p. 113

47 *DC* 18, Saffrey 100, Pera 143: Res omnes habent essentiam per ens primum, et res vivae omnes sunt motae per essentiam suam propter vitam primam, et res intelligibiles omnes habent scientiam propter intelligentiam primam.

48 *In DC* 18, Saffrey 104.9–10, Pera 346, trans. p. 115.

49 *DC* 12, Saffrey 77, Pera 103: Primorum omnium sunt quaedam in quibusdam per modum quo licet ut sit unum eorum in alio. Trans. p. 87.

50 *DC* 12, Saffrey 77, Pera 105: Verumtamen esse et vita in intelligentia sunt duae intelligentiae, et esse et intelligentia in vita sunt duae vitae, et intelligentia et vita in esse sunt duo esse. Trans. p. 87.

51 *In DC* 12, Saffrey 79.2–3, Pera 277: Sed hoc quod ponitur loco huius in hoc libro, videtur esse corruptum et malum intellectum habere. Trans. p. 88.

52 *De An*. 2, 4, 415b13: τὸ δὲ ζῆν τοῖς ζῶσι τὸ εἶναί ἐστιν.

53 *In DC* 12, Saffrey 79.10–14, Pera 278: Vivere enim viventis est ipsum esse eius, ut dicitur in II *De anima* et ipsum intelligere primi intelligentis est vita eius et esse ipsius, ut in XII *Metaphysicae* dicitur; unde et hoc Proclus excludens dicit quod esse intellectus est cognitivum et vita eius est cognitio. Trans, p. 89. See *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 103, p. 92. See Werner Beierwaltes, *Proklos*, p. 116; 'Der Kommentar zum "Liber de Causis" als neuplatonisches Element in der Philosophie des Thomas von Aquin', pp. 206–7.

54 *In DC* 12, Saffrey 79.14–19, Pera 278: Alioquin sequeretur inconveniens quod Aristoteles inducit in III Metaphysicae contra Platonicos, quod scilicet Socrates esset tria animalia, quia et ipse est animal, et de eo praedicatur idea animalis communis quam participat, et similiter idea hominis qui item est animal; sequeretur enim quod unumquodque istorum trium esset non unum sed multa. Trans. p. 89.

55 *In DC* 12, Saffrey 80.1–5, Pera 279: Sic igitur illud quod est essentialiter in primo, est participative in secundo et tertio; quod autem est essentialiter in secundo, est in primo quidem causaliter et in ultimo participative; quod vero est in tertio essentialiter, est causaliter in primo et in secundo. Trans. p. 89. See *Elements of Theology*, Prop. 103, Dodds, 92.17–20; Prop. 65.13–14. For a sensitive treatment of the triad 'esse-vivere-intelligere' see Werner Beierwaltes, 'Der Kommentar zum "Liber de Causis"'. pp. 206–7.

56 *In DC* 12, Saffrey 78.14–19, Pera 275: Sed a Proclo quidem inducitur haec propositio secundum positiones platonicas quibus ponuntur formae separatae subsistentes quarum, ut supra dictum est, unaquaeque tanto est altior quanto est universalior et ad plura suam participationem extendens; et, secundum hoc, ipsum esse est superius quam ipsa vita, et haec quam ipse intellectus. Trans. p. 88.

57 *In DC* 12, Saffrey 80.10–13, Pera 280: In ipso esse secundum propriam rationem invenitur causaliter vivere et intelligere, secundum illum modum quo in 1a propositione dictum est quod esse est causa prima, vivere et intelligere posteriores causae. Trans. p. 89–90. See Prop. 1: Esse ergo vehementius est causa homini quam vivum: quoniam est causa vivo, quod est causa homini.

58 *In DC* 12, Saffrey 80.16–18, Pera 281: Esse, prout est in vita, est ipsa vita, cum vita nihil addat supra esse nisi determinatum modum essendi seu determinatam naturam entis. Trans. p. 90.

59 *In DC* 12, Saffrey 80.27–29, Pera 282: Causa autem agit in effectum per modum ipsius causae, effectus autem recipit actionem causae per modum suum. Trans. p. 90.

60 *In DC* 12, Saffrey 81.8–12, Pera 284: Unaquaeque enim intelligit aliam secundum quod alia est in ipsa, per modum eius in quo est; quia etiam in superioribus sunt inferiores secundum quasdam excellentiores similitudines seu species, superiores vero in inferioribus secundum quasdam deficientiores similitudines et species. Trans. p. 90.

61 *DC* 4, Saffrey, p. 26, Pera 37–40, p. 27: Quod est quia esse est supra sensum et supra animam et supra intelligentiam, et non est post causam primam latius neque prius causatum ipso. Propter illud ergo factum est superius omnibus rebus creatis et vehementius unitum. Et non est factum ita nisi propter propinquitatem suam esse puro et uni vero in quo non est multitudo aliquorum modorum. Trans. p. 28.

62 *In DC* 4, Saffrey 27.15–18, Pera 98, trans. p. 30.

63 *In DC* 4, Saffrey 27.18–28.6, Pera 98: In ordine autem eorum quae de rebus dicuntur, communissimum ponebant unum et bonum, et communius etiam quam ens, quia bonum vel unum de aliquo invenitur praedicari de quo non praedicatur ens, secundum eos, scilicet de materia prima quam Plato coniungebat cum non ente, non distinguens inter materiam et privationem, ut habetur in I Physicorum, et tamen materiae attribuebat unitatem et bonitatem, in quantum habet ordinem ad formam; bonum enim non solum dicitur de fine sed de eo quod est ad finem. Sic igitur summum et primum rerum principium ponebant Platonici ipsum unum et ipsum bonum separatum. Trans. p. 30: 'Furthermore, in the order of predication, they maintain that the most common is the one and good, and even more common than being. According to them, good or one are found predicated of something of which being is not predicated, namely, prime matter, which Plato associated with nonbeing, not distinguishing between matter and privation, as is noted in Book 1 of the *Physics* [I 9, 191b35–192a16]. Still, he attributes unity and goodness to matter inasmuch as matter is ordered to form. For we call "good" not only the end but also what is ordered to the end. In this way, then, the Platonists place the separate one itself and good itself as the highest and first principle of things.'

64 *In DC* 4, Saffrey 28.6–9, Pera 98: Sed post unum et bonum nihil invenitur ita commune sicut ens; et ideo ipsum ens separatum

ponebant quidem creatum, utpote participans bonitatem et unitatem, tamen ponebant ipsum primum inter omnia creata. Trans. pp. 30–1.

65 This is somewhat reminiscent of Dionysius' notion of being as the intensive concentration of all existential goodness, of which intelligence and life are particular modes or manifestations. On the relation of being and intelligence in *De Causis*, see Alexander Fidora and Andreas Niederberger, *Von Bagdad nach Toledo. Das Buch der Ursachen und seine Rezeption im Mittelalter*, pp. 159–61.

66 *In DC* 4, Saffrey 29.19, Pera 103, trans. p. 32. Aquinas adds the word '*subsistens*'.

67 *In DC* 4, Saffrey 29.21–24, Pera 103: Quod autem est propinquius ei quod est per se unum, est magis unitum quasi magis participans unitatem; unde intelligentia quae est propinquissima causae primae habet esse maxime unitum. Trans. p. 32. Although Proposition 4 may refer, as Aquinas suggests, to the primacy of created being vis-à-vis the higher realities of Intelligence and Soul, it could also, I suggest, be validly interpreted to reflect the primacy of Dionysius' common being, that is, the first created participation which is the foundation in all creatures of every consequent perfection. Each individual being, together with all its particular endowments, is created first with respect to its being. This conclusion, needless to say, expresses not a temporal succession, but the metaphysical priority of being as the act of acts and the perfection of perfections.

68 *DC* 4, Saffrey 26, Pera 41: Et esse creatum quamvis sit unum tamen multiplicabitur, scilicet quia ipsum recipit multiplicitatem. Trans. p. 28.

69 *DC* 4, Saffrey 26, Pera 45: Et, quia diversificatur intelligentia, fit illic forma intelligibilis diversa. Et sicut ex forma una, propterea quod diversificatur, in mundo inferiori proveniunt individua infinita in multitudine, similiter ex esse creato primo, propterea quod diversificatur, apparent formae intelligibiles infinitae. Trans. p. 29. See the perceptive comments by Michael B. Ewbank, 'Doctrinal Precisions in Aquinas's *Super Librum de Causis*', pp. 20–1.

70 *In DC* 4, Saffrey 30.2–4, Pera 105: Sed, quia esse creatum primum est esse participatum in natura intelligentiae, multiplicabile est secundum diversitatem participantium. Trans. pp. 32–3.

71 On being as a composite of limit and infinite for Proclus, see Werner Beierwaltes, *Proklos*, pp. 53–4.

72 *DC* 16, Saffrey 92, Pera 129: Omnes virtutes quibus non est finis, pendentes sunt per infinitum primum quod est virtus virtutum, non

quia sunt acquisitae, fixae, stantes in rebus, immo sunt virtus rebus habentibus fixionem. Trans. p. 103. Aquinas adds the word *entibus* after *rebus*: Omnes virtutes quibus non est finis, pendentes sunt per infinitum primum quod est virtus virtutum, non quia ipsae sint acquisitae, fixae, stantes in rebus entibus, immo sunt virtus rebus habentibus fixionem (*In DC* 93.16–20, Pera 317) Aquinas correctly points out that the second part of the proposition should refer in the singular to the power which is not 'acquired, fixed, abiding steadfastly in things which have being', but is itself the 'power of powers'. See *In DC* 93.20–94.2, Pera 317: Haec autem secunda propositionis pars in omnibus libris videtur esse corrupta; deberet enim singulariter dici: non quia ipsa sit acquisita, fixa, stans in rebus entibus, immo est virtus etc., ut referatur hoc ad *virtutem virtutum.* He refers to Proclus' Prop. 92, as rendered by Moerbeke: Omnis multitudo infinitarum potentiarum ab una prima infinitate exorta est, quae non ut participata potentia est, neque in potentibus subsistit, sed secundum seipsam, non alicuius participantis ens potentia, sed omnium causatorum entium. Trans, 105: 'Every multitude of infinite potencies has originated from one first infinity, which neither exists as a participated potency nor subsists in those things with potencies but subsists according to itself, being not a potency belonging to some [particular] participant but [a potency] belonging to all caused beings.' On Moerbeke's misreading of the final words of the proposition, which should read 'but the cause of all things', see *Commentary*, 105n13.

73 *In DC* 16, Saffrey 94.8–12, Pera 318, trans. p. 105. I translate '*potentia essendi*' here as synonymous with '*virtus essendi*', the positive power and vehemence of being rather than a relative potency; see previous chapter, '*Virtus Essendi*: Intensive Being in Pseudo-Dionysius and Aquinas'. Commenting on Proposition 17, Aquinas offers the following clarification of the meaning of 'infinite': 'All infinite powers depend upon the first infinite, which is the power of powers. So, to the degree a power has been closer to that first power, to that degree it necessarily participates its infinity. Now, that first power is essentially one. So, to the degree that something is more one, to that degree it necessarily has more infinite power. And so it is that the power of an intelligence, which is first among the infinite created powers, is infinite to the greatest degree as closer to the first one.' *In DC* 17, Saffrey 99.2–9, Pera 331: Omnes virtutes infinitae dependent a primo infinito quod est virtus virtutum; oportet igitur quod, quanto virtus propinquior fuit illi primae virtuti, tanto magis participet de eius infinitate. Illa autem prima virtus

est essentialiter unum; oportet ergo quod, quanto aliquid est magis unum, tanto habeat virtutem magis infinitam. Et inde est quod virtus intelligentiae, quae est prima inter virtutes creatas infinitas, est maxime infinita utpote propinquior uni primo. Trans. p. 110.

74 *In DC* 4, Saffrey 30.18–24, Pera 109: Si autem aliquid sic haberet infinitam virtutem essendi quod non participaret esse ab alio, tunc esset solum infinitum; et tale est Deus, ut dicitur infra in 16. propositione. Sed, si sit aliquid quod habeat infinitam virtutem ad essendum secundum esse participatum ab alio, secundum hoc quod esse participat est finitum, quia quod participatur non recipitur in participante secundum totam suam infinitatem sed particulariter. Trans. p. 33, slightly modified.

75 *In DC* 4, Saffrey 30.25–27, Pera 109: In tantum igitur intelligentia est composita in suo esse ex finito et infinito, in quantum natura intelligentiae infinita dicitur secundum potentiam essendi; et ipsum esse quod recipit, est finitum. Trans. p. 33, my emphasis.

76 *In DC* 4, Saffrey 30.28–30, Pera 109: Et ex hoc sequitur quod esse intelligentiae multiplicari possit in quantum est esse participatum: hoc enim significat compositio ex finito et infinito. Trans. p. 33, modified. According to Cornelio Fabro: 'Saint Thomas retrouve ainsi la thèse centrale de sa métaphysique, c'est-à-dire la distinction reelle d'essence et d'*esse*, comme acte et puissance, en toute creature.' *Participation et Causalité selon S. Thomas d'Aquin*, p. 239.

77 *DC* 7, Saffrey 48, Pera 64, trans. p. 53. Aquinas *In DC* 7, Saffrey 52.23, Pera 192, trans. p. 58.

78 *In DC* 7, Saffrey 49.24–25, Pera 181, trans. p. 55.

79 *In DC* 4, Saffrey 32.11–12, Pera 116: intelligentia completa ultima completione quantum ad esse creatum in potentia essendi. Trans. pp. 34–5.

80 *In DC* 2, Saffrey 11.11–12, Pera 45: Primum est indivisum, quia causa prima est una tantum. Trans. p. 13. Also *In DC* 4, Saffrey 26.4–27.1, Pera 94, trans. p. 30.

81 *DC* 9, Saffrey 57, Pera 90: Et intelligentia est habens *yliatim*, quoniam est esse et forma, et similiter anima est habens *yliatim* et natura est habens *yliatim*. Et causae quidem primae non est *yliatim*, quoniam ipsa est esse tantum. Trans. p. 65.

82 *Yliatim*, as Richard C. Taylor explains, has nothing to do with Greek ὕλη, but is a corruption of '*helyatin*', Gerard of Cremona's transliteration of the Arabic word '*hilyah*', meaning 'ornament', 'attribute', 'quality', 'state', 'condition', 'appearance' and even 'form'. See. Richard C. Taylor,

'St. Thomas and the *Liber de causis* on the Hylomorphic Composition of Separate Substances', pp. 510–11.

83 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 64.9–13, Pera 230: Quidditas enim et substantia ipsius intelligentiae est quaedam forma subsistens et immaterialis; sed quia ipsa non est suum esse, sed est subsistens in esse participato, comparatur ipsa forma subsistens ad esse participatum sicut potentia ad actum et ut materia ad formam. Trans. p. 71: 'For the quiddity and substance of an intelligence itself is a certain subsisting immaterial form. However, because it is not its own being but subsists in participated being, the subsisting form itself is compared to participated being as potency to act or matter to form.'

84 *DC* 9, Saffrey 57, Pera 90, trans. p. 65.

85 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 64.16–17, Pera 230: Corpus naturale est compositum ex materia et forma. Trans. p. 71.

86 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 65.3–5, Pera 233, trans. p. 72.

87 See Joseph chiu yuen Ho, 'La doctrine de la participation dans le commentaire de saint Thomas d'Aquin sur le Liber de causis', p. 374.

88 *In DC* 6, Saffrey 47.13–14, Pera 175, trans. p. 51.

89 *In DC* 5, Saffrey 39.18–20, Pera 146: Ipsum autem esse participatum vocat finitum, quia non participatur secundum totam infinitatem universalitatis suae, sed secundum modum naturae participantis. Trans. pp. 41–2.

90 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 64.20–21, Pera 231: Oportet autem quod omne participatum derivetur ab eo quod pure subsistit per essentiam suam. Trans. pp. 71–2.

91 Richard C. Taylor, 'St. Thomas and the *Liber de Causis*', p. 513.

92 *DC* 9, Saffrey 57, Pera 90, trans. p. 65.

93 *DC* 9, Saffrey 57, Pera 91, trans. p. 65.

94 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 58.9–10, Pera 210: ipsa essentia bonitatis subsistens, quam Platonici vocabant ipsum bonum. Trans. p. 66.

95 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 64.11–13, Pera 230: Quia ipsa non est suum esse, sed est subsistens in esse participato, comparatur ipsa forma subsistens ad esse participatum sicut potentia ad actum aut materia ad formam. Trans. p. 71.

96 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 64.17–20, Pera 231: *Causa* autem *prima* nullo modo habet *yliatim*, quia non habet esse participatum, sed ipsa *est esse* purum et per consequens bonitas pura quia unumquodque in quantum est ens est bonum. Trans. p. 71.

97 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 65.7–13, Pera 234: Sed ad hoc respondet quod ipsa *infinitas* divini *esse*, in quantum scilicet non est terminatum per aliquod recipiens, habet in causa prima vicem *yliatim* quod est in

aliis rebus. Et hoc ideo quia, sicut in aliis rebus fit individuatio rei communis receptae per id quod est recipiens, ita divina *bonitas* et esse individuatur ex ipsa sui puritate per hoc scilicet quod ipsa non est recepta in aliquo. Trans. p. 72.

98 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 65.1–2, Pera 233, trans. p. 72.

99 See also *In DC* 4, Saffrey 29.27–30.2, Pera 105, trans. p. 32.

100 *In DC* 7, Saffrey 50.5–7, Pera 182: Causa autem prima non est natura subsistens in suo esse quasi participato, sed potius est ipsum esse subsistens et ideo est supersubstantialis et simpliciter inenarrabilis. Trans. pp. 55–6.

101 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 65.13–15, Pera 234: Et ex hoc quod est sic individuata sui puritate, habet quod possit influere bonitates super intelligentiam et alias res. Trans. p. 72.

102 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 59.7–10, Pera 214: Quia vero causa prima est maxime una, quanto aliqua res fuerit magis simplex et una, tanto magis appropinquat ad causam primam et magis participat propriam operationem ipsius. Trans. pp. 66–7.

103 *In DC* 4, Saffrey 32.16, Pera 116, trans. p. 35.

104 *In DC* 4, Saffrey 32.7–9, Pera 116: Manifestum est autem quod quanto aliquid est perfectius, tanto propinquius est uni perfectissimo. Trans. p. 34

105 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 60.14–17, Pera 217: Intelligentia quasi princeps regit et retinet inferiora per virtutem superioris causae, et hoc ideo quia ipsa est causa earum; et quod sit causa procedit ex hoc quod est vehementioris unitatis. Trans. p. 68.

106 *In DC* 9, Saffrey 59.10–11, Pera 214: Intelligentiae vero sunt maioris unitatis et simplicitatis quam res inferiores. Trans. p. 67.

107 *In DC* 11, Saffrey 76.8–11, Pera 269: Et sicut suum esse est unum, intelligit tamen multa, et propter hoc potest multa producere, quamvis eius intelligere unum et simplex remaneat. Trans. p. 85.

108 *In DC* 10, Saffrey 68.7–9, Pera 241: Nam ipse solus per essentiam suam omnia cognoscit absque participatione alicuius alterius formae. Trans. p. 76.

109 *DC* 16, Saffrey 92, Pera 129: Omnes virtutes quibus non est finis, pendentes sunt per infinitum primum quod est virtus virtutum, non quia sunt acquisitae, fixae, stantes in rebus, immo sunt virtus rebus habentibus fixionem. Trans. p. 103.

110 *In DC* 16, Saffrey 94.8–12, Pera 318: Ubi primo considerandum est quod infinita potentia dicitur cuiuslibet semper existentis, sicut supra dictum est in 4. propositione, in quantum scilicet videmus quod ea quae plus durare possunt, habent maiorem virtutem essendi; unde illa

quae in infinitum durare possunt, habent quantum ad hoc infinitam potentiam. Trans. p. 105.

111 *In DC* 16, Saffrey 94.13–15, Pera 318: Secundum autem platonicas positiones, omne quod in pluribus invenitur oportet reducere ad aliquod primum, quod per suam essentiam est tale, a quo alia per participationem talia dicuntur. Trans. pp. 105–6.

112 *In DC* 16, Saffrey 94.16–19, Pera 318: Unde, secundum eos, virtutes infinitae reducuntur ad aliquod primum, quod est essentialiter infinitas virtutis, non quod sit virtus participata in aliqua re subsistente, sed quia est subsistens per seipsam. Trans. p. 106.

113 *In DC* 16, Saffrey 94.26–8, Pera 318: Hoc autem infinitum ideale, a quo omnes virtutes infinitae dependent, est medium inter unum et bonum quod est primum simpliciter, et inter ens. Trans. p. 106, modified.

114 *In DC* 16, Saffrey 95.5–6, Pera 319: Sed quia auctor huius libri non ponit diversitatem realem inter huiusmodi formas ideales abstractas quae per essentiam suam dicuntur, sed omnia attribuit uni primo quod est Deus, ut supra etiam patuit ex verbis Dionysii, ideo, secundum intentionem huius auctoris, hoc primum infinitum a quo omnes virtutes infinitae dependent, est primum simpliciter quod est Deus. Trans. p. 106.

115 *In DC* 16, Saffrey 96.10, Pera 324, trans. p. 107.

116 *In DC* 16, Saffrey 96.22, Pera 326, trans. p. 107. Also Saffrey 97.13–15, Pera 328: Dicit quod ens primum creans est supra infinitum, illud scilicet quod participatione est infinitum; sed ens secundum, quod est creatum, scilicet intelligentia, est infinitum participative. Trans. p. 108.

117 *DC* 17, Saffrey 98; Pera 138: Omnis virtus unita plus est infinita quam virtus multiplicata. Aquinas relates it to Proposition 95 of Proclus' *Elements*. The corollary states: 'When a power begins to be multiplied, its unity is then destroyed. And when its unity is destroyed, its infinity is then destroyed.' *DC* 17, Pera 139: Virtus, quando incipit multiplicari, tunc destruitur unitas eius, et, quando destruitur eius unitas, tunc destruitur eius infinitas. Trans. p. 109.

118 *In DC* 17, Saffrey 99.18–26, Pera 333: Videmus enim in rebus corporalibus partibilibus quod, quando multa aggregantur et uniuntur, fit vehementior eorum virtus, ex qua consequuntur mirabiles operationes, sicut patet in multis hominibus simul trahentibus navem, qui divisim non possent eam trahere nec partes eius proportionales, et, quanto magis dividitur virtus rei corporalis, tanto debilior fit et facit operationes viliores, sicut tota domus a magno igne aggregato calefit,

quod fieri non potest si ignis dividatur per diversas partes domus. Trans. p. 110.

119 *In DC* 24, Saffrey 120.10–20, Pera 391: Ad cuius evidentiam considerandum est quod aliquid dicitur esse in alio multipliciter: uno quidem modo realiter, alio modo secundum habitudinem actionis et passionis. Secundum igitur primum modum dicendum est quod omnia sunt in causa prima uno modo, quia scilicet illud secundum quod omnia sunt in causa prima, est una et eadem res, scilicet virtus divina; sunt enim effectus virtute in sua causa. Causa autem prima secundum hunc modum est in rebus diversimode, quia scilicet causa prima in rebus causatis est secundum quod eis similitudinem suam imprimit; diversae autem res diversimode similitudinem causae primae recipiunt. Trans. pp. 135–6.

120 See *In DC* 24, Saffrey 121.5–23, Pera 395, trans. pp. 135–6. Aquinas refers this proposition to Proclus 142, which states: 'The gods are present to all in the same way, but not all things are present to the gods in the same way. Rather, each assumes its presence according to its order and potency: some unitarily, others in a multiplied way; some perpetually, others in time; some incorporeally, others corporeally.' *In DC* 24, Saffrey 121.23–122.2, Pera 396, trans. pp. 136–7.

121 *In DC* 24, Saffrey 122.13–17, Pera 398: Manifestum est autem quod causa prima est una, nullam diversitatem habens, sed ea quae recipiunt influentiam causae primae sunt diversa; diversitas ergo receptionis non est ex causa prima quae est bonitas pura influens bonitatem rebus omnibus, sed est propter diversitatem recipientium. Trans. p. 137. Causality among finite beings, according to Aquinas, is governed by the principle that diversity of effects manifests a diversity of causes (*In DC* 5, Saffrey 35.6–7, Pera 130: Distinctio causarum manifestatur per distinctionem effectuum. Trans. p. 38). Creation, on the other hand, is the radical and global causation of being. If we focus upon the diversity of natures or essences in the universe, the rule cannot hold, since they are caused by the one absolute cause; however, if we take creation properly as the causation simply of being, then the rule holds, since all creatures share in one and the same effect, the act of existence. In this sense, the principle is valid, since in respect of existence their causation is one and identical.

122 *In DC* 24, Saffrey 122.19–26, Pera 399: Est autem attendendum quod duplex est actio causae primae: una quidem secundum quam instituit res, quae dicitur creatio, alia vero secundum quam res iam institutas regit. In prima igitur actione non habet locum quod hic dicitur, quia,

si oportet omnem diversitatem effectuum reducere in diversitatem recipientium, oportebit dicere quod sint aliqua recipientia quae non sint a causa prima, quod est contra id quod dictum est supra, 18. propositione: Res omnes habent essentiam per causam primam. Trans. p. 137.

123 *In DC* 24, Saffrey 122.26–123.2, Pera 399: Unde oportet dicere quod prima diversitas rerum secundum quam habent diversas naturas et virtutes, non sit ex aliqua diversitate recipientium sed ex causa prima, non quia in ea sit aliqua diversitas sed quia est diversitatem cognoscens, est enim agens secundum suam scientiam; et ideo diversos rerum gradus producit ad complementum universi. Trans. p. 137.

124 *In DC* 23, Saffrey 118.19–24, Pera 387: Proprium autem est Dei, qui est ipsa essentia bonitatis, ut se aliis communicet; videmus quod unumquodque, in quantum est perfectum et actu ens, similitudinem suam aliis tradit. Unde id quod est essentialiter actus et bonitas, scilicet Deus, essentialiter et primordialiter communicat suam bonitatem rebus, et hoc pertinet ad regimen ipsius. Trans. p. 132.

125 *In DC* 20, Saffrey 109.14–17, Pera 360: Et ideo contra hoc in hac propositione inducitur quod haec duo in causa prima non sunt contraria nec se invicem impediunt universale regimen rerum et summa unitas, per quam Deus exaltatur supra omnia. Trans. p. 122. Aquinas notes that 'Proclus asserts all this in Proposition 122.' *In DC* 20, Saffrey 109.22–7, Pera 361: Et hoc totum in CXII propositione Procli ponitur sub his verbis: Omne divinum et providet secundis, et ereptum est ab his quibus providetur; neque providentia submittente suam immixtam et unialem excellentiam, neque separata unitione providentiam exterminante. Trans. p. 122.

126 *DC* 20; Saffrey 108, Pera 157, trans. p. 120.

127 Ibid.: Prima enim bonitas influit bonitates super res omnes influxione una; verumtamen unaquaeque rerum recipit ex illa influxione secundum modum suae virtutis et sui esse.

128 *In DC* 20, Saffrey 110.8–17, Pera 363: Dicit ergo primo quod omnes bonitates quae inveniuntur in rebus, effluuunt a causa prima; et huiusmodi bonitates recipit unaquaeque res secundum modum et proprietatem suae substantiae et virtutis — sunt autem diversarum rerum diversae naturae et virtutes — et inde est quod, quamvis causa prima influat uno influxu super omnia, diversimode tamen influxus eius in diversis rebus recipitur. Cuius exemplum evidens est in lumine quod quidem a corpore lucido uno modo procedit, sed secundum quod radii diversi transeunt per vitra diversimode colorata, diversam apparentiam faciunt. Trans. pp. 122–3.

129 *In DC* 20, Saffrey 110.18–19, Pera 364, trans. p. 123: Influit enim in res secundum rationem boni.

130 *In DC* 20, Saffrey 110.21–2, Pera 364: Bonitas autem causae primae est ipsum suum esse et sua essentia, quia causa prima est ipsa essentia bonitatis. Trans. p. 123.

131 *In DC* 20, Saffrey 110.26–7, Pera 364: Sed ex eius influxu res diversimode recipiunt, quaedam plus et quaedam minus, unaquaeque secundum suam proprietatem. Trans. p. 123.

132 *DC* 21, Saffrey 112, Pera 162–3, trans. p. 125. See Werner Beierwaltes, '*Primum est dives per se*. Meister Eckhart und der Liber de Causis'.

133 The Arabic text is somewhat more complete: 'But the simple thing, that is, the One which is good, is one and its unity is good, and the good and the one are a single thing.' See *Commentary*, p. 125n5.

134 *In DC* 21, Saffrey 113.2–6, Pera 370: Nam Deus est maxime unum cum sit prima unitas sicut et prima bonitas; simplicitas autem ad rationem unitatis pertinet — dicitur enim simplex quod est unum non ex pluribus aggregatum; unde Deus in quantum est prime et maxime unum, in tantum etiam est prime et maxime simplex. Trans. p. 126.

135 *In DC* 21, Saffrey 113.9–14, Pera 371: Omne enim compositum indiget pluribus ex quibus sua bonitas constituitur, et non solum indiget illis ex quibus componitur ut ex partibus, sed etiam indiget aliquo alio quod causat et conservat compositionem, sicut patet in corporibus mixtis; non enim diversa in unum convenirent nisi per aliquam causam ea unientem. Trans. p. 126. See also *ST* I, 3, 7: Omne compositum causam habet; cf. *CG* I, 18; *De Pot.* 7, 1. It is the same reasoning which led Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* to abandon the primacy of the composite individual, designated in the *Categories* as first substance, since whatever is composed cannot be ultimate.

136 *In DC* 21, Saffrey 113.19–22, Pera 371: Cum igitur Deus sit primo et maxime simplex utpote habens totam bonitatem suam in uno perfectissimo, sequitur quod Deus sit primo et maxime per se sufficiens. Trans. p. 126. See *DC* 22: The first goodness can fill the world with goodnesses, only because it is *supra completum*. D'Ancona Costa (*Recherches*, p. 30) points out that this proposition derives from *Elements* 131; the editors of the English translation, however, suggest that this proposition 'does not have Proclus's *Elements* as its source' (p. 128).

137 *In DC* 21, Saffrey 114.8–10, Pera 375, trans. p. 127. For the origin of this teaching in the pseudo *Theology of Aristotle*, see D'Ancona Costa, *Recherches sur le Liber de Causis*, p. 38n65. See Werner Beierwaltes, '*Primum est dives per se*. Meister Eckhart und der Liber de Causis'.

138 *DC* 32, Saffrey 143, Pera 217: Necessarium est unum faciens adipisci unitates et ipsum non adipiscatur, sed reliquae unitates omnes sunt adquisitae.

139 *In DC* 32, Saffrey 145.2–3, Pera 464: Sed unum ponebant primum, qui nihil participabat, sed est essentialiter unum et bonum. Trans. p. 163.

140 *In DC* 32, Saffrey 145.6–7, Pera 464: Semper enim participans praesupponit aliquid prius quod est per essentiam. Trans. p. 163.

141 *In DC* 32, Saffrey 145.15–18, Pera 466: Necesse est ponere unum primum ... a quo participant unitatem quaecumque sunt unum; et ipsum ... non participat unitatem ab aliquo alio. Trans. p. 163.

142 Cf. *Commentary*, p. 128n1. D'Ancona Costa remarks: 'Il s'agit d'un texte composite, dont le lemme ne vient pas de Proclus, mais, à ce qu'il semble, d'un passage du corpus "plotinien arabe", cependant que la partie principale de la démonstration est tirée litteralement de la proposition 131 de *l'Elementatio*, accompagnée d'influences "plotiniennes".' *Recherches*, p. 30.

143 Remarkably, stressing the importance of form — inherited from Aristotle — as the principle of action (*principium actionis*), Aquinas adapts it to the deeper use of Platonist participation: the first cause is 'totally form', and 'is totally productive of other things by a participation in itself' (*sicut agit id quod totum est forma, quod sui participatione secundum se totum est aliorum productivum*). *In DC* 22, Saffrey 115.29–116.2, Pera 379, trans. p. 130.

144 *In DC* 22, Saffrey 116.19–21, Pera 382: Tota ergo virtus huius probationis ad hoc redit quod Proclus breviter tangit, quod scilicet Deus et est ipsa unitas, non unitum aliquid. Trans. p. 130.

145 *In DC* 7, Saffrey 51.5–6, Pera 187: Est enim divisio quidam motus ab unitate in multitudinem. Trans. p. 56.

146 *De Pot*. 3, 5: Diversitas causarum diversos effectus producit.

147 *In DC* 6, Saffrey 47.8–13, Pera 175: Causa autem prima, secundum Platonicos quidem, est supra ens in quantum essentia bonitatis et unitatis, quae est causa prima, excedit etiam ipsum ens separatum, sicut supra dictum est. Sed secundum rei veritatem causa prima est supra ens in quantum est ipsum esse infinitum. Trans. p. 51. See Michael Ewbank, 'Doctrinal Precisions in Aquinas's *Super Librum de Causis*', p. 16: 'St. Thomas can allow no participation in unity above existence, for such would be incompatible with what he understands to be the most fundamental and proper acknowledgement of being. Such demands an admission that beings are existent by participation and through essence; one and existent through their essence; and good

through participation in being. Not only does each of these conclusions rest on profound doctrinal principles, but together they serve as a backdrop for St. Thomas's strategy in assimilating the principles espoused by the author of the *Liber de Causis*.'

148 *In DC* 7, Saffrey 50.5–7, Pera 182: Causa autem prima non est natura subsistens in suo esse quasi participato, sed potius est ipsum esse subsistens et ideo est supersubstantialis et simpliciter inenarrabilis. Trans. pp. 55–6.

149 *In DC* 10, Saffrey 68.6–7, Pera 241: Ipse enim Deus est ipsa bonitas et ipsum esse in seipso virtualiter comprehendens omnium entium perfectiones. Trans. p. 76.

150 The correction had also been made by Dionysius. Cf. *In DC* 4, Saffrey 28.10–13, Pera 99: Dionysius autem ordinem quidem separatorum abstulit, sicut supra dictum est, ponens eumdem ordinem quem et Platonici in perfectionibus quae ceterae res participant ab uno principio, quod est Deus; unde in IV capitulo De divinis nominibus, praeordinat nomen boni in Deo omnibus divinis nominibus, et ostendit quod eius participatio usque ad non ens extenditur, intelligens per non ens materiam primam. Trans. p. 31: 'Dionysius did away with the order of separate things, maintaining the same order as the Platonists in the perfections that other things participate from one principle which is God. Hence in Chapter 4 of *On the Divine Names* he ranks the name of good in God as the first of all the divine names and shows that its participation extends even to nonbeing.'

Chapter Ten

1 This essay was the introduction to *Ciphers of Transcendence. Essays in Philosophy of Religion in Honour of Patrick Masterson*, ed. Fran O'Rourke. While not dealing directly with Plato and Aquinas, it refers to themes which resonate with both.

2 Cicero, *De Inventione* 2, 161, p. 329.

3 *ST* II-II, 81, 1.

4 Lactantius, *The Divine Institutes* IV.28, p. 131.

5 Augustine, *Retractationes* 1, 13.

6 Augustine, *Vera Rel.* 55, 113, p. 282.

7 *Crat.* 399c: σημαίνει τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὅτι τὰ μὲν ἄλλα θηρία ὧν ὁρᾷ οὐδὲν ἐπισκοπεῖ οὐδὲ ἀναλογίζεται οὐδὲ ἀναθρεῖ, ὁ δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἅμα ἑώρακεν—τοῦτο δ' ἐστὶ [τὸ] ὄπωπε —καὶ ἀναθρεῖ καὶ λογίζεται τοῦτο ὃ ὄπωπεν. Trans. Jowett, modified.

8 *Part. An.* 2, 10, 656a10–13; 4, 10, 686a25–7.
9 *Part. An.* 4, 10, 686a27–31: Ὀρθὸν μὲν γάρ ἐστι μόνον τῶν ζῴων διὰ τὸ τὴν φύσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν εἶναι θείαν· ἔργον δὲ τοῦ θειοτάτου τὸ νοεῖν καὶ φρονεῖν· τοῦτο δ' οὐ ῥᾴδιον πολλοῦ τοῦ ἄνωθεν ἐπικειμένου σώματος· τὸ γὰρ ῥᾴδιον πολλοῦ τοῦ ἄνωθεν ἐπικειμένου σώματος· τὸ γὰρ βάρος δυσκίνητον ποιεῖ τὴν διάνοιαν καὶ τὴν κοινὴν αἴσθησιν. Trans. Peck, p. 367.
10 *EN* 6, 6, 1141a21–6, 7, 1141b1: ἄτοπον γὰρ εἴ τις τὴν πολιτικὴν ἢ τὴν φρόνησιν σπουδαιοτάτην οἴεται εἶναι, εἰ μὴ τὸ ἄριστον τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἄνθρωπός ἐστιν... εἰ δ' ὅτι βέλτιστον ἄνθρωπος τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων, οὐδὲν διαφέρει· καὶ γὰρ ἀνθρώπου ἄλλα πολὺ θειότερα τὴν φύσιν, οἷον φανερώτατά γε ἐξ ὧν ὁ κόσμος συνέστηκεν.
11 Pindar, *Pythian Ode* 8, 95–7.
12 John Clare (1793–1864), 'November'.
13 Paul Bourget, *Le démon de midi*, vol. 2, p. 375.
14 Ferdinand Alquié, *Philosophie du Surréalisme*, p. 211.
15 Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, p. 155.
16 Interview with Jody Allen Randolph in *Close to the Moment. Interviews from a Changing Ireland*, p. 205.
17 Interview with David Frick, 'U2 Finds What It's Looking For', *Rolling Stone*. From a later interview: 'As dark as it gets, we are looking for shiny moments. Those shiny moments, for me, are the same as they've always been. There are big words for them, like transcendence. . . For a hundred years people have been told they don't have a spirit, and if you can't see it or can't prove it, it doesn't exist. Anyone who listens to Smokey Robinson knows that isn't true.' Bill Flanagan, *U2 At The End of The World*, p. 81.
18 *ST* I-II 32, 8: Est autem admiratio desiderium quoddam sciendi, quod in homine contingit ex hoc quod videt effectum et ignorat causam, vel ex hoc quod causa talis effectus excedit cognitionem aut facultatem ipsius.
19 *ST* II-II 180, 3 ad 3: Admiratio est species timoris consequens apprehensionem alicuius rei excedentis nostram facultatem. Unde admiratio est actus consequens contemplationem sublimis veritatis. Dictum est enim quod contemplatio in affectu terminatur.
20 Aristotle, *Met.* 1, 2, 982b17–19. See Fran O'Rourke, *Aristotelian Interpretations*, pp. 29–43.
21 See Josef Pieper, *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, pp. 108–20.
22 Patrick Masterson, *The Sense of Creation. Experience and the God Beyond*, p. 2.

23 William Wordsworth, 'The Excursion', p. 161, ll. 1130–8.
24 Patrick Masterson, *Approaching God. Between Phenomenology and Theology*, p. 33.
25 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 525.
26 See Byron's witty verse:
When Bishop Berkeley said 'there was no matter,'
And proved it — 't was no matter what he said:
They say his system 'tis in vain to batter,
Too subtle for the airiest human head;
And yet who can believe it! I would shatter
Gladly all matters down to stone or lead,
Or adamant, to find the World a spirit,
And wear my head, denying that I wear it.
Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, canto XI, i, *The Complete Poetical Works* V, p. 465.
27 Tennessee Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, p. 7.
28 See Patrick Masterson, *Atheism and Alienation. A Study of the Philosophical Sources of Contemporary Atheism*, pp. 9–10.
29 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (*CPR*) B 25, p. 59.
30 Kant, *CPR*, B 21, p. 56.
31 See Patrick Masterson, *Atheism and Alienation*, pp. 17–18.
32 *Selected Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke, 1902–1926*, trans. R. F. C. Hull, p. 393.
33 Kant, *CPR*, B 8, trans. J. M. D. Meiklejohn, p. 29.
34 Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan, p. 13.
35 Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, p. 174.
36 Jacques Maritain, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, p. 162.
37 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Essays and Lectures*, p. 292. Also *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks*, vol. 5, p. 304.
38 Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks*, vol. 4, p. 362. Also vol. 6, p. 198: 'There's a crack in every thing God has made except Reason.'
39 See Samuel Taylor Coleridge: 'Finites, even the human form, must, in order to satisfy the mind, be brought into connection with, and be in fact symbolical of, the infinite'. *Complete Works*, Vol. 4, *Lectures upon Shakespeare and other Dramatists*, p. 290. Coleridge is repeating A. W. Schlegel's claim that Greek pagan thought turned ideas (infinites) into anthropomorphic finites, whereas Christianity connects finites with the infinite. For Coleridge's less severely edited version see *Lectures 1808–1819 on Literature*, vol. 2, p. 394: 'The reverse in Christianity—

Finites, even the human Form, must be brought into connection with the Infinite—must be thought of in some shadowy, or enduring relation—Soul, Futurity &c and—Hence two great effects—a combination of Poetry with *Doctrines*—and (by turning the mind inward on its own *essence* instead of its circumstances and communities) with *sentiment*.' I am grateful to Peter Cheyne for this reference.

40 William Blake, 'The Marriage of Heaven and Hell', *The Poems of William Blake*, p. 114.

41 *Met.* 2, 1, 993a10–12. Aquinas wrote: 'Something is invisible in two ways. The first way is on account of itself, as a dark object; the other way on account of its exceeding the one seeing, as the sun does the eye of the owl. Thus, to us certain things are not clearly seen on account of a defect of their being, and certain others on account of their being excessive; and in this way God is inaccessible to us to a certain degree.' Referring to Pseudo-Dionysius' remark, 'All darkness is inaccessible light', Aquinas explains: 'It is the very same thing which here is light, and there darkness; but he is darkness inasmuch as he is not seen, and light inasmuch as he is seen.' *Commentaries on St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, p. 88. *In I Tim.* 6, 3: Sed qualiter ergo Deus habitat lucem inaccessibilem? ... Ex. IX: *Moyses accessit ad caliginem, in qua erat Deus*. Respondet Dionysius: *omnis caligo est inaccessibile lumen*. Est ergo idem quod hic lumen, et ibi caligo; sed caligo est inquantum non videtur, lumen vero inquantum videtur. Sed aliquid est invisibile dupliciter. Uno modo propter se, sicut opacum; alio modo propter excedentiam eius, sicut sol ab oculo noctuae. Sic quaedam sunt nobis non conspicua propter defectum sui esse, et quaedam propter excedentiam eius; et sic Deus nobis quodammodo inaccessibilis est.

42 Parmenides, Frg. 6.

43 S. T. Coleridge, *The Friend* I, p. 514. Emphasis in original.

44 Louis Pasteur, Inaugural speech to the Académie Française, 27 April 1882. The speech continues: 'I see everywhere in the world the inevitable expression of the concept of infinity. It establishes in the depth of our hearts a belief in the supernatural. The idea of God is nothing more than one form of the idea of infinity. So long as the mystery of the infinite weighs on the human mind, so long will temples be raised to the cult of the infinite, whether it be called Bramah, Allah, Jehovah, or Jesus. . . The Greeks understood the mysterious power of the hidden side of things. They bequeathed to us one of the most beautiful words in our language — the word 'enthusiasm' — Ἐν θεός — an inner god. The

grandeur of human actions is measured by the inspiration from which they spring. Happy is he who bears within himself a god, an ideal of beauty, and who obeys it; an ideal of art, of science, of patriotism, of the virtues symbolized in the Gospel. These are the living sources of great thoughts and great acts. All are lighted by reflection from the infinite.' Quoted in René J. Dubos, *Louis Pasteur. Free Lance of Science*, pp. 391–2.

45 In conversation with writer Anthony Cronin, confirmed by Anne Haverty in a personal communication.

46 *Rep.* 6, 486a.

47 *De. An.* 3, 8, 431b21.

48 *Hamlet* II, ii.

49 Blaise Pascal, *Les Pensées*, Frg. 348: 'Par l'espace, l'univers me comprend et m'engloutit comme un point: par la pensée, je le comprends.' My trans.

50 See also the English poet Fulke Greville (1554–1628):
The mind of man is this world's true dimension
And knowledge is the measure of the mind;
And as the mind in her vast comprehension
Contains more worlds than all the world can find,
So knowledge doth itself far more extend
Than all the minds of men can comprehend.
Fulke Greville, *Complete Works*, Vol. II, p. 5.

51 Arthur Koestler, *Darkness at Noon*, pp. 225–6.

52 Pieper, *Leisure the Basis of Culture*, pp. 112–13.

53 Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons*, p. 74.

54 *De An.* 3, 4, 429a18: ἀνάγκη ἄρα, ἐπεὶ πάντα νοεῖ, ἀμιγῆ εἶναι.

55 *De An.* 3, 4, 429a24–5: διὸ οὐδε μεμῖχθαι εὔλογον αὐτὸν τῷ σώματι.

56 *De An.* 3, 4, 429a25–6.

57 *Gen. An.* 2, 1, 734b24–5. Πρόσωπον is also the word for 'person'.

58 Friedrich Albert Lange, *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart*, p. 3.

59 A further indication of the universality of the psyche is its grasp of the universal concepts of those essences which are instantiated in countless substances. There is nothing whose essence cannot be the object of intellect, grasped in its immaterial intelligibility. See Aquinas *ST* I 86, 1 ad 3: Nihil intelligitur nisi immaterialiter.

60 *De An.* 2, 5, 417b22–3: τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον ἡ κατ' ἐνέργειαν αἴσθησις, ἡ δ' ἐπιστήμη τῶν καθόλου.

61 Karl Jaspers refers to 'the high daring of self-reflection, that precondition of all truthfulness' which, he regrets, 'has degenerated

along the path of ideological theory'. *The Origin and Goal of History*, p. 132. *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte*, p. 127. 'Das hohe Wagnis der Selbstreflexion, diese Bedingung aller Wahrhaftigkeit, ist auf dem Wege der Ideologienlehre entartet.'

62 *De An.* 3, 4, 430a2–5.

63 See pp. 96-7 above.

64 Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, pp. 182–3. The passage continues: 'From our experimental point of view, reflection is, as the word indicates, the power acquired by a consciousness to turn in upon itself, to take possession of itself *as of an object* endowed with its own particular consistence and value: no longer merely to know oneself; no longer merely to know, but to know that one knows. (*Non plus seulement connaître, mais se connaître; non plus seulement savoir, mais savoir que l'on sait.*) . . . Now the consequences of such a transformation are immense, visible as clearly in nature as any of the facts recorded by physics or astronomy. The being who is the object of his own reflection, in consequence of that very doubling back upon himself, becomes in a flash able to raise himself into a new sphere. In reality, another world is born. Abstraction, logic, reasoned choice and inventions, mathematics, art, calculation of space and time, anxieties and dreams of love — all these activities of *inner life* are nothing else than the effervescence of the newly-formed centre as it explodes onto itself.

65 Vyvyan Evans, *The Crucible of Language: How Language and Mind Create Meaning*, p. 98. Reference is to Wordsworth's poem 'Intimations of Immortality'.

66 Patrick Masterson wrote his doctoral dissertation on the Fourth Way at the University of Louvain.

67 Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange formulated the principle as follows: 'When a perfection, the concept of which does not imply any imperfection, is found in various degrees in different beings, none of those which possess it imperfectly contains a sufficient explanation for it, and hence its cause must be sought in a being of a higher order, which is this very perfection.' *God: His Existence and His Nature*, p. 308.

68 *ST* I 2, 3.

69 See Patrick Masterson's excellent treatment of the Fourth Way in Chap. 7, 'Analogy and Transcendence' of *The Sense of Creation*, pp. 85–106.

70 Garrigou-Lagrange, ibid.

71 For a comparable passage see Aquinas, *ST* II-II 180, 5 ad 3, cited p. 29 above.

72 *Tim.* 90a.
73 See Aquinas, *In Job*, 37: 'The most wonderful thing of all is that earthly and corruptible man may be promoted to the possession of spiritual and heavenly things.'
74 *ST* I 86, 3.
75 See Shakespeare, *Hamlet* II, ii: 'What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form, in moving, how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!'
76 *ST* I 76, 5 ad 4: Anima intellectiva, quia est universalia comprehensiva, habet virtutem ad infinita.
77 Aquinas, *In Peri. Herm.* 1, 3, 29. Also *CG* 1, 59, 498; *De Ver* 1, 8; *De An.* 3, 1.
78 *Confessiones* 1, 1.
79 *ST* I-II 2, 8, trans. English Dominican Fathers, p. 622.
80 For an extensive treatment see the essay 'Beauty from Plato to Aquinas' in this volume.
81 Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education*, p. 222.
82 Hermann Broch, *The Death of Virgil*, p. 135.
83 Benjamin Robert Haydon, *Autobiography ad Journals*, ed. Malcolm Elwin (London: Macdonald, 1950), p. 78.
84 *Part. An.* 1, 5, 645a16–26, trans. Ogle, *CW1*, p. 1004.
85 Patrick Masterson discusses the contrast in Chapter 6 of *The Sense of Creation*.
86 *Fiat iustitia, et pereat mundus*, *Fiat iustitia ruat caelum*.
87 *Crito* 49ab. See also Romans 3. 8: 'It is not licit to do evil that good may come of it.'
88 *ST* I-II 19, 5, *Sed Contra*.
89 John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of A Grammar of Assent*, p. 107.
90 *Tim.* 37d: εἰκὼ δ᾽ ἐπενόει κινητόν τινα αἰῶνος ποιῆσαι.
91 *Parm.* 156de, trans. Gill & Ryan, 388.
92 Jussi Backman, 'All of a Sudden: Heidegger and Plato's *Parmenides*', *Epoché* 11/2 (2007), p. 400.
93 Boethius, *Tractates*, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, p. 422.
94 James Joyce, *Occasional, Critical, and Political Writing*, p. 104.
95 Gottlob Frege, *Begriffsschrift und andere Aufsätze* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1964), p. 107.
96 Asked if everything could be expressed scientifically, Einstein replied that it could, but that it would make no sense: 'It would be a description

without meaning — as if you described a Beethoven symphony as a variation of wave pressure.' *The Ultimate Quotable Einstein*, p. 409.

97 See Plato, *Rep.* 398–403, *Ion* 534.

98 Aristotle, *Pol.* 8, 5, 1340a19–20.

99 Aristotle, *Pol.* 8, 5, 1339b21–22: φησὶ γοῦν καὶ Μουσαῖος εἶναι βροτοῖς ἥδιστον ἀείδειν.

100 See Plotinus, *Enneads* I 3 [20] 1.19–34; V 9 [5] 11.7–13.

101 Augustine, *De Musica* 1, 2, 2.

102 Ibid. 1, 3, 4.

103 Ibid. 1, 2, 3.

104 Ibid. 6, 11, 29.

105 *ST* II-II 91, 2: Manifestum est autem quod secundum diversas melodias sonorum animi hominum diversimode disponuntur... Et ideo salubriter fuit institutum ut in divinas laudes cantus assumerentur, ut animi infirmorum magis provocarentur ad devotionem. My trans. with slight modification.

106 Thucydides 1, 22, 4, p. 41. See Sophocles, *Antigone* 456–7: Οὐ γάρ τι νῦν γε κἀχθές, ἀλλ' ἀεί ποτε ζῇ ταῦτα. ('For these things live not today or yesterday, but for all time.')

107 Horace, *Odes* 3.30: Exegi monumentum aere perennius ... non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei vitabit Libitinam. ('I have finished a monument more lasting than bronze. . . I will not wholly die, and a great part of me will elude the Goddess of Death.')

Τέλος δεδωκώς, Χριστέ, σοί χάριν φέρω

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to the editors and publishers for kind permission to reprint the essays which were originally published as follows:

'Aquinas and Platonism', in *Contemplating Aquinas*, ed. Fergus Kerr (London: SCM Press, 2003), pp. 247–79.

'Beauty from Plato to Aquinas', in *Ciphers of Transcendence. Essays in Philosophy of Religion in Honour of Patrick Masterson* (Newbridge: Irish Academic Press, 2019), pp. 64–109.

'Immortality of the Soul in Plato and Aquinas, in Classics Ireland 27 (2020). Platonic Thought – and Action. Essays in Honour of Andrew Smith, pp. 356–95.

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'The *Triplex Via* of Naming God', in *The Review of Metaphysics* 69 (2016), pp. 519–54.

'Evil as Privation: The Neoplatonic Background to Aquinas's *De Malo*' in *Companion to Aquinas's* De Malo, ed. Michael Dougherty (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 192–221.

'Aquinas on Pseudo-Dionysius' Celestial Hierarchy', in Proceedings of Aquinas Conference, Rome, September 2022. [in press]

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'Ciphers of Transcendence' in *Ciphers of Transcendence. Essays in Philosophy of Religion in Honour of Patrick Masterson* (Newbridge: Irish Academic Press, 2019), pp. 1–31, 39–43.

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