

THE AQUINAS REVIEW
OF
THOMAS AQUINAS COLLEGE

Vol. 21, 2016
ISSN 1076-8319

EDITOR

Anthony Andres

EDITORIAL BOARD

Michael F. McLean
Brian T. Kelly
Kevin D. Kolbeck
R. Glen Coughlin
John Francis Nieto

The Aquinas Review is published annually by the Office of the Dean, Thomas Aquinas College, Santa Paula, California; Michael F. McLean, President; Brian T. Kelly, Dean. Unsolicited articles, reasoned criticisms of articles, and letters are welcome.

Correspondence should be addressed to: Editor, The Aquinas Review, 10,000 North Ojai Road, Santa Paula, CA 93060. A subscription form follows the final article.

Editor's Statement

This issue of *The Aquinas Review*, like the last, is dedicated to the memory of the review's founding editor, Ronald P. McArthur. In the last issue we recalled the reasons why he traveled to Laval University to study St. Thomas and Aristotle with the renowned Thomist, Charles DeKoninck. In this issue we will briefly consider his role in the founding of Thomas Aquinas College and *The Aquinas Review*.

Having completed his studies at Laval, Dr. McArthur returned to California to teach, first at the San Francisco College for Women and then at his *alma mater*, St. Mary's College, where he taught both in the philosophy department and in the Integrated Liberal Arts Program, a program modeled to some extent upon the Great Books curriculum of St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland. But despite the many real strengths of such a program, he and several like-minded colleagues, including Dr. John Neumayr and Mr. Marcus Berquist, came to the conclusion that it was incapable of forming a fully liberally educated Catholic. In a 2007 interview he explained why:

We could not order things theologically because the people who ran [the Program] were against that, and we could not habituate people to a careful reading of Aristotle because of the program's "Great Books" style. That is, when you were reading Aristotle, you had to read him in large sections. The same thing was true of St. Thomas. . . . We knew that there was a better way, because we had had experience of it at Laval University with Charles DeKoninck.

Meanwhile, it was the 1960s and intellectual life at American universities, both secular and Catholic, had descended to its present chaotic state. It was then that a former student of

McArthur, Peter DeLuca, urged him to consider starting a new college that would provide a truly Catholic, truly liberal education. In response McArthur and Berquist, with the help of several colleagues, especially Neumayr, wrote *A Proposal for the Fulfillment of Catholic Liberal Education*, the founding document of Thomas Aquinas College.

Years later, looking back on that time, Dr. McArthur explained what the founders of the College had hoped to accomplish:

At St. John's College the centerpiece of the curriculum is the seminar, and that means the discussion of great books. The centerpiece of our curriculum had to be theology, the highest discipline. The question was, could we figure out a way to do that while maintaining the things which we thought were good and productive at St. John's?

The resulting *Proposal* was their answer. It outlined an ambitious program of studies which was to be pursued under the light of the Catholic Faith and which was to aim at forming the student in the liberal arts and in discipleship to St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle, while also having him read the greatest texts of Western Civilization.

In 1971 Thomas Aquinas College began offering classes, with Berquist, Neumayr and DeLuca as founding faculty members and McArthur as its founding president, a position he held until 1991. In 1994 the College began to publish *The Aquinas Review* and named Dr. McArthur its founding editor. In its inaugural issue he explained why the College had taken on this new task:

The experience of [the College's] success has aroused the desire within it to begin publication of a review which would speak to those off campus who share the same concerns as the teachers, alumni, and students who

have, over the years, participated in the life of the college community.

The articles in this issue of *The Aquinas Review* exemplify the same concerns which inspired its founding. Dr. McArthur's "Natural Law: A Perennial Problem," written while he was the president of the College, argues for a fundamental truth in moral philosophy; in "Where Aristotle Agrees with Plato about Participation," Dr. John Francis Nieto, a former student of Dr. McArthur and current tutor at Thomas Aquinas College, explores speculative philosophy in discipleship to Aristotle; and Dr. Glen Coughlin, also a former student of Dr. McArthur and current tutor, takes us to the summit of wisdom, Sacred Theology, in "Charity and Divinization according to St. Thomas Aquinas."

Anthony Andres
Editor

Preface

At Thomas Aquinas College we often say that the education we provide is only a beginning. For the most part, our students are reading the important works in our program for the first time, and the class discussion, while certainly helping them to better understand the principal arguments and themes in the readings and to acquire the intellectual virtues, only introduces them to the profoundest truths and deepest questions that have engaged mankind for centuries.

Accordingly, it is fitting that the College publish *The Aquinas Review* to honor its patron and to provide a forum for deeper consideration of those matters which constitute its curriculum and are central to genuine Catholic liberal education. Consistent with the nature of the College itself, this review is marked by fidelity to the *Magisterium* of the Catholic Church and a respect for the great tradition of liberal learning which is our common heritage.

The essays in *The Aquinas Review* reflect positions taken by their authors and not necessarily by the College itself. The editor – in collaboration with the editorial board – determines the contents of each issue. Any interested person may submit an essay for consideration or letters or comments on articles already published.

It is our hope that *The Aquinas Review* will be a source of wisdom to its readers and contributors.

Michael McLean
President, Thomas Aquinas College

Contents

THE NATURAL LAW: A PERENNIAL PROBLEM	1
<i>Ronald P. McArthur</i>	
WHERE ARISTOTLE AGREES WITH PLATO ABOUT PARTICIPATION.....	31
<i>John Francis Nieto</i>	
I NO LONGER CALL YOU SERVANTS BUT FRIENDS: CHARITY AND DIVINIZATION ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS AQUINAS.....	117
<i>R. Glen Coughlin</i>	

**THE NATURAL LAW:
A PERENNIAL PROBLEM**

Ronald P. McArthur

Detocqueville, in his *Democracy In America*, characterized the Americans of his day as the most unphilosophical of peoples, as those caring least about abstract ideas and large principles. Yet he saw them wedded to a philosophical method; they were, he said, Cartesian, without having read the *Discourse On Method* or even heard of Descartes. He meant, I think, that we Americans, for the same is true today, eschew tradition, accepted doctrines and book learning, and find our ground of understanding and action solely within ourselves, each faced with the situation of the moment.

This is but one way of seeing the United States as the most modern of countries, as most exemplifying the main concerns of modern thought—individualism, equality, private enterprise, secularism, utilitarianism, activism, and the like. (I take it here as an axiom that modern thought takes its bearings from a rejection of the ancient study of nature, of metaphysics, and of theology

Ronald P. McArthur (1924–2013) was a graduate of St. Mary's College of California (1949) and received his Ph.D. from University Laval (1952). He was the founding president of Thomas Aquinas College (1971–1991) and the founding editor of *The Aquinas Review*. This article appears courtesy of *The American Journal of Jurisprudence*.

in the name of mathematics, which becomes the key to understanding whatever can be understood, and in the desire not so much to understand the world as to transform it according to human projects. Hence the elevation of practice above thinking, the premium placed upon enterprise, the desire to bring about a society unfettered by the traditional religion which looks to the after-life, and the impatience with the noble and the exalted.)

The significance of America, however, according to the founders of our Republic, lies not in its harboring the tendencies peculiar to modern men. Rather, it is traceable to the great principles and sentiments expressed in our *Declaration of Independence*. This document, as you well know, states that “We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed;...”

We are here confronted not with a reflection on self, a proceeding outward from within, but with tremendous assertions upon which our revolution is justified, and which constitute an explicit doctrine of natural rights, which rights are the only foundation of legitimate government.

Hamilton, in urging the ratification of the constitution, says “it has been frequently remarked that it seems to have been reserved to the people of this country, by their conduct and example, to decide the important question, whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident and force. If there be any truth in the remark, the crisis at which we are arrived may with propriety be regarded as the era in which the decision is to be made; and a wrong election of the part we

shall act out may, in this view, deserve to be considered as the general misfortune of mankind.”¹ While he is referring to the *Constitution* and not the *Declaration*, they yet form a whole which establishes our country upon principles seen as the result of reflection, and chosen as good from the beginning. As such we are a most consciously principled country, whose political discourse is stamped by our founding documents.

Yet, two hundred years after our founding we have, by and large, denied our principles even if keeping the language which has sprung from them. We now think the *Declaration* is parochial, or outdated, or a mask of political adventurism.

The American Bar Association, to illustrate, became exercised, before the 1980 election, over that part of the Republican National Committee’s platform which called for the “appointment of judges at all levels of the judiciary who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life.” Its House of Delegates called on the contrary for a “commitment to the selection of judges on the basis of merit and not on the basis of particular political or ideological philosophies that may or may not be held by the judicial candidate in question.”

This position is at least curious, and for more than one reason; to scrutinize it is worth our while. It is said that judges are to be selected “on the basis of merit and not on the basis of particular political or ideological philosophies...” This means, I take it, that a candidate’s opinions about good and evil, whether he thinks there *is* good and evil, have no bearing on his suitability for appointment. Rather, he should be appointed “on the basis of merit,” but a merit which, evidently, is separated from all the fundamental considerations which determine the character of our lives. “Merit” must mean here a competency in judicial procedure, the way in which courts function. Such competency

¹*The Federalist*, 1.

can be possessed by those of any persuasion whatever. So how would someone choose a judge? He must not, says the American Bar Association, choose on the basis of good and evil, right and wrong, "...not on the basis of particular political or ideological philosophies...." Presumably, then, he should choose the one who, regardless of his philosophy, is most competent in the conduct of the office. It would be wrong, accordingly, to appoint a man *first* because his views on morality and political life were sound and *then* because he was enough the master of means to function in his appointed capacity. Since there would be many who merit appointment, the choice would depend solely upon the appetite of the one who appoints. The desire to eliminate partisanship would make it impossible to exercise reasonable choice in the appointment of the judiciary. Choice would be necessarily partisan.

The Bar Association, further, characterizes the various views of life which are professed as "particular political or ideological philosophies," and therein lies, I think, a tale. The use of the word "ideological" leads to a consideration of "ideology," a consideration most instructive in this connection. The word was first used at the end of the 18th Century to stand for a "science of ideas" which would, by establishing thought upon a scientific basis, lead to a reform of the social order, purged of the mystification inflicted upon it by priests and intellectuals. It was later co-opted by Marx to stand for a mystification itself, for a false view of reality, an illusion, which motivates its adherents and which can only be dispelled with the rise and victory of Communism. While the current use of the word may not be Marxist, and is assuredly not in most cases, it yet retains the sense of a belief or set of beliefs held *subjectively* which move the believer to action in conformity with them. Since such beliefs cannot be based upon reason, defended by reason, verified by experience, or shown, in short, to be worthy of the respect of

rational men, they must be the result of desire and as such indefensible. Hence when the Bar Association does not wish judges appointed “on the basis of particular political or ideological philosophies” we may understand that no one should be chosen because of his non-defensible and purely subjective beliefs—a reasonable proposition so far as it goes; but only reasonable if there is genuine political philosophy which can show ideology for what it is. The Bar Association does not, however, allude to political philosophy at all. Its sense is that all discourse about the political order is purely subjective, that there can be no right understanding of political life, and that all such attempts are really nothing more than a clothing of the otherwise naked appetite with respectability. This analysis is confirmed by the report of the Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association, who, in his zeal to oppose the “appointment of judges...who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life,” characterizes such positions as “pre-conceived ideological or political beliefs,” which, if taken into account, would lead to “a partisan judiciary composed of those who show the same partisan beliefs.” We cannot, he says, sift judicial candidates through “a narrow ideological sieve or subject them to a political ‘litmus’ test. Who is to say which ideology is ‘right’ and which is ‘wrong’? One person’s ideological ‘sanctity’ is another’s ideological ‘sin.’”

Here, then, we find the root of the insistence upon merit and merit alone. There is nothing to morality but a set of procedures, no substance to either its claims or its provisions. We should, nevertheless, make sure that we find a way, cosmetically, to appoint judges, which we would do by looking solely to merit.

But if no statement about the moral order is better than any other, it becomes clear that the statements you oppose are as viable as those you espouse, or even more, that you cannot take your own position seriously. Since no one likes to be caught saying, about supposedly important issues, “I want this and I

don't want that," he will tend, under scrutiny, to "give reasons" for his position, "reasons" which not even he can believe. Hence, rather than clarify, order, and defend his position, he will confuse issues, disguise his intent, ridicule his opponents—in short, render his thought obscure at every point. Those who do so, who are forced by their position to do so, are usually highly critical of traditional morality, and characterize those who hold to it as opposed to enlightenment, as precluded by prejudices, bigotry and dogma from open-minded inquiry, from intellectual candor. Yet the logic of their own position leaves them, no matter the condition of their opponents, with nothing but prejudice, bigotry and the like to fall back upon. They are what they claim to oppose. The separation of "merit" from "ideology" must itself be ideology against which we must be on our guard.

When most people consider the role of the worthy judge, they think in terms of right reason, of a right reason imbued with justice, and based on solid principle. Someone merits appointment, then, who is rectified with respect to those principles, who loves justice, who will judge the cases before him in the light of moral law, and who through experience and learning has a sufficient mastery of the details of legal procedure. "Merit," in other words, is concerned, according to common usage, with what is most fundamental. For example, the merit of a case, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, "refers to the intrinsic 'rights and wrongs' of the matter, in contradistinction to the extraneous points such as the competence of the tribunal and the like." The Bar Association, on the other hand, contrives its statement so that procedure is now fundamental and substance wholly irrelevant, or rather, that procedure *is* substance. This is an attempt to graft a contrary meaning of 'merit' on the old, which in this case has no rational basis, the sign of an ideology.

Thucydides gives us a wonderful insight into just this practice when he analyzes the Corcyrean revolution. "The sufferings

which revolution entailed upon the cities," he says, "were many and terrible," and "war takes the easy supply of daily wants, and so provides a rough master, that brings most men's character to a level with their fortunes." So men became cunning and atrocious. "Words had to change their ordinary meaning and to take that which was now given them. Reckless audacity came to be considered the courage of a loyal ally; prudent hesitation, specious cowardice; moderation was held to be a cloak of unmanliness; ability to see all sides of a question, inaptness to act on any. Frantic resolves became the attribute of manliness; cautious plotting, a justifiable means of self-defense.

"The cause of these evils," he goes on to say, "was the lust for power arising from greed and ambition." While we don't know for sure what Humpty-Dumpty wanted, we do know, in his conversation with Alice, that "words mean what I say they mean." Words in this context mean what the Bar Association wants them to mean, and the change in meaning comes from what any careful reader sees from the beginning: The American Bar Association is now against "traditional family values and the sanctity of human life," which persuasion, on their own showing, is itself nothing more than partisan ideology.

These and many more are the difficulties to which such a position gives rise. It is but another outcome of the all-pervasive nihilism which is playing its part in destroying our civilization, and which threatens, if it continues, to complete its work, the ineluctable fruit of its tendencies.

If my assessment of the statement of the Bar Association is correct, it would have us look upon judges as functionaries within a closed system of legal precedent, skillfully marshalling prior decisions to produce a desired justice in the cases before them. But this is not what happens, as we can see by paying attention first to experience and then to judicial decision. Any normal experience of social life shows us, without our having

any competency in the law, that the circumstances in which we act are unlimited, and that they are constantly changing. New situations arise all the time because of technology, the increasing complexity of our lives, inventions, new knowledge (as in medicine), and the like. Laws which may have regulated intelligently our conduct in the past need sometimes to be modified and even repealed in the light of the present. Hence human laws are not ultimate. A look at the opinions of the courts, further, shows that judges act indeed according to their general sense of good and evil, and that they could not reach their decisions unless they based them on that sense. This can be illustrated by the majority decision in *Roe v. Wade*. There is, in the majority opinion, a use of the "right to privacy," but not a necessary application of that right as it had been previously understood. There is, further, the application of the "due process clause" of the fourteenth amendment, but only to the fetus in the third trimester of pregnancy and not before; there is again no precedent. There is a justification of the state's duty to be concerned with the unborn, but a limitation of that duty by "viability"; again no precedent. There is the admission that all depends upon whether the unborn is a person, whose rights would then be guaranteed by the fourteenth amendment; but the court says it cannot decide such an issue. My point is that the decision does not follow necessarily from any of the principles used to establish it, nor from the confluence of the many streams of argument that go to make it up. It is based on the general sense that abortion should be permissible in our society, and that it is a lesser evil, if it is such, than the evils which follow if it is not permitted. But this sense comes not from the laws, or from the constitution, or from the Hippocratic Oath, or from a history of medicine, or from the duties of the state as most recently understood. A decision against abortion could have been rendered, and the same constitution, the same rights, the same duties, the same Hippocratic Oath and the same

history of medicine could have been used. And since abortion is wrong, the decision against it could have made more sense.

It is important, then, what general position our judges hold about the moral order, for they determine, in their decisions, the very character of our lives. The apprehension of that moral order in this decision is frighteningly wrong and no just man can help but be shocked at the results.

Either, then, the sense of right and wrong, which lies at the root of our actions, both public and private, is fabricated by each man according to his appetites, or there is a moral order discoverable by reason. (The position that only faith supplies the moral law is reducible to appetite, since one must *will* to believe.)

To reflect on such options is to reflect upon the principles not only of American political life, but of all political life, and we should never refuse to think about them. Our own time, however, makes such concerns especially important. We have seen Nazism and Communism, in the name of nature and nature's laws, devastate countries and peoples, and we are still threatened with the destruction, by either physical or psychological violence, or both, of our whole civilization, which is now so weak and floundering as to arouse the concern of men from all parts of the political spectrum.

It is not surprising, given the horrors which result from a moral vacuum, that there have been attempts to base our actions upon nature, where we can rest secure, and which guarantees that we are on the path of right and good.

One possible understanding of the natural law lies in thinking that it is a body of rules, which, applicable to man alone, is yet like the more universal laws in Newton's *Principia* applicable to all bodies.

Here, to test the claim, are Newton's laws:

I. Every body continues in the state of rest, or of uniform

motion in a right line, unless compelled to change that state by forces impressed upon it.

II. The change of motion is proportional to the motive force impressed; and is made in the direction of the right line in which that force is impressed.

III. To every action there is always opposed an equal reaction: or, the mutual actions of two bodies upon each other are always equal, and directed to contrary parts.

Note that these laws do not tell us what *should* take place, but what *will* take place under certain conditions—not how bodies *ought* to act, but how they *do* act. Their actions, in fact, can be traceable quantitatively to these laws, and explained thereby. In short, they state the fundamental behavior of bodies which lies at the root of all physical science, and further, state their behavior *invariably*; there are no exceptions. They state, in other words, the *facts* about the motion or rest of all bodies, but give no *reason* for the facts; to repeat an often used expression, they are *descriptive* and not *prescriptive*.

Now positive laws differ from these laws in several obvious ways. They are, first of all, about human behavior; then, they are different in different places and at different times. For both reasons, they are not *comprehensively* universal. They do not, further, *describe* human behavior; rather, they propose authoritatively how we *should* act, countenancing at the same time a punishment if we fail to obey.

Suppose though, in a flight of fancy, we were to suppose positive laws to be stated as were Newton's. An example might be "whenever a driver is surrounded with stimuli sufficient to divert his attention from his driving to such an extent that he forgets to notice stop-signs, he runs red lights." Even if such a law (which is not the case) be universal, and even if it describes human behavior accurately (it does not), it cannot be a proximate measure of human action, for it does not specify how we

should act. Only on the assumption that all our actions are necessary and predictable could we look to such laws and then, of course, we would not need them.

Since all this is well known about positive law, and since it is most known to us, it is not surprising that some would say that all laws which measure behavior are man-made. Since all such laws, however, are changeable, and legitimately so, there are those who, to avoid complete relativity within the political order, take refuge in the natural law, which is thought to be truly universal in its applicability because it transcends any political order (all society is based on nature) and because *it* does not, any more than do the laws of physics, admit of exceptions.

But could this be the case? Suppose we say, for example, that sexual intercourse leads to the propagation of the race. Though we are speaking of something which transcends time and place—and is therefore of universal import—there are many exceptions, even granting conception; Men (to take another example) want to live in society—but not always, for there are some who do not. We tend (another example) to protect human life—but again not always, for some have participated in the extermination of certain races, others countenance abortion generally, while others enslave and brutalize even the innocent.

There is, then, under this conception, no so called natural law (understanding such law to apply properly to human behavior) which is stated without exception, and recourse to it will gain us nothing that we do not already possess with positive laws, which *do* guide our conduct.

Suppose, however, that we keep refining our laws, and come to something wholly universal in human conduct, such as “Every man acts for what appears to him to be good for him when he acts.” Such a law, though truly universal, does not tell us that we *should* seek the good of reason. It is, further, blind to the possible distinction between the real and apparent good,

which would need to be clarified if we would act reasonably. If we were to say that since all men do seek a good in their actions, it is important to know the right goods to seek, and that they consist of x, y, z, etc., we will then have laws about how we *should* act, but not how men *universally* and *invariably* act. Our laws, in becoming regulative, take on the character of *positive* law.

Newton's laws, to sum up, do not tell us that *bodies* ought to act as they do, nor *why* they so act, and if the natural laws of human conduct were similar, they would not tell us how we *ought* to act, which is the character of every law which regulates our lives as men.

Such natural laws, then, can, therefore, give no *proper* guidance to human life, though we might take account of them as we would the laws of bodies, so that we do not act stupidly. They could not be the principles upon which our positive laws rest, which again tell us how we *ought* to behave, at least in a given society. Our knowledge of such laws would comprise the findings of modern psychology, physiology, and anthropology, which could not, except by arbitrary appetite, be accepted as guides which measure our lives. Such "natural laws" could, in fact, be learned in order to manipulate human behavior, and for ends known only to the one who has the power to determine the lives of others; and they are so used.

We have not, with this understanding of natural law, rooted our behavior on what *ought* to be, but only on what is. Were this, then, the natural law, we would agree, or *should* agree, with those who tell us that the only law which specifies our behavior is positive law.

It is interesting in this connection that Montesquieu in the *Spirit of the Laws*, before he considers the natural law, pays attention first to the *rules*, not laws, by which the Creator governs His world: "These rules are a fixed and invariable relation. In bodies moved, the motion is received, increased, diminished,

or lost, according to the relation of the quantity of matter and velocity; each diversity is uniformity, each change is constancy.”² He speaks first of *laws* of nature when he speaks of laws applicable to us, “so called because they derive their force entirely from our frame and existence.”³ In order to see what these laws are, however, “in order to have a perfect knowledge of (them), we must consider man before the establishment of society: the laws received in such a state would be those of nature.” But those laws are seen, not through the physicist’s consideration of bodies, but by the abstract considerations of change in their local motions, but by a reflection upon the internal experience of living. Those laws, it turns out, are based upon: first the desire for peace, which would make possible man’s continuation in existence; then the desire for nourishment, conducive to his health; then the desire for the other sex, which maintains the species; and finally the desire to live in society, which fulfills his rational nature.

My point in considering Montesquieu is that one can, following him, formulate precepts of law, such as “Seek peace with others,” “Seek nourishment,” “Seek sexual union,” and “Seek the society of others,” which tell men what they *ought* to do, not only what they do. The behavior of bodies, on the other hand, is made intelligible by *rules*, not laws, since they are not concerned with how bodies ought to act.

Montesquieu, then, sees that the more intelligible sense of law involves what ought to be done, and that the natural law is discoverable somehow through a consideration of our “frame and existence,” which turns out to be an ordinary experience of human life.

Let me turn, now, to a classical text to see if I can further the claim that the natural law is accessible through experience.

²Book I, c.1.

³Book I, c.2.

St. Augustine in his *City of God* refers, in his discussion of the Roman republic, to Scipio's definition of a republic as it is found in Cicero's *De RePublica*:

For he defines a republic as the will of the people...for the people, according to his definition, is an assemblage associated by a common acknowledgement of right and a community of interests. And what he means by a common acknowledgement of right he explains at large, showing that a republic cannot be administered without justice. Where, therefore, there is no true justice there can be no right. For that which is done by right is justly done, and what is unjustly done cannot be done by right. For the unjust inventions of men are neither to be considered nor spoken of as rights; for even they themselves say that right is that which flows from the fountain of justice, and deny the definition which is commonly given by those who misconceive the matter, that right is that which is useful to the stronger party. Thus, where there is not true justice there can be no assemblage of men associated by a common acknowledgment of right, and therefore there can be no people...; and if no people then no weal of the people, but only some promiscuous multitude unworthy of the name of the people. Consequently, if the republic is the weal of the people and there is no people if it be not associated by a common acknowledgment of right, and if there is no right where there is no justice, then most certainly it follows that there is no republic where there is no justice...that virtue which gives every man his due.⁴

It is well to note not only that right is here related to justice, but that it is separate from power, for, as Augustine says,

⁴*The City of God*, XIX, 21.

justice is not “that which is useful to the stronger party.” Right, as related to justice, which, when operative, gives every man his due, looks not only toward others but toward them in a certain way, for it means that there are claims which, if right is to prevail, must be satisfied. This satisfaction must be accomplished by someone’s good will, based itself upon the determination of reason, which apprehends what is everyone’s due.

This takes us back, legitimately I think, to Aristotle’s account of justice in the fifth book of the *Nichomachean Ethics*. After having shown that the unjust man and the unjust act are unfair and unequal, and it being clear “that there is an intermediate between the two unequals involved in either case,” the intermediate turns out to be the equal. “If, then,” he says, “the unjust is unequal, the just is equal, as all men suppose it to be, even apart from argument.”⁵ He then distinguishes two kinds of justice. One is concerned with the distribution of honors, rewards, or other goods according to merit. Here the goods awarded are proportional to the merits of the recipients, so that the equality is one of proportion. If A merits twice the good that B merits, then C, his share, shall be twice D, B’s share. The other kind of justice is concerned with exchanges. Here the equal is effected when, in exchanging, for example, shoes for food, each has, after the exchange, something equal to what he had before he exchanged, and each party is thought equal to the others as exchangers. Both kinds of justice pertain to men within a political order, where laws make possible a rectification of injustices, especially in exchanges. It is in fact by justice that the political order holds together. “Men,” says Aristotle, “seek to return evil for evil—and if they cannot do so, think their position mere slavery—or good for good—and if they cannot do so there is

⁵*N. Ethics*, 1131a12.

no exchange, but it is by exchange that they hold together.”⁶ “Justice,” says James Madison, “is the end of government. It is the end of the civil society. It has ever been and ever will be pursued until it be obtained, or until liberty be lost in the pursuit.”⁷

The just man “is said,” again by Aristotle, “to be a doer, by choice of that which is just, and one who will distribute either between himself and another or between two others not so as to give more of what is desirable to himself and less to his neighbor (and conversely with what is harmful), but so as to give what is equal in accordance with proportion; and similarly in distributing between two other persons.”⁸

When speaking about political justice, Aristotle says that it “is found among men who share their life with a view of self-sufficiency, men who are free and either proportionately or arithmetically equal...For justice exists only between men whose mutual relations are governed by law.”⁹ Because men tend to will too much of good things to themselves and too little of things evil to themselves, “we do not allow *man* to rule, but *rational principle*, because a man behaves then in his own interests and becomes a tyrant.”¹⁰

Justice, if Aristotle is right, looks not only at one’s own interest, but at the interest of both, or of more, who are related to a given action. There must be such a concern on the part of each engaging in the activities where justice should be the aim, but if not, on those who rectify the injustice, if the political order is to be maintained. All those who seek justice do so not with themselves as the end of the action, as if mere utility were all that was

⁶N. *Ethics*, 1133a2.

⁷*The Federalist*, 51.

⁸N. *Ethics*, 1134a.

⁹N. *Ethics*, 1133a25.

¹⁰N. *Ethics*, 1133a35.

involved, but seek as well the “good of the other,” which makes possible the continuation of civil society.

It is for this reason that those philosophers who first made intelligible the perfection and exigencies of political life were concerned in great part with justice. They paid a significant attention to it and to its opposites. As such they considered tyranny, which they saw as the ultimate corruption of the political order, and the tyrannical man, whose seeds they found in the unrectified soul. While they could speak of the unhappiness, even the misery, of the tyrannical man, his like was yet appealing to those who thought their good to lie in the unfettered activity of their appetites. The tyrannical life was desirable because, to put it another way, it emancipated its possessor from the shackles of duty, custom, and law. The tyrant lived for himself, and, when ruling, ruled not for the good of the whole, but for his own good alone. There was nothing towards which he was directed, in which he was perfected, but himself.

The genesis of society, however, as understood by the ancients, shows that while man is capable of a life much higher than other animals, he is yet radically deficient, a deficiency which is remedied only by his membership in the family, the tribe, and the city. Suppose, they thought, each man was required to supply his needs by himself. His sustenance would then require all his time, there would be no peace in which to mate and raise his young, there would be none of the art, literature, music, and thinking which make possible a life specifically human. There would furthermore be little or no possibility for the acquisition of the moral and intellectual virtues. But since these virtues complete his nature, then society is natural to man; he is by nature social and political. This is why, according to Aristotle, man has the power of speech, whereby he can form words which signify concepts of good and evil, just and unjust, being and nothing.

The family, concerned as it is with the mundane activities necessary for existence, with the propagation and maintenance of offspring, cannot of itself attain all the goods which men need to lead a human life. Hence the necessity of the city.

The important principle here is that man is ordered, for his perfection, to several societies as a part is to a whole. He is perfected by and in his role in those societies. This can be made clearer by considering that those goods which men desire are not all the same. Some are private goods, which are the good of one man alone, and are ordered to him as to their end. A steak, a pair of shoes, should be loved and used as such. There are other goods, however, which can be called common goods; they are, as in the previous case, the goods of individuals, but not the private good of any. A family is the good of each of its members, but not the exclusive good of any one of them. This means that the family, in order to be, must be loved as a good communicable to all its members; in fact, the other members of the family should be loved in so far as they participate in this good. Such a good is not common because it is the mere addition of private goods, but a single good communicable to many, and finally, of an order higher than the order of private goods.

We must, in order to understand a common good and love it as such, transcend sense knowledge, which is limited to the apprehension of the sensible singular, by an intellectual apprehension of it; and so man alone of all the animals can grasp the nature of the common good and order himself, as master of his actions, toward it. This is liberty.

The more elevated moral virtues, such as justice and courage, were based, according to the ancients, on a love of the city and a willingness to die for it if necessary. The man, in fact, who was not so inclined could be free, but only as a slave was thought to be free. The universe, says Aristotle, "is as in a house, where

the free men are least at liberty to act at random, but all things or most things are already ordained for them, while the slaves and the animals do little for the common good, and for the most part live at random...¹¹

It is not surprising, therefore, that Aristotle can say that the city is prior to the individual, and that the citizen is related to it as a part to its whole. The good of the whole is the good of each of its parts. They are perfected in so far as they function within the whole. In other words, the citizen, as the member of a family, fulfills himself by tending toward the common good as his perfection, and not by expropriating that good as if it were his private good, to be ordered exclusively to him as to its end.

There are different loves which, in the rectified man, correspond to the different goods. We can, says St. Thomas, love something as a subsistent good (*ut bonum subsistens*) or as an accidental good (*ut bonum accidentale*). That which is loved as a subsistent good is loved in such a way that things are willed to it, while that which is loved as an accidental good is loved in so far as it is directed to another, either oneself or someone else. The first kind of love is called by St. Thomas the love of friendship (*amor amicitiae*) while the second is called concupiscible love (*amor concupiscentiae*). All concupiscible love is founded on some love of friendship, for something must be loved as the end toward which other things loved are directed.¹²

If now the only love for anything other than ourselves was a concupiscible love, we would never will the good of another; rather he himself would become a part of our own private good, which would, of course, destroy the possibility of friendship and a common life at its roots.

¹¹*Metaphysics*, 1075a 15.

¹²Ia, Q 60, a5.

Any society holds out some good to its members, some good in conformity to which their lives are rectified and they become good men. This good is understood in varying levels by those who participate in it as they are inclined and able. Any society, to exist, must protect and strengthen its way of life; failure to do this means its dissolution.

All law can be seen in this context; but not only seen, for it can be defended as well. St. Thomas, in his consideration of law,¹³ says first that it is a rule and measure of human acts which orders those acts to an end, an end and the means thereto as apprehended by reason, which is the specifying principle of human acts. This means that though the willing of an end leads to the issue of commands about the means, that end must be justifiable in the light of reason itself. Otherwise, the will emancipated from the prior consideration of reason, the precepts of a subservient reason would “savor of lawlessness rather than law.” But not only is law founded upon reason, it always, according to St. Thomas, is directed to the common good. The first principle in practical matters, he begins his argument, is the last end, which is happiness, as apprehended by reason. Since law is a rule or measure it will be related, then, to that end. But man’s beatitude is found in civil society, since he is by nature a part of the political order. Hence law is always directed to the common good. But the common good is most enhanced and maintained by justice, the bond of citizens. “Human law,” again says St. Thomas, “is ordained for the civil community, implying mutual duties of man and his fellows; and men are ordained to one another by outward acts, whereby men live in communion with one another. This life in common of man with man pertains to justice, whose proper function consists in directing the human community. Wherefore human law makes precepts only

¹³Ia IIae, Q 90.

about acts of justice; and if it commands acts of other virtues, this is only in so far as they assume the nature of justice...”¹⁴

Now if human reason is to guide and direct, and not be subject to appetite, it must base its laws upon nature, and upon a nature in which there is found reason other than its own, and superior in some way to it. So much is this so that if one admits the sense of justice, both arithmetical and proportionate, as necessary to maintain the bond of citizens, and that the political community provides the goods men seek, and that this is all *reasonable*, he is led to think of the natural law, or natural justice, as Aristotle calls it. St. Thomas puts it this way:

...good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed to action: since every agent acts for an end under the aspect of good. Consequently, the first principle in the practical reason is one founded on the notion of good, viz., that good is that which all things seek. Hence this is the first precept of law, that good is to be done and pursued, and evil to be avoided. All other precepts of the natural law are based upon this: so that whatever the practical reason naturally apprehends as man's good (or evil) belongs to the precepts of the natural law as something to be done or avoided. Since however, good has the nature of an end, and evil the nature of a contrary, hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. Wherefore, according to the order of natural inclinations, is the order of the precepts of the natural law. Because in man there is first of all an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances: inasmuch as every

¹⁴Ia, IIae, Q 100, a2.

substance seeks the preservation of its own being, according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life and warding off its obstacles, belongs to a natural law. Secondly, there is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him more specifically, according to that nature he has in common with other animals: and in virtue of this inclination those things are said to belong to the natural law, which nature has taught all animals, such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring, and so forth. Thirdly, there is in man an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him: there man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society: and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance, to shun ignorance, to avoid offending those among whom one has to live, and other such things regarding the above inclination.¹⁵

Natural law, then, is rooted in the inclinations of the human soul, discoverable by reason, and is the measure and principle of all human law, no matter how general it must remain, no matter how much human law must add to it to regulate, finally, the actions of men.

The *Ethics* of Aristotle, which takes its bearings by first considering the nature of happiness, is a treatise, really, about human action in accordance with right reason. Very little, in terms of the whole, is concerned specifically with law, and hardly anything is said about natural justice, though the whole book is about actions in accordance with “laws,” if you will, discoverable by reason and based on the nature of man. The language Aristotle uses is the ordinary language men tend to use when

¹⁵Ia, IIae, Q 94, a2.

they speak of morals, and the distinctions he makes, though they demand a careful reflection upon experience, are yet founded upon it. The natural law, though the words are not used, comes to be seen as he unfolds the order of natural goodness; it is implied in the life of the good man. Aristotle brings this out when, after establishing that political justice, “found among men who share this life with a view to self-sufficiency, men who are free and either proportionately or arithmetically equal...,” which “exists only between men whose mutual relations are governed by law,” is a superior justice, he then says that “part is natural, part legal—natural, that which everywhere has the same force and does not exist by people’s thinking this or that; legal, that which is originally indifferent, but when it has been laid down is not indifferent...”¹⁶ He is saying that there are some principles of justice, some laws if you will, which are discoverable by men everywhere, or anywhere, and which are the same when discovered, and other principles, or laws, which cannot be discovered everywhere, or anywhere, because they must be laid down or formulated in a particular place in a particular time, and before that formulation do not exist; hence legal justice is “originally indifferent.” His examples, which illustrate the original indifference of legal justice, are illuminating—“e.g. that a prisoner’s ransom shall be a mina, or that a goat and not two sheep shall be sacrificed, and again all the laws passed in particular cases...” Note that it has *not* been originally indifferent that we should ransom prisoners, for that is *discoverable* by reason, but it is laid down (for good reason, of course), that the ransom shall be a mina; it has not been originally indifferent that sacrifices shall be made to the gods, but it must be laid down that a goat and not two sheep shall be sacrificed; any law passed in particular cases is laid down, though the general law has not been originally

¹⁶N. *Ethics*, 1134b20.

indifferent. Aristotle is illustrating and showing through his use of language that positive law is so entwined with natural justice that it is sometimes difficult to separate them; what is naturally just is implied in the man-made law. Further, the naturally just, though too universal and too far removed from human action to be immediately acted upon, is yet superior to the conventionally just as its foundation.

This superiority of natural justice explains equity and the equitable. We sometimes, says Aristotle, attain the intent of the law when the letter of the law produces, in a given case, an injustice. When we rectify the injustice we do not do something unjust: “for the equitable, though it is better than one kind of justice, yet is just, and it is not as being a different class of thing that it is better than the just. The same thing, then, is just and equitable, and while both are good the equitable is superior. What creates the problem (that the equitable is not just) is that the equitable is just, but not the legally just but a correction of legal justice.”¹⁷

There is nothing, finally, esoteric about the natural law, or about the experience which leads to the understanding of it. We can return, then, to St. Augustine’s connection of right with justice. There is nothing right which should not issue in justice. This separates us from all those who see right in terms of power, unspecified by a natural end.

This whole defense, if it is such, of the natural law, or natural right, is based upon the experience of human actions as they take place in society, and as they are related to man’s faculties, which are seen as *potencies* which, when operating, are perfected; they are not *forces*. There is the recognition here that nature acts for an end, that man’s human actions are but

¹⁷N. *Ethics*, 1137bl2.

a kind of purposeful activity proper to his specific nature, and that other natural things in their own way act for ends proper to them. Thus, Aristotle in the first book of the *Ethics* shows not only that all men desire happiness, but that happiness is the final good natural to man, a good he cannot help desiring whenever he acts.

Without going into the various denials by modern philosophers that nature is intelligible in this way, that it is the work of reason, it can be taken here as granted that moderns, by and large, take nature not so much as something exhibiting its own forms and characteristics, as something formless which is susceptible of human transformations; but not wholly formless, for it will exhibit certain laws according as forces and resistances are exerted upon mathematical bodies which are either at rest or moving locally. The attempt to base society upon nature as understood by the physicist, the key to whose understanding is mathematics, leads to the conception of natural law we have already seen when thinking of Newton's laws, which conception is not applicable to human action.

Political discourse and debate in America has been concerned at its best, with, among other things, liberty, equality, justice, and rights. At its worst, however, it becomes more exclusively concerned with rights to the detriment of the other factors which constitute our lives as citizens.

When we speak about our rights, as we often do, we tend to speak as if they were identical with power, and that they should extend as far as our powers permit except when they conflict with the other's rights or powers. This is, I think, to conceive of ourselves as if we were bodies which meet and are modified in our behavior by the resistance of other bodies. Hence the talk about one's rights limited by another's rights, and even, more radically, the view that society arises when we give up some of our rights to secure the safe exercise of others. This leads to the view

that human society, though necessary, is an evil which it would be most desirable to dispense with if we could. In its turn this leads us to think that each man is primarily a whole who would, could we but bring it about, be sufficient unto himself. The state becomes a network of prohibitions, and the law becomes merely that art of playing off against each other the competing forces any of which would destroy it. The question then becomes not what is right—right, finally, by nature—but which power will predominate in its tendency to shape the whole in its likeness. Society becomes a battleground of competing interests, which, if the battles continue long enough, will lose its common purpose, the bond of its people.

I don't know, exactly, what the *Declaration of Independence* means when it speaks of "The Laws of Nature and of Nature's God," but it does become clear that those laws are thought unchangeable, that human nature is unchangeable, that the rights based upon it are unchangeable, and that the role and purpose of government is unchangeable. All this separates our founding document from the historicism, the skepticism, and the cynicism which so dominate the intellectual climate of our own times. It is less clear, but I think defensible, that the wording of the *Declaration* lends itself to an interpretation of law in the sense of Newtonian laws, that the unalienable rights of man can be thought to be like the activities of bodies, inertial if you will, when unimpeded by other bodies. Each man wants life and liberty, and wants to pursue happiness as he sees fit—goals he will always want. If he meets opposition through another's like desires, there will be a conflict and some resolution, whereby he will still want, and try to get, the same things. Human laws, in this understanding, are meant to maintain enough of the primary rights of all so that there can be a modicum of peace and security. Arrangements tend to become primary, and the letter of the law tends to dominate, for each will use the law for his

own purposes. The law, further, is not seen as related to virtue— to temperance, courage, justice, and fortitude, as it was for the ancients—but rather to solve the problems which arise from the conflict of rights. It is as if one could have a good society, a good life, solely by arrangement, leaving aside the perfection of the citizens who constitute it.

Solzhenitsyn characterizes this organization, the type “western society has chosen for itself,” as legalistic:

The limits of human rights and human rightness are determined by a system of laws; such limits are very broad. People in the West have acquired considerable skill in using, interpreting, and manipulating law (though laws tend to be too complicated for an average person to understand without the help of an expert). Every conflict is settled according to the letter of the law and this is considered to be the ultimate solution. If one is right from a legal point of view, nothing more is required, nobody may mention that one could still not be entirely right, and urge self-restraint as a renunciation of those rights, call for sacrifice and selfless risk: this would simply sound absurd. Voluntary self-restraint is almost unheard of: everybody strives toward further expansion to the extreme limit of the legal frames... I have spent all my life under a Communist regime and I will tell you that a society without any objective legal scale is a terrible one indeed. But a society with no other scale but the legal one is also less worthy of man. A society based on the letter of the law and never reaching any higher fails to take advantage of the full range of human possibilities. The letter of the law is too cold and formal to have a beneficial influence on society. Whenever the tissue of life is woven of legalistic relationships, this creates an atmosphere of spiritual mediocrity that paralyzes man's noblest impulses.

And it will be simply impossible to bear up to the trials of this threatening century with nothing but the supports of a legalistic structure.¹⁸

Solzhenitsyn's "voluntary self-restraint" reminds one of the traditional doctrine that law is educative, that it should help men acquire the virtues which rectify his soul, which make him want to live according to the spirit of the law, which point toward justice, the "concern for others." To live according to the letter is to use the law, as well as other citizens, as if they were ordered solely to oneself, which is the proper stance of the tyrant. Such a position is corrosive, for it denies the perfection of social life, the friendships which unite men in a common purpose, and it goes against the experience which gives rise to thinking about the political order. That is why such talk of "rights" is always abstract, leaving aside everything, one might say, that makes sense out of the lives we lead.

I do not know if Solzhenitsyn is guilty of exaggeration, but I do know that his assessment is not a caricature; and it applies to many in our own country.

Let me conclude with a few remarks which will, I hope, locate in retrospect my discussion of natural law:

a) I have not spoken, as did Solzhenitsyn, of spiritual mediocrity or of man's noblest impulses. This is not because of neglect, but because, in concentrating on one aspect of the law, others had to be left aside. I do not think that any good society can ever come about without the recognition of God, without the practice of virtue and the whole moral law, and without God's grace, which comes to us normally through the sacraments of the Catholic Church. I do not think, further, that any society, given the wayward proclivities of men, can long sustain any

¹⁸*A World Split Apart.*

vision of greatness without the guidance of the teaching Church.

b) The problem of natural law, of natural right, is of supreme importance in our own time because our whole civilization is being destroyed, both within and without, by doctrines which make it impossible even to take seriously the claims of the moral law. Since the whole defense of the West depends finally upon the United States, our concern for the intellectual defense of our own country becomes almost necessary for survival, which is not assured even by a return of military strength.

c) I meant to think about the *Declaration of Independence* and to raise questions about it. I think it defensible, if not in the letter, and I think our country a great country, whose civil war, though tragic, is, in its own order, a beacon of light to all who would see. I have tried to look at problems in the light of antiquity, with a wisdom I think it disastrous to overlook because such a wisdom is yet congruent, granted many difficulties, with the best impulses of our own political tradition—for *that* tradition does not speak only of rights but of duties, not only of gain but of justice, not only of majority rule, but of protection of the minority; and it speaks also of God, who makes us equal as men, so that each by birth is entitled to participate in a life of justice, in the rule of law. As such it is not mere foolishness for us to say, without guile, that we express in our founding a light for all men.

**WHERE ARISTOTLE AGREES WITH
PLATO ABOUT PARTICIPATION**

John Francis Nieto

For Ronald P. McArthur

1. Several times as he and I sat together in his study or over lunch, Ron McArthur would speak of an important judgment he had made during his graduate studies. “In the end”, he would say, “you should think that the agreements between Aristotle and Plato are more important than their disagreements”. He would go on to describe a passage in which Boethius describes his ultimate intention in the tasks of translating Aristotle and Plato and commenting upon their works: “These finished, I would not neglect to summon the judgments of Aristotle and Plato back into one fellowship, as it were, and I would demonstrate not that they disagree in almost all things, as most do, but

John Francis Nieto has been a tutor since 1992 at Thomas Aquinas College, where he did his undergraduate work, after studying political science and music at various California colleges and universities. At the University of Notre Dame, he wrote his dissertation on “Continuity and the Reality of Movement” and received a doctorate in 1998. A collection of his poems, *The Gloss*, was published by Mellen Poetry Press in 2003.

that they agree in most and the greatest things in philosophy”.¹ Ron often added that he thought this in some sense the proper end of philosophical studies: “The agreements between them are really what philosophy is about”.

2. These judgments described very distinctly the attitude that coalesced in me when I read the passage in his commentary on Aristotle’s *On the Soul*, where Saint Thomas claims, “Often when Aristotle disproves Plato’s opinions, he does not disprove them so far as Plato’s intention but so far as the force (*sonum*) of his words”.² From my first reading of Aristotle at twenty-five, I felt him continuing for me the work that had begun four years earlier when I encountered Socrates in Plato’s *Apology*. I imagined Aristotle himself to feel toward these two men a reverence not unlike my own toward him.

3. Aristotle’s achievement seemed possible to me only to one in whom the love of truth would excite at least the response that I felt toward the men who wrote the great philosophical works I studied, those who taught me how to read them, and those who made it possible that I should do so. For Aristotle, I have often reflected, these men were the same, Socrates and principally Plato. In the passage from Boethius that Ron brought to my attention, I found an ancient source—perhaps one Saint Thomas had in mind—for understanding the work of Plato and Aristotle as a continuous development of a perennial wisdom. Both Ron and I—as Saint Thomas and before him Boethius—felt the deepest reverence toward the development of this wisdom.

¹*In librum Aristotelis Peri hermeneias commentarii*, PL 64, 433 C-D: “His peractis non equidem contempserim Aristotelis Platonisque sententias in unam quodammodo revocare concordiam eos que non ut plerique dissentire in omnibus, sed in plerisque et his in philosophia maximis consentire demonstrem”.

²*Sentencia Libri Primi De Anima*, c.8, 3-6: “Aristotiles plerumque quando reprobatur opiniones Platonis, non reprobatur eas quantum ad intentionem Platonis, sed quantum ad sonum verborum eius”.

We both desired—as our teachers before us—to participate in this development, and were each as willing, I hope, to learn as to teach.

The Mode of the Present Consideration

4. Of course, as Boethius makes clear, to have this ‘instinct’ about the relation between these philosophers is not enough. One must find some way of integrating the articulated understanding of their works to show the contribution of each toward the truths of perennial wisdom. The explanation Saint Thomas offers for Aristotle’s criticism of Plato’s thought opened up for me a way for such an articulation. After implying Aristotle’s assent to Plato’s intention in the passage quoted above (2), Saint Thomas points out Aristotle’s concern with Plato’s language:

Plato has a bad mode of teaching, for he says everything figuratively and teaches through symbols, insofar as he intends something else through his words than what the words themselves mean (*sonent*)...and so, lest someone fall into error because of these words, Aristotle argues against him, so far as the force that the words have.³

I would add here that, since first reading Aristotle, I have always understood him to address various Platonic conceptions to an audience whose principal—if not exclusive—philosophical experience had occurred directly or indirectly through Plato.

5. On first reading this passage, I immediately recalled a passage from the *Gorgias*, where Socrates maintains against Polus that the tyrant is the least powerful man in the city. He

³*Sentencia Libri Primi De Anima*, c.8, 6-13: “Plato habet malum modum docendi: omnia enim figurate dicit et per simbola docet, intendens aliud per uerba quam sonent ipsa uerba...et ideo ne aliquis propter ipsa uerba incidat in errorem, Aristotiles disputat contra eum quantum ad id quod uerba eius sonant”.

defends this with the claim that the tyrant least accomplishes what he wills, namely what is good for himself.⁴ I sympathized thoroughly with the truth Socrates defended there. I recognized the moral depravity behind Polus' resistance to this truth. And yet I thought the discussion ignored the obvious force in the word 'powerful'. According to political or constitutional power, the tyrant is not the least powerful in the city but the most. In fact the political truth is instrument to the moral truth. The tyrant's political power makes possible his particular moral deficiency.

6. Many years later several considerations led me to see such statements in a different but complementary light. I saw that Saint Thomas' charge, that Plato has a "bad mode of teaching", should be tempered by the context of the dialogue. Perhaps if he had greater access to Plato's works, he might have recognized that Plato did not directly teach. Rather, he explored certain conceptions. Most important here is his exploration of what we call the forms or ideas, though I will call them species.⁵ Most often he did so not in his own voice but through the character of Socrates who confessed the instinct that drove him to suspect the truth of these conceptions.

7. My appreciation for his use of dialogue and dialectic became more keen, as I came to see in Plato—principally though not exclusively—the dialectic in the light of which Aristotle came to distinguish philosophy from dialectic, the various sciences from one another, and the proper principles of the various sciences and arts. Plato's mode of teaching became for me the mode in which the dialectician tests principles, articulates the elements of any question, reveals the strength and weaknesses,

⁴*Gorgias* 466b ff.

⁵In what follows I will not use the common name 'form' or even 'idea' but the term used most often by Plato, 'the species.' Aristotle more often uses this word to discuss the position and uses it in significant ways in his own movement toward immaterial beings.

the coherence and inconsistencies, of various positions.

8. I intend to discuss where Aristotle and Plato agree on participation with such an understanding. I take Plato here as proposing a new conception of causality and a higher, immaterial form of being—things undreamed of by his predecessors—and exploring his understanding of these in a manner that allowed Aristotle to teach demonstratively about them. I thus see Plato as the Dialectician much as Saint Thomas sees Aristotle as the Philosopher, not merely the preeminent, but the one who perfects these habits for the human race.

9. These comments cannot therefore propose an agreement in doctrine. And such an effort would be laughable in the face of passage after passage in which Aristotle criticizes what seems to be a Platonic doctrine of participation. Rather, what follows will show that elements involved in Plato's notion of participation all appear in one form or another in Aristotle's teaching. What follows will take Plato's discussion of participation as the *moment* of dialectic in the philosophy of participation and Aristotle's teaching as the *moment* of demonstration.

10. To do this I must propose some understanding of participation. I myself understand 'participation' properly to name a real relation, that of likeness in something that stands as part to another that stands as whole, insofar as the whole is some kind of cause to the part. Yet we conceive this relation through the category of action. We say that what stands as part 'takes part' or 'shares' in what stands as whole.⁶ Still, I do not now propose to investigate the sufficiency of this understanding. Nor do I propose it here as a definition of the reality or even the meaning of the name. Rather, I will identify seven notes that must enter into any discussion of participation. At present I make no reference to the role of participation in knowledge. As being is—in thought

⁶Cf. 1022b4-5.

at least—prior to knowledge, I will make some comments about knowledge later (177-180).

11. *First*, participation occurs only where many things other in nature in some way bear a common name. They may bear these names deservedly or only in appearance, but they cannot bear that name equally. *Second*, insofar as it involves things under names, participation touches upon the forms or essences so named. *Third*, insofar as the realities named stand in some way to each other unequally, the relation of part to whole arises. This grounds the extension of the name ‘to partake’—to take part or to share—to the relation of what stands as part to what stands as whole. *Fourth*, participation is or involves a kind of causality, one not recognized distinctly in the sensible world we immediately experience. *Fifth*, such causality is more the cause of these things than the causality we find or imagine to occur in this experience. *Sixth*, since the matter in the things we take as the immediate subject of our speech seems inextricably tied to division, another, immaterial order of beings must answer to the whole implied in participation. As these beings deserve the common name more completely, they must also exist in a more complete manner, that is, without generation, eternally. *Seventh*, because what is complete and perfect stands as good in distinction from the deficient and lacking, the ultimate ground of participation must be good. And as that being takes the name ‘good’ from nothing else, that ground for all participation must be goodness itself.

12. In the task of showing where Aristotle agrees with Plato about participation, I will discuss each philosopher in turn. With Plato (13-38) I will in some sense follow the path suggested by his cave allegory.⁷ This path begins with the first of these notes, attention to equivocation, and ends with the last, the

⁷*Republic* 514a-520a.

understanding of the good as the ultimate principle of all things. Between these I will introduce passages from other dialogues that indicate steps along the way.

Seven Notes of Participation in Plato

13. The allegory of the cave begins with men in its depth bound there by fetters so that they see only shadows (σκιά) cast upon the cave's wall.⁸ A fire above and behind them casts these shadows as men carry a variety of statues and wooden and brazen animals before it. The fettered inhabitants name these things. The first moment of the movement that constitutes philosophizing, the search for wisdom, is the unfettering of one of these inhabitants. After becoming accustomed to the fire's light, he can see the statues and animals that were the source of the shadows he had previously named. Clearly, whatever things bear those names most, the inhabitant must understand that these statues and animals bear the names more than do the shadows. To this extent the shadows and the things that cast these shadows bear those names equivocally.

14. I recognize that Plato proposes that sensible things do not properly bear names such as 'fire' or 'gold' but 'fiery' and 'golden.'⁹ The former names, expressing the nature substantively, belong properly to the forms. The adjectives express this nature insofar as something has the nature without being that nature. This opens up the possibility of having the nature more or less.

15. Here I take Plato's distinction not as mere rejection of the name imposed upon the sensible substance but as explaining that name by resolution to what bears that name more perfectly. Before philosophical reflection, we call some sensible substance 'fire' or 'gold' from an implicit experience of its likeness to a

⁸*Republic* 515a

⁹*Timaeus* 49d2-e7.

form we know only by recollection or by an argument. The mind uninitiated to philosophy calls the sensible being by another's name. The new names 'fiery' and 'golden' serve as glosses that clarify the name first imposed.

16. Now, already in the cave allegory, the notion of form or shape appears, in the shadows, the statues, and wooden and brazen animals. But a passage from Plato's *Cratylus* will make the second note of participation clear. Here Socrates has been discussing the analysis of some names into prior names. In such an analysis the first names are those we first impose. The later names derive their meaning from prior names. Yet Socrates makes a distinction. The rightness of words—their correctness or aptitude in naming—is the same quality, whether the words are first or later. Precisely as names, the first and those derived from them differ in no way.¹⁰

17. This correctness does not concern their order to one another as names. Rather, the correctness arises insofar as each is "such as to manifest each of the beings".¹¹ Clearly Plato intends here the notion that names differ from one another and are used rightly or wrongly insofar as they manifest distinct natures or forms of things. Whether these beings are material or separate, some manner of naming expresses them appropriately. The nature existing in separation from sensible things is 'this', while sensible things we can only call 'such'.¹²

18. The third note I ascribe to participation, some relation of part to whole among things sharing some common name, appears in various places in the dialogues. It has already been

¹⁰*Cratylus* 422c7-9.

¹¹*Cratylus* 422d1-3. Cf. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio Libri Peryermenias* 1.4.191-196: "Quidam uero dixerunt quod nomina non naturaliter significant quantum ad hoc quod eorum significatio non est a natura, ut Aristoteles hic intendit, quantum uero ad hoc naturaliter significant quod eorum significatio congruit naturis rerum, ut Plato dixit".

¹²Cf. *Timaeus* 49d2-e7.

implied in noting just above that names said of sensibles, even when said substantially, signify only in the mode of quality: not ‘this’ but ‘such.’ To the extent that both refer to the same nature—that found in the species—they express that nature more and less.

19. More direct assertions come from two dialogues. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates is speaking with Cebes and Simmias:

What, then? he said. Do we experience anything such with what’s in sticks and other equal things of which we were speaking just now? Do they appear to us thus equal as is ‘the very what [the equal] is’?¹³ Or do they fall short of it somewhat in being such as is the equal? Or do they not?

They do fall short, he said, much.¹⁴

This expresses the more and less in some common name manifesting the form or nature of something. Thus Socrates at one point uses the phrase αὐτὸ τὸ ὁ ἔστιν, just the ‘what it is’ or ‘the very what it is.’¹⁵

20. The interlocutors soon agree that this distinction is found in other things as well. Socrates draws the same conclusions regarding knowledge of such things:

The recent argument is not something more for us about the equal than about the beautiful itself or the good itself or the just or the holy and, as I say, about all things in which, both asking in our questions and answering in our answers, we determine ‘the very what it is.’¹⁶

¹³Cf. *Phaedo* 74a11-12.

¹⁴*Phaedo* 74d4-8.

¹⁵*Phaedo* 74d6.

¹⁶*Phaedo* 75c10-d3.

It follows from such an application of a common name in expressing what things are that things falling short of ‘the very what it is’ manifested by each name must stand to that ‘what it is’ as part to whole.

21. In his dispute with Parmenides, Socrates admits just this, which immediately becomes a difficulty exploited by Parmenides:

It seems to you, you say, that there are these “species”¹⁷ of which the things taking part [μεταλαμβάνω]¹⁸ take their names, as those taking part of likeness become like, but of bigness big, while of beauty and justice just and beautiful?

Completely so, said Socrates.¹⁹

Parmenides continues the argument until he concludes that these species must be divided from themselves. This follows from the presence of the species in those things participating in it.

22. Socrates gives Parmenides occasion to strengthen the divisibility in his notion of species by proposing that they do not suffer division any more than does a day:

Not, he said, if, as a day, being one and the same, is at once in many places and in no way separate from itself, so each of the species might be at once one and the same in all.

Socrates, he said, how amusingly you make something one and the same everywhere, as if you would say many

¹⁷I use this word in quotation rather than forms or ideas to emphasize its agreement with developments in Aristotle.

¹⁸μεταλαμβάνω is clearly a word designating participation, whose etymology suggests the translation ‘to take after’. I translate it ‘taking part’ to exploit the ambiguous genitive relative pronoun that starts the clause.

¹⁹*Parmenides* 130e5-131a3.

men spread under a sail to be one whole upon the many.
Doesn't it lead to saying such?

Maybe so, he said.²⁰

My purpose is not to consider the justice of Parmenides' argument or its development in this dialogue. I wish only to show that Socrates agrees to the language of part and whole in describing how what bears the common name less stands to what bears the name more, or rather, most.

23. The fourth and fifth notes both concern causality. The fourth recognizes that participation involves some causality, while the fifth proposes that this causality is greater or higher than the causality we experience in sensible substances moving each other or serving as matter to each other. I will discuss the fourth note briefly, since consideration of the fifth will reinforce whatever can be gathered there.

24. Perhaps Plato's most straightforward statement occurs in the *Phaedo*. After describing the effect of Anaxagoras' teachings upon him, Socrates proposes:

But what I am saying is nothing new but just what I never stop saying always and each time, in the recent argument as well. Now I am going to attempt to point out to you the kind of cause I have worked out, and I will go again from those things much talked about and begin from them, supposing there to be something beautiful itself through itself and good and big and all the others.²¹

This kind of cause—I will emphasize its distinction from other kinds presently—he associates with the verb 'to take after' or 'take part', μετέχω:

It seems to me, if something else is beautiful besides the

²⁰131b3-c1.

²¹100b1-7.

beautiful itself, not through anything else is it beautiful, but because it takes after that beautiful [the beautiful itself]. Do you assent to this?²²

I note here that the passage suggests that ‘taking part’ or ‘taking after’ expresses, on the side of the effect, the causality Socrates has worked out. By this I mean merely that he does not say participation results from this causality, as sonship from generation, but rather he seems to understand the verbs ‘to take after’, ‘to take part in’, ‘to share’, and ‘to participate’, all to signify ‘to be caused by’.

25. His next comments, expressing his understanding of participation as causality, help one to see two things important to the present study. First, Socrates does not claim here that through his understanding of participation he grasps the nature of other causes, or why we explain things by means of other causes, or even that he knows such other things not to be causes in any way. Second and perhaps following from the first, Socrates—and thereby Plato—does not present this understanding of participation as a doctrine but in the midst of dialectic.

26. The passage deserves quotation at length. He discusses three things here: his inability to understand other causes, his understanding of participation as some presence or communion, and the security with which he stands by this understanding, perhaps we should say, in the face of death:

Well, now, he said, I am learning further that I am not able to understand these other causes, the sophisticated ones, but if anyone says to me something is beautiful through having a fresh color or shape or anything else such, I say goodbye to these other things—for I get muddled in all the others—and I hold this to myself simply and artlessly and perhaps naively, that something else

²²100c4-7.

does not make it beautiful but the presence of or communion with—there from wherever and however—that beautiful [one], for no further do I insist upon this but that by that beautiful [one] all beautiful things [become] beautiful. To answer this seems to me most secure both for me and for another, and holding it I expect not to fall, but that it is secure for me and anyone else answering that by that beautiful [one] all beautiful things [become] beautiful. Does it not seem so to you?²³

Immediately one might think that, against my present assertion, Socrates has in fact claimed to know that “something else does not make it beautiful”. For this reason he “says good-bye” to anything so proposed. Consideration of the fifth note of participation, that the causality involved in participation is not only other than the causality we observe or seem to observe in sensible experience but also more, that is, more causal, will make it easier to see that this statement does not have the force that it seems to have. At least it does not have such force to one engaged in dialectic.

27. This note appears, it seems to me, most clearly in a passage immediately preceding the discussion I have just articulated. Socrates described his encounter with the teaching of Anaxagoras while still a student of “that wisdom they call the examination [ἵστορία] about nature”.²⁴ He heard the claim that

...mind is both the one ordering and the cause of all things, and I was pleased with this cause and in some way it seemed to me to bode well that mind is the cause of all things, and I thought, if this is so, mind, ordering, would order all things and set each thing in that way in which it were best.²⁵

²³100c9-e3.

²⁴96a7-8.

²⁵97c1-6.

Now, Socrates, the Platonic character, certainly did not say goodbye to the good as cause—and as ultimate cause—of all things, and, I suggest, according to some union with mind.²⁶ Rather, he did so to other causes—“I made ready as one no longer desiring any other species of cause.”²⁷

28. He continues to describe his disappointment with the explanations of particular facts offered by Anaxagoras:

From that wonderful hope, friend, I came quickly to exasperation, since reading on I see the man in no way using mind nor holding it responsible in ordering things but air or its upper part and water and much other nonsense. What I felt seemed to me just as if someone, saying that Socrates does the things he does by mind and then attempting to say the causes of each of the things I do, should say first that through these things I am now seated here, that my body is put together from bones and tendons, and the bones are solid and have joints answering to one another but the tendons such as to tighten and let go, covering the bones with flesh and skin that contain them; so, the bones being raised at their joints, by slackening and tightening the tendons make it possible for me somehow to bend my limbs, and through this cause I sit here bent.²⁸

Socrates insists that rather he sits there—“to say the causes truly”²⁹—by reference to two minds: that of the city and his own. It seemed best to the Athenians to vote against him and therefore it seemed best to him to sit there and more just to accept the

²⁶Cf. *Parmenides* 132b3-5: “But, Parmenides, says Socrates, might not each of these species be a thought [νόημα] and upon this it in no way follows that it come to be anywhere else than in souls”.

²⁷*Phaedo* 98a1-2.

²⁸98b7-d6.

²⁹98e1.

judgment—causes articulated in the *Crito*.

29. In proposing these causes, however, Socrates does not deny some role to tendons and bones. He even offers some account of the reality named when people say that such things cause.

Since, by the dog, as I figure it, these tendons and bones would long ago have been near Megara or Boeotia, running from desire of the best, if I did not think it more just and more fine, instead of fleeing and hiding out, to submit to whatever judgment the city might fix. But to call such things causes is too absurd. Now, if someone were to say that without having such things, both bones and tendons and what else I have, it would not be possible to do what seems right to me, he would speak the truth. But to say that, through these things I do what I do, while doing them through mind, but not through choosing the best, would be too much and too great carelessness of speech. For it is possible not to discern that what the cause of something is is one thing, that without which the cause could not be a cause is another—which the many, as if groping as in the dark and employing another's name, seem to me to call the cause itself.³⁰

These remarks imply that the species are prior causes. They do not insist that they are the only causes. I would remark upon two aspects of the statement.

30. First, the presentation of this claim by Socrates, as an exploration of the nature of causality, and in the form of dialogue, implies that these arguments do not stand in the settled and fixed form proper to scientific knowledge. This is necessarily more true for the author than for the character. In fact, the claim itself suggests that science demands the actual sight of the

³⁰98e5-99b6.

species of the beautiful or the species of the just. But Socrates claims repeatedly in this dialogue that such sight occurs only in the soul's separation from the body.³¹ He tries to reach the species by reasoning while his soul is in the body.³²

31. Second, though closely related to this, the inability to grasp the multitude of the meanings of a name, such as 'cause', and the order among these meanings is itself characteristic of dialectic.³³ By this I do not mean to suggest that Socrates, much less Plato, exhibits weakness in making these assertions. Rather, he exhibits great insight in distinguishing a mode of causality beyond matter and the material agent. But one does not easily extend a name and order the new meaning to a previous meaning at once. Only repeated attention to the word used with each of these meanings can accustom one to the new meaning's light.

32. The sixth note bears upon the immateriality—and consequent immutability and eternity—of the form or species that stands as whole. That Plato understands this as characteristic of ideas is not controversial. I offer evidence from various places to suggest the dialectical manner of his discussion of these species.

33. As stated earlier, in the *Parmenides* the title character raises objections concerning the unity of these species from the notion that they are in each of the things sharing them. "But, Parmenides, says Socrates, might not each of these species be a thought [νόημα]? Upon this it in no way follows that it come to be anywhere else than in souls".³⁴ Here the immateriality in question follows from the notion that presence in souls does not demand a localization and division of these species or forms.

³¹Cf. *Phaedo* 65d4-66a9; 66d7-e4.

³²Cf. 99e4-100a7.

³³Note Aristotle's very careful rejection of the first meaning of a name before its extension at 417b5-7, 12-17, 1030a16-17, 1030b4 -7, and 1031a11-14. Clearly in these passages the rejection or limitation prepares the reader for grasping its extension and development.

³⁴132b3-5.

34. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates speaks in a complementary manner. In comforting his friends, the condemned man explains why he hopes for some liberation through his death. He mentions the existence of such things as justice itself and the beautiful and the good and asks whether his interlocutors have seen these things with their eyes or any other bodily sense. They have not, though they recognize the existence of such beings.³⁵ Rather, he proposes, the man who uses thought itself [διανοία] will more readily do this.³⁶

35. The separation from the body involved in this distinction of sense knowledge from thought prepares for his principal claim:

But in reality [τὸ ὄντι] it has been proved to us that if we will ever know anything purely, there must be a release of the soul and the things themselves must be seen by the soul itself, and then, as it seems, will there be for us the wisdom we desire and of which we claim to be lovers, as the argument [λόγος] signifies,³⁷ but not to us living.³⁸

These things, which he later proposes as the species which sensible things share, are not objects known by bodily senses that know changeable bodies in places we can turn our organs toward, but beings—earlier he used the word οὐσία, substance or essence, the being—known only to the soul in its separation from and transcendence of bodily conditions. Proving that the soul has this character and is thus separable from the body is the very theme and purpose of this dialogue.

³⁵65d4-e2.

³⁶65e6-66a9.

³⁷Perhaps this refers to the λόγος or definition of philosopher—lover of wisdom.

³⁸66d7-e4.

36. This corresponds again with the judgment in *Timaeus*: “If mind [νοῦς] and true opinion [δόξα] are two genera, undoubtedly these species themselves exist not sensed by us, but only understood [νοούμενα].”³⁹ Corresponding passages in the *Republic* are too numerous to quote here. These species correspond to the most knowable section of the divided line and these are the objects that those liberated from the cave gradually become accustomed to see:

The present argument—I said—signifies this power existing in the soul of each and the organ by which each perceives—as if an eye were not able to turn to the light from the darkness otherwise than with the whole body—so with the whole soul must [it] turn from what becomes, until it becomes able to rise up beholding being and the clearest being.⁴⁰

The sentence immediately following this establishes the seventh note of participation, well known to all who read Plato: “But this we say to be the good.”⁴¹

37. To offer some conception of the good as that in which all other things share, Plato begins by noting that sight requires not only the medium through which it sees sights but also some light in that medium.⁴² Recognizing the sun as source of both this light and the power of sight,⁴³ Socrates draws the famous analogy: “Just as [the good] in the intelligible place is to intellect and things intelligible, this [sun] that is in the sky is to sight and things seeable.”⁴⁴

³⁹52d3-5.

⁴⁰518c4-10.

⁴¹518c10-d1.

⁴²507d11-e5.

⁴³508a4-b8.

⁴⁴508b13-c2.

38. But the sun not only makes things on earth visible. It also provides them with “generation, growth, and food”.⁴⁵ This foundation provides opportunity for what is perhaps the loftiest description of the good found in Plato:

To things knowable too one must say not only being known has come to them from the good but also both being [εἶναι] and essence [ousia] belong to them from it, though the good is not essence, but exceeding beyond essence in dignity and power.⁴⁶

Here too the notion of excess implies participation. Essence—finite essence—determines something to one nature or another, justice or beauty. The otherness of these goods we experience in sensible beings. But in the intelligible source of justice and beauty—here clearly something of an agent cause, but also an exemplar—these goods are not, cannot be, distinct. Rather, they exist there in a manner “surpassing in dignity and power”.

The Seven Notes of Participation in Aristotle

39. In the bulk of what remains of this essay, I will show that Aristotle also proposes an understanding of participation. This is not generally acknowledged but often explicitly denied and for good reason. First (41-45), I will discuss some reasons why Aristotle’s teaching on participation is not as manifest as Plato’s. Then (46-52), I will comment distinctly on equivocity in Aristotle. Finally (53-176), I will show that his teaching includes notions of participation involving these seven notes.

40. I consider the evidence I offer sufficient to see such a teaching in Aristotle. I do not, however, propose to do either of

⁴⁵ 509b2-4.

⁴⁶ 509b6-10.

two things here. I will not defend my understanding in a manner I think immediately demonstrative. Nor do I propose to defend that my understanding of participation as a relation follows demonstratively from Aristotle's principles.

Why Aristotle's Teaching on Participation is Not Manifest

41. I see two reasons why Aristotle does not teach participation more distinctly. I trust that what remains of these remarks will make each of these reasons clear. First, in his philosophical works, participation or sharing does not itself constitute a mode of causality. Rather, to take part, according to the sense introduced by Plato, seems to be the relation—real enough—of what possesses some form and species less to what possesses it most. But the principal concern of demonstrative science is to manifest the causes of things.⁴⁷ This is clear in one way through the definition of science offered in *Posterior Analytics*⁴⁸ and in another way in the very notion of wisdom as analyzed in the opening chapters of the *Metaphysics*.⁴⁹

42. Second, in the understanding of Aristotle, any teaching on participation does not belong to the science of metaphysics principally as it is the scientific study of being. I do not deny that it concerns such a study nor that an understanding of participation arises through its teachings. Rather, I propose that participation concerns metaphysics principally as metaphysics resolves the subjects of other sciences to its own and thereby establishes and defends the principles of those other sciences. Metaphysics brings about such a resolution by the very act of manifesting its own subject, being as such, and the ultimate causes of that subject. But the resolution belongs secondarily to the science, while

⁴⁷993b19-24.

⁴⁸71b9-12. Cf. *Physics* 184a10-16.

⁴⁹982a1-3, 982b7-10.

the articulation of the causes and principles of its proper subject belongs to it first.

43. Metaphysics must manifest being as such and its causes through the beings most known to us, sensible beings. But being as such transcends the sensible. The scientific order of metaphysics thereby demands that the sensible beings in which and by which the science considers the nature of being be resolved to beings of a higher nature. Yet sensible beings are not only better known to us, they are known to us immediately. These beings are therefore subjects of independent sciences that take their intelligibility through what is sensibly known about these beings.

44. But insofar as our analysis of these sensible beings reveals some deficiency and dependence, they imply being of another, higher kind. This resolution of such deficiency and dependence serves the articulation of metaphysics. We grasp the nature of higher beings through the dependence of lower beings upon them. But necessarily this also completes the resolution of those sciences that know sensible beings according to the intelligibility proper to them. A detailed defense of this claim belongs to a more exact study of the nature of metaphysics. In the present examination, attention to the citations that reveal Aristotle's conception of participation—attention to the role these play in the various sciences concerned—provides the principal present defense of this claim.

45. Apart from that, I would note here that only by the resolution of these subjects to that of metaphysics do each of the other sciences properly bear the notion of philosophy. Each of them is in some way second philosophy;⁵⁰ each takes part and shares in the power of first philosophy to reveal the first causes of *all* being. This notion alone grounds first philosophy's claim to wisdom. Unless, therefore, one grasps the causality proper to

⁵⁰Cf. 1061b17-33; 1064b11-14.

each subject of the sciences that examine some part of being, such as mobile being or the political order, in light of the first being as known to metaphysics, the science bears only the character expressed by its proper name, say ‘physics’ or ‘politics’. Only for him who sees the subject of such a science as taking part of and taking part in the higher causality known by metaphysics does that science bear the notion of philosophy—secondarily but truly.⁵¹

Equivocity in Aristotle

46. Aristotle opens his *Categories* by defining “things named equivocally”.⁵² Perhaps it is accidental that the example he offers of a name by which things are named equivocally is ‘animal’. He distinguishes the living substance so named from the image under that name⁵³—the very distinction that begins philosophical life for the freedman of the cave allegory. I do not insist upon this, but it has long intrigued me that Aristotle begins philosophizing there, to the extent that philosophy begins with logic.

47. Note two things. First, Aristotle does not here resolve equivocity merely to names but to things. Logic proposes to grasp the truth in speech as that truth has its foundation in things. So he discerns the equivocal from the univocal by the otherness of ὁ κατὰ τοῦνομα λόγος τῆς οὐσίας, “the account, according to that name, of the substance”. Second, Aristotle uses the notion of equivocation in a variety of ways throughout his

⁵¹Cf. *Physics* 1.2, especially 185a20: “For the investigation has philosophy”.

⁵²1a1-6. Immediately Aristotle uses this definition only to divide ‘being’ as something said in four ways logically, and later ‘substance’ and ‘quality’. Of course, here the order is principally among *rationes* rather than realities.

⁵³I ignore here the equivocation in the application to the drawing. Does Aristotle intend the image as an artifact or as a representation of an animal by the word ζῷον? Or both?

works. Distinct sciences judge the account of the thing's essence according to their proper principles. It is no part of my present attention to put these in order. Some examples will bear immediately upon participation.

48. Those examples that seem most important to me occur in a chapter of the *Ethics* that suggests there can be no agreement of Aristotle with Plato about participation. This chapter considers the role of the universal good, which he goes on to speak of as an 'idea'. Recall, however, that the discussion argues against the utility of knowing such an idea as the conceptual basis of a science of human happiness. Two reasons pertain to the present discussion: this idea would not be proper to all the things called good⁵⁴ and, above all, it could not be proper to man and the means to his happiness.⁵⁵ The principal impediment is that these things do not bear the name 'good' univocally.

49. Aristotle finally asks "how things are named good",⁵⁶ if not univocally. The common name—a transcendental—"does not seem to belong to things equivocal by chance".⁵⁷ This itself implies that the equivocal name must be applied to these many things in order, involving therefore some before and after in naming them, and thus they bear the name 'good' more and less. He proposes that an accurate answer belongs to another philosophy,⁵⁸ yet he offers three orders for such naming: from one, toward one and according to proportion.⁵⁹

50. To my mind, Aristotle approves all three of these orders and each of them involves some kind of participation. Still, one will be of greatest importance for this question and I

⁵⁴1096a17-34.

⁵⁵1096b31-1097a13.

⁵⁶1096b26.

⁵⁷1096b26-27.

⁵⁸1096b30-31.

⁵⁹1096b27-29.

will only speak to the participation demanded by that order of naming. I will here offer my understanding of each order without defense. Things bear the name 'good' according to proportion, as he himself indicates, insofar as the predicate pertains to every category of being: "as sight is in the body, mind is in the soul, and something else is in something else".⁶⁰

51. Things bear the name 'good' toward one as they bear the notion of desirable. This refers to the division of the good into the useful, pleasant, and honest or noble—sometimes called merely good.⁶¹ Things useful are good toward things desirable in themselves. Things that are precisely pleasant are desirable in themselves, yet only as they complete an appetite by agreeing with and satisfying that appetite. As such, though they themselves are desirable, their desirability depends upon appetite and its varying conditions. Things noble bear the notion of good because they themselves perfect the one possessing them. These seem to bear the name 'good' simply insofar as they do not or cannot fall away from or fail in being desirable.

52. Finally, things bear the name 'good' from one, insofar as all are from some one first being that is the extrinsic good of the universe.⁶² This being possesses a goodness identical with its substance. For this reason, all things desire this good in one way or another. These other things are good and desirable insofar as they, substantially or accidentally, conform to this first being according to the measure of their own substance and species.⁶³ To manifest this understanding in Aristotle is one of the principal purposes of the present remarks.

⁶⁰1096b29-30

⁶¹1155b18-19.

⁶²Cf. Boethius, *Quomodo Substantiae in Eo Quod Sint Bonae Sint Cum Non Sint Substantialia Bona*.

⁶³Cf. 1021b30-1022a3.

The Need for Resolution in the Lower Sciences

53. The detailed examination of these seven notes of participation in Aristotle depends on the understanding proposed earlier (42-45) of resolving the subject of one science to another. As stated above, this will involve aspects of the subjects of various sciences: physics, study of the soul, and moral and political science. In each science Aristotle proposes early in his consideration of the subject that each aspect I am concerned with is in some way divine. He implies or explicitly states, even in the lower science, some reference to God. He complements this in various passages of the *Metaphysics* where he distinctly attends to these aspects of lesser, sensible beings in his consideration of God. He shows that each aspect belongs to God in a way that suggests that God stands to these lesser beings as the most. Finally, in his consideration of the good, he explicitly refers the causality of natural beings to God's goodness.

54. I will begin the overall consideration of these resolutions (54-78) by citing passages in which Aristotle's description of something as divine implies the need to resolve the nature in question to the divine being. The first and most fundamental of these is his reference in *Physics* 1.9 to form as something divine. After criticizing Plato's failure to distinguish matter from privation, he defends his own position by distinguishing the three principles in this order—form, privation, and matter—as follows: "Something being divine and good and desirable, we call one thing contrary to it, while [we call] another what is apt to desire and yearn for it according to its nature"⁶⁴ The first adjective here, divine, understands form *as such* to have some character found fully only in the divine.

⁶⁴*Physics* 192a16-19. Hardie and Gaye understand the genitive absolute construction as concessive and translate this so as to emphasize its character of agreement with Plato: "For while admitting that there is something divine, good, and desirable..."

55. I propose that this statement anticipates something Aristotle postulates in *Physics* 2.7, “Often three [causes] come into one. For what it is and that for the sake of which are one, while ‘whence was the movement first’ is the same with these in species”.⁶⁵ This understanding of form as foundation to the causality of natural substances in three ways merely states distinctly what Aristotle made clear in showing that form bears the notion of nature in the first chapter of this book. He offered three arguments there proceeding through formal cause,⁶⁶ agent cause,⁶⁷ and final cause.⁶⁸ Each argument shows that form bears the notion of nature according to one of these three conceptions of cause.

56. Here, in *Physics* 2.7 while defending the agent causality following form, Aristotle again implies the need to resolve aspects of this causality to something beyond nature:

For man begets man, and as a whole whatever moves through being moved. But whatever do not are no longer natural. For they move, not as having movement or a principle of movement in themselves, but as being immobile.⁶⁹

Then, after restating the causes proper to this science, those that move naturally, Aristotle explicitly speaks to the nature of the first mover. He does so as if to clarify the likeness that form has to this first mover.

57. But, in expressing this likeness, Aristotle also makes references—apparently to the first mover and the natural being’s form—more proper to the science of metaphysics:

⁶⁵198a24-27.

⁶⁶193a30-b8.

⁶⁷193b8-12.

⁶⁸193b12-18.

⁶⁹198a26-29.

The principles, those that move naturally, are two; one other than these is not [a] natural [principle]. For it has no principle of movement in it. But such is whatever moves not having been moved, as what is altogether immobile and the first of all [things] and the ‘what it is’ and the form. For it is the end and that for the sake of which.⁷⁰

Here Aristotle seems to refer to the first immobile mover as the first of all and identifies the ‘what it is’ with the form. He explicitly attends to form and ‘what it is’ through a likeness to the first mover and the first being. Form and essence, the ‘what it is’, move things not by having a principle of moving them but by being such a principle. So do what is altogether immobile and the first being.

58. The likeness of form as mover to the first unmoved mover demands the resolution that occurs in *Physics* 7 and 8. But insofar as the form and the first mover are the ‘what it is’ of a sensible substance and the first of all beings respectively—or even if they merely bear the same relation—they require another resolution. The ‘what it is’ of sensible substance needs resolution to the first of all beings insofar as something able to be and not to be must be resolved to something that necessarily is.

59. Later (83-97) I will argue that Aristotle first resolves the ‘what it is’ and ‘what was its being’ as the essence of sensible things to species that are themselves such essences in *Metaphysics* 7. I leave aside in the present study whether he understands the first mover and the first of all beings to be one separate substance or many. As he has already proposed that form as desirable and good is divine, this implies some resolution of form to the divine according to all three causalities it expresses. I understand him to provide this resolution in *Metaphysics* 12 insofar as the first of

⁷⁰198a35-b4.

beings is through its own substance the final cause of all things, a causality actually or eminently identical with the actuality by which the first mover moves the universe.

60. Aristotle goes yet farther in another passage. He explicitly describes living things as taking part in the divine through possession of soul. This arises in answer to a tacit question: Why do living things reproduce?

The most natural work of living things, whatever are complete and neither mutilated nor generated by chance, is making another like itself, an animal an animal, but a plant a plant, so that they might have part (μετέχω) of the always and the divine so far as they can. For all things yearn for this, and for the sake of this do whatever they do by their nature.⁷¹

Note that, in offering his answer, Aristotle broadens the scope to include all natural things.

61. He appears to do so through a higher understanding of the claim quoted earlier, that form is something divine.⁷² In *Physics* 2.7, he compared the form to an unmoved mover. Here, in the study of the soul, nature as form must be the active principle by which natural substances act⁷³ and he understands these substances to perform such actions insofar as they yearn for the always and the divine. Also significant is the verb here translated ‘might have part’. This occurs many times in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* while discussing Platonic participation.⁷⁴

62. Several comments in *On the Soul* identify mind or intellect as something divine. In chapter four of the first book, after

⁷¹*On the Soul* 2.4, 415a26-b2.

⁷²This agrees with his claim at the beginning of *On the Soul* (402a4-6) that “the knowledge of it contributes much to all truth, but most of all toward [the truth about] nature”.

⁷³Cf. 202a9-12.

⁷⁴990b28, 31; 991a3; 992a28; 956b8; 1040a27; 1079a25, 27.

proposing soul as the source or term of movement as defined in the *Physics*, he says, “But mind seems to enter, [already] being some substance, and not to corrupt”.⁷⁵ Later, he adds, “But mind is perhaps something more divine and impassive”.⁷⁶ I have translated the Greek according to its weaker force. The word taken here as ‘perhaps’ could mean ‘certainly’.

63. This understanding is restated with an implicit attribution of intellect to divine beings when Aristotle considers the various ways in which we speak of ‘living’. “Even if only some one of these is present”, he notes, “we say it lives”.⁷⁷ He offers a list of such things. Understanding begins the list; nourishment, growth, and shriveling up complete it. After describing the part or power of soul responsible for these three acts of vegetative life, he notes about this part, “This is able to be separated from the others, but the others cannot be from it in mortal things”.⁷⁸ He implies clearly enough that in immortal things, the gods, life exists and that such life is the life of mind or understanding.

64. Later in this chapter, he shows that one cannot divide one part of soul, such as the sensitive, from another, say the vegetative.⁷⁹ He then excludes mind from the force of this assertion:

But about mind and the theoretic power nothing is yet clear, but it seems to be another genus of soul, and this only is able to be separated, just as the eternal from the corruptible.⁸⁰

I would point out here that in distinguishing the meanings of ‘to live’ he seems to have offered the previous comment

⁷⁵408b18-19.

⁷⁶408b29.

⁷⁷413a22-23.

⁷⁸413a31-32.

⁷⁹413b13-24.

⁸⁰413b24-27.

regarding the inseparability of other sorts of life from vegetation as a preparation for this claim. He made us ready to consider mind as something separable and incorruptible by attending to the fact that we speak of separate beings that live insofar as they understand and think through mind.

65. Another passage from *On the Soul*, startling in its brevity, is obscure but suggestive. The passage distinguishes knowledge “according to potency” from knowledge “as a whole” and states the order between them. I understand the comment to answer the question postponed near the end of the previous chapter: “The cause of [its] not always understanding must be settled”. Whatever its distinct purpose, the passage clearly proposes some resolution of knowledge coming to be in time to knowledge as a whole. Aristotle says:

Knowledge in act is the same with the thing. Knowledge according to potency is prior in time in the individual, but as a whole [it is prior] not even in time but [it, knowledge as a whole,] does not at one time understand and another not understand.⁸¹

I would make two comments about this statement.

66. First, one finds here an explicit reference to a whole. The intellect knowing at one time and not at another has knowledge first in potency and then in act. The mind possessing knowledge as a whole has knowledge only in act.

67. Second, I think this can only refer—in the strictest sense—to the divine mind rather than the agent intellect—to those who distinguish these intellects. Such an understanding of God, as the first being possessing the whole of actuality on whom the actualization of all other beings depends, is key to the

⁸¹430a19-22. This is part of a passage that recurs in chapter 7 at 431a1-3. The concern with where the text belongs is not material to my purpose in introducing it here.

understanding of participation in Aristotle.

68. Two passages from the *Nicomachean Ethics* and one from the *Politics* complete my citation of passages in which Aristotle refers to something we experience in sensible reality as divine. The first occurs early in the *Ethics*, the second chapter of Book One:

For even if [the human good] is the same for one and for a city, to attain and to preserve that of the city seems greater and more complete. For it is lovable to one alone but finer and more divine to a nation and to cities.⁸²

Immediately I note that κάλλιον, the word translated 'finer', might have been translated 'more beautiful' or 'more noble'. I chose 'finer' as able to suggest either of these.

69. Two aspects of the claim will be important. First, it implies that the common good is more than the private, since attaining the common is more than attaining the private. Second, insofar as it is 'more good' or better, it is finer or more noble and also more divine. I understand this last claim to be another determination of the general principle that form, or rather second actuality as something formal, is something divine.

70. The second reference to the *Ethics* is from the tenth book, in the discussion of happiness. There Aristotle begins the determination of his definition of happiness to a particular virtue or virtues with this assumption:

If happiness is activity according to excellence (virtue), reasonably it should be according to the highest and this will be the excellence of our best part. Whether this is reason or something else which is our ruler and guide by

⁸²1094b7-10. Note that the second sentence is merely ambiguous. Is it the good or attaining and preserving the good that is more fine and more divine? But this ambiguity is irrelevant to the present purpose.

nature and understands the noble and divine, whether it is itself divine too or only the most divine thing in us, its activity according to its own excellence will be complete happiness.⁸³

Here the activity of what is more divine, as conceived through two powers—rule and knowledge of the noble and divine—must constitute happiness in us.

71. Aristotle confirms this with an argument in the following chapter.⁸⁴ The confirmation shows that contemplative happiness is like the activity of God:

Now, if you take away from a living being action, and, still more, production, what is left but contemplation? So the activity of God, which surpasses all others in blessedness, must be contemplative, and of human activities, therefore, that which is most akin to this must be most of the nature of happiness.⁸⁵

This recognizes that the best in us is so from its conformity to the divine. Further, it implies that, while this best is most the nature of happiness, it is not happiness or blessedness as found most, that is, as found in God.

72. Aristotle applies this understanding of happiness even to cities, though not with as great determination. The seventh book of the *Politics* proposes the question, what life is most choice-worthy? Clearly, the best form of constitution should pursue such a life.⁸⁶ He supports his first general conclusion by a reference to God:

⁸³ 1177a12-18. Cf. 1199b14-18.

⁸⁴ 1178a9-b7. Here Aristotle prefers the happiness proper to contemplation to the happiness proper to action as it belongs to the moral virtues.

⁸⁵ 1178b20-23.

⁸⁶ 1323a14-21.

To each belongs just so much of happiness as of excellence and of prudence and of action according to these; let that be agreed upon for us using as witness God, who certainly is happy and blessed, yet through no external good but he is through himself and by being someone such by [his] nature.⁸⁷

But Aristotle insists that cities too, not merely individual men, are happy through a life of contemplation.

73. He begins his defense of this by recognizing two meanings of ‘practical’ or ‘active’: one proper to exterior actions and another proper to thought.⁸⁸

But ‘active’ need not be toward others, as some think, nor is only that thinking ‘active’ that is done for the sake of the results of the making, but much more so are contemplations and thinking for their own sakes, those complete in themselves. For acting well is the end, so that some action too is the end. But, we say strictly, even of exterior actions, that those architectonic in their thinking are most of all act.⁸⁹

Here I translate the word κυρίως ‘strictly’. Preferable would be ‘decisively’ or ‘authoritatively’. This suggests the sense of a word that serves as principle of order to others.⁹⁰

⁸⁷1323b21-26.

⁸⁸Here I translate Greek words πράξις and πράττω by the English ‘active’ and ‘to act’. Cf. the footnote after the next.

⁸⁹1325b16-23.

⁹⁰So Aristotle qualifies the first meaning of substance in the *Categories* as κυριωτάτως, most decisively. Here, however, one must understand this judgment about the meaning of πράξις and πράττω as dependent upon the determination in *Metaphysics* 9.6 that movement does not properly deserve the name ‘action’ or ‘activity’, ἐνέργεια. Rather, πράξις properly bears this name. Cf. *Ethics* 10.4.

74. Aristotle then concludes by applying this understanding to cities. He suggests—without detail—that by having parts through which the city can act on itself, that even the city is capable of such a life. Then he proposes God and the universe as evidence that the city must be capable of a life of contemplation not as an action toward another but for itself.

Nor must cities settled by themselves and so choosing to live be inactive, for even this can take place according to its parts. For many things communicated among one another belong to the parts of the city. This turns out similarly even according to any one man. For God in his leisure, and the whole universe, for whom there are no exterior actions apart from the ones proper to them, would hardly be well. So clearly the same life must be best for each man and in common for cities and for men.⁹¹

I would add only that I understand the reference to “the whole universe” to speak most distinctly, as Aristotle understands it, to the movers of the heavenly spheres other than God, the gods. These contemplate him and perhaps imitate him in moving spheres, if he moves anything directly.⁹² Again, the universe does not act upon God or anything else outside it, but through and in those parts contemplating him—including men and cities, it seems—the universe exists most excellently.

75. In concluding this section, I would point out that each of these claims concerns the subject of the science to which it belongs, yet each fails to establish the truth claimed to the extent

⁹¹1325b23-32. The phrase ‘many things communicated’ reads more exactly ‘many communions’ or ‘many common gifts.’

⁹²This passage does not deny extrinsic action to God but only extrinsic action really distinct from his proper intrinsic action. Such distinction is proper to agents that depend in some way upon the patient to enter into act. As I will show below, Aristotle identifies God’s agent causality, his immanent act of thinking, and his substance.

that none of these sciences properly considers the divine nature. So considered, each claim constitutes some hypothesis or postulate of that science. These postulates—these immediate statements in need of resolution—all concern form or some actuality of the perfect: form as formal, final, and agent cause; soul as principle of life; soul as principle of knowledge; happiness as the ultimate good of a man or of man organized as a city.

76. Such postulates are first principles to the science in question, but they require some proof in another science:

What must be so through itself and must seem to be [the case] is neither an hypothesis nor a postulate. . . . So whatever someone assumes without proving, though it is provable, if he takes things [as] seeming [so] to the learner, he hypothesizes, and it is not simply an hypothesis, but only toward him. But if he assumes the same thing, no opinion or the contrary being present [in the learner], he postulates.⁹³

In keeping with this, to take these claims precisely as they need some resolution, that is, abstracting from the manner in which they are evident to one having some disposition to the science, the name ‘postulate’ seems most appropriate to them.

77. I should make clear, however, that I do not claim that these postulates do not sufficiently establish the sciences to which they belong. Insofar as these sciences have an independence proper to them—in distinction from sciences properly subordinated to another science, as optics to geometry—they begin with these claims as sufficiently evident.⁹⁴ The mode of

⁹³*Posterior Analytics* 76b23-24, 27-31.

⁹⁴One must recognize, however, that one can make significant progress in a science while maintaining its first principles as postulates. Almost no one grasps the distinction of the ten categories at the beginning of Aristotle’s *Categories* in the manner most proper to the science. Likewise, the student of chemistry at some point admits the existence of so many elements without having made

definition and abstraction proper to these sciences manifests the agreement of subject and predicate in their first propositions. If they admit of some proof in a higher science, this will not be, to my mind, a demonstration properly speaking or at least not a demonstration according to the mode of the lower science. So natural science may prove certain things about the continuum and moving bodies that may make Euclid's five postulates more intelligible. But natural science does so by consideration of principles not employed by geometry. Geometry attends to the same truths as self-evident according to its own mode of judgment.

78. Further, such hypotheses or postulates—truths the science in question cannot fully resolve—in themselves make possible the integration of the various habits of science in the human soul. By one science providing foundation to the other, according to various orders, our knowledge through many habits becomes one knowledge of reality. The various references to the divine I have pointed to—"handles" one might say—are so many places where these sciences become one—not in subject or mode of definition—but with the power first philosophy possesses to illuminate all reality through its grasp of the first reality.

Manifestation of Participation through Resolution

79. Now the resolution of the various notes Aristotle identifies in one manner or another as divine occurs principally in *Metaphysics* 12, though various anticipations and preparations occur earlier. Apart from the twelfth book I will look only at the seventh. As my present concern is only to show certain agreements in Aristotle's consideration of participation with that found in Plato, I will provide a sketch of the principal movements

all the analyses necessary to make this sensibly evident. In either case, one can really develop the habit of science in question, or, more exactly, a disposition apt to become science.

by which I understand him to resolve these attributes of sensible substances to God.⁹⁵

80. I will examine this resolution in five principal parts. First (83-97), in *Metaphysics* 7, Aristotle resolves substance as said of sensible beings immediately to its form insofar as that form bears the notion of species and τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι—the ‘what was its being’. But he goes on to show that some simpler being must have the notion of substance and ‘what was its being’ through itself. Second (98-111), he begins in *Metaphysics* 7.17 to resolve substance as a cause to its form and species, and in *Metaphysics* 12.6 he completes the resolution of agent causality to a being whose substance is its action. Third (112-140), in the beginning of *Metaphysics* 12.7 he resolves movement or imperfect actuality to this substance according to final causality. These first three considerations at once resolve the formal, agent, and final causality belonging to the forms of natural substances and reveal the nature of the substance through which they are possible. Fourth (141-168), in the middle of the same chapter, he resolves action, the actuality of the perfect, to the identity of this substance with such actuality. Fifth (169-176), he resolves the common good to God in *Metaphysics* 12.10.

81. In common, these resolutions introduce the notion of participation through an aspect of form (and activity) ignored entirely by Plato, to my knowledge, and not always distinctly mentioned by Aristotle where I understand him to resolve these postulates. Form serves as part of some whole, the substance composed of form and matter. Likewise, the activity of happiness or blessedness, as the actuality of the perfect, stands as the perfecting element in the perfected human intellect and thus in the happy man—though happiness is not all he is.

⁹⁵I have ignored various other attributes such as the perfection of the universe as some one body or the male in distinction from the female.

82. As something composed, what has form therefore takes part in the determination or actuality proper to that form. The whole substance participates first of all insofar as the composite takes such actualization merely as some part of itself. Other elements in the composite, even its potency, introduce some otherness into the whole. Such otherness is especially clear in the disposition of corruptible substances to forms other than the one now possessed. Further, following Plato, the composite takes part in any determination or actuality answering to some common λόγος or account found in some simple being that lacks composition—as do all the actualities in question—insofar as the presence in the composite of something other than the form limits and contracts this actuality in one way or another. To this extent, the determination or actuality that is a part must always be had in some partial manner. The same must be said about the activity of happiness. This understanding will be made clearer as I follow out each of these five resolutions.

Resolution of Form to Simple Substance

83. In *Metaphysics* 7 Aristotle completes one principal step in the resolution of form as divine. He shows that the sensible substance bears the notion of substance through its form—understood as species—rather than its matter and, further, that intelligible substances not said of any subject, if they exist, must bear the notion of substance first. This, I propose, resolves substance as the form of sensible substances to separate, intelligible substances. In the final chapter he proves that form and species, as the remote foundation of the middle term in syllogism, has the character of cause. As Aristotle points out there, this begins a further resolution of this aspect of form, agency, to “that substance which is separated from the sensible substances”.⁹⁶ In the

⁹⁶1041a8-9.

twelfth book he completes this resolution, depending partly on developments in the ninth book, by identifying some substance with its action or agent causality.

84. A comment regarding the use of logical conceptions in the seventh book will be useful. As I read this book, all but the introductory chapters use logical conceptions— ‘what was its being,’ definition, genus, universal, middle term, and so on— in drawing conclusions, demonstratively, about substance as it exists in reality. Metaphysics is capable of using such logical intentions because it considers being as such: being as such is actual and to this extent intelligible and apt to be signified in words.⁹⁷ This book thereby considers the intelligibility implied in our language about substance—not to discover its intrinsic character through logical principles—but to resolve this intelligibility to the intrinsic principles of the substance as known through the analysis of natural substance in the *Physics*. This is to resolve certain properties of sensible substance, its intelligible character, to the principles contained in its essence. I trust the following account of several truths taught in this book will provide a sufficient example of this understanding of the method in this part of metaphysics.

85. Now the first step I proposed in the resolution of form as formal cause was Aristotle’s teaching that sensible substance does not bear the notion of substance through its matter but through its form and species. In chapter three he resolves one of the notes of substance, that of subject, to matter,⁹⁸ but he also notes the insufficiency of this: “For both ‘separate’ and ‘this

⁹⁷Cf. *Super Boetium de Trinitate* Q.6, a.1, c., 119-136. Note that insofar as metaphysics knows beings as actual and therefore intelligible (and even as apt for signification), logical intentions do not stand as extrinsic to its subject. For physics and mathematics, however, which only consider their subjects through movement or quantity, logical intentions must remain extrinsic. They can serve at best as propaedeutic to demonstration. Cf. *Physics* 189b32-190a13.

⁹⁸1029a7-10, 18-19, 26-27. Cf. 1017b10-14, 23-25.

thing' seem to belong most to substance".⁹⁹ He therefore goes on to show that these notes of substance arise from species, either from form as species in composites or from species itself in separate substances.

86. In chapter four he shows that form, conceived as species, the principle of intelligibility, is the principle in the composition through which that composite has the notion of substance as τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι, the 'what was its being'. This form or species therefore is what we seek when asking the question 'what' and what we offer in answer.¹⁰⁰ Insofar as the form is this answer, it grounds the correspondence of the substance in reality to a definition. Further, the λόγος or complex speech answers the question 'what is it' most perfectly by expressing the principles by which the substance is what it is.

87. Aristotle shows in this chapter that such a conception of substance cannot belong to accidental unities, nor—in the manner considered here—to the composite of form and matter immediately. The composite must always remain in the subject position through its matter, while its form is the foundation for its substantial predicate. The accidental unity resolves to some substance and its accident or accidents, that stand as foundations, respectively, to the subject and an accidental predicate or predicates.

88. Each accidental unity involves some one thing said about another, while substance is said καθ' αὐτό or through itself:

So is there any 'what was [its] being' [for white man] as a whole or not? For just what was [the] being is the 'what was [its] being'; but when one thing is said about another, [it] is not just this thing (τόδε τι), like the white

⁹⁹1029a27-28.

¹⁰⁰1029b13-16.

man is not just this thing, if 'this thing' belongs only to substances. So that there is the 'what was [its] being' of whatever things the λόγος is a definition (ὀρίσμος). But definition exists not [when] a name signifies the same as a λόγος (for then all λόγοι would be definitions [ὅροι]; for there will be a name [that signifies] the same with any λόγος, so that even the Iliad will be a definition), but [definition exists] if it should be of something first. But such are whatever are said not by one thing being said about another. So there will not be, for anything [that is] not a species of a genus, the 'what was [its] being', but to these only. For these seem not to be said by taking part and passion, nor as an accident...¹⁰¹

I would emphasize here that this completes the first argument based explicitly on the consideration of sensible substance in light of its form and species.¹⁰²

89. This argument shows that such a form and species bears the notion of substance prior to matter or the composite, if one considers substance precisely as that reality answering first to the account of what the thing is.¹⁰³ The consideration of becoming in chapters seven through nine shows further how substances that are not simply what they are can take on such a principle.¹⁰⁴ Insofar as they do, as chapter ten and eleven show, this species has the notion of some part that defines the whole.¹⁰⁵ In this way this species communicates the notion of substance to the whole. Aristotle clearly expresses this just after he insists that

¹⁰¹1030a2-14.

¹⁰²I would also note what I consider a purposeful play on 'species'. As a logical intention, the species answers the question 'what is it' about many differing only in number and is logically a predicate; the form in sensible substances corresponds to this as the intrinsic intelligible principle or 'species'.

¹⁰³1017b21-22.

¹⁰⁴Cf. 1033a32-b10.

¹⁰⁵1017b17-19.

the λόγος or definition includes only parts of the form:

For [the λόγος] is not with the matter (for it is indefinite), but it is according to the first substance, as the λόγος of the soul belongs to [a] man. For his substance is the species, that existing within, from which, together with the matter, the compound (σύννοδος) is called substance.¹⁰⁶

Thus, sensible substance bears the notion of substance through its form, insofar as form is first substance, the substantial principle responsible for the defining note of substance, 'what was its being'. In another way it takes the name 'substance' from matter, insofar as substance is subject, even to its substantial predicate.

90. Note here the difference from the purely logical consideration of *Categories* 5. There the composite of form and matter bears the name 'substance' first.¹⁰⁷ Neither species nor genus bears it distinctly from one another; nor do they bear the name as principles to the composite. Rather these take the name 'substance' from that composite, insofar as we grasp the composites as parts placed in species and genus as certain universals.¹⁰⁸ In logic Aristotle orders substance precisely according to the λόγοι or definitions, since logic must always make its judgments through speech.

91. In metaphysics, however, judgment proceeds through some understanding of the reality and its intrinsic order. According to this science, form appears as what bears some determinate character answering to the notion of this or that thing and communicating this character to matter and so to the composite substance. So understood, first substance is the knowable, intelligible principle in such substance, the species.

¹⁰⁶1037a27-30.

¹⁰⁷2a11-14.

¹⁰⁸2a14-19.

Thus form as species is foundation of the name ‘substance’. This name ‘substance’ belongs to both the matter and the composite through an intelligibility that first belongs to form. Since being finds its first and most complete expression in substance, Aristotle also recognizes in *Metaphysics* 7.3, “So if the species (εἶδος) is being before and more than the matter, it will be [a being] even before what is from both by the same argument”.

92. But Aristotle also shows, in *Metaphysics* 7.6, that “substances to which there are no prior substances and natures” must bear the notion of substance first. He makes his argument based upon a supposition, “...if there are some substances which there are not substances other than nor natures prior to, which sort some say the ideas to be”. Note that in quoting the following passage I use the Latin *esse*, ‘to be’, to translate the Greek infinitive, and the English ‘being’ to translate the Greek participle used substantively. Aristotle proposes the good, the alive,¹⁰⁹ and being as such ideas:¹¹⁰

For if the good itself is one thing and the *esse* to the good [another], and [the] alive and the [*esse*] to [the] alive, and the [*esse*] to being and being, [there will be] other substances and natures and ideas besides those stated, and these substances will be prior, if the ‘what was its being’ is substance.¹¹¹

He proposes here the notion of substances in which substance does not belong to a whole through a part which bears that notion ‘substance’ more than and prior to the whole. Such substances are called substances and beings according to

¹⁰⁹I use this to translate the Greek ζῶον, animal or living being, because here it clearly refers to life as something apt to be separate.

¹¹⁰Note that such characteristics will be affirmed of the first being, God, as said according to himself, in the later chapters of *Metaphysics* 12, especially 1072b26-30.

¹¹¹1031a29-b3

themselves. Aristotle understands this *ratio* to belong so properly to substance that such substances, the first substances, are neither subjects nor said of a subject.¹¹²

93. To my mind, Aristotle manifests the necessity of such beings here through the principle that what is through itself is prior to what is through another. But I will not defend this here. Once the student of this science sees that such beings must exist, through the present or a later consideration, he will recognize that the name 'substance' belongs to them in this manner. These are substances and beings immediately and not through another, as matter and the composite are through form and species.¹¹³ So he concludes this inquiry noting that such things would bear the notions 'substance', 'being' and 'one' first: "So this is clear: with things said first and according to themselves the being to each and each are one and the same".¹¹⁴

94. Now, if such simple substances are substances first, then composite substances must be substances only in a secondary way. Though the form and species deserves the name 'first substance' in relation to the matter and to the composite, the composite is not a substance or a being first, but only through its part. The simple substance, however, exists according to the species by which it is intelligible and by which it is a substance and a being.

95. In this way the name 'substance' cannot belong to composite substance according to the same understanding as it belongs to simple substance. The logician, who can judge reality only through what speech reveals about it, cannot consider composite and simple substances through distinct concepts of substance. But here metaphysics orders the name and intention as these depend upon the actuality of things. Through such

¹¹²1031b15-18.

¹¹³1031b11-14.

¹¹⁴1032a4-6.

actuality, the simple substance deserves the name 'substance' in a manner prior to the composite substance.

96. The composite substance deserves the name only insofar as it has as its part some likeness to the simple substance. Because of this likeness, even for sensible substances, "each thing itself and what its being was will not accidentally be one and the same".¹¹⁵ The composite substance must have matter united to its species and form, its 'what it was'. Such a union is not accidental to matter. This likeness for it is the foundation of its substantiality and thereby of its correspondence to the name 'substance'.

97. The first four or five of the several notes which I ascribed to participation play some role in this understanding. *First*, the name 'substance' cannot belong to sensible and intelligible substances univocally.¹¹⁶ *Second*, the name 'substance' manifests the nature or essence of each of the things so named, albeit confusedly and generically. Yet, *third*, these essences named by the word 'substance', as founded on the reality of sensible and intelligible things, cannot bear that name equally. The essence of intelligible things bears the name 'substance' according to its very self; the essence of sensible things bears the name according to one of its two parts or principles. The former is substance through its essence; the latter is a substance through a principle that causes it to be a substance insofar as the form causes the whole to bear the notion of 'what is'. And while the seventh book does not propose the form and species in sensible substances to be effects of the intelligible ones, the *fourth* note appears to the extent that formal causality seems to be at work in each. Again, the *sixth* note, immateriality, appears insofar as the intelligible substance will not be a subject nor said about a subject.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵1031b19-20.

¹¹⁶Elsewhere I intend to reconcile this with Aristotle's use of *συνώνυμον* at 993b25.

¹¹⁷1031b16-18.

Resolution of Movement to God as Agent Cause

98. This understanding of separate substances remains insufficient for Aristotle, as he makes clear later. He therefore begins another resolution of form to realities beyond the natural in *Metaphysics* 7. He will not complete this resolution here but in Book Twelve.

99. Form is the foundation of agency in any substance. For the naturalist and the metaphysician, this agency does not belong to substance accidentally, as it appears to the logician. Aristotle's identification of form with agent cause in *Physics* 2.7 suggests rather that the actuality proper to the form and species of any composite substance is the foundation of its agency. He makes this understanding more distinct while defining movement:

Now the mover will always bear some form, either this or such or so much, which will be the principle and cause of the movement when it moves, as the actual man makes a man from a man existing in potency.

Thus, the natural substance has form as its nature, in one sense, insofar as this form is the foundation for the action proper to that substance according to its species.

100. In keeping with this, Aristotle shows in *Metaphysics* 7.17 that substance bears the notion of cause. As elsewhere in this book, he shows this through logical intentions—here the middle term—that belong to substance through the actuality that follows its form. In this case, that form and species, the composite's substance, appears in the middle term of a syllogism, predicated about the minor term, which is the substance as including its matter.¹¹⁸ Drawn into the middle term, the essence or definition explains the various attributes proper to this substance. Form and species is in this way the ground of the

¹¹⁸1041b4-9; 25-31.

sensible substance's proper causality as an agent, as manifested by logic in the syllogism.

101. The context in which *Metaphysics* 7.17 shows this clarifies its role in the science. Aristotle explicitly took up the consideration of substance in *Metaphysics* 7 for the purpose of clarifying the existence of some substance separate from the sensibles.¹¹⁹ In the second part of chapter 16, he summarized his estimation of the position of “those stating there are species”. He stated once again that they are not right in making them the same in species with sensible substances, but he claims that they are right in making these species separate, if they are substances.¹²⁰ Further, he insisted that, even without the existence of incorruptible sensible substances such as the heavens, “nonetheless, I suppose, there would be eternal substances beyond those we see”.¹²¹ He then stated that—since they are not the same in species with sensibles—this book has shown *that* they exist but not *what* they are: “So that even now, if we do not know what they are, certainly some must exist”.¹²² In just this context, he now proposes in *Metaphysics* 7.17 the attribution of causality to substance as such as a necessary step to go beyond the deficiency found in the Platonic understanding of separate species.

102. As Aristotle does not arrive at substances separate from sensible being in this chapter, the seventh book clearly comes to an end in the middle of a resolution of sensible substances to some eternal substance or substances according to the notion of agent cause. He has no doubt anticipated this resolution in *Physics* 2.7, when he insinuated the dependence of the agency in sensible substance upon an unmoved mover—a dependence demonstrated in *Physics* 7 and 8. Yet the resolution

¹¹⁹1028b13-15, 27-32; 1037a10-14; 1041a6-9.

¹²⁰1040b27-29.

¹²¹1041a1-2.

¹²²1041a2-3.

provided in the last two books of the *Physics* remains incomplete. There he certainly shows that the power to move belonging to moved movers flows from the power to move proper to some first unmoved mover.¹²³ Still, he does not investigate the condition of the first mover's power to move, apart from its lack of proportion to any quantity or size. In *Metaphysics* 12, however, he takes this further step.

103. There, at the beginning of various resolutions with which I am here concerned, Aristotle has completed a general consideration of the intrinsic principles of beings as beings in *Metaphysics* 12.1-5. He has recognized even there the existence of the first mover proved in the *Physics*.¹²⁴ In *Metaphysics* 12.6, at the beginning of the investigation of the condition of the first mover's power to move, he repeats the division of beings made in *Physics* 2.7, though here he does not speak of the members of this division as movers but as beings: "Since there were three substances, the two natural ones and one unmoved, we should speak about this".¹²⁵ This reflects a proportion in these considerations to the mode of judgment proper to each science. Insofar as physics knows things through its understanding of movement, it can form a common consideration of these three beings insofar as each is a distinct kind of mover. *Metaphysics* considers them all precisely as beings. This higher consideration also reflects metaphysics' ability to resolve the power by which these movers move to their being.

104. Clearly the active power of the corruptible natural substances depends upon the forms they receive through the various movements they undergo. Local motion is the most fundamental and continuous of these.¹²⁶ No other movement

¹²³Especially *Physics* 8.5.

¹²⁴1070b34-35.

¹²⁵1071b3-4. Cf. 198a35-b4.

¹²⁶260a20-261a28.

can occur without some locomotion, at least instrumentally. In Aristotle's consideration, this locomotion arises in various ways from the heavenly bodies.¹²⁷ To this extent the corruptible natural substances have the power by which they move each other through being moved by these incorruptible and ever-moving bodies. These heavenly bodies too, however, move only insofar as they are moved. Some being of another nature must be responsible for the first and most natural of their movements.

105. Aristotle then develops the understanding of substance as agent that he began in *Metaphysics* 7.17. He states the general principle for consideration of the possibility of movement in the world: "So if there is something apt to move or apt to make, but one not at work [in act], there will not be movement. For what has a power is able not to act."¹²⁸ Here Aristotle resolves the possibility of movement to a condition of the being of some substance. Movement will not exist if the first being or beings have a power merely able to be at work. At the same time, the principle of intelligibility in physics or natural philosophy resolves to the principle of intelligibility in metaphysics or first philosophy.

106. Through this principle Aristotle first clarifies the notion of separate species that he has received from Plato and then determines the agency of the first being. He shows immediately that separate species—the sort investigated various times in *Metaphysics* 7—cannot be useful in the ultimate resolution of movement to being. Plato's attempt to consider separate substance only through predication and not through the movement of natural substances has left the species without power: "So there is no profit, even if one make eternal substances, as those making the species do, if there will not be in them any principle

¹²⁷I am not presently concerned with how one must understand these things according to a modern understanding of the order in the material universe.

¹²⁸1071b12-14.

able to change [another]”.¹²⁹ This continues the discussion of the position proposed at the end of *Metaphysics* 7.16, where Aristotle criticized the conception of separate substances as the same in species with sensible beings.

107. Here he recognizes, as if this followed upon the understanding of substance as cause in *Metaphysics* 7.17, that the conception of these beings precisely as separate species fails insofar as it conceives them only as species, through what they are and not through their power to move and change another. In some sense, Aristotle proposes that this notion of power must be seen as another aspect of intelligible substances separate from the sensible ones. We must resolve not only the notion of substance and the notion of ‘what’ to such substances but also the agency by which things move other things.

108. Yet Aristotle sees that even this may be insufficient, if conceived so that this power belongs to the separate substance, grounded in its actuality, yet distinct:

Still, not even this is enough, nor another substance beyond the species. For, if it will not act, there will not be movement. Further, not even if it will move, but its substance is a power, [will this be enough,] for there will not be an eternal movement. For a being in potency is able not to be. So there must be such a principle whose substance is [its] action.¹³⁰

Here I understand Aristotle to resolve the power to move in all secondary movers to the first unmoved mover. He does so through the identity of the substance or essence of the first unmoved mover with its activity, the identity of its first and second actuality. Only such a mover is not “a mover in potency”.¹³¹

¹²⁹1071b14-16.

¹³⁰1071b16-20.

¹³¹Cf. 202a3-4—the alternate reading κινήτικον.

109. For all other movers, though each is a mover and bears the notion of mover according to its proper nature, this power must be brought into act by some actualization of the mover as such. In bodily substances, taken as such, this involves some local motion through which the inherent form can serve as the principle of another's actualization. Again, each attained that form by which they have such power through some movement terminating in that form as its end and good.

110. Insofar, then, as the sensible substances we experience have some active power through their nature and form, they bear, through some part of themselves, the notion of cause or agent. Although the composite acts, its form, rather than the whole composite, is the principle of its agency. But this character exists in substances without matter in a higher manner. Perhaps in some such substances the notion of agency follows a power to which action itself is something other. In such a being, agency would be founded on the whole of the substance, while requiring some other principle leading it into act. More certainly, according to Aristotle, some substance exists whose action is in no way other than its substance. For this being, neither its power nor its action follows its essence or substance so as to be distinct. Only such a being is agent simply speaking through itself. Note that below (113, 132) I will briefly address the question whether this first immobile mover is God himself.

111. Here too, in the resolution of agent cause to some first being, various of the notes of participation appear. In fact, six of the seven notes appear with some clarity. *First*, if one considers agency as a property of substance as known by the metaphysician,¹³² the substances that are agents through some part and through movement or through some power not identical with their action do not bear the notion of agent first. What bears

¹³²The logician considers agency only as an accidental predicate.

the name and reality of agent first must be some substance identical with its action. Other things take the name 'agent' as it is some part of their being, perhaps only in their potency. *Second*, these names reach to the very substance of these agents, since agency follows actualization. *Third*, the name 'agent' belongs to these substances in order. One is first through the identity in it of first and second actuality. Others have the power to move in order, as second actuality follows first actuality in such a substance as its proper actualization. *Fourth*, the agency in question transcends the order of agency we sensibly experience. Though the locomotion through which we denominate a sensible substance 'mover' and 'cause' is immediately sensible, the agency proper to intelligible substances is not sensibly evident to us.¹³³ We reason to it. *Fifth*, the higher, remote agent is more the cause of the ultimate effects than is the proximate agent, to the extent that it is the first.¹³⁴ *Sixth*, after coming upon a being "whose substance is its action", Aristotle distinctly recognizes its immateriality: "Further, these substances must be without matter. For they must be eternal, at least if anything else is eternal. So [they must be] in act".¹³⁵

Resolution of Movement to God as Final Cause

112. So far I have considered the divine as principle to two of the three aspects of the causality proper to form. Resolution of the remaining aspect, its goodness, to the divine good occurs principally in *Metaphysics* 12.7, where Aristotle resolves agent causality to final causality as part of the resolution of movement to mind. This third line of resolution, that of the good,

¹³³Cf. *Physics* 241b30-33 or 41-44, where Aristotle compares someone facing this question to one unable to discern which part moves the mobile when one part moves another.

¹³⁴Cf. 1072a9-18.

¹³⁵1071b20-22.

involves that of life, mind, and happiness, insofar as these are certain goods superior to those proper to the sensible world. But he distinctly resolves life, mind, and happiness or blessedness to the divine in one articulated movement I describe in the following section. The final resolution of the good manifests God as the common good of the world and manifests the order of the world's intrinsic common good to him.

113. *Metaphysics* 12.7 begins by resuming the claim of *Physics* 8 that there is something always moving with an unceasing movement and something always moving it. Either this mover or some higher—I will not insist upon this here—is “something which moves unmoved, eternal, being both substance and action”.¹³⁶ In two extended arguments Aristotle shows first that “heaven and nature depend upon such a principle”,¹³⁷ and then that action belongs to this principle in such a way that “we call God the best, eternal living being”.¹³⁸ In the first Aristotle resolves various second actualities that bear the notion of movement or becoming to the condition of the first mover as the principle of such actualities. In the second Aristotle shows how the notion of action [πράξις] belonging to second actualities belongs also to God, though not as actualities distinct from his substance.

114. The first of these arguments will resolve final causality to God insofar as movement demands such a cause. Aristotle begins by identifying the manner in which the very first mover moves things with the causality proper to the good and that of intellect:

Since something moved and moving is also a mean, there is something which moves not being moved, eternal,

¹³⁶1072a25-26.

¹³⁷1072b13-14.

¹³⁸1072b27-28.

being both substance and action. But the desirable and intelligible thus move not being moved. But the first of these are the same.¹³⁹

The identification of the intelligible and desirable in the first being is no accident. The first being is desirable insofar as it is intelligible.

115. The intelligible and desirable are here distinct to the extent that the desirable appears to cause apart from the intelligible. Animals move through desire and in some sense all substances desire their proper end as a principle of their proper operations, in the manner in which Aristotle says that “all things desire [to share in the always and the divine].”¹⁴⁰ Again, men often, usually perhaps, act against the intelligible through the desirable.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹1072a24-27.

¹⁴⁰415b1.

¹⁴¹Clearly this distinction intends to defend the defectibility found in moral and political action. Aristotle may recognize here that the intrinsic powers of intelligent agents can never suffice for the integrity of their operations. As intellects they respond only to the intelligible and to the influence of some being with power proper to this order of being. So he reasons in the *Eudemian Ethics* 1248a21-29:

“So then thought [voûς] is not the beginning of thinking, nor deliberation of deliberating. What else then than luck? Thus all things will be by luck. Or is there some principle outside which is no other, which by being such is able itself to do such [a thing]? But this is the thing sought: what is the principle of movement in the soul? Clearly, just as in the whole it is God, so too in this. For the divine in us somehow moves all things. But the beginning of argument [λόγος] is not argument, but something stronger. What, then, is stronger than science and understanding [voûς] but God?”

The divine as something desirable works in all things, most of all in those thinking, deliberating and choosing well. Yet false opinion, the result of some faulty thinking, may impede the full power by which God operates in and through our nature. I suspect the biologist must offer a similar account of the defectibility of the natural estimation in animals through his understanding of the interior sense bringing forth such estimations.

116. Aristotle shows that the first intelligible and first desirable are the same in three distinct steps. The first step (117-122) shows that the desirable resolves to an intelligible good as a species of mover. The second (123-126) defends the claim that the first substance must be intelligible as such. The third (127-132) shows that goodness must belong to the same being according to its substance. I will merely summarize these here with little explication or defense.

117. The first step begins by proposing a proportion between the four things: “What appears good is yearned for, but the first that *is* good is wanted”.¹⁴² The Greek text presents the predicate before the subject in each sentence. This is significant.¹⁴³ Likewise, I italicize ‘is’ to express the emphatic force of the participle used here.

118. I will express my understanding with little more than a gloss. Aristotle’s word ‘order’ implies an analysis of our experience. We yearn for something—the Greek word often distinguishes sensitive longing or yearning from desire taken as a genus—but what we desire is something seeming good, whether by being sweet or noble. As we proceed we distinguish—through attention to various conflicts in our desires—what is wanted, a rational desire, from other desires, but this manifests to us a distinct object. What we want does not merely appear good; we understand it to *be* good for us.

119. Immediately Aristotle expresses the order between desire or yearning and its object: “But we desire because it seems [good] rather than it seems [good] because we desire”.¹⁴⁴ This proposes the fact that desire follows some apprehension. Desire is an effect of apprehending something as good. He does not

¹⁴²1072a27-28.

¹⁴³It is hard for me to believe that Aristotle does not have the divided line in the back of his mind when he proposes this.

¹⁴⁴1072a28.

explain this order as it pertains to sensitive desire. This belongs more properly to lower sciences.¹⁴⁵ Nonetheless, he manifests here, especially in the next sentence, the principle that will explain the priority of wanting to desire.

120. Concluding this first step, Aristotle says, “Yet thinking is the beginning. But intellect is moved by the intelligible”. The first statement proposes that thinking is prior in action to sensation.¹⁴⁶ For this reason, in human action wanting, especially in its distinction from choosing, resolves to a higher mode of knowing, one without the limitations of sensation, since mind “knows all things”¹⁴⁷

121. Having resolved the sensitive order of desire to thought, he expresses the order between wanting and the first good. He does this according to the difference of wanting. As a rational desire, its definition includes mind. Mind, however, at least as men experience it, involves a kind of movement. While the ninth book made clear that such movement bears the notion ‘activity’ or ‘actuality’ in distinction from movement, I believe he uses the word ‘movement’ here to turn us to the way in which we first experience our intellectual knowledge, through human intellect’s dependence upon the bodily senses, as a kind of movement.¹⁴⁸ This allows us to attend to the intelligible, in this case what we understand to be good, under the species of mover.

122. I note three things without comment. First, reference to movement grounds the extension of cause from agent to end

¹⁴⁵In the appendix I attend to an important way in which Aristotle seems to address the order between desire and the apparent good, and its ability to fall short of the true good, in his *Eudemian Ethics*.

¹⁴⁶He says nothing here about how this plays out in mere animals, though this statement orders biology in its treatment of that subject. No doubt Aristotle’s statement in various places that animals all have some prudence teaches us where to unify the habit of biology with this science regarding this difficulty.

¹⁴⁷429a18.

¹⁴⁸Many, if not most, thinkers never rise above such a conception.

and the good. We experience the good as arousing desire in a way that suggests a metaphorical movement.¹⁴⁹ Second, since it follows thought, the good appears as cause according to an intelligible existence, in abstraction from its real existence—it makes no difference whether it really exists. Likewise, the intelligible moves—in the sense of arousing desire—only insofar as it manifests something as good. Third, the causality of the good is prior to that of the agent and therefore explains agency.

123. The second and third steps involve reference to the two orders or columns, proposed in *Metaphysics* 3 as Pythagorean in origin.¹⁵⁰ Aristotle understands these orders to be particular instantiations of excess and defect.¹⁵¹ I think it reasonable to think that Aristotle understands the various cases of excess to be various manifestations of actuality.

124. He thus points out, to begin the second step, that substance and what is in itself intelligible stand in the same column: “But one order is according to itself intelligible, and substance is the first of this [order], and of [substance] the simple and according to [its] act”.¹⁵² The qualifications of substance and the intelligible will help in the identification of each with substance in God. The intelligible is on the list insofar as it is such καθ’ αὑτό, according to itself and not according to another. I merely note that the word ‘itself’ expresses the notion of substance

¹⁴⁹Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *In Librum de Causis Expositio* 1 n.39: “In causis etiam finalibus manifestum est verificari omnia praedicta, nam propter ultimum finem, qui est universalis, alii fines appetuntur, quorum appetitus advenit post appetitum ultimi finis et ante ipsum cessat; sed et huius ordinis ratio ad genus causae efficientis reducitur, nam finis in tantum est causa in quantum movet efficientem ad agendum, et sic, prout habet rationem moventis, pertinet quodammodo ad causae efficientis genus”.

¹⁵⁰986a23-b2; 1096b5-6. Cf. 201b25; 993b12; 1093b11-16; perhaps 1054b35; 1058a13.

¹⁵¹1004b27-1005a2.

¹⁵²1072a30-32.

reflexively. Substance appears on the list in distinction from accident. But then he qualifies this in two ways. Of substance, the simple must be distinguished from the composite, and the actual from the potential.

125. As first and prior to all others, the first mover and the first being must be substance in act. This agrees with such a substance being intelligible in itself, since, as the ninth book made clear, the intelligible is intelligible insofar as it is in act. After having introduced the example of the geometer manifesting some truth by drawing a line, Aristotle said there, “Whence clearly beings in potency are discovered when led into act. But the cause is that understanding is an actuality”.¹⁵³ The simplicity of this being is nothing other than the identity of its substance and its intelligibility with its actuality.

126. He concludes this second step by clarifying how we should understand this. He points out a distinction of the simple and the one. They are not synonymous: “Yet the one and the simple are not the same; for the one signifies measure, while the simple stands in a certain way”.¹⁵⁴ Aristotle says this because composite substances are also one, though not simple. This makes clear that the identification of substance and intelligibility in the first being does not introduce any composition of these into something one. Rather, each expresses an aspect of his excess of actuality.

127. The third step brings these conceptions together under the formality of good and clarifies the manner in which the first being is a final cause. First, Aristotle points out that the good and the object of choice also belong to this order or column: “But the good and what is choice-worthy through itself is in the same order, and the first is always best or [something]

¹⁵³1051a29-31.

¹⁵⁴1072a32-34.

analogous”.¹⁵⁵ These must be identified in perfect simplicity with the first being’s substance as intelligible through itself insofar as its substance is actuality.

128. In the ninth book, Aristotle concluded that “in things existing from the beginning and eternal, there is nothing evil, no mistake, no corruption”.¹⁵⁶ This followed from the priority of good to evil, which he manifested by the fact that “The activity of a good power is better and more honorable than that power”,¹⁵⁷ while “with evils the end and activity is worse than the power”.¹⁵⁸ The first being must be either the first mover or a being prior to that mover. So the power by which the world moves and attains its good depends upon the actuality of the first being. Such a substance must be good in itself and choice-worthy as an object of imitation by other beings. The passage closes with the fact that the first is always the best to make clear that the identification of these things in the first being is most reasonable.

129. He goes on to clarify this claim by explaining why the good is a proper cause in the science of metaphysics. Earlier, while raising matters of doubt pertinent to this science, he asked how the good can serve as cause in immobile beings.¹⁵⁹ Here he makes a distinction in two meanings of ‘that for the sake of which’:

A distinction [division] makes clear that that for the sake of which exists in immobile things: for that for the sake of which is *cui* [that *for* which] and *cuius* [that *of* which], of which one is and one is not [immobile], but it moves as loved, but others move [as something] moved.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵1072a34-b1.

¹⁵⁶1051a19-21.

¹⁵⁷1051a4-5.

¹⁵⁸1051a15-16.

¹⁵⁹996a18-b1; 1059a34-38.

¹⁶⁰1072b1-4.

This distinction appears also in *On the Soul*.¹⁶¹ The soul moves for the sake of something [*gratia cuius*] which does not yet exist or is not yet possessed. The soul acts for itself as the one to or for whom this is good [*cui bonum*]. While such a being may profit from the activity or movement, as such it does not come into existence.

130. Note, however, that one may make or do some good for someone else as well as oneself. That other may profit in one way or another. But this is not necessary. Honor, for example, adds nothing to the one honored as such, though we give such honor insofar as it is an extrinsic good to the one honored. So the first being, God, is that for whom all the activities and movements proceeding from him exist, insofar as they manifest and honor his surpassing actuality.¹⁶²

131. I note one thing here about my understanding of finality in this discussion. Many insist that Aristotle proposes God as a final cause in distinction from an agent cause. Each side has its evidence. This evidence is significant if one asks the question whether God immediately moves the first mobile or some created mind from a power it actualizes from love of God. But the question resolves only to modes of signifying if one asks whether God bears the formality of one cause or the other.

132. Let me address this in a few words. God's actuality, activity, and causality exist *in him* in utter simplicity. He has only one causality insofar as this exists in his substance as the principle of all action proceeding into secondary substances. Further, final causality is the highest formality this causality bears. To say that he is only a final cause is to understand this causality to be so complete that the being, power, and action of other substances flow from and return to it. To call God the final cause, exemplar cause, and agent cause of all things is to conceive his

¹⁶¹415b2-3, 20-21.

¹⁶²Cf. S. Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* 12.7 p. 2528.

one act of causality in three ways.

133. I will discuss the remainder of the resolution of movement to God as final cause in a summary fashion. Above (98-110) I discussed Aristotle's resolution of secondary movers to the first being as a first mover. The present passage goes farther. It resolves movement to the first being as an end and final cause. Aristotle thus completes the general resolution of natural science, including the first movement of the universe as a whole, to this being. This resolution is superior to the resolution to a first mover in natural science. Here we resolve these aspects of the natural world to God as the good, a cause in need of no other cause, not even in the order of reason. And thus we see that, so far as concerns natural science, there are no other species of cause.¹⁶³

134. Further, he explicitly identifies—so far as I can see—the agency and finality of the first mover with his substance:

So if something is moved it is also able to be otherwise, so that if locomotion is first and its actuality is insofar as the thing is moved, according to this [movement] it is able to be otherwise, according to its place, even if not according to its substance. But, since there is some mover being itself unmoved, this is unable to be otherwise in any way. For the first of changes is locomotion, and of this [the first is] the circular. But he moves this [i.e., causes this movement]. So he exists of necessity, and if necessary, well, and thus is a principle.¹⁶⁴

Aristotle introduces necessity because necessity follows the notion of causality.¹⁶⁵ While he draws the necessity of the first mover from the unceasing character of the first movement,

¹⁶³Cf. 195a3-4; 983a34-b6; 993a11-27; 1044b3-5.

¹⁶⁴1072b4-11.

¹⁶⁵Cf. S. Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* 5.6 p. 827.

he clearly understands this to imply the necessity involved in his very being—the identity of his substance and action or activity implied in the simplicity of his substance.

135. Insofar as these are nothing other than the actuality that is his substance, he is eminently good, that is, he exists well. This makes clear that this being is, above all, the principle or beginning of all things. Aristotle himself expresses this by arguing that his necessity implies that the first mover exists well. After recalling the meanings of necessary proposed earlier in *Metaphysics* 5.5¹⁶⁶, he says:

For the necessary is in so many ways: that by force because against inclination, that without which the good does not exist, and what is not able to be otherwise simply. So heaven and nature depend upon such a principle.¹⁶⁷

Clearly Aristotle has principally the last of these in mind. The necessity that follows the simplicity of the first substance is the reason all other beings depend upon it as that without which their good cannot exist. Only for other substances do the other modes of necessity, those that involve some reference to another, come into play, immediately or ultimately, through some relation to the first being. He himself enjoys the good not as involving any extrinsic necessity but in the very necessity of his eternal existence.

136. The resolution made so far shows that the causality experienced in the movement of sensible substances exists in God in a simple manner. In the movement of these sensible substances, the agency that follows form and species is in some way always distinct from the finality proper to form. Again, the form and end often coincide but not always. Furthermore, the form as such exercises causality because the form “makes” the substance

¹⁶⁶1015a22-24; 26-28; 33-35.

¹⁶⁷1072b11-14.

to be what it is. In separated substances the species—the ‘what was its being’—is the substance itself; in sensible substances this species, the form, is a principle and cause of the substance. In all such beings their causality exists in them in a defectible manner. The effect need not follow, except as subordinated to the necessity of the first and final cause. In the first being, these exist—or preexist—in the very necessity of his substance and activity. His substance is the action or agency by which things move and the end for the sake of which they move: “all things yearn [to have part of the always and the divine], and for the sake of this do whatever they do by their nature”.¹⁶⁸

137. In this way, new aspects of participation appear relative to the name ‘cause’, not merely as it signifies agent, as outlined earlier, but insofar as ‘cause’ itself is an equivocal name. Causality in secondary beings appears as a participation in a higher order of causality founded on and—on the side of the cause itself—indistinct from the substance of that cause. God’s causality operating in the effects themselves is distinct from his substance and exercised at distinct times and toward distinct effects.

138. Further, the causality proper to and exercised by secondary beings has the notion of a part. I do not mean here only that the actuality that founds the causality of the secondary being exists as some part of its substance, as occurs with material beings. Nor do I refer merely to the limited power of the secondary cause. I attend principally to the division of causality into agency and finality—even among secondary separate substances—and formality in sensible substances. This is the postulate in natural science that the forms of natural beings bear the notion of a formal and final cause, as well as an agent cause.

139. This implies all the notes involved in participation.

¹⁶⁸*On the Soul* 2.4, 415b1-2.

First, cause is said unequally of second causes and the first precisely insofar as it appears united in the first and fractured in the second. *Second*, this name touches the substance of each: in God this causality is his very substance; in secondary beings it follows species—whether or not that species is some form. *Third*, causality in the first being appears as a whole compared with causality in secondary beings, where it appears always as some part of a complex of causes. This is clear in a number of ways, but Aristotle uses the notion of excess and defect, which imply more and less, insofar as these are the generic names of the two columns introduced here, though here we encounter excess as it exists in the first. *Fourth*, the superior causality that causes the causality of secondary beings does not appear in time and place as proper to particular, determined causes. *Fifth*, the superior causality, as cause of the causality in inferiors, is more the cause of their common effects. *Sixth*, the superior cause is immaterial, eternal, and unchangeable. *Seventh*, goodness is the highest formality of the causality of the first being. The simplicity of this being demands that the formality of final cause founds any other notions of causality that belong to it, both the notion of agent causality by which we first become aware of this being and the exemplar causality through which we bring this being under some common conception as first. I only add to this that here Aristotle introduces God's goodness to explain the world of movement and change. The discussion in *Metaphysics* 12.10 introduces his goodness to another purpose.

140. Also worth noting here is that almost similar things can be said about the notion of necessary. God's necessity stands to necessity in secondary beings in much the way his causality stands to theirs. He is in himself unable to be otherwise. This grounds in them whatever they have of such necessity. He also stands to them as the first thing bearing the notion 'that without which the good does not exist'. Again, whatever necessitates as

force does so through some agency derived from the first being.

Resolution of the Actuality of the Perfect to God's Activity

141. In the second extended argument, Aristotle shows the διαγωγή or life proper to the being that is understood as principle of all others. The etymology of this word suggests the notion of carrying or leading something over some distance. 'Course of life' and 'pastime' are standard glosses that have some application here.¹⁶⁹ I translate it as 'course of life' here before the claim that this course of life constitutes life in God. I understand the word to refer here at the beginning of the second part of *Metaphysics* 12.7 to the notion of action or second actuality as immanent action.

142. The argument has three principal parts. He first (143-144) proposes the manner in which we should compare God's course of life to our own.¹⁷⁰ Then (145-156), he analyzes the aspects of our course of life that resolve in some way to the divine.¹⁷¹ Finally (157-160), he determines the way in which God has life.¹⁷² I note here that insofar as thought is life for minds and happiness is the highest actualization of intellect, the present resolution implies that life, mind, and happiness are all participations in the life, mind, and blessedness of God. Though Aristotle does not expressly speak of God's happiness or blessedness here, the text itself makes this intention clear, as does comparison with the passages from the *Ethics* and *Politics* quoted earlier.

¹⁶⁹Aristotle uses this word twice in *Metaphysics* 1 to distinguish the genus of art: 991b18 and 992b23. Each time he distinguishes arts toward necessities from arts toward διαγωγή. He does not to my knowledge use the word in the *Metaphysics* apart from these three passages.

¹⁷⁰1072b14-16.

¹⁷¹1072b16-24.

¹⁷²1072b24-30.

143. Now, as has been said, Aristotle first makes a comparison of God's course of life to our own. He has just stated that "heaven and nature depend upon such a principle"¹⁷³ and now states that "his course of life is such as is the best for us for a little time, for he is always thus, while for us this is impossible".¹⁷⁴ This follows from the claim made above that the first being exists well and is the best of beings.

144. I would add that even in the previous resolution Aristotle proposed God's well-being as the resolution of eternal movement and becoming in sensible beings. Earlier, in natural science, he describes this movement as "the life, as it were, of all things put together by nature".¹⁷⁵ In the present resolution, where the well-being of the higher substances is in question, we see that they must have a greater share in the well-being of the highest.

145. Aristotle does three things in the second part of this argument. First (146-147), he discusses pleasure. Then (148-154), he treats of mind. Finally (155-156), he concludes this part by showing what aspect of mind is most pleasant and best.

146. The discussion of pleasure assumes it to be a certain end and perfection found in those second actualities that actualize something complete.¹⁷⁶ Pleasure belongs to the enjoyment of life and activity, insofar as "The proper pleasure increases along with the activity, for those acting with pleasure discern the particulars better and work more exactly".¹⁷⁷ With this understanding of action and pleasure, Aristotle notes as something self-evident that God's activity is pleasant.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³1072b13-14.

¹⁷⁴1072b14-16.

¹⁷⁵250b11-16.

¹⁷⁶Cf. *Ethics* 1174b31-1175a3.

¹⁷⁷*Ethics* 1175a30-32.

¹⁷⁸1072b16-17.

147. He then recognizes the pleasant character of his course of life as something found less perfectly in inferior beings: “And through this, waking, sensing, and thinking are most pleasant, while hopes and memories [are pleasant] through these”.¹⁷⁹ Just as hopes and memories share in the pleasure proper to the acts they refer to, he proposes, so the activity of secondary beings seems to ‘share’ in the pleasure proper to God’s activity.¹⁸⁰ Aristotle says ‘through this’ to identify this participation.

148. While all these activities belong to living beings as the act of the perfect,¹⁸¹ thinking is clearly singled out as proper to beings without matter. First (149), he distinguishes that sort of thinking that is thinking most. Second (150-154), he identifies various aspects of thinking proper to its perfection as activity.

149. In this first part, he identifies “thinking according to itself” as thinking “of what is best according to itself”.¹⁸² Further he distinguishes the best thinking as thinking of the best. I ignore here attention to whether the genitives used in each predicate speak immediately to the object or the subject of thinking. On either reading, I understand the qualifications ‘according to itself’ and ‘best’ to eliminate many aspects of dependence. Such thinking does not depend upon senses or imagination. It does not depend upon premises or evidence. Nor does it depend upon another intellect as object or agent. Again, such thinking knows without dependence upon hidden or implied truths, known only virtually. In various ways, minds less than the first can possess these excellences of thought according to the limitations of their share in the activity of the first.

¹⁷⁹1072b17-18.

¹⁸⁰Cf. *Ethics* 1076a 3-4: For each animal [living thing] there seems to be a proper pleasure too, just as there is a [proper] work.

¹⁸¹431a6-7.

¹⁸²1072b19-20.

150. He goes on to note three aspects of thinking that transcend other modes of activity. First, mind knows itself “according to its grasp of the intelligible”.¹⁸³ This aspect of thinking makes it clearly superior to any other kind of knowing. Sense, imagination, and the power by which we judge particulars do not know themselves. Any reflection or awareness of self proper to sensitive being must follow the activity of one body upon another. But no body acts upon itself. Mind, however “grasping and knowing”—the first word according to its first use means ‘touching’—“becomes intelligible”.¹⁸⁴

151. This implies, second, the union of agent and object that Aristotle concludes to: “So that intellect and the intelligible are the same”. This union between the agent and its object transcends any found in sensible beings.¹⁸⁵ In minds after the first the knower and known must also be one but, again, this unity falls away from the perfect simplicity of the first being in proportion to their share in his intellect.

152. Aristotle then points out a third way in which intellect transcends other modes of action: “Intellect is what is receptive of the intelligible and substance”.¹⁸⁶ While he says this primarily to distinguish intellect in potency from intellect in act, I understand the mention of ‘the intelligible and substance’ to imply another superiority of intellect to other forms of knowledge. This sort of knowledge properly grasps substance and always knows accidents in some way through substance. This suggests two resolutions to me.

153. One resolution implied here is that of sense knowledge to intellectual knowledge. Sense, which properly grasps

¹⁸³Cf. *On the Soul* 429b5-9.

¹⁸⁴1072b20-21.

¹⁸⁵Cf. John Francis Nieto, “On the Essential Objectivity of Knowledge”, in *The Aquinas Review*, Vol.16, 2009; nn. 61-72.

¹⁸⁶1072b22.

the accident and knows substance only through and in its accidents,¹⁸⁷ is some share in knowledge but does not constitute knowledge simply speaking. If to know is to know something, to know simply speaking is to know some substance. If this is so, it follows that just as the generative powers provide a resolution to God as the principle of vegetative life in all living sensible substances, so intellect provides a resolution to God for all knowledge, sensible or intellectual.

154. Again, another given in need of implicit resolution here is the knowledge of substance by secondary intellects. These cannot be utterly identical with their objects, most obviously the human intellect. Such intellects must know substance because they participate in or share the activity by which the first intellect knows himself as something supremely, because substantially, intelligible. For this reason, the activity of the power flowing most immediately from any finite intellect's substance bears upon some substance, itself or something presented sensibly.¹⁸⁸

155. Having described intellect, as we experience it, as something receptive (152), Aristotle notes that having the intelligible and substance "it acts".¹⁸⁹ Such an intellect possesses not only first actuality but second, "so that this [the second actuality] more than that [the power and receptivity] is what mind seems to have as something divine".¹⁹⁰ Clearly, he understands the intellect in act to be divine more strictly than intellect in potency.

¹⁸⁷Cf. *On the Soul* 418a20-24.

¹⁸⁸These resolutions taken together make clear why sensation cannot exist in a substance without some 'prudence' derived from the divine mind or this together with its own intellect.

¹⁸⁹1072b22-23.

¹⁹⁰1072b23.

156. Three resolutions, which I will only mention, follow this. In *On the Soul* Aristotle has resolved knowledge that comes to be to knowledge as a whole. I propose that this formula describes the knowledge proper to the divine intellect we begin to examine here. This also, secondly, explains the order of intellect to happiness, which consists in activity of intellect. Finally, intellect in act shares more in the character of the first intellect than intellect in potency, so that “contemplation is the most pleasant thing and the best”.¹⁹¹ I should add that this grounds the identification of the intelligible and the desirable made above: the intelligible, which we experience as most pleasant, is also most divine in us.

157. The third part of the resolution of activity, the act of the perfect, to the first being presents God’s life as knowable through creatures. At the same time it grounds the possibility of all the beings perfected by such activity as these are known by the lower sciences. Now Aristotle notes two sorts of imperfection we must remove from God’s activity: “If thus one exists well, as we are sometimes, but God always, it is wonderful; but if more, yet more wonderful. And he does exist so”.¹⁹² Saying ‘thus’ to refer to the most pleasant and best activity, Aristotle first removes the fleeting manner in which we experience the contemplation that constitutes happiness. God enjoys such contemplation always.

158. This begins the resolution of moral and political science to the divine. God’s possession of contemplation as happiness makes the subject of these sciences – man as capable of happiness in himself or as organized into a city – possible and thus fully intelligible. We see why there are beings capable of happiness not merely from experience and desires, but from the nature of the first being, from the being at the very foundation of reality. Not accidentally, this being, God, is the very source of

¹⁹¹1072b24.

¹⁹²1072b25-26.

this possibility and is the intelligible, desirable object that actualizes such a possibility.

159. The next negation of imperfection follows the definitive understanding of God proposed in the previous chapter: “such a principle whose substance is its action.”¹⁹³ Aristotle completes this negation in two steps. He first attributes life to God: “Life too belongs [to him], for the activity of mind is life.”¹⁹⁴ But in keeping with the more wonderful way in which God exists well, he negates the abstract mode of signifying proper to life and says, “But he is that activity.”¹⁹⁵ Note here that this grounds the claim in *Politics* 7.3 that “for God in his leisure...there are no exterior actions apart from the ones proper to [him]”.¹⁹⁶

160. Further, this shows, by the implicit identification of the activity of God’s intellect with the activity by which he moves—whether or not he immediately moves some body—that God possesses activity in a manner more whole than do inferior intellects whose ruling must be in various ways other than their contemplation. In this way both modes of happiness, the political and the contemplative, must be participations in his own, though one is more like his, is a greater share in his, than another.¹⁹⁷

161. Before proceeding to the final section of this argument, I would leave one aspect of the present claim *sub dubio*. The present consideration of life through activity, taken in its distinction from movement, certainly implies participation by all aspects of life caught up in knowing, including the various

¹⁹³1071b20.

¹⁹⁴1072b26-27.

¹⁹⁵1072b27.

¹⁹⁶1325b28-30.

¹⁹⁷Such an understanding seems evident in Plato’s notion that the wisdom of the guardians is at once speculative and regulative. The man who escapes the cave and catches sight of the good is the one who must return to the cave and set others free.

powers of sensation and desire or appetite strictly speaking, in God's activity so taken. Less clear is whether the name 'life' belongs to plants through some participation in this activity or merely through activity as rule of the body. Two things give me pause.

162. First, Aristotle recognizes in *On the Soul* two notes by which his predecessors conceived of soul, as principle of movement and principle of knowledge.¹⁹⁸ While he reconciles these in a manner sufficient to maintain one science of the soul, namely the understanding of sensation, thought, and desire as movements and passions,¹⁹⁹ metaphysics considers these acts according to higher conceptions than physics does. Metaphysics does not admit that the name 'movement' is said properly of such actualities. Perhaps this science will not admit life to belong to a plant according to any activity beyond its soul serving distinctly as all three causes to its body. Aristotle goes on to consider the soul as bearing the notion of cause in three ways just after his reference to its participation in the divine.²⁰⁰

163. Second, this very aspect of soul, its distinction from the body as its cause, especially as formal, the 'what was its being', seems to be Aristotle's reason for distinguishing soul as the prototype of substance in *Metaphysics* 7.10.²⁰¹ Soul, unlike lower forms, bears the notion of substance in its distinction from its subject. Through such distinction soul is superior to the forms constituting inanimate substances. I cannot underscore this more highly.²⁰² In this way soul, even vegetative, through its rule

¹⁹⁸ 403b25-27.

¹⁹⁹ 417a14-16.

²⁰⁰ 415b8-28.

²⁰¹ 1035b14-20.

²⁰² The soul of the plant exercises, albeit in one part with respect to another, agent causality over its body. The sensitive and intellective souls both enjoy knowledge and desire as immanent acts, described in *Metaphysics* 9.6 as bearing the name actuality or activity most. Insofar as such activity is the actuality

over the body, appears as substance in distinction from its body, which is substance only as subject. So the separate substances distinguish themselves from the whole bodily world. Vegetative soul, however, does not clearly share in life as the actuality of the perfect and so it experiences no pleasure.

164. I leave as a matter of doubt, therefore, whether such works of soul bear the name 'life' immediately from the present understanding of life as said of God or from the identity of activity as first discovered in him as first mover. If the latter, the three-fold causality over its body proper to soul would distinguish it from lower forms through its likeness to the agent and final causality present eminently in God's substance, the immateriality of which distinguishes him from and raises him above the natural world.²⁰³

165. In Aristotle's conclusion to his consideration of God precisely as alive, he expresses the life proper to God: "Now, his activity according to himself is the best and eternal life. But we call God the best, eternal living being, so that life and a continuous age and the eternal belong to God, for this is the God".²⁰⁴ Here we find the 'always' mentioned in *On the Soul* as what living things and all things insofar as they have a nature desire to share in. This is not an accident to God nor an external measure of his life, as time is for sensible substances. Rather, it is identical with him and his life, which once again stand as a whole to all beings.

166. But some distinction must always be made in living substances. All share in God's life to the extent they live. Some share more insofar as they know, even in potency, yet more when

of the perfect, they deserve, when in act, the predicate 'perfect', which seems to be, from examination of the later chapters of *Metaphysics* 5, the principal attribute with which this science is concerned. Cf. S. Thomas Aquinas, *In Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* 5.18, p. 1033 and 5.21, pp. 1085 and 1098.

²⁰³In this sense the vegetative powers might bear the name 'life' as the friendship of utility bears the name 'friendship'.

²⁰⁴1072b27-28.

in act, but most when they are happy. Then these minds agree most with God's substance. The latter contains as one the various perfections that the former experience as distinct and partial actualities: being, life, intellect, activity, pleasure, and happiness or blessedness.

167. The seven notes of participation appear with respect to each of these aspects of sensible beings. *First*, Aristotle shows that the substance of the first being rightly bears all these names, said also of sensible substances. Yet one cannot affirm these names of God without denying the mode in which they belong to sensible substances, as said concretely but not abstractly. Secondary substances and the first must therefore share these names unequally. *Second*, these names all touch upon the nature and substance of God but also on those of sensible substances. Even names like 'activity', 'pleasure', and 'happiness' belong to these substances according to their natures and as fulfillment of those natures. *Third*, the very distinction in sensible substances of the realities so named from one another implies that they possess each as some part of what belongs to God under the common name. Further, the predication of these names of sensible substances only in the concrete implies the composition in sensible substances that limits and determines their share in such actuality. I will not examine the various ways this is so here. *Fourth*, God's causality, especially as an exemplar of sensible substances, does not appear sensibly, and, *fifth*, that causality is greater than any causality discernible in sensible being. *Sixth*, God is immaterial, unchangeable, and eternal. Further, the negation of the distinction between concrete and abstract modes of signifying what belongs to him excludes every sort of potency. *Seventh*, God's blessedness appears here as the good in which the highest good of human intellects is distinctly part.

John Francis Nieto

*Resolution of the Intrinsic Common Good
of the Universe to God*

168. Aristotle goes on in chapter eight to discuss the number of intellectual beings other than man, the gods. Presumably these share most in God's blessedness. In chapter nine he examines God's intellectual activity according to itself. What remains of resolution occurs in chapter ten: the discussion of the order of the universe as some share in God as he is himself the common good of the universe.

169. Aristotle proposes that "It must be examined in which way the nature of the whole has the good and the best, as something separate and itself by itself or as its order or both ways as an army".²⁰⁵ In recognizing that the whole has the good in both ways, he states through the analogy of an army that God, as something separate from the world, is more its good. "For he does not exist through the order, but the order exists through him".²⁰⁶

170. Now clearly the order in the whole arises from the beings of various natures, material and immaterial, whose causality and activity have been resolved to God in chapters six and seven. This order exists through their causality and activity and the highest part of this order is the ordered activity of intelligent beings contemplating God contemplating himself.²⁰⁷ This includes cities or merely citizens devoted to contemplation, should they exist at any time,²⁰⁸ and the order among separate

²⁰⁵1075a11-13.

²⁰⁶1075a15.

²⁰⁷1074b33-35. Cf. I Summa Theologiae 26.2.c; 27.1.c: *Et hoc maxime patet*, etc.

²⁰⁸The *Republic* clearly suggests such a city. Perhaps one should see East Indian society, with its philosophical Brahmin caste, as an attempt, however imperfect, at such a city. Likewise the Church, itself a city, has established and encouraged the life of contemplation, whether religious or academic. These have acted, so far as I can see, with the same understanding.

substances and perhaps separated intellectual souls.²⁰⁹ Thus the order of the whole constitutes a participation in God's goodness and blessedness over and above the particular participation borne by its various parts. Again, the order in its highest parts, intellectual substances, is distinctly the greatest and most complete participation.

171. Aristotle resolves this order of the universe—in the creatures themselves—to nature, the very beginning of these many resolutions I have proposed. First he asserts with reference to the order of the universe that “all things are ordered together somehow but not likewise”.²¹⁰ He names various kinds of substance, “fishes and birds and plants” and says, “They do not stand so that the being of one is nothing to the other, but [the being of one] is something [to the other]”.²¹¹

172. He immediately explains this by the order in particular substances to the first. He says, “For all things are ordered together toward one”.²¹² Aristotle illustrates this by the image of a household, where all are ordered to a common life, one possessed most perfectly by freemen.²¹³ He points out in particular the greater order in the higher parts of the household. Likewise, one finds greater order in the higher parts of the universe. He then identifies this order in the parts of the universe with what might seem an obscure comment, “Such a principle of each thing is their nature”.²¹⁴

173. Nature itself as principle of being and action is the principle immediately ordering each substance to the first substance. In doing so nature orders one substance to the good of

²⁰⁹Cf. 1070a21-27.

²¹⁰1075a16.

²¹¹1075a16-18.

²¹²1075a18-19.

²¹³1075a19-22.

²¹⁴1075a22-23.

the other according to their diverse participations in the divine. I assume here that Aristotle uses the word 'nature' equivocally, to speak both of the principle of movement in mobile beings and of the substance of intellectual ones.²¹⁵

174. With respect to both, he implies that for any substance that has its nature as a principle—any substance but God—the operation or movement proper to its nature has an order not only to the good of that substance but to the common good, ultimately the common good of the universe. So Aristotle suggests that even the lowest things in this universe contribute toward something common, at least insofar as they corrupt into elements useful for others.²¹⁶ This implies resolution of the axiom that the common good is more desirable than the private. As Aristotle puts it:

For even if [the human good] is the same for one and for a city, to attain and to preserve that of the city seems greater and more complete. For it is lovable to one alone but finer and more divine to a nation and to cities.²¹⁷

This itself subordinates ethics to politics and all the arts to political science. Not only does Aristotle assume these orders at the beginning of the *Ethics*, he introduced the passage just quoted in defense of such order.²¹⁸

175. Here too, in the resolution of the common good of the universe to God, the seven notes of participation clearly appear. *First*, both the order of the universe, especially in its highest parts, and God are the good for "the nature of the whole". They

²¹⁵Cf. 1015a3-5, 11-13.

²¹⁶1075a23-24.

²¹⁷1094b7-10. Note that the second sentence is merely ambiguous. Is it the good or attaining and preserving the good that is more fine and more divine? But this ambiguity is irrelevant to the present purpose.

²¹⁸1094a18-b7.

share the name ‘good of the whole,’ but they do not do so equally, insofar as one stands as the good to the other. *Second*, this common name names the very actuality by which each is desirable. Both God and the intrinsic order of the universe are desirable to the universe, just insofar as each is what it is. *Third*, this actuality in God bearing the notion of excess stands to the actuality of the order of the universe as a kind of whole to a part. Several aspects of the intrinsic common good make this clear: its mutability, its dependence upon a multitude of parts, its dependence upon potency. According to each, the intrinsic order of the universe is able to be otherwise and arises from goods divisible in duration or subject. Further, in bearing one aspect of desirability explicitly and formally, it must lack another. In God there can be no such deficiencies. *Fourth*, the causality in question is clearly beyond the sensible order, especially as transcending the distinction of final, agent, and exemplar cause. *Fifth*, this involves a causality superior to those more evident to us. The causality described here, if one does not attend to God’s supernatural operation in the world, is the very first and highest causality in the whole universe. Here we attend to the goodness of God as the principle of the goodness of the universe, which is the reason for its very existence alongside God. *Sixth*, God is clearly the extrinsic good of the universe insofar as he is immaterial, unchangeable, and eternal. *Seventh*, this consideration manifests his goodness as the source of what is principally desirable in the universe, its intrinsic order. But, as proposed above, this is the reason for the existence of everything else in the universe. Further, this order, more than any other of its aspects, causes the universe to be one and thus to be a universe.

176. To my mind, the resolutions proposed above make clear beyond doubt that Aristotle has an understanding of participation. This understanding is distinct from that of Plato in many ways. Yet he uses the Greek word μετέχω, to take after

or take part, to name this order of dependent beings upon the first—expressly in the case of living and natural beings.²¹⁹ As these are the lowest of the orders considered here, Aristotle must understand the same verb to name the manner in which intellect, happiness, and the intrinsic common good of the universe depend upon God.

Knowledge and Participation

177. As knowledge appears inseparable from Plato's consideration of participation, it would be unreasonable to say nothing about whether some agreement regarding the role of participation in knowledge exists in Aristotle's teaching. I will discuss this very briefly. As foundation, I would point out a principle common to Plato and Aristotle that also seems to be the root of most differences in what they teach about knowledge. Both philosophers hold firmly that the principle of being and knowledge for things is one and the same.²²⁰ Differences in their understanding of knowledge reflect differences in understanding this principle of being and knowing.

178. Insofar as Plato considers the possibility that sensible substances do not properly have intrinsic essences by which they exist simply speaking and are themselves intelligible, he resolves the attention paid them by our intellects to knowledge of some separate essence in which these sensible beings participate. Aristotle recognizes form in sensible substances, insofar as it bears the notion 'species,' as the principle of its being and intelligibility. Through the immaterial union of the potential intellect with such a form, we know the composite substance and articulate certain sciences and arts about it and its kinds. These sciences and arts possess some sufficiency according to which

²¹⁹*On the Soul* 415a26-b2.

²²⁰1031b20-22. Cf. *Republic* 509b6-10.

they need not refer to some higher knowledge for the certitude proper to them.²²¹

179. Yet in Aristotle's understanding there does exist some need to refer these sciences and arts to a higher science. If they will bear the notion of wisdom and philosophy, the love of wisdom, the subjects of these sciences must be understood as taking part in the subject of a higher science, the cause of which is the ultimate cause of all things.²²² To speak of merely natural perfections, only the human intellect in which the various sciences have not only the order proper and intrinsic to each but an order to the first and highest science grasps the whole of reality as dependent upon its first and highest cause. But this is to see the subject of the lower sciences in some way through the subject of the higher.

180. Again, to resolve the lower science to a higher is to see the subject of the lower science, which has the causal power that provides scientific certitude to the human intellect, as taking part or sharing in the causal power of the subject of the science that undertakes to explain the reality and intelligibility of all things. This occurs most perfectly through the resolution of this reality to God as the extrinsic good of the universe. The resolutions which I have attempted to sketch in these comments constitute Aristotle's guidance to just such an understanding of reality.

Plato as Dialectician

181. Throughout this pursuit, I have spoken of Plato's work as lacking the sort of resolution I have just attributed to Aristotle. I do not say this to disparage so great an intellect, one to whom not only Aristotle but the whole human race owes a

²²¹1063b36-1064a10.

²²²1061b17-33; 1064b6-14.

debt of gratitude. Rather, I understand Plato's keenness of mind as particularly apparent where he recognizes he cannot yet resolve to what is first. So poised he proposes as clues or hints some hunches he has about the nature that can quell all intellectual appetite and so he directs us toward that nature. Not one of these, so far as I have seen, fails to bear fruit in Aristotle, not to mention others who have followed Plato to their benefit.

182. I understand Plato himself to recognize the primacy of dialectic in his work in several ways. Most obviously, he speaks at times of the highest or the only true knowledge as dialectic. Again, we best understand Socrates' claim that he does not know, when we understand him to refer to his inability in this life to see what he suspects are the first principles of intelligibility, the species. In keeping with this he proposes to reach these principles here by argument or reasoning, *λόγος* and *λογισμός*. Finally, Plato seems to pay a special tribute to Parmenides—above his tribute to Anaxagoras but subordinated to his tribute to Socrates. In the dialogue of that name, he suggests that the source of his dialectical power lies in Parmenides' work. Most likely, he intends this to be understood not only of his immediate study of Parmenides but also of his tutelage in dialectic under a Socrates who had been awakened in some way to dialectic through Parmenides.

The Docility of Aristotle

183. With all these things in mind, no one should be surprised that I understand Aristotle to feel a great, albeit limited, docility to Plato. I find it difficult to imagine that Aristotle does not recognize in Plato's works and teaching some clue making it possible for him to establish almost every aspect of the various sciences and arts, sometimes in detail, always in principle. The student of Aristotle, so far as I can see, should inherit some part

of this docility, in addition to any docility to Plato occasioned by immediate reading of his works.

184. I propose further that Aristotle's regular disagreement with Plato about participation arises neither from rancor nor from opposition to participation itself. I see in it a docile recognition: Aristotle will not learn properly from Plato's dialectic unless he encounters Plato's account of participation from every side. He enters into Plato's dialectic in the spirit proper to it. Unlike most of Socrates' interlocutors, Aristotle has much to say in response.

185. Aristotle criticizes Plato, as well as any other philosopher, only in order to learn. And in fact, so far as I can see, from the beginning of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* to its end, no other thinkers appear as often as a sounding board as "those positing the species". Only by constant recourse to this understanding was Aristotle able to establish his own doctrine as known to us first and most securely in natural being.²²³

186. Again, Aristotle's disagreement with Plato about participation is no less a docility to Plato than his agreement. Plato himself raised objections to the notion, most evidently in the *Parmenides*. Most likely, he intended us to see the character of Socrates developing his understanding of participation as he grows older through dialogues such as *Parmenides*, the *Republic*, and the *Phaedo*.

187. I think I see the mark of Aristotle's sense of debt to Plato in a passage near the end of *Metaphysics* 12.10. Aristotle discusses the failure of some to recognize form as a principle making things beautiful and good. According to this error, "All things share in the foul apart from the one."²²⁴ In fact, he implies, being as such is beautiful; it is foul accidentally, if at all.

²²³In another work I hope to discuss where Aristotle disagrees with Plato about participation.

²²⁴1075a34-35.

He points out that some fail to see that “in all things the good is most a principle”.²²⁵

188. Others see that the good is a principle but do not properly express how, “whether as end or as mover or as species”.²²⁶ Empedocles does see the good—love—as a mover but he also treats it as matter.²²⁷ “Anaxagoras makes the good a principle as mover; for mind moves but it moves for the sake of something [else], so that [it is] other”.²²⁸ In reality, the mind that moves all things is itself the good itself and their final cause, as Aristotle showed us above.

189. The reference here to Anaxagoras demands distinct attention. First, the comment implies criticism similar to that made by Socrates in the *Phaedo*, quoted at length above. In distinguishing himself from Anaxagoras—and perhaps from Plato—Aristotle points out that in his own position “medicine is somehow health”.²²⁹ This implies the claim made in *Metaphysics* 7.7 that for what comes to be by art the species is in the soul.²³⁰ This species knows health as the good of animals and how to bring it about. Likewise, God as the mind moving all things must know them and the good that defines them.

190. This makes clear how Aristotle understands mind, that is, God, to move all things. Insofar as by his knowledge, the transcendent activity through which he lives blessedly yet moves the universe,²³¹ he knows the good of all things, he possesses their good immaterially and intelligibly. In this way he can, like the artist, be both agent and final cause to beings whose species he possesses eminently. This implies the intelligible existence of

²²⁵1075a36-37.

²²⁶1075a38-b1.

²²⁷1075b1-7.

²²⁸1075b8-9.

²²⁹1075b10.

²³⁰1032a32-b1.

²³¹Cf. 1325b16-32.

their natures in his own. His essence is the divine idea of every other substance—something very close to the Platonic species and idea.

191. Second, this remark implies a comment made by Aristotle in *Physics* 2.8, where he discusses the good as a cause in nature. About other naturalists, namely Empedocles and Anaxagoras, he says, “even if they speak of this cause, as soon as they touch upon it, they say goodbye”.²³² The phrase ‘to say goodbye’ is just the phrase used by Socrates to describe his attitude toward other causes after he learned to think that mind does all things for the good, as I noted above. I find it hard to believe Aristotle did not intend the reader to make this association. If so, this suggests that, however much Aristotle criticizes Plato’s accounting for the good as cause,²³³ he does not think that Plato “said goodbye” to such a cause.

192. Rather, I propose that he recognizes his own debt to Plato in learning of such a cause. In this manner, Plato suggests something similar toward Socrates and Anaxagoras by representing Socrates as crediting Anaxagoras with inciting him to think along these lines. Aristotle himself suggests a reverence for Anaxagoras insofar as he stated that mind moves all things.²³⁴ Neither Aristotle nor Plato considers this debt as an impediment to criticizing other aspects of his predecessors’ thought.

193. Finally, I would note that Aristotle’s doctrine of participation, rooted in God’s transcendent substance, causality, and activity, makes clear that all docility among philosophers partakes in a transcendent docility toward God himself as the source of all knowledge and truth. Aristotle exhibited such docility through a more immediate docility, a “listening”, to nature. His docility to God as teacher must have been touched

²³²198b14-15.

²³³Cf. 988b6-16, esp. 11-15.

²³⁴984b15-22. Cf. 995b11-19.

with piety and, hopefully, the worship of true religion.

194. In such a spirit, I suggest, Aristotle defends his criticism of Plato's teaching. After pointing out that "the men who introduced the species are dear",²³⁵ he noted that "both being dear [friends], it is pious to prefer the truth".²³⁶ No doubt he wrote this poignantly aware of being led to this understanding by Plato, who presents his own teacher, Socrates, admonishing us to "think little of Socrates, but much more of the truth".²³⁷

Appendix

Aristotle's reference to the identity of the first desirable and intelligible suggests that the intelligible is the principle of all movement arising from desire. Thus, even in desires where the agent acts without awareness of the intelligible or against some understanding of it, some first intelligible and desirable being moves in a manner proper to it. He defends the independence of the apparent good, not absolutely, but through the mediation of some opinion formed by thinking:

For the apparent good is the yearned for, while the first thing being good is [what is] wanted. But we desire because it seems [so] rather than it seems [so] because we desire. Yet thinking is the beginning. But intellect is moved by the intelligible.²³⁸

This defends the defectibility found in moral and political action. I suspect the biologist must offer a similar account of the defectibility of the natural estimation in animals through his understanding of the interior sense bringing forth such estimations.

²³⁵1096a13.

²³⁶1096a16-17.

²³⁷*Phaedo* 91c1-2.

²³⁸1072a27-30.

Perhaps Aristotle recognizes here that such causes can never suffice with intelligent agents. As intellects they respond only to the intelligible and to the influence of some being with power proper to this order of being. So he reasons in the *Eudemian Ethics*:

So then thought [νοῦς] is not the beginning of thinking, nor deliberation of deliberating. What else then than luck? Thus all things will be by luck. Or is there some principle outside which is no other, itself by being such is able to do such [a thing]? But this is the thing sought: what is the principle of movement in the soul? Clearly, just as in the whole it is God, so too in this. For the divine in us somehow moves all things. But the beginning of argument [λόγος] is not argument, but something stronger. What, then, is stronger than science and understanding [νοῦς] but God?²³⁹

The divine as something desirable works in all things, most of all in those thinking, deliberating and choosing well. Yet false opinion, the result of some faulty thinking, may impede the full power by which God operates in and through our nature.

²³⁹1248a20-29. Cf. *Quaestiones disputatae de malo* 6.1.

**“I NO LONGER CALL YOU SERVANTS
BUT FRIENDS:” CHARITY AND DIVINIZATION
ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS AQUINAS**

R. Glen Coughlin

In Memory of Ronald P. McArthur

Heidegger famously asked, “Why are there beings at all, and not rather nothing?”¹ A Thomist might answer: we know there are things, and we know that if anything at all exists, then something must necessarily exist, so there must be something the very nature of which implies existence.² But we still might ask, why does anything else exist? Why, if the first being is all-perfect, did he bother to make anything? It could not do him any good at all. His creation is so gratuitous as to be almost unintelligible. And yet, “*You have made us for yourself, O Lord,*

R. Glen Coughlin is a graduate of Thomas Aquinas College (1981). He completed his Ph.D. in Philosophy at Université Laval in 1986 and began teaching at Thomas Aquinas College in 1987. He served as Dean of the College from 1996 to 2004.

¹Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 2nd Ed., trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Yale University Press: New Haven, CT, 2014), p. 1.

²This is the import of St. Thomas’s third way. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, Ia, Q. 2, a. 1, c. All subsequent references to this work will be by part, question, article, etc. All works of St. Thomas will be cited without reference to his name.

*and our heart is restless until it rests in you.*³ This is the bounty of a love so abundant that it seeks the good of the beloved without any possibility of benefit, so abundant that it even gives birth to the beloved in order to shower goods on her. It goes further than we could have conceived – “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him” (1 Cor 2:9). What has God prepared for us? What, finally, *is* the gift of God, the gift which he died to give us, and which, in being given, saves us? What is salvation and what is saved by it? St. Paul says, “reckon yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom 6:11). We are saved because we live in Christ, because we now share with him a spiritual life.⁴

St. Thomas teaches that the essence of this spiritual life consists in charity,⁵ and he understands charity as friendship of man with God.⁶ But here one might easily find reason to pause: is it not absurd to think one could be friends with God? Is not the love of friends impossible between man and God? “[W]hen one party is removed to a great distance, as God is, the possibility of friendship ceases.”⁷ To become a friend of God seems ridiculous, since friendship implies mutual love and a shared life. And yet, when St. Thomas addresses the question of charity, he finds evidence in Scripture to define charity as friendship: “No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his lord is doing. But you I have called friends, because all things that I have heard from my Father, I have made known to you” (Jn 15:15).⁸ How can this be?

³St. Augustine, *Confessions*, I.1

⁴Cf. Rom 8:13.

⁵*De perfectione vitae*, Ch. 1.

⁶Cf. esp. IIa-IIae, Q. 23, a. 1, c. We shall return to this text soon.

⁷Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VIII.7.

⁸This text forms the “Sed Contra” of the article cited in note 6.

To start with, the effects of charity do seem to point us in the direction of friendship, since they so nearly mirror them. It is a mark of friendship to converse together, but “our conversation is in heaven,” says St Paul (Phil 3:20). Friends delight in their friends, but through the Holy Spirit, we rejoice in God: “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but, justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14:17). Friends consent to each other’s will, but the Holy Spirit moves us to obey the commands of God. “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (Jn 14:15). One basis of friendship is family relations: “Whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom 8:14). Those who are of the family are free men: “You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but the Spirit of adoption as sons” (Rom 8:15). Friends live together: “Do you not know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit dwells in your midst?” (I Cor 3:16). By friendship we love those loved by our friends: “Love your enemies” we are told, and we know that God loves all men.

So there is some reason on the surface of things to say that by grace we are made friends of God. The issue is tackled more formally in the *Summa*.⁹ St. Thomas explains that not every love has the character of friendship but only that love which he calls benevolence or goodwill. We have such a love for someone when we wish the good for him. If, on the other hand, we wish good for the thing we love, but for our own sakes, as we want wine or a horse to be good for our own sakes and not for the sake of the wine or the horse, we do not have friendship with the thing loved, but, as he says, a certain concupiscence. Even benevolence or goodwill is not sufficient for friendship; rather, we must be loved in return by what we love. Such a mutual goodwill, he says, is founded upon some “communicatio,” some shared good

⁹II-IIae, Q. 23, a. 1, c.

or life. We might, for example, be friends with another because we both love horseback riding or philosophy or virtuous action. We might be brought together by blood or citizenship. There is always some good which friends both love and upon which their friendship is founded. "Since, therefore," St. Thomas goes on, "there is some communication of man with God according as he communicates his blessedness to us, upon this communication some friendship must be founded."

The way St. Thomas puts this is telling: "upon this some friendship must be founded." Why must there be a friendship here? He seems to be saying that the definition of friendship could not but be satisfied in the case of the communication of the good in question. It is clear enough that the two of the three criteria for friendship are met in the case before us. God himself could not communicate any good at all to us without wishing for our good, for he is utterly transcendent and can in no way benefit from his creatures. So the love by which he shares any good at all with us, let alone his own blessedness, must be a benevolent love. Secondly, he does communicate a good to us, in fact, every good we have is given to us by him. But not every good can found a friendship. Every good we have, whether naturally or supernaturally, is given us from above, but we are not called friends of God because of any such gift, but, as St. Thomas says, because of the communication of God's blessedness in charity.

The third point, though, is a little harder to see, namely, that we cannot but love God in return, and with a benevolent love, if that particular good, his own blessedness, is shared with us. Why could we not have a concupiscent love for God, that is, a desire to have him for ourselves and a satisfaction with the fact that God wants to give us a share in himself? Such a love would not be a friendship because a love which is not mutual and in which we do not wish for the beloved what we wish for ourselves is not friendship. If I desire the good only for myself and am

merely using you to get it, even if what I seek is by its nature a common good (as a student might use a teacher to get some knowledge), I would not be desiring that good as common but, by appropriating it to myself, I would be treating it as a mere private good. We would not be friends, but employer and employee or master and slave or something of that sort. Friendship, then, demands a common good and that it be desired as common. If a good which is by nature common is shared and shared just as common, then there is necessarily a friendship based on this communication, provided the other two criteria of friendship are met, namely, mutual and benevolent love. In fact, if people love a good as common, then by definition they have, for the others who share in that good, mutual and benevolent love.

It is possible, however, to love God not as a common good, but merely as a source of one's own blessedness, that is, with a "concupiscent" love. As St. Thomas says:

To love the good of some city happens in two ways: one way that it be possessed, another way that it be conserved. However, to love the good of some city that it might be had and possessed does not produce the political good; because thus even a tyrant loves the good of a city that he might dominate it: which is to love himself more than the city; for he desires this good for himself, not for the city. But to love the city truly is to love the good of the city, that it might be conserved and defended, which produces the political good....Therefore, to love the good which is shared in by the blessed, that it might be had and possessed, does not make a man disposed well to blessedness, because even evil men desire that good; but to love that good according to itself, that it might endure and be spread, and that nothing be done against that good, this makes a man well-disposed to the fellowship of the blessed. And this is charity, which loves God for himself,

and neighbors who are able to have blessedness, just as themselves.¹⁰

Just as a man might love to rule a city as a tyrant, we might love to possess God simply for the sake of our own private happiness; and just as one should love the city for itself as a good to be preserved and even defended with our lives and private goods, so we should love God for himself, and be willing to sacrifice our private good for him. We should so love him that we desire that he be loved by all and we rejoice in his blessedness. This latter love, the love of God as a common good, is fundamental for charity.

The good which is communicated can, then, be desired with a mere concupiscence,¹¹ a love which is not charity. It can even be desired as a common good without charity, however:

To love God...above all things is something connatural to man, and even to every creature, not only the rational

¹⁰Amare autem bonum alicuius civitatis contingit dupliciter: uno modo ut habeatur; alio modo ut conservetur. Amare autem bonum alicuius civitatis ut habeatur et possideatur, non facit bonum politicum; quia sic etiam aliquis tyrannus amat bonum alicuius civitatis ut ei dominetur: quod est amare seipsum magis quam civitatem; sibi enim ipsi hoc bonum concupiscit, non civitati. Sed amare bonum civitatis ut conservetur et defendatur, hoc est vere amare civitatem; quod bonum politicum facit: in tantum quod aliqui propter bonum civitatis conservandum vel ampliandum, se periculis mortis exponant et negligent privatum bonum. Sic igitur amare bonum quod a beatis participatur ut habeatur vel possideatur, non facit hominem bene se habentem ad beatitudinem, quia etiam mali illud bonum concupiscunt; sed amare illud bonum secundum se, ut permaneat et diffundatur, et ut nihil contra illud bonum agatur, hoc facit hominem bene se habentem ad illam societatem beatorum. Et haec est caritas, quae Deum per se diligit, et proximos qui sunt capaces beatitudinis, sicut seipsos. *Questio Disputata de Caritate*, a. 2, c.

¹¹Ia-IIae, Q. 66, a. 6, ad 2. By 'concupiscence,' St. Thomas first of all means the desire for sensible pleasure, but allows the word to be extended to a spiritual desire for the possession of a good for oneself; nor does he think this is contrary to charity, though it does not constitute it.

ones, but even to the irrational and the inanimate, according to that mode of love which is able to belong to each creature. The reason for which is that it is natural to each thing that it desire and love something according as it is naturally apt to be, “for thus does each thing act, as it is naturally apt,” as is said in *Physics* II. It is manifest, however, that the good of the part is for the sake of the good of the whole. Whence, even by natural appetite or love each particular thing loves its own proper good for the sake of the common good of the universe, which is God.¹²

Every natural part is naturally ordered to the whole of which it is a part, as the hand is ordered to the body, and so there is in such parts a natural desire for the whole and for what rules the whole. It is natural for us to block with our hands something thrown at our heads – we do this naturally, without thinking – because the hand is a part which serves the whole body and its ruler. So we can, by nature, love God more than ourselves because we are by nature a part of the universe ordered to and under God. But if an unfallen man were to love God in this way, he still would not love him from charity or with the love of friendship. For though an unfallen man could love God as a common good, he would only love him as the principle and end of all things:

¹²Diligere autem Deum super omnia est quidam connaturale homini; et etiam cuilibet creaturae non solum rationali, sed irrationali et etiam inanimatae, secundum modum amoris qui unicuique creaturae competere potest. Cuius ratio est quia unicuique naturale est quod appetat et amet aliquid, secundum quod aptum natum est esse, “Sic enim agit unumquodque, prout aptum natum est,” ut dicitur in II Physic. Manifestum est autem quod bonum partis est propter bonum totius. Unde etiam naturali appetitu vel amore unaquaeque res particularis amat bonum suum proprium propter bonum commune totius universi, quod est Deus. Ia-IIae, Q. 109, a. 3, c.

To the first it must be said that charity loves God above all things more eminently than nature, for nature loves God above all things as he is the principle and end of natural good, but charity [loves God above all things] according as he is the object of blessedness and according as man has a certain spiritual fellowship with God.¹³

If I rejoice in your happiness, I must love you for yourself and not for what I can get from you. To love God's blessedness and to share it is not simply to love him as the beginning and end of all things; it is to love him with a love that adheres to him and his blessedness as to one's own blessedness, as to the delight of one's soul, to love him as the good that quells our every desire.¹⁴ "Oh, that he would kiss me with the kisses of his mouth" (Song 1:2) says the Canticle, and so expresses the longing of the soul for union with God.¹⁵

What is this blessedness which God shares with us in charity? In general, we only speak of blessedness in the case of rational beings. We do not call cats or dogs blessed because, even when they are in full possession of their proper good, they are not much aware of the fact. Nor do we speak of a rational being as blessed unless it has and firmly holds its own proper good. Thus, blessedness is the perfect possession of its proper good by an intellectual nature.¹⁶ But God's proper good is himself and

¹³Ad primum ergo dicendum quod caritas diligit Deum super omnia eminentius quam natura. Natura enim diligit Deum super omnia, prout est principium et finis naturalis boni, caritas autem secundum quod est obiectum beatitudinis, et secundum quod homo habet quandam societatem spiritualem cum Deo. Addit etiam caritas super dilectionem naturalem Dei promptitudinem quandam et delectationem, sicut et quilibet habitus virtutis addit supra actum bonum qui fit ex sola naturali ratione hominis virtutis habitum non habentis. Ia-IIae, Q. 109, a. 3, ad 1.

¹⁴Ia-IIae, Q. 3, a. 8.

¹⁵St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs*, Sermons 1-4.

¹⁶Ia, Q. 26, a. 1, c.

his is an intellectual nature, perfectly united to himself. God is, then, perfectly blessed because he is perfectly good, is in union with that goodness, and is aware of the fact. And this blessedness is shared with us in charity, so that we too have that good, God himself, as he has himself, that is, we are united to that same perfect good as the object of our happiness and we are aware of it. Not only that, but if we actually share in the blessedness of God, if we rejoice in his blessedness, we must share that blessedness in common with him, for it is him, and therefore we must share in it as a common good, at least as common with him. Loving his happiness, we love it for him and so as a common good, and, loving his happiness, we love whatever he deems good to love, what, as it were, pleases him and makes him happy; ultimately, then, we love ourselves and our neighbors, and even our enemies, in that love. We love him as a common good and beyond all else but, furthermore, we love him as our blessedness. Consequently, by charity we enter into friendship with God, because we partake of the good which is his happiness and that happiness is his in the most fundamental way. Moreover, in loving him as he is in himself, as a common good, we want for him the good appropriate to him: that he “might endure and be spread, and that nothing be done against that good.”¹⁷ Such a love, then, is a mutual benevolent love based upon a common good, and is therefore a friendship. Such love is surely beyond nature.

One last note here: blessedness can be understood from the point of view of the good had or from the point of view of the one who has it. When we share God’s blessedness, we possess by grace what he possesses by nature. The thing possessed, God, is the same, but the ones possessing it remain distinct. In this sense, we form a community in grace and glory, the Heavenly Jerusalem.

¹⁷*Questio Disputata de Caritate*, a. 2.

Charity, then, is a friendship based on shared love of the blessedness of God himself. Through it, we love God with the love wherewith he loves himself, for the good he shares with us is himself as blessed, as enjoying his own goodness. Not only charity, but faith and hope, too, have God as their object in a way no natural virtue does. In distinguishing the moral and intellectual virtues from the theological, St. Thomas writes:

...man is perfected through virtue for the acts by which he is ordered to beatitude.... The blessedness or happiness of man, however, is two-fold.... One [happiness] is indeed proportioned to human nature, which man is able to arrive at through the principles of his nature. The other [happiness] is a blessedness exceeding the nature of man, which man is able to attain only by divine power, according to a certain participation of divinity, according to what is said in 2 Peter 1:4, that through Christ we are made sharers in the divine nature. And because this sort of blessedness exceeds the proportions of human nature, from which nature he proceeds to acting well according to his proportion, they do not suffice for ordering man to the aforesaid blessedness. Whence, it is necessary that there be divinely superadded to man some principles, through which he be so ordered to supernatural blessedness, just as he is ordered to the connatural end through natural principles, though not without divine help. And such principles are called theological virtues, both because they have God for an object, insofar as through them we are ordered unto God, and because they are poured into us by God, and because such virtues are taught to us only by divine revelation in Sacred Scriptures.¹⁸

¹⁸Respondeo dicendum quod per virtutem perficitur homo ad actus quibus in beatitudinem ordinatur, ut ex supradictis patet. Est autem duplex hominis beatitudo sive felicitas, ut supra dictum est. Una quidem proportionata humanae

Nature provides us with principles by which we are ordered to our natural sort of happiness. For example, we have natural inclinations to society, to truth, and to food, which inclinations are perfected and rectified by moral and intellectual virtues: the inclination to society by the virtue of justice, to truth by science, and to food by temperance. But we have no such natural principles by which we are ordered to participating in the divine nature. To be ordered to divine participation, then, we need virtues which not only perfect already existent inclinations but which add to our natures an ordering to the infinitely higher nature of God. We need to have added to ourselves, not virtues which would rectify our appetite or intellect vis-à-vis a natural object, but virtues which will provide the very object itself. This is clearer two articles later:

...the theological virtues order man to supernatural blessedness just as man is ordered through natural inclination to his connatural end. But this happens according to two things. First, according to reason or intellect....Second, through the rectitude of the will naturally tending into the good of reason. But these two fall away from the order of supernatural blessedness, according to 1 Cor 2:

naturae, ad quam scilicet homo pervenire potest per principia suae naturae. Alia autem est beatitudo naturam hominis excedens, ad quam homo sola divina virtute pervenire potest, secundum quandam divinitatis participationem; secundum quod dicitur II Petr. I, quod per Christum facti sumus consortes divinae naturae. Et quia huiusmodi beatitudo proportionem humanae naturae excedit, principia naturalia hominis, ex quibus procedit ad bene agendum secundum suam proportionem, non sufficiunt ad ordinandum hominem in beatitudinem praedictam. Unde oportet quod superaddantur homini divinitus aliqua principia, per quae ita ordinetur ad beatitudinem supernaturalem, sicut per principia naturalia ordinatur ad finem connaturalem, non tamen absque adiutorio divino. Et huiusmodi principia virtutes dicuntur theologicae, tum quia habent Deum pro obiecto, in quantum per eas recte ordinamur in Deum; tum quia a solo Deo nobis infunduntur; tum quia sola divina revelatione, in sacra Scriptura, huiusmodi virtutes traduntur. Ia-IIae, Q. 62, a. 1, c.

“Eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and it has not arisen in the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him.” Whence, it was necessary that, with regard to both, something be supernaturally added to man so as to order him to the supernatural end. And first, indeed, with regard to the intellect, certain supernatural principles, which are grasped by the divine light, are added to man, and these are things to be believed, about which there is faith. Second, the will is ordered to the end both (1) with regard to the motion of intention, tending into it [the end] just as into something which it is possible to attain, which belongs to hope, and (2) with regard to a certain spiritual union, through which, in some way, it [the will] is transformed into that end, which happens through charity. For the appetite of each thing is naturally moved and tends to the end connatural to itself, and this motion comes forth from a certain conformity of the thing to its end.¹⁹

¹⁹Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est, virtutes theologicae hoc modo ordinant hominem ad beatitudinem supernaturalem, sicut per naturalem inclinationem ordinatur homo in finem sibi connaturalem. Hoc autem contingit secundum duo. Primo quidem, secundum rationem vel intellectum, in quantum continet prima principia universalis cognita nobis per naturale lumen intellectus, ex quibus procedit ratio tam in speculandis quam in agendis. Secundo, per rectitudinem voluntatis naturaliter tendentis in bonum rationis. Sed haec duo deficiunt ab ordine beatitudinis supernaturalis; secundum illud I ad Cor. II, “Oculus non vidit, et auris non audivit, et in cor hominis non ascendit, quae praeparavit Deus diligentibus se.” Unde oportuit quod quantum ad utrumque, aliquid homini supernaturaliter adderetur, ad ordinandum ipsum in finem supernaturalem. Et primo quidem, quantum ad intellectum, adduntur homini quaedam principia supernaturalia, quae divino lumine capiuntur, et haec sunt credibilia, de quibus est fides. Secundo vero, voluntas ordinatur in illum finem et quantum ad motum intentionis, in ipsum tendentem sicut in id quod est possibile consequi, quod pertinet ad spem, et quantum ad unionem quandam spirituales, per quam quodammodo transformatur in illum finem, quod fit per caritatem. Appetitus enim uniuscuiusque rei naturaliter movetur et tendit in finem sibi connaturalem, et iste motus provenit ex quadam conformitate rei ad suum finem. Ia, q. 62, a. 3, c.

Whereas the natural virtues rectify our inclinations to ends given by nature, the theological virtues give us inclinations to an end not had by nature. The intellectual and moral virtues (which I am calling the “natural” virtues), only rectify our appetites and reason with regard to naturally given ends. Mathematics, for example, is an intellectual virtue which rectifies our intellects with regard to the knowledge of quantity, and temperance is a moral virtue which rectifies our appetite with regard to the pleasures of touch. Both the pleasures of touch and the truths of mathematics are goods to which we are naturally inclined. Faith, by contrast, gives us an inclination to truths which transcend our nature and are proper to the knowledge of God alone, while hope inclines our will to God as to the one whom we trust to secure for us a share in his own blessedness,²⁰ and charity inclines our will to God himself as our blessedness. There is in us no purely natural inclination to God as he is in himself, but only, at most, to God as the source and end of all things. Philosophical wisdom, the natural knowledge of the highest causes, seeks God, but only as an explanation of the things around us, and our natural love follows suit.

If to desire and to possess God in the way which blessedness demands and which is offered to us by Christ, that is, if to desire friendship with God, is something to which our nature is not ordered, we must wonder how we can be given it or even hope to be given such a desire or ordering by the theological virtues or, for that matter, by anything else. The short answer, already stated, is by grace. I turn now to the second part of this paper, grace and divinization.

“God became man that man might become God.”²¹
The thought has a long pedigree and is not original with

²⁰“The formal object of hope, by which it is a theological virtue, is divine help....” *Questio Disputata de Spe*, a. 4.

²¹St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 54.3.

St. Athanasius but is in fact scriptural. The Gospel of John says, “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (Jn 1:12-13), and later, referring again to birth, “Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn 3:5).

These references to birth and to being sons of God imply the taking on of a new nature, the nature of the one who begets. Being “born of God” or “born of the Spirit” means we have the nature of God or the Spirit. The second letter of Peter is also often cited in this context:

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

St. Thomas cites this text in his *Commentary on Ephesians*:

For neither the human desire nor human intellect could have considered or understood or begged from God that he should become man and that man should be made God and a sharer in the divine nature, but this is what he has done in us by his power, and this [was done] in the Incarnation of his Son: “that through this we might be made sharers in the divine nature.” (2 Pet 1:4)²²

²²Nam nec affectus, nec intellectus humanus potuissent considerare, vel intelligere, vel petere a Deo quod fieret homo et homo efficeretur Deus et consors naturae divinae, quae tamen secundum virtutem operatur in nobis, et hoc in Incarnatione Filii sui. 2 Pet. 1:4: “Ut per hoc efficiamini divinae consortes

Grace is not merely a covering over of sin, or a medicine which restores our native health, but is a regeneration, the taking on of a new nature, that of God himself, so that by grace we are divinized. Were this not so, we would not be sharing God's life, but only depending on him. If God became man, but man did not become God, we could not be friends of God, but only beneficiaries. He would not be our brother or friend, for we would not share his life, nor would he be for us "another self," but only a hero, remote and inaccessible. While our ordering to God as he is in himself demands divinization, charity as friendship with God demands it for a more particular reason, for it implies the sharing of God's own life.

Whatever else is true, divinization cannot be taken to mean that we become God essentially or substantially, that we are so united to him that we lose our own substantial being and our identity. We do not become God materially, the way a hamburger becomes us, by the matter losing its own nature and taking on ours, nor in a Nirvana of spiritual absorption into God. Rather, we are divinized by a sort of participation in the life of God. The text so often quoted, that from 2 Peter, itself speaks this way: "partakers of the divine nature." So what is "participation"?

The idea of participation seems to enter into philosophical discourse through the Pythagoreans and Plato, the latter famously speaking in the dialogues of sensible beings sharing in separate, absolute Ideas. In the *Phaedo*, for example, Plato says that the things around us that we call beautiful are beautiful because they share in the absolute Beauty.²³ In criticizing Plato, Aristotle claims the word 'participation' is an empty one.²⁴ There are, no doubt, various interpretations of this critique, but one which seems to fit with several texts goes as follows.

naturae." *In Eph.* 3:20.

²³E.g., Plato, *Phaedo*, 100c; *Timaeus* 51d.

²⁴Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I.9, 991a20-22.

Plato holds to the eternal forms in order to account for our knowledge of things. He thinks that because our knowledge is of what is necessary and universal, while the sensible things are contingent and particular, we cannot really know the things around us.²⁵ In essence, he is arguing that we know things as they are, and we know them as universal and necessary, so the things we know must in their own being be universal and necessary. But if we were to carry this argument to its bitter end, we would have to say that everything intelligible about a thing is not really in it but elsewhere, for everything intelligible is universal and necessary, while the thing understood is particular and contingent. Consequently, there is nothing left of intelligibility in the sensibles with which we began – we have transferred all being and intelligibility to a separate, eternal realm. The world in front of us becomes the realm of becoming and opinion and the forms are present in it only as projections of the forms onto a blank cave wall,²⁶ the empty space of the *Timaeus*.²⁷ Participation conceived of in this manner denudes the world of all intelligible reality; it is an “empty” concept because there is in fact nothing participating in the forms any more.

This interpretation may or may not be right either about Plato’s views or about Aristotle’s intention in his criticism, but my point is this: that for participation to mean something, the thing which shares in another must itself really have a form or nature of some kind which is its own but is understood as somehow derived from that in which it participates. If so, then the thing which is shared in must be in some sense divisible and its parts must be really possessed by what shares in it. As St. Thomas points out, the root meaning of “participate” is

²⁵Cf. Plato, *Phaedo*, 79d; *Timaeus*, 27d-28a; *Philebus*, 15a-d.

²⁶Plato, *Republic*, VII, 514a-517c.

²⁷*Timaeus*, 51d-52c; cf. also Aristotle, *Physics* IV.2, 209b6-17.

“to take part” or share.²⁸ The most obvious example of this is material sharing. If we share a pie, we each get a piece. This is division in the first, that is, the quantitative sense, and the possession of the parts is by way of physical assimilation. This sort of participation corresponds to the integral whole and its parts. Sometimes such wholes are possessed in common without such obvious division, as we share a road by being on it at the same time, though not on the same part of it at the same time. This too, then, involves the division of quantity. Or we can share something by dividing not space but time – we can take turns using a lawn mower, for example.

More subtle forms of participation are also possible. We all share human nature, but it is not divided quantitatively when we do this. We each have the whole²⁹ of human nature – we really do each possess that entire nature in ourselves but, still, no one of us exhausts it – if one of us did, no one else could have it. While no one of us takes up the whole power of the nature, we each have the whole nature. This odd sort of whole is called the “universal” whole, and it is the one which we find in predication, as when we say “every man is an animal.”

Close to this is sharing in a form in such a way as not to possess it fully, not only in the sense that others too can possess it, but also in the sense the form we possess is not fully the same as the form to be possessed but some imperfect version of it. A painting is a clear example of this, since it is a likeness, but only presents a certain “point of view” among an infinite number of possible ones. The original, exemplar cause is a kind of extrinsic formal cause – the painting is a painting of this man because of the shape which this man himself has intrinsically. It is also, in a way, a kind of whole, for it has a form which can be had by

²⁸In *Boethii de Hebdomadibus*, Ch. 2, l. 70.

²⁹On the various sorts of whole, cf. *Questio Disputata de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, a. 11, ad 2.

others partially. To this extent, it can be understood to be what St. Thomas calls a potential whole, a whole which is divided not quantitatively nor by predication, but according to its powers. To take a clearer example, one St. Thomas usually uses, the rational soul has the powers of vegetation, sensation, and reason, but no one of these expresses its full power. These powers in a way divide the soul, which is why Aristotle calls these “parts” of the soul.³⁰

Participating in a universal nature like man and participating in an exemplar cause are both ways of sharing in a formal cause. The exemplar is an extrinsic formal cause and the universal names an intrinsic formal cause. Both demand that the thing which shares have within it some real form, the shape of the statue or the nature of the man, and also that there be something they can be said to share in without using it all themselves, something which has the character of a whole.

The agent cause can also ground participation, for it too, especially if it has effects which differ in kind, is like a whole which each of its effects takes part in. The carpenter, for example, can make many different tables and, while each has in itself an expression of the ability of the artist, no one is the full expression of that ability. Once again, there is in the effect something real which stands to the cause as part to whole, so that the effect can be said to share in the cause without being an adequate expression of it.³¹

Something similar can be said about the good, or final cause. We can easily recognize that such things are also shared in: an army shares a victory and philosophers share the truth. What is shared is not used up by being so shared; the goodness of the truth is available to all who seek it, so that its power is

³⁰This is an example of a potential whole, not of an exemplar cause.

³¹This can even be said of univocal causes, but that is not as clear and is not relevant for our purposes.

like a whole relative to those who share in it. Generally, too, the truth is not shared by all in just the same way, nor is the victory possessed by each member of the army equally. To this extent, it seems that we can once again assimilate the cause to a potential whole, the power of which exceeds any one expression of it. The victory is good for this man and for that man without being exhausted by this sharing, and it is even good for them, usually at least, in somewhat different ways: the general gets the lion's share of the glory while the private's share is real but lesser.

Thus, all four causes can ground participation, though at least in some cases of material causality this occurs by an actual quantitative division of the whole, while in the others the cause maintains its integrity even while being divided. The other three kinds of causes can ground a participation in which the participated remains whole and in which the sharers take only something of what the participated has in its power. More precisely, exemplars, equivocal agents, and final causes share a likeness to the potential whole and can be principles of a participation in which the partakers do not have the whole of what they share in.

God, of course, is an agent, exemplar, and final cause which no effect can fully exhaust.

Everything is therefore able to be called good and being from the first being and good, [which is being and good] through its essence, insofar as they participate in it through the mode of a certain assimilation, though remotely and deficiently, Thus, therefore, each thing is called good by the divine goodness, as from the first exemplary, effective, and final principle of all goodness. Still, each thing is called good by a likeness of the divine goodness inhering in it, (a likeness) which is formally its own goodness denominating it. And so there is one goodness of all things and yet many goodnesses.³²

³²A primo igitur per suam essentiam ente et bono, unumquodque potest dici

This text also makes another important point, one which seems to undergird some of Aristotle's criticism of Platonic participation, namely, that the thing which shares in another must really *have* the quality which the thing shared in has. If a creature is not itself good, it could hardly be said to participate or take part in the goodness of God, for what takes something has that something.

How, then, do we have God's nature? It cannot be by materially dividing him, nor by having his nature fully, the way that we each share in humanity. But since we are effects of his agent, exemplary, and final causality, and are effects which do not measure up to their cause, we can share in him through those modes of causation. In this way, every creature, not only man or redeemed man, shares in God.

A creature is conjoined to God in three ways. In the first way, according to likeness alone, insofar as there is found in a creature some similitude of the divine goodness, which does not attain to God according to his substance: and this conjunction is found in all creatures in their being assimilated to the divine goodness.³³

St. Thomas also describes an infinitely greater way that a creature can attain God, namely, not by mere by similitude, but

bonum et ens, inquantum participat ipsum per modum cuiusdam assimilatio-
nis, licet remote et deficienter, ut ex superioribus patet. Sic ergo unumquod-
que dicitur bonum bonitate divina, sicut primo principio exemplari, effectivo
et finali totius bonitatis. Nihilominus tamen unumquodque dicitur bonum
similitudine divinae bonitatis sibi inhaerente, quae est formaliter sua bonitas
denominans ipsum. Et sic est bonitas una omnium; et etiam multae bonitates.
Ia, Q. 6, a. 4, c.

³³Conjungitur autem creatura Deo tripliciter. Primo modo secundum simil-
itudinem tantum, inquantum invenitur in creatura aliqua similitudo divinae
bonitatis, non quod attingat ipsum Deum secundum substantiam: et ista con-
junctio invenitur in omnibus creaturis divinam bonitatem assimilantibus. *I*
Sent. D. 37, Q. 1, a. 2, c.

by attaining to God in his being (*esse*). This is the mode by which the created human nature of Christ attains to God.³⁴ Between these two modes is a third mode of attaining God, a mode which is proper to the saints:

...a creature attains to God himself considered according to his substance, and not only according to likeness; and this is through an operation; namely when someone adheres by faith to the first truth itself, and by charity to the highest good itself: and thus this is another way, in which God is specially in the saints through grace.³⁵

While all creatures bear some likeness to God simply insofar as he causes them, and while Christ is united to God in his being, the saints attain to God in his substance, not only by being a similitude, yet without being united to him in his being, as does the created nature of Christ. They do this, as St. Thomas says, by their operations.

God is said to be in things in two ways. One way, in the mode of an agent cause, and in this way he is in all things created by him. In another way, as the object of an operation is in the one who operates ... according as the known is in the knower and the desired in the one desiring. In this second way, then, God is in a special way in rational creatures which know and love him in act or habitually. And because the rational creature has this through grace ... [God] is said in this way to be in the saints through grace.³⁶

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵...creatura attingit ad ipsum Deum secundum substantiam suam consideratum, et non secundum similitudinem tantum; et hoc est per operationem; scilicet quando aliquis fide adhaeret ipsi primae veritati, et caritate ipsi summae bonitati: et sic est alius modus quo Deus specialiter est in sanctis per gratiam. Ibid.

³⁶Deus dicitur esse in re aliqua dupliciter. Uno modo, per modum causae

We can look at the operations of the mind and the will on three separate levels: on the natural level, insofar as we are a certain sort of creature, namely rational; on the level of grace, insofar as we are divinized imperfectly here below; and on the level of glory, when we shall be as much divinized as human nature will allow: “But we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn 3:2).

Though it is not our primary interest, we should start with our natural operations, since grace perfects nature and nature is more apparent to us. As animals, we learn through sensation and abstraction from sensibles. Consequently, the proper object of the human mind is the whatness of material beings. Just as the proper object of sight is color, and we cannot see anything except by seeing color, so in our natural operations we can only know God as the principle of the things which we know properly, and can only know about him the things that are demanded by his being the first principle: that he is the first agent, perfect, the highest good, etc. As our knowledge is limited, so is our love limited. St. Thomas writes, “Nature loves God above all things as he is the beginning and end of natural good.”³⁷ Nevertheless, we do know by nature that God is the greatest good and that he is the common good of the universe, and we have seen that it is natural for the part to love the good of the whole more than its own proper good. Thus, by our natural knowledge and love of God, we are more closely assimilated to him than are other creatures, which are likenesses of God, but likenesses whose

agentis, et sic est in omnibus rebus creatis ab ipso. Alio modo, sicut obiectum operationis est in operante ... secundum quod cognitum est in cognoscente, et desideratum in desiderante. Hoc igitur secundo modo, Deus specialiter est in rationali creatura, quae cognoscit et diligit illum actu vel habitu. Et quia hoc habet rationalis creatura per gratiam, ... dicitur esse hoc modo in sanctis per gratiam. Ia, Q. 8, a. 3, c.

³⁷Natura enim diligit Deum super omnia, prout est principium et finis naturalis boni. Ia-IIae, Q. 109, a. 3, ad 1.

operations attain him only indirectly, namely, insofar as they serve man's operations. Thus the rational creature, even on the level of nature, shares more fully in the divine nature than do other creatures.

The foregoing participation in the divine nature can be recognized by natural reason. But there is a more hidden participation, a participation which, though it is on the level of nature, can only be seen in the light of revelation. God tells us in Genesis that we are made in his image and in the New Testament that he is a Trinity. This image of God is according to our intellectual nature,³⁸ insofar as our powers of intellect and will with their processions of the concept or the word of the heart and of love mirror God's Trinitarian processions and do so even more when we actually use those powers to know and love God. For then we have an actual concept or word of the heart, and an actual procession of love. Moreover, since acts of knowing and loving are defined by their objects, in knowing and loving God, even if only in a natural way, we have acts more akin in species to those of God than when we know or love other things, for his own unique act of knowing and loving also has his own nature as its object.³⁹

To summarize the ways we might be able to speak of man's natural participation in divine nature, we can say that we have operations of intellect and will, as does God, and that we can have as an object of intellect and will, though indirectly, what God has as his object of intellect and will, namely himself, and that we have these operations of intellect and will in distinct powers each of which involves an immanent procession, while God has these operations in his unique act of existence, but nevertheless with two processions, one of intellect and one of will. The most perfect partaking possible for us by nature would be

³⁸Ia, q. 93, a. 6.

³⁹Ia, q. 93, aa. 5, 7-8.

for our processions of intellect and will to mirror God's not only in the character of the powers they come forth from but also in the objects they tend toward. Since we have our nature, powers, and operations from God as from an agent, and also as an exemplar both with regard to his divinity and his Trinity, and because our natural happiness consists in knowing and loving God as our end or good, we can be properly said to participate in God and to do so more than any other creatures.

It remains, though, that the notion of participation in God's nature is more often used in connection with the condition of grace.

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba, Father," it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs of Christ. (Rom 8:14-17)

It seems that we are sons of God, partakers of the divine nature, in some more formal or complete way by grace than we are by nature. So what is grace?

Because the theological virtues order us to an end surpassing our nature, and virtues are so called because they are dispositions which are perfective of the operations of a nature,⁴⁰ as the virtue or excellence of a horse is whatever makes it act well as a horse, we must have in some way a divine nature if these theological virtues are truly virtues.

⁴⁰In essentia quidem virtutis aliquid considerari potest directe; et aliquid ex consequenti. Directe quidem virtus importat dispositionem quandam alicuius convenienter se habentis secundum modum suae naturae, unde philosophus dicit, in VII Physic. quod virtus est dispositio perfecti ad optimum; dico autem perfecti, quod est dispositum secundum naturam. Ia-IIae, Q. 71, a. 1, c.

Grace is, in fact, a kind of share or participation in a superior nature, the nature of God:

The infused virtues, however, dispose man in a higher way, and to a higher end, whence it is necessary too that [they dispose] by an order to a higher nature. This is through an order to a participated divine nature; according as it is said in 2 Peter 1, “Great and most precious promises has he given us, that through them we might be made partakers in the divine nature.” And according to the taking on of this nature, we are said to be regenerated as sons of God.⁴¹

For this reason, too, grace is said to be in the essence of the soul while the virtues are in the powers: “Through grace we are reborn as sons of God. But regeneration terminates in the essence before the powers. Therefore grace is in the essence before it is in the powers.”⁴² Finally, grace, as a participation of the divine nature, cannot be caused by anything but God:

The gift of grace exceeds every faculty of created nature, since it is nothing other than a certain participation in the divine nature, which exceeds every other nature. And therefore it is impossible that any creature should cause grace. For thus it is necessary that God alone deify, by communicating a fellowship in the divine nature through

⁴¹Virtutes autem infusae disponunt hominem altiori modo, et ad altiorem finem, unde etiam oportet quod in ordine ad aliquam altiorem naturam. Hoc autem est in ordine ad naturam divinam participatam; secundum quod dicitur II Petr. I, “Maxima et pretiosa nobis promissa donavit, ut per haec efficiamini divinae consortes naturae.” Et secundum acceptionem huius naturae, dicimur regenerari in filios Dei. Ia-IIae, Q. 110, a. 3, c.

⁴²...per gratiam regeneramur in filios Dei. Sed generatio per prius terminatur ad essentiam quam ad potentias. Ergo gratia per prius est in essentia animae quam in potentiis. Ia, Q. 110, a. 4, sc.

a certain participation of similitude, just as it is impossible that something other than fire should ignite.⁴³

Grace, then, is a participation in the divine nature in four ways. First, by deifying the essence of our souls, we become more like God in our very souls. Second, our powers of intellect and will will be informed by the habits which flow from grace, the theological virtues, which make divine operations connatural to us, and which must therefore be themselves some sorts of participations in the divine nature. Further, while God always acts when any creature acts, because the agent is in the patient, God's act of causing the operations appropriate to the theological virtues will also cause God to be present in us so as to deify us. Finally, since an action is defined by its object, as seeing by color or housebuilding by houses, so our knowing and loving God have their specific nature from their object, which is God.

Although the essences of our souls become deiform by grace, the likeness of our soul to God does not seem to be something we can very well speak of directly, but only by way of its manifestation in our powers and our operations. Even in more mundane cases of participation in a higher nature, we see that the participation in the nature is best understood by way of the elevated operations and power. For example, a police dog is trained to participate, in a way, in the political life of men. We intend this when we train the dog, and we recognize the success of the training when the dog can do the things that we want it to do. It is by the operations that we recognize that the dog has taken on a habit which permits it to do things above its own

⁴³Donum autem gratiae excedit omnem facultatem naturae creatae, cum nihil aliud sit quam quaedam participatio divinae naturae, quae excedit omnem aliam naturam. Et ideo impossibile est quod aliqua creatura gratiam causet. Sic enim necesse est quod solus Deus deficiet, communicando consortium divinae naturae per quandam similitudinis participationem, sicut impossibile est quod aliquid igniat nisi solus ignis. Ia-IIae, Q. 112, a. 1, c.

nature. We also see in this example that the nature of the dog remains intact; it really has a new quality or habit, but it does not, in sharing our higher nature, lose its own. So too, when we share in God's nature, we do not lose our own nature, but there is added to us something, namely, grace, which permits us to share in divine operations and which is therefore itself a sort of partaking in the divine nature.

The operations in question are those of belief and love, of faith and charity.⁴⁴ Faith transcends natural knowledge by adhering to the First Truth, as to a formal object, and to the propositions of the faith as to material objects. "The work of faith," says St. Thomas, "is to believe in God."⁴⁵ Elsewhere, he explains that, "If we consider the formal notion of the object, it is nothing other than the first truth, for the faith about which we are now speaking does not assent to anything except because it is revealed by God; whence it relies upon the divine truth itself as upon a middle [term]."⁴⁶ Just as we believe that triangles have three angles equal to two right angles because of the definition of triangle, which is the middle term in the demonstration, so we believe the propositions of faith because God reveals them. God not only reveals to us such truths, but also that it is he who reveals them, and it is on this basis that we believe.

Moreover, the faithful man is moved to believe not because he has the evidence before him – "faith is the evidence of things unseen" (Heb 11:1) – but because God moves his will to assent to things even though he does not see them. But then the act of faith depends upon God's infusing grace and faith and upon his

⁴⁴For reasons which shall become apparent, I leave aside the consideration of the theological virtue of hope.

⁴⁵...fidei opus sit credere Deo.... Ia-IIae, Q. 65, a. 4.

⁴⁶Sic igitur in fide, si consideremus formalem rationem obiecti, nihil est aliud quam veritas prima, non enim fides de qua loquimur assentit alicui nisi quia est a Deo revelatum; unde ipsi veritati divinae innititur tanquam medio. IIa-IIae, Q. 1, a. 1, c.

moving our wills. Consequently, God is also present in the will of the man of faith through the presence of the Holy Spirit moving us to believe. It is with this in mind that St. Thomas refers to charity as the “form” of faith,⁴⁷ “effectively,” he specifies, not as an intrinsic form or an exemplar, but insofar as it orders the act of faith to its end, namely divine blessedness.⁴⁸ It is not the case that we are moved by God to believe in just the same way as he moves us with regard to natural activities. Though in both cases we depend upon his agency, in the case of faith, we are being moved with a motion that transcends nature and directs us to God’s own truth.

But it seems to be especially by charity that we share in the life of God. Without charity, our faith is dead.⁴⁹ “The spiritual life consists principally in charity; he who has it not is deemed to be spiritually nothing.”⁵⁰ If we are principally alive spiritually by charity, and divinization is precisely sharing in the life and operations of God, then charity must in some way be that in virtue of which we are divinized principally.

Like faith, charity flows out of a soul born of God, and, like faith, charity is a habit by which we are connaturally carried toward God. Further, charity like faith needs to be moved by God in order to be actually brought into activity. But unlike faith, charity will not pass away (1 Cor 13:8-13). Because faith attains

⁴⁷Ia-IIae, Q. 4, a. 3.

⁴⁸Ia-IIae, Q. 23, a. 8, c and ad 1; cf. also Ia-IIae, Q. 62, a. 1, c and Ia-IIae, Q. 62, a. 3, c. Cf. also Ia-IIae, Q. 62, a. 2, ad 1: Virtutes enim theologicae se habent in ordine ad beatitudinem divinam, sicut inclinatio naturae ad finem connaturalem.

⁴⁹Distinctio autem fidei formatae et informis est secundum id quod pertinet ad voluntatem, idest secundum caritatem. Ia-IIae, Q. 4, a. 4, c.

⁵⁰Consistit autem principaliter spiritualis vita in caritate: quam qui non habet, nihil esse spiritualiter reputatur: unde apostolus I Cor. XIII, 2, dicit: “Si habuero prophetiam, et noverim mysteria omnia et omnem scientiam, et si habuero omnem fidem, ita ut montes transferam, caritatem autem non habuero, nihil sum.” *De Perfectione*, Ch. 1:

God by way of the propositions of the intellect and not as he is in himself, it is imperfect and will pass away,⁵¹ and hope, because it is for things not yet possessed, will also pass away when vision is granted to us, but charity, because even here below it attains to God as he is in himself, loves God without defect.⁵²

The act of the knowing power is perfected through this that the known is in the knower, but the act of the appetitive power is perfected through this that the appetite is inclined toward the thing itself. And therefore it is necessary that the motion of the appetitive power be toward the thing according to the condition of things themselves, but the act of the knowing power is according to the mode of the knower. But the very order of things is such that God is knowable and lovable because of himself, as essentially being truth and goodness itself, through which other things are both known and loved. But with regard to us, because our knowledge takes its origin from sense, the things closer to sense are knowable beforehand, and the ultimate term of knowledge is in that which is most remote from sense. According to this, therefore, it is to be said that love, which is the act of an appetitive power, even in the state of this life, tends to God first, and from him it is derived to others. And according to this, charity loves God immediately, but other things by the mediation of God. In knowledge, though, the converse is true, because we know God through others, as a cause through

⁵¹I Ia-IIae, Q. 1, a. 2, ad 3: Sed per fidem non apprehendimus veritatem primam sicut in se est.

⁵²This is so even if the quantity of the charity is somehow changed. Cf. I Ia-IIae, Q. 24, a. 7, ad 3: Ad tertium dicendum quod ratio illa procedit in his quae habent quantitatem eiusdem rationis, non autem in his quae habent diversam rationem quantitatis; sicut linea, quantumcumque crescat, non attingit quantitatem superficiei. Non est autem eadem ratio quantitatis caritatis viae, quae sequitur cognitionem fidei, et caritatis patriae, quae sequitur visionem aperi- tam. Unde ratio non sequitur.

an effect, or through the mode of eminence or negation, as is clear through Dionysius, in the book *On the Divine Names*.⁵³

When we love something, our will tends to the thing as it is in itself, but when we know, the operation is completed by the thing in some way coming to be in our minds. Thus the will conforms to things in their real being but the intellect conforms things to itself. We attain God's beatitude even here below, then, and we do so by way of the habit of charity, by which we love God as he loves himself. He is the object of our love immediately, despite the weakness of our intellectual adherence to him, for we can love a thing much even if we know it little, however much it remains true that love follows knowledge.⁵⁴ By nature, even if we

⁵³Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est, actus cognitivae virtutis perficitur per hoc quod cognitum est in cognoscente, actus autem virtutis appetitivae perficitur per hoc quod appetitus inclinatur in rem ipsam. Et ideo oportet quod motus appetitivae virtutis sit in res secundum conditionem ipsarum rerum, actus autem cognitivae virtutis est secundum modum cognoscentis. Est autem ipse ordo rerum talis secundum se quod Deus est propter seipsum cognoscibilis et diligibilis, utpote essentialiter existens ipsa veritas et bonitas, per quam alia et cognoscuntur et amantur. Sed quoad nos, quia nostra cognitio a sensu ortum habet, prius sunt cognoscibilia quae sunt sensui propinquiora; et ultimus terminus cognitionis est in eo quod est maxime a sensu remotum. Secundum hoc ergo dicendum est quod dilectio, quae est appetitivae virtutis actus, etiam in statu viae tendit in Deum primo, et ex ipso derivatur ad alia, et secundum hoc caritas Deum immediate diligit, alia vero mediante Deo. In cognitione vero est e converso, quia scilicet per alia Deum cognoscimus, sicut causam per effectus, vel per modum eminentiae aut negationis ut patet per Dionysium, in libro de Div. Nom. Ila-Ilae, Q. 27, a. 4, c.

⁵⁴Cf. St. John of the Cross: "It should be known that the teaching of some about the will's inability to love what the intellect does not first know ought to be understood naturally. Naturally, it is impossible to love without first understanding what is loved, but supernaturally, God can easily infuse and increase love without the infusion or increase of particular knowledge.

"This is the experience of many spiritual persons; they frequently feel they are burning in love of God, with no more particular knowledge than before. They understand little but love a great deal, or understand a great deal

can love him above all things, we cannot love him except as the beginning and end of all things, but by grace and charity, we are lifted up into the divine life so as to have his blessedness as our object, and this love, though it will be in some way altered when fulfilled, will not be destroyed.

Charity not only attains God as he is in himself, it also conforms us to God. In a text already cited, St. Thomas said:

[The will] is transformed into that end, which happens through charity. For the appetite of each thing is naturally moved and tends to the end connatural to itself, and this motion comes forth from a certain conformity of the thing to its end.⁵⁵

Elsewhere, St. Thomas explains why the will becomes conformed to whatever it loves. Because the will is a moved mover (a mover because it moves the other powers of man and moved because it is moved by the good⁵⁶), it must take on from its mover the good or the object of appetite, a form by which it becomes such a mover, somewhat as a hammer must take on momentum from the hand in order to drive the nail. But a thing only gives what it has, so the will must take on from the object

but love little. As a matter of fact those spiritual persons whose understanding of God is not very advanced usually make progress according to their wills, while infused faith suffices for their knowledge. By means of this faith God infuses charity in them, and augments this charity and its act, which means greater love, although, as we said, their knowledge is not increased. Thus the will can drink love without the intellect again drinking knowledge..." *The Spiritual Canticle*, Stanza 26, #8. In *The Collected Works of John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D., and Otilio Rodriguez, O.C.D. (ICS Publications: Washington, D.C., 1979), pp. 512-513.

⁵⁵[Voluntas] transformatur in illum finem, quod fit per caritatem. Appetitus enim uniuscuiusque rei naturaliter movetur et tendit in finem sibi connaturalem, et iste motus provenit ex quadam conformitate rei ad suum finem. Ia, Q. 62, a. 3, c.

⁵⁶Aristotle, *De Anima*, III, ch. 10.

of the will some likeness to that object, which likeness is then a principle of the operation of the will.⁵⁷ Consequently, the will in its operation becomes like the object of the will – thus if we love what is beneath us, we become worse, while if we love what is above us, we are elevated.

The lover, whose affection is informed by the good itself ... is inclined through love to work according to the demands of the beloved, and such operation is most delightful to him, as if befitting his form; whence, whatever the lover does and suffers for the beloved, it is all delightful to him, and he is always more and more set on fire by the beloved, insofar as he experiences a greater delight in the beloved in those things which he does or suffers for the beloved. And just as fire is not able to be restrained from the motion which belongs to it according to the demands of its form, except through violence, so neither can the lover be restrained from acting according to love.⁵⁸

⁵⁷In III *Sent.* D. 27, Q. 1, a. 1. A fine translation of this text and of many others on our topic from the *Commentary on the Sentences* is found in *On Love and Charity: Readings from the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, trans. Peter A. Kwasniewski, Thomas Bolin, and Joseph Bolin (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 2008). My own translation is a modification of theirs.

It is important not to conflate agency and finality even though we tend to imagine all causality after the manner of an agent cause. Thus, in the text we are discussing, St. Thomas speaks as if the end moves as does an agent, but if this were simply so, agency would not be a sort of causality distinct from finality. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I, 7.

⁵⁸Amans, cuius affectus est informatus ipso bono, quod habet rationem finis, quamvis non semper ultimi, inclinatur per amorem ad operandum secundum exigentiam amati; et talis operatio est maxime sibi delectabilis, quasi formae suae conveniens; unde amans quidquid facit vel patitur pro amato, totum est sibi delectabile, et semper magis accenditur in amatum, in quantum majorem delectationem in amato experitur in his quae propter ipsum facit vel patitur. Et sicut ignis non potest retineri a motu qui competit sibi secundum

In the act of loving God, then, especially in the act of supernatural love called charity, we are made like God, for he is in himself our object in that love. And, as we have seen, this conformity gives us a connaturality with God such that we desire what he desires and we even recognize his truths by our love of them. So much is this so, that when St. Thomas speaks of charity, he associates with it the gift of wisdom, for this wisdom is had by a kind of conformity with God. St. Thomas explains this conformity as follows:

It is to be said that the operation of the intellect is completed according as the thing understood is in the one who understands, and therefore the nobility of the intellectual operation is taken according to the measure of the intellect. But the operation of the will, and of any appetitive power, is perfected in the inclination of the one who desires to a thing [desired] as to a term. The dignity of the appetitive operation, therefore, is taken according to the thing which is the object of the operation. Those, however, which are below the soul are in the soul in a more noble way than they are in themselves, because each thing is in something through the mode of the thing in which they are, as is said in the Book of Causes, but what are above the soul are in themselves in a more noble way than they are in the soul. And therefore, concerning things which are below us, knowledge is more noble than love, because of which the Philosopher, in X Ethics, preferred the intellectual to the moral virtues. But concerning things which are above us, and principally in the case of the love of God, [love] is preferred to knowledge. And therefore charity is more excellent than faith.⁵⁹

exigentiam suae formae, nisi per violentiam; ita neque amans quin agat secundum amorem.... Ibid.

⁵⁹Ad primum ergo dicendum quod operatio intellectus completur secundum quod intellectum est in intelligente, et ideo nobilitas operationis intellectualis

By charity, too, we are made to dwell with the Lord and he with us. For it is a property of love that the beloved and the lover live together. "He that abides in charity abides in God and God in him" (1 Jn 4:16). When we love, the beloved must be in us by knowledge, and we ourselves strive to know the beloved as much as possible, in proportion to our love. With regard to the will, the beloved is in us because our inclination to the beloved is itself a sort of presence of the beloved in the lover. And the lover is in the beloved because he thinks of what is good for the beloved as good for himself; the union of friends in love makes of them one soul.⁶⁰

Yet when we speak of charity as the love of God, we cannot be understood to mean that the very act of love by which God loves himself *is* charity as it exists in our souls. God's act of love is God himself⁶¹ and, in loving himself, he spirates the Holy Spirit.⁶² Whenever St. Thomas speaks of charity, he will at some point bring up the question of whether charity is the Holy Spirit, arguing against Peter Lombard that it is not. In the *Summa*, he argues on two grounds: first, it would follow that the

attenditur secundum mensuram intellectus. Operatio autem voluntatis, et cuiuslibet virtutis appetitivae, perficitur in inclinatione appetentis ad rem sicut ad terminum. Ideo dignitas operationis appetitivae attenditur secundum rem quae est obiectum operationis. Ea autem quae sunt infra animam nobiliori modo sunt in anima quam in seipsis, quia unumquodque est in aliquo per modum eius in quo est, ut habetur in libro de causis, quae vero sunt supra animam nobiliori modo sunt in seipsis quam sint in anima. Et ideo eorum quae sunt infra nos nobilior est cognitio quam dilectio, propter quod philosophus, in X Ethic., praetulit virtutes intellectuales moralibus. Sed eorum quae sunt supra nos, et praecipue dilectio Dei, cognitioni praefertur. Et ideo caritas est excellentior fide. Ia-IIae, Q. 23, a. 6, ad 1. Cf. Ia-IIae, Q. 23, Intro.; Ia, Q. 1, a. 6, c.

⁶⁰Ia-IIae, Q. 28, a. 2, c.

⁶¹Et sic oportet in Deo esse voluntatem, cum sit in eo intellectus. Et sicut suum intelligere est suum esse, ita suum velle. Ia, Q. 19, a. 1, c. Cf. also Ia, Q. 59, a. 2, c.

⁶²Ia, Q. 36, a. 1, c.

act of charity is not voluntary, since a motion derived entirely from an external agent is not voluntary; and secondly, the act of charity would not be meritorious, whereas charity is the root of all merit.⁶³ It would in fact diminish the notion of divinization to say that charity is the Holy Spirit himself, for then we ourselves would have no connaturality with the act of loving God by charity – we would only be moved and would in no way be active in adhering to God.

Charity, then, like faith, is a habit in a power of the soul, a habit flowing forth from the grace that is in the essence of the soul as natural powers flow from the natural essence of the soul. The Holy Spirit moves us to love, and we, having the habit of charity, share in that motion of love. Thus charity is another mode of divinization, for through it we are enabled to love God as he is in himself and to do so from our own power in a connatural way. We conclude that grace divinizes us in the essence of our soul, and also in our powers of intellect and will, by causing in them forms which are like to God. By pouring out into our powers of intellect and will new habits, habits which have a new, connatural object, namely God himself, and by allowing us to be moved by God as by an agent through those theological virtues to a final cause beyond nature, to union with God, grace makes us partakers in the divine nature.

Grace elevates our likeness to God not only with regard to the divinity of God, but also with regard to the Trinity. We are

⁶³Ia-IIae, Q. 23, a. 2, c. Cf. Ia-IIae, Q. 114, a. 3, c: Si autem loquamur de opere meritorio secundum quod procedit ex gratia spiritus sancti, sic est meritorium vitae aeternae ex condigno. Sic enim valor meriti attenditur secundum virtutem spiritus sancti moventis nos in vitam aeternam; secundum illud Ioan. IV, “Fiet in eo fons aquae salientis in vitam aeternam.” Attenditur etiam pretium operis secundum dignitatem gratiae, per quam homo, consors factus divinae naturae, adoptatur in filium Dei, cui debetur hereditas ex ipso iure adoptionis, secundum illud Rom. VIII, “Si filii, et heredes.” Cf. *Questio disputata de caritate*, a. 1; *I Sent.*, D. 17, Q. 1, a. 1, c.

in the image of God by nature insofar as we have an intellectual nature the operations of which are carried out through processions of the word of the heart and of love, and are in that image as much as nature can make us when we think on and love God. Yet we are in the image of God even more so when we know him by faith and love him by charity. Under these conditions, we attain him as he attains himself, that is, we know about him what could only be known by him and we love him as he is in himself. In the question on the missions of the Persons, St. Thomas speaks of this conformity to the Trinity:

The soul through grace is conformed to God. Whence for this that some divine person be sent to someone through grace, it is necessary that there comes to be an assimilation of him to a divine person who is sent to someone through some gift of grace. And because the Holy Spirit is love, through the gift of charity the soul is assimilated to the Holy Spirit, whence, the mission of the Holy Spirit is understood according to the gift of charity. The Son, however, is the Word, not of just any sort, but spirating love, whence Augustine says, in IX de Trin., “the word which we intend to imply is knowledge with love.” The Son is not sent according to just any perfection of the intellect, then, but according to such an instruction of the intellect as makes one burst forth into an affection of love, as is said in John (Jn 6:45): “Everyone that has heard from the Father and has learned, comes to Me,” and in the Psalms (Ps. 38:4): “In my meditation a fire shall flame forth.” And so Augustine says significantly that the Son is sent when he is known and perceived by someone, for perception signifies a certain experiential knowledge. And this is properly called wisdom (*sapientia*), as if to say, a sweet knowledge (*sapida scientia*), according to

Ecclus. 6:23: "The wisdom of doctrine is according to her name."⁶⁴

Charity conforms us to God, not only because we are moved by God and to God, but also because the very principle of our act of love, the habit of charity, is a likeness of the Holy Spirit.

As an agent cause, God puts into our souls grace and the theological virtues, and these are likenesses to himself. Moreover, he moves us in accordance with these virtues, and so has given us habits by which divine operations, namely, knowing and loving God as he is in himself, may arise in us by his aid. Since the agent is present in the patient, and these actions of God are motions towards himself, they allow us to share even more in his divine nature. As an exemplar cause, he likens us to himself by the grace in the essence of the soul and the theological habits in our powers: insofar as these produce operations of the sort he himself has, they must be in some way likenesses of his nature. And insofar as our intellect and will, by grace, tend to God as to an end in an elevated way, God is our final cause as our blessedness.

⁶⁴Ad secundum dicendum quod anima per gratiam conformatur Deo. Unde ad hoc quod aliqua persona divina mittatur ad aliquem per gratiam, oportet quod fiat assimilatio illius ad divinam personam quae mittitur per aliquod gratiae donum. Et quia spiritus sanctus est amor, per donum caritatis anima spiritui sancto assimilatur, unde secundum donum caritatis attenditur missio spiritus sancti. Filius autem est verbum, non quaecumque, sed spirans amorem, unde Augustinus dicit, in IX libro de Trin., "verbum quod insinuare intendimus, cum amore notitia est." Non igitur secundum quamlibet perfectionem intellectus mittitur filius, sed secundum talem instructionem intellectus, qua prorumpat in affectum amoris, ut dicitur Ioan. VI, "omnis qui audivit a patre, et didicit, venit ad me"; et in Psalm., "in meditatione mea exardescet ignis." Et ideo signanter dicit Augustinus quod filius mittitur, cum a quoquam cognoscitur atque percipitur, perceptio enim experimentalem quandam notitiam significat. Et haec proprie dicitur sapientia, quasi sapida scientia, secundum illud Eccli. VI, "sapientia doctrinae secundum nomen eius est." Ia, Q. 43, a. 5, ad 2.

But there is more. We do not by sanctifying grace have the fullness of the gifts God bestows on his loved ones. There is a yet greater inheritance awaiting those who are faithful, the very vision of God, seen by the light of glory. While the charity we have been speaking of remains in the kingdom of God, the gifts of faith and hope, because they are imperfect, belonging to those who do not see and do not possess, pass away and are replaced by the possession of God in the beatific vision.⁶⁵ In order to have this divine operation of the intellect, we must have the divine object, which is the essence of God himself. But his essence cannot be known by way of any likeness, for no likeness would sufficiently express God's essence. We must have God as our immediate object, just as he is the immediate object of our wills in charity. As St. Thomas argues, this is not connatural to any intellect but God's, and so we need an additional light to attain this object, a light which St. Thomas calls the light of glory.

Everything which is elevated to something exceeding its nature must be disposed by some disposition which is above its nature...When some created intellect sees God through his essence, the very essence of God becomes the intelligible form of the intellect. Whence it is necessary that some supernatural disposition be superadded to it, for this that it be elevated to such sublimity. Since, therefore, the natural power of the created intellect does not suffice for seeing the essence of God, as was shown,⁶⁶ it is necessary that by divine grace there be grafted on to it a power of understanding.... And this is the light about which it is said (Apoc 21), that the glory of God illumined it (namely, the society of the blessed seeing God). And according to this light we are made deiform, that is, like to God; according to John (1 Jn 3:2): "When

⁶⁵Ia, Q. 12, a. 2; IIa-IIae, Q. 18, a. 2, c.

⁶⁶The reference is to Ia, Q. 12, a. 4.

R. Glen Coughlin

he shall appear we shall be like to him, and we shall see him as he is.”⁶⁷

This light of glory is in at least one place described as a perfection of the light of grace, so we should not think there is a complete rupture between the life of grace here below and the life of glory. Rather, there is a sort of continuity: “To the second it must be said that a form does not exceed the proportion of its matter, but they are of the same genus. Similarly, too, grace and glory are referred to the same genus, because grace is nothing other than a certain beginning of glory in us...”⁶⁸

⁶⁷Respondeo dicendum quod omne quod elevatur ad aliquid quod excedit suam naturam, oportet quod disponatur aliqua dispositione quae sit supra suam naturam, sicut, si aer debeat accipere formam ignis, oportet quod disponatur aliqua dispositione ad talem formam. Cum autem aliquis intellectus creatus videt Deum per essentiam, ipsa essentia Dei fit forma intelligibilis intellectus. Unde oportet quod aliqua dispositio supernaturalis ei superaddatur, ad hoc quod elevetur in tantam sublimitatem. Cum igitur virtus naturalis intellectus creati non sufficiat ad Dei essentiam videndam, ut ostensum est, oportet quod ex divina gratia superacrescat ei virtus intelligendi. Et hoc augmentum virtutis intellectivae illuminationem intellectus vocamus; sicut et ipsum intelligibile vocatur lumen vel lux. Et istud est lumen de quo dicitur Apoc. XXI, quod claritas Dei illuminabit eam, scilicet societatem beatorum Deum videntium. Et secundum hoc lumen efficiuntur deiformes, idest Deo similes; secundum illud I Ioan. III, “cum apparuerit, similes ei erimus, et videbimus eum sicuti est.” Ia, Q. 12, a. 5, c.

⁶⁸Ad secundum dicendum quod forma non excedit proportionem materiae, sed sunt eiusdem generis. Similiter etiam gratia et gloria ad idem genus referuntur, quia gratia nihil est aliud quam quaedam inchoatio gloriae in nobis. IIa-IIae, Q. 24 a. 3, ad 2. St. Thomas indicates the following proportion: grace : glory :: matter : form. As matter is a sort of beginning of form, because it is a potency for it and is, if proximate, proportioned in some way to it, as lumber is wood prepared for the carpenter to give it the form he chooses, so grace is like a matter prepared for the gift of glory. It seems that the numerical unity of the charity of the wayfarer with that of the blessed demands as much, since the subject from which that charity flows is the graced soul. Perhaps the graced soul can be compared to an eye in darkness – it longs for light, so that its natural appetite attains in some way its object, but it does not have that light, which, when added, brings to completion and rest the desire of the eye for light

Thus, glory is the culmination of our conformity to Christ. As St. John of the Cross says,

This vision is the cause of the soul's complete likeness to God. St. John [the Evangelist] says, "We know that we shall be like Him" (1 Jn. 3:2) not because the soul will have as much capacity as God – this is impossible – but because all that it is will become like God. Thus it will be called, and shall be, God through participation.⁶⁹

And elsewhere he says:

This transformation into divine life will be effected perfectly in heaven, in all those who merit the vision of God. Transformed in God, these blessed souls will live the life of God and not their own life – although indeed it will be their own life, because God's life will be theirs. Then they will truly proclaim: We live, now not we, but God lives in us.⁷⁰

Very briefly, then, the final aspect of divinization is the light of glory and the operation of the intellect which it permits – the vision of the essence of God. This vision is effected not by way of a created concept adequate to God himself, for no concept can be adequate⁷¹ unless it be that concept which is the perfect Word of God.⁷² God himself is present to our intellect in the beatific vision; he takes the place of a concept by which we know the object of our knowledge, so that the object and the light by

and vision. So too our hearts, graced by God, long for God and already even here below attain him as he is, but the longing is perfected by the light of glory and the vision it attends. The eye enlightened is like the soul in glory, and as light is to the eye as form to matter, so is glory to grace.

⁶⁹*The Dark Night*, Ch. 20, #5.

⁷⁰*The Spiritual Canticle*, Stanza 12, #8.

⁷¹Ia, Q. 12, a. 2.

⁷²Ia, Q. 27, aa. 1-2; Q. 34, a. 1.

which we know the object are one and the same. In order to cause this, God causes in us the light of glory: "In your light we shall see light itself" (Ps 35:10).

We have traced, too superficially and hastily, the meaning of divinization and how it is related to charity defined as friendship with God. Our Lord tells his apostles: "I no longer call you servants but friends, for everything I have heard from my Father I have made known to you" (Jn 15:15). To be a friend is to share a life, to form a community around a shared common good. But man as he is cannot do this with God, even if God should become a man. Man must himself become a god. But to become a god while remaining a man is to partake in the divine nature. This partaking is by way of grace, faith, and charity in this life, and by way of glory, the beatific vision, and charity in the next. In each case, that of natural knowledge and love, that of grace, and that of glory, we are the image of the Trinity. In grace and glory we have, as the object of the intellect and will, God himself immediately, and so we share in operations which are proper to God alone, and, as they are then connatural to us, we are "partakers of the divine nature."

The purpose of the creature is to imitate God and to return to him in whatever way it is able. But God has not stopped at creating a creature which could naturally attain to knowledge and love of God as a beginning and an end. He has, by grace and glory, raised us to share in his own life to such an extent that we are made to know God himself in his own essence and to love him as he loves himself. In him we see and love him and what he himself knows and loves, for his one and simple act, which is both love and knowledge at once, is not only knowledge and love of himself but also of us and of the world. Charity and the beatific vision complete in the most perfect possible way the return of the world to God because they make of man a god, a god who, though he is himself within the world, carries the

CHARITY AND DIVINIZATION ACCORDING TO ST. THOMAS

world within himself as known and loved by God. “All things come forth from charity as from a principle and all things are ordered to charity as to an end.”⁷³ The divinized creature, loving with the charity of God and seeing with the mind of God, is the culmination of creation, because it is in that creature that the world fully returns to its source.

⁷³*In Joan.* XV, 12 (C. 15, l. 2, #2006) A caritate omnia procedunt sicut a principio et in caritatem omnia ordinantur sicut in finem.

THE AQUINAS REVIEW SUBSCRIPTION FORM

The Aquinas Review is issued yearly at no charge to subscribers. If you would like to receive a copy, please fill out the following information, detach the page, and mail it to:

Subscriptions, *The Aquinas Review*,
10,000 N. Ojai Road,
Santa Paula, CA 93060.

Subscriptions may also be requested by electronic mail to
vsalazar@thomasaquinas.edu
(please provide your postal address).

Name _____

Address _____

Tel. (optional) _____

Persons wanting information on Thomas Aquinas College itself should call or write the Dean, Brian Kelly, or the Director of Planned Giving, Thomas J. Susanka, Thomas Aquinas College, 10,000 N. Ojai Road, Santa Paula, CA 93060; (800) 634-9797, or (805)525-4417, locally.

