All Given and All Received: *Deus in se* in Aquinas' *Summa theologiae*
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I.   *Ipsum esse subsistens* is a real Giving and Receiving of Itself to Itself

Very being [*ipsum esse subsistens*] is real, not notional, giving [*dare*] and receiving [*accipere*] of itself to itself. This giving and receiving of infinite being forming three infinite subsistences, makes understandable, though not by a compelled necessity, the emanation of finite beings, what religion calls creation. Thomas' *thearchy* unrolls and rewinds by way of linked concentric circular motions ever more inclusive of otherness until the *Summa theologiae*, if completed, would have described even the encircling of evil within the *mone, proodos, epistrophe* of Thomas' tripartite system of God, human, and Christ as the man-God. The circular motions returning upon themselves are of diverse kinds, and we must map them and their connections at the end of this talk, but by far the most important are those which Aquinas deduces from the Proclean logic of simple substance.[1]

From the *Liber de causis* and Dionysius, he knows that simple substance has perfect self-return, a shape he has manifested, following Dionysius, in the initial questions on the divine names. In consequence, *ipsum esse subsistens* is, by the absolute necessity of its nature, knowing and willing.[2] These two operations, processions or emanations—the terms are used more or less interchangeably by Aquinas for whom emanation was a Scriptural term (*Liber Sapientiae*, 7.25[3])—are

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[1] On which see K. Corrigan, "L'Auto-réflexivité et l'expérience humaine dans l'*Ennéade* V, 3 [49], et autres traités: de Plotin à Thomas d'Aquin," *Études sur Plotin*, éd. M. Fattal (Paris - Montreal: L'Harmattan, 2000): 149–172 and my "Between and Beyond Augustine and Descartes: More than a Source of the Self," *Augustinian Studies* 32:1 (2001): 65–88 at 84–85.

[2] For the beginning of an analysis of the connection between physical circling and knowing as reflection, see Stephen Menn, "Self-Motion and Reflection: Hermias and Proclus on the Harmony of Plato and Aristotle on the Soul," in James Wilberding and Christoph Horn (eds.), *Neoplatonism and the Philosophy of Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 44–67; at 65–67 Menn treats Aquinas whom he finds to be the first person using *reflexio* or *reflectio* "as something like a technical term."

[3] See W.J. Hankey, "*Ab uno simplici non est nisi unum*: The Place of Natural and Necessary Emanation in Aquinas' Doctrine of Creation," in *Divine Creation in Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Thought: Essays Presented to the Rev'd Dr Robert D. Crouse*, edited by Michael Treschow, Willemien Otten and Walter Hannam, Studies in Intellectual History (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 309–333 at 310. As a result emanation is used a term for the *proodos* more by Latin Christian theologians than by pagan Platonists.

internal to the divine essence. By employing the notion of motionless motion, through which the Neoplatonists reconciled Plato and Aristotle at their greatest difference, Aquinas is able to attribute the characteristics of Plotinian *NOUS* to Aristotle's (and his own) God as self-thinking thought and to predicate life of it.[4] However, motionless motion is a metaphor for Aquinas—he always refuses to apply the proper Aristotelian physical motion to God even if the ascent to God begins with it in the *Quinque Viae* of *Summa theologiae* 1.2.3—nonetheless, the divine self-diremption must be real. Thus we get "*Et licet motus non sit in divinis, est tamen ibi accipere.*" [*ST* 1.42.1 ad 3]. *Accipere* and its correlative *dare* are essential to the logic of infinite *esse*, as the form under which it is, or contains, the relation of opposites. Such a relation is real, the differentiation of the essence in the opposition of action and reception is not merely "rational", that is, a creation of perspective. Thus, within the divine simplicity, the two relations of this kind must of necessity form subsistences, or hypostases, to use another word which is both Scriptural and Neoplatonic, called persons in religious language.[5]

In what follows I shall first outline reasons why we should look at Thomas' metaphysics of infinite being as including the whole fundamental structure of the *Deus in se*. I shall go on to say something about why we are able to do so, and shall then pass to what prevents such an obvious reading. Finally, I shall map the logic of *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* in the *Deus in se* of the *Summa theologiae* and indicate how it founds finite existence.

II.   Why we should look for Thomas' metaphysics of infinite being through the whole *Deus in se*.

As well as disposing of the "personal God" which has been imposed on Aquinas in the grotesque re-anthromorphizing of divinity of the last two centuries, a fundamental logic of *esse* as poetic and receptive in itself is far more interesting metaphysically than the notion of *esse* as existential facticity.[6] By contemplating

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[4] My interpretation here is fully within the later medieval Thomist tradition, especially as taken up along the Rhine in the *sillage* of Albertus Magnus and worked out in dialogue with the texts of Thomas by Eckhart, see Evan King, "'*Bonum non est in Deo*': on the Indistinction of the One and the Exclusion of the Good in Meister Eckhart," M.A. thesis Dalhousie University (2012), 80–101. I am deeply grateful to Evan for the interest he has taken in this paper and his help with it. My thanks is equally owed, and very willingly given, to the members of my seminar for 2012-13 who worked through Questions 1 to 45 of the *Summa theologiae* with me. Their work confirmed Thomas' judgment that the order of the *Summa* is the *ordo disciplinae*.

[5] See Hebrews 1.3.

[6] See W.J. Hankey, "Making Theology Practical: Thomas Aquinas and the Nineteenth Century Religious Revival," *Dionysius* 9 (1985): 85–127, especially 99–100 & 105–106 and idem, "From Metaphysics to History, from Exodus to Neoplatonism, from Scholasticism to Pluralism: the fate of Gilsonian Thomism in English-speaking North America," *Dionysius* 16 (1998): 157–188. For a

the self-affectivity of *esse*, we would pass from that now barren rapprochement with Heidegger and its continuation in Christian anti Neoplatonic polemic to fruitful engagement with the Dominican tradition from Albertus Magnus to Meister Eckhart in the Middle Ages and with Michel Henry and his followers in contemporary philosophy—to say nothing of the scare name for Catholic medievalists, Hegel.[7] Considering the whole *de deo* as Aquinas' metaphysic of infinite *esse* also has the advantage of fidelity to his identification of *esse* and *essentia* in the simplicity of the infinite. In consequence, this approach enables us to understand the unrolling and rewinding of the thearchy as the explication of the infinite *essentia*.

Further, it does away with the grounds of a distorting polemic conducted in the last century from all sides of the Christian ecclesiastical spectrum: Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, and anti-metaphysical and anti-Augustinian Catholicism, against Thomas' treatment of God. The polemists claimed that Aquinas' *de deo* subordinated the proper Christian theology of the Unknowable Trinity to philosophical knowledge of God as one and asserted that Aquinas followed

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reassertion of the philosophical fecundity of Gilson's existential Thomism see D.J.M. Bradley, "Reading Thomas as a Theologian: The Hermeneutics of some Medievalists Old and New," *Dionysius* 25 (2007): 177–224 at 177.

[7] See on Michel Henry, to whom I owe the notion of self-affectivity as primary, my *One Hundred Years of Neoplatonism in France: A Brief Philosophical History,* Studies in Philosophical Theology (Leuven/Paris/Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2006), 209–215, idem, "The Ineffable Immediately Incarnate. Interplay between 20th century French Neoplatonism and Heidegger" for a conference on Heidegger and Theology at The Oxford Centre for Theology and Modern European Thought, Christ Church College, Oxford University, May 24, 2008 online at the Oxford University Research Archive [http://ora.ouls.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid%3A05c4da8d-d3f0-44c2-b29c-12f8392b00e9/]. In contrast on Jean-Luc Marion, who despite all his nuances still wanders, with too many others, including Humbrecht, mostly in Gilson's metaphysical desert, supposing that this is the way out of the modern captivity of the Catholic Church to a new triumph, see my *One Hundred Years*, 201–209, idem, "Denys and Aquinas: Antimodern Cold and Postmodern Hot," *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric and Community*, edited by Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones, Studies in Christian Origins (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 139–184 at 150–163, idem, "Philosophical Religion and the Neoplatonic Turn to the Subject," *Deconstructing Radical Orthodoxy: Postmodern Theology, Rhetoric and Truth*, edited by Wayne J. Hankey and Douglas Hedley (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Press, 2005), Chapter 2, 17–30 at 20–21, idem, "Radical Orthodoxy's *Poiêsis*: Ideological Historiography and Anti-Modern Polemic," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 80:1 (Winter 2006): 1–21 at 9–13, idem, "Misrepresenting Neoplatonism in Contemporary Christian Dionysian Polemic: Eriugena and Nicholas of Cusa versus Vladimir Lossky and Jean-Luc Marion," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 82:4 (2008): 683–703 at 701–703, and idem, "Jean-Luc Marion's Dionysian Neoplatonism," *Perspectives sur le néoplatonisme, International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, Actes du colloque de 2006*, édité par Martin Achard, Wayne Hankey, Jean-Marc Narbonne, Collection Zêtêsis (Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2009), 267–280.

Augustine in this. In fact the opposite is the case both in terms of historical influence and in terms of Thomas' understanding of the unity from which his treatise on God begins.[8]

Thomas does distinguish his treatment of God as one from his consideration of God as three. However, first, and crucially, in the *Summa theologiae* these are moments in a single treatise, not separated treatises.[9] Second, he is explicit that the One from which he begins is unknowable—theology here is deeply negative, that God conforms to the mode of our knowing is continually denied. Finally, the distinction of the *de deo uno* from the *de deo trino* is explicitly, and correctly derived by Aquinas from the profoundly negative theology of Dionysius the Areopagite. Thomas' *de deo uno* has its justification and model in *The Divine Names* of Dionysius, a treatise itself dependent on Proclus.[10] In the initial questions of the *Summa theologiae* (3–11) Aquinas follows Dionysius both in beginning from the unknowable One,[11] and in making the divine names circle upon themselves.

We have in Aquinas' modification of Proclus, Dionysius, Augustine and Aristotle both a deeply interesting metaphysic and a distinctly Christian one. Aquinas, following Al-Ghazali and Maimonides, and in contradistinction from his 13th century Augustinian adversaries, like Bonaventure, predecessors like Anselm, and successors like Eckhart, Hegel, and Michel Henry, identifies some religious doctrines where philosophy cannot provide certain demonstration. He will deduce neither the Trinity, nor the creation, nor the Incarnation from the idea of God. Nonetheless, in the case of the Trinity, this is not because it is inessential to the logic of infinite *esse*. Rather, for Aquinas, although there is an analogy between the Trinitarian structure of human knowing and that of the divine, the likeness is not strong enough to enable a philosophical demonstration. Human reason must be aided by revelation in order to discover that the relations in God are real and form infinite and equal divine subsistences. Revelation is required for us to know that there is real *dare* and *accipere* in God. However, that submission of the essence to itself is absolutely necessary.

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[8] See my "The *De Trinitate* of St. Boethius and the Structure of St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*," *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Studi Boeziani*, ed. L. Obertello, (Roma: Herder, 1981), 367–375, idem, *God in Himself: Aquinas' Doctrine of God as Expounded in the Summa Theologiae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987/ 2000), 12, idem, "Denys and Aquinas," 162–173.

[9] It is important to be clear that I am concerned with the logic of Aquinas' *de deo* in the *Summa theologiae* which has the *ordo disciplinae* and not his other treatments. For example, he separates the *de deo uno* from the *de deo trino* in the *Summa contra Gentiles* because it is written for Dominican missionaries among either Christian heretics, or non-Christians, or both. See my *God in Himself*, 19–35.

[10] In agreement with the scholarship, Humbrecht is clear about this.

[11] He is explicit that the divine simplicity is known only negatively.

A Thomist scholar to whose two recently published books we shall turn in a few minutes has pointed out that the argumentation in Thomas' *de deo* becomes more affirmative when the *de deo trino* is reached. In my view, he gives the wrong reason for this. Nonetheless, relative to the old polemic, it is significant that the movement of the *Deus in se* is from negative to positive, and not contrariwise. The reason is not hard to understand. In the kind of Neoplatonic thinking which is Thomas', as we move from simplicity to real multiplicity, we come closer to human modes and the capacity of human understanding.

III.   What reason can be given for presenting the Trinitarian culmination of Aquinas' theology as fundamental metaphysics to a university programme in Philosophy?

In a few minutes I shall give some of the reasons why the metaphysical logic of Aquinas' *Ipsum esse subsistens* is not treated in its integrity in either "Philosophy" or "Theology" departments or faculties. Unfortunately, this prevails in the Catholic academic world and in the so-called secular academe, largely dominated in the Anglophone world by secularised Calvinism, and, in the French and American world, now including a militantly secularising Quebec, by the necessities of *laicité*.[12] Hope comes from the presence of Classicists, whether in Philosophy departments or in Theology schools, where such training was once almost universal.[13]

That theology belongs to Ancient and Medieval Philosophy cannot be doubted. It is after all, to mention nothing else, one of the names Aristotle gave the science also called wisdom, and the science of being as being, and which came many centuries after him to be designated as "metaphysics".[14] Moreover, we do not need to wait for Philo or Iamblichus for this theology to include revelation as well as the activity of discursive rationality and intellectual

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[12] See generally *Changing our Mind on Secularization. The Contemporary Debate about Secular and Sacred in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Proceedings of the 29th Annual Atlantic Theological Conference Charlottetown, June 23rd to 26th 2009, edited Wayne J. Hankey and Nicholas Hatt (Charlottetown: St Peter Publications, 2010).

[13] See my "*Memoria*, *Intellectus*, *Voluntas:* the Augustinian Centre of Robert Crouse's Scholarly Work," *Dionysius* 30 (2012): 41–76.

[14] See my "Natural Theology in the Patristic Period," *Oxford Handbook of Natural Theology*, edited Russell Re Manning (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 38–56 at 38–43; Luc Brisson, "Un si long Anonymat," *La métaphysique: son histoire, sa critique, ses enjeux*, éd. L. Langlois et J.-M. Narbonne, Collection Zêtêsis (Paris/Québec: Vrin/Presses de l'Université Laval, 1999), 37–60 at 38–40; for Aquinas' use of the names of Aristotle's highest science see my "Why Philosophy Abides for Aquinas," *The Heythrop Journal*, 42:3 (2001): 329–348 at 341–345 where I also consider Jean-Luc Marion on the subject. His paper in *La métaphysique: son histoire, sa critique, ses enjeux* is of considerable importance.

intuition. The primary Greek theologians Homer and Hesiod[15] are clear about their dependence on divine inspiration. Parmenides, in founding the logic of being, is equally explicit, and both Plato and Aristotle are clear that humans can possess the knowledge which belongs properly to the divine because it is not jealous but rather wants humans to participate in its intellectual beatitude. Nonetheless, once theology becomes Trinitarian, most will think of looking for it in the ecclesiastical seminary, rather than here.

Theology as metaphysics, which always remained the fundamental logic of what is and what is not, of the known and the unknown, in the union and difference of εἶναι and νοεῖν, has a more or less continuous tradition in Greek and Latin texts from Parmenides to Nicholas of Cusa. The Renaissance Platonists start here, as well as from the texts of Plato. Aquinas, in the questions we shall consider, draws on almost the whole history before him. Certainly, his theology depends on Aristotle and the Greek, Latin, and Arabic Peripatetics, and, despite his almost complete ignorance of Plato's writings, on the Middle and Neo Platonists, who wrote in Greek, Latin or Arabic. Both the Aristotelian and Platonic traditions and their inner penetration, Hellenic, Christian, Jewish and Islamic, are essential to understanding his sources and his modifications of them. I want to appeal to classicists as well as to philosophers and theologians to take responsibility for this tradition, something English-speaking Classicists have been working at more seriously than we once did.[16] Understanding the Trinitarian culmination of Aquinas' theology as fundamental metaphysics, in the way Aquinas does, falls to philosophers trained as Classicists because this consideration will not, to my knowledge, be generally found in "Philosophy" departments, or in seminaries among the theologians. It falls to the duty and especial *métier* of philosophers and medievalists who look at texts in their integrity in the way Classicists do.

One of the many joys, and the great advantage, of treating works like the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas as a Classicist is not having to choose between whether it is a work of philosophy, revealed theology, or of spirituality, as an *itinerarium mentis in deum*.[17] In fact, it, and almost everything like it before it, from Parmenides "*The Way of Truth*" and Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, through Philo's *De Opificio*, Origen's *De Principiis*, Plotinus' treatises, Augustine's *De Trinitate*, Proclus' *Elements of Theology* and his *Platonic Theology*, Eriugena's

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[15] As Herodotus designates them.

[16] On Dodds' role in this turn see my "Re-evaluating E.R. Dodds' Platonism," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 103 (2007): 499–541.

[17] See my "'Knowing As We are Known' in *Confessions* 10 and Other Philosophical, Augustinian and Christian Obedience to the Delphic *Gnothi Seauton* from Socrates to Modernity," *Augustinian Studies* 34:1 (2003): 23–48 at 41–48 and Bradley, "Reading Thomas as a Theologian": 185ff.

Periphyseon, to Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in deum* are all three, often with treatments of literary hermeneutics as well. In the *sillage* of al-Ghazali and Moses Maimonides, Thomas' *Summa theologiae* will make the distinction between philosophical and revealed theologies which leads to the kind of division of genres we make currently. Nonetheless, the unity of philosophy, revelation and spirituality remains true both in it and for much after it. The *Summa theologiae* keeps all three together in a continuous movement within one work.

The *Deus in se* of the *Summa theologiae* has a compelling, logic, evolving in step by step modifications, from its beginning in Question 2 on the Existence of God to its completion in Question Forty-three on the Sending of the Divine Persons.[18] Indeed, that logic continues into the questions on creation, and thus into the *Summa* as a whole. Creation, in a series of contrasts with the Divine in itself, is represented as the result of a productive operation, that of power, which, unlike knowing and willing, works outside the essence, as a procession or emanation of the Trinitarian subsistences in their essential unity. Unlike the internal operations, that of power is neither according to nature nor necessity. It constitutes a relation with the opposition of giving and receiving, but, in contrast to the Trinity, the terms are unequal. Thus, the relation is not mutually of the relative terms but in the recipient. There are two gatherings, breaks and transitions within the *de deo*, but there is a strong impulse throughout, and the structure, when reduced to its elements, is stunningly simple.

IV.   What breaks up this metaphysical logic?

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[18] It begins in the order of the *Quinque Viae*. See my *God in Himself*, 141 & 142: "Thomas uses the causes to structure his writing only twice in the first forty-five questions of the *Summa theologiae*; in both cases he uses the same order. He places matter and form between the moving and final causes. Proper motion, as distinguished from activity generally, belongs to the material. When seen in relation to the divine causality, it involves a going out from simple immaterial being to matter which is raised to formal perfection as the good, or end, it lacks. In causing, God as the principle of all procession, i.e. the Father, knows the form by which he acts in [and as] the Son and loves the Son and himself as end in the Spirit. Thus understood, the order Thomas uses, in distinction from his sources in Aristotle, has a reason. The source of motion is the obvious beginning, just as its opposed cause, the final, is appropriate end….He says, glossing Aristotle, who also mentions their opposition, 'motion begins from efficient cause and ends at final cause' [*In Meta*. I.IV, 70]. '*Prima autem et manifestior via est, quae sumitur ex parte motus.*' The moving cause is an obvious point from which to start the ways to God within a theology which also begins from him. Those ways ended: '*Ergo est aliquid intelligens, a quo omnes res naturales ordinantur a finem, et hoc dicimus Deum*'. But '*intelligere et velle*' are motions as '*actus perfecti*' and as such display the '*rediens ad essentiam suam*'. This return is perfect in the divine being. Its *exitus* and *reditus* become fully manifest in the processions of persons founded in God's activities of knowledge and love; these in turn make intelligible the procession and return of creatures."

Thierry-Dominique Humbrecht's two recent books treating the *Deus in se* and Aquinas' *Summa theologiae* exhibit the institutional structures, the historical traditions, and the philosophical and theological aims and positions which separate the *deo uno* from the *deo trino* in a way the *Summa theologiae* does not do. These prevent seeing their unifying logic.

    Théologie négative et noms divins chez saint Thomas d'Aquin (Paris: Vrin, 2005), 841 pages, treats what belongs to the beginning questions of *de deo uno* the *Summa theologiae.* It publishes a dissertation directed by Olivier Boulnois, Directeur d'études at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, and Professeur at the Institut catholique de Paris. He was a student of and is now a collaborator with Professeur Jean-Luc Marion. Gilles Emery, O.P., Jean-Luc Marion, Remy Brague, Ruedi Imbach, and Alain de Libera were on the jury. *Théologie négative* earned Humbrecht a doctorate in philosophy from the secular École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris.

    It was succeeded by *Trinité et création au prisme de la voie négative chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Bibliothéque de la Revue thomiste (Paris: Parole et Silence, 2011); 788 pages devoted to the matter of the *de deo trino* and the initial questions concerning creation. *Trinité et création* was written as Fr Humbrecht's dissertation for the canonical doctorate in theology at the Dominican University of Fribourg in Switzerland. It was supervised there by Gilles Emery, O.P., Ordinary Professor of Dogmatic Theology at Fribourg, with François-Xavier Putallas, and Serge-Thomas Bonino, O.P. (of the Toulouse convent which publishes the *Revue thomiste*), on the jury, among other notable philosophical – theological scholars of St Thomas.

    Evidently it is of striking importance that what Aquinas united in one work, more than once, and what he set out by a continuous step by step argument in the *Summa theologiae,* is divided now between two disciplines, carried on in two very different, indeed, in some sense opposed, universities. Such disciplinary and institutional division is common in Western Christendom, indeed, almost universal, and this will be our primary concern. It is important that neither in *Théologie négative* nor in *Trinité et création* does Humbrecht work through the logic structuring Thomas' questions. About this, and the reasons for it, something must be said.

    I have already indicated that Aquinas himself made the distinction between what is known by the light of natural reason and what is known by a gracious addition to that which will work itself out over time in the kind of

separations we see with Humbrecht's books.[19] This distinction was new in Latin Christendom and was opposed by Aquinas's so-called "Augustinian" contemporaries. The Franciscans were fiercely against it. They led in the condemnations of the 1270s and of 1284 which were consequences of the separation of philosophy from revealed theology to which Aquinas ascribed, even if he was not, at least at first, the object of the condemnations, and even if there were more extreme separations and positions than his. One of the problems devilling the study of Aquinas is that we tend to read the authoritative position he came to have in the Catholic Church back into the High Middle Ages. Then he was a radical on the edge; some of his positions were implicated in the condemned propositions and approaches. The Franciscans not only carried off the palm in the period, but there is considerable truth in Gilson's position that during most of Thomism's history, Aquinas was interpreted through a Franciscan, Duns Scotus.[20] Be that as it may, the *Summa theologiae* unites what Aquinas identifies as the two lights of our knowledge.[21]

More important, ultimately, is the coming into being of the university in Latin world in the 12th and 13th centuries and the creation and separation within it of the Faculties of Arts, the home ground of philosophy, and of Theology. Although the university did not, and probably could not have developed in the Latin world without what it derived from the Arabic revival, mediation, and development of Greek philosophy, the Faculty of Arts gave it an institutional home it did not have in the Islamic world. The Arts *magistri* saved philosophy in the way it was carried on in the Western extreme of that world by Averroes and his like.[22] Philosophy and philosophers in the Faculty of Arts in Paris and elsewhere were subservient to theology and the theologians, according to the image and structure created by Aristotle of a queen and her handmaidens, picked up by Philo and normal in the 13th century.[23] However, throughout that

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[19] On which see my "Aquinas at the Origins of Secular Humanism? Sources and innovation in *Summa Theologiae* 1.1.1," *Nova et Vetera* [The English Edition of the International Theological Journal], 5:1 (2007): 17–40.
[20] On this, with references to the crucial literature, see my "Self and Cosmos in Becoming Deiform: Neoplatonic Paradigms for Reform by Self-Knowledge from Augustine to Aquinas," *Reforming the Church Before Modernity: Patterns, Problems and Approaches*, edited Christopher M. Bellitto and Louis I. Hamilton (Aldershot, England/ Burlington, VT.: Ashgate Press, 2005), Chapter 3, 39–60 at 42–46.
[21] *Summa theologiae*, 1.1.1ad2.
[22] See, on the difference between Eastern and Western in Islam, Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan.*
[23] See Robert D. Crouse, "St. Thomas, St. Albert, Aristotle: *Philosophia Ancilla Theologiae*," *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso nel suo settimo centenario*, i (Naples: Edizioni Domenicane Italiane, 1975), 181–185; idem, "*Philosophia Ancilla Theologiae*: Some texts from Aristotle's

century, with real success despite real danger from the authorities, philosophy asserted its substantiality as a way of life, and the Arts *magistri* maintained the propriety of having institutional autonomy and norms of their own.[24] The *magistri* were abetted, in accord with the implacable irony governing conflict, by the theologians who opposed them. Aquinas was properly a member of the Faculty of Theology and he certainly struggled against what he named, and helped to create, as "Latin Averroists," like Siger of Brabant, on Straw Street.[25] However, crucially, he transgressed both the philosophy – revealed theology, and the Arts – Theology faculty, boundaries in several ways, most notably by doing philosophy in the manner of the Arts *magistri* and according to their norms. Thus Aquinas helps philosophy's growing autonomy in the 13th century both by opposing it (or at least some practice of it) and by working according to its proper methods and norms as these were developed in the Faculty of Arts. He did this primarily by way of commentaries on Aristotle and the *Liber de causis*, astonishingly undertaken not as a preparatory work at the beginning of his labours but during the last years of his teaching and writing. Indeed, while he was working on the *Summa theologiae*, left unfinished, and later, he made his philosophical expositions and treatises important both for the interpretation of Aristotle and for his own philosophical and theological arguments.[26] So, with

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Metaphysica in the Interpretation of Albertus Magnus," *Actas del V Congreso Internacional de Filosofia Medieval*, 2 vols (Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1979) i, 657–661.

[24] See Bradley, "Reading Thomas as a Theologian": 189–197.

[25] There is an extensive literature, crucial parts of which are treated in my unpublished "Aquinas' New Aristotle and the Platonists: *Plotinus unus de magnis…inter commentatores de Aristotilis* (Aquinas, *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas*)," A lecture for the Medieval Institute of the University of Notre Dame, Background Paper. Essential are R.-A. Gauthier (ed) in Aquinas, *De Unitate Intellectus contra Averroistas*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina: vol. 43 (Rome 1976), 249–250 and in Aquinas, *Sententia libri de Anima*, ed. Fratrum Praedicatorum, Commissio Leonina, vol. 45, pars 1 (Commissio Leonina / Vrin: Rome / Paris, 1984), introduction; F.-X. Putallaz and R. Imbach, *Profession philosophe: Siger de Brabant*, Initiations au Moyen Âge (Paris: Cerf, 1997); Alain de Libera, *Raison et Foi: Archéologie d'une crise d'Albert le Grand à Jean-Paul II*, L'ordre philosophique (Paris: Seuil, 2003); B. Carlos Bazán, "Siger of Brabant," *A Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jorge J.E. Gracia and Timothy B. Noone, Blackwell Companions to Philosophy (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 632–642. Fundamentals of Gauthier's framework so far as they depend on hypotheses as to what Averroes' thought and how it was understood by Latins in the 13th-century are now undermined by Richard Taylor in Averroes (Ibn Rushd) of Cordoba, *Long Commentary on the* De Anima *of Aristotle* (New Haven/ London: Yale, 2010), xcvi–cv

[26] See my "Why Philosophy Abides for Aquinas," idem, "Thomas' Neoplatonic Histories: His following of Simplicius," *Dionysius* 20 (2002): 153–178, idem, "Philosophy as Way of Life for Christians? Iamblichan and Porphyrian Reflections on Religion, Virtue, and Philosophy in Thomas Aquinas," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 59:2 [Le Néoplatonisme] (Juin 2003): 193–

Aquinas, we have distinctions contained in that out of which they were divided, an institutional separation transgressed, a subordination overcome by the recognition of the integrity of nature, metaphysics and revelation united.

What happened to produce what we see in Humbrecht's two books? Several things: philosophical, doctrinal and institutional, indeed, we may say, political. Certainly a metaphysics grounded not in *esse* but in common being, provided the basis for a onto-theological structure which subordinated the divine to comprehended being. There is huge controversy as to when this occurred. Many from Gilson through Marion with their followers, blame this, which they designate as the metaphysical structure characteristic of modernity, and, thus, modernity itself, on Duns Scotus, but this is contested. Probably we must wait for the 18th century and Christian Wolff for the elements to coalesce in this way.[27] Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that Thomistic scholasticism became a form of shallow rationalism.[28] Doctrinally, corresponding to this was the notion of "pure nature" conceived as the complete correlative of grace; the idea was fathered on Augustine and Aquinas as the Eden, so to speak, in which to construct philosophical proofs of Catholic dogmas, independent of revelation. Certainly one of the most important scholarly works in respect to Aquinas in the 20th century was Henri de Lubac's demonstration that "pure nature" was opposed to the teaching of both these great authorities and was also pernicious.[29] De Lubac wrote:

224, and idem, "*Participatio divini luminis*, Aquinas' doctrine of the Agent Intellect: Our Capacity for Contemplation," *Dionysius* 22 (2004): 149–78.

[27] See Richard Cross, "Duns Scotus and Suarez at the Origins of Modernity," *Deconstructing Radical Orthodoxy: Postmodern Theology, Rhetoric and Truth*, edited Wayne J. Hankey and Douglas Hedley (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Press, 2005), Chapter 5, 65–80.

[28] See the judgements of Josef Pieper, "the customary interpretation of St Thomas has been considerably determined by Rationalist thought" (*The Silence of St Thomas*) and Joseph Owens ("Value and Person in Aquinas" *Atti del Congresso Internazionale Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo settimo centenario*, 9 vol., vii [Napoli, 1978], 57) as quoted in my "Making Theology Practical": 91–92 and see my *One Hundred Years*, 131–146.

[29] See his *Surnaturel. Études historiques*, nouvelle édition avec la traduction intégrale des citations latines et grecques by Michel Sales, Théologie (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991) and my *One Hundred Years*, 142–151, idem, "'Dionysius dixit, Lex divinitatis est ultima per media reducere': Aquinas, hierocracy and the 'augustinisme politique'," in *Tommaso D'Aquino: proposte nuove di letture. Festschrift Antonio Tognolo,* edited Ilario Tolomio, *Medioevo. Rivista di Storia della Filosofia Medievale*, 18 (Padova: Editrice Antenore, 1992), 119–150 at 130–133, idem, "From St Augustine and St Denys to Olier and Bérulle's Spiritual Revolution: Patristic and Seventeenth-Century Foundations of the Relations between Church and State in Québec," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 63:3 (octobre 2007): 515–559 at 525 and John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Debate concerning the Supernatural* (Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2005).

> [W]ishing to protect the supernatural from any contamination, people had in fact exiled it altogether…leaving the field free to be taken over by secularism….Christians…seek to find a harmony with things based on an idea of nature which might be acceptable to a deist or an atheist. The last word in Christian progress and the entry into adulthood would then appear to consist in a total secularization which would expel God not merely from the life of society, but from culture and even from personal relationships.[30]

Then, there was a crucial development, beginning at the latest in the 17th century, whereby speculative theology of the kind undertaken by Aquinas was replaced with "positive theology" directly at the service of the pastoral work of the ecclesiastical authorities. "It was based not on logical precision but rather on harmonizing the sources of the ecclesiastical tradition of the first six centuries: Fathers, Councils and Synods, ancient liturgies."[31] Theology is not in the university, nor founded an understanding of the nature of what is, but in the seminary, and is founded in what is necessary to the priests of the church: "Theology in respect to its substance has regard to what is necessary to the Church and her Priests (*Theologia secundum suam substantiam spectata est Ecclesiae eiusque Sacerdotibus necessaria.*)".[32] It is not insignificant that Humbrecht maintains that the *de deo trino* is kataphatic because here Aquinas is writing to serve ecclesiastical authority and that, for Humbrecht, this affirmation of doctrinal language founds our knowledge of the divine names. I shall speak of this reversal again in a few moments, but I must note here how foreign this procedure would be to the risk taking Aristotelian radical whose positions would have been seen as among those condemned in 1277 and 1284 had he not by a good providence, like Eckhart later, died opportunely.[33] And I say nothing here of the thoroughly and consistently systematic character of Thomas' mind. Of course, part of the same kind of church theology taught the doctrine of pure

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[30] de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), xxxv.

[31] B. Neveu, "French Theology and the Gallican Culture on the Shelves of the Library of the University of King's College, Halifax, Nova Scotia," Public Lecture in celebration of the Bicentennial of the Library of the University of King's College delivered October 4, 1989, *Epilogue/ Épilogue: Canadian Bulletin for the History of Books, Libraries, and Archives*, 10 (Fall/Automne, 1990): 1–16 at 5–6.

[32] My "From St Augustine and St Denys": 526, quoting *Compendiosae Institutiones Theologicae ad Usum Seminarii Pictaviensis,* issu et auctoritate illustrissimi ac reverentissimi Dom. D. Joannis-Claudii de la Poype de Vertrieu, Pictaviensis Episcopi, 5 tomes duodecimo (Poitiers: J. Faucon, 1729), i, Quest. 6, Resp. 1, 9.

[33] See my "Self and Cosmos", 43–44.

nature; thus, both distortions of what Aquinas practiced and taught were passed on together. They prevailed and were even more authoritatively universalised with the neo-Thomistic revival inaugurated in the 19th century, especially under Pope Leo XIII; it crushed, without annihilating, all other theology in the Catholic Church until the Second Vatican Council.

Two questions arise which have the same answer. What made Thomism so attractive to the Catholic Church? And why did it absorb so much that was alien to it? The answer can be expressed briefly, even if its working out was the labour of multitudes over centuries. On the political side, the humiliating failure of the ultimate assertion of the church's *potestas directa* by Boniface VIII in *Unam Sanctam* (November 18, 1302) made itself felt. The rise of secular power had its correlate, and often its support, in philosophical science carried on in the mode of the Averroist Aristotelianism of the Arts *Magistri*, i.e. with a sense of the autonomy, completeness, and internal finality of philosophy. There has been no permanent reversal of these since the 13th century and, indeed, as seen in figures like Dante and Emperor Frederick II, *Stupor Mundi*, what the translations from Arabic brought exceeded argument and structure in the university and entered the political.[34] The Church was forced to adapt. The Papacy, and its perceptive partisans, from the 14th century to Pope John Paul II in the 21st saw in Aquinas' use of a subordinated Aristotle a medium by which the Catholic Church could engage the secular and justify, politically, a *potestas indirecta*.[35] It made no difference that Thomas' own position was Dionysian in the manner of Boniface VIII and that his system was as much Platonist as Aristotelian. When used by institutions philosophers lose the right to have their teaching represented truthfully.

By this route we come back to the two books of Fr Humbrecht. Philosophically they are determined by the anti-metaphysical, anti-idealist, and anti-Neoplatonic existential Thomism of Gilson, deeply modified by the far more sophisticated understanding of Heidegger by Jean-Luc Marion who sees himself in the *sillage* of Lévinas and of an anti-Neoplatonic Dionysius. It is this which

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[34] See Ruedi Imbach, *Dante, la philosophie et les laïcs*, Initiations à la philosophie médiévale (Paris-Fribourg: Cerf–Éditions Universitaires Fribourg, 1996).

[35] See my "Pope Leo's Purposes and St. Thomas' Platonism," *Atti dell' VIII Congresso Tomistico Internazionale*, 8 vol., ed. A. Piolanti, viii, Studi Tomistici 17 (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1982), 39–52, idem, "Making Theology Practical", idem, "'Dionysius dixit", idem, "Dionysian Hierarchy in St. Thomas Aquinas: Tradition and Transformation," *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident, Actes du Colloque International Paris, 21-24 septembre 1994*, édités Ysabel de Andia, Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité 151 (Paris: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, 1997), 405–438, idem, "Philosophy as Way of Life for Christians?", idem, "Self and Cosmos in Becoming Deiform", idem, "Aquinas at the Origins of Secular Humanism?".

accounts for Humbrecht's refusal to follow the logic of the divine names in the *Summa theologiae*; it is unmistakably, as he admits, that of a modified Proclean Neoplatonism. Equally, Humbrecht must keep the *de deo uno* apart from the *de deo trino*, lest metaphysics do more than lead us to the Church's authoritative teaching of what is graciously revealed. Metaphysics may play a very limited role as propaedeutic, but it must have no substantial content and must never determine what belongs to faith. This understanding of philosophy and its role, and of the nature of theology, force Humbrecht to contradict without evidence the scholarly consensus on Aquinas' relation to Dionysius.[36]

As I indicated, Humbrecht's most novel assertion is that "Retroactively, the Trinity as a theological *corpus*, confers on the divine names an indispensable solidity".[37] For Humbrecht, because, following Proclus, and in accord with *Liber de Causis*, Dionysius privileges a superessential Trinity, Aquinas "discretely quits" him. The reason: "to save the appropriateness of our discourse about God".[38] The purpose of this salvage is in turn that "Thomas Aquinas wishes to make himself the servant of the [church] councils"; in particular he is moved by his desire to serve the purposes of Lateran IV.[39] Not a shred of evidence is offered for this astonishing reversal. In my view, it has against it the radical daring of Thomas in his fidelity to the integrity of philosophical reasoning, while he limits it vis-à-vis what faith alone can know, thus creating a new structure for Christian theology, his courageous defiance of the "Augustinian" Franciscans with ecclesiastical power on their side, and his determination in the *Summa theologiae* to at last present sacred doctrine in the right order. To that we now turn.

V.   A Map of the Logic of *Ipsum Esse Subsistens*, the *Deus in Se* of the *Summa theologiae*

See Powerpoint presentation

October 9, 2013

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[36] See most concisely, V. Boland, *Ideas in God According to Saint Thomas Aquinas. Sources and Synthesis*, Brill Studies in the History of Christian Thought 69 (Leiden: 1996), 310: "Dionysius must be interpreted always as a Catholic believer ... In Saint Thomas' commentary on the *Liber de causis* 'the faith' tells against Proclus and against 'platonic positions', against the 'Auctor', against Aristotle, but never against Dionysius who remains for Saint Thomas an authoritative source for what the faith teaches."

[37] *Trinité et création au prisme de la voie négative chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Bibliothéque de la Revue thomiste (Paris: Parole et Silence, 2011), 726.

[38] *Ibid.*, 727.

[39] *Ibid.*, 728.s