Traces of Otherness in St. Thomas Aquinas' Theology of Grace

Michael Luiz Fagge

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TRACES OF OTHERNESS IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS’ THEOLOGY OF GRACE

A Dissertation
Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By
Michael Luiz Fagge

May 2011
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ABSTRACT

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By

Michael Luiz Fagge

May 2011

Dissertation supervised by George S. Worgul, S.T.D., Ph.D.

This dissertation looks into the work of St. Thomas Aquinas and addresses his theology of grace through the lens of the postmodern concern for the other. The first chapter sets up the postmodern view using Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida to draw out the fundamental grounding for the concern for the other. In chapters two and three, St. Thomas’ theology of nature and then grace are examined focusing on his particular focus on the other. In his work we find that there is a concern for the other and a structure to the human person that supports this concern. Using Clarkeian interpretation of St. Thomas along with unique analysis both a nature and a grace that is for the self and for the other is discovered. In the fourth chapter this structure is put in dialogue with the postmodern thinkers especially Jean-Luc Marion.
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INTRODUCTION: THE DIALOGUE OF “OTHERNESS”

When looking at much of contemporary theology, one sees a serious concern for the “other” pervading the work. This comes as no surprise considering the postmodern context marking the present age. An unfortunate mark, though, is the rejection of much of what has come before the modern/postmodern debate. In Roman Catholic theology there is an intimate connection not only with the theology of the medieval period but also that of the patristic period. Catholic theology is marked by a desire to keep the theology of the past and integrate it with that of the present and future. To this end I propose a dialogue between the present postmodern concern for the other and the medieval understanding of the other as found in a theology of grace.

In an attempt to find an appropriate postmodern theology with which to dialogue medieval thought, one will find that many of the theological questions are being asked and answered by philosophers either wholly unconnected or tenuously connected with the Christian tradition, especially the Roman Catholic tradition, and few, if any, theologians.¹ For the Roman Catholic theologian this can become problematic especially when the outcomes of philosophy come into conflict with the theological Tradition of the Church. This conflict does not necessarily have to happen. The dialogue between Roman Catholic theology and postmodern philosophy can and must take place but to do so, there must be

¹ There are beginning to be some exceptions to this, most notably the Catholic University of Leuven with its particular section devoted to this dialogue. They are still situated in the postmodern addressing the medieval but have not yet begun from the medieval to approach the postmodern.
some common ground on which to build; otherwise nothing particularly edifying will result.

With each conversation there must be some point of shared understanding. This dissertation will focus on “otherness” as found in both postmodern philosophy and the general cultural situation of postmodernity. Otherness has great resonance with the postmodern project and many connections within the Catholic theological Tradition, especially for this dissertation, represented by St. Thomas Aquinas.\(^2\) Once this theme of “otherness” is linked to the theological tradition, a dialogue of development can begin and a more conversant Roman Catholic systematic theology can evolve using the gifts and admonishments that come with the postmodern philosophical project.

Has this dialogue not already begun? No, I do not believe so or at best it is just beginning. Much of the discussion revolving around postmodern themes remains within the realm of philosophy.\(^3\) Those discussing theology in the context of otherness have been doing so from within a particular philosophical system. This creates a certain restraint within the work distinguishing it from the theological project which is

\(^2\) The reason St. Thomas is chosen is because of his foundational position within Catholic Systematic Theology. No other theologian has had the support of the Magisterial and Ecclesial body as he. Consider that he is the only theologian that has been the subject, supportively, of more than one Magisterial documents especially papal encyclicals. Cf. *Aeterni Patris, Non Multo Post, Studiorum Ducem, Mirabilis Deus, Fides et Ratio, Veritatis Splendor*, etc. In the papal bull ordering St. Thomas’ canonization, Pope John XXII said "His doctrine was not other than miraculous…He has enlightened the Church more than all other Doctors, and more profit can be gained in a single year by the study of his works, than by devoting a lifetime to that of other theologians. He has wrought as many miracles as he has written Articles."

\(^3\) The possible exceptions are L.-M. Chauvet and Leven Boeve but most of the known names dealing with these questions are primarily in the field of philosophy as trained philosophers.
constrained not by any single philosophical system but by articles of faith. Those working on philosophical projects dealing with theological themes begin and end within their particular philosophical system. A review of the theological system of the medieval and even modern theologians shows a desire to stay within a philosophical system but not as a boundary beyond which they cannot go. The rule of faith is the boundary beyond which a theologian cannot go and this may or may not mean that a particular philosophical system will or can be used exclusively; more than likely it will not.

Due to time and space constraints a single aspect of the theological tradition will be used as a focal point: otherness or concern for the other or other-oriented-ness in the theology of grace in St. Thomas Aquinas. This offers an exceptional starting point for this discussion since a cursory review of St. Thomas’ theology of grace shows that there are affinities in his theology and philosophy with the postmodern “concern for the other.” This leaves the door open to a deeper dialogue and research concerning how these themes connect and interconnect in Thomistic and postmodern theology and philosophy as well as Roman Catholic theology as a whole.

The history of the Catholic theological Tradition has indicated that it must consider the theological and philosophical developments of the time—read the “signs of the times.” This reading or simple interaction can come as adversarial or complementary

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4 Consider, most recently, the work of Pope John Paul II and his use of phenomenology as well as the system of Karl Rahner who utilized the philosophical systems of Heidegger and Aquinas.

5 The most recent case is that of the theology of John Paul II where he uses phenomenology as a tool for his particular theology but did not consider himself, nor did others consider him, a phenomenologist.
as seen in various documents throughout the Tradition. Most especially in mind is the encyclical letter *Fides et Ratio* of the late Pope John Paul II. The charge to put theology in dialogue with philosophy and the desire to dip the theological tradition in the acid bath of reason is a reaffirmation of a long tradition in Roman Catholic theology. As of yet we are only seeing the beginnings of this dialogue with Postmodernity. The hope is that by making these connections, the dialogue will have a framework around which to build a much larger discussion.

*Concern for the Other*

The emphasis on the ‘other’ in postmodernity/ism is in reaction to a perceived self-centeredness found in much of the modern philosophical project. This is also found in much of the theological projects of the contemporary era. The “turn to the subject” has left its mark on much of the early twentieth century philosophico-theological work as can be readily seen the literature. As a counterpoint to this movement, Emmanuel Levinas has played a major part in the philosophical underpinning of otherness as a key postmodern concern, others have continued the development throughout the mid- to late-twentieth century. Levinas’ status as having put otherness at the forefront makes him an important dialogue partner. Jacques Derrida builds off of the project started by Levinas and develops it further. On the popular level, Lyotard opened up the philosophical

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6 Cf. Augustine’s *De doctrina christiana*.

7 See, for example, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke and Hume as they try to establish the subject as primary. They also shift the concerns from transcendental to epistemological as the flourishing of nominalism in the late scholastic and early modern period posed problems about the knowability of anything.
discussion of otherness as it relates to the culture of the present age in the 1980s by showing how far the themes of postmodernity have penetrated western culture.

The concern for the other in Levinas comes in the form of the “here I am” and the pre-conditional, pre-thematic, and pre-intentional responsibility for the other, his idea of substitution. The “here I am” is Levinas’ notion of a testimony of God and is saying that there is a god that gives to us, in an unthematizable fashion, the exigency of ethical subjectivity exclusively for the other. In Ethics and Infinity, Levinas describes the idea of the “me voici,” the “here I am” as a testimony to the Infinite or God. When confronted by the face of the other one encounters an exigency that drives him to present himself for the other in a relationship to the Infinite that is not one of disclosure but of nondisclosure. The other contains the trace of the Infinite in the face and this testimony, “here I am,” is the subject’s preintentional answer to the command of the face of the other and saying "here I am" unconditionally not to a someone but to an unknowable unknown.

The “here I am” is not only a testimony to or about God it is also an exclamation of what is truly constitutive of the human person. The idea of leaving the self in the accusative versus the nominative case defines the human subject as one that cannot, as Same, absolutize the Other. To be a human or subject, then, is to keep the other as other while in the Same. The ethical subject is to be subject but only insofar as the Other is kept Other while in the concern of the Same. Keeping in mind that Levinas deals with the meaning of ethics and not the practical aspects of doing ethical things. The "here I am" is the passivity that is constitutive of the human person—the "passivity more passive than
all passivity." It is what makes the human a human.⁸ Levinas sees that the glory of God is brought out in the "here I am" even though "It never appears as theme, but in the ethical signifyingness itself."⁹

"Obsession,"¹⁰ "accusative,"¹¹ an "indebtedness before any loan"¹² All these describe the one element of Levinas’ system that is foundational, the idea that there is an owing that is constitutive of the subject. One must erase from their ideas of subject the ontological categories that keep the self in the fore and find already there in the subject a debt to the other. Before any talk of the subject which makes it categorical in the first place there is an unthematizable source of obsession, an obsession that overcomes and commands the self towards its desire. The desire, for Levinas, is the Other.

As a student of Levinas, Jacques Derrida also has concern for the other as a foundational concept although Derrida will address the concept in terms of responsibility. Levinas too uses the concept of responsibility but Derrida will develop it further than Levinas. For Derrida responsibility comes from the idea that we are all unique individual persons. His deconstructive method will begin to get to the heart of the reason why this

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¹⁰ Cf. Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, op. cit.

¹¹ The concept of the accusative case is one so ubiquitous in Levinas’ work that the references are too numerous to list. It will be explained in more detail later in Chapter One.

fact requires that each person is responsible for the other in a total commitment made before the person themselves can reflect upon making a commitment.

To get a better idea of the reason for each person’s responsibility one must look beyond the majority of Derrida’s work and focus on a few texts that get to the reason for this responsibility. For this dissertation *The Gift of Death*\(^{13}\) will play a major part because it addresses best the origins of responsibility rather than the results of it.

*St. Thomas Aquinas*

A broad view of St Thomas will be taken focusing on both his scripture commentaries and systematic writings. The scripture commentaries hold much in the way of foundational material that gets glossed or summarized in the systematic texts. In the *Commentary on Romans*, we see that St. Thomas divides the notion of grace in two: one specifically for the individual and one specifically for others. This sharp distinction demonstrates a division between the self and other that does not collapse into the self or the other as many systems have done that try to lay claim to being “Thomistic.” Much of this understanding comes not only from St. Thomas’ theology but also his anthropology. The context of “grace building on nature” means that there must necessarily be a different look into the anthropology of St. Thomas involved in any project involving grace. To this end we will look at the anthropology of Aquinas first to see the ground upon which his theology of grace builds with an eye to otherness.

The Nature that Grace Builds On: St. Thomas Aquinas’ Anthropology

“Grace builds upon and presupposes nature”\textsuperscript{14} is a quick way to represent the relationship of nature and grace in St. Thomas such that we see the need for a reexamination of his theology of nature looking for the elements of otherness. Concerning the other, we will see that St. Thomas’ anthropology structures the person as being created, as William Norris Clarke puts it, substance-in-relation\textsuperscript{15}. As such, each individual is created with an aspect that focuses on the self and one that solely focuses on the other and even the self as an other. In the end there is a structure of the person that is designed to have the two fold concern for the self and the other keeping the self as self and other as other. It will be this nature that St. Thomas’ theology of grace will build upon.

The process begins with St. Thomas’ assumption of the intelligibility of being which opens up the concept of the existential meaning of being and a participational metaphysics that undergirds his entire theology of creation. What results is a dynamic notion of substance that grounds the idea of being; for St. Thomas this is the idea of a real being over a mental being.

The intelligibility of being grounds this entire project; if one cannot know being through things then all metaphysics is guesswork. Accepting this means that things are

\textsuperscript{14} ST I. Q2. A3

\textsuperscript{15} William Norris Clarke, "To Be is to Be Substance in Relation," in Explorations in Metaphysics, (Notre Dame, IN: UND Press, 1995).
knowable in and of themselves, that there is an “aptitude of all being to be known.” For St. Thomas, all beings proceed from God by an act of free creative intelligence and love and, therefore, all beings are oriented towards knowing and loving, but the beings themselves do not easily give up their secrets; beings are open to being understood by the mind but require reflection. In St. Thomas’ *De Veritate* the first question about the definition of truth is rooted in this relationship between being and intellect: “The first reference of being to the intellect, therefore, consists in its agreement with the intellect.”

The best systematic discussions of this topic by St. Thomas are probably his early philosophical treatise *On Being and Essence* and his later work *Disputed Questions on Truth*, in which this doctrine, new to the philosophic and theological world, grounds all beings in the perfect being of God through esse. The essence of a thing may be posited, but unless it is granted a share in esse the thing has no existence.

Combining the ideas of the existential meaning of being and participational metaphysics, “being” becomes a dynamic sharing in the dynamic gift of God, Who is pure act, pure esse in Whose esse all substances participate in. The one purdaining aspect

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18 Ibid. 17.


20 The debate over created esse or uncreated esse is sidestepped for the moment but is not one that impacts greatly on the point at hand.
of the being is its substance. Substance is not to be understood in a nominalistic fashion or after the ideas of the enlightenment for whom, substance was static and should be expunged from their philosophic systems as incompatible, but more on the order of a what-ness that “stands under” the thing itself. Even Thomas would find it difficult to use substance if he did not see it as dynamic; the purpose of being is to be active.

Each and every thing shows forth that it exists for the sake of its operation. Indeed operation is the ultimate perfection of each thing.  

It flows from this discussion that the “self” is self-communicative, for its operations serve to communicate itself and receive information from other beings; it is in the nature of the being to express itself and take in expression. Action, communication in its most basic understanding, is the way beings know each other; it is the way in which we know the presence of something as well as its nature. “To be is to be actively co-present to the community of existents, of other presences.” This co-presence involves receptivity as well. In brief, all beings, all substances, exist in a relational mode by creation. Nothing exists that does not relate and that relation, in turn is towards the good.

For natural things have a natural inclination not only toward their own proper good, to acquire it, if not possessed, and, if possessed, to rest therein; but also to diffuse their own goodness among others as far as possible. Hence we see that

21 SCG, I, ch. 45.
22 Clarke, “The Metaphysics of St. Thomas Today,” in Explorations, 10.
23 Clarke, “Action as the Self-Revelation of Being” in Explorations, 47.
every agent, insofar as it exists in act and possesses some perfection, produces something similar to itself. It pertains, therefore, to the nature of the will to communicate to others as far as possible the good possessed...

The communicative aspect of being becomes the communication of goodness in action and which gives the universe its dynamism as an interacting system of beings based in love. For the highest being in this system, God, self-communication reaches its highest point as “self-communicative altruistic love” without which the entire gratuitously created universe would not exist.

The structure of being as both in itself and towards others has the necessity of the substantial core self or self-identity, the “ontological root” of the being and, in the human person, is the seat of the “I” that each human person speaks. Slowly over time one comes to know the self through its experiences; there develops a certain self-awareness that comes through self-knowledge through interactions with others. In the interest of time we now move to grace and its building on this nature.

Grace and Otherness in St. Thomas

Once a basis for understanding the person in St. Thomas in established, his theology of grace can be seen as an extension of these ideas; ideas of otherness now come to the fore. The grace structure is meant to coincide with the created natural structure.

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24 *ST*, I, q. 19, art. 2.

25 Clarke, “Action as the Self-Revelation of Being,” *Explorations*, 49. This is not to say that creation is a necessary outpouring of the Good but only that creation is a result of that Good.
An example of this other-orientedness of grace is the distinction between Sanctifying and Gratuitous or Charismatic Grace. Sanctifying grace is meant for the self and Charismatic grace is meant for the other.\textsuperscript{26} In this way the structure is found to support the continuance of and dependence on the other. Neither the self nor the other is reduced to one entity as is feared in much postmodern work.

While the notion of sanctifying grace being for the core self has been an understood notion and not one for controversy, it is the notion of actual grace that brings up new horizons. Charismatic grace in St. Thomas Aquinas is a grace given to each person for the sole purpose of the other; each person is given Charismatic grace solely for the other around them.

And thus there is a twofold grace: one whereby man himself is united to God, and this is called "sanctifying grace"; the other is that whereby one man cooperates with another in leading him to God, and this gift is called "gratuitous grace,"\textsuperscript{27} With respect to the grace freely given [charismatic grace], someone is not to be said to be predestined simply, because grace freely given [charismatic grace] is not directly ordered to this (namely) that he, who receives grace, is ordered to an

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\begin{quote}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{26}] Cf. St. Thomas' Commentary on Romans §47: "gratia gratis data non ordinatur directe ad hoc quod ille, qui eam recipit, ad finem ultimum dirigatur, sed ut per eam alii dirigantur, secundum illud I Cor. XII, 7: unicuique datur manifestatio spiritus ad utilitatem."
\item[\textsuperscript{27}] ST I-II, Q.111,art.1.
\end{itemize}
\end{quote}
ultimate end, but through that grace others are ordered to an end as in 1Cor. 12.7:
“to each is given the manifestations of the spirit for their utility.”28

This concept has not been looked into nor has it been brought up in the contemporary discussions about the other. St. Thomas sees as importance in the divisions of grace that he creates for his analysis. It is the first of the divisions of grace in the Summa Theologica and is the starkest in its division as being for the self and for the other. Not only is the nature created by God one of keeping the other as important as the self, St. Thomas has the structure of grace, the presence of God in man, broken down along these same lines, keeping the distinction between self and other, holding them in tension but keeping them equally important to the individual person.

The Dialogue with Postmodernity

The concern for not collapsing all into one is found as a common theme. St. Thomas’ theology maintains difference and supports it with the very structures of grace and nature. This finds resonances with the postmodern concern for the other and its collapse into the self found in the modern philosophical and theological project. My initial thought is that there will be important points of intersection between the two and they will both address the root concerns for the other. I have confidence that this project will be new and important due to the fact that there has been a lack of attention paid to St. Thomas by the postmodern thinkers29 and the radically different philosophico-theological

28 *Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Romanos*. Lectura §47.

29 With the possible exception of Jean-Luc Marion.
projects that are found between St. Thomas project and the project of his contemporaries
and those that followed such as Scotus and eventually Cajetan who both claim to be
faithful to St. Thomas’ teaching, a false assertion concerning this point.

There will inevitably be tensions, points that will not be easily reconciled. These
points will be brought out and discussed in their contexts with an eye towards creating an
acceptable level of discourse between them. Some of the differences will come as a
result of the differing frameworks within which each project resides. For the moment
these may remain as irreconcilable differences but a way may be found towards a
practical reconciliation within which each can work. The way around many of the
tensions will be to go back to the root concerns found in the origins of the postmodern
concern for the other and see if they are addressed in St. Thomas’ theological project. If
they are, the differences between frameworks may become insignificant and no longer a
matter of division.

For St. Thomas there is an understanding that we cannot consume the other into
our selves other than through creating an impression of it and then taking the copy into
ourselves. This keeps the other as other but it does not treat the other in itself. It
maintains the otherness of the other by not intruding on the other as the same. St. Thomas
knows that our knowledge of things is through this creation of a copy, the taking in of the
form of the thing, and not a true consumption of the other. He also understands that the
constant review of the form of the other is needed and ongoing.
CHAPTER ONE: POSTMODERN CONCERN FOR THE OTHER

There are a few places to begin a discussion of the postmodern concern for the other. Ideally one would start with those that began the movement towards concern for the other in its postmodern form. To this end we will look at Emmanuel Levinas first and also his student and critic Jacques Derrida. After an analysis of their understanding of the root of the concern for the other we will take a cursory look at the various versions that claim a Derridian or Levinasian foundation to their understanding of the concern for the other. We can see their influence in Lieven Boeve and Richard Kearney to name just two of many. When the particular paradigm of the concern for the other is drawn out of their work and some examples of it in theological work has been examined the question of whether this concept can be found in the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas can be addressed.

Emmanuel Levinas

For Emmanuel Levinas the root of the concern for the other is a pre-thematic, pre-conceptual and pre-intentional concern that comes before the individual person can choose to be concerned for the other. Essays such as “God and Philosophy”30 as well as texts both philosophical and exegetical such as Totality and Infinity31, Otherwise than

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Being or Beyond Essence\textsuperscript{32}, and Nine Talmudic Readings\textsuperscript{33} will develop this point well. For Levinas the ethical is the place for the concern for the other. This ethical is the root of the concern. Levinas founds his understanding of the ethical in God through his Talmudic writings which will influence his philosophical writings.\textsuperscript{34} From that beginning point he will find a new definition of subjectivity which is entirely grounded in the relationship with the other. Once he has this relationship developed he will begin to negate the other concepts that show the concern for the other cannot be a conscious action by the individual but must be what constitutes the subject in the idea of the me voici.

To read Levinas one must understand his project as a mixture between the theological and the philosophical. His philosophical inspiration comes from the theological; an Old Testament verse will spark a philosophical line of thought. An example can be seen in his use of the story about Rebecca in the Old Testament scriptures; she gives water from her well to the camels of Abraham’s servants. This is a starting point for Levinas to find the paradigm for service to the other and the question of the third party intervening in the ethical relationship of two.\textsuperscript{35} Levinas will take from


\textsuperscript{34} “[E]very philosophical thought rests on pre-philosophical experiences, and because for me reading the Bible has belonged to these experiences.” Emmanuel Levinas. Ethics and Infinity. Trans. Richard A. Cohen. (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985) 24.

scripture a concept and translate it into philosophical language. Inherent in this is an understanding of the interrelationship of scripture (Torah) and philosophy; he will find, in the Judaic, a language that needs to be translated into the Greek.

His use of “Greek” does not just signify the language, but an entire system of thought that is the western philosophical tradition replete with its ontological thinking from Socrates to Heidegger. Levinas will see his task as that of translating the Hebrew text of Judaism into the Greek language of the culture in order to pull out concrete ideas with which to regulate lives. The bible must use the language of the Greeks to develop ideas of justice and responsibility. The original particularity of the face of the other has been obscured because the original sayings of the Hebrew texts do not translate easily into Greek.

For Levinas the Torah is not just the Torah but the Hebrew text plus commentary in the form of midrash. It is this literary genre that gives Levinas the basis with which to make his claim of the continuous tension between static and dynamic in the text. Midrash is a conversation brought about by the Hebrew language; its lack of vowels leads to various interpretations and re-readings. The continuous dialogue among rabbis over the centuries has created a body of work that Levinas will dialogue with and use as a basis for his own interpretive projects.

The Hebrew text is always in flux; its interpretation is always a question that must be answered. For Levinas, to interpret the text and place it into the language of the Greeks, means changing the text from dialogue to monologue. The Greek language, metaphorically the language of the ontologising philosophers, will settle a question and move on to the next question until all the questions have been answered. This is the
trouble Levinas finds with the Greek translation of the Torah; it has lost its dynamics and, essentially, its life. Greek thematization is required for the Torah to be “known” by any person, though; the alternative is to be in flux in a constant revealing of the text as the Hebrew and midrashim demonstrate.

To those that insist that the two disciplines of philosophy and theology must be separate, Levinas would disagree. “But I did not have the impression, early on, that philosophy was essentially atheistic, and I do not think it today.”36 He will take from scripture and midrash a conversation between the rabbis and find in it a philosophical beginning. “I search by way of the old wisdom. I illustrate with the verse, yes, but I did not prove by means of the verse.”37 Many detractors have accused Levinas of using the Torah as first principles from which he will construct a philosophy. An example of his method can be seen from his mixing of the injunction “thou shalt not kill,” with the notion of “love thy neighbor as thyself,” where Levinas will see a beginning for the understanding of the ethical subject. This is what Levinas means when he says, “Philosophy, for me, derives from religion.”38 Religion will bring about the inception of an idea that needs philosophical construction in order to be “known” by the person.


With this understanding of the foundations of Levinas’ philosophical work, a connection to the theological becomes more plausible. In examining his Talmudic works and his philosophical works, one can see that his “understanding” of God is twofold; immanent and transcendent. There is a Kabbalistic immanent aspect to God, *Elohim*, and a transcendent God, יהוה, *YHWH*; *Elohim* can be seen as the immanent aspect of *YHWH*.

*Elohim* is the power that continues the world, keeps it in existence, as seen in his power to create the world, or worlds, *ex nihilo*. “His association with these worlds confers being, which is also called power, light, purity and holiness.” 39 Of interest is the fact that there is a myriad of worlds created and within that pleroma there is a hierarchical order. *Elohim* is the interaction of God in the world, the soul of the world in a hierarchy of souls that has its highest in *Elohim* and the lowest, apparently, in the universe of rocks and such. Most of these distinctions are taken from the writings of the Rabbi Hayyim Volozhiner, a late eighteenth and early nineteenth century rabbi from Lithuania considered by Levinas, and others, to be one of the last great Talmudists. His writings influenced the way Levinas approaches the Torah and its various commentaries. An important concept in Levinas’ understanding of *Elohim* is from the Rabbi about the “higher” being the soul of the “lower” in this hierarchy of creation. This is from the *Nefesh Hahaim* or *The Soul of Life*, a text where there Levinas finds a “hierarchy of holiness and dignity.” *Elohim* is the soul of the soul of the person, the soul of the person

is the soul of the body, which one can assume, is the soul of the inanimate things in the world. There is an intimate tie between Elohim, the person, and the rest of the universe. The highest is the “root” of the lowest in this hierarchy; the highest soul is the soul of the soul of the lowest inanimate object.

_ElohIm_, as power and sustenance of the universe and all of its creatures, must remain present to the universe in order for that sustenance to continue. It is this presence that the person has control; _ElohIm_ gives over to the person, since the person is the soul of the body, the task of presenting _ElohIm_ to the universe. Presentation takes the form of the living out of the Torah in the ethical life as well as in the prayer of Israel. It is in the living out of the Torah that the person has control of _ElohIm_; control in the sense of the ability to continue His presence to the universe. If the person stops living righteously, then _ElohIm_ stops being present in the world; it is a living for the other and a praying for the other that keeps the universe in existence. “The vocation, or _raison d’etre_, of humanity is precisely to provide the necessary conditions for the association of God with the worlds, and thus for the being of the worlds.”

40 This aspect of God is seen in the philosophical writings of Levinas only implicitly and is downplayed in favor of the unsayable God that Levinas will use especially in “God and Philosophy”—the unknowable God to which we are to encounter only obliquely.

For Levinas the most complete name for God, if there is to be one, is _YHWH_, the tetragrammaton; it is the name unutterable by any in Judaism and the name of the God that encompasses the aspect of the _ElohIm_. _ElohIm_ is considered an aspect of, but in no

40 Levinas, “Judaism,” 122.
way a comprehensive explanation of, YHWH. The tetragrammaton is also called the *Ein-Sof*, or Infinite; “the absolute of a God affected neither by the created world nor by its history.” God’s meaning in the tetragrammaton signifies “something that man cannot define, formulate, think, or even name.”

To get a sense of the unsayable God—the God of the tetragrammaton, the Infinite—a God who is unaffected by creation, one must examine his idea of God as an unaffected God. Levinas will use Talmudic terms to speak of this God, especially those of Rabbi Hayyim. This God is described as not having a place in the world but, is, instead, the condition for the possibility of place at all. This God is the very condition of all being. This understanding of the Infinite gives ground to the Elohim. Levinas will see that the language used in the Torah is of a particular kind that hints at the absolute, as such, by its use of the second and third person in Jewish liturgy. It is through this understanding of the Infinite that Levinas proves a monotheism without onto-theology.

To speak of this Infinite is impossible; by speaking even the name one is already placing limitations on it and on the Absolute.

Strictly speaking, then, that which is infinite and never-ending is not the absolute of God which nothing can determine, but the *act of thinking of the Absolute which*...
never reaches the Absolute, and this has its own way—which is quite something—of missing the Absolute.\textsuperscript{44}

This act of thinking alludes to deference and a familiar post-modern idea of the last word having not yet been said. Here Levinas will talk of a relation without correlate, an open-ended relation, one between the human subject and it is originary and is also an avenue through which the absolute reveals meaning. Levinas finds that in the human inability to conceive the Infinite there is a new way of signifying, a new way of naming. This can be, at best, the God of philosophy for no other reason than this absolute God cannot console.\textsuperscript{45} There are ways of recognizing this God in one’s life and in “God and Philosophy” Levinas will present a few of those ways in order to, hopefully, clarify his idea of the Infinite and our relationship to It.

Two ways in which Levinas discusses the Infinite in his essay are the concepts of insomnia and the idea of the “putting” that is done by the Infinite into thought in such a way that it is always-already. In “God and Philosophy,” Levinas speaks of the Infinite by first referring to Descartes’ third meditation and developing the idea of an innate notion of God in man. He is interested in the “breakup of consciousness” found in Descartes’ meditation where a thought has the thing thought upon already in it before it thinks. Levinas will find that this signifies the “non-contained par excellence” or the Infinite, the \textit{Ein-Sof}. “The idea of God is God in me, but God already breaking up the consciousness

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\textsuperscript{44} Levinas, “Image,” 164-5.
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which aims at ideas, and unlike any content.”⁴⁶ This God who is the condition for the possibility of all beings is in the subject pre-intentionally and, certainly, pre-comprehensionally.

The way in which this Infinite is in the person is through a passivity that is, in ontological words, beyond any passivity, beyond any notion of receptivity as a collection of something received. The idea of the Infinite in me is a passivity of consciousness yet a “passivity more passive still than any passivity”⁴⁷ in which one has the idea of the infinite forced upon them as in a trauma. The feel for this trauma is something unassumable, an overwhelming of the consciousness such that it in no way can grasp or comprehend; it is pre-apprehensional, even pre-intentional. Again, in ontological terms, it is before any beginnings of understanding or any comprehension. It is an idea put in at the very soul of the subject. This idea of the infinite is originary and can only, truly, be spoken around but not spoken of, because a speaking of would entail a grasping by the understanding and that means a concretization of something which cannot be concretized; much the same as the Hebrew scriptures cannot be translated into Greek without making certain concrete decisions about meaning.

In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas will describe this Infinite in terms that lead us through to its possible origin. For Levinas, the concern for the other is built into the very existence of each person. His analysis begins with an observation of dissatisfaction in the


human existence and the desire that is never sated. In Totality and Infinity, he will find within the person a desire\(^\text{48}\) for perfection that cannot be satisfied with things of this world. He will take this desire out of the realm of the self and the existents and into what he will call the metaphysical realm, metaphysical desire. “The metaphysical desire has another intention; it desires beyond everything that can simply complete it.”\(^\text{49}\) This desire only feeds on itself and deepens the desire rather than fulfill it. This can only happen through a distance that is maintained in the relationship to the metaphysical desire. The distance or remoteness that he speaks of is of a radical nature and exists only if the desire “is not a possibility of anticipating the desirable, if it does not think it beforehand.”\(^\text{50}\) This distance bridges the known and the unknown. Metaphysical desire understands the remoteness, the alterity of the other because it is transcendent, transcendence.\(^\text{51}\) This transcendence is what he calls the invisible or the Infinite and taking direction from Plato will utilize ontological language of height to point to the invisible or Infinite as the Most High akin to Plato’s Good-beyond-Being. Levinas will maintain this notion of the Infinite both as Plato’s Good-beyond-Being and connect it to the One God of the Hebrew Bible, the \textit{En-Sof}.\(^\text{52}\)


\(^{49}\) Levinas, \textit{Totality and Infinity}, 34.

\(^{50}\) Levinas, \textit{Totality and Infinity}, 34.

\(^{51}\) Levinas, \textit{Totality and Infinity}, 35.

How does the human experience this Infinite. The metaphysical desire comes over the person as a trauma. The notion of the trauma is better seen in Levinas’ description of insomnia and the phenomenology of the insomniac experience. The experience of a sleepless night can be understood by most, but it has special resonance for the explanation of the intrusion of the Infinite into self. A night of insomnia is marked by a desire for sleep, rest, and comfort that it is not coming due to a constant drum-beat of wakefulness. One has no power over this intrusion and there is no cure for it from within; the person lays subject to it, pondering the unbearable heaviness of being, of meaninglessness.

Onto this image Levinas will map his understanding of how the Infinite breaks through to make its presence known to the subject. Sleep represents sameness, thematization, manifestation, immanence, intentionality, and consciousness with its cohorts, identity of same, presence, and history. All these are the harbingers of ontology as he understands it and the reduction of the other to the same, something Levinas is trying to eliminate and break away from in his philosophy. They represent the state of life of the majority who live in the ontological circle; for them to go beyond, to find the Infinite, there must be trauma. Insomnia brings wakefulness without intentionality and with it: vigilance, demand, a force put onto the subject from outside coming like inspiration, transcendence, otherness, and the unconditioned (Infinity). This is the non-intentional putting that comes upon us in the trauma of the breaking through of the Infinite in me. The battle between sleep and wakefulness wages in every subject; the two worlds teeter as each feels the pull from either side.
This is, on one level, an analogy of the situation in which one finds oneself jolted from “natural atheism” or one’s happy, self-contained life that does not involve the other in any considerable way. We are jolted out in an experience that defies one’s ability to define; a confrontation with something so wholly other and cannot be mastered or grasped. Holocaust experiences are of this type as are other experiences of complete meaninglessness. There is a weight that falls on the person experiencing this that thrusts him towards the other out of sheer necessity; the heaviness of insomnia, the unbearable heaviness of being, of meaninglessness in a desperate search for meaning.

It is in this hidden realm of insomnia that God, Infinite, is found and only in trace form. Recalling Levinas’ exegesis of Torah, especially his interest in the commandment not to kill, the trace of the Infinite comes in the ethical responsibility for the other, in the face of the other.

The Infinite affects thought by devastating it and at the same time calls upon it…It awakens it. The awakening of thought is not a welcoming of the Infinite…the idea of the Infinite is not even taken up as love, which is awakened when the arrow strikes, but then the subject is stunned by the trauma finds itself forthwith in the immanence of a state of soul. The Infinite signifies precisely prior to its manifestation.\(^5\)

The “in” of the Infinite is this putting in the subject of the desire for the Infinite, an endless desire for “what is beyond being;” it is a transcendence, a desire for the Good.\(^4\)

\(^{53}\) Levinas, “God and Philosophy,” 176.

\(^{54}\) Levinas, “God and Philosophy,” 177.
It is a non-erotic love for the undesirable, the other, the one that cannot be desired except through a metaphysical desire, because the desirable must remain distant in order not to be assumed into immanence, and for that to happen the desire must be for the undesirable. Levinas will call the “other” the “undesirable par excellence” making the other the avenue to experience the trace of the Infinite.

The injunction not to kill becomes the command to responsibility for the other as the other becomes the object of our metaphysical desire. The Infinite is found through the responsibility for the other; God is found, obliquely through our responsibility, pre-intentionally put into us by the Infinite God, for the other. This is a hidden God and only obliquely found.

His absolute remoteness, his transcendence, turns into my responsibility—non-erotic par excellence—for the other. And this analysis implies that God is not simply the ‘first other,’ the ‘other par excellence,’ or the ‘absolutely other,’ but other than the other, other otherwise, other with an alterity prior to the alterity of the other, prior to the ethical bond with another and different from every neighbor, transcedent to the point of absence.\(^\text{56}\)

The other is not the Infinite but it is the way in which one can see the trace of the Infinite that is prior to any otherness as comprehensible.

Levinas will use the Platonic concepts of height and nobility attributed to the Goodness-beyond-Being in order to show the need to die for the Invisible. The invisible

\(^{55}\) Levinas, “God and Philosophy,” 178.

\(^{56}\) Levinas, “God and Philosophy,” 179.
Infinite is a non-formal alterity that is prior to every initiation.\textsuperscript{57} Metaphysical alterity is a perfection that “exceeds conception, overflows the concept,”\textsuperscript{58} a perfection to which the things of the Earth pale in comparison. “The Other is not an incarnation of God, but precisely by his face, in which he is disincarnate, is the manifestation of the height in which god is revealed.”\textsuperscript{59} It is in the face of the other that we find a trace of the Infinite perfection of metaphysical alterity – absolute Other. But also to recognize the face is to “recognize the Lord.”\textsuperscript{60}

These are but two ways Levinas will use in trying to explain his idea of how God can be discerned and what God’s relationship to us looks like. In his explanations there is a great usage of apophatic language to describe this God. In the last quote the concept of “transcendent to the point of absence” becomes most troubling for any but the most diligent apophatic thinkers. It is also at this point that we see the linkages to an older tradition, a tradition that we will see in Chapters Two and Three, that has much in common with Levinas.

The Infinite that is not recognizable to the mind has affinities to the Cloud of Unknowing; Levinas insists that the Infinite cannot be seen and that the subject is not to seek it for it cannot be found in the realm of conceptual knowledge. “The Infinite signifies precisely prior to its manifestation; here the meaning is not reducible to

\textsuperscript{57} Levinas. \textit{Alterity}, 38-39.

\textsuperscript{58} Levinas. \textit{Alterity}, 41.

\textsuperscript{59} Levinas. \textit{Alterity}, 79.

\textsuperscript{60} Levinas. \textit{Alterity}, 75.
manifestation, the representation of presence, or teleology." Manifestation is conceptual thinking and the kind of knowledge that the author of the Cloud seems to have in mind. The Cloud attempts to allow a clearing of knowledge in order to find the darkness that is dwelling place of God. This darkness is the clearing of manifestation from the mind; it is a clearing of the conceptual framework within which ideas are constructed. Levinas will see in this realm the pre-intentionality required as a place for the Infinite to put in the idea of the desire for the other, a hidden oblique knowledge of God. It is not God one encounters but the innate reference to God in the other; pseudo-Dionysius would say, “he does not meet God himself, but contemplates, not him who is invisible, but rather where he dwells.”

Again it is Levinas who sounds like the ancient apophatic mystic speaking of a God beyond our understanding and beyond our grasp:

It is then an idea signifying with a signifyingness prior to presence, to all presence, prior to every origin in consciousness and thus an-archical, accessible in its trace.

Our first quote from pseudo-Dionysius points to this “signifyingness prior to presence” by recalling that one is to go beyond the understanding to find the unknowable God,

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61 Levinas, “God and Philosophy,” 176.


63 Levinas, “God and Philosophy,” 175.
begging for the lack of knowledge to comprehend the God. Levinas is in a long line of thinkers that reach beyond the knowing to find God firmly resting in the unknown.

Much like pseudo-Dionysius, there is a desire at work in Levinas, desire for the undesirable, moving the subject through non-erotic love. Pseudo-Dionysius recalls that “it is enough for you that you feel moved in love by something, though you do not know what it is.”64 Unknown love is the perfect descriptor for the pre-intentional love for the neighbor found in Levinas. One is moved by it to ethical responsibility for the other and it comes from some place, ontologically speaking, prior to our thinking about it. Like a watchman, the consciousness will take in all things to itself in order to see all that is before it in guarding the Same. The metaphysical desire comes from behind the watchman and seizes him, pointing him towards the knowable with a new intention.

What we see in Levinas is a concern for the other that is constitutive of subjectivity. The concern is pre-thematic, pre-intentional, and pre-conceptual. It is this understanding of the Concern for the other that will be the subject of our search not only in Jacques Derrida but in St. Thomas Aquinas as well.

Jacques Derrida

Following upon Emmanuel Levinas is his student and critic, Jacques Derrida. He, along with Levinas, forms the foundation of much of the contemporary work on postmodern responsibility ethics. Levinas’ work can be seen as a foundation for Derrida’s ethics with some exceptions. One of the key exceptions is the lack of explicit

Jewish starting points evident in Levinas. Whereas Levinas was an observant Jew and a Talmudic commentator, Derrida calls himself an “atheist” but, even so, will use elements of Judaism that form part of his identity. While much of Derrida’s work deals with responsibility and hospitality, space considerations will limit us to a few main texts. The focus of the investigation also limits much of the source material since we are trying to find the origins of one’s responsibility for the other as seen in Derrida. This specific aspect is addressed in very few texts; responsibilities resultant action is what is developed in most of his works. After delving into the roots of his understanding of responsibility we can form a better picture of the origin of his concern for the other. This will give a good contrast point to the next chapter’s development of St. Thomas’ idea of the origins of the concern for the other.

Derrida’s core concept can be developed in three steps. The first is the understanding that each person is a responsible person due to his relationship with the other. Next will be the idea that the other person we are all in relation to is a “Wholly Other”, i.e. a God figure. The last step is to connect the two ideas and show that “every other is the Wholly Other.”

As with many things Derrida writes about, he finds that every person is responsible in a very circumscribed way. In The Gift of Death, Derrida will use the

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philosophy of Jan Patočka\textsuperscript{66} to guide his way through finding the source of the concern for the other. This method of using another’s work is not uncommon for Derrida.\textsuperscript{67} He takes the starting point from Patočka and deconstructs it to find the radical elements within. He begins where Patočka begins, Christian elements in European history. From there he will delve into the elements that lay behind the philosophy. Patočka writes that the secret of European history is that European history is a series of developments from basic civilizations through the Greek civilization. The Christianity of Europe hides within itself the Platonic and orgiastic elements that it claims to overcome. These elements, instead, lay hidden, repressed, in the background of the prevailing European Christianity.

The care of the soul with respect to death is the mark of the earlier elements and also marks the Christian element of the \textit{mysterium tremendum}. The base orgiastic animalistic desires are brought under control by the reasoning of Platonic thought and that Platonic thought is placed under the reign of Christianity. This mystery is one that makes us tremble – \textit{tremendum} – and is one key point that Derrida will make his own.

Derrida looks at mystery and secret and finds that there are several motifs that are in play when connecting responsibility with secret or mystery and how all of that relates to death.\textsuperscript{68} One of them is the fact that mysteries are never destroyed but live on in some way telling us that the orgiastic and the platonic elements are not lost but are merely

\textsuperscript{66} Patočka’s work used by Derrida is originally in Czech but can be found in English as \textit{Heretical Essays in the Philosophy of History}, trans. Erakim Kohák, ed. James Dodd (Chicago: Open Court, 1996)


\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Gift of Death}, 23-25.
The orgiastic animalistic battle against death is repressed by the Platonic reasoning out of where death belongs and finally the approach to death of the Christian is one of sacrifice. Each element has the previous one in mind and is in constant relationship with it.

Another motif is the idea that Christianity has not sufficiently rid itself of the Platonic language to allow it to move forward. This grounds his criticism of Christianity as not fully developed; it is bound by language that will not allow it to further develop. Within this motif Derrida, pace Patočka, finds the ideal of responsibility. The Platonic language of reason approaches responsibility as a purely intellectual pursuit and this intellectual responsibility “discounts responsibility” by not allowing the person to emerge as the fully responsible person.69

Responsibility, for Patočka is twofold; it has both an intellectual and a praxis dimension. If it is a purely intellectual process then the individual person is taken out of the exchange of responsibility. If it is a matter, exclusively, of doing the right actions in response to a situation then there is no room for the individual person to act, only a mechanical response to conditions. There must be a praxis element of responsibility, a pure action, that is not intellectual or rooted in reason.

As a result, the activating of responsibility (decision, act, praxis) will always have to extend behind and beyond any theoretical or thematic determination. It will have to decide without it, independently from knowledge; that will be the condition of a practical idea of freedom. We should therefore conclude that not

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69 Gift of Death, 25.
only is the thematization of the concept of responsibility always inadequate, but that it will always be so because it must be so.  

Derrida brings together the ideas of the *mysterium tremendum*, the mystery of Christianity, and responsibility; it is the way in which Christianity deals with death – sacrificially. Platonic thought, repressed and yet exposed in the ideas of Christian mystery, points the person towards a Good that is beyond the realm of the visible, but also links the person to the gaze of the un-seeable Person. For Patočka, the idea of the responsible person is one that exposes the self to the gaze of another without being able to see the one gazing. From the purely Christian perspective, Patočka sees the definition of a person as inseparable from a *responsible* person whose definition is  

[the] exposing of the soul to the gaze of another person, of a person as transcendent other, as an other who looks at me, but who looks without the subject-who-says-I being able to reach that other, see her, hold her within the reach of my gaze.  

There are obvious allusions to God in the un-seeable Person that Patočka uses in his definition of the responsible person. Derrida will use this analysis of the Christian foundation of Patočka’s understanding of personhood as a stepping stone towards a deeper “understanding” of God.

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70 *Gift of Death*, 27.

Putting the two strands of thought together, that the Christian person must be responsible person yet is impossible to be fully responsible; a sense of guilt is created.\textsuperscript{72} The trembling of the \textit{mysterium tremendum} is a result, then, of the asymmetric gaze of the other that we are never responsible enough towards.

Responsibility comes from a response to an originary gaze from a “Good that [can] no longer be a transcendental objective, a relation between objective things, but the relation to the other; an experience of personal goodness and a movement of intention.”\textsuperscript{73} This means a pre-intentional praxis that is not one born of reflection leading to action. There is something that is pushing the subject along, commanding it. As a reflection on death this pre-intentional command works on the subjects understanding of his singularity. His uniqueness brings about awareness of the uniqueness of the other but only after the command is felt, the command of guilt over one’s own individual irresponsibility.

It is at this point that Derrida introduces the idea that the ethical/responsible life is a gift. Taking his analysis from Kierkegaard and Patočka, the asymmetry found in the gift is the same asymmetry found in responsibility. We are given life and given it from some goodness that is beyond our comprehension. Each life is a gift given and, as such, each life is indebted to the giver of the gift. The giver takes on a Divine quality in this

\textsuperscript{72} Gift of Death, 52.

\textsuperscript{73} Gift of Death, 50.
particular analysis and gives a “place” from which to bring the gift forward to each person.\textsuperscript{74}

Derrida brings in another thread to weave into the argument by further refining his idea of responsibility and using Kierkegaard’s analysis of the story of Abraham and his sacrifice of Isaac. From this story we get an uncommon understanding of ethical/responsible action. Tied into Kierkegaard’s Divine command ethics we see that it is better to listen to God and do what He says rather than be in solidarity with one’s fellow humans. In so doing an element of secrecy is necessary for ethical/responsible action. Abraham kept the secret of whom the sacrifice will be from both Isaac and his companions. Abraham never lies but does not tell the entire truth.

It is secrecy that Derrida finds at the heart of the individual human person. Derrida sees the secrecy as Abraham safeguarding his own singularity, his own self. In saying nothing Abraham chose to be alone in his knowledge and not be in communion with his son or companions. It also means he remains a unique person; “Once I speak I am never and no longer myself, alone, unique.”\textsuperscript{75} He will also universalize the rule by stating each person is responsible for silence because any talk of God would bring the Wholly Other into the speaker as part of the speaker and no longer unique. What is

\textsuperscript{74} Gift of Death, 42. Much more can be developed in Derrida’s work concerning “gift” but would take us beyond the scope of this work. See Derrida’s Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) as well as the discussion on gift with Marion and Derrida in Robyn Horner. Rethinking God as gift: Marion, Derrida, and the Limits of Phenomenology (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001)

\textsuperscript{75} Gift of Death, 60.
implied here is that all are to keep the secret of God, to never speak of God. Each person has the responsibility to not speak in order that the uniqueness of the Wholly Other is respected as Abraham did not speak.

Derrida has a more nuanced understanding of “speaking” than is commonly accepted. Speaking is the absorption of the other into a homogeneity with the self. Speaking will take the other into the self and create a false other about which one is speaking. This does violence to the other in that it is no longer unique but it is one’s version of the other and not the true other. The self objectifies the other and shuts off any ability to encounter the other.

One can put the two strands of thought together to get a better understanding of the origins of the concern for the other in Derrida. The first strand is the understanding of the responsible person as one that exposes the soul to the gaze of the Wholly Other. The other is the idea of the secret. These two are really two sides of the same coin in that the soul bearing of the self to the Wholly Other is a persistent non-objectification of the Wholly Other by the self and, in a way, is keeping the secret of the other – keeping the other a secret. Not speaking of the other is a way of keeping the soul open to the gaze of the Wholly Other because there are no words spoken, no “speaking,” yet. This puts the conditions for not speaking in the realm of the pre-intentional and the pre-thematic or pre-conceptual, “beyond an axiomatic of the self or the chez soi as ego cogito, as

consciousness or representative intentionality.” Any conceptualization or thematization is already a speaking, already an apprehending of the other into the self. One’s relationship to the Wholly Other is defined by silence, secrecy, and the understanding that one cannot begin to speak about the Wholly Other without doing violence and closing the self off from the Wholly Other, closing off the soul to the gaze of the Wholly Other.

Derrida understands the Wholly Other to be God albeit in a very different understanding than is commonly accepted by the Judeo-Christian doctrine. God is the “infinitely other” and as such is the paradigmatic Wholly Other in relation to which every person exists. God is the person whose gaze is cast upon each and every person defining them as such. Here we find Derrida falling back onto the concept of a creator God through whom and by whom all of mankind is created, a creation that links every human person together with God. This is the background to the phrase “tout autre est tout autre.” Derrida can translate this a number of ways gleaning insight with each change. “Every other is wholly other” is a preferred way to show the relationship between God and created persons.

The “wholly other” can easily be the Wholly Other or God and through their linkage each person can be seen as God or at least treated as such. Derrida draws a distinction between himself and Levinas on this point drawing from his earlier article

77 Gift of Death, 92.

78 Gift of Death, 82. “Tout autre est tout autre” is the chapter heading and main idea of chapter four.

79 Esp. Gift of Death, 87.
“Violence and Metaphysics” where he finds trouble with Levinas’ distinction between the otherness of God and the otherness of humans. Derrida can justify no such distinction. To objectify an other requires no distinction in what the other is. God may be objectified just as easily as a fellow human. Each human is a mystery that no other has full access to and therefore is like God with respect to the mystery involved.

This leads to one startling fact that every other one encounters must be treated with the same silence as God. “Every other (one) is God…it is declared that every other one[individual], each of the others, is God inasmuch as he or she is, like God, wholly other.” Our concern for the other is our concern for God and keeping the secret that is God. Our concern for the other is the silence due God and is also a silence due to each human person.

If ‘tous autre est tout autre’ signifies that every other is singular, that every one is a singularity (que ‘tous autre est singulier’, que tout est singularité)…, then it is impossible to distinguish between our obligation to God as singular and our obligation to everyone of our neighbours as each singular. Moreover, since our obligation to each one of these singularities, each of those who are wholly other,

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81 Cf. Gift of Death, 87.
is infinite, no way can be found to fulfill all of those obligations, each of them equally exigent.\footnote{Miller, J. Hillis “Derrida’s Others” in J. Brannigan, R. Robbins and J. Wolfreys, \textit{Applying: To Derrida}, (New York: New York University Press, 1996) 158.}

For Derrida, then, the idea of being a responsible human is one that is rooted in “silence” and, as its foundation, the ethical command to silence. This command comes from the Wholly Other, for Derrida, God, and reaches us pre-thematically, pre-conceptually, and pre-intentionally. This puts him in the same category as Levinas when it comes to finding the origins of ethical/responsible action which is fundamentally a concern for the other. This concern is the source of all action and is given to each human person through creation by a God. In this Levinas and Derrida seem to agree. Their disagreements in this, albeit narrow in concern, are few and impact more in how this foundation plays out in each individual human life and in society in general.

\textit{Contemporary Theologians Using Levinas and Derrida as Their Foundation}

Those that follow, theologically, in the footsteps of Levinas and Derrida also show the trace of this understanding of the foundation for the concern for the other in their work. Briefly we can see some evidence of it in the work of Leiven Boeve and Richard Kearney as just two examples of the diverse influence. These theologians have used various themes from Levinas and Derrida with varying degree of intensity and have
impacted the theological field greatly. For the purposes of this dissertation, their connection to Levinas and Derrida need only be pointed out.

In an interview with Leiven Boeve, Hoskins delves into some fundamental question with this postmodern thinker especially his influences and dialogue partners. Those that come to mind initially are the cultural critics such as J-F Lyotard and R. Rorty but when it concerns the thinkers that challenge Christian faith and theology, Derrida and Marion as well as Kearney are mentioned and later Emmanuel Levinas. He is using these philosophers to get a deeper understanding of how the postmodern concepts and their proponents “qualify the context in which Christian faith exists and from which this faith develops its self-understanding.” Throughout the interview we find Boeve uses Derridian themes to describe his ongoing projects both with and without direct accreditation. In describing his project of open narratives, Boeve is discussing a problematic example of messianisms and the messianic as having hegemonizing tendencies, Boeve is tapping into a significant theme that Derrida has written on and was a part of Derrida’s ongoing work. The messianic is a theme tied to the Wholly Other and its promise. Derrida objected to the content of the messianic but never the form of the


84 Hoskins, 31.

messianic because it will always foretell what is yet to come and keeps the silence of the Wholly Other or restricts our “knowledge” of it to a trace.

Not surprisingly, Boeve also takes other Derridian as well as Levinasian ideas as his foundation for understanding the problematic necessitating open narratives. Once again the hegemonic tendencies brought out in Derrida’s understanding of metaphysics calls out for a new paradigm for narratives. Boeve thinks that the narratives passed on from the modern period are closed and therefore hegemonic in their structure. Using Derridian foundations of difference and a concern for the individual to remain an “other,” the new structure of open narratives breaks the hegemonic hold on the individual. Once again, this plays on the theme of silence due to the Wholly Other. Closed narratives are speech in Derrida’s understanding of speaking discussed above. Boeve is unsure of the place of any narratives⁸⁶ yet finds a place for recontextualization in open narratives. His goal it would seem is to speak without speaking.

In a similar fashion, Richard Kearney has taken on the concept of narratives and the place of the other but has a different way of using the insights of both Derrida and Levinas. Kearney will use Derrida very critically and Levinas more sympathetically. Kearney’s ideas of the place of narrative follow a more Levinasian path than Derridian. The distinction that he makes in the concept of the other is more along the lines of Levinas and the distinction he makes between the otherness of God and the otherness of

humans. Kearney will side with Levinas and go beyond to say that even Levinas does not make a sharp enough distinction between the types of “others” not only divine and human but also inter-human.

In a trilogy of books published closely together, *On Stories*[^87], *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*[^88], and *The God Who May Be*[^89] Kearney mixes Levinasian philosophical insights with theological concepts to come up with ideas of the other that forms differing categories of “others” making a distinction between the alien who is a friend and the alien who is an enemy. He excoriates the ideas of all aliens being enemies and tries to find a theology that will demonstrate this. He uses theological concepts of scapegoat, the transfiguration and the burning bush to make his points. Kearney will look at the projects of both Derrida and Levinas and find them wanting. He sees that Levinas, especially, has a sense of responsibility that begins and is focused around the one-on-one, face-to-face, interaction and ultimate responsibility for the one face of the other. Levinas will later modify this notion of responsibility to include the fact that there are more than two people in the world. Kearney begins his project from the basis that responsibility must take in a plurality of others and there must be some way of discerning the types of others one comes in contact with and this leaves Kearney with one important question.

How can we tell the difference between benign and malign others? How do we know,…, when the other is truly an enemy who seeks to destroy us or an innocent scapegoat projected by our phobias?90

Kearney bases much of his work on Levinas and Derrida but also on the Judeo-Christian tradition and in so doing he includes the idea of God and various aspects of God in his work. While being critical of Levinas and Derrida, he will find an easy place for their work within his own and can use much of their foundational work to augment his own project. The concern for the other is rooted in God and something pre-intentional and pre-thematic but Kearney will say that for this concern to be actualized it must come into the realm of the conceptual in order for the individual to distinguish between the different types of “others.”

Even a cursory look at Keaney’s work finds Levinas and Derrida hiding in the background in many subtle and not so subtle ways. He uses Levinas’ concern for the face of the other as a starting point but, in contrast with Derrida, will go further than Levinas will in distinguishing the types of “other” than can command the self.

Kearney acknowledges his indebtedness not only to Levinas and Derrida but also to Ricoeur and Marion. While not thoroughly a follower of Levinas or Derrida, much of the work is influenced by the two. The notion of the root of the concern for the other is found in God and in some form of pre-conceptual, pre-intentional and pre-thematic concern that will help define who the individual person is. All of these are hints towards the Levinasian and Derridian provenance of the concern for the other in Kearney’s work.

90 Kearney, Strangers, 67.
These are simply two of the many postmodern theologians that will use Levinas and Derrida as their foundation, if not wholly, partially. Boeve will take the insights from the two thinkers into the realm of the sacramental and Kearney will take them into the fields of narrative and what he calls “onto-eschatology”. There are many more examples of the influence of this type of concern for the other in contemporary theologians\textsuperscript{91} but these two will prove sufficient to see that their influence will continue into a new generation of theologians that will have to deal with the continuity of the Tradition and try to manage some type of connection with the past.

\textit{Conclusion/Transition}

This first chapter is to set up the state of the problem. How do contemporary theologians that claim the postmodern as their starting point converse with the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church? This Tradition must also interact with the postmodern but may not have the language. Is there a language that can be spoken by both the Tradition of the Church spanning many philosophical eras and that of Postmodern philosophers/theologians with Levinasian/Derridian provenance? The foundational concepts in both Levinas and Derrida that ground the concern for the other are few but particularly powerful. Both find the concern for the other rooted in a pre-thematic, pre-conceptual and pre-intentional structure of concern that is found within every human person given by God. God may be defined as an indefinable by Levinas and Derrida but

\textsuperscript{91} Jean-Luc Marion is one significant character in this discussion and does bring out the interaction between St. Thomas and the postmodern quite well. He will be discussed in the last chapter of this dissertation.
God is also thus described by St. Thomas Aquinas\(^{92}\) and to the extent that both Levinas and Derrida consider God, so too St. Thomas. Many will argue that philosophical presuppositions will prevent the two traditions from speaking constructively together but each tradition can be stretched to accommodate some new interaction.

With the rudimentary notions of how the concern for the other is found in the human person in Levinas and Derrida, the next step will take us to a representative of the Roman Catholic Tradition, St. Thomas Aquinas. While not the representative of the Tradition en toto, for no one theologian can claim this role, St. Thomas holds a special place in the Tradition and will prove a surprisingly willing dialogue partner. Through his theology, I believe there are concepts similar and expandable to the degree that dialogue between the Tradition and contemporary theology can move forward. What we are looking for is a way to interpret ethical action in terms of the concern for the other especially as that concern is pre-thematic, pre-conceptual and pre-intentional. This is evident from the work above with respect to Levinas and Derrida but will this be true in St. Thomas Aquinas. The next two chapters will explore this possibility.

CHAPTER TWO: THE NATURE THAT GRACE BUILDS UPON: A REVIEW OF ST. THOMAS’ NOTION OF CREATED BEINGS

Due to the integrated nature of the concept of otherness, especially when dealing with grace, a look into the anthropology of St. Thomas is in order because for him, “grace does not destroy nature but perfects it.” 93 This initial look into St. Thomas’ theology of nature will be such that the elements of otherness orientation will emerge as primary. Part of this project will entail an examination of the foundational understanding of the creation of the human person in St. Thomas. This understanding will be the basis on which a theology of otherness in nature and grace can be built that is faithful to St. Thomas’ own theology. Concerning the other, we will see that St. Thomas’ anthropology structures the person as a created being and, as such, is created, as William Norris Clarke puts it, “substance-in-relation” 94. Each created thing has, at its core, an aspect that focuses on the self and one that focuses on the other. It will be this nature that St. Thomas’ theology of grace builds upon and presupposes.

In this chapter we will find the foundational understanding of the nature of the human person as created with two poles, substantial and relational. Three things must be developed in order to see this structure: first, St. Thomas’ presuppositions that relate to his understanding of the person must be understood and clarified, second the understanding of “being” in St. Thomas as substantial and relational rooted in the idea

93 ST I, Q1, a8, ad2.

94 William Norris Clarke, “To Be is to Be Substance in Relation,” in Explorations in Metaphysics, (Notre Dame, IN: UND Press, 1995).
that “to act” follows upon “to be”, and third, developing the notion of person as the highest “being”. This will leave the structure of nature open to a grace that is for the substantial self and for the other.

The primary texts used will be from the *Summa Theologicae* (*ST*) but there will also be a discussion with other mature writings such as the *Commentary on the Hebdomads* (*CHeb*), the *Disputed Questions on Power* (*DP*), and *Disputed Questions on Truth* (*DV*) as well as his early writings such as *On Beng and Essence* (*DeEnte*)\(^95\). The process begins with St. Thomas’ assumption of the intelligibility of being as well as the concept of the existential meaning of being. Along with these concepts is the notion of participation in his metaphysics which is integral to his entire theology of creation. What results is a dynamic notion of substance and being which, for St. Thomas, is the idea of a real being over a mental being. The inclusion of the transcendental “the good” will also help develop a dynamic understanding of being.

Before beginning the discussion of the presuppositions found in St. Thomas, it must be acknowledged that it is in the presuppositions that some find problems with a dialogue between St. Thomas and postmodern thinkers.\(^96\) Philosophically, these issues


can be handled through various different methods that could reconcile the two enough to work together. This work is outside the scope of this dissertation where the overriding goal is a theological one showing the non-incompatibility of Thomistic thought for the contemporary discussion of otherness.

*Presuppositions in St. Thomas’ Work*

The two presuppositions of St. Thomas that are most significant in this discussion are the intelligibility of being and the notion of participation. Each in their own right deserves dissertation length treatment but for the purposes of this work a basic outlining of them will suffice. Firstly, the intelligibility of being grounds this entire project; if one cannot know being through things or beings themselves then all metaphysics and physics for that matter, is guesswork. Accepting the intelligibility of being means that things are knowable in and of themselves, that there is an “aptitude of all being to be known.”

Without accepting this principle, only the empirically testable can be accepted as known and only by the one testing at the time of testing; any search for an answer beyond the observable would imply an acceptance of the principle of intelligibility. St. Thomas will bring up this point often and in various settings. In the *Summa Contra Gentiles* we find St. Thomas speaking about the intelligibility of creation such that the soul recognizes the

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very principles underlying it.\textsuperscript{98} The sense that there is a general understanding of creation is found also in the principles that undergird the concept.

As a foundation for his claim, St. Thomas will draw from scripture that all beings proceed from God by an act of free creative intelligence and love\textsuperscript{99} and conclude, therefore, that all beings are oriented towards knowing and loving. This also implies that these beings themselves do not easily give up their secrets; beings are open to being understood by the mind but require reflection.\textsuperscript{100} Once again the article in the \textit{Summa Contra Gentiles} mentioned above brings out the idea that the human person can know the principles but not the conclusions. There needs to be some work done by the person to arrive at certain conclusions about creation and beings. All of this implies that this is an endeavor that is possible.

This intelligibility of being has static and dynamic principles. The static principle is the principle of non-contradiction; no real being can both be and not be at the same time and in the same respect. Denying this principle renders all statements meaningless and any sentence can be said to speak the truth no matter how absurd. St. Thomas will

\textsuperscript{98} \textit{SCG} II, 83.

\textsuperscript{99} That God freely and not necessarily creates cf. \textit{ST} I, Q19, a3. For the creative intelligently as origin of all things cf. \textit{ST} I, Q65, a2, and more broadly the treatise on the work of six days \textit{ST} I QQ 65-74, which has as its underlying principle the intelligent ordering of creation. As for the love in creation cf. \textit{ST} I, Q74, a3, ad. 3. “In the account of the creation there is found something to correspond to the words, “God saw that it was good,” used in the work of distinction and adornment, and this appears from the consideration that the Holy Spirit is Love. Now, ‘there are two things,’ says Augustine (\textit{Gen. ad lit.} i, 8) which came from God's love of creatures, their existence and their permanence.

link this to the very foundation of truth and any knowledge. The positive side of this principle is the stability of all beings: something is itself and not something else.\(^\text{101}\)

The dynamic aspect is the principle of sufficient reason; every being has sufficient reason for its existence, either in itself or in another. While this principle can reduce to the classic cause-and-effect understanding of being, it should be looked at in a fuller sense. Alexander Pruss\(^\text{102}\) has a very cogent examination of the principle of sufficient reason in St. Thomas. He finds that the principle, while not explicitly discussed by Aquinas, is behind his discussion of causal principles especially in the commonly called proofs for the existence of God. One also finds the concept in St. Thomas’ *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics* dealing with the end of acts where St. Thomas remarks that there must be some final end or reason for the entire endeavor lest the person be frustrated in existence. “If we should proceed to infinite in our desire for ends so that one end should always be desire on account of another to infinity, we will never arrive at the point where a human person may attain the ends desired.”\(^\text{103}\) St. Thomas

\(^{101}\) Cf. *DV* Q1,1., See also *DV* 21, a4, ad1; *ST* I Q11, a2, ad3; *ST* I-II, Q55, a4, ad1; *ST* II-II, Q1, a7.; *DP* 9, a7, ad15; *CSent.* I D24, Q1, a3, ad2. All of these references point towards a principle of non-contradiction or the stability of beings in various applications supporting the idea that St. Thomas held to this principle throughout all of his work.


\(^{103}\) *CNich* I, Lec.2, 21.
finds that an infinite regress is an impossible outcome and an insufficient reason for things.\textsuperscript{104}

The combination of the dynamic and static aspects of the intelligibility of being marks the intimate correlation between the intellect and being. “Intellect is radically \textit{for} being, oriented toward it by a natural, innate affinity, aptitude, or ‘connaturality’ for being...[and] being itself is \textit{for} intelligence.”\textsuperscript{105} It is this intimate correlation between intellect and being that marks an initial stepping stone towards a greater metaphysics.

St. Thomas accepted this relationship between being and intellect implicitly throughout his philosophical and theological works. In St. Thomas’ \textit{De Veritate} the first question about the definition of truth is rooted in this relationship between being and intellect: “The first reference of being to the intellect, therefore, consists in its agreement with the intellect.”\textsuperscript{106} There are many other instances of this correlation in St. Thomas, showing that the being-intellect relationship is integral to any metaphysics—not just to

\textsuperscript{104} The problem of the infinite regress has been/is being addressed in the modern and postmodern era and has various proponents and opponents. The impossibility that St. Thomas finds with the infinite regress comes from his study of Aristotle and allies mostly with it. Modern philosophers such as Hume and more contemporary philosophers such as Cantor and Craig discuss the infinite regress through a more refined definition of the infinite and move the debate along by discussing the possibility of an actual infinite and whether or not it can impact the infinite regress discussion. See, Craig, W. L. \textit{The Kalâm Cosmological Argument} (London: Macmillan Press, 1979). Craig is rooted in the foundational work of Georg Cantor, the founder of set theory, in his ideas of what an infinite is.; David Hume, \textit{Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion and Other Writings} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

\textsuperscript{105} Clarke, “Metaphysics,” 29.

\textsuperscript{106} DV Q. 1, art. 1.
Thomas’. With the intelligibility of being accepted, the next element can be developed in St. Thomas’ presuppositions – the notion of participation.

The second important presupposition in St. Thomas’ theology of nature is the idea of participation which, as it came to St. Thomas, was originally a Platonic idea according to which lower beings which make up the plurality of the world participate in the higher form of that being or the Ideal and eventually, The One. For example a tree would participate in “treeness”, the form or Ideal of tree. This structure was solidified through Plotinus\(^{107}\) and then Proclus\(^{108}\) and came to St. Thomas in the basic tripartite form where first there is something containing the fullness (perfection) of whatever aspect is being participated in, and that this perfection necessitates its being the essence of a unique source; second, there is a participant that participates in the perfection in a limited, restricted way and, third, the participation is necessarily a dependence on the source.\(^{109}\) The participant, due to its participation, must be a composite, then, consisting of, at least, the participated perfection and the receiving participant. St. Thomas takes this format and combines it with notions from Aristotle involving potency and act in order to explain, more clearly, how the participant and the participated perfection interact.

Within the Thomistic corpus there is one work that singles out this notion of participation and it comes at the beginning of his career. His CHeb was written in the

\(^{107}\) Cf. his Enneads, especially books 1 and 2.

\(^{108}\) Cf. his Commentary on Plato’s Parmenides. For an understanding of the origins of the question one should, obviously, look at Plato’s Parmenides as well as Republic.

\(^{109}\) Clarke, “The Meaning of Participation in St. Thomas,” in Explorations, 93ff.
later 1250’s and addresses Boethius’ ideas of participation in detail. Much of what he writes in this short exposition can be found throughout his works in the rest of his life.\textsuperscript{110} In this commentary, St. Thomas delves into the various ways of understanding participation taking as his starting point the distinction, developed by Boethius, between 

\textit{esse} and “that which is.”\textsuperscript{111} In what is a thorough exposition on Boethius’ understanding of participation, St. Thomas comes up with three different ways of understanding the notion.\textsuperscript{112} The first idea of participation is that “whenever something particularly receives what pertains universally to something else, it is said to participate in it.”\textsuperscript{113} To demonstrate this he uses the idea of the person participating in animal, “since it does not have the account of animal in its full generality.”\textsuperscript{114} The genus animal has a universality that the species person does not contain in its totality or universality – the person is not every animal. In the first instance St. Thomas sees the particular receiving something that is universal to something else. The thing participating does not contain the fullness of what it is participating in. The example is that of a human participating in animal. Human does not contain everything that pertains to animal but does share some of the

\textsuperscript{110} For evidence in his later works cf. ST I, Q44, a1; \textit{Disputed Questions on the Soul} Q6, ad1.


\textsuperscript{112} CHeb. L2.

\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Ibid.} quando aliquid particulariter recipit id quod ad alterum pertinet, universaliter dicitur participare illud.

\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Ibid.} quia non habet rationem animalis secundum totam communitatem.
characteristics. Humanity is not the fullness of animal. The other example is that Socrates participates in humanity but is not the fullness of humanity. Socrates does not contain all that it is to be human, only his particular portion. Human would include all hair colors, all skins colors, all heights, etc. Socrates participates as a particular participating in a universal.

The second notion of participation is a subject participating in its accidents or matter in its form. This is the participation of a specific subject in a more abstract accident as a statue will participate in whiteness or gold in the form of a statue. The pattern emerges that the more specific participates in the more general. This is also the similar pattern for the third example of the effect participating in the cause. St. Thomas stipulates that this is especially true when the effect “isn’t equal to the power of its cause.”

The first of the above ways deals analogously with participation as the concrete participating in the abstract or the particular in the universal. The second example is that of a concrete participating in an abstract. The examples could be the same as in the first but St. Thomas uses generic terms saying that matter participates in form or that subject (substance) participates in accidents. These more generic terms are better suited for the original purpose of this section of his commentary which is to delineate the difference between esse and “that which is.” The argument is that the particular participates in the universal applies to this relationship. The particular “that which is” or “a being” participates in the universal esse or “act of being.” The “that which is” can participate in

115 Ibid. praecipue quando non adaequat virtutem suae causae.
something but esse cannot because esse is the most universal and so there is nothing more
universal in which it can participate.

Simply understood, participation, as taking a part of something, should not be
construed as the taking of something in a physical manner, leaving an absence in the
source. Participation can be seen to be analogous to the sharing of an idea with another
where the sharing does not take away from the source but does benefit the receiver. In
this way the number of participants does not affect the source – God does not diminish or
become more rarified as the number of creatures increases. The notion of participation in
his metaphysics is the way St. Thomas avoids some of the many problems of the one and
the many.\footnote{Most of Clarke’s works begin with this issue. The “one and the many”
problem is addressed thoroughly in \textit{The One and the Many}, op. cit., his text on Thomistic
metaphysics.}

The notion of participation is foundational to the understanding of St. Thomas’
thought on creation especially when dealing with the human person. It forms the
foundation of the existential meaning of being and forms the basis for St. Thomas’
anthropology. The presuppositions laid out are those that will play the most important
roles in the discussion to come. I believe that so far they do not fundamentally conflict
with any of the postmodern ideas I have discussed above in the areas delineated.

I do not believe that either of the two presuppositions violate any of the
postmodern concerns to the extent that they impact the discussion of the rootedness of the
concern for the other in the human person. With these presuppositions understood, the
next step is to delve into the heart of St. Thomas’ anthropology starting with the basic
notions of substance and being from which basis the notion of personhood can be addressed and, then, ultimately the structure that will hold, for the human person, the grace of God and promote the concern for the other in its innermost core.

The Dynamic Notion of Substance and Being

The ideas of substance and being are practically interchangeable when considering the human person. Substance or being, for St. Thomas, becomes the foundation for understanding the human person. To understand substance is to understand the structure that God created in order to come to the fullness of love for God and neighbor. Combining the ideas of the existential understanding of substance and being with the notion of participation, we find that substance becomes a dynamic sharing in the esse of God, Who is pure act. To see how this comes about, two paths will be taken: first, substance or being will be looked at metaphysically through an examination of the term esse and the existential understanding of being, the second path will be to see what comes from examining substance and being as good. These two paths come together to create a dynamic notion of substance that forms the basis for understanding personhood.

St. Thomas has an existential notion of being, or substance, at play in all of his philosophical work. Understanding being through the existential lens means that the structure of all existing things is not focused on the essence but on the fact of existence. His understanding of existence is that of essence informed by esse, or “to-be,” conferring on the real being its existence. The best systematic discussion of this topic by St. Thomas is probably his early philosophical treatise DeEnte in which this doctrine, a new
formulation in the philosophic and theological world at the time, grounds all beings in the perfect being of God through His esse. This treatise will go beyond traditional Aristotelian ideas of matter and form to create an analogous relationship with essence and esse. The essence of any thing may be posited, but unless it is informed by esse, the “to-be,” of God, the thing has no existence. The essence of a thing is the passive element that is given dynamic existence by esse just as matter is the passive entity that is given shape by form.

Connecting both Aristotelian lines of thought with Platonic, St. Thomas will use the notion of participation to relate how esse informs the essence. Working from the second definition of participation, esse becomes the more abstract but active element in participation. Previous formulations of existence focusing on form and essence do not tie in the relationship between God and the creature. The existential meaning of being loses none of the linkage to the intelligibility of being due to its rooting in the divine esse.

In a word, what St. Thomas has succeeded in doing is to shift the center of gravity in the constitution of the real from form and essence to actual existence as inner act, without thereby letting go of the intelligibility of being; for existence itself, as the directed participation in God’s own essential perfection, has now become the root of intelligibility itself, mediated to our finite intelligences through the spectrum of finite forms.¹¹⁷

St. Thomas also uses the potency/act relationship as an analogy when explaining the essence/esse relationship. Since the act of being, esse, is given from God, it is the active “to-be” informing the passive essence.\textsuperscript{118} This puts the act of being, esse, at the very heart of any existent thing without taking away the connection between the created receiver and the Creator, the giver of the esse; only existing things have esse.

St. Thomas brings out the inability for esse to participate in anything early on in his CHeb when he examines the language of being and beings. He will draw the parallel of the runner and running, “a being” and “the act of being.” A runner is the subject of running but running is not the subject of running, running cannot run, only a runner can run. In the same way a being is the subject of the act of being, the act of being cannot be the subject of the act of being. Boethius remarks that “being itself not yet is” or cannot be because it is the very act of being; being is not but a being is.

In St. Thomas’ notion of the existential meaning of being he eliminates from the category of real beings things like ideas and possibilities. Some alternate versions of Thomism have included ideas as falling in this category. The problem arises in the interpretation of St. Thomas himself when it comes to what defines a “real” being. In DeEnte and in his DSS, St. Thomas will discuss the definition of what a being is or what can be properly called a being. These two works seem to bracket the Thomistic oeuvre with DeEnte written around 1256 and DSS written around 1272.\textsuperscript{119}

\textsuperscript{118} DeEnte Cap 4.

\textsuperscript{119} The overwhelming majority of dating sources agree that these works span St. Thomas’ career even with the considerable variations in the specific dating of works. The dates I use here are from the Introduction to the Summa Theologica translated by the
In DeEnte, the first chapter deals with definitions of essence and beings. In the opening lines we find that a being, “in itself can be spoken of in two ways.”\(^1\)\(^2\)\(^0\) These two ways describe “a being” as either that of a substance or accident as understood through Aristotle’s ten categories,\(^1\)\(^2\)\(^1\) or “a being” signifies the truth of a proposition.\(^1\)\(^2\)\(^2\) St. Thomas will quickly dispense with the latter definition because of its superficial nature in a discussion of existing things. Anything that uses the copulative “is” can be considered a being in this latter sense even though most would agree that many of the things affirmed in these statements are not existing things. He will use the idea of blindness as an example. Blindness is not an existent thing but is, in actuality a privation of something, sight. There is no free-floating blindness that someone may run into. Later in other treatises St. Thomas will use this definition to connect being with truth. This is also another aspect of the intelligibility of being mentioned above.

The first way of understanding “a being,” \textit{ens} is through Aristotle’s ten categories, the first of which is substance and the other nine demark the accidentals that rely on the substance for existence. The definition concludes with the statement that only things that

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\(^1\)\(^2\)\(^0\) DeEnte, Cap 1. \textit{ens per se dicitur dupliciter}.

\(^1\)\(^2\)\(^1\) Ibid. uno modo quod dividitur per decem genera.

\(^1\)\(^2\)\(^2\) Ibid. alio modo quod significat propositionum veritatem.
exist in reality can be called “a being.” His use of “in re” gives the sense of something tangible, something in reality, something that can be touched or seen, something that has accidents and is not immaterial. He emphasizes this point in the following line bringing out the idea that blindness and the like are not “beings” since they do not have accidents and do not support accidents.

The section of his treatise *On the Separated Substances* that deals with the same subject only treating incorporeal substances and is in response to Plato, Aristotle and the Islamic philosopher Avicebron around whom the treatise seems to revolve. After presenting Avicebron’s understanding of angels (separated or incorporeal substances) along with the essentialist understanding of being, St. Thomas begins to refute his argument eventually getting to a refined definition of being. Avicebron considers *esse* to be an accident that gets added on to the essence of a thing and tries to demonstrate that *esse* has three different orders when considering the separated substances. St. Thomas will reverse the roles of *esse* and see that there is a difference in the way substances partake in *esse*.

For, since being is not predicated of all things univocally, the same mode of being is not required in all things that are said to be; rather, some participate in *esse* more perfectly, and some less perfectly. For accidents are called beings, not

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123 *Ibid. Sed primo modo non potest dici ens nisi quod aliquid in re ponit.*

124 *Ibid. unde primo modo caecitas et huiusmodi non sunt entia.*

because they have in themselves esse but because their esse is in that which is in a substance. Again, in all substances, there is not the same mode of being.126

Here St. Thomas is nuancing the way esse as accident should be understood. He is arguing against Avicebron who believes that all things are composed of matter and form and saying that spiritual substances do not contain matter but they do exist and participate in esse not as accidents in a substance but as the substance itself which has a proper essence or definition. The substance-accident relationship does not hold when discussing the existence of angels or immaterial substances because their existence is not accidental as Avicebron seems to hold. St. Thomas has the notion of essence participating in esse in the background of his analysis of Avicebron. He sees the main flaw in Avicebron’s argument as not understanding the proper relationships between matter and form in incorporeal beings and therefore misunderstands the relationship between essence and esse.

More recent reviews of the notions of the essence-esse relationship bring out the differences between medieval thinkers before and after St. Thomas and emphasize the uniqueness of St. Thomas’ approach.127 In more recent decades, Clarke has emphasized the distinction in St. Thomas between real and mental beings; real beings are present due to their own intrinsic act of existence (esse) beyond simply being thought up. For Clarke,

126 Ibid. cap 8.
the criterion for understanding the difference between the two is action; real beings act, ideas do not unless acted on by a real being.\textsuperscript{128} This idea is still debated and some have found this to be a flaw in Clarke’s understanding of St. Thomas although a closer reading of St. Thomas will prove the theory to be sound and valid.\textsuperscript{129}

\textit{Esse as Active}

The existential meaning of being marks real beings as existing beings due to their intrinsic act of being or \textit{esse}. This changes the way being is viewed from “lifeless” presence in a form/matter formulation to active presence that has the act of existence in common with all real beings.\textsuperscript{130} Another way to present the idea of the essences-sharing-in-\textit{esse} is to turn the concept around to show that \textit{esse} is limited by essence in a real


\textsuperscript{129} O’Callaghan’s article is particularly good at bringing out the details of the argument and showing that St. Thomas does, in his early and later works, make a distinction between beings that are real that share in divine \textit{esse} and other beings that are purely propositional. An example O’Callaghan likes to use is the idea that a horse is a real being whereas a unicorn is not a real being but only a propositional being because they do not exist in reality but they are a concept that can be argued about or sung about.


\textsuperscript{130} Clarke, \textit{The One and the Many}, 80-84.
being. This reversal places the importance on the act of being itself, the *esse*, especially as it relates to God. The act of existence flowing from God is limitless until it is bounded by a particular essence. The act of existence is then seen as a “maximum” limited by each differentiating essence. It is the common share in *esse* that roots all beings in a community, sharing their debt of existence to God, a debt rooted in the idea the Platonic/Neo-Platonic notion of participation.

The existential meaning of being of the being or substance is dynamic. Since it is the purpose of a being to be active—a substance that is interactive through its act of being—there is an intrinsic dynamism within the notion of being. The structure of this dynamism is rooted in the notion of *esse* as pure act and the connection of all existent beings with *esse* giving all existent beings a dynamic existence.\(^\text{131}\) This brings about the idea of God as pure act for “in God, to act and to be are the same thing.”\(^\text{132}\)

From this we see the relationship of all existing things as essence plus *esse*. Behind the notion is that *esse* is active. From his earliest philosophical writing we see that concerning substances, “…being [*esse*] it receives from God and this being [*esse*] is received as an actuality.”\(^\text{133}\) *Esse* is the actuality that every being (*ens*) receives to become actualized and existent. Also in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, St. Thomas looks at *esse* from the point of view of the first mover,

\(^{\text{131}}\) This will be developed more in the next section.

\(^{\text{132}}\) *DV* Q21, a2, ad8.

\(^{\text{133}}\) *De Ente*, Ch. 4.
Again, if the first mover is eternal and unmoved, it must not be a potential being because any potential being is naturally fitted to be moved, but an independent substance whose essence is actuality.\textsuperscript{134}

and from the point of view of intelligible things:

Therefore it has been shown from the series of movers and things moved that the first mover is a simple substance and an actuality…It follows, then, that the first intelligible entity is a simple substance which is an actuality.\textsuperscript{135}

From his philosophical works we get a picture of an \textit{esse} that is simple and dynamic and one that interacts with all existence.

Now all created causes have one common effect which is being, although each one has its peculiar effect whereby they are differentiated: thus heat makes a thing to be hot, and a builder gives being to a house. Accordingly they have this in common that they cause being, but they differ in that fire causes fire, and a builder causes a house. There must therefore be some cause higher than all other by virtue of which they all cause being and whose proper cause is being: and this cause is God, Now the proper effect of any cause proceeds therefrom in likeness

\textsuperscript{134} \textit{CMetaphysics}, 12, lect. 6.

\textsuperscript{135} \textit{CMetaphysics}, 12, lect. 7.
to its nature. Therefore being[esse] must be the essence [substantia] or nature of God.\textsuperscript{136}

This interaction is one that affects all of creation as creation. The active esse that is given to all created beings gives all beings a dynamism that reflects its existence. The first mover is active and simple it is also intelligible and eternally actual. This first mover is what St. Thomas will call God, while it is not the fullest definition, it is important for the present discussion. The first mover, in Aristotelian analysis is the mover that begins all other motion. St Thomas will make this foundational but will add the Platonic notion of participation to augment the active aspect of the first mover. This first mover is the “to be” of all existence and all existing things participate in that “to be.”

St. Thomas sees God as esse and the giver of esse to creation; His very essence is esse. In St. Thomas’ CHeb, the understanding of the relationship of the essence of a thing to its being is in the background. Once again he is developing the ideas from his earliest writings especially DeEnte. All beings (ens) are made up of essence, which is the definition of the individual thing, and its share in the “act of being” (esse). This leaves room for there to be potentiality in every being because it could not actually exist. St. Thomas says that he can know what a dog or a phoenix is without ever knowing that they exist.\textsuperscript{137} Now since there is no potentiality in God there should be no distinction between the essence and esse in God as is seen in the ST:

\textsuperscript{136} DP 7, 2.

\textsuperscript{137} DeEnte, cap 2.
… existence [esse] is that which makes every form or nature actual; for goodness and humanity are spoken of as actual, only because they are spoken of as existing. Therefore existence must be compared to essence, if the latter is a distinct reality, as actuality to potentiality. Therefore, since in God there is no potentiality, as shown above [ST I, Q3, a1], it follows that in Him essence does not differ from existence. Therefore His essence is His existence.\textsuperscript{138}

Through the proofs of the existence of God, St. Thomas comes to the conclusion that God is eternal among other things and from that background he finds that there is no passive potency in God.

The being whose substance has an admixture of potency is liable not to be by as much as it has potency; for that which can be, can not-be. But, God, being everlasting, in His substance cannot not-be. In God, therefore, there is no potency to being.\textsuperscript{139}

Here we have tied the philosophical to the theological. In seeing that, for St. Thomas, esse is what gives existence and is pure actuality and also that God is the Creator and Who gives existence and is also pure activity, St Thomas links esse and God.

\textsuperscript{138} ST I, Q3, a4. This is a much abbreviated discussion of why there is no potentiality in God and why God’s essence is existence. For a greater discussion of this see De Ente, Ch. 2; ST I, QQ 2-13; DP, 1, 1; CMetaphysics, V, 9. For the purposes of this dissertation these points regarding St. Thomas’ definition of God need be merely stated.

\textsuperscript{139} SCG I, 16.
With the understanding of *esse* as dynamic activity we can see St. Thomas’ mixture of Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysics as innovative. His use of the notion of participation gives the creature access to the perfections of the source; it gives the essences existence through the gift of sharing in *esse* from God. We have shown above how St. Thomas uses this notion to relate the existing being with the act of being, participation means essence participates in the act of being. The essence is not greater than the *esse* participated in; it is a particular that participates in a universal analogous to a concrete participating in the abstract. This seems to reverse the focus of much of the philosophical discussions regarding essence found in the Middle Ages and into the modern age where essence was seen as primary and the dynamic force of the existing entity. St. Thomas turned the essence into a passive role that needs to participate in the active *esse*.

When St. Thomas does talk of beings participating in *esse* he is more nuanced than even this treatise will lead one to believe. This now brings to the fore the third way of understanding participation – an effect participating in its cause.\(^{140}\) At this point there are two ways to pursue the notion of participation as effect in a cause. The first way can be that of a purely philosophical method in which we do not assume the existence of God and work towards that end in dealing with participation. The other way is that of theology in which, for St. Thomas, the existence of God is a given. St. Thomas can be seen as doing both and at times may seem to be conflating both. Elsewhere St. Thomas goes

through a philosophical development of the existence of God but, for our task, St. Thomas has already discussed the ideas of participation with the idea that God exists and works from there.

In his exposition of Boethius’ text and in later works such as his *Quodlibetal* questions, St. Thomas deals with the idea of beings participating in *esse* to have existence. He does not like the idea that they are related as matter to form or as substance to accidents. \(^{141}\) The third way of participating in something that St. Thomas brings out in his exposition of Boethius’ *Hebdomads* is as an effect participates in a cause, “especially when it is not equal to the power of the cause.”\(^{142}\) The creative power of God comes into effect here as the effect of an existent being can be seen to participate in its cause – *esse*. While the *esse* participated in is not God *per se*,\(^{143}\) it comes from God and is part of His creative work. The issue itself is not as important to this discussion as it is to others since the basic presupposition is that *esse* comes from God and it is that in which an essence participates in order to become an existing being. The cause is God and the effect is existence.

\(^{141}\) It is true that he calls *esse* an accident in Quodlibetal XII and other places but he is trying to make the point that *esse* is not in the essence of a thing but is something outside of the essence, analogous to an accident in a substance.

\(^{142}\) *CHeb.* L2.

\(^{143}\) This is a matter of some dispute amongst several scholars of participation and St. Thomas. The question is around the nature of *esse*. Is it divine *esse divinum* or *esse commune* that St. Thomas is speaking of. See various arguments in Rudi te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1995). In the studies reviewed, there seems to be no significant difference in the properties between the two concepts.
Anticipating an objection to this principle by postmodern thinkers, one must recall that this *esse* is prior to any beings, it is prior to all creation and does not yet enter into the discussion of the individual human person. The *esse* of God is not the Same that all things reduce to in the postmodern rejection of what they consider classic metaphysics. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the concept of the *esse* will fall into the same level as the Wholly Other or the concepts of the Infinite. If those concepts are kept by postmodern thinkers then the dialogue can continue with St. Thomas.

*Substance and Active esse*

To refine a definition of substance\textsuperscript{144} found in St. Thomas one must start with the empirical questions that St. Thomas is presented with. What exactly perdures in a being; what stays throughout the various changes over time and why this is important? For St. Thomas the answer is “substance.” There must be some principle of self-identity that does not change over time. This becomes important because the history of the idea of substance has changed dramatically from the thirteenth century and especially St. Thomas’ understanding of it. A short review of the changes are in order.

Various concepts of substance that have arisen since St. Thomas, most of which come from the modern era and depart drastically from the understanding of substance St. Thomas knew. To draw out the contrasts one need only look at philosophers such as Hume, Locke, and Whitehead as well as the diverse religious traditions that were not engaged with the Latin west such as Buddhism. Hume and the empiricists find no

\textsuperscript{144} The term substance will be used with the understanding that both substance and being (*ens*) are meant.
permanent substance, insisting instead that beings are a collection of various states (both physical and psychological) in constant flux, that there is no substance that remains through the changes of time, no “in-itself.” Locke, while not as extreme in his rejection of substance, still asserts that it is unknowable and is posited merely to support the accidental properties we encounter. Whitehead draws from Descartes’ definition of substance as isolated self-subsistent substance and utilizing process philosophy’s ideas of the total inter-relatedness of things, claims that all beings are inter-related and influence each other, changing each other and leaving no place for an “in-itself” substance. This leads Whitehead to a total rejection of the idea of substance.

145 Cf., for example, David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, “The idea of a substance as well as that of a mode, is nothing but a collection of Simple ideas, that are united by the imagination, and have a particular name assigned them, by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others, that collection. But the difference betwixt these ideas consists in this, that the particular qualities, which form a substance, are commonly referred to an unknown something, in which they are supposed to inhere; or granting this fiction should not take place, are at least supposed to be closely and inseparably connected by the relations of contiguity and causation. The effect of this is, that whatever new simple quality we discover to have the same connexion with the rest, we immediately comprehend it among them, even though it did not enter into the first conception of the substance.” I, vi.

146 Cf. An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, “So that of substance, we have no idea of what it is, but only a confused obscure one of what it does.” II, xiii, 20.

147 Whitehead finds that the very definitions violate his process principle and finds no place for Aristotelian or Cartesian ideas of substance. Looking at his categories of explanation we see “that the actual world is a process, and that the process is the becoming of actual entities... how an actual entity becomes constitutes what that actual entity is.... Its being is constituted by its 'becoming.' This is the 'principle of process’” A. N. Whitehead, Process and Reality (New York: Macmillan, 1929) p. 78. See also Leonard J. Eslick “Substance, Change, and Causality in Whitehead” Philosophy and Phenomenological Research, Vol. 18/4 (June, 1958) 503-513.
The non-dualist Mahayana school of Buddhism has an understanding of reality as pure mind and the “substance” of things is an illusion. This understanding is very close to Whitehead’s in positing total inter-relation between beings, but it has an even more radical “ontological emptiness” at the heart of it. By discarding the ideas of independent beings, the truth about reality can be seen as simple spiritual mind or, beyond that simple spiritual mind, to something indescribable.\textsuperscript{148} Given the impoverished views of substance as these thinkers understood it, there was no reason for them not to reject substance as having anything useful to offer philosophy.\textsuperscript{149} Many of the contemporary philosophers have sympathies with the enlightenment understanding of substance.

All these descriptions or rejections of substance lack the dynamic notion that Thomas understood. For them, substance was static and should be expunged from their philosophic systems as incompatible or useless. Even Thomas would find it difficult to use substance if he did not see it as dynamic. An examination of the human experience can lead to the basic questions revolving around the question of the permanent “in itself” aspect of existence, a principle of self-identity within every substance.

A few steps can easily demonstrate that the question of this principle must be addressed. First, by looking at the human experience one finds that there must be something that lasts throughout the changes. To deny this, one would have to address questions about memory, moral responsibility, and even something as simple as a


\textsuperscript{149} For a good review of some of these thinkers on substance see Justin Broackes and Peter Hacker “Substances” \textit{Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes}, Vol. 78 (2004), pp. 41 -63; Clarke, \textit{The One and the Many}, 125ff.
promise or a pledge. For St. Thomas and other Thomists these questions require an answer that stipulates something that endures from one moment to the next; memory gives us a recollection of past events as our own past events, moral responsibility allows us to say, “I did this” and to take responsibility for an action and its consequences, all of which are extended through time. Pledges and promises that we make are also based on expectations that we are going to be around to keep them, that we will be the same person when the time comes to honor them. The fact of some kind of perduring self, one that remains throughout changes, is necessary for any anthropology to come to any agreement with human experience.

The next step is to realize that the principle of self-identity is something radically different from the changes a thing goes through: the “self” cannot be the same as all the changes, because the changes do not last through time as the self does; so the self either must be identical and not identical at the same time, or it must be radically different. The self is the subject at the core of the changes. It transcends the phases of change and the two form a “real metaphysical composition.” When one looks at the tradition prior to the fourteenth century to find a name for this perduring self, “substance,” which emerges as that which stands under something with its companion term for the changeable as “accident.” It is this substance/accident relationship (first clarified by Aristotle) that St. Thomas uses to form the language with which to speak about the self and personhood.

St. Thomas, while not specifically addressing the issue in any one place, has an underlying understanding of the dynamic notion of substance. The axiom that “action

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150 Clarke, The One and the Many, 127.
follows upon being” is held through much of St. Thomas’ systematic works. The following quotes are a sampling of citations\textsuperscript{151}:

Every Substance exists for the sake of its operation.\textsuperscript{152}

Again, every created thing attains its Ultimate perfection through its proper operation.\textsuperscript{153}

It is the nature of every actuality to communicate itself insofar as it is possible. Hence every agent acts according as it exists in actuality.\textsuperscript{154}

The substantial forms of things, which, according as they are in themselves, are unknown to us, shine forth to us through their accidental properties.\textsuperscript{155}

It is easy to see from these texts that an existing substance is made for its operation, for action, and that action requires a core self that is a metaphysical co-principle with its changing accidents. St. Thomas has the foundation for a future argument with Hume, Locke and Descartes latent in the work; the foundation is latent because these questions were never raised to St. Thomas in his day.

\textsuperscript{151} These examples come from Clarke, \textit{The One and the Many}, 34.

\textsuperscript{152} SCG, I, 45.

\textsuperscript{153} SCG, II, 64.

\textsuperscript{154} DP Q2, a1.

\textsuperscript{155} ST, I, Q19, a2.
The idea of a substance, as something perduring through changes as well as its allied accidents, are controversial ideas to modern philosophers such as Locke and Hume.¹⁵⁶ The latter idea is necessary as the way in which the former expresses itself; something neither Locke nor Hume would accept. This is not to say that the substance does not change. The substance/accident relationship is such that there is never one without the other. The only way a substance is in act is through the accidents. As self-identical, the core of the being is intimately tied to the accidents while keeping the “self” intact. The substance necessarily changes in its accidents, for otherwise there would be no communicative action of the core self. The substance changes but not substantially; the accidental change, though, is not be a mere change, but the way in which the substance itself changes.¹⁵⁷

It flows from this discussion that the “self” is self-communicative, for its operations serve to communicate itself and receive information from other beings; it is in the nature of the substance to express the self and be effected by the expression of other substances. There are two possible ways of coming to this conclusion on one’s own: first by observation and then by metaphysical reflection.¹⁵⁸ Observation of all levels of substance from inorganic to human life show a propensity for interaction: inorganic materials give off energy as well as being present to other substances. The rock has color

¹⁵⁶ See above discussion of the modern philosophical problems with dynamic substance.

¹⁵⁷ SCG II, 74.

¹⁵⁸ Clarke, The One and the Many, 32ff; “Action as the Self-Revelation of Being” in Explorations in Metaphysics, 47.
and weight. Plants interact, reproduce, and sustain themselves, and humans live in community as political and moral people. Human persons communicate in these ways but also communicate in a higher order. At this highest level, the human person loves and cares and interacts in intimate ways that are attempts, by the self in the substance, to give to the other something of the self and to receive from the other something of its self. In all these observations we find that there is a communication of the inner core to other substances regardless if it is a rock communicating hardness and weight or a human communicating its rational self to other rational selves.

Metaphysical reflection on a being that in no way interacts or expresses itself yields a being that is either non-existent or irrelevant. If there were no action from within or from without the substance, it would make no difference to itself or to anything else; it would be “indistinguishable from nothingness.”

The medieval adage *agere sequitur esse* proves to be the driving force behind this reflection: action follows upon being. Action is also a criterion for discovering a real being—if it acts, it is a real being either in itself or as part of a being. Action, communication, in its most basic understanding, is the way beings know each other; it is the way in which we know the presence of something as well as its nature.

“*To be is to be actively co-present to the community of existents, of other presences.*”

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160 Keep in mind St. Thomas’ presupposition of the intelligibility of being.

161 Clarke, “Action as the Self-Revelation of Being” in *Explorations*, 47.
At this point St. Thomas’ structure of substantial being becomes apparent. Substance as the “in itself” aspect of being, grounds a being and gives it its perduring core of self-identity. The relational aspect of being, building upon the existential meaning of being, is the “towards others” aspect. Being is meant to act and receive action; it exists to act and action is its perfection. Clarke sums up this structure by saying that “to be is to be substance in relation.” From here the question may be asked about what kind of actions beings perform.

*The Good*

Along with substantial being, the notion of the good becomes very important to this discussion of action. The question arises as to what kind of action, at its core, the substantial being is undertaking. St. Thomas inherited the idea of the good in its relationship with being from the later Church fathers and early medieval scholars. This relationship is one of convertibility. In this short section we will go over St. Thomas’ understanding of the good as it relates to being in our limited focus on action and being.

St. Thomas works within the understanding of the transcendentals as they relate to beings. including being, truth, unity, and goodness as seen in his *Commentary on the*
This leads to St. Thomas’ use of the adage “being and good are convertible” that has been used by many before and after him. This connection with being is not without its detractors. Much of the controversy revolves around the understanding of what the good is. Most of the objections are rooted in an understanding of the good as moral good whereas St. Thomas speaks of ontological good, a good connected with perfection. The difference is significant and to confuse the two will lead the kinds of misunderstandings that have plagued this discussion for centuries.

*What is the Good?*

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163 *Nec solum huiusmodi abstractione Platonici considerabant circa ultimas species rerum naturalium, sed etiam circa maxime communia, quae sunt bonum, unum et ens. Ponebant, enim, unum primum quod est ipsa essentia bonitatis et unitatis et esse, quod dicimus Deum CDN, Prol. “The Platonists not only considered abstractions of this kind regarding the ultimate species of natural things, but also concerning the highest commonalities, which are the Good, the One and Being. For they posited one First which is the essence itself of goodness and unity and *Esse*, which we call God.”*

164 *In Sent. I, 8, 1, 3. ens et bonum convertuntur*

165 See, for example, Alexander of Hales, *Summa*; St. Bonaventure, *In Sent. II*; Albert the Great, *De Bono*.

166 For a short list of these detractors and their objections which includes that of Emmanuel Levinas, see Jan A. Aertsen, “The Convertibility of Being and Good in St. Thomas Aquinas.” *The New Scholasticism* Vol. 59/4 (Autumn, 1985) 449-470.

167 St. Thomas will make the distinction between the different types of “good” in various places most notably, *CHeb*, lect. 4. *In bonis creates est duplex bonitos...alia vero bonitas consideratur in eis absolute, prout scilicet unumquodque dicitur bonum, inquantum est perfectum in esse et operari.*
For St. Thomas the Good is connected with perfection and as such also is connected with causality and eventually action. In the *ST* I Q5, a1, we get a summary of what the good is for St. Thomas:

Goodness and being are really the same, and differ only in idea; which is clear from the following argument. The essence of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable. Hence the Philosopher says (Ethic. i): “Goodness is what all desire.” Now it is clear that a thing is desirable only in so far as it is perfect; for all desire their own perfection. But everything is perfect so far as it is actual. Therefore it is clear that a thing is perfect so far as it exists; for it is existence that makes all things actual, as is clear from the foregoing (3, 4; 4, 1). Hence it is clear that goodness and being are the same really. But goodness presents the aspect of desirableness, which being does not present.

Goodness is the same thing as being in the realm of existing things. This is the question to be answered and he does so through a short summary of the things that have been discussed in the few earlier questions. First what is good must be desirable. This he

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168 The discussion on action will be focused on later.

169 *ST* I Q5, a1.

170 The translation of the English Dominicans, while excellent, shows its dating. Their use of the phrase “really” takes on a different meaning almost a hundred years later. My translation of the first line is: Good and being are the same in the realm of [according to] existing things. The *secundum rem* is translated too simply as “really”. It loses its import in the sentence for today’s readers.
takes as a given and comes to him from Aristotle’s Ethics.\textsuperscript{171} What makes the good desirable is its perfection because that which is perfect is desired. Perfect has very technical definitions to St. Thomas.

We must first consider that “perfect” is said in several ways. For something may be simply speaking perfect, or something may be called perfect in a certain respect. Something is simply speaking perfect when it attains to the end that belongs to it according to its proper nature, while something can be called perfect in a certain respect when it attains an end in regard to things accompanying its proper nature, as an animal is said to be perfect simply speaking, when it reaches the end that it lacks none of those things that constitute animal life.\textsuperscript{172}

Perfect in the case of being is with respect to the fact that a being (\textit{ens}) exists; it lacks none of the constituent elements for something that exists – it has \textit{esse}. Therefore in this sense of perfect, all real existing things are perfect and therefore have the aspect of the good in them. In this sense goodness and being (\textit{ens}) are the same. All existing things are good in that they exist.\textsuperscript{173} From this it is clear that the idea of the good is not a moral goodness but a perfective goodness.

St. Thomas puts a new order in the relationship between the good and being that especially differs from the received Platonic/Neoplatonic tradition in which the Good was

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\textsuperscript{171} \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} book I, 2.

\textsuperscript{172} \textit{On the Perfection of the Spiritual Life}, Cap. 1.

\textsuperscript{173} Cf. \textit{ST} I, Q5, a3.
\end{flushright}
considered beyond being or outside of being. St. Thomas changed this relationship depending on the order in which one is investigating. In the order of existence, the good and being are the same but in the order of ideas the Good is subordinate to Being; in order to be good something must first be.

In ideas being is prior to goodness. For the meaning signified by the name of a thing is that which the mind conceives of the thing and intends by the word that stands for it. Therefore, that is prior in idea, which is first conceived by the intellect. Now the first thing conceived by the intellect is being; because everything is knowable only inasmuch as it is in actuality.\(^{174}\)

Existence has priority in analyzing goodness and, while they are still intimately related but differing in orders.

The good also has a unique character in that it is considered self-diffusive, it wants to continue on to its ultimate end. As such, the good has the character of an end and is that which is sought after and desired.

For natural things have a natural inclination not only toward their own proper good, to acquire it, if not possessed, and, if possessed, to rest therein; but also to diffuse their own goodness among others as far as possible. Hence we see that

\(^{174}\) ST I, Q5, a2. See also ST I, Q5, a1, ad1.
every agent, insofar as it exists in act and possesses some perfection, produces something similar to itself.\textsuperscript{175}

The good has the characteristic of driving towards perfection and achieving its ultimate end. It is active in its pursuit of perfection and that active pursuit also produces goodness and being or, at minimum, demonstrates their existence.

Typical examples of beings seeking their good and perfection would be the human desire to reproduce and create another human and the bodies need for food which will help it achieve perfection. This is not to say that all things the body desires are for its perfection but they are all desired as goods. Every action is ordered towards an end, which St. Thomas calls the good, either real or perceived. This action fulfills the one acting or benefits another as the agent desires.\textsuperscript{176} However the action manifests itself, action is required as a result of \textit{esse}. From this it follows that action follows upon existence.

But we can say that actuality necessitates action. \textit{Esse}, which is good as perfective and desired, can be said to be diffusive of itself in that \textit{esse} necessitates action. In every finite being \textit{esse} naturally flows over into action \textit{ad extra}.\textsuperscript{177}

\textsuperscript{175} \textit{ST}, I, Q19, a2. See also SCG I, 37.

\textsuperscript{176} M\textsuperscript{c}Cool, S.J., ed., \textit{The Universe as Journey}, 76.

Being results in the communication of goodness in action and gives all of existence its dynamism as an interacting system of beings based in something. That something is love. For the highest being in this system, God, self-communication reaches its highest point as self-communicative altruistic love without which the entire gratuitously created universe would not exist. Here, St. Thomas as theologian and philosopher pulls together the Christian understanding of God as Love (1 John) and God as being, “I am Who Am” (Exodus 3) and makes them foundational to his metaphysics: the God who is Love is also Being. Revelation provides data about the Triune God useful in completing his metaphysics. God, the Father, Son, and Spirit interact through self-communication; the Father gives over everything to the Son and they, together, give over all to the Spirit. These relationships, founded in eternal love, are part of the nature of the Triune God as esse, the same act of existence in which all created beings participate in some way. As human persons participate in the existence of God we also share in the need to communicate in love to another, several others even, as part of our nature. The human being is different than other created material beings in that we have the rational capacity to act on this nature or deny it; lower beings are fixed in a simple responsive, unreflective form of self-communication.

Through the analysis of esse from two angles we arrive at the conclusion that substantial being is a very dynamic concept; through its participation in esse, the “to be”

178 Clarke, “Action as the Self-Revelation of Being,” Explorations, 49. This is not to say that creation is a necessary outpouring of the Good but only that creation is a result of that Good. See also ST I, Q45, a6. “God the Father made the creature through His Word, which is His Son; and through His Love, which is the Holy Ghost.”
given it by God, is active. It is also good and that good is itself self-communicative and therefore active, outward-oriented and remains so as far as it is in existence. With this understanding of being and substance the next step is to discover what type of substance is the highest and where does the human person fit into this structure. For St. Thomas, “person” is the highest form of being.

The Person

To understand St. Thomas’ use of the term person, some of the history that has come with the term should be investigated so a deeper understanding of how he uses the term will come to light. St. Thomas will see the person as the highest form of substantial being and to see why this is so will require a historical survey of the term. After a brief history of the term “person” some of the essential elements of what a person is can be uncovered as well as how those elements play into the present task of building a framework around which grace can inform. The person, as the highest form of being, is so in both its intellect and its will as it strives towards self-awareness while also being self-communicative and receptive in its relationship with the world around it.

Many avenues lead to the understanding of the term “person” in its Christian use, some from Greek and others from Latin provenance. In the early Greek perspective the

word *prosopon* meant the mask of an actor or the appearance of someone. The term developed from the combination of three parts of words (*pro-*, *ops-*, *-on*), the central part taken from the verb meaning “to see” or “to be seen”.\(^{180}\) Initially the term was an anatomical reference to the area between the neck and the top of the head in a human, the term then expanded to include the idea of a mask used at theatrical plays, and then to the role played by the actor. Over time, we find development from an objective thing, a mask, towards personality; from a part in a play to the actual character of the individual.\(^{181}\) The word connoted a sense of manifestation, a bringing to light out of the shadows, a distinctive and unique hidden depth revealed through action. Further, the periphrastic usage (*kata prosopon*, against the face) indicates intimate face-to-face communication. Aristotle said that the human is the only animal with a face indicating that the face manifests a depth that only the human person has.\(^{182}\) Both the uniqueness and the relationality of the human are brought out in the developing concept of *prosopon*.

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\(^{180}\) I follow Schmitz, “Geography,” here.

\(^{181}\) Ury notes that there is a shift from an exclusive use of the Greek word soma, meaning body or an individual, to the equal use of *prosopon* in the writings of Plato and others. See Ury, *Role and Meaning* 84, footnote 73.

Only later related to *prosopon* is the philosophical term *hypostasis*, which originally meant a substance that stands under something. Under the Stoics and Gnostics this term slowly changed to mean individual substance and took on a sense of uniqueness and individuality, a change from essence to instantiation.\(^{183}\) With emphasis not on the appearance of a thing or the face but more on a particular nature's unique manifestation, the development of the meaning of *hypostasis* draws closer to that of *prosopon*.

God was called simply a substance in the Greek philosophical understanding of the word *ousia*, a term handed down from the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophical schools. *Ousia* is the abstract noun of the verb *einai* (to be) that could give it the meaning of ‘being’ in any sense of ‘to be’.\(^{184}\) In Aristotle, *ousia* has two subdivisions that he named secondary *ousia* and primary *ousia*. The secondary *ousia* or substance is sometimes a species and sometimes a genus but the primary *ousia* is always an individual substance or a real individual thing. Aristotle related the primary and secondary substances by defining primary as a complex of a secondary substance and a substratum or some kind of material.\(^{185}\)

The Latin history of the term for person centers on the term *persona*, most likely derived from the Latin root “to sound,” *sonare*, with “through,” *per*, added as a prefix, creating *per-sonare*. This construction was a Latinization of a term taken from an older Etruscan term for a mask, *phersu*, worn by actors during festivals in honor of

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\(^{183}\) Drippe, *op cit.*, 35-36.


By the time of Cicero the term was used with legal meanings in considering individual people as well as the personal character of the person with respect to the community. The idea of person in this context was considered not so much ontologically as communally. Legal proceedings depended on the personal character that the individual possessed, slave or free for example. At that time the general philosophical understanding of *persona* was the individual human substance (*ousia* in Greek) in its proper and distinct human individuality.\(^{187}\) The understanding of *persona* as relational is concentrated on the external communal relation; by the Christian era, some kind of relational understanding of the word *persona* was in usage.

Greek and Latin usages converged in the Christian age as the early councils needed precise language and concepts to help the Church understand the deposit of faith, particularly in the Trinity. The Church took the language of *persona* in Latin or *prosopon* and *hypostasis* in Greek, with their dual concepts of unique individual relation, and further developed and deepened that language. Taking cues also from the usage of the poets and popular philosophers Christianity also had to integrate the Latin usage. Cicero's first use of the Latin *essentia* to render the Greek *ousia* never gained currency though, as *substantia* became the common translation. *Substantia*, though it might have originally meant “existence,” came in practice to mean “an existent thing.”

*The Christian Usage of “Person” in the Early Church*


The scriptural tradition of the Hebrews survived in the Greek-speaking culture through translations of the texts known as the Septuagint (LXX) and it is this tradition that the Christians received. The Greek prosopon is found over twelve hundred times in the LXX and translates roughly fifteen variations of the Hebrew word panim (face) alone or with a preposition, mepanim meaning opposition as in turning ones face against someone or something (in Greek, kata prosopon).\textsuperscript{188} The development of the Hebrew has, in a way, paralleled the development of the Greek where the term can mean the face of a person or the countenance and personality of the person as well as the whole person.\textsuperscript{189} This usage in the LXX opened the text to prosopographic exegesis found in the early Christian writers. Biblical authors used different characters in dialogical roles to give life and dynamism to events rather than simply writing a narrative using what is called “prosopographic” writing.\textsuperscript{190}

By the time the first century was coming to a close, a certain amount of the prosopographic exegesis was in usage. The new Christians took the roles found in the Old Testament texts and combined them with the Latin and Greek philosophical understandings of person.\textsuperscript{191} The acceptance, in faith, of Jesus of Nazareth, an individual human being, as God, along with the individual Persons of the Father and the Holy Spirit,

\textsuperscript{188} Edwin Hatch and Henry Redpath, Concordance to the LXX. (Akademische Druck-U. Verlagsanstalt: Graz, Austria, 1954); Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A Briggs, Hebrew-English Lexicon of the Old Testament (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1951). One exception is aph, meaning nose or nostril as found in speaking of God breathing into the nostrils of Adam.

\textsuperscript{189} Ury, Role and Meaning, 86-90 esp. footnotes.

\textsuperscript{190} Ratzinger, op. cit., 441-443.

\textsuperscript{191} Ratzinger, op. cit., 442-443.
all roles found in scripture, began to draw together the philosophical and theological understandings of “person” as a unique, real, living, individual being. The Fathers used philosophical tools to answer questions about the faith, refining the definition of the person into this unique individual.

Questions about the person of Christ became more complex as the Church grew and for the first time there was a need to explain and defend the faith. Answering questions about Christ required the development of a Christian ontology drawn from the Greek and Latin ontologies found in the lands where the new Christians lived. A new vocabulary was needed and a philosophic way of speaking about the faith in general and Christ specifically was required. Tertullian was an important developer of the philosophic language bridging Greek and Latin.

\textit{Development of the Christian Use of “Person”}

The Fathers had recourse to the Greek philosophical tradition as they professed simultaneously a unity and plurality in the Godhead. In Aristotle they found five ways of looking at unity in substances, three of which they could use for their purposes: unity by substratum, unity by genus and unity by species.\footnote{Wilks, “Zizoulas,” 68; Aristotle defined 'unity by substratum' as the unity things have by virtue of their underlying material or substance. Augustine used this analogy when mentioning that oil and wine are related because of the water that is constituent to both. 'Unity by genus' relates things by their genus; 'unity by species' is the relatedness of being in the same species. Gregory of Nyssa gives an example of this as three men all sharing in humanity. If another is added to their number, humanity is not added to; there is still one humanity. (Basil \textit{Epistles}, 38.2) However, if this analogy were applied to God it would yield three gods sharing a divinity. Hence, Augustine rejected the analogy in favor of an analogy of substratum. “But herein is declared, not only that He is
Tertullian, whose understanding of ousia most likely came through Stoic reinterpretations of Aristotle, used substantia in a way that was similar to the secondary ousia in contrast to the specific material of a thing.193 For Tertullian substantia was polyvalent; he understood it as either “some particular kind of stuff” or “stuff of which all things are composed.”194 Substantia was an abstract term for Tertullian; everything had a substance to it and the only real thing was corpus, corpora or body. He also used substantia as a thing composed of a certain kind of “stuff;” in Tertullian a thing is a substance as opposed to having substance.

His understanding of God as a corpus gives rise to the question of what kind of corpus; Tertullian’s answer is that the triune God is a spiritus.195 “Tertullian himself presents of substantiae which admit of a kind of distribution and plurality which does not constitute a division.”196 Tertullian combined all of his concepts of substantia into an understanding of God as seen from the internal order in God.

God, but also that He is the same substance as the Father; ... concerning the Holy Spirit, ... also the very God and therefore absolutely equal with the Father and the Son, and in the unity of the Trinity, consubstantial and co-eternal” (Augustine, De Trinitate, 6, NPNF first series, Vol. III) Basil found that the analogy by substratum and genus were prone to misunderstanding, the genus being understood in a Platonic Form and the substratum being Stoic ideas of ousia as material elements that made up the divinity.

193 See also William J. Hill. The Three-Personed God, (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1982) 36 for another discussion of this. The Latin essentia is really a closer translation and is more proper for the Greek ousia. Etymologically, substantia is closer to hypostasis as both mean “standing under.” Seneca first used substantia to show the contrast between hypostasis and emphasis, reality and appearance.


195 “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” John 4:24.

Tertullian is considered the first to use *persona* in its fullness in describing both Christ,\(^{197}\) and the Trinity.\(^{198}\) Ratzinger thinks that it was Tertullian's use of the term *person* in this context that made the word enter “intellectual history for the first time with its full weight”\(^ {199}\) and began an ever increasing usage of the word in developing the articles of faith and fighting heresies. In *Adversus Praxeum* Tertullian uses “person” to mean both the presence of someone, say, God,

who equally rejoiced with a reciprocal gladness in the (person of Him) Fathers' presence “You are my Son, today I have begotten you.( Ps. II, 7)\(^{200}\)

and the individual unique being:

But you will not allow Him to be really a substantive being, by having a substance of His own; in such a way that He may be regarded as an objective thing and a person, and so be able (as being constituted second to the God the Father,) and make two, the Father and the Son, God and the Word.\(^{201}\)

\(^{197}\) *videmus duplicem statum non confusum sed conjunctum in una persona Deum et hominem Iesum* “We see plainly the twofold state, which is not confounded but conjoined, in one person, God and the man Jesus.” (*Adversus Praxeum* 27.11).

\(^{198}\) *una substantia tres personae* “one being in three persons”

\(^{199}\) Ratzinger, “Person,” 440.


Tertullian used his philosophical vocabulary that was a mixture of Aristotelianism and Stoic Platonism to the great advantage of the Church however some issues were still unresolved concerning the faith and new ones arose as the language of the west became Latin. Increasingly troublesome translations between the Greek and Latin became much of the task at hand for the Cappadocians.

The council of Nicea (325) convened to deal with various heresies and questions, particularly Arianism.\textsuperscript{202} To solidify the understanding of the Father/Son relationship, the council taught, “One in being with the Father \textit{(homoousion)}.\textsuperscript{203} In the anathemas of the council were references to \textit{hypostasis} and \textit{ousia} based on the Greek definitions which were equivalent. Athanasius used the anathemas to advance his early position that \textit{hypostasis} should not be used to speak of the persons in God. Many Fathers were strong defenders of the unity in substance as Athanasius was but many also became entangled in conflicts over terms.

\textit{The Cappadocians}

After Nicea there are two possible understandings of the \textit{ousia-hypostasis} relation. The first follows Aristotelian thought wherein \textit{ousia} is secondary \textit{ousia}, an abstract-being, and \textit{hypostasis} a concrete-being. The second way of seeing the two is to see them as both concrete-being where there is a single united substance in God


\textsuperscript{203} What the council did not address in the creed was the person of the Holy Spirit and Its relationship to the Father and the Son; it avoided an exact definition of all the terms used.
expressed in three persons. The Cappadocians chose the second way avoiding the first's potential modalism; they used all the philosophical tools available to show how the two concrete-beings, ousia and hypostasis are related.

In the early time of the Cappadocians the terms ousia and hypostasis were identical; referring to the unity of God. Basil, like Athanasius, initially defended the equality of the two citing Heb 1:3, the Nicene Creed anathema and an earlier letter from Athanasius for support. He later took up Origen's definition of God as one ousia and three hypostaseis in hopes of clarifying the distinction between the substance and persons in God. To refine the distinction, Gregory of Nazianzus wrote about the unity and inseparability of hypostasis and ousia, “the individuality is only the manner in which the identical substance is objectively presented in each several person.” After Basil affirmed the distinction between the two terms he said that the distinction between the ousia and hypostasis is the same as the distinction between general and particular; confessing that God is one ousia or substance but with distinct hypostaseis. The

204 Wilks, “Zizoulas,” 69.

205 “He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

206 “And those who say ... that he came to be from things that were not, or from another hypostasis (hypostaseos) or substance (ousia) ... the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes.” Tanner, Decrees, 5.

207 ad Afros, 4: ousia and hypostasis mean nothing apart from being itself.


209 Epist.236.6; See also Basil to Greg. Nyssa Letter 38.3 “that which is spoken of in a special and peculiar manner is indicated by the name of the hypostasis.” NPNF, Second series, Vol. VIII.
difference, he writes, was like that “between the animal and the particular man;”

Gregory of Nazianzus also defined hypostasis as “modes of being in the Godhead.”

The Cappadocians distinguished without separating the two terms and integrated this distinction throughout their writing.

What relates hypostasis and ousia is the processional relationship of the hypostaseis; their “modes of being” as unbegotten, begotten and proceeding. Though equal in substance, the hypostaseis do have an order within them; the Father begets the Son and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father. According to Basil, “God, who is over all, alone has, as one special mark of his own hypostasis, his being Father, and his deriving his hypostasis from no cause; and through this mark He is peculiarly known;”

Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus shared this understanding of God the Father as the originator, uncaused; each promoting order in relationship without subordination of the Persons. The concepts are summed up in the idea of homoousios, being of the same ousia or 'of one being', while keeping the hypostaseis equal.

210 Wilks, “Zizoulas,” 68.


212 Epist. 38.4.

213 Gregory of Nyssa, Cant. Eunomius I; Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration 42.15 and 40.43 in NPNF, Second Edition, Vol. VII.

214 Wilks, “Zizoulas,” 73; In some of their analogies they appear to violating this. For example see Or. 42.15 where Gregory can be interpreted as giving precedence to the Father over and above the other Persons of the Trinity. He does clarify his point earlier in Or. 40 but out of context it can appear subordinational.
During this time, linguistic conflicts continued between the east and west as *ousia* was translated into Latin as *substantia* and later as *essentia*;\(^{1215}\) *hypostasis* was also translated as *substantia* due to the continued equating, in the west, of *ousia* and *hypostasis*. Only when Tertullian used the term *persona* in Latin to speak of the three relations in God did *persona* become closely associated with *hypostasis*. Confusion arose between East and West with his use of *persona*, which translated into Greek as *prosopon* or mask. When the East said, “one *ousia* and three *hypostasis*,” the West heard in their Latinized terms, “one *substantia*, three *substantia*,” which was Arian or tri-theist. When the west said, “one *substantia*, three *persona*,” the East heard in Greek, “one *ousia*, three *prosopon*, “one substance and three masks, which is similar to the formula used by Sabellians to say there is no distinction of persons in the one God but just three different masks or outward presentations.

It was the need for the distinction between the *ousia* and *hypostasis* and the equating of *hypostaseis* with *prosopon* that gave Basil cause to change his use of *hypostasis*, instead using *prosopon* even though he preferred *hypostasis*.\(^{1216}\) Because of the translational difficulties, the subtle differences between *ousia* and *hypostasis* were missed by the west; the idea of the unified substance of one God in a trinity of relational

\(^{1215}\) cf. note 101.

\(^{1216}\) By the time he writes *De Spiritu Sancta* he is very comfortable using the term *prosopon* to mean *hypostasis*. “[A]ccording to the distinctions of Persons (*prosopon*), [the Father and Son] are one and one, and according to the community of Nature, one.” *De Spiritu Sancta*, 45, *NPNF* Vol. VIII
hypostaseis does not come through until after the Cappadocians have refined the use of persona and theologians like Augustine advance their work in the Latin west. 217

At the Councils of Nicea and Constantinople the terms for what is unity and what is trinity in the Godhead were finally codified in creeds. In the Nicene creed, God is referred to as “one” and the Son is begotten “from the substance of the Father” but also “consubstantial with the Father,” showing that the person of the Son is separate from the Father but they are of the same substance. 218 Though persona or prosopon are not used, the designation of the Son as a separate entity is understood as the individual prosopon, hypostasis or, in Latin, persona. In the Council of Constantinople the same is applied to the Holy Spirit described as a separate, “lordly and life-giving one, proceeding forth from the Father.” The proceeding forth indicates the same substance as the Father. It is only a hundred years after these first councils that the term persona understood as hypostasis becomes common in the decrees at Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451).

This is the language inherited by St. Thomas and used by St. Thomas but not uncritically. As observed above, St. Thomas was aware of the translational issues that influenced the early Church Fathers. He does, though, hold Boethius’ definition of “person” as standard and correct. The person is an “individual substance of a rational nature.” 219 Working through the various linguistic nuances, he agrees with Boethius that

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217 The language problems did not go unacknowledged by St. Thomas. Cf. DP Q9; ST I, Q29, a2-3.

218 Tanner, Decrees, 5.

219 Originally in Boethius’ De duabus natura, 3. Cf. ST, I, Q29, a1; DP Q9.
the term “person” should be used for rational substances versus irrational substances which should just be referred to by the term “substance.”220

*Person as highest form of Being*

In St. Thomas, the person holds a distinct place in the hierarchy of beings. Mankind is at a unique meeting-point between the intellectual and spiritual realms, he calls the human person the lowest of the spirits but also the highest of the material order.221 The best phrase to describe the human person is “embodied spirit.” Directly above the human person in the intellectual realm—the angelic realm—are those creatures without bodies, and above all of these is God as the infinite spirit.222 Personal being is the highest form of being because it is used to describe the Persons in God. This is a case where theology influences philosophy. The Christian use, in general, and Boethius, in particular, of the term person is of prime importance for St. Thomas. It enters into his thought as a given that “person” describes something more perfect than regular being. Because of what a person is, Clarke says that it:

is nothing but being itself freed from the limits of material modes of existence that hold it down in the darkness of un-self-conscious lack of self-presence, being

220 *ST* I, Q29, a2, co.; *DP* Q9, a1.

221 *DeEnte*, cap 4.

itself allowed now to take on the full dimensions of what it meant to be, that is, to be active presence in the world.\textsuperscript{223}

For St. Thomas “‘person’ signifies what is most perfect in all nature--that is, a subsistent individual of a rational nature”\textsuperscript{224} and also:

\textit{person} denotes a certain nature with a certain mode of existence. Now the nature which \textit{person} includes in its definition is of all natures the most exalted, to wit that nature which is intellectual in regard to its genus. Likewise the mode of existence signified by the word \textit{person} is most exalted, namely that a thing exists by itself.\textsuperscript{225}

For St. Thomas, the human person is first a spirit, an intellectual essence, that receives its \textit{esse} from God in order to exist. Reflection upon the operations of the soul reveals the many activities that are purely spiritual, beyond the simply material body. St. Thomas will place the human soul among the separated substances but also among the weakest requiring material sense input.\textsuperscript{226} His analysis demonstrates that the soul possesses its own act of existence, which then informs the material body.\textsuperscript{227} The soul is the essence of the particular human person and that particular essence requires a material

\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{223}] McCool, S.J., ed., \textit{The Universe as Journey}, 79.
\item[\textsuperscript{224}] \textit{ST} I, Q29, a3.
\item[\textsuperscript{225}] \textit{DP} Q9, a3.
\item[\textsuperscript{226}] See his analysis in his commentary on Aristotle’s \textit{CDA} and also \textit{DeEnte}.
\item[\textsuperscript{227}] \textit{SCG} II, 68, 70.
\end{enumerate}
body in order to “rise to an indirect, analogous knowledge and direct love of the Transcendent Spiritual source of itself and its cosmos.” As we will see, it is through the body that the human person communicates its being to others and seeks the creating God.

To see how this applies to the discussion at hand, the elements of personhood can be broken down into two main aspects, those dealing with the self and those dealing with the other. Those dealing with the self concern the intellect and the will that brings about self awareness and self determination respectively. Those dealing with the will are self-communication and receptivity. These are the elements that give the person its characteristic structure of in-itself and for-the-other. This is the structure that was created to allow grace to act.

*Self-Awareness in the Intellect*

Self-awareness is a focus, by the intellect, on the self synthesizing everything in its self-knowledge. The structure of being as in itself and towards others has the necessity of a substantial core self or self-identity. This core is the “ontological root” of the substance and, in the human person, is the seat of the “I” that each human person speaks. Slowly over time one comes to know the self through its experiences; there develops a certain self-awareness that comes through self-knowledge. Even Descartes finds that his radical doubt starts with an “I” that does the thinking. To be able to say “I” is the unique prerogative of personal being. Human persons as personal beings are present to

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themselves in a way that animals are not capable of. The human, in its unique place among creation as embodied spirit, can rise above the material aspects and reflect upon the self as self and not as a mere reflection in a stream.

As a negative consequence of human material nature, self-awareness takes time and effort to develop; higher orders of personal beings—angels and God—are present to themselves immediately and completely due to their immaterial existence. From infancy through old age the human person needs to work to become ever more aware of itself; other beings are used in getting a clearer picture of the inner core. The corporality of the human person limits the ability truly to know the self in its entirety principally due to our openness to the Infinite rooted in our ability to transcend the material. Since the human person is by its nature an immaterial intellect, he is open to God who is infinite intellect and will.\textsuperscript{230} The ends of the human intellect are knowing God and knowing the self through a continuous process of discovering the self and extending ourselves towards the final experience of the Beatific vision where we will know ourselves completely.\textsuperscript{231} 

\textit{Self-Determined -Will}

\textsuperscript{230} Cf. \textit{ST} I, Q88, a1. [T]he active intellect is not a separate substance; but a faculty of the soul, extending itself actively to the same objects to which the passive intellect extends receptively; because, as is stated (\textit{De Anima} iii, 5), the passive intellect is “all things potentially,” and the active intellect is “all things in act.” Therefore both intellects, according to the present state of life, extend to material things only, which are made actually intelligible by the active intellect, and are received in the passive intellect. Hence in the present state of life we cannot understand separate immaterial substances in themselves, either by the passive or by the active intellect. For the understanding of the soul as it relates to the body see also, \textit{ST} I, Q76, a5.; \textit{SCG} II, 90.; \textit{De Malo}, Q5, a5.; \textit{DQA} a8.

\textsuperscript{231} \textit{ST} I-II, Q3, a8.
The human person’s will informed by the intellect is the avenue for action and, as a spiritual faculty, the will is oriented towards the Good.\textsuperscript{232} Lower material beings are locked into instinctive responses and cannot reach above their corporeality. The human person can strive for the good that is beyond the material and aim at the infinite Good that becomes available to him through the participation in the divine \textit{esse}. Moreover, the human person will not be satisfied until union with the Divine Good is achieved; as Augustine says, “Our hearts are restless… until they rest in You.”\textsuperscript{233} 

[A] human being is by nature a finite embodied spirit, in search of the Infinite, in a social solidarity with his fellow human beings, on a historical journey through this material cosmos towards its trans-worldly goal.\textsuperscript{234}

The social aspects of the human person flow from the necessary communication innate in its nature. As we communicate, we form a system of relationships and interactions—we form a community—that continues throughout history, though not bound by it. Since we are material bodies, we use the created universe as our path to reach the ultimate goal that is beyond this world—God.

Through the freedom of the will, the person achieves a radical self-mastery or self-determination as he can say, “I did this.” All moral action is a way of coming to understand and possess the self as the person has the ability to govern himself. The human

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{232} ST I Q82, a4.; SCG II, 47; DM Q6.
\item \textsuperscript{234} Clarke, \textit{Person and Being}, 41.
\end{itemize}
person can self-direct to act as God acts by listening to the divine law placed in the heart—the natural law. This is not to say that one should act in a purely legalistic manner following laws without reflection. By using the intellect, the human person can govern life towards harmony with the rest of the created universe in an imitation of God seeking the good of the whole, in general, and a personal perfection, in particular. A well formed intellect will see the good actions as good, in themselves, and not as rules demanding a particular action.

Integral in this self-determination is the notion of responsibility; the human person is the sole responsible agent of action regardless of whatever influence on the intellect; a person’s action is one’s own. According to St. Thomas:

For every person is bound to examine his actions according to the knowledge which he himself has from God, whether natural or acquired, or infused from above; for every man is obliged to act according to reason [i.e., in context according to his or her own personal participation in reason].

Self-determining action is the manner in which the human person comes to develop the self; it develops “who we are” from the actions of “what we are.” We develop the self through an action-reflection-action pattern in which we judge ourselves and change towards a good; the intellect will, ideally, find the true good towards which to aim.

Self-Awareness as the in-itself aspect of the person is fulfilled through both knowledge and will in their proper functioning in accordance with the law placed in

\[235\] DV Q17, a5, ad4.
them by God. Going beyond the Delphic command to “know thyself,” to “possess thyself” is foundational in the establishment of the person. In an ever-maturing process this self-awareness will only reach its goal in the presence of God when we will be face-to-face with the source of everything we are.

Self-communication

On the other side of the human substance there is a need to go out from the self to others; the in-itself must have its towards-others which comes about through communication. For the rational person, communication is more than simple programmed instinctual interactions. The person, as a rational creature, whose intellect reaches beyond itself, communicates through willful giving of some aspect of the self. As opposed to irrational beings such as rocks or plants, more than simple electrons or spores are communicated as part of human nature; the good is communicated.

As seen above, an aspect of being is its convertibility with the good. As such there is the notion of diffusiveness within all beings. There is a need to send out the good of itself out into the world.

For natural things have a natural inclination not only toward their own proper good, to acquire it, if not possessed, and, if possessed, to rest therein; but also to diffuse their own goodness among others as far as possible.236

It is both for the good and as a result of the good that every substance communicates, especially the person. The person can determine the content (in many cases) and direction

236 ST I, Q19,a2.
of this communication. Like the irrational substances, the human person communicates through its accidents; our very material existence communicates our presence and certain things about us to others. Unlike the irrational substances the human person can communicate thoughts and desires as well as results of intellectual activity. We can tell someone that two plus two is four.

From an experiential point of view, the human person possesses a grossly limited ability to communicate in the early years of life and communication skills take many years to learn. The in-itself dominates in the early years and continues to make an effort to communicate through some kind of action and, as a result of that action, reflection, and then more action. Over time the repeated action-reflection-action system brings in information through action’s corollary—receptivity.\(^2\) As the human person matures, the system creates a network of interactions building a community around him. Each of the persons in this community are doing the same thing and create an ever-increasing social community around the human person, something St. Thomas found completely natural.\(^3\)

This ever-increasing interaction is the necessary way for the human person to grow and become ever more self-aware due to the temporal-material nature of existence. The angelic persons are all-knowing immediately and without error because of their immaterial existence; these spirits interact without any regard for, or limit from, time.\(^4\) The human person requires another to mirror the self. Contemporary personalist thinkers

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\(^2\) Below we shall see the activity of receptivity.

\(^3\) Cf. SCG, III, 81; ST, I-II, Q72, a4.

\(^4\) Cf. ST I, Q84, a7.
like Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel and Jean-Paul Sartre have developed this insight into human nature. The development of relationships is easily seen in the growth of an infant through adulthood especially in the adolescent years where identity gets its first real taste of freedom. At this stage, the intellect begins to grasp abstract concepts and begin a radical deepening of the person’s most intimate relationship—himself and God. The intellect, open to the Infinite, can begin its un-fulfillable attempt at fully grasping everything including Infinite Being or God.

In St. Thomas’ treatise on man, priority is given to the human person above the rest of creation due to its intellectual ability to go beyond itself. The soul is directed towards the infinite, universal being. The human person must become aware of this through interactions with particular things. The more the human person interacts, the more understand of the place in the order of being is developed—the more one finds the self to be relational in nature. These principles are true for all persons, but the angelic realm and the Infinite Being do not have the material existence that limits our ability to achieve our expansion towards the Infinite.

In human interaction the question could be asked, what is it, truly, that we give when we communicate? Recall St. Thomas’ notion of the good as a property of being and that beings by their nature communicate the good to others; they do this out of the richness that they have within them. Each creature has a different aspect of the Infinite Good that they participate in and it is that share that they can give. Setting aside the involuntary communications of the person such as things that would marks it presence:

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_{\text{240}} \text{ST, I, Q78.}
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size, color, etc., this free, self-aware, self-communication of the good is also called love.\textsuperscript{241}

Despite all the conflicting drives within our flawed human nature, it is still connatural for a human person to be a lover, to go out towards others we love, sharing what we have and wishing them the good they need for their own flourishing, for they too are good by participation in being similar to our own.\textsuperscript{242}

What human persons give is, in part, who they are, the things they know, wisdom, all mediated by the material that is part of human nature.

The universe of beings becomes reoriented towards a communitarian existence, especially in its highest form, the person. The sub-rational beings exist to serve the human person and the human person is meant to be in community as substance-in-relation. The created, material, universe, then, becomes gathered up by the human person and directed back to its source, Infinite Being, as part of a \textit{communio personarum}. From this we get an idea of the person as an individual substance of a rational nature that must, in order to come to full fruition, be in active communion with other persons and other substances.

\textit{Receptivity}

As a corollary to the active self-communication, receptivity is also a fundamental aspect of a being. If one is to communicate effectively one’s message must be received

\textsuperscript{241} Cf. \textit{ST} I-II,QQ26-27.

\textsuperscript{242} \textit{Person and Being}, 76.
and if one wishes to learn anything about a being it must receive the communication sent by that being. Receptivity is a part of creation and is part of all things except for God because God has no potentiality. We will see that it is in potentiality that the created order involves receptivity in general and then we will investigate the receptive aspects of the person where we will see that receptivity does not necessarily imply a lack or potentiality.

There are many places where the notion of receptivity occurs in St. Thomas’ work. Most will refer to material things and their potentiality such as matter in general or designated matter specifically. Other times the concept of receptivity will involve the immaterial separated substances such as angels. An example of St. Thomas’ use of the concept of receptivity can be seen in the following quote.

The First Act is the universal principle of all acts; because It is infinite, virtually “pre-containing all things,” as Dionysius says (Div. Nom. v). Wherefore things participate of It not as a part of themselves, but by diffusion of Its processions.

*Now as potentiality is receptive of act*, it must be proportionate to act. But the acts *received* which proceed from the First Infinite Act, and are participations thereof, are diverse, so that there cannot be one potentiality which receives all acts, as there is one act, from which all participated acts are derived; for then *the receptive potentiality* would equal the active potentiality of the First Act. Now *the receptive potentiality* in the intellectual soul is other than *the receptive*

243 *ST I, Q84, a6* “intellectual knowledge is caused by the senses.” This sense input comes through interaction with sensible things. The senses themselves are passive and so are receptive to input from the outside, cf. *SCG II*, 82.
**potentiality** of first matter, as appears from the diversity of the things received by each. For primary matter receives individual forms; whereas the intelligence receives absolute forms.²⁴⁴

First we see that potentiality is receptive of act. This is an idea that pervades all of St. Thomas’ work on the act/potency relationship and an idea in which most of his philosophy of creation is rooted. Potential things are able to receive an act. Receptivity is built into the very understanding of creation, even things that are not yet in existence. All potentialities are “receptive potentialities.” Primary matter receives some differentiating aspect and then that is capable of receiving some specific form.²⁴⁵ Even the intellect is receptive because it is not active until acted upon.²⁴⁶ Anything in potency is receptive of some act otherwise there is no reason for it to exist in potency.

²⁴⁴ *ST I, Q75, a5, ad1.* Emphasis mine.

²⁴⁵ *DV Q10, a8.* “…just as the nature of first matter is known from its receptivity for forms of a certain kind.”

²⁴⁶ “Consequently this possible intellect must be in potency to all things intelligible to man; it must be capable of receiving them and therefore must be devoid of them, because anything capable of receiving other things is in potency to them inasmuch as it lacks them; just as the pupil of the eye, which is capable of receiving all colors, lacks every color.” *DQDeAnima, a2.* This speaks to the possible or passive intellect. The active intellect is activated by the reception of an intelligible thing. “But the human intellect, which is the lowest in the order of intelligence and most remote from the perfection of the Divine intellect, is in potentiality with regard to things intelligible, and is at first like a clean tablet on which nothing is written, as the Philosopher says (*De Anima* iii. 4). This is made clear from the fact, that at first we are only in potentiality to understand, and afterwards we are made to understand actually. … And consequently the intellect is a passive power.” *ST I Q79, a2.*
The Latin *potentia* is a passive concept of power or force. A power is something that is not always in act. This is why it also takes on the meaning of capacity, another passive, unfulfilled term. It is a term that connotes future possible use but at present is not being used or activated. A potential receives some kind of act in order to fulfill its capacity or its function. All creatures, save God, are in need of some kind of activating principle.

Passion is found in the soul and in every creature, because every creature has some potentiality in its composition, and by reason of this every subsistent creature is capable of receiving something.\(^{247}\)

If nothing else, every creature receives its existence from something else.

Therefore in every being other than the first, there is present both a “to be” itself as the act, and the substance having “to be” as a potency receptive of the act of “to be.”\(^{248}\)

By the very fact of creation there is receptivity in all creatures. This translates to the creature itself after it is in act, after it receives its “to be” whereby receptivity becomes part of its very nature. Is this the reason why persons need to interact? St. Thomas does not specifically say. Putting together the notions that the intellect needs

\(^{247}\) *DV* Q26, a1.

\(^{248}\) *De Substantiis separatis*, cap 8.
Effective communication essentially entails sending and receiving messages. Thus every being that communicates should, in its nature, have some aspect of receptivity within itself. One can look at the irrational beings and see this in primitive form: in chemical elements, electrons are given off and received, plants give off spores and receive them, etc. As the focus narrows to the personal being, the giving and receiving aspects also change in their character.

In the communication of love, there is an inherent element of mutuality in the process. Clarke analyzes friendship with its mutual love and finds that “one’s love is accepted, joyfully welcomed by another, and returned in kind, and the same is true reciprocally for the other person with respect to me.” The highest love, then, requires a receptive nature.

In an Aristotelian analysis, receptivity is an imperfection, a passivity that lacks activity but the imperfection is in the temporal order of material things. If one were to remove time and matter from beings, receptivity will take on a completely active role in their love relationship. One lover gives love, in its entirety, to the beloved, timelessly, and the beloved receives it, timelessly, in its entirety, and the beloved returns the same. Timelessly means eternally, an “always” aspect in the relationship revealing that the

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249 This deals with substances in general but not persons in general. Angelic persons do not need sense input and neither do the Divine Persons. What follows is focused mainly on the human person unless otherwise specified.

250 Person and Being, 84.
beloved always both receives the love of the lover and fully possesses it. Receptivity is a perfection in the love relationship when stripped of its limitations.

This aspect of the person did not come from St. Thomas but from the Christian tradition especially as it is developed by the Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar who brought out the aspects of receptivity in the love between the Trinitarian Persons. Tradition holds that the Godhead is a Trinity of Persons—St. Thomas calls these Persons constituted by relations that are subsistent—that are in an eternal love relationship,251 Father, Son and Holy Spirit.252 The Father begets the Son and their love begets the Holy Spirit. The Son and the Spirit are essentially first receptive and thankful to the Father.253 Their receptivity is not seen as a reduction in the esteem of the Son or the Spirit but an equally worthy personhood. Each has its self-communicating personhood coeternal with its receptivity.

We see here a unique “Christian philosophy” in the true sense of that phrase; this philosophy is using the truths of revelation to further its rational natural project. The Trinitarian Persons and “God is Love” from 1 John, points natural reason past a point where otherwise it would have stopped. Using basic revealed truths as philosophical first principles points the philosopher towards a solution to an otherwise unanswerable problem. The human mind can only travel so far in this philosophical journey without

251 Comp. Theol. 45.
252 ST I, Q30, a1.; cf. DP Q9, a5.
253 Richard of St. Victor was fundamental in developing the love relationship in understanding the relations between the Persons within God. Cf. De Trinitate.
help from a higher source.\textsuperscript{254} In a Christian philosophy faith and reason must work together to reach its goals.

Coming full circle we can see the root of our being inside this Triune God of interpersonal relationships as the source of our existential meaning of being especially in personal beings.

The reason why all being, and all persons preeminently, are such is precisely because that is the way the Supreme Being, the Source of all being, actually is, and, since all creatures—and in a special way persons—are participations and hence images of their divine Source, then it follows that all created beings, and more intensely persons, will mirror in some characteristic way the divine mode of being.\textsuperscript{255}

Through participation in divine Being (\textit{esse}), the human person shares in Divine inclinations and Divine structure;\textsuperscript{256} human persons, too, are involved in the eternal process of communication and receptivity, the communion of persons. This grounds the reasons for the person’s drive towards self-expression and self-awareness, moving the human person to communicate, through the body, to others. The paradigm for perfect

\textsuperscript{254} Cf. \textit{ST}, I, Q1.

\textsuperscript{255} Clarke, \textit{Person and Being}, 88.

\textsuperscript{256} Cf. Gen 1.
communication is love, a full self-giving of the goods of the self for the good of the other.²⁵⁷

On the human level, the fullness of love must be given over to other human persons through the body and in the most intimate fashion. This is necessary due to the fact that humans come to know themselves through interactions with others and if there is no interaction, something of the self is lost or at best does not develop fully. Time limits the interactions and therefore some intimacies take long periods to develop and sustain, but the rewards outweigh the efforts as each in the relationship learn better to communicate its good to the other and learns how to receive the good of the other.

Self-transcending

Considering the relational structure of substance, especially as person, the person looks to develop both aspects of that relationality both horizontally and vertically. The relationships between human persons are, ontologically, on the same horizon and are key to the full flourishing of the human being. Horizontal relationality finds its pinnacle in the love relationship between the human persons. In that relationship, the one must go out of himself to the other in concern and in sending the goods he has to offer; to go outside of oneself is how one fulfills itself.

What has been said of being is a prologue to developing an understanding of self-transcendence. The study of being and the human person has brought to the fore key concepts that lead into self-transcendence: common human nature rooted in the share of esse and being made in the image of God. All human persons share in the same human

²⁵⁷ ST I-II, Q26, a4.
nature, the same essence of humanity, and this binds all of humanity together. Human beings also have their existence in God as they share in Divine esse; the unity is in and through the Supreme Being as participants in the same gift. Finally, from revelation, we share in being made in the image and likeness of the Triune God; this same God-man relationship grounds an even deeper vertical relationship.

Being made in the image of God grounds the upward drive of the person towards God; our intellect and will are ordered to the Infinite since God is the Infinite Being and Source of all. This goes beyond mere contemplation of God to a true movement towards Him in what would seem to be a move away from the self and towards God. Persons are drawn out of their self-centeredness towards a God-centeredness, changing the perspective to that of God. The person takes on the new task of letting go of the self to enable God be at the center and guide the will and intellect all from within the core self. “I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me” (Gal. 2:20). The will as well as the intellect is to be ordered to God in this new re-centered existence.

Looking again to the Trinitarian life, the dynamic overflowing of love for each Person from the Other is paradigmatic for the give-and-take of the human existence. As the eternal processions within the Triune God are eternal due to their unlimitedness, the human existence is limited by matter, making the give and take extend over time and waxing and waning with each person. Human imitation of the Unlimited God proceeds forth from poverty and richness. In richness, we offer to others what goods we have, not just material possessions but the riches of the self, and in poverty we take from others and their richness. No two persons have the same poverty and richness making for infinite
combinations and infinite possible ways the human person can fulfill themselves and others.

The core self, center of the intellect and will, is aimed at God, pushing the de-centering of the human person along its way. The intellect is ordered towards the whole of being in its ability to step outside of its material confines and try to grasp totality. It is driven, through the grasping at totality, to know God and eventually to see Him as He sees. The will is driven towards the good, seeing God as the good in being and driven more towards communion with God as the end of mankind. Once in communion with God the human person desires to love as God loves. Transcending the self is the final step in reaching the end of the human person, communion with God. From this communion comes an increased understanding of our radical dependency on God as the source of all being.  

*The Human Person That Will Receive Grace*

Beginning with substantial being, the Aristotelian/Platonic mosaic found in St. Thomas and expands into an even richer notion of person as the highest being. To a simple explanation of essence and *esse* patterned after the Aristotelian concept of act and potency Thomas adds the Platonic idea of participation and the self-diffusiveness of the good to develop a notion of the human person. Substantial being in all its fullness

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258 Clarke, “To Be is To Be Substance-in- Relation,” in *Explorations*, 119; See also David Schindler’s comments at the end on the relatedness to God in response to Clarke’s dyadic structure of the person as in-itself and for-others. Schindler shows that there is a triadic structure of from another, in-itself, and for-others. Parts of this can be folded into the idea of receptivity as Clarke does but it can also be seen as a true separate aspect in consideration of the totality of being and not just the person.
becomes, as Clarke would say, “substance-in-relation;” which means, ultimately, that to be a person is to be in communion. Where Boethius understands person as an “individual substance of a rational nature,” St. Thomas goes beyond him and says the person is “subsistentes distinctum in natura rationali (a distinct subsistent in a rational nature).”

Since the person is not something added into being from the outside, but is the highest perfection and most intense expression of existential being itself, the person takes on more intensively the whole dynamism of existence as expansive, self-communicating act, now raised to the order of self-consciousness and freedom.

Putting all this together we see the picture of the human person that arises from St. Thomas’ theology and philosophy. The human person as an individual substance of human nature has several characteristics that, as we will see, opens up a new understanding of St. Thomas’ structure of grace. Recall that grace builds upon nature and so the structure of nature form the foundation for the structure of grace. The human person is structured to be a rational substance, a substantial being that has within itself two poles: the in-itself and the towards-others. As we have seen the substantial being has a core in-itself part that is the center of self-awareness and the place from which communication happens. The person, as substantial being is also good and as such wishes to diffuse itself and its goods outside of itself.

259 ST I, Q29, a3.

260 Clarke, Person and Being, 111.
The greatest difference between the person and other substances is its rational nature, a nature that can reflect on itself and seek the good through various ways beyond those of instinct. Fundamentally this plays on the desire towards outward action culminating in the ultimate outward action that is love. Grace, as the love of God, enters into the human person from the very beginning and settles into the very nature of the person. If unopposed, this grace will transform the person and bring to perfection all of the actions natural to it.

The accidents that form the outward other-oriented aspect of the “purely natural” human person are, as created, the means by which the interaction between the human person and the rest of creation happens. There is also the self, the core of the human person that forms the seat of its essence. This part receives grace as well as the for-the-other aspect. In the next chapter we will see that grace maps well onto this structure of nature, especially for the human person. There is an aspect of grace that elevates the in-itself pole of human nature and an aspect of grace that elevates the for-the-other pole of human nature. With this understanding of grace we will see a source of ethical action that lies within the human person that is pre-conceptual, pre-intentional and at the origin of the human person.

\[261\] Cf. ST I Q26.
CHAPTER THREE: GRACE IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS’ PERSPECTIVE

Having established the human person as substantial and relational in the previous chapter this chapter will try to find a similar structure to St. Thomas’ theology of grace. To do this four things will be addressed: first, how St. Thomas defines grace, second, the foundational universality of grace for all created rational beings, third, an example of the division as emphasizing the other-orientedness in the division of grace into grace for the individual and grace for the other in the *Summa Theologicae* and support from various other texts of St. Thomas and, finally, the synthesis of this theology of grace with his theology of nature. The final synthesis will bring together the results of chapter two and three in order to find a new view of grace in St. Thomas Aquinas that will be able to dialogue with the post-modern concept of otherness in the final chapter.

1. **What is Grace in St. Thomas’ Theology?**

   St. Thomas has examined grace in a few places with great focus but the ideas of grace permeate almost all of his work. For our purposes here the *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (*CSent*), the *Disputed Questions on Truth* (*DV*), from his early works, the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (*SCG*) from the middle years of his work and as well as the *Summa Theologicae* (*ST*), *Quodlibetal Questions*\(^{262}\) (*QQ*) and his commentary on Paul’s letter to the Romans (*CRom*) and others from his later works will form the basis for analysis. There will be much overlap but there will also be development as his

\(^{262}\) *Quodlibetal Questions* I-V and XII are only extant in his later revisions so they mark a time later in St. Thomas’ career than do the Questions VI-XI, cf. Torell, 337 which builds off of Weisheipl, 355. See also Chenu, 285ff who follows closely, P. Mandonnet “Chronologie des Questions Disputées de S. Thomas” *Revue Thomiste* 23 (1918) 266-287, 341-371.
thought matures over time. Each new development will contribute to the overall understanding of how St. Thomas understands grace and its relationship with nature.

*Grace in Commentary on the Sentences and Disputed Questions on Truth*

The earliest work of St. Thomas that treats grace directly is found in *CSent.*\(^{263}\) The ideas are not significantly different from those found in *DV*\(^{264}\) but there are variations in themes that come to the fore in each treatise or summa. Each slight variation is used to bring out various elements of grace that are developed over time. In these early treatises we find that the disputed questions are a freer discussion of the topic and the early development of St. Thomas’ theology of grace will focus on the *DV* due to its more comprehensive nature.\(^{265}\) That being said we must first find the elements that appear in *CSent* in order to begin the analysis.

The themes that present themselves on grace in *CSent* and, in more depth, in *DV* support and develop the notion that grace is love, the Divine Love of God. In the *CSent* we find that the first focused discussion of grace gets to the origin of grace itself – the love of God which can be taken to mean the “friendly reception in love,” or, understood another way, it is a gift freely given out of that love.\(^{266}\) The initial emphasis on love

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\(^{263}\) Cf. *CSent.* Book II, D26-29.

\(^{264}\) Cf. *DV* Q27.

\(^{265}\) For reference most of the parallels found in the *CSent* come in Book 2 distinction 26. They seem to cover the same ideas as *DV* question 27 especially on issues of grace in the soul (*DV* Q27, a1 // *CSent* II, 26, a1), cause of grace (*DV* Q27, a3 // *CSent* II, 26, a1), grace and charity (*DV* Q27, a4 // *CSent* II, 26, a4), sanctifying grace (*DV* Q27, a5 // *CSent* II, 26, a6), and the definition of grace (*DV* Q27, a6 // *CSent.* II, 26, a3).

\(^{266}\) *CSent* II, D26, a1. *Liberalis autem donationis principium est amor: et inde est quod nomen gratiae dupliciter sumitur. Uno modo pro ipsa acceptatione* ['acceptione' in
which is given great import in this part of the commentary may be due to the fact that Peter Lombard himself brings it up early in the distinction.\textsuperscript{267} As a commentary, St. Thomas is not as free to express the depth of his understanding of love and grace as he is in his treatment of grace in \textit{DV}.

Throughout Peter Lombard’s \textit{Sentences}, especially Distinction 26, we find that Lombard struggles to keep prominent the fact that grace is given out of love and that love is integral in the workings of grace. Grace and love are connected intimately from the idea that grace allows the angels to love God perfectly\textsuperscript{268} to the idea that love is the Holy Spirit which is the Charity that makes the human person love God perfectly.\textsuperscript{269} This particular aspect of love in Lombard’s work may be the source for St. Thomas’ remark that grace can be called the Holy Spirit.\textsuperscript{270} This appellation is nowhere else explicitly expressed in St. Thomas’ work describing grace or love and could be an unusual act of deference to Lombard, who is a revered authority throughout St. Thomas’ career. St. Thomas will go on to correct Lombard on the mission of the Holy Spirit and the

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the Parm. edition] \textit{amoris, secundum quod aliquis gratiam alterius habere dicitur quieum diliget. Alio modo pro ipso dono quod liberaliter datur ex amore; unde gratia dicitur donum quod gratis datur.}
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\textsuperscript{267} Peter Lombard, \textit{Sent} Book II, D26, c3. For example, \textit{et si diligenter intendas, nihilominus tibi monstratur, quae sit ipsa gratia voluntatem praeveniens et praeparans, scilicet fides cum dilectione.}

\textsuperscript{268} Cf. \textit{Sent} Book II, D5, c4.

\textsuperscript{269} Cf. \textit{Sent.} Book I, D17.

\textsuperscript{270} \textit{CSent} II, D26, Q1, a1
definition of charity, fully engaging Lombard and correcting him without any reservations in the *Summa Theologicae* and later treatises.

Even as a young commentator on the *Sentences*, St. Thomas had his own ideas about love and grace. Love is the source of grace and the source of whatever flows from grace, i.e. gifts. In the *CSent*, love is the first notion mentioned and from it all other definitions flow. Love plays a foundational part in describing grace in these two early treatises but in *DV* we see that love is mentioned in more depth and with more freedom than in *CSent*. As seen above, in the *CSent*, love is the origin and is the reason for the gift being given, but in *DV* the gifts given are directly linked to love especially later in question 27 but there is always an understanding that grace is primarily the love of God.

In *DV*, grace is like the love, or “favorable reception”\(^\text{271}\) that a benevolent king has for his subjects and it is a love that brings gifts. He says that these are the definitions that are important in “divine matters.”\(^\text{272}\) Grace, for St. Thomas, then, is Divine love\(^\text{273}\) that bestows gifts on creation. Only later in the *Summa Theologicae* will he add other layers to his definition of grace including the subject’s response to that love.\(^\text{274}\)

Delving into the philosophic underpinnings of grace we see that in the *CSent* the technical definitions of grace emerge starting with the question of whether it is created in

\(^{271}\) *acceptatione* again as in *CSent*, cf. note 5 above.

\(^{272}\) *DV* Q27, art. 1. “Sic et in divinis duplicem gratiam dicimus...”

\(^{273}\) Acceptation is the same as love in divine matters. *eum enim acceptare aliquem vel diligere, quod idem est.* *DV* Q27, a1.

the soul. This question opens the door to further development of the idea of grace and its place in the human person. At this point in the CSent, various points have been made about the soul and the human person in general and this discussion builds off of that base.

Grace is created in the soul as opposed to being part of the essence of the soul; it is in the soul as an accident and is not a power of the soul. Instead grace is one thing that comes to the soul from without and affects every part of the soul and thus every part of the human person.

Grace must be created in the soul and not part of its essence due to the nature of an essence which is its definition as we have discussed above in chapter two. This essence marks the limits and ends of the substance the essence is a part of. The end of the purely human person is a purely human end, that is, an end that is natural as opposed to supernatural. St. Thomas makes the distinction between the purely natural human, one without the aid of sanctifying or charismatic grace, and graced humanity, one that is affected by sanctifying and charismatic grace.275 The purely natural end of the human person is not union with God per se but is open to the possibility of union with God.276

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275 Much of the references in the ST I-II QQ 109-113 involve the distinction between pure nature and corrupt nature that is in need of sanctifying and charismatic grace.

276 The concept of the natural desire for God arises out of this discussion between pure nature and graced nature which cannot be pursued here. The purely natural ends would be those of the animal soul yet there is an opening for grace. For a glimpse into the on-going debate see, Lubac, Henri de. The Mystery of the Supernatural. Translated by Rosemary Sheed. (New York: Crossroad, 1998); Rahner, Karl. "Concerning the Relationship Between Nature and Grace." In Theological Investigations. Volume I. God, Christ, Mary and Grace. Translated by Cornelius Ernst, O.P. (Baltimore: Halcion, 1961); Feingold, Lawrence. Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas and His Interpreters (2nd Ed., Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2010); Long, Steven. Natura Pura:
This union with God is explained as the ultimate end of the human person in earlier chapters of both the *CSent* and *DV* and is taken as a given by the time these sections are written. It is not until grace enfolds the human person that this possibility of union with God is realized. Since it is not part of the soul it must be created in the soul. His reasoning begins and ends with the idea that there is a change in the person with grace and that change is the opening up to union with God, a state he could not have reached before grace.\(^{277}\)

Since this change came from without it is classified as an accident, not part of the essence but is a cause in that it changes the person, giving him the ability to be in union with God. The question St. Thomas addresses is whether grace is the efficient cause or the formal cause of that change. If it were an efficient cause then there would have to be something else that stood in between God and the human person and affected the change making grace a mediating cause and adding a step between God and man; this, St. Thomas says, is “alien to the faith.”\(^{278}\) The cause, then, must be a formal cause because it changes the very soul as giving it a new form. It is within this article that St. Thomas says that grace is the form of the soul. The effect is immediate on the soul and changes it so that it can now achieve union with God and receive the various gifts of God as a result of that love. On these two points we find further support in *DV* as the questions also get

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\(^{277}\) *CSent* D29, a1. *Sed quod hoc donum nunc habeatur cum prius non haberetur...*

\(^{278}\) *CSent* D29, a2. *quod est alienum a fide.*

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deeper elaboration. Question 27 of DV combines some of the articles in CSent especially around Distinctions 26-29.

Regarding grace as created in the soul, DV seems to flip the order of explanation from what was seen in CSent. Here St. Thomas starts with the more technical aspects of grace all the while keeping the element of love in the background. In this first article in Question 27, St. Thomas asks whether grace is something created in the soul where he will immediately make the distinction between grace given freely or charismatic graces, and grace that makes one pleasing or sanctifying grace in order to answer the particular question with more precision. He does this to situate various ways in which grace is received in the human person. He also takes for granted that charismatic or gratuitous graces are obviously something created in the soul due to their periodic and unique nature. The reason for this will be discussed below in greater detail. The idea that sanctifying grace, the grace that makes the human person pleasing to God, is created in the soul is his main concern.

Following upon the CSent explanation, St. Thomas will give more detail as to how grace is a new creation in the soul and is not and cannot be part of the soul in its essence. Sanctifying grace makes one acceptable to God and this is a state no one can achieve on their own. Through a series of scriptural passages St. Thomas supports the notion that the grace of God bestows on the human person a new supernatural life.281 This

279 gratia gratis data.
280 gratia gratum faciens.
281 Wisdom 1.25; Genesis 1.31; Isaiah 64.4; Romans 6.23.
new life is explained as a gift given out of love that starts from God. “[B]y the very fact that by His will God destines someone for eternal life, He supplies him with something by which he is worthy of eternal life.”

The love of God starts the process and supplies the individual human person with gifts that make them worthy, in themselves, to be in union with God. This love is grace which is “not only…being loved by God with a view to eternal life but also…being given some gift by which he is worthy of eternal life.”

The created-ness of grace with respect to the soul comes from the nature of the human person’s essential inability to reach union with God, a condition changed by grace.

From this we see that St. Thomas builds on the foundation he touched on in CSent and when not constrained to Lombard’s framing of the question, he develops his own ideas on grace and its essential definition. As he did in CSent, the other main question regarding grace is its relationship to the essence of the human person. Grace has the essence of the soul as its subject. This is to say, that the soul is informed by grace and grace gives a new life to the soul – a spiritual life.

These two early works treat grace essentially the same but emphasize different aspects: DV focuses on the distinctions between the various types of grace in their technical definitions, CSent with its focus on the origin in love. These aspects will be reorganized when St. Thomas engages those that are not of the Christian faith in his next large theological summary, the Summa Contra Gentiles.

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282 DV Q27, a1.

283 Ibid.

284 DV Q27, a6, ad2. “grace, which is the principle of spiritual existence, presupposes the essence of the soul.”
Summa Contra Gentiles

The SCG presents grace, in its first detailed presentation of the topic, as Divine help. The structure of this first summa, which presents St. Thomas’ Christian faith to those not familiar with the tenets of the faith, is to start from experience and reason; it is more of a philosophical approach to the notion of grace. He begins to approach grace by showing the need for divine help and then explaining what that help is. In chapter 147 of Book 3 St. Thomas presents the need for help.

But, beyond this, man’s ultimate end is fixed in a certain knowledge of truth which surpasses his natural capacity: that is, he may see the very First Truth in Itself, as we showed above. …So, if man is ordered to an end which exceeds his natural capacity, some help must be divinely provided for him, in a supernatural way, by which he may tend toward his end.

and,

Furthermore, there are many impediments presented to man in the attaining of his end. For he is hindered by the weakness of his reason, which is easily drawn into error by which he is cut off from the right way of reaching his end. He is also hindered by the passions of his sensory nature, and by the feelings whereby he is attracted to sensible and lower things; and the more he attaches himself to these, the farther he is removed from his ultimate end, for these things are below man, whereas man’s end is above him. He is further hindered by frequent bodily illness from the carrying out of his virtuous activities whereby he may tend toward
happiness. Therefore, man needs divine help, but he may fall completely short of the ultimate end as a result of these obstacles.

Earlier in the book, he presents the need for every creature to attain its perfection and calls that perfection, following Aristotle, happiness.\textsuperscript{285} We see from above that the human person is in need of divine help to achieve his ultimate happiness. We can see in this argument the same elements that were put forward in the questions of whether grace is created in the soul but he presents them in the order of outward appearance. He has shown that the human person desires this happiness but also that the human person needs help to achieve his ultimate end and this help can only come from some entity that is greater than the human persons themselves.

The creative love of God may be seen to be irresistible but that would go against the nature of the humanity that God created. Grace is not coercive in its work. It is necessary that the needed help must not be forced on the human person due to the demands of free will.\textsuperscript{286} This is the tie between grace and virtues, an important element touched upon in the earlier works but only later more fully developed in the \textit{SCG} and an entirely separate treatise on virtues.\textsuperscript{287} St. Thomas will appeal to scripture to support the

\textsuperscript{285} \textit{SCG} 3. 17ff. The beginning of Book 3 concerns itself with actions and leads to an understanding that every creature desires to be like God and attain perfection. This perfection is its happiness, cf. chapter 25ff.

\textsuperscript{286} Cf. \textit{SCG} 3.148.

\textsuperscript{287} \textit{Disputed Questions on the Virtues}.
ideas of free will in the human person but will, in the end, make a philosophical argument for the requirements of free will in attaining happiness.

Moreover, man reaches his ultimate end by acts of the virtues, for felicity [happiness] is assigned as a reward for virtue. Now, forced acts are not acts of the virtues, since the main thing in virtue is choice, which cannot be present without voluntariness to which violence is opposed. Therefore, man is not divinely compelled to act rightly.  

As Divine help, it will not force action from a human person and neither will it diminish good action; it is an assist to the will. This help is what the human person needs to achieve happiness and it is not a usurpation of human power but merely an assistance to a will that otherwise would be unable to obtain its end.

After he establishes the need for Divine help he calls this help grace and begins to describe it in terms of love. Grace is the free gift of help given to the human person out of Divine love. It is some perfection of the human person that is given so that God can be loved above all things.

God’s love is causative of the good which is in us, just as a man’s love is called forth and caused by some good thing which is in the object of his love. But man is aroused to love someone in a special way because of some special good which pre-exists in the person loved. Therefore, wherever there is found a special love of God for man, there must consequently be found some special good conferred on

\[SCG \ 3.148.\]
man by God. Hence, since in accord with the preceding explanation sanctifying grace marks a special love of God for man, it must be that a special goodness and perfection is marked, as being present in man, by this term.  

God’s love is a creative love and it creates the good in the human person that will then turn around and seek out its own good which is God. This is how Divine love differs from human love; Divine love causes the good in the other whereas human love seeks the good that is already in the other.

He approaches the name grace through various different means. It is called Grace due to the fact that it is given freely or ‘gratis’ and what is given is divine love, a creative love that changes the human person in his relationship to God.

In fact, a person is said to be in the “good graces” of another because he is well liked by the other. Consequently, he who is loved by another is said to enjoy his grace. Now, it is of the essence of love that the lover wishes good and does what is good for the object of his love.

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289 SCG 3.150. See also SCG 3.151: “Indeed, this is the principal thing in the lover’s intention: to be loved in turn by the object of his love. To this, then, the lover’s main effort inclines, to attract his beloved to the love of himself; unless this occurs, his love must come to naught.” God’s love strives to make the object of that love return the love.

290 SCG 3.150.
This Divine help is needed for the human person to attain happiness both in this life and the next due to human nature being oriented towards a supernatural end. This supernatural end is the perfection of the human person and to help anything towards its perfection is to wish and work for its good, St. Thomas’ definition of love.

But a special mark of divine love is observable in the case of those to whom He offers help so that they may attain a good which surpasses the order of their nature, namely, the perfect enjoyment, not of some created good, but of Himself. So, this help is appropriately called grace, not only because it is given gratis, as we showed, but also because by this help man is, through a special prerogative, brought into the good graces of God.

God’s assistance orients the human person towards the vision of God, the ultimate end. Grace is the assistance that makes the person able to enjoy the presence of God through the fact that one is made enjoyable to God.

Now, this grace, within the man who is graced by it, must be something, a sort of form and perfection for that man. For, a thing that is directed toward an end must have a continual relation to it, because the mover continually moves the moved object, until the object comes to its end as a result of the motion. Therefore, since

\[291\] *SCG* 3.149 “But, beyond this, man’s ultimate end is fixed in a certain knowledge of truth which surpasses his natural capacity: that is, he may see the very First Truth in Itself...”

\[292\] *SCG* 3.150.2.
man is directed to the ultimate end by the help of divine grace, as we showed, man must continually enjoy this help until he reaches his end.  

St. Thomas uses form language to speak of the essential change in the nature of the one in the state of grace. This change of form is explained as a change in the ultimate end of the desires and passions of the human person. Divine love orients all of these passions towards their true ultimate end, a shared end with the Lover – God, the ultimate good. This sharing of an end is a mark of friendship. Grace, then, is that which gives the human person friendship with God with all the requisite shared ends and desires and interests that accompany this friendship.

Again, there must be some union of things for which there is one end, as a result of their being ordered to this end. … Now, the ultimate end, to which man is brought with the help of divine grace, is the vision of God in His essence, which is proper to God Himself. Thus, this final good is shared with man by God. So, man cannot be brought to this end unless he be united with God by the conformation of his will. And this is the proper effect of love, for “it is proper to friends to approve and disapprove the same things, and to be delighted in and to be pained by the same things.” Hence, by sanctifying grace man is established as

\[293\]  

\[SCG\] 3.150.3.
a lover of God, since man is directed by it to the end that has been shared with him by God.\textsuperscript{294}

From the \textit{SCG} we get a broader and deeper definition of Grace. Grace is the Divine help given by God to the human person in order that one will be able to reach a friendship and union with God. This help changes the person and gives them the ability to act rightly through their virtuous acts. All these elements have come together not only from other section of \textit{SCG} but from previous treatises such as the \textit{DV} and \textit{CSent}. We will see that the \textit{ST} will pull from all of these works and come to a more complete discussion of how we can understand grace.

\textit{Summa Theologicae I-II, Q110}

In the \textit{ST} the so-called treatise on grace\textsuperscript{295} provides a concise assessment of what grace is and what it does. Question 110 of the first part of the second part of the \textit{ST}, in particular, deals with the essence of grace giving three various ways of understanding what the term “grace” means. This question establishes that grace is a quality of the soul, as opposed to an infused habit, that is in the essence of the soul. This description fits into the understanding of the nature of the human person operative in St. Thomas’ work discussed above. St. Thomas begins with the examination of the various possible

\textsuperscript{294} \textit{SCG} 3.151.

\textsuperscript{295} \textit{ST} I-II, QQ109-114.
meanings of the word “grace” in the first article. He states, “Grace is taken in three ways” that are not mutually exclusive but are inter-related.

According to the common manner of speech, grace is usually taken in three ways. First, for anyone's love, as we are accustomed to say that the soldier is in the good graces of the king, i.e. the king looks on him with favor. Secondly, it is taken for any gift freely bestowed, as we are accustomed to say: I do you this act of grace. Thirdly, it is taken for the recompense of a gift given "gratis," inasmuch as we are said to be "grateful" for benefits. Of these three the second depends on the first, since one bestows something on another "gratis" from the love wherewith he receives him into his good "graces." And from the second proceeds the third, since from benefits bestowed "gratis" arises "gratitude." 

The first definition mentioned is love or favor. St. Thomas notes that this love is the kind that someone greater bestows on a lesser such as a king that loves his subjects. From this love gifts flow to the subjects from the king. The third definition is gratitude on the part of the subject for these gifts.

What kind of love is this? As the article continues, St. Thomas explains, again, the differences between human love and Divine love. Human love is rooted in the good

296 ST I-II Q110, art. 1, c. gratia tripliciter accipi consuevit.
297 ST I-II Q 110, art. 1, c.
298 Much of this discussion presupposes a definition of love as willing the good for the other which is perfected in Divine love since He wishes the good for His creation. Going into more detail concerning this aspect will be going beyond the scope of this dissertation. For more details see Malloy, Christopher J. "Love,” The Thomist (June,
that is already in the creature whereas Divine love gives that good to the creature from its creation.299 Divine love begins with God and makes the creature lovable in human eyes. Human love does not cause the good in the other human but presupposes the good given by God.

It is to this good that the gifts are ordered. The gifts from God transmit the good to the creature and through the creature the good is sent out to all other creatures. From this definition we can see the gift-grace connection; grace bestows something upon the human person and that person, in turn, gives it to others as an extension of God’s love. Both the \textit{ST}\textsuperscript{300} as in \textit{DV}\textsuperscript{301} begin their analysis of grace by saying that grace is in the soul of the person, residing in them as a stranger in a strange land.302 In the \textit{ST} we see that the objections raised against grace being created in the soul are taken primarily from scripture and go to the idea that grace is a change in God. God now looks upon the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item\footnote{299} We will speak more about how the human person is particularly loved by God below.
\item\footnote{300} \textit{ST} I-II, Q110, a1.
\item\footnote{301} \textit{DV} Q27, a1.
\item\footnote{302} St. Thomas writes this article mindful that the various writers of the time had differing opinions as to how grace functioned. Some would think that grace is either the Holy Spirit residing in the soul (Peter Lombard) or it was some kind of gift given to the human person but did not affect the soul in any way but was just an acceptance by God with no change in the human person. Cf. \textit{DV} Q27 objections for many of the authors he will address in the \textit{ST}. By the time he writes the \textit{ST}, he has encountered most of these objections and has dealt with them through different treatments. This \textit{ST} entry is more of a summary of the issues.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
human person and sees that he is lovable and therefore loves him.\textsuperscript{303} The objections in \textit{DV} and in the \textit{CSent} are similar but there are more nuances in them as they draw from authorities other than scripture namely Augustine and Anselm. Most of them pointing out that nothing is created anew in the soul from the moment of creation and therefore grace must be something that is outside the soul and accidental to the body in the way one is accidentally hot or cold.

Grace is considered as either a motion or a quality of the soul in the second article. The distinction brings out two different aspects of grace as Divine love. This love will both make the person pleasing to his ultimate end and also incline him towards achieving that end. As motion, grace moves the person to know and do certain things that point the person towards the good.

Now it was stated above, man is aided by God's gratuitous will in two ways: first, inasmuch as man's soul is moved by God to know or will or do something, and in this way the gratuitous effect in man is not a quality, but a movement of the soul; for "motion is the act of the mover in the moved." III \textit{Physics}\textsuperscript{304}

\textsuperscript{303} Cf. \textit{ST} I-II, Q110, a1., ad1-3. These objections accentuate that the Lord gave Joseph (Gen 39) grace or favor as well as Deuteronomy 30 where God is described as the life of a person which "quickens" (\textit{vivificant}) the body which cannot happen through a medium so it cannot be created in the soul. Finally the last objection comes from Paul in his letter to the Romans, and through the choice of passage all other Pauline letters, where he wishes "grace and peace" to his addressees. The wishing of peace means the remission of sins, a process in which, so the objector states, the soul is not changed. In many ways these objections anticipate the questions brought up by Luther and others in the Protestant heresy.

\textsuperscript{304} \textit{ST} I-II, Q110, a2.
This points to the second definition of grace in the previous article. The gifts bestowed as a result of the Divine love are motions given to man. These motions, as we will see below, include the charismatic gifts such as, for example, prophecy and miracles. This motion, to know, to will, and to do, grants each individual a share in the work of leading not only themselves but also others to their ultimate end – God.

As a quality, grace is the first definition of Divine Love.

[M]an is helped by God's gratuitous will, inasmuch as a habitual gift is infused by God into the soul; and for this reason, that it is not fitting that God should provide less for those He loves, that they may acquire supernatural good, than for creatures, whom He loves that they may acquire natural good.  

This is the creative love that creates the good in man. As a persistent quality in the soul, grace makes the person pleasing to God and to others leaving something in the soul that enables it to be inclined to the Ultimate Good. This inclination is described as infused but it is not to be confused with an infused virtue.

As was seen in SCG but with more refinement, distinguishing grace from an infused virtue is the concern of the third article. Indispensable to his argument is the definition of a virtue. A virtue deals with a specific order: the acquired virtues to the order of nature and the infused to the order of the supernatural. It is also true that a virtue disposes one or inclines one towards a particular way of acting but it is only in accord with the particular nature.

\[305\] \textit{Ibid.}\]
Grace is reduced to the first species of quality; and yet it is not the same as virtue, but is a certain disposition which is presupposed to the infused virtues, as their principle and root.  

St. Thomas sees the affinity that grace has to the idea of a virtue but finds that grace is something presupposed. It is presupposed to the infused virtues as the “natural light of reason” is presupposed in the acquired human virtues. Virtues orient the person towards an end that is the perfection of their nature. Without an orientation towards a supernatural end created by the new life created through sanctifying grace, there is no possibility of attaining it.

From what has been said we see that grace is the love of God that is given to all creation through which certain gifts flow. The Divine love not only gives life and sustenance to all of creation, it elevates the human person to a participation in the Divine life. This participation is marked by the bestowal of certain gifts that enable others to come to a participation in the Divine life as well. These gifts include the infused virtues of faith, hope, and charity and also orient all the other acquired virtues to their supernatural end. As each person shares in God’s love, they also share in the drive to diffuse that love to others.  

2. The Foundational Universality of Grace for All Created Rational Beings: Man’s Capacity for Grace Includes all Mankind.

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306 ST I-II, Q110, a3, ad3.

307 See chapter two, pg. 78.
With the definition of grace put in greater relief, its pervasiveness can be discussed. To this end three questions will draw out what receives grace and to what extent grace is received. The first question is does all creation receive grace? Next, to what degree does each element of creation receive grace, i.e. does some facet of creation receive more than others? Lastly, does every human person receive grace? Once these three questions are addressed we can advance to the next section regarding how the divisions of grace build upon this.

**Does all creation receive Grace?**

St. Thomas addresses the question of who and what receives grace directly in the ST:

God loves all things that exist. For all things that exist are good, in so far as they are. The very existence of anything whatsoever is a good, and so is any perfection of it. Now we proved above that God is the cause of all things. A thing must therefore be, and be good, to the extent which God wills.\(^\text{308}\)

The very act of creation is an act of love, of grace.\(^\text{309}\) Everything that is created is loved by God. As he references previous questions about God being the cause, St. Thomas

\(^{308}\) ST I Q.20, a2.

\(^{309}\) The notion of the “grace of creation” is not specifically stated as such in St. Thomas. The idea came into prominence with the Pelagian heresy and St. Augustine’s addressing of the issue. This will not be addressed here since the issue will take us too far afield but the idea will be used in its basic form – grace, that is the love of God, that brought about creation.
gives the reason for Him causing creation – love. This love makes creation good; “and God saw that it was very good” (Gen. 1.31). This would appear to mean that God loved all creation appropriately and, in one sense, this is true. The divine will is a simple will and does not suffer greater or lesser in its love. “[God] loves all things by an act of the will that is one, simple, and always the same.”

God loves His creation and also sustains it. God continues to keep all of creation in existence not out of necessity but out of love for creation, a love that is neither necessary nor commanded. Drawing from Aristotle’s *de Anima*, St. Thomas will begin with the ideas of motion to start his demonstration.

But it is clear that as all corporeal movements are reduced to the motion of the heavenly body as to the first corporeal mover, so all movements, both corporeal and spiritual, are reduced to the simple First Mover, Who is God. And hence no matter how perfect a corporeal or spiritual nature is supposed to be, it cannot proceed to its act unless it be moved by God;

St. Thomas approaches motion through Aristotle and thereby continues Aristotle’s project with regards to motion and its principles. All motion is either mediately or immediately the result of the motion from a first mover, an Unmoved Mover, the first in

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310  ST I Q20, a4

311  ST I-II, Q109, art. 1, c.
the causal chain of events. For Aristotle this is a self thinking thought.\textsuperscript{312} For St. Thomas, the first in the causal chain is God, a personal God that takes a continual interest in the workings of His creation.

but this motion is according to the plan of His providence, and not by necessity of nature, as the motion of the heavenly body. Now not only is every motion from God as from the First Mover, but all formal perfection is from Him as from the First Act.\textsuperscript{313}

God’s plan of providence is evident in creation since all created things come from God and participate in God and depend on Him for existence.\textsuperscript{314}

And thus the act of the intellect or of any created being whatsoever depends upon God in two ways: first, inasmuch as it is from Him that it has the form whereby it acts; secondly, inasmuch as it is moved by Him to act.\textsuperscript{315}

\textsuperscript{312} Cf., for example, Aristotle's \textit{Metaphysics}, particularly books 2 and 12.

\textsuperscript{313} \textit{ST} I-II, Q109, art. 1, c.

\textsuperscript{314} Cf. \textit{ST} I, Q44, a1. “Now it has been shown above [Q3, a4] when treating of the divine simplicity that God is the essentially self-subsisting Being; and also it was shown [Q11, aa3,4] that subsisting being must be one; as, if whiteness were self-subsisting, it would be one, since whiteness is multiplied by its recipients. Therefore all beings apart from God are not their own being, but are beings by participation. Therefore it must be that all things which are diversified by the diverse participation of being, so as to be more or less perfect, are caused by one First Being.”; \textit{DP} Q5, a1. “I answer that without any doubt whatever it must be admitted that things are preserved in existence by God, and that they would instantly be reduced to nothing were God to abandon them.” Cf. also \textit{SCG} III, 65, 66, 44; \textit{ST} I, Q104, art. 1.

\textsuperscript{315} \textit{ST} I-II, Q109, a1.
Consequently creation is really nothing but a relation of the creature to the Creator together with a beginning of existence.

God does not create things by one action and preserve them by another. The existence of permanent things is not divisible except accidentally in so far as it is subject to some kind of movement: and in itself is in an instant. Hence God’s action which is the direct cause of a thing’s existence is not distinct as the principle of its being and as the principle of its continuance in being.\(^{316}\)

As St. Thomas understood it, there is no doubt that God created and sustained creation through a continuing act of grace. To this point St. Thomas is showing that all of creation receives some kind of grace, at minimum, the grace of existence. The next question is to what extent this grace continues or increases in creation.

*To what degree does each element of creation receive grace?*

From what has been said it would appear that God loved all creation equally and, in one sense, this is true but in another sense it is not. The fact that God can love things more or less depends on the understanding of God’s love. When considering the source of love, God, the love given is equal since God’s love is simple and one. Considered from the side of the things loved, it differs. As we spoke of earlier, love is a creative and diffusive love. What determines the various degrees of love from God is the creatures rank in the hierarchy of beings; it is in the thing’s goodness.

\(^{316}\) *DP* Q5, a1, ad2.
Again, as was seen in chapter two and above, God’s love is creative and a simple observation will show that there are diverse things in the universe and with each difference there is a greater or lesser degree of goodness in things. As the *ST* says, “God loves better things more.”\(^{317}\) Better is a reference to a hierarchy of natures and St. Thomas will pull from the book of Revelation to see that there are different relationships between created things:

> For according to Rev. 21:17 the measure of a man and the measure of an angel are the same, although some angels may be better in respect of it than some men, and some men better than some angels. Yet the natural condition of an angel is better than that of a man. Hence it was not because he loved man more that God assumed the nature of a man, but because man needed him more.\(^ {318}\)

Human nature is in the hierarchy of beings as below that of the angels but after human nature was taken up by the second person of the Trinity, the nature became greater than that of the angels.\(^ {319}\) God wills for a creature a certain good and that willing makes it so. “[N]othing prevents us from saying that God loves one thing more than another, according as He wills it a greater good.”\(^ {320}\)

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\(^{317}\) *ST* I, Q20, a4,


\(^{319}\) Cf. *De Ente* Ch4. For an early development of the hierarchy of beings in St. Thomas’ philosophy.

\(^{320}\) *SCG* I, 91 sect 11.
God’s love is one that creates the good in the beloved and through that we see the degrees of love found in the hierarchy of created things. An early attempt at defining love in general is found in the *CSent* and provides a good framework for looking at Divine action in love. He takes his starting point from Dionysius in chapter four of *The Divine Names*, love is:

a unitive and concretive power, moving superiors to exercise providence for those having less… further moving coordinated things… to a communicative relationship with each other; and finally, moving subjects…to turn themselves toward better things.\(^ {321}\)

When it pertains to God, we see that love moves the subject to turn towards better things which, in the case of God and creation, is God. Love turns the person towards God not through coercion but through desire of its ultimate end. God is the first and the last for all creation. It is the place from which they came and the place towards which they tend.

Through creation, God has determined those creatures that are more deserving of being gifted with greater good. This is so due to the proper governance of things by God.

\[\text{[P]erfect goodness would not be found in created things unless there were an order of goodness in them, in the sense that some of them are better than others. Otherwise, all possible grades of goodness would not be realized, nor would any}\]

\(^{321}\) *CSent* III, D27, Q1, a1, title. Translation found in Thomas Aquinas, *On Love and Charity: Readings from the “Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard”* Translated by Peter Kwasniewski, Thomas Bolin, OSB, and Joseph Bolin (Catholic University of America Press, 2008)
creature be like God by virtue of holding a higher place than another. The highest beauty would be taken away from things, too, if the order of distinct and unequal things were removed. And what is more, multiplicity would be taken away from things if inequality of goodness were removed, since through the differences by which things are distinguished from each other one thing stands out as better than another; for instance, the animate in relation to the inanimate, and the rational in regard to the irrational. And so, if complete equality were present in things, there would be but one created good, which clearly disparages the perfection of the creature.\footnote{SCG III, 71.}

We see the hierarchy from inanimate to animate and irrational to rational. From stones to plants and animals to the human person, the hierarchy reaches up through the angels to the Divine which gives the order as part of His creative act.

Since to love a thing is to will it good, in a twofold way anything may be loved more, or less. In one way on the part of the act of the will itself, which is more or less intense. In this way God does not love some things more than others, because He loves all things by an act of the will that is one, simple, and always the same. In another way on the part of the good itself that a person wills for the beloved. In this way we are said to love that one more than another, for whom we will a greater good, though our will is not more intense. In this way we must needs say that God loves some things more than others. For since God's love is the cause of

\footnote{SCG III, 71.}
goodness in things, as has been said, no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another.\textsuperscript{323}

From the two quotes above we can see that the order of things is created by God and that order is based on the amount of good that God gives to each creature. It can be said that the order is determined by the varying degrees to which things make present the love of God. Divine providence orders things as needed and creates things to manifest Divine love in varying ways. Therefore the amount of love is given by degrees as determined by God.

In this hierarchy we see that creatures with a rational nature stand out as particularly loved. These rational natures include the human and the angelic. There is a special love, and grace for rational creatures, all rational creatures particularly, for our purposes here, the human person. This is due to the love of God being of a particular kind. The love that God gives to the rational creature is the love of friendship.

… friendship is possible only with rational creatures who can return it, and who can share in the work of life, and fare well in fortune and happiness. Benevolence, also, is properly towards rational creatures.\textsuperscript{324}

Irrational creatures can neither love God nor share his intellectual life of happiness. Properly speaking, therefore, God does not love them with the love of friendship. But he does love them with the love of desire a love that is for the creatures utility to God and

\textsuperscript{323} ST I, Q20, a1.

\textsuperscript{324} ST I Q20, a2, ad3.
man. God has ordained them for the rational creature, indeed for Himself—not as if he needed them, but for the sake of his loving-kindness, in as much as they are useful to rational creatures. The creation of irrational creatures, which includes the animals and plants, thus becomes part of the love that God has for His rational creatures, the human and angelic persons.

We now see that all created beings share in grace at least in that of creation and sustenance. The rational creature also receives Divine help over and above that, though, due to his free will and supernatural end which is not shared with non-rational creatures. The next question is if all rational creatures share in this Divine assistance or if there are those that do not or will not.

Does every human person receive grace?

From what we have seen it can be said that every human person receives grace, the love of God, and it is a special kind of love, it is the love of friendship. This is not to say that all humans will join in friendship with God but all have access to it and have been able to access it from the beginning of creation, either their own personal creation or the creation of the world.

… it is only in God that creatures have existed from eternity. Yet, since they have existed in Himself from eternity, God has known their proper natures from eternity, and for the same reason has also loved them from eternity.\(^{325}\)

\(^{325}\) *ST* I Q20, a2, ad2.
What does this grace look like for the human person? Grace is the help that St. Thomas spoke of when defining the notion of grace. The nature of the human person is to be elevated beyond the merely natural world in which he exists. The help of grace allows each human person to achieve that goal. This is where salvation enters into the discussion of grace. The ultimate goal of the human person is union with God which is only achievable if God lifts him up into this union. Being in union with God can only be achieved on His terms, though. To be united with God means to be like Him, to be one with him. We become “partakers of the divine nature”(2 Peter 1.4).

At this point one could begin, again, a discussion of the virtues and meritorious acts. Grace empowers the person to act meritoriously and deepen in virtue. It is undisputed that St. Thomas sees the virtuous person as being the one who achieves union with God. It is also the virtuous person that helps his neighbor. This is the result of the outpouring of love on the part of God. Nowhere does St. Thomas find that this love is restricted in any way on the side of God towards humanity. But St. Thomas’ moral theology is where we can see the conditions for the rejection of this assistance as a result of the sin of the individual human person.

326 The body of literature on St. Thomas and the virtues is staggering and the overwhelming consensus is that the virtuous life is the life that is pleasing to God which leads to salvation. We can only touch on the basics of virtues here lest we stray too far into a sea of scholarship that will consume too much space before it can be helpful in our goal.
The relationship between God and the human person with respect to grace and human action is one that is described especially well and with particular relevancy to this dissertation in St. Thomas’ *Compendium Theologiae*\(^{327}\) which is worth quoting at length.

Accordingly, divine providence governs individual beings in keeping with their nature. Since rational creatures, because of the gift of free will, enjoy dominion over their actions in a way impossible to other creatures, a special providence must be exercised over them in two respects. First, with regard to the aids God gives to rational creatures in their activity, secondly, with regard to the recompense allotted for their works. God gives to irrational creatures only those aids by which they are naturally moved to act. But to rational creatures are issued instructions and commands regulating their lives. A precept is not fittingly given except to a being that is master of his actions although in an analogous sense God is said to give commands to irrational creatures also, as is intimated in Psalm 148:6: “He made a decree, and it shall not pass away.” But this sort of decree is nothing else than the dispensation of divine providence moving natural things to their proper actions.\(^{328}\)

Here we see the difference between rational and irrational creatures. The rational creatures have regulations for their lives principally because rational creatures have

\(^{327}\) The dating of the *CTheol* is in somewhat of a dispute. Fr. Vollert, who translated the 1947 edition believes it to be written at the end of St. Thomas’ career in either 1270 or 1271 after the *ST*. Chenu et al. place the *CTheol* right before the *ST*.

\(^{328}\) *CTheol*, 143.
dominion over their lives, i.e., they have mastery over their actions and a will to carry those actions out. Only analogously can it be said that God gives irrational creatures commands that they follow. Not only does the rational creature have regulations to follow, but there is punishment and reward for their action. This merit is related to salvation and the ultimate reward for good acts.

The merit for good action is not only earthly but is also a heavenly reward; as is the punishment for evil action.

The deeds of rational creatures are imputed to them in blame or in praise, because they have dominion over their acts. The actions of men are ascribed to them not only by a man who is placed over them, but also by God. Thus any praiseworthy or blameworthy action that a man performs is imputed to him by the person to whose rule he is subject. Since good actions merit a reward and sin calls for punishment, as was said above, rational creatures are punished for the evil they do and are rewarded for the good they do, according to the measure of justice fixed by divine providence. But there is no place for reward or punishment in dealing with irrational creatures, just as there is none for praise or blame.\textsuperscript{329}

The irrational creature does not get reward or punishment for its action. These creatures do not have any supernatural connection and therefore will not be achieving a supernatural end which is the goal of rational creatures. The rational creatures, then, need some kind of supernatural help. Bringing in the understanding of nature from our chapter

\textsuperscript{329} \textit{Ibid.}

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two, St. Thomas will give a short summary of the human condition as needing supernatural help to achieve their supernatural end.

Since the last end of rational creatures exceeds the capacity of their nature and since whatever conduces to the end must be proportionate to the end according to the right order of providence, rational creatures are given divine aids that are not merely proportionate to nature but that transcend the capacity of nature. God infuses into man, over and above the natural faculty of reason, the light of grace whereby he is internally perfected for the exercise of virtue, both as regards knowledge, inasmuch as man’s mind is elevated by this light to the knowledge of truths surpassing reason, and as regards action and affection, inasmuch as man’s affective power is raised by this light above all created things to the love of God, to hope in Him, and to the performance of acts that such love imposes.\textsuperscript{330}

Virtue is the way in which St. Thomas analyzes the actions of the human person and judges how the person interacts with other persons. The virtues are built up in the person but are also given origin and aid through grace.

These gifts or aids supernaturally given to man are called graces for two reasons. First, because they are given by God \textit{gratis}. Nothing is discoverable in man that would constitute a right to aids of this sort, for they exceed the capacity of nature. Secondly, because in a very special way man is made \textit{gratus} (or pleasing to God) by such gifts. Since God’s love is the cause of goodness in things and is not called \textsuperscript{330} \textit{Ibid.}
forth by any pre-existing goodness, as our love is, a special intensity of divine
love must be discerned in those whom He showers with such extraordinary effects
of His goodness. Therefore God is said chiefly and simply to love those whom He
endows with these effects of His love by which they are enabled to reach their last
end, which is He Himself, the fountainhead of all goodness.\textsuperscript{331}

As we have seen above in this chapter St. Thomas is consistent in his definition of
grace as Divine assistance and love. Grace is given to the human person due to the love
of God and through nothing that is in the human person deserving these gifts. Grace is
also described as love and the gifts that are gifts resultant of that love. From this entry in
his \textit{Compendium of Theology}, St. Thomas gives a concise summary of the relationship
between grace, Divine Love, virtues and the human person as rational being.

No rational creature is excluded from this economy; all human persons are loved
by God and this love is formative. Every human person has grace as his origin and
sustenance making him completely reliant upon God for existence, action and elevation.
All of this is done without man’s consent or even his awareness. For St. Thomas this is
the structure of the human person as a created rational being. Their origin is in grace,
created without consent or, presumably, knowledge of this fact nor can they reflect upon
it as something wholly objectifiable because of its uniquely radical nature within the
rational creature.\textsuperscript{332}

\textsuperscript{331} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{332} Other avenues to understanding this aspect in St. Thomas would be to
investigate the mystical theology present in his work as well as his division of grace in to
As far as salvation of the individual is concerned, St. Thomas’ understanding of grace opens up all of created rational beings to a salvific grace that sets no limits except those set up by the rational creature itself. The virtuous life is the path that God has set up as the path to follow for the achievement of this happiness, this blessedness, and God wills that all should be saved.\footnote{ST I, Q19, a6, ad1.} But it is ultimately up to the person not or reject this salvation. We also see in \textit{DV} that even if the sinner rejects God and his grace, there is always a chance for the sinner to repent because grace is always there for the imperfect obstinate sinner.\footnote{DV Q24, a11. Cf., \textit{ST} II-II Q10, a4.}

St. Thomas has much to recommend these ideas, especially from scripture. I Tim 2.4, “who desires all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth,”\footnote{Cf. \textit{ST} I, Q19, a10, ad2. Here St. Thomas speaks of the desire that all men shall be saved but approaches it in the realm of justice where God will not save those that choose to do evil and are unrepentant.} as well as 1 John 4.16 “he who abides in charity abides in God and God in him”\footnote{Cf. \textit{SCG} IV, 21. God will keep His friendship with those who keep His commandments. God’s abiding is an act of friendship – union with Him.} God wishes that all should be saved and those desiring salvation will keep His commandments. The keeping of commandments happens through virtues, the habits acquired by practice and elevated by grace.

prevenient and subsequent. The latter is done by Michael Purcell especially as it relates to the postmodern condition. For this see chapter four for an analysis of his work on prevenience. Delving, in depth, into these avenues is for another project not this dissertation.

\footnote{ST I, Q19, a6, ad1.}
What comes out in St. Thomas is the notion that all humans receive grace, not only the grace of creation but also the grace that provides further assistance in their existence. For the rational creature, grace becomes an added “light” that will assist them in choosing well and choosing the good. This light will also help the person attain union with God and, as we will see below, help others to attain union with God. The virtues, the rational creatures path towards union with God, are assisted by grace and are elevated by grace and much has been written about their importance and their relationships. Another aspect of grace that is not spoken of as thoroughly in this context is the grace that is given specifically for the other. Each human person is given his share of this grace and it becomes part of his existence. The next section will develop this idea better from the work of St. Thomas himself.

Does this apply only to those baptized in the Church?

At this point the question may be asked whether or not all of this analysis deals exclusively with the baptized in the Church. I think the evidence proves that this understanding of grace extends to all humans regardless of their being situated inside or outside of the Church. In the section of the ST’s treatise on grace we see that grace is involved in all human actions such as knowing and wishing or doing any good

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337 DP Q3, a3. “Now every form bestowed on created things by God has power for a determined act, which it can bring about in proportion to its own proper endowment; and beyond which it is powerless, except by a superadded form, as water can only heat when heated by the fire. And thus the human understanding has a form, viz. intelligible light, which of itself is sufficient for knowing certain intelligible things, viz. those we can come to know through the senses. Higher intelligible things of the human intellect cannot know, unless it be perfected by a stronger light, viz. the light of faith or prophecy which is called the "light of grace," inasmuch as it is added to nature.”
whatsoever. This does not require the baptism of the human person but only the creation of the human person. Baptism adds and perfects this initial grace of creation but St. Thomas does not recognize any real un-graced nature and especially any un-graced rational substance.

In article one of question 109 in the ST the logic proceeds thus; to know anything one needs grace, it is evident that an unbaptized person knows something therefore unbaptized person lays claim to the fact that some form of grace obtains. The same can be said of an acting person; there is need of divine assistance to do any good or will any good, it is evident that an unbaptized person does will and do some good, therefore there is some grace in the unbaptized person. Granted the kind of grace mentioned that these men have is the most rudimentary but it is also an axiom found in St. Thomas that grace is simple and singular while differing only in its effects. For the unbaptized person there are limited effects that can be produced whereas for the baptized person the effects are greater and more fruitful. It is also interesting to note that, even for the baptized person there are unequal effects. Some receive “greater or lesser share in the grace of newness” as they go through baptism. It is important to note, though, that in either situation, baptized or unbaptized, St. Thomas presents the human person as graced.

3a. A division of grace into grace for the individual and grace for the other in the ST

3a. A division of grace into grace for the individual and grace for the other in the ST

338 ST I-II, Q109, aa1-9.
339 ST I-II Q109, a1.
340 ST I-II, Q109, a2.
341 ST III, Q69, a8.
For the most explicit example of the other orientedness of grace, a division St. Thomas makes in grace is of keen importance. For this division of grace, one needs to turn to the *ST* and delve into the heart of St. Thomas’ treatise on grace\(^{342}\) and his more detailed examination of the example of charismatic grace\(^{343}\) in the later section of the *ST*\(^{344}\) as one way of demonstrating the other-orientedness of grace. In this section we will examine the division of graces in *ST* I-II, Q111 and the later section of *ST* II-II that deal with the division specifically. In the section to follow we will look at the other parts of St. Thomas’ work that touch on this division and bring it out in various degrees including his commentaries on scripture.

*ST* I-II, *Q 111: A Division of Grace*

In Question 111 we have the division between charismatic and sanctifying grace. In St. Thomas the order in which things are presented is important.\(^{345}\) The first division we see, then, should be the most important or the one that will impact the rest. The first is between sanctifying and gratuitous grace, the second is between operative and cooperative grace and the third is prevenient and subsequent grace. In the question he

\(^{342}\) *ST* I-II, QQ 109-114.

\(^{343}\) The term “charismatic” grace will be used as the translation of *gratia gratis data*. This is chosen over other translations such as gratuitous grace or grace given freely to emphasize the charism aspect of these graces. The other translations have their particular uses and advantages but, as a translation, these three imply something distinct about *gratia gratis data* and St. Thomas draws upon each of them at various times.

\(^{344}\) *ST* II-II QQ171-178.

\(^{345}\) Chenu, 95;
returns to the distinction between sanctifying and charismatic grace for the last two articles of the question. Up to this point in this section on grace he has discussed the necessity and basic structure of grace.

This first division is centered around the Dionysian idea that “things are led to God by other things,” and that things are well ordered “[a]nd hence since grace is ordained to lead men to God, this takes place in a certain order, so that some are led to God by others.” From this, St. Thomas will see that grace is primarily divided between grace for ourselves, sanctifying grace, and grace for the other, charismatic grace.

And thus there is a twofold grace: one whereby man himself is united to God, and this is called "sanctifying grace"; the other is that whereby one man cooperates with another in leading him to God, and this gift is called "gratuitous[charismatic] grace," since it is bestowed on a man beyond the capability of nature, and beyond the merit of the person. But whereas it is bestowed on a man, not to justify him, but rather that he may cooperate in the justification of another, it is not called sanctifying grace. And it is of this that the Apostle says (1 Corinthians 12:7): "And the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man unto utility," i.e. of others.

The question arises as to why this is the first distinction and why it is significant that this is the first division that St. Thomas will make in his understanding of the

346 Cf. Dionysius, Coel Heir. IV, as cited in ST I-II, Q111, c.
347 ST I-II, Q111.
divisions of grace. He will follow this distinction with more popular divisions of grace but the choice of the first division needs some examination. He wishes to deal initially with the ideas of sanctifying grace and so has to make the distinction in order not to deal with anything else. He makes this division possibly with an eye towards his understanding of nature as structured between a purduing self and a communicative relationality. As we saw in chapter two, this understanding of nature must be mined out of his theology but this division of grace is obvious and deliberate. Since St. Thomas does not address his reasoning directly, only an attempt at a reason can be made.

From the body of the first article itself, very little can be gleaned. He chooses to make this first distinction in order to single out sanctifying grace but in doing so he has created a polarization of grace into the separate divisions. This is more of a case of dividing to distinguish and clarify rather than anything else. This polarization does create the two different realms for examination: sanctifying grace for the self, charismatic grace for the other. The next section will show that this is not an idea that came to him near the end of his career but it finds its way into various discussions of grace well before the *ST*. The importance of this division as seen by its prominence in the question means that this division is important to St. Thomas. 348 He evidently saw that this was important enough

to get out of the way before proceeding on to sanctifying grace. We will see that it does
tie into his understanding of Paul’s letters.

The objections to this division are on different grounds, some very superficial
such as the third objection where the very name is objected to, but even that occasions a
moment to reinforce the idea that there are two different important aspects of grace, one
of the self which is sanctifying and one for the other which can also be called non-
sanctifying. The non-sanctifying is the charismatic grace which, to the objector, seems to
be a tautology since all grace is gratuitous.\textsuperscript{349} St. Thomas wants to keep in the fore the
idea that there is not only a grace for the individual self. The other objections can be
referred to previous questions as misunderstandings of how grace acts – formally rather
than efficiently, and that grace is not granted on demand by the creature as creature but is
a gift from God.

In the fourth article of the question St. Thomas begins to define more clearly
where he got the notion of charismatic grace and how it is divided in itself. Charismatic
grace is mentioned in St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians\textsuperscript{350} and it is from that passage
that St. Thomas shows the divisions within this grace for the other. He gives the reference
in the \textit{sed contra} section of the article slightly paraphrasing the passage from the vulgate.

The Apostle says (1 Corinthians 12:8-10): "To one indeed by the Spirit is given
the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the

\textsuperscript{349} Here is one instance where the translation of \textit{gratia gratis data} as “gratuitous”
is most fitting rather than charismatic.

\textsuperscript{350} 1 Cor. 12.8-12.
same Spirit; to another, the working of miracles; to another, prophecy; to another, the discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another interpretation of speeches.\textsuperscript{351}

For St. Thomas the divisions are already made by St. Paul and St. Thomas needs only to expound upon them.\textsuperscript{352} Charismatic grace gives one the ability to help bring others to salvation, cooperating with God, as an extension of the love of God working in the individual. To bring someone else to the knowledge of something, a person must be able to know the thing he is trying to teach, be able to confirm what he knows, and be able to present it to others in a way that is persuasive. The divisions St. Thomas finds in St. Paul are those elements: knowledge, confirmation and presentation.

It is interesting that in this discussion of things that move a person externally, we find that the first thing St. Thomas picks out of St. Paul’s passage is that God must grant an initial act, faith,\textsuperscript{353} to the person assisting in the salvation of another so that he has the knowledge of God to pass on to others. Whereas the habit of faith is an internal

\textsuperscript{351} ST I-II, Q111, a4, sc.

\textsuperscript{352} There was much debate throughout the late medieval commentators as to whether this enumeration of the gifts was complete. For mention of this debate see Reginald Garrigou-Legrange, \textit{Grace: Commentary on the Summa Theologicae of St. Thomas Aquinas Ia-IIae, q109-114} (Trans. Dominican Nuns of Corpus Christi Monastery, London: Herder, 1952)

\textsuperscript{353} ST I-II, Q111, a4, c.
movement of the soul by God, this faith is not the virtue of faith but a less inhering, non-habitual knowledge put into the person. And from that movement of assent that will work on the person’s intellect, comes the ability to “be certain” about the supernatural things of God. With this knowledge of faith, the individual can be granted wisdom and knowledge of things supernatural.

The working of miracles and prophecy are the gifts that confirm the knowledge given. Miracles, especially healing, are given to some to prove the presence of Divine power. These can also include the control of natural elements such as making the sun stand still or dividing a sea. These unexplainable miracles serve to prove the existence of the Divine, as does knowledge of things that have not yet happened. Prophecy is considered proof of a Divine source Who knows all things past and present as well as future or even just the “secrets of the heart” which would be the discerning of spirits in St. Thomas’ understanding.

With regard to presenting the faith to hearers in a way that they will understand, the gift of tongues and the interpretation of speeches is given. For St. Thomas, the gift of tongues is the speaking of different languages as was seen in the earliest apostles when they were said to be speaking in languages of all different origins in Acts 2. This

\[354\] ST II-II, Q6, a1 “Therefore faith, as regards the assent which is the chief act of faith, is from God moving man inwardly by grace.” In this particular article, faith is this supernatural certitude, see a4, ad2.

\[355\] ST, I-II, Q111, a4, c.

\[356\] For St. Thomas’ take on the reason for tongues as a remedy for the idolatry punished at Babel see ST II-II, Q176, a1. This understanding of the gift of tongues is one of two that hold sway among Jewish and Christian commentators. The other notion of the gift of tongues refers to an unintelligible language that only the speaker and God
enables the speaker to be unburdened by other languages when traveling and spreading
the word of God. So it is with the interpretation of speeches. St. Thomas groups the two
together and implies that this interpretation is of diverse languages. In this sense one sees
that the two go together as it would be good for there to be, at least, someone that can
speak in diverse languages and one that can interpret the language. Other than this there
is little in the ST that speaks about the interpretation of speeches.

These are the graces associated with grace given freely and all of them are works
of the individual for the assistance of the other in bringing the other to a knowledge of
God either through various words or miracles. St. Thomas recognizes that each individual
person can be granted these gifts regardless of their status. Sanctifying grace is not a
prerequisite for the charismatic graces. Faith granted as a supernatural certitude is the
beginning of these gifts and then this knowledge is transmitted to others. The ST shows
that the distinction between grace for the self and grace for the other is a real distinction
in St. Thomas and this distinction is important. St. Thomas finds origin for this
distinction in the scriptures and his commentaries on the scriptures demonstrate this
concern. It is to these commentaries, along with some other works, that we shall now
turn.

3b. Support from various other texts of St. Thomas

understand and even among those that hold this understanding debate as to whether the
speaker can understand what is being said. It is clear from St. Luke’s passage that
speaking in tongues means the use of different languages but most of the scholars that
argue for the incomprehensible speaking to God will actually use the 1 Corinthians
passage from St. Paul. This seems to indicate that St. Thomas had no other notion of
speaking in tongues than that of speaking different languages.
While the ST provides a concise account of the distinctions in grace, it is not the only place that these distinctions are found. The commentaries on Paul’s letters are a good source of much of the nuances found in the ST. In this section we will look at several different commentaries as well as other synthetic treatises such as DV and SCG. I believe this will show that the different distinctions in grace between grace for the self and grace for the other is not an insignificant notion in the thought of St. Thomas. DV being one of the earliest treatises written by St. Thomas shows this distinction and some basic ideas about grace that follow throughout his career. The SCG will build on this idea making similar distinctions.

In DV we get the same division of grace between sanctifying and charismatic graces. He also quickly moves on from the discussion of the charismatic graces to get to sanctifying grace, the more important of the two in the order of grace.

In divine matters we accordingly speak of two kinds of grace. One is called grace gratuitously given or gratuitous grace, as the gift of prophecy and of wisdom and the like. But this is not in question at present, because it is evident that such gifts are something created in the soul…

Notice also that he assumes the reader will recognize the charismatic graces as something that comes to a person only temporarily as created in the soul and not dwelling in the soul

[^357]: DV Q27, a1, c.
since “ingratiatory grace can be called gratuitous grace, but not conversely, because not every gratuitous grace makes us worthy of eternal life.”358

Following up on the definition of grace we see a place for the charismatic graces in a response to an objection that references the letter to the Romans that “faith comes through hearing” (Rom 10.17). The reply to this objection deals with both graces. Faith comes through the sanctifying grace and the person becomes perfected in that faith through the hearing of the things of the faith and this, in the reply, is the word of the preacher but also fits with later definitions of what the charismatic grace does. The “utterances” of the faith are the gifts of prophecy and tongues. The hearers are perfected through that hearing.

We see that in DV the distinction between the charismatic and the sanctifying graces are not fully developed in their implications but the ideas are there for future treatises such as the SCG and the ST. In the SCG we find no real distinction between graces. What does come out is the foundation for the distinction. St. Thomas makes the point that knowledge of the faith has to come from someone, for some it comes from God and for others it has to come from other humans, regarding knowledge of the things of faith: “some persons had to receive them directly from God, then others from them, and so on in an orderly way down to the lowest persons.”359 There is a certain way in the plan of God that all will end up hearing the things of the faith. It is either through God or from someone who has received it from God; grace for the self and grace for the other.

358 Ibid.

359 SCG III, 154.
In the commentaries on St. Paul’s letters, we find St. Thomas focuses all of his work on the letters relating to grace. In the commentary on the letter to the Romans St. Thomas begins his work on the Pauline corpus and the prologue for it acts as the prologue for his entire study of St. Paul.

He wrote fourteen letters. Nine instruct the Church of the Gentiles, four the leaders and princes of the Church, that is the rulers, and one the people of Israel, namely the letter to the Hebrews. This teaching is entirely about the grace of Christ,…

Grace is the underlying theme for all the letters and St. Thomas finds that they are already set in a specific order that lends itself to this sort of analysis. The canonical order of the letters beginning with Romans through the letter to the Hebrews displays this format. St. Thomas is aware that the letters are not placed in chronological order but seem to have another order in mind.

In the discussion of grace, St. Paul’s letter to the Romans takes pride of place since it is concerned with grace, “in itself.” The letters that follow describe how this grace is found in the sacraments as well as the unity of the Church and so on. Each letter

\[\text{360} \quad C\text{Rom, Prooem., 11. Scrispit enim quatuordecim epistolas quorum novem instruunt Ecclesiam gentium; quatuor praelatos et principes Ecclesiae, id est reges; una populum Israel, scilicet quae est ad Hebraeos. Est enim haec doctrina tota de gratia Christi.}\]

\[\text{361} \quad C\text{Rom. Prooem., 12. Sed videtur quod epistola ad Romanos non sit prima.}\]

\[\text{362} \quad C\text{Rom. Prooem., 11. secundum se, et sic commendatur in epistola ad Romanos.}\]
plays a role in defining how grace works in creation. The first to be examined should be his commentary on Romans because it will discuss the nature of grace in itself. In it is the two fold understanding of grace as for the self and for others.

With respect to the charismatic grace, someone is not to be said to be predestined simply, because charismatic grace is not directly ordered to this, that he, who receives grace, is ordered to an ultimate end, but through that grace others are ordered to an end as it says in 1Cor. 12.7: “to each is given the manifestations of the spirit for their utility.”

This discussion of grace is strikingly similar to that found in the ST. Most scholarly timelines place the writing of these commentaries during the time of the writing of the ST but it is safe to assume that, since the medieval cycle of education in theology begins with the Bachelor of the Sacred Page and then moves on to the Master of the Sentences, St. Thomas had these ideas in the back of his mind throughout his career. Also in this section the discussion of the charismatic graces is not primary and this short statement on them seems to indicate comfort with the idea and an understanding that the reader has some knowledge of this distinction.

There is not much more about the charismatic graces in his commentary on Romans with the exception of a later comment on the graces that each use in which he

\[363\] CRom Cap 2, 47. Respectu vero gratiae gratis datae, non dicitur aliquis praedestinari simpliciter, quia gratia gratis data non ordinatur directe ad hoc quod ille, qui eam recipit, ad finem ultimum dirigatur, sed ut per eam alii dirigantur, secundum illud I Cor. XII, 7: unicuique datur manifestatio spiritus ad utilitatem.

\[364\] See the section below on DV which was written in the early years of his career.
indicates that the charismatic graces are not given to each person the same way but are diverse in their manifestations.\textsuperscript{365} This is perhaps anticipating his commentary on the first letter to the Corinthians. The commentary on Romans does seem to parallel the \textit{ST} in focusing its discussion on sanctifying grace and mentioning the charismatic graces as another grace given to each person for the other.

In the commentary on the first letter to the Corinthians we see the charismatic graces spoken of more thoroughly. In chapter 12 of the letter, St. Paul delineates the charismatic graces and St. Thomas will discuss them as he had in the \textit{ST} only from a purely scriptural basis. In the twelfth lecture pertaining to 1 Cor. 12.1-6, St. Thomas sees that the Apostle is trying to explain the gifts of the spirit or the charismatic gifts.\textsuperscript{366} In this section he speaks of the gifts being given to those who do not possess God, those not in sanctifying grace, such as Balaam’s ass or Caiaphas. In this way we see that some graces are given to those who are not in sanctifying grace but he makes it seem that if someone is not in sanctifying grace the only reason he would receive these graces was for the assistance of another where through their actions, others would be helped in some way towards sanctifying grace.\textsuperscript{367}

The charismatic graces are spoken of as giving strength to the Church but also being done by someone who may not be within the Church, a “sinner, in whom the Holy

\textsuperscript{365} Cf. \textit{CRom.} Cap 12, lect 1, 968.

\textsuperscript{366} \textit{CICor.} Cap 12, lect 1, 710.

\textsuperscript{367} \textit{Ibid.} 718.
Spirit does not dwell.” Again in this section St. Thomas demonstrates how someone is given graces that do not benefit the person themselves but those of others. He also shows the almost superficial nature of these graces by pointing out the distinctions between other graces and the charismatic graces that he specifically mentions. The graces are not of wisdom or knowledge but the utterance of wisdom and knowledge. The utterances only benefit others since they are meant to be voiced for outside hearers. St. Paul also mentions faith but St. Thomas qualifies the type of faith as just the utterance of things of the faith.

The Apostle places in the charismatic graces not wisdom and knowledge, but the utterance of wisdom and knowledge, which pertain to the ability to persuade other by speech about matters pertaining to wisdom and knowledge.

Now, the principles of the doctrine of salvation are the articles of faith, and in regard to this he adds: to another is given faith by the same Spirit. It is not taken there for the virtue of faith, because this is common to all members of Christ, according to Heb (11:6): “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” But it is taken for the utterance of faith in the sense that a man is able rightly to propose manners of faith, or for the certainty of faith someone has in an excellent way.

The charismatic graces of prophecy and speaking in tongues are centered around utterances and are for the building up of others as is the working of miracles. All of these

\[368\] Cf. \textit{C/Cor.} Cap. 12, lect.2, 725.
deal with a part of humanity that is directed towards the other. St. Paul also writes that God will distribute the graces “apportioning to each one individually as He wills.” (1 Cor. 12.11) St. Thomas takes this to mean that the Apostle is pointing out that God can choose any individual for such graces leaving open the possibility that all humanity has the ability to receive this grace.

From the above we can see that St. Thomas has taken time to develop the distinction of graces between those for the self and those for others. These differing graces are found throughout his work in some form or another. We see in *DV* the distinction is in place but not well explained while in the *SCG* the distinction is not explicitly mentioned at all. The scriptural commentaries do bring this out in a more definitive way and also give a hint as to the origins of the distinction.

Recall that in Question 111 of the *ST* regarding the divisions of grace, the other divisions can also be shown to demonstrate, to various degrees, this distinction between the for-the-self and for-the-other. The distinction between operating and cooperating can be seen in this perspective as the operating deals only with the person receiving the grace while the cooperating works with the person as they interact with creation. The division does not have the same strength in its argument as does the sanctifying/gratuitous division but it can show affinities towards it. The same can be said for the prevenient/subsequent distinction where the prevenient deals solely with the for-the-self and the subsequent works in the person’s outward actions. Again, the division is not as obvious for bringing out this distinction but it does show affinities.

What St. Thomas appears to be doing is drawing out the distinctions to focus one aspect of grace that draws form the full understanding of grace. Grace, as the love of God
is a diffusive and attractive love and, as such, draws others to it through the ones that God loves. The love within the one loved becomes an outward expression and that expression touches others. I would say that St. Thomas would agree that the love infused in us from grace is a driving force that will lead us towards a deeper love, in a never ending quest towards fulfillment in God’s love. It is this drive that focuses on the other, makes us want to help the other. This may be seen in how St. Thomas understands fraternal correction, a simple act of keeping a brother along the correct spiritual path.

Is there a precept for brotherly correction? Yes, both the ST and the DVirt speak to this. The ST is characteristically brief but to the point:

Consequently fraternal correction also is an act of charity, because thereby we drive out our brother's evil, viz. sin, the removal of which pertains to charity rather than the removal of an external loss, or of a bodily injury, in so much as the contrary good of virtue is more akin to charity than the good of the body or of external things. Therefore fraternal correction is an act of charity rather than the healing of a bodily infirmity, or the relieving of an external bodily need.\(^{369}\)

As an act of charity it is done through love, if done correctly as the article continues, and so love does have a motive force that brings out the desire for the other to walk in the view of the ultimate Good.

The DVirt speaks more freely about the effects of love, read grace, in the idea of fraternal correction.

\(^{369}\) ST I-II, Q33, a1.
There is a precept about brotherly correction. The reason is that we are obliged by precept to love our neighbor. Love, though, in itself includes wishing the good of the person who is loved: to love someone is to want what is good for him, as Aristotle says…

Love appears to have, within it, the very interest of the other at heart. This understanding of love as grace and grace as for the other is important to St. Thomas. Love is the foundation of all concern for the other. Even before one thinks to correct, there is love driving all of creation towards its perfection in God.

I hope that what has been developed here is the beginnings of a greater discussion among Thomists about the other-orientedness of grace in St. Thomas. Grace itself is the love of God and that love has properties that give it this orientation. Love as diffusive and creative will fit within the confines of the created natural order well because in the order of creation, love came first and then all the existing things follow.

4. Synthesis of this theology of grace with his theology of nature

The theology of nature and the theology of grace in St. Thomas Aquinas are not separate theologies but the same theology that delves deeper into the human person. From what has been said above, the nature of the human person includes a dyadic structure of the in-itself and the for-the-other. His theology of grace will build upon and elevate this nature forming the human person as one focused on outward action as part of his very essence. To synthesize the ideas of nature with those of grace, the natural structure must

\[370\] \textit{DVirt.} Q3, a1.
have a foundation for the associated grace. This will show how the grace structure is built on the framework of the created natural human person. Once the connection is made between nature and the grace, the next step is to show that grace brings with it some form of motion, a command that can be cooperated with or not. With these two ideas developed a new sense of the human person rooted in Thomistic theology can be brought into conversation with contemporary theologies especially those of the postmodern phenomenological ilk.

For St. Thomas, the human person, as the highest of substances – a rational substance, is created with a core self that is the perduring part of the human person lasting through the changes of time. It is the “I” that answers to another’s call or the “I” that refuses to help another. This core self, for the human person, requires the assistance of its accidents. It is through these accidents that the self makes itself present to the other.

The accidentals express the differences between humans and form some of the distinguishing characteristics that will make each human develop into the unique individual human person over time. It is through them that the human person interacts

371 This is a particular need for the human person versus the angelic or Divine person. The human requires the use of the senses and therefore a body, an accident which changes, to interact and receive information about the world around it. See also chapter two.

372 This brings to the fore the idea of personal singularity, a concept that seems to be part of the early and medieval Tradition as well as being part of today’s understanding of the person in the Roman Catholic Tradition. For a great discussion of this see, Adrian J. Walker. “Personal Singularity and the Communion Personarum: the Creative Development of St. Thomas Aquinas’ Doctrine of Esse Comune.” Communio 31 (Fall 2004) 457-479.
with others and can hurt or help others. The accidentals include the physical characteristics of the human, things that change over time and are used by the in-itself to make the self present to others while also affecting how the in-itself understands the otherness of the world around it.

The created person, when examined as “natural,” has both of the aspects of the in-itself and the for-others and as such form the foundation for grace to build from and transform. Described as the love of God, grace will transform this nature in its most radical elements. Grace affects these elements of the for-the-self and for-the-other. Of which, the most important for St. Thomas is the grace that touches the in-itself – sanctifying grace, the grace that makes one pleasing to God, through which the human person can achieve union with God. When grace touches the in-itself, when the love of God touches the self, that love is transformative and is salvific in that the self is made pleasing to God and this is commonly called salvation or justification. This grace affects the internal, the self, and only the individual person can reap the benefits; no other person will have any notion as to whether or not the other person, the individual self, has been touched by grace.

St. Thomas will not say that there are different graces but there is one grace, one love that flows from God, at the will of God, not in any uncontrolled or necessary fashion but in a singular grace that affects the human person in different ways due to the structure of the person. This singular grace will touch upon the in-itself and that brings about a salvific effect since the core in-itself is the person. That same love which touches the in-itself and also affect the for-the-other, the accidentals. It is through them that the others are helped.
Recall that the love of God, as with all love which has its source in God, is
diffusive of itself and any connection or share in that love will communicate that
diffusiveness or at least the need for that diffusiveness. Connection with God’s love
drives the person towards communicative relationality, concern for the other. This love
wishes the good for the other and so it drives the self towards a love for the other. The
connection with grace, the love of God, activates the human person’s concern even if in
small rudimentary ways. The diffusiveness of Divine love through everything it
touches fulfills the natural structure of the human person and perfects it bringing to all
creation this diffusive love for the other. As the aspect of provenience brings out, this
love is before us as is the associated love, or concern for the other.

This aspect of grace seems to act on the accidentals of the person and enhances
their abilities. Charismatic grace touches each human person for the benefit of other
human persons and not for the self because it touches upon those things that are not
essential to the salvation of the in-itself, those accidentals which interact with the
other. Being affected by grace in the accidentals is part of the unity in love for each
person that God has and shares with His creation. The gifts of prophecy, miracles and
healings as well as tongues all rely on the various physical changeable aspects of the
human person: the voice, the hands, the tongue, etc.; miracles presumably conferred by

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373 See the various ways in which the western philosophical and theological
tradition finds a sense of justice in the human person long before the advent of
Christianity or the encounter with Judaism. Cf. Aristotle, Plato, Homer, etc.

374 This is not to include the things that have been called the substantial accidents,
the things that are part of the essence of the human person. These would include the
physicality of the person, the fact that there must be a body versus how tall or short that
body is.
the hands or by some touch are not something the individual person activates at their will but are only activated by God’s will. The grace that is for the other uses the aspects of the person that are created to be the outward oriented means of expressing the self to others. God uses the accidentals for His ends by giving them a particular end and these gifts do not inhere in the individual human person because the accidentals are changeable and a change in the accidents does not necessarily mean a change in the substance.

From what has followed in chapters two and three the interaction of grace and nature is a thoroughly intimate and integrated interaction by design and by creation. A question to be asked about the miracles and healings and all of the charismatic manifestations is their purpose. Why would God choose to use the individual as a means to convey these gifts of miracles and healings and so forth? Why does not God just heal the person or perform the miracle or sign Himself and skip the human interaction? St. Thomas does not present an answer to this question, directly, since this question was never put to him directly nor was it of any concern for the various thinkers of his time. The answer to this question is for another time and another philosophical era. The only hint St. Thomas gives as to a possible answer lies in his notion of grace itself.

Grace, as a singular entity, is love and is active in that it is from God, pure act.\textsuperscript{375} Divine love creates and wants to be diffused so being created in love means that created things want to communicate that love.\textsuperscript{376} The analysis of creation in chapter two shows that the created being is meant to communicate its own goodness. The accidental
means of that communication for the human person. The angelic person does not need this nor does the Divine; their communication is instantaneous and complete due to their immaterial aspects. The human person requires accidentals to communicate the goodness found in the self. The goodness of the human does not reside in the physical characteristics, the hands or feet or lungs, but in the goodness given to the self by the Divine love poured into the person, the self, the in-itself.

*Divine demand*

When looking at the human person, both graced and natural, a picture of a communicative, loving, active person arises, one that is created with these attributes as essential to its very existence. The human person is graced and that grace activates, by creation, the communicative activity which, at its root, is the radical foundation for the ethical demand within the human person. Grace is the source of this demand to love from the very beginning, before the human person begins his reasoning; before the human person can reflect on the demand or the source. The diffusive love of God drives the human person towards the perfection of the self and the other.

St. Thomas has developed a way of looking at the human person that leaves open this analysis. His discussions of charismatic grace and sanctifying grace along with the structure of the human person all leave open the possibility to see within the human person this divine demand to love, to communicate the good. We have seen this in earlier examples of fraternal correction and the virtues in general. St. Thomas also has much in
the way of analyzing why the human person does not follow this demand.\textsuperscript{377} Sin is the reason the human person does not follow this demand but the love of God can overcome this blindness and restore the human person back to where he should be and can clearly see the ethical demand as part of the perfection of his existence.

Is the analysis of charismatic grace the totality of the understanding of the for-the-other in grace? Absolutely not, but it is one aspect that has not been discussed in much detail, yet one that has much to recommend it in a conversation with contemporary postmodern theologians and philosophers. Charismatic grace is one of many ways or seeing the pre-thematic, pre-conceptual, pre-intentional concern for the other. Analysis of prevenient as well as operative grace can also prove fruitful for future pursuits. In the next chapter we will see one such analysis of provenience by a current theologian coming from the postmodern perspective.

\textsuperscript{377} St. Thomas’ work on original sin, the virtues, and evil all result from an examination of fallen humanity. The treatise on Grace continually makes the distinction between fallen human nature and integral human nature or nature before the fall. St. Thomas was well aware that the human person was able to be good and ethical “in the beginning.” The ethical demand for inter-human behavior was perfectly within the ability of the human person, before the fall, even if the ability to love God above all things was still wanting. Cf., e.g., ST I-II, Q109 in all of its articles where the distinction is made repeatedly.
CHAPTER FOUR: DIALOGUE

Two dialogue partners have been presented and now the dialogue can begin with full understanding that it will not end here nor will it be satisfactorily started. The conversation must continue so that the Tradition can be built up and presented “ever ancient, ever new.”\(^\text{378}\) To this end I hope to bring together some of the elements from Levinas and Derrida with those of St. Thomas. I have tried to put the work of St. Thomas into a postmodern context and can now begin to compare their thoughts. On one plane, I believe that they have much in common and will attempt a synthesis that will hopefully prove fruitful in advancing theology in the postmodern context.

Let us recall the key elements form Levinas that will be of help in this discussion. For Levinas, God as the Infinite that only leaves a trace, is the source of all ethics, speaking most generically; it is “a pre-thematic, pre-conceptual and pre-intentional concern [for the other] that comes before the individual person can choose to be concerned for the other.”\(^\text{379}\) It is in this concern for the other, actually, in a responsibility for the other, that the Infinite, or God, is found. Driving the person towards this responsibility for the other is a transcendent desire for God. A desire that will never be fulfilled but only deepens as the desire grows.

There is something in the human person that desires beyond what it can reach and that desire yields a command from the object of that desire, the Infinite, God. The command “do not kill” is in the person from the very beginning in an always/already

\(^{378}\) Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, X, 27.

\(^{379}\) See Chapter 1, p.15.
relationship to the self. It is, in fact, this concern that constitutes the subject. How much
one responds to this command determines the degree to which one has subjectivity.
Levinas is trying to get to the heart of ethics and, for him, it lies in the command coming
from God, the Infinite, Who is unreachable and (almost) entirely transcendent. The trace
of this Infinite, giving just a glimmer of the Infinite, rests in the face of the other to whom
we are bound by this command to care for more than ourselves.

It seems that we are commanded to love one another from the very beginnings of
our existence. Commanded by an Infinite that reaches us through the other and so our
relationality helps us see the Infinite and helps us follow the command that the Infinite
gives us. We receive the commands, though, in true passivity, a passivity in which are not
aware of the passivity. This command comes to us before we can reflect upon it and
before we can react to it. This command gives us our orders well before we think to ask
for them as well as giving us the ability to act on that command since it is constitutive of
the subject.

The basic elements of command and passivity mixed with the always/already
structure of the command given pre-intentionally, pre-conditionally, and pre-thematically
can be examined in dialogue with St. Thomas’ idea of grace given in creation to all
beings and sustaining that creation. The ideas of the Infinite and the desire for the Infinite
have affinities in the work of St. Thomas. Thinking the idea of the Infinite is thinking
God and, in many ways, we see it as the love of God. It is this love that will be the similar
driving force in the concern for the other.

The Infinite is God as the condition for the possibility of all beings. In St. Thomas
the condition for the possibility of creation, for the possibility of all beings, is the love of
God, without which, there would be nothing. Levinas’ Infinite is the love of God and cannot be approached in its fullness in any way. The love of God leads us to some understanding of God through its effects but works to keep undermining any real understanding of God. While not fully comprehending God in any degree of completeness, humanity, as an existing being, though, always/already has the love of God in them through creation in grace and through being sustained in grace.

The Infinite, for Levinas, is the non-contained, an idea working on the human person to break up consciousness in hopes of eliminating any conceptualizing thoughts of the Infinite. This is not unlike the mystical tradition that St. Thomas receives which speak to the inability to grasp onto any total understanding of God which includes St. Thomas himself; “I adore you devoutly, hidden God.”380 “He spoke of a God beyond everything holy theology could say about him. He spoke of the God he loved as inconceivable.”381 St. Thomas knew that there was a veil between knowledge of God and God and made that explicit in his work on the knowledge of God.

Hence from the knowledge of sensible things the whole power of God cannot be known; nor therefore can His essence be seen. But because they are His effects and depend on their cause, we can be led from them so far as to know of God


380 This is one of the five prayers composed by St. Thomas Aquinas, Adoro te devote, latens deitas..., for Pope Urban IV in honor of the Blessed Sacrament.

whether He exists, and on to know of Him what must necessarily belong to Him, as the first cause of all things, exceeding all things caused by Him.\textsuperscript{382}

and,

It is impossible for any created intellect to comprehend God; yet "for the mind to attain to God in some degree is great beatitude," as Augustine says (\textit{De Verb. Dim.}, Serm. xxxvii). In proof of this we must consider that what is comprehended is perfectly known; and that is perfectly known which is known so far as it can be known. …But no created intellect can attain to that perfect mode of the knowledge of the Divine intellect…\textsuperscript{383}

Our knowledge has limits and is grossly incapable of grasping the Infinite love of God or its source.

The desire for the Infinite is also an element in Levinas’ understanding of the subject, a desire for what is beyond being, for the Good. It is the desire for what cannot be desired, the undesirable, and especially the “undesirable par excellence.”\textsuperscript{384} The desire for the Infinite, as we have seen, can translate to the desire for the other.\textsuperscript{385} For St. Thomas “love precedes desire”\textsuperscript{386} and so, for St. Thomas, to approach Levinasian desire

\textsuperscript{382} \textit{ST} I, Q12, a12.
\textsuperscript{383} \textit{ST} I, Q12, a1.
\textsuperscript{384} Levinas, “God and Philosophy,” 178.
\textsuperscript{385} Cf. Chapter one above.
\textsuperscript{386} \textit{ST} I-II, Q25, a2.
for the other, there is first love for the other. In St. Thomas, the love with which a person loves is a share in divine love. William Hoye demonstrates this in his lecture on human love in the thought of St. Thomas.\footnote{William J. Hoye, “Human Love as Unfulfilling Union According to St. Thomas Aquinas.” Lecture, International Congress on Christian Humanism in the Third Millennium: The Perspective of Thomas Aquinas, Rome, September 23, 2003.} Human love is the desire for union that is rooted in the desire for union with God. The union can be one of friendship or of lovers but it is rooted in the desire to be in union with God – the purpose of grace.

We can see that the desire for the Infinite is a non-erotic love, an agapic love that is the love of God. Desire for the Infinite leads to a desire for the other and that desire is the beginning of love. One can look at desire as love and so desire for the infinite is a love for the infinite and desire for the other is a love for the other. The source of that love is God and so they love the others through the same love with which they love God and, therefore, because God loves humans, so should other humans love humans. Through our love we see that we love others due to the love of God which is in us before we love. The love of God is grace and so our love is rooted in the always/already presence of grace. These are good examples of how one can use Levinasian ideas to get to a deeper understanding of Thomistic thought as well as the received Tradition.

In Levinas there is also the idea of passivity that marks the subject. One can easily see the passivity in the human person as this always/already presence of Divine love in the background of existence. Like a trauma, the love of God is present even before one understands that there is love. It comes from outside of the human person and, as such, comes to them without their consent or understanding. A passivity more passive still than...
any passivity as it comes over the human person so as to bring the person into existence activating the very essence of that individual.

Using Levinasian passivity to describe the always/already aspect of God’s grace will get to the heart of the idea that grace comes first in the order of creation. God’s grace founds the subject through love, through the grace of creation. The initiative is all God’s and through that initiative the human person comes about. The ultimate passivity of the person is this reception of existence from God through grace. No initiative from the human person can begin this for themselves.

Divine grace is not partitioned though, it transmits not only the creative aspect of esse but also its diffusive content, love of the other. From before the very beginning of each passive essence, each not-yet-existent individual there is active Divine initiative giving it existence through grace, through Divine love. Using Levinas’ language of passivity can get to the very radical nature of Divine initiative and the necessary human dependence upon God for everything.

The dialogue with Levinas can continue and deepen as both thinkers build up the other. Levinas through the lens of medieval thought has yet to be developed but there are some beginning this process. Fr. Michael Purcell is one that has brought Levinas into dialogue with St. Thomas and other medieval thinkers in the realm of grace as prevenient.

Fr. Purcell comes from the postmodern philosophical milieu but has also shown a willingness to examine the work of medieval thinkers such as St. Thomas Aquinas. He comes from his work on Levinas and brings to this discussion a question of the correlation between St. Thomas’ understanding of prevenient grace and the ethical demand.
Out of almost all of the scholarly work done in this area thus far, Purcell comes the closest to dealing with the dialogue of post-modernity and medieval thought on grace.\(^{388}\) His work entails placing Levinas in dialogue with the Tradition especially as seen through Karl Rahner but also St. Thomas through Rahner. Purcell will approach grace from the aspect of its prevenience, an aspect that seems to belie its pre-thematic nature. Purcell does not pursue this avenue but, instead approaches the idea of prevenience as evidence for grace’s constitutive relation with subjectivity. Using Rahner’s (through St. Thomas) idea that we only experience grace in its effects and never grace as such, Purcell will develop the idea that grace goes before the subject and is before the subject. The person does not experience grace in itself but only the after-effects. Purcell will use Levinas’ idea of the anteriority of the posterior to describe grace as prevenient.

Grace is experienced, phenomenologically only after the fact and a phenomenological analysis of the effect will bring out the “before” of grace that is always already prevenient to the subject. The effects of grace will always present themselves and only then lead to an understanding of the cause as anterior. Purcell will see in Levinas this idea of the posteriority of the anterior and see that as a description of grace, prevenient grace. Grace is only seen after the fact and “in terms of the fact.”\(^{389}\)

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\(^{389}\) Purcell, “Glimpsing Grace” 74.
becomes apparent after it has an effect on the subject thereby telling the subject that grace is present.

Purcell will use St. Thomas’ division of grace as a connection to the Tradition as seen in St. Thomas. In the ST I-II, Q111, we find the division of grace. One of the various divisions is that between prevenient and subsequent grace as well as the division of operating and co-operating grace. Purcell takes the notion of operating grace, a grace that God works in the person without that person’s input, and prevenient grace, a grace that comes to the person before their willing or doing of any good, to get to an idea of grace that is before the willing or hoping of the person. It is before the person yet fully penetrating of the person and constitutes the very subject himself. He will also reach back to the Council of Orange and St. Augustine for his understanding of the provenience of grace as received by St. Thomas.

The key point is that human initiative is dependent upon and assisted by the prevenient and continuing action of God whose grace gives both the possibility of both willing and doing the good. In short prevenient divine initiative is the condition of the possibility (posse) or both willing (intending) (velle) and achieving (esse) the good, a position already outlined by Augustine in his response to Pelagius. 390

390 Purcell, “Glimpsing Grace,” 78.
Purcell goes on to read the basic texts in St. Thomas’ on prevenient grace, ST I-II Q111, and apply them to his notion of Levinasian anteriority. In “The Prevenience and Phenomenality of Grace” Purcell goes through the question of the division of grace focusing on the provenience and all that flows from that aspect especially looking into the cooperative and operative sides of grace. His analysis does not touch upon the division between sanctifying and charismatic grace. As such, Fr. Purcell treats almost every aspect of grace except the notion that there is a grace received specifically for the other. He does not mention charismatic grace nor does he use it in his analysis of grace as constituting the subject.  

Many of the issues that coincide with St. Thomas in Levinas also find affinities in Derrida but Derrida has some differences with Levinas that will add complexity into the dialogue. The key elements that St. Thomas and Derrida can speak to in relation to this dissertation are the two areas of responsibility and the Wholly Other. Their ideas of responsibility can come into contact and enhance each other quite well while I see a connection between Derrida’s idea of the Wholly Other in St. Thomas’ idea of God. The

\[\text{391} \text{ In two places in “Glimpsing Grace” Fr. Purcell references St. Thomas incorrectly. He fixes these references in a later reworked version of this article “Prevenience and Phenomenality.” The two articles are mainly the same, the second showing an increase in research on St. Thomas’ position and analyze the work in the ST in greater depth but focusing only on the ST and not any other treatise or commentary.}\]

\[\text{392} \text{ I hope the future will find deeper analysis of grace by Fr. Purcell because I think his work tying together Levinas and St. Thomas is very fruitful to both Levinas scholarship as well as medieval scholarship. His earlier work on grace and Blanchot, while not dealing with St. Thomas directly does add to the scholarship concerning grace and can be useful in the dialogue surrounding grace especially when one considers St. Thomas’ mystical theology. See Purcell, Michael, “Grace and the Experience of the Impossible: Blanchot’s ‘Impossible Relation’ as a Prolegomenon to a Theology of Grace.” Philosophy and Theology 10/2 (1997) 421-448.}\]
latter will be addressed first as it is the shortest to address and factors into the understanding of the former.

For Derrida the Wholly Other is a God figure that is unapproachable and incomprehensible, “inaccessible to me,” a God that is transcendent to the point of invisible, as Levinas would put it. Derrida’s idea of the transcendent other takes on a Divine character when he speaks of the Wholly Other. This moniker is somewhat misleading in its use here and elsewhere in Derrida since a truly wholly other would have no way of making contact with any other while in Derrida there is a trace. It would be more correct to speak of an Almost Wholly Other. The idea he is trying to convey, though, has resonance with St. Thomas.

For St. Thomas, God is nothing we can “know.” We have no way of knowing God in any sense of comprehension but we can see the effects of God and from that connection we can know some aspects of God. Josef Pieper has demonstrated quite well that St. Thomas has, in no way, considered a total knowledge of God anything achievable by creation. 

God as an unknown is said to be the terminus of our knowledge in the following respect: that the mind is found to be most perfectly in possession of knowledge of God when it is recognized that His essence is above everything that the mind is

\[393\] GD 33.

capable of apprehending in this life; and thus, although what He is remains unknown, yet it is known that He is.\textsuperscript{395}

God can only be recognized as God when the mind realizes that it cannot comprehend God. Only in the realization that we cannot understand God do we understand God to the fullest extent of our abilities. St. Thomas keeps the hidden-ness of God intact through an appropriate understanding of the place of the human intellect.

It is because human intelligence is not equal to the divine essence that this same divine essence surpasses our intelligence and is unknown to us: wherefore man reaches the highest point of his knowledge about God when he knows that he knows him not, inasmuch as he knows that that which is God transcends whatsoever he conceives of him.\textsuperscript{396}

Here we see the affinities with Derrida who could have used St. Thomas as a source for this aspect of his analysis as much as Kierkegaard or Patočka. The human person cannot know what God is but only \textit{that} God is.

The concept that responsibility is a relationship is something that Derrida develops in the \textit{Gift of Death} but uses other places also has a close tie to St. Thomas in its development. The key concept is that responsibility is a relationship with the other and fundamentally the Wholly Other. We have seen that this relationship is one that opens the

\textsuperscript{395} \textit{De Trinitate} I, Q2, ad1; St. Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Super Boethium De Trinitate, Questions 1-4} (translated by Rose E. Brennan, S.H.N., New York: Herder, 1946)

\textsuperscript{396} \textit{DP Q7}, a5, ad14.
self to the gaze of the other and that other is one that cannot be gazed upon. It is the gaze of the transcendent other, the Wholly Other Who cannot be reached and must be respected in secrecy.

To begin some kind of dialogue one must start fairly far afield in St. Thomas with the basic understanding that God is love and as such is essentially a relationship of Persons. Love dictates the distinction of Persons for St. Thomas as he describes the Trinitarian Persons as substantial relations. Relations for St. Thomas are rooted in love and especially Divine love, the same love that is described as grace, the love of God.

We interact with God as a result of grace and this relationship builds up the human person, gives them life and sustains them. This love also carries with it all the things that make up Divine love such as its diffusive properties and its concern for the other. When we love, we love with the love of God and that love has a responsibility attached to it.

Grace brings with it a tendency towards the virtues which will draw the person into relationships with others that are formed on the basis of love. The grace that brings charity is one that will play well into this understanding. Charity is that virtue by which one is rightly ordered towards the good, the ultimate Good, God. Grace brings this order and all have access to it which means all have the possibility of this kind of ordering in their lives. Grace lets one love the lover by revealing the lover, God. This grace brings

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397 ST I, Q

398 A study of the virtues has not been undertaken due to the sheer volume of work on them especially in St. Thomas including the author’s unpublished “Charity as the form of the Virtues in St. Thomas.”
Charity which makes one see, with the eyes of God, the things around and enables the seer to relate to them as God would. One sees and loves the other as a creation of God, loved as God loves them or at least as close as one can get to this love. We love things because the Beloved loves them.

It is this love that closely approximates Derrida’s linkage of every other as the Wholly Other. In every other we see the Wholly Other and love them as the Wholly Other. “Charity which loves God for His own sake and loves fellow-men who are capable of attaining Beatitude as it loves itself.” Charity helps us love the other in the same respect we love God since they are created by God and have God as their source of existence with us. Not only do we love through grace but that love also infuses charity in us which directs our actions towards others and for their good.

Our responsibility, then, comes from the love we have for other human persons driven by the love of God and acted on through our charitable acts. These charitable acts are our ways of pointing ourselves and others to the ultimate human Good, God. Derrida sees in responsibility this drive as well due to our relationship with the Wholly Other, a God figure for Derrida. For St. Thomas the responsibility is driven by love, for Derrida this responsibility is driven by fear, a difference that will need further research.

_Further Dialogue_

Part of beginning a dialogue is finding the right partners with which to be in dialogue. So far we have seen both Levinas and Derrida brought into the dialogue.

without much on their part to recommend the dialogue. There do seem to be a growing number of those willing to engage in this dialogue; one such person is Jean-Luc Marion. Not only has he proven himself an influential actor on the stage of postmodern theology/philosophy but he has also shown a keen interest in St. Thomas. In early his book _God without Being_400 Marion seems to take St. Thomas to task for being part of the onto-theo-logical system and therefore being stuck in the understanding of God as in the realm of Being. By the time the English language edition is published, he had added to the introduction a retraction of sorts and later penned a rather longer and more formal retraction of his views of St. Thomas.401 In this article Marion finds that St. Thomas does not inscribe God within the boundaries of Being and also finds that St. Thomas does have an apophatic trend in his understanding of God.

Marion does an excellent job rooting out the problems inherent in this dialogue between the medieval and the postmodern. One of the most important contributions Marion makes is the ridding of the onto-theo-logical stigma that seems to plague any dialogue between the two. Marion will examine the charge and find it wanting in St. Thomas. He will also correctly point out that the troubles with Thomism began almost immediately after the death of St. Thomas himself with the imposition of univocal terms in theology when speaking of God.


The saturated Phenomenon

One of the key areas that Marion’s work contributes to this discussion is in the idea of the saturated phenomenon. In a personal discussion with Jean-Luc Marion, he expressed the idea that he is changing his thinking on the saturated phenomenon and is beginning to realize that all phenomenon can be seen as saturated. This may play into the idea that the grace that is in creation comes out as much bigger and more complex that initially thought. Marion may have the language to express this depth and it will be fruitful to look into the idea especially as it relates to grace.

For Marion the concept of the saturated phenomenon begins with the phenomenological reduction to givenness. He makes this as an analysis using Husserl as the foundation especially his phenomenological principle “so much reduction, so much givenness.” He finds in Husserl an idea of givenness as universal. The phenomenon gives itself and, in doing so, it’s intuition comes into contact with the subjects intention and it is there that the concept of the saturated phenomenon begins to take shape.

For Marion the intuition can be poor compared to the intention or equal to, or greater than the intention receiving it. The intuition through which a phenomenon will show itself, gives itself, can be greater or lesser than the receiving intention. Marion addresses the poor and equal degrees of intuition rather quickly as they are fairly unexciting but the situation where the intuition exceeds the intention is what he will call a

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403 IE, 20-21.
saturated phenomenon; the phenomenon is saturated with intuition such that it overwhelms the intention.\textsuperscript{404}

To analyze the saturated phenomenon Marion will use Kant’s categories of knowledge to help understand how to define a saturated phenomenon.\textsuperscript{405} The four categories are quantity, quality, relation and modality. Each of these, through an inversion done by Marion, will show the specific way of finding a phenomenon that is saturated. The first three lay out a horizon within which to know a phenomenon but Marion will invert these to show how the horizons are put into question.

The category of quantity is the first he examines and with respect to quantity, the saturated phenomenon is invisible. In the classical sense of material extensiveness, the saturated phenomenon goes beyond the visible as being too visible. Conceptually, though the saturated phenomenon goes beyond the sense of visible; material extensiveness is judged by the summation of its parts while the saturated phenomenon cannot be. There can be no summation of its parts, there are too many of them; there is too much of the phenomenon. Marion uses the idea of the event as an example of this.\textsuperscript{406} Any event has too many past present and future possibilities that the event itself cannot be comprehended in its totality. All of the things that went into the creation of the event in the past, all of the thoughts that went into the planning, development, etc. of the event combined with the present, instantaneous, moment that is unique and totally unrepeatable.

\textsuperscript{404} \textit{BG}, 221-225.

\textsuperscript{405} Here I follow \textit{BG}, 199-221.

\textsuperscript{406} See \textit{IE}, chapter two.
along with the unpredictable future, all go into the idea that the event is too saturated with intuition that gives itself over to the intention of anyone trying to conceptualize it.

Quality is marked by Marion as unbearable in a saturated phenomenon. Perception can anticipate a certain amount when looking at something. For Marion, excess in quality is marked by the gaze suffering bedazzlement. Art is the favorite example that Marion will use. The artist portrays real life but in that portrayal the image dazzles to the point of pushing the real into the background and making the portrayal more important and full of meanings that could be read into the represented item. Phenomenologically, the painting becomes the original and the original takes on a secondary status.

The idol is the saturated phenomenon with respect to quality. The idol catches the gaze and holds it in bedazzlement to the point that the gaze cannot look any further. The representation becomes greater than the reality. The painting example is particularly useful in seeing that the real world has three dimensions and we, in our concept of things, realize that we cannot see the other side of an object without turning it around. This appresentation works along with presentation to get a fuller concept of the object. In a painting the artist does away with the appresentation and only gives what we need to see what the artist puts forward. This gives it a mysteriousness about it. This is one of the reasons that people return time after time to look at the same painting. There is so much that can be “seen” in it that is left up to the imagination of the seer. Abstract art is

\[407\] See IE, chapter three, BG 202-206.
particularly good for this as well as representational art. In abstract art there is no framework or structure to even begin a conceptualization.

With regard to quality, the phenomenon is unbearable there is too much there to take in and requires extended time in looking but even time will not help the situation. No amount of time will allow for the full conceptualization of the idol. Merold Westphal speaks to this in an article analyzing the transfiguration of Jesus as a saturated phenomenon, a bedazzlement takes place like that of Mary Magdelene’s encounter when she saw an angel at the tomb,”[q]uite clearly what bedazzled, overwhelmed, and even scared her….“[408] Bedazzlement marks the halting of the gaze upon the phenomenon.

In speaking of relation, Marion says the saturated phenomenon is absolute. There can be no relation to it either by a real relation or by analogy of experience. His best way of explaining this is by the examples form Kant where Marion will invert the situation. One of the ways in which we know things, according to Kant is through a network of concepts that give rise to our understanding of things. We can relate everything to something we have already encountered. Kant will require the analogies of experience to rule description. Kant also requires that all experience happen in the background of time. Marion quotes Kant from his *Critique of the Power of Judgment* by stating that “all phenomena are in time.”[411] Kant is setting up horizons, however broad,

that will contain the phenomenon. Marion asks if phenomena could exceed their horizon. That is the place of the saturated phenomenon which reaches just beyond the limits of the horizons set up around it. The intuition exceeds the concept or signification that is supposed to see it, it fills the entire horizon, it can even over-fill the horizon. This can go on to the point where no single horizon can be filled up nor any combination of horizons can receive the intuition.\footnote{BG, 210-211.}

The saturated phenomenon gives itself as an absolute without any relation or analogy. In this way it exceeds any horizon and is unapproachable through any analogy or relationship. It is stand-alone without respect for either time or space. Marion also calls this an “unconditioned phenomenon.”\footnote{BG, 212. Marion will use the concept of flesh to describe this type of saturated phenomenon in \textit{IE} chapter four. He uses this concept to show that before there is any phenomenon there needs to be some kind of receptive aspect in the subject and that is flesh. The flesh is described as the way phenomena enter the subject for conceptualization. Flesh is the area of sensory beginning and as such is the horizon within which all senses are to be taken in. It has no relation to anything else because the subject knows nothing without flesh. “My flesh is distinguished from every object of the world, therefore from every body, in such a way that before being able to perceive itself as a possible external object in the world, it perceives.” \textit{IE}, 87. This idea of flesh has some affinities with that of Merleau-Ponty’s idea of flesh as “an anonymity innate to myself,” in his \textit{The Visible and the Invisible} (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1969) 133.}

Finally with respect to modality which deals with phenomenal relationship to thought, we see the saturated phenomenon as irregardable.\footnote{BG, 212-221. \textit{IE}, chapter five.} Building off the previous three categories, we know that the saturated phenomenon is invisible, unbearable and absolute so it should make sense that it is irregardable with respect to thought. When
considering the saturated phenomenon, the fact that it is invisible, unbearable and absolute leads to it not being objectified by the receiver. There is too much for the intention to take in to be able to objectify the phenomenon and constitute it in any way. This does not mean that it does not exist or is not a phenomenon, it just means that there are no avenues for the intention to objectify what it is receiving. In that way the phenomenon objectifies the receiver. The phenomenon constitutes the one to which the phenomenon arrives.

Marion will use the icon as the paradigm for this situation. The icon cannot be gazed at but only gazes, it looks and draws one in. It is a phenomenon that is originary. The gaze regards the object but in a particular way.

To gaze at the phenomenon is therefore equivalent to not seeing it, but indeed to transforming it into an object visible according to an always poor or common phenomenon – visible within the limits of a concept, therefore at the initiative of the gaze, enduring as long as possible in permanence, in short, visible in conformity with objects.

We are unable to take in the saturated phenomenon, reduce it to the conditions of experience and are therefore taken by the icon and the gaze is directed away. The gaze can only take in so much but is overwhelmed with the excess. Marion will call the situation where the “coming forward exceeds what comes forward” as paradox.\textsuperscript{415}

\textsuperscript{415} BG, 216.
The paradox not only suspends the phenomenon’s subjection to the I; it inverts it. For, far from being able to constitute this phenomenon, the I experiences itself as constituted by it.\textsuperscript{416}

The paradox leaves in its wake a witness instead of an I. The witness to the phenomenon does not determine it, constitute it, and therefore can only offer partial objectifications of the phenomenon. The witness is also halted from drawing any meaning that can be considered complete. The limited ability to take in the phenomenon limits the meaning giving. As a receiver of the gaze from the phenomenon, the witness is left surprised and dazed. The witness also realizes that they cannot reduce the phenomenon to themselves, they lose the nominative sense of self. The witness can only register the fact of the phenomenon. Being constituted also implies a call put forward from the saturated phenomenon to the witness.

[I]nsofar as I receive myself from the very givenness of the irregardable phenomenon, me insofar as I learn of myself from what the gaze of the Other says to me in silence.

We have progressed to the point of understanding Marion’s saturated phenomenon so that we can now use this idea and apply it to grace. Is there something new that can be gleaned from the idea of grace as a saturated phenomenon. I will apply

\textsuperscript{416} BG, 216.
this format to the phenomenon of grace. I hope to show that grace is a saturated phenomenon by going through the various categories discussed above.

The first question one could ask is whether or not grace is a phenomenon. According to Marion, grace would fit into the understanding of a phenomenon. Playing off of the phenomenality of the phenomenon, Marion finds that phenomena have the right and the power to show themselves on their terms.\(^{417}\) He says the phenomenon remains “inasmuch as it is an instance exterior to consciousness, completely unevident, since evidence is defined as a mode or state of consciousness alone, independent from and indifferent to a possible transcendence.”\(^{418}\) Grace is not something thought up or originating in the consciousness, it is exterior. For our purposes here we will simply stipulate that grace is a phenomenon that can be encountered by a subject.

Now we can look at each category and try to ascertain to what degree grace can be called a saturated phenomenon with respect to that category. Quantity will be the first category considered. Is grace invisible? Can grace be found to be the sum of its parts and can we calculate all the parts involved. From what we have seen above grace goes beyond measurement. As the love of God, grace takes up the all of existence and cannot be divided into parts, it is unforeseeable due to the fact that there is too much of it. Simply put, there is too much grace in the intuition for the intention to take in.

With respect to quality, grace is unbearable. Again, as the love of God, grace is a maximum without measure — infinite. When one tries to comprehend grace one is

\(^{417}\) BG, 19.

\(^{418}\) BG, 20.
confronted with an insurmountable chasm between intuition and intention. There is no zero point in grace that the intention can use as a starting point. It overwhelms any attempts at conceptualization. Fr. Purcell’s article on prevenient grace comes in very well here as it marks a time before the subject exists where grace is still.

These two categories, quality and quantity find grace as saturated from the same infinite source viewed from different angles. Quantity runs up against the infinite love of God as does the quality where there is no maximum, grace is the maximum and therefore is not defined by anything else. God, given as infinite, directs a loving will on all of creation.

Again, the will of God is directed to things other than Himself, as has been shown, in so far as, by willing and loving His own being and His own goodness, God wills it to be diffused as much as possible through the communication of likeness. This, then, is what God wills in other things, that there be in them the likeness of His goodness. But this is the good of each thing, namely, to participate in the likeness of God; for every other goodness is nothing other than a certain likeness of the first goodness. Therefore, God wills good to each thing.\textsuperscript{419}

With respect to relation we will find that there is nothing like God or the love of God. It has no analogy and is absolute. It is without horizon while creating the horizon of the subject. As limitless, since God is limitless and does not exist in degrees there is no horizon that contains grace from which the intuition can fully take in the phenomenon.

\textsuperscript{419} SCG, I, 96.
Grace is absolute and without relation. It is not measured by anything in order to give it over to something else. It is the measure.

We can finish off this quick analysis by looking at modality. Is grace iconic? It does not let itself be comprehended but instead comprehends and constitutes the I of the intention that receives the phenomenon. Grace constitutes the subject, every subject for that matter, as the creative source and is incapable of being constituted. In relation to thought, grace is constituting due to the gaze being unable to settle on grace because of the infinitude of grace. The subject is constituted by initial creative grace, as we have seen above, and the grace that builds on the created nature of the human person.

By these conclusions, admittedly brief in development, we can safely claim that grace is a saturated phenomenon. The next question to address is what to do with this idea now that it is established. I think that Marion’s ideas about the call and radical givenness related to the saturated phenomenon will bring new insight into thinking about grace. Also, the analysis is somewhat superficial and would require much more in the way of development than what has been given here. Another avenue will be to apply this work to the sacraments since they present a more readily accessible phenomenon to deal with.

In Marion’s analysis of givenness and the saturated phenomenon he finds a call that comes forth from the phenomenon as it constitutes the subject. This constitution, in a sense creates the subject as something new, something in the image of the saturated

420 In a personal discussion with Jean-Luc Marion in April 2008, he confirmed this with great emphasis that it may be the saturated phenomenon par excellence along with his idea of revelation.
phenomenon giving itself over to the receiver. The subject turns into the receiver the subject is now a receptive subject if a subject at all.\footnote{421}

Theologically this opens the saturated phenomenon, all saturated phenomena possibly, to the origins in God. The constituting Other that is behind the beyond, is God Who is creating through love. The subject is now a witness to this love as charismatic grace makes one a witness to grace.\footnote{422} Near the end of book IV in \textit{Being Given}, Marion begins to speak of the saturated phenomenon as it relates to possibility.

Because it gives itself without condition or restraint, the saturated phenomenon would offer the paradigm of the phenomenon finally without reserve. In this way, following the guiding thread of the saturated phenomenon, phenomenology finds its final possibility: not only the possibility that surpasses actuality but the possibility that surpasses the very conditions of possibility, the possibility of unconditioned possibility – in other words, the possibility of the impossible…\footnote{423}

To which St. Thomas may reply,

\begin{quote}
\textit{aspiciens autem Iesus dixit illis apud homines hoc imposibile est apud Deum autem omnia possibilia sunt.} (Mt 19.26)
\end{quote}

\textit{Problems and Conflicts}

\begin{quote}
\footnote{421} See especially BG, Book V with the creation of one called “the gifted one” \textit{l’adonne}. \\
\footnote{422} Cf. \textit{BG}, 240. \\
\footnote{423} \textit{BG}, 218.
\end{quote}

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As I stated above, on one plane these ideas work together but on another they have many issues to resolve. One of these areas, the understanding of metaphysics, looms the largest in the background. Levinasian scholars will immediately recognize the problems Levinas will have with the metaphysical concepts used by St. Thomas in defining the nature of the person. Derrida, too, will have similar problems. But even before that, there will be a recognition that much of the foundation for this, even in a more basic form, comes from the two differing approaches to the question of the Other, one phenomenological in focus and the other ontological in focus.

Levinas in a later article “Transcendence and Intelligibility”\(^424\) but also earlier in “Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity”\(^425\) as well as “Transcendence and Height”\(^426\) we see that Levinas is heavily critiquing the idea of the intelligibility of being.

Ontology, "authentic" ontology, coincides with the facticity of temporal existence.

To understand being as being is to exist in this world. Not that this world, through

\(^{424}\) Emmanuel Levinas, “Transcendence and Intelligibility” in Emmanuel Levinas, \textit{Basic Philosophical Writings} Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, Simon Critchley, Robert Bernasconi, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996)


\(^{426}\) Emmanuel Levinas, “Transcendence and Height” in Emmanuel Levinas, \textit{Basic Philosophical Writings} Adriaan Theodoor Peperzak, Simon Critchley, Robert Bernasconi, eds. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996)
the hardships it inflicts on us, elevates and purifies the soul, enabling it to acquire a receptivity to being.\textsuperscript{427}

For Levinas the idea of ontology cannot start until there is conceptualization but when conceptualization has begun, otherness is destroyed. Ontology lives, for Levinas and to a degree in St. Thomas, in the realm of knowledge. St. Thomas agrees with Aristotle that metaphysics is the science of being as being. Levinas thinks that respect for or responsibility for the other cannot take place in the realm of ontology. For Levinas, the process of conceptualizing involves the absorption of the other into the self. This is very similar and probably foundational to what was discussed in chapter one regarding Derrida and the distinction between the saying and the said. Once one thinks and conceptualizes, the self negates the other and absorbs the other into the self by taking control of the other in “knowing” the other.\textsuperscript{428} The challenge is to overcome this hurdle in bringing the two together and, at present, there does not seem to be much progress.

With respect to the question of being, Marion finds that St. Thomas is something of an outlier in the scholastic field. In his “retraction” in the \textit{Revue Thomist}\textsuperscript{429} Marion brings out the mystical side of St. Thomas as well as the idea that the Heideggerian understanding of Beings and being does not apply to St. Thomas who keeps a distance


\textsuperscript{428} Levinas, “Is Ontology Fundamental?” 6.

\textsuperscript{429} Op. cit.
between God and creation. Much of the critique of St. Thomas will come through other’s understanding of “Thomism” through others besides St. Thomas. Marion is one of the few, along with John Caputo\(^{430}\), who have delved into the work of St. Thomas himself. Slowly more scholars are going into the original works of St. Thomas but many are still reading him as an isolated historical system instead of a dynamic philosophy and theology that still has some application for today.\(^{431}\)

In sum, most of the problems that one will encounter in this project come from the idea of nature in St. Thomas. Each of the thinkers presented from postmodernity will have some of the same problems. Most, with the notable exception of Jean-Luc Marion will not deal with the concept of grace and may have trouble with Marion’s interpretation of Husserl that allows talk of grace or God. This traces its roots back to the problem of the theological turn in phenomenology that was chronicled by Dominique Janicaud in the collection of essays *Phenomenology and the Theological Turn: the French Debate*\(^{432}\)

\(^{430}\) John Caputo, *Heidegger and Aquinas: An essay on Overcoming Metaphysics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982) Caputo shows a grasp of St. Thomas that he puts in contrast to Heidegger and has good insight into St. Thomas as not necessarily falling prey to Heidegger’s critique of metaphysics or Heidegger’s structure of Beings and beings.

\(^{431}\) John Milbank and some in the Radical Orthodoxy movement have shown promise in approaching St. Thomas but each takes an angle in looking to St. Thomas that suits their more political theology and uses it more as a tool guided by their own projects. See especially John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2000) and Tracy Rowland, *Culture and the Thomist Tradition: After Vatican II* (New York, Routledge, 2003)

where this debate, not only about whether theology belongs in phenomenology but whether phenomenology belongs in theology, comes to the fore.

Conclusion

As the previous chapters have attempted to show, there is much to recommend the continuation of this dialogue between the postmodern theologian/philosopher and St. Thomas. I believe that the dialogue can be fruitful and bring out certain nuances that may go unnoticed otherwise. From what we have seen so far, grace is also a good starting point. In the postmodern work one finds an interest in the mystical and the hidden which also finds interest in the Tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, still very much influenced by St. Thomas. As we can see from the previous analysis, grace can benefit from the ideas of “the other” found in Levinas and Derrida as well as the concept of the saturated phenomenon in its understanding. I have hopefully shown that these ideas work to advance a better understanding of the mysteries of the faith.

The ideas of “the Other” and “concern for the Other” have been in the tradition but may have been obscured by other concerns or other attempts to develop ideas in a different direction. I think that using the contemporary philosophical language, one can present the ideas of the faith in a more relevant way for today’s postmodern believer. This present generation of believers has grown up steeped in the postmodern milieu and has an ear for the language. Placing grace and other concepts in this language may help the next generation grapple with the perennial problems in contemporary ways all the
while remaining true to the received Tradition. The Church should have no problem finding new yet proper formulations for ancient truths.\footnote{Linking grace and the concern for the other may open the way for further work on grace to penetrate the contemporary language and become something spoken of in common parlance unlike today’s light discussions of grace limited to radio talk shows or one line expressions of “grace” found in daily planners.\footnote{Grace, in its full theological import, has much to offer the layman as well as the religious, academic and scholar and this dialogue should help move grace back onto the theological radar. I think also that the theological understanding of grace has much to offer the postmodern philosopher/theologian as a new avenue to pursue in research. The affinities found in Levinas and Derrida as well as Purcell and Marion have shown that there is much mining to do and can produce some excellent work. Marion’s work in particular seems to be bearing great results.} Grace, in its full theological import, has much to offer the layman as well as the religious, academic and scholar and this dialogue should help move grace back onto the theological radar. I think also that the theological understanding of grace has much to offer the postmodern philosopher/theologian as a new avenue to pursue in research. The affinities found in Levinas and Derrida as well as Purcell and Marion have shown that there is much mining to do and can produce some excellent work. Marion’s work in particular seems to be bearing great results.}

Even long held strongholds of theological doctrine are couched in the ideas that their formulations are the best they can come up with. I am thinking of Trent’s declaration that Transubstantiation was a term that “is suitably and properly” used. This opens the door to there being some term more suitably and properly used. Transymbolization may have affinities for the postmodern user, for example.

\footnote{There is a notable absence in much of contemporary theology to speak of grace in any theological depth. Much of the discussions revolve around the nice things that happen to people throughout the day; books speaking about everyday graces, and so on. Very little beyond these puff pieces on grace approach anything near the deep theological import of grace not only in Catholic theology but in Christianity in general.}
theological anthropology for today. To find that the human person is made to relate and love the other in both its natural and supernatural structure opens up many opportunities for development. The understanding of the human person as other-oriented supports ideas surrounding social justice, moral theology, interpersonal ethics and many other areas as well. It would seem that this paradigm would eliminate any possible ideas of the self enclosed in the self who ignores the other without doing detriment to the self. I also see that this theology is balanced between the self and the other. Some of the philosophies seen above push the concern for the other too far to the extreme and lose site of the self, a self that is intuitively obvious and cannot go away.

I find the work of Marion to be very helpful in developing a theology of grace and, as seen above, can answer many issues that are brought out in the contemporary mind regarding the hidden-ness of grace. The work on the saturated phenomenon can be developed in this direction as it becomes apparent that the grace of God is a saturated phenomenon possibly in the second order. Marion would say that revelation or epiphany is the ultimate expression of the saturated phenomenon but that revelation can be seen as the love of God revealed. There is much work to be done in this area. My analysis stemmed from the origins of the saturated phenomenon but another avenue for this is most definitely Marion’s work on Love as found in texts dealing with the erotic especially Prolegomena to Charity and The Erotic Phenomenon and other occasional articles dealing with the flesh and love.


436 Translated by Stephen Lewis (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006).
Bridging the gap between medieval and postmodern, I think this work has much to offer scholars of both eras and my hope is that this contribution will spark some interest and further research by myself as well as others. Many of the contemporary scholars have work that has great potential to be the bridge between the two eras especially in the areas of the hiddleness of God. Whatever the area, only good can come of scholars reappropriating Tradition in new and creative ways.
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