

Truly Human, Fully Divine: The Kenotic Christ of Thomas Aquinas

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TRULY HUMAN, FULLY DIVINE:
THE KENOTIC CHRIST
OF THOMAS AQUINAS

by

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ABSTRACT
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Thomas Aquinas' mature Christology, developed primarily during his second and final Parisian residency in the years 1269 to 1273 is notable for—among other things—its increasing focus on explicating and defending the full humanity of the incarnate Son. In several important works that Thomas undertook during this period, particularly the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*, and *Quaestio Disputata De unione Verbi Incarnati*, an early Christian hymn preserved in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, 2:6-11, with its emphasis on the Son's kenosis or 'self-emptying,' the assumption of a human nature whereby the pre-existent Word comes to subsist in the "form of a slave," often plays a key role in Aquinas' arguments regarding the truth of Christ's humanity. However, a complete appreciation of the importance of the notion of kenosis in Thomas' mature Christological cannot be achieved without first establishing the prominence of the concept of kenosis in the Bible and its reception in the Patristic and Medieval eras.

In the remainder of the dissertation I trace the development of Thomas' understanding of certain aspects of this hymn from the beginning of his career, a development often seen in conjunction with his increasing familiarity with the Christological Councils. In the process, I explicate the crucial task played by this hymn in what has come to be recognized as one of the most controversial topics in Aquinas' final Christology: the intrinsically human existence of the enfleshed Word, what in the *De unione* Thomas refers to as the secondary created human act of existence (*esse*) of the enfleshed Word, and the function of that *esse secundarium* in the saving work of Christ Jesus. After considering the reception history of this contested notion in modern Thomism, I conclude with a proposal that the incarnate Son's unique mode of human subsistence mirrors the Son's properly obediential relationship to the Father. This kenotic reciprocity is in turn manifested in the incarnate Word's theandric existence, at once both truly human and fully divine, and in the divine-human instrumentality of the God-man's operations as mediator and salvific exemplar *pro nobis*.

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INTRODUCTION

Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225-1274) is one of the most important theological thinkers not only of the medieval era but in the entire Christian tradition. In his relatively brief yet extraordinarily prodigious teaching and writing career he explored many if not all of the most profound religious doctrines of the Christian faith, including the existence of God, the Trinity, and the nature of grace. Among them perhaps there is no topic more important, not only in terms of historical research, but also for contemporary Christianity, than the Christological mystery of the Incarnation. Aquinas' most fully articulated analysis and explication of the mystery of the Word made flesh is to be found in the third section (*tertia pars*) of his monumental *Summa Theologiae* (ST III). In questions 1 to 26 of the *tertia pars* Aquinas explores the mystery of the Incarnation according to which God became man for our salvation by setting forth the categories and principles according to which that life and mission of Christ are to be understood. The first twenty-six questions not only explicate the nature and purpose of the Incarnational union and assumption of a human nature in the enfleshed Son, but also such attendant topics as Christ's human and divine knowledge and will, and the crucial role these elements play in Christ's salvific mediatorship. In other words, Thomas considers what it means for God to become man for man's salvation, and in doing this, he provides his readers with an understanding of who and what Christ is so as to grasp more profoundly the meaning of what Christ does.

In question 17 of the *tertia pars* Aquinas offers a sustained discussion of Christ's single act of existence (*esse*) and vigorously defends Christ's status as a single subject in

whom two natures are united. In article 2 of q. 17, he writes: “Everything is said to be a being, inasmuch as it is one, for one and being are convertible. Therefore if there were two acts of being [*esse*] in Christ, and not one only, Christ would be two and not one.” The contention that Christ can only have one *esse*—inasmuch as he exists as a single entity—can seem like a mere technical or metaphysical verification of a larger scriptural and religious truth: that Christ is a single person. Thomas’ affirmation in this question, however, performs remarkable conceptual work. As becomes evident in the remainder of ST III, the Christological and theological commitments at stake in Thomas’ teaching on the single *esse* is a reminder that q. 17 cannot be isolated from a host of larger theological claims held by the author. Indeed Christ’s *esse* does not merely satisfy an ontological consideration of the mode of union in the Incarnation, it also provides a conceptual foundation on which to understand the import of Christ’s saving mission and its consequences for the life of grace.

However, the fourth article of another of Thomas Aquinas’ works: the *Quaestio disputata De Unione Verbi incarnati*, has for centuries perplexed and frustrated the interpretive efforts of his most faithful commentators. The difficulty stems, in very large part, from Aquinas’ introduction of a second, human *esse* (in addition to the divine *esse*) into the metaphysical constitution of Christ. He thus departs from and even seems to contradict his standard account of Christ’s *esse* in which, as we have already seen, he repeatedly insists that Christ has only one act of existence, the divine and eternal *esse* of the Word. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that *De Unione* itself offers little to no explanation as to what metaphysical status Thomas is willing to grant Christ’s human *esse*. He does state that the human *esse* is not accidental, but neither is it, he adds, the

primary or substantial *esse* whereby Christ subsists as a person. This raises some obvious questions: What is the human *esse*, what role does it serve, and how is this account compatible with what Aquinas says elsewhere?

While some have sought to diminish the importance—or even question the authenticity—of the *De Unione*, it is important to note that both the Christological portion of the *Summa* and the *De Unione*, despite differences of scope, size, and levels of elaboration, are actually structured along very similar conceptual lines. Most significant in this regard is the fact that in both texts Aquinas feels it is of vital importance to clarify the crucial matter of Christ's human and divine natures, as it relates to the issue of Christ's act of existence before he goes on to explore the question of Christ's specifically theandric or divine-human operations as they are instrumentally utilized in order to bring about the salvation of fallen humanity. In both the *tertia pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*, and the *Disputed Question on the Incarnate Word*, the early Christian kenotic hymn preserved in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, 2:5-11, with its emphasis on the Son's kenosis or 'self-emptying,' that is, the assumption of humanity by the pre-existent Word, plays a key role in Aquinas' arguments for the truth of Christ's humanity. In this dissertation I argue that Thomas' changing conception of kenosis discloses a correspondingly developmental set of complexly interlocking and mutually reinforcing Christological concepts: instrumentality, theandry, and *esse*. As Aquinas will continuously remind us in these works, the Word does not utilize this humanity and its operations as an external and inanimate tool; rather he acts instrumentally through his created humanity in a manner that is in accordance with his mode of existence as this particular human being. This developed understanding of the two-fold *esse* of Christ also

helps Aquinas to explicate the soteriological significance of the Son's theandric operation, an explication that is not at odds with his earlier emphasis on the divine *esse* in Q. 17 of the *Summa*, but which is actually closely mirrored in the succeeding eighteenth and nineteenth questions, which similarly explicate how the incarnate Word continuously evinces a synergistic inter-penetration of volitional salvific actions arising from two distinct natures operating in harmony. Thus, as I argue in the remainder of the dissertation, Thomas' articulation of theandry in the *Disputed Question*, affirming the integral reality of two operations, two wills, two natures, and two acts of existence in the God-man, should be seen as the final fruition of Aquinas' long engagement with the kenotic hymn.

In *Chapter 1*, I commence by exploring the importance of kenosis in Philippians 2:5-11, not only for Aquinas' formulation of the Incarnation, but in selected early Christian, patristic, and medieval theologians who shaped that Christian tradition on the mystery of the Word made flesh, which was to be of such profound importance for Thomas. The hymn to Christ is found in the Apostle Paul's Philippians Epistle. In my analysis of Philippians 2:5-11, I pay particular attention to the allied themes of pre-existence, self-emptying, the paired notions of *forma Dei* and *forma servi*, humility, and exaltation of the crucified Son. I follow this with a look at a select list of early Christian witnesses and patristic writers on kenosis: Origen and Athanasius on the development of a partitive exegesis and the communication of divine and human idioms in the incarnate Son, and the seeming conceptual dichotomy of *Christus in se/Christus pro nobis*. Shifting my focus to the Latin west, I then look at Hilary of Poitiers' and Ambrose of Milan's introduction and development of kenotic themes into western theological thought.

However, without doubt, the most influential expositor of kenoticism in the first millennium of Christianity is Augustine. In his elaboration of Philippians 2:5-11, I trace several key themes that will be of considerable importance for later thinkers: the kenotic Christ as the humble mediator between God the Father, the enfleshed Word as the revelation of the Father, who through his human *forma servi* manifests the glorious invisible *forma Dei* of the Father to sinful humanity. In addition, I explain how for Augustine faith in the Son's divinity consequently enables access to the beatific vision of God, a path to salvation which proceeds through participation in Christ in the *forma servi*; that is, through a process of self-emptying humility, obedience, and sacrificial love. Finally, I examine the Bishop of Hippo's elaboration of kenosis as an explicitly ontological claim in Augustine's *habitus* theory of the Incarnation, and its accompanying soteriology, wherein death on the cross, and ultimate exaltation, is the paradigm of the Christian life. Arriving thence at the twelfth century, I turn to Peter Lombard's seminal compendium of medieval Christian theology, the *Sentences*, particularly Distinction 6, which raises the question of 'How God Was Made Man,' and reports three opinions current to the Lombard's time speculating on the manner the Incarnation came about. As I go on to show, in his explication of the third or *habitus* model, Lombard evokes Augustine, utilizing the very same verses from Philippians to elucidate both the means and the purpose of the Word's assumption of a human nature. I also briefly examine Lombard's other notable use of the kenotic hymn, in Distinction 18, where he invokes Philippians 2 in order to explicate a profound soteriological account of how and what Christ merited through the suffering and death he endured in his servant-form. Finally, I turn to Thomas's engagement with the concepts of kenoticism, theandry,

instrumentality and *esse* in his *Scriptum super Sententiis*, and I offer two substantive critiques of Aquinas' work in the *Commentary*: First, I argue that by positing a model of the hypostatic union which denies an independent act of existence to the human nature of Christ, Thomas wisely precludes any potential misunderstanding of the Son's kenosis as the assumption of a separate human being by the Word, however he also dramatically weakens claims that the incarnate Christ possesses a true and full humanity. Secondly, I demonstrate how Aquinas' insufficiently robust concept of instrumentality reduces the efficacy of the Son's humanity to a kind of meritorious exemplarity that, at best, only disposes us to the reception of divine grace, but does not actually transmit that saving grace to fallen humanity.

Chapter 2 traces Thomas' developing Christological thought after his commentary on the Lombard, a development which will see him beginning to redress some of the problematical aspects of his explication of instrumentality, a development first recorded in the somewhat contemporaneous *Disputed Question of Truth (De Veritate)*, in relation to Christ's humanity within the context of the Son's kenosis, but only fully explored in Thomas' first mature work of theological synthesis, the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, completed during his sojourn in Orvieto in 1264-65. In my analysis, I explain how a great deal of Thomas' growth as a theological thinker during these crucial years can be attributed to his encounter with the *Collectio Casinensis*, a collection of texts translated from the Greek into Latin which provided Aquinas with unprecedented access to the texts of the first four Ecumenical Councils, most notably Ephesus and Chalcedon. As I also demonstrate, the massive amounts of patristic citations which begin to appear in Thomas' work during this particular period are also partly the result of

Thomas' extensive research in various Byzantine biblical commentaries, particularly those of Theophylact of Ohrid (1055–1107), whose texts Thomas had translated in order to assist him on his work on the *Catena Aurea*, undertaken at the request of Pope Urban IV—again, while Aquinas was a resident of Orvieto—in the mid-1260s. In this chapter I explicate how Book IV of the *Contra Gentiles* demonstrates Thomas' new-found awareness of the intricate connections between instrumentality, theandry and kenoticism and does so as part of an increasingly sophisticated dialogue with both the newly discovered acts of the Christological Councils and the patristic heritage.¹

Chapter 3 explores in some detail some of the most theologically rich of all of Thomas' Biblical commentaries, the Commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Philippians and the *Lectura super Ioannem*, composed at the University of Paris during the period 1270–72. In my analysis of the Commentary on Philippians, which marks Thomas' most prolonged and detailed interpretation of kenoticism within its distinctively biblical context, I examine Thomas' explicit focus on the humility of the enfleshed Word in Philippians 2, which as we have already noted is also one of Augustine's key themes in his examination of kenosis, indeed one of the principal reasons for the Word's incarnation, as well as the primary means for fallen humanity to be redeemed through becoming more Christ-like in their humility. Indeed, in this particular explication of the kenotic hymn, Thomas will connect the personal or hypostatic unity of divinity and

¹ E.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Liber de veritate Catholicae Fidei contra errores infidelium*, (*Summa contra Gentiles*), ed. P. Marc, C. Pera, and P. Caramello (Turin: Marietti, 1961–1967): IV, 4 [union by grace; Phil 2:6, 8]; IV, 6–8 [Arianism, instrumentality; Phil 2:6–9]; IV, 9 [Photinus, Sabellius]; IV, 27 [Incarnation; Phil 2:6–7]; IV, 28 [Photinus; Phil 2:6–9]; IV, 29 [Manicheans, Phil 2:6–8]; IV, 34 [Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nestorius; Phil 2:5–7]; IV, 35 [Eutyches; Phil 2:6–7]; IV, 36 [Macarius of Antioch, Dyothelitism, instrumental causality, theandry, Dionysius, Ep. 4 *ad Caium*; Phil 2:8–9]; IV, 37 [soul, body unity of Christ; Phil 2:7]; IV, 38 [Cyril, Nestorius, Ephesus, two hypostases in the one person of Christ, *communicatio idiomatum*, *esse*]; IV, 41 [incarnation, instrumentality; Phil 2:13]; IV, 55 [instrumentality, satisfaction; Phil 2:8].

humanity, that is, the theandric interrelation of the natures in the divine person of the incarnated Christ, to our sanctifying conformity to that union of natures, or our imitation and participation in the theandry of the Word through the instrumental causality of that humanity which Christ has united to himself. I also note the emphasis that Aquinas gives to the volitional dimensions of the God-man's theandric existence, for it is Christ's will in obedience to the Father that is the means of our salvation. While as yet Thomas is not yet fully conversant with the post-Chalcedonian Monothelite controversy, nevertheless he is already stressing the importance of the conformity of Christ's will with the divine will. As we shall see in the fourth and fifth chapters, this will become an especially important topic once Thomas has discovered and absorbed the meaning of the dyothelite Council of Constantinople III, which occurs soon after his completion of his Philippians commentary, and only a short while before he commenced work on ST III. One of the most significant aspects the Commentary on the Fourth Gospel is Thomas' comprehensive utilization of the newly discovered documents of Constantinople II to begin to construct an argument for the importance of the two wills for the incarnate Word's salvific mission. It is the Son's freely given assent to undergo the passion willed for him by the Father, which finally allow Thomas to fully explicate the significance of the kenotic form of obedience that he firmly locates in Philippians 2:8; a key passage as well in John of Damascus' discussion of Dyotheletism in *De Fide* III, a text which will hold particular importance for Aquinas in his subsequent Christological works.

According to Paul Gondreau, in the *Lectura* Aquinas is specifically defending Christ from Docetic attacks that would deny the real humanity of the incarnate Word, attacks possessing a two-fold danger: a soteriological hazard—since a non-human Christ cannot

in fact save humanity, and an ontological danger which denigrates the material in order to exalt the spiritual, thus denigrating the embodied truth of the Son's Incarnation.²

Gondreau points to Thomas' recurring dictum that the "humanity of Christ is the way that leads us to God" (cap. 7, lect. 4, no. 1074) to defend his thesis that Aquinas' main task is to uphold the truth of the human nature" assumed by Christ. This locution echoes the celebrated Christological axiom penned by Leo the Great, which states that "Each form accomplishes in concert what is appropriate to it, the Word performing what belongs to the Word, and the flesh carrying out what belongs to the flesh."³ This axiom, which was formulated to counter the Monophysite denial of the full integrity of Christ's humanity, was read into the Acts of the second session of the Council of Chalcedon, and subsequently appropriated and employed in an anti-Monothelite manner by Constantinople II, and later yet by the Damascene. So while Gondreau and others posits that Thomas uses it in an largely anti-Docetic manner, I argue at some length that from a close reading of several key passages of the *Lectura*, it is overwhelmingly evident that Aquinas employs his defense of Christ's integral humanity, his existence precisely as this man Jesus Christ, as both a dyophysite and dyothelite counter-arguments against heretical teachings he has been made aware of in the material from Chalcedon and Constantinople II, both of which are explicitly cited in the Commentary.⁴

Chapter 4 is a sustained retrieval and reevaluation of the contested theme of Thomas' *esse secundarium* as adapted and defended in contrasting ways among a small,

² Paul Gondreau, "Anti-Docetism in Aquinas's *Super Ioannem*: St. Thomas as Defender of the Full Humanity of Jesus," in *Reading John with St Thomas Aquinas*, ed. M. Dauphinais (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), pp. 254-276.

³ Cf. Tome of Leo in DS 294.

⁴ See *Super evangelium Sancti Ioannis lectura*, ed. R. Cai (Turin: Marietti, 1952): cap. 1, lect. 7, nos. 166, 171. See also cap. 5, lect. 4, nos. 759, 762, 791, 795-796; cap. 6, lect. 4, nos. 922-923, 927-928; cap. 9, lect. 2, no. 1318; cap. 10, lect. 4, no. 1422

disparate group of twentieth-century Thomists. While earlier Thomistic scholars attempted to overcome the vexing difficulties regarding the importance and meaning of the *De Unione*, and its controversial position regarding the *esse* of Christ, by dismissing the problematic text as either spurious or at best a juvenile theological lark.⁵ Indeed, Cardinal Cajetan's antagonistic position gradually became codified as the majority-opinion among most Thomists, who subsequently developed a theory according to which Christ's human nature has no separate created existence, for in this case God not only creates it, but also communicates his divine existence.⁶ Nonetheless, a small congeries of unorthodox Thomists, such as Maurice de la Taille, with his provocative theory of created actuation through uncreated act, left room for a created existential reality with the incarnate Word, which they were willing to call a secondary human *esse*. For the most part, however, traditional Thomists insisted that the one personal being of Christ entailed a unitary act of existence, and defended the basic concept of the 'ecstasy of existence' as the authentic view of Thomas.⁷ This opinion was weakened in its historical foundations by the pioneering scholarship of Franz Pelster and others, who established that the *Disputed Question* was not only authentic but probably a late work of Aquinas.⁸ More significantly, some prominent students of Thomas in the 1950s, among them Bernard Lonergan, argued for the important role that this concept played in

⁵ See, for example, Louis Billot, *De Verbo Incarnato: commentarius in tertiam partem S. Thomae* (Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1949).

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⁷ Maurice de la Taille's major Christological pieces, including "Actuation créée par Acte increé, lumière de gloire, grâce sanctifiante, union hypostatique," originally published in *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 18 (1928), pp. 253-268, are all conveniently collected in *The Hypostatic Union and Created Actuation by Uncreated Act*, trans. C. Vollert (West Baden Springs, I.N.: West Baden College, 1952).

⁸ See Pelster's seminal essay, "La Quaestio disputata de saint Thomas *De unione Verbi incarnati*," *Archives de Philosophie* 3 (1925), pp. 198-245.

Aquinas' mature Christology, and incorporated it into their own work.⁹ Perhaps the most significant figure in this regard was Herman Diepen, who wrote an extensive series of provocative articles defending just such a thesis in the pages of the *Revue Thomiste*.¹⁰ Indeed, no less a luminary of twentieth-century Thomism than Jacques Maritain, late in his career admitted that Diepen's critique of the prevailing ecstasy of existence theory had caused him to abandon his own previous position, and acknowledge the presence in Christ of a secondary, created *esse*.¹¹ I conclude this survey with an examination of the works of Jean Galot and Thomas Weinandy, the most articulate and insightful proponent of Christ's human *esse* among contemporary theologians. In this chapter I not only retrieve this largely forgotten strain of Thomism, but I also adjudicate the various elucidations of the *esse secundarium* extolled by these writers, and conclude by offering my own formulation of Christ's human act of existence as Thomas' ultimate understanding of the kenosis of Philippians 2:5-11. That is, that finite mode of existing which created at the moment the Incarnation, bringing at once into being both the participated act of human existence and the potency proportioned to receive the unlimited act divine being in the one person of the Word. As Aquinas himself explains in another context, "in giving existence, God at the same time produces that which receives

⁹ Lonergan's most significant contribution during this period is contained in *De Verbo Incarnato*, third edition (Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1964), and *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, trans. M.G. Shields, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 7 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

¹⁰ Among many others, we should especially note: "La psychologie humaine du Christ selon saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue Thomiste* 50 (1950), pp. 515-562; "L'unique Seigneur Jésus-Christ, bilan d'une étude christologique," *Revue Thomiste* 53 (1953), pp. 28-80; "Les implications métaphysiques du mystère de l'Incarnation," *Revue Thomiste* 54 (1954), pp. 257-266; and "L'existence humaine du Christ en métaphysique thomiste," *Revue Thomiste* 58 (1958), pp. 197-213.

¹¹ See Maritain, "Sur la notion de subsistance," *Revue Thomiste* 54 (1954), pp. 242-256, and idem, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, translated from the fourth French edition under the supervision of G.B. Phelan (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959).

existence.”¹² In other words, to be in composition with a nature or essence, existence itself must be modified, and thereby determined to a certain kind of being. Hence, the secondary yet non-accidental *esse* that Thomas introduces in the *Disputed Question*, thus understood, amounts to kind of incarnational limiting in the received act of existence in Christ of the unlimited being of the Word. To say that the human nature of Christ substantiates the Word is thus to say as well that it renders the Word finite, that it actualizes the Word in a truly human mode of existence by bringing the Incarnate Son to be within the boundaries of the temporal and historical world.

Chapter 5 brings the dissertation to a close by marshaling its themes into a focused evaluation of Thomas’ final theological synthesis of kenosis, instrumentality, theandry, and *esse* in his mature Christology. As already elaborated, this synthesis is made possible by Thomas’ articulation of a grammar of the saving mystery of the God-man as elaborated by the Christological Councils, particularly Ephesus, Chalcedon, Constantinople II and III, and results in his definitive understanding of two united yet distinct natures, operations, wills, and acts of existence in the unique hypostasis of Christ.¹³ This culminating chapter elaborates that contention through a detailed reading of *De Unione* a.5 in parallel with *ST* III qq.17-19, both of which treat Dyoennergism and Dyotheletism in the light of instrumentality of the natures as actualized in the two-fold being of the enfleshed Word. I further contend that it is the very kenoticism proper to the Son of the Father that in turn establishes the kenotic mode of subsistence of the enfleshed

¹² “Deus simul dans esse, producit id quod esse recipit: et sic non oportet quod agat ex aliquo praeexistenti,” *Quaestiones de potentia*, q. 3, a. 1, ad 17.

¹³ E.g., Dyoennergism and Dyotheletism and Constantinople II in SCG: IV, 24; *ST* III: q.2, a.1, ad.1; q.2, a.3; q.2, a.6; *De Unione*: a.2; and *Super Io.*: Cap. 1, lect. 7, no. 171. Even more telling is his utilization of Constantinople III in *ST* III: q.9, a.1; q.13, a.4, ad.1; q.18, a.1; q.18, a.6, arg.1 q.19, a.1; and *De Unione*: a.5 s. c.

Word in creation. This theme is then explored in an examination of Thomas' exposition on theandric activity, meritoriously redemptive death, and resurrection of the God-man as efficient, instrumental, and exemplary cause of salvation in us, and the final judgment of Christ as man,¹⁴ we see that Aquinas' articulation of Christ's human act of existence, as briefly formulated in a. 4 of the *Disputed Question*, and made elaborately manifest here at the conclusion of his most profound and extensive rumination upon the person and mission of Christ, should be considered not as an aberration but as the final fruition of Aquinas' long engagement with the kenotic hymn of Philippians 2:5-11 and the topics of instrumentality and theandry.

¹⁴ See ST III, q. 43, a. 2; q. 44, a. 3; qq. 46-47; q. 48, a.6 co.; qq. 56-59.

II. Chapter 1: The Kenosis of the Christ: Philippian 2:5-11

1. Introduction:

Thomas Aquinas' earliest Christology was developed during his time as student at the University of Paris in the years 1252 to 1256, when he was writing his commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. Thomas' first foray into the mystery of the person and mission of Jesus Christ is notable, even at this early stage, for its focus on explicating and defending the full humanity of the incarnate Son. Much of this is inspired Aquinas' reading of the so-called kenotic hymn preserved in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, 2:5-11. With its emphasis on the Son's kenosis, or 'self-emptying,' whereby the Word assumed the "form of a slave," these verses often play a key role in Aquinas' arguments for the truth of Christ's humanity. As Thomas explicates in the Christological section of his Lombard commentary, the self-emptying *exinanio* or kenosis of Philippians does not refer to an abandonment of the divine prerogatives or attributes, nor to a change of God's eternal being into what God formerly was not. Rather, it refers to the condescension and love with which God, without ceasing to be the transcendent deity, assumes a human nature and suffers humanly in order to redeem us.¹⁵ Through that humanity, the God-man performs his atoning works, not only in his acts of human righteousness before God on our behalf, but also in the way that the Incarnate Word as man through his human

¹⁵ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis*, ed. M.F. Moos and P. Mandonnet (Paris: Sumptibus P. Lethielleux, 1929–1947), III, d. 5, q. 1, a. 2, c.; d. 5, q. 3, a. 1, s. c. 3; d. 6, q. 3, a. 2; d. 7, q. 1, a. 2, arg. 5; d. 18, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 3, arg. 2; d. 21, q. 1, a. 1; d. 22, q. 3, a. 1, ad 2; et al.

actions effectuates our salvation. How precisely does the saving power of God operate in the enfleshed Son? In the *Commentary*, in the context of the Philippians hymn, Thomas will undertake an initial explication of the soteriological significance of these actions in terms of the instrumentality of the human nature of Christ, which are salvific precisely because they are the human acts of the Word made flesh, and are undertaken theandrically (or in a conjointly divine-human manner) in unison with the divine acts of the one person of the Son. In his later Christology, Thomas will highlight how the God-human operations evident in the birth, life, suffering, and death of the Incarnate Word all indicate that the Son's kenotic assumption of humanity entails the exercise of a fully authentic human mode of existence (*esse*) undertaken for the redemption of fallen humanity. Thus, as this dissertation will illustrate at some length, a diachronic analysis of Thomas' changing conception of kenosis discloses a correspondingly developmental set of complexly interlocking and mutually reinforcing Christological concepts: theandry, instrumentality, and *esse*.¹⁶

However, it is quite difficult to fully understand how and why Thomas employs the hymn in this regard, not only in an early text such as the *Sentences Commentary*, but even more so as it evolves over the course of his later theological career, without first grasping the importance of the kenotic hymn for the Christian theological tradition. Philippians chapter two, verses five to eleven, that portion of the Philippians Epistle that has come to be known as the kenotic hymn to Christ, is one of the most theologically

¹⁶ Thomas Joseph White, "Kenoticism and the Divinity of Christ Crucified," *The Thomist* 75 (2011), pp. 1-41, gives a good introductory account of Thomas' reading of Philippians 2: 5-11, and it is exemplary in its investigation of the important differences between more modern notions of kenosis and the classical Thomistic account of the kenotic hymn; however, in this admittedly narrowly-focused essay, White does not even begin to explore how precisely the concept of kenosis functions in Aquinas' theology in relation to such crucial concepts as instrumentality, theandry, and *esse*. The balance of this dissertation attempts to redress this oversight.

significant and therefore debated passages in the New Testament.¹⁷ A significant aspect of the scholarly debate focuses on the literary form of the Hymn and on the attendant question of whether this pericope pre-dates the composition of the Philippians Epistle as a whole. Although a significant body of scholarship indicates that the hymn provides us with a glimpse into the beliefs and liturgical practices of earliest Christianity, and was in all likelihood only subsequently incorporated into the body of letter by the Apostle Paul with minimal redactional adaptations, However, the question of the hymn's origin and authorship is beyond our purview, since patristic and medieval readers, including Thomas Aquinas, assumed that the Paul was the original source of Philippians 2:5-11. Regardless of the hymn's true beginnings, its importance as the fixed point from which much subsequent Christological thought develops has been and continues to be widely recognized, particularly in regard to the inextricably related and contested issues of Christ's preexistent equality with God and subsequent Incarnation in human form. Finally, as subsequent chapters will explicate, it is impossible to fully grasp the development of Thomas's Christological thought, particularly in relation to the interconnecting themes of instrumentality, theandry, and *esse*, without recognizing the rich heritage of early Christian and patristic engagement with the kenotic hymn alongside an appreciation of Aquinas' later retrieval and creative appropriation of the Philippians text.

¹⁷ For a survey of scholarly interpretations of the kenotic hymn and an extensive bibliography, see Ralph P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians 2.5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983). For a discussion of the possible ontological presuppositions of the hymn as understood by the earliest Christians, see Gerald F. Hawthorne, "In the Form of God and Equal with God (Philippians 2:6)," in ed. R.P. Martin and B.J. Dodd, *Where Christology Began: Essays on Philippians 2* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), pp. 96-110. For a short yet insightful analysis of the place of kenosis within Paul's overall theology, see Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009).

2. The Hymn to Christ in the Philippians Epistle

Any interpretation of the kenotic hymn must proceed from its immediate context within the opening verses of the Epistle, an exhortation to the fractious Christian community at Philippi to put aside internal dissention, to conduct their lives in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (1:27), and to remember the fellowship into which they were united with and in Christ (2:1). Paul encourages the Philippians to be like-minded in their love for each other (2:2), admonishes them to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but rather place greater value on others than on themselves (2:3). They should not be looking out for their own self-centered interests; on the contrary, everyone should be concerned for the interests of the other members of the community (2:4). Finally, the hymn proper is prefaced by as simple declaration that counsels the Philippians that in their relationships with one another, they are to have the same mindset as Christ Jesus (2:5), before the following verses (6-11) go on to illustrate those paradigmatic characteristics that as followers of Christ they should imitate.¹⁸ Paul's exact phrase here is τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, "let this be your disposition, which was also in Christ Jesus." The demonstrative pronoun "this" (τοῦτο) points the reader backwards to the characteristics enumerated by the Apostle in verses 1:27-2:4, followed by the imperative form of the verb φρονεῖν (*phronein*), designating the

¹⁸ ¹Εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ, εἴ τι παραμύθιον ἀγάπης, εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος, εἴ τις σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί, ²πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαρὰν ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμψυχοι, τὸ ἐν φρονοῦντες, ³μηδὲν κατ' ἐριθείαν μηδὲ κατὰ κenoδοξίαν, ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν, ⁴μη τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες, ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι.

sort of practical reasoning that comprehends God's will; a pattern of thinking, acting, and willing that is fully in accord with the exemplary pattern evinced by Christ Jesus.¹⁹

⁶ Who, being in the form of God,
did not consider equality with God
as something to be used for his own advantage;
⁷ instead, he emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross.

The hymn is evenly divided into two stanzas of roughly equal length, the first describing Christ's humble entrance into creation (vv.6-8). It is evident that the opening words of verse six are of paramount importance in understanding the entire narrative and conceptual arc which the rest of the hymn unfolds. The most important initial question regards the meaning of the opening phrase which tells us that Christ was in the *morphe* (form) of *Theou*/God (μορφῇ θεοῦ). Obviously, the answer to this question will have great bearing on our understanding of the subsequent pronouncement that Christ did not deem the equality to God which this *morphe* entails something to be used to his own advantage, certainly not something to be rapaciously grasped (ἀρπαγμὸν). Moreover, our construal of *morphe* will inform our reading of the startling claim in v.7 that the Christ who was in the form of God emptied himself (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν), took the *morphe* of a slave (μορφὴν δούλου), and was thereafter found in human likeness (ὁμοιωμάτι

¹⁹ ⁵ τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. C.f., F.E. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), p. 157; G. Bertram, “*phrēn, aphrōn, aphrosynē, phroneō, phronēma, phronēsis, phronimos*,” in eds. G. Kittel and G. Freidrich, G.W. Bromiley, trans., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. IX (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968.), pp. 220-235; Stephen E. Fowl, *Philippians*, The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005), pp. 88-90.

ἀνθρώπων).²⁰ The most common utilization of μορφή in in this time period points to the outward visible aspects of a material object,²¹ yet Paul repeatedly reaffirms the Old Testament’s emphatic declarations of God’s immateriality and invisibility (e.g., Genesis 32:22-30, Exodus 24:9-11, 33:20, Deuteronomy 4:19), most notably in Romans 1:20, Colossians 1:15 and 1 Timothy 1:17. However, the use of μορφή to designate a unique perceptible manifestation of an otherwise immaterial and invisible God to humanity is not wholly without precedent in Second Temple Judaism. For example, in his *Life of Moses*, Philo explains that when Moses approached the burning bush (Exodus 3), he beheld a “most beautiful form (μορφή), not like any merely visible object, but an image supremely divine in in appearance (θεοειδέστατον ἄγαλμα), shining with a light more brilliant than that of fire.” As Philo concludes, one “might suppose this to be the image of Him Who Is (εἰκόνα τοῦ ὄντος).”²²

The principal characteristic of the Godly form as described by Philo is its superlatively divine and resplendent beauty, qualities very often used in the Septuagint (e.g., Exodus 16:10, 24:16-17, 33:17-23, 40:34-38; 1 Kings 8:11; Isaiah 6:3; Ezekiel 1:28, 43:3, 44:4) to describe God’s glory or δόξα (*doxa*) as a manifestly effulgent splendor.²³ Indeed, the term δόξα was frequently employed by the Hellenistic-Jewish scholars who produced the LXX as a translation for the כבוד (*kavod*) of the Hebrew

²⁰ ὅς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, ⁷ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφήν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος.

²¹ Cf. “ΜΟΡΦΗ,” in Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, 7th edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p. 519.

²² Philo, *De Vita Mosis*, 1.66. This is a clear reference to the “I am that I am” of Exodus 3:14.

²³ See Gerhard Kittel, “*Dokeo, doxa, ktl*” in G. Kittel and G. Freidrich eds., G.W. Bromiley, trans., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. II (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968.), pp. 232-245; H. Hegermann, “*Doxa, doxazo*” in H. Balz and G. Schneider eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 344-349; Ceslas Spicq, “*Doxa*,” in C. Spicq ed., *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, Vol. I (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), pp. 362-379.

Scripture.²⁴ In the OT כבוד was associated with God's awe-inducing power and transcendent mystery as glimpsed in providential demonstrations of divine majesty in history and creation, and is often referred to as a devouring and dazzling fire (e.g., Exodus 24:15ff). In Ezekiel 1 the prophet describes a vision of the divine *kavod* which rides on a chariot-throne surrounded by angelic beings and is described as having a refulgent human form (אדם כמראה דמות), and in Isaiah 66:18-19 the Lord's works of salvation in the world is said to allow humanity to see God's glory (כבודי-את וראו). This constellation of meanings, denoting the transcendent and supra-perceptible divine glory which is expressed and thus made visible in God's powerful operations within the unfolding of history, is echoed in various passages in the New Testament, associated particularly with Christ (Luke 2:14; John 1:14, 2:11, 11:40; Hebrews 13:21), most especially by Paul, who explicitly designates glory as the visible manifestation of God's majesty (Romans 1:23; 1 Corinthians 11:7; 2 Corinthians 3:18, 4:6)). More specifically, it is Jesus who is raised by the *doxa* of the Father (Romans 6:4) and taken up into glory (1 Timothy 3:16), he is called κύριον τῆς δόξης, the Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8), for our very eschatological hope of salvation is the glorious appearance of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13). The Apostle follows the Hellenistic-Jewish practice of showing a relationship between God's transcendent and invisible form with its visibly glorious expression in the world, and by describing Christ as being in the form of God (Philippians 2:6), the hymn which Paul has either composed or incorporated into this

²⁴ Cf. John N. Oswalt, "kabod, kabad," in eds. R. Harris, G.L. Archer, and B.K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, vol. 1, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 426-427; M. Weinfeld, "Kabod," in eds. G.J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, and H.-J. Fabry, *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 22-38; C. John Collins, "kbd," in ed. W.A. VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), pp. 577-587.

letter seems to implicitly correlate Christ with the Lord's glorious deity made manifest in salvation history.

The language of V.6 gives us another valuable insight into the Christological beliefs evident in earliest Christianity and in Paul's theology. This line begins with the participial phrase ὅς ἐν ("who in") rather than a finite verb, in all probability used in order to indicate that Christ's God-like form had always been found in the form of God. Indeed, the participial ultimately modifies, and therefore stands in temporal and modal contrast to, the main verb in verse 7: ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν ("but emptied himself"), rather than the aorist "he did not consider" of verse 6.²⁵ In other words, the grammar indicates that it was while already being in the pre-existent form of God that Christ emptied himself and took on a new form, the temporal and material mode of being a slave. But what precisely did Paul understand the main verb of the Hymn's seventh verse (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν/"emptied himself") to mean? The most common way of interpreting the Greek verb κενόω is that of the physical voiding of an object, such as water being poured out of a bucket until it is empty. In a less literal sense, the verb can also mean to nullify or come to nothing or deprive of power. Thus, when conjoined to the final clauses of verse 7, μορφὴν δούλου (*morphe doulou*) λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος: καὶ σχήματι ἐυρέθεις ὡς ἄνθρωπος, it should be seen as a profound indication of the purpose of the Incarnation: Christ comes to be, (literally, he is generated) in a form that embodies humility and servitude when he refuses to exploit his inherent deity, and takes on the form of a slave. As Paul seems to strongly indicate in 2 Corinthians 8:9, this does not entail a negation of divinity on the part of Christ, but rather denotes Christ's

²⁵ See Gordon D. Fee, *Pauline Christology: An Exegetical-Theological Study* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007), pp. 376-377.

willingness to become subject to all the things that fallen humanity is subject to, including death, in loving obedience to the Father: ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ (“he humbled himself, and became obedient to death—even death on a cross”).

The term σχήματι or “appearance” in v.7 may at first glance indicate a merely superficial appearance, so that Christ would seem to have taken on only the outward semblance of a man, and not truly become man, and although the word is rarely used in the LXX, it was widely employed in classical Greek to denote everything in an individual which strikes the senses, not only the outward figure and bearing, but all actions and manner of living which discloses that which is most essential in a person.²⁶ In other words, this phrase reinforces the fact of Christ’s full humanity, and lays the linguistic and conceptual groundwork for the following description (in v. 8) of the manner in which Christ’s authentic humanity is lived out—i.e., in humility and suffering. Moreover, Christ’s kenotic assumption of humanity or, more literally, of a despised slave-form, reveals something crucial about God as well. In declining to use his share in the divine glory for his own advantage, and “adopting, instead, the disposition of self-emptying, which includes Incarnation, obedience, crucifixion, and ultimately exaltation, Christ is actually displaying the form of God, making the glory of God manifest to humans.”²⁷ For, as Paul states so emphatically in 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, God’s sacrificial love is revealed most perfectly in the cruciform character of Christ’s death; in fact, it is the utter

²⁶ Peter T. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, The New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), p.p. 226-227.

²⁷ Fowl, *Philippians*, p. 96.

humiliation of Jesus' execution on the cross which comprehensively manifests the depths of God's glorious wisdom and power to humanity.

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

With the opening phrase of verse 9 the hymn takes a decisive turn: whereas in vv.6-8 Christ was the subject of all the finite verbs and participles which described the Son's humble assumption of a slave form and obedient sacrifice on the cross, now the Father becomes the subject as he exalts Christ. Having reached the depths of self-abasement in his shameful death, the Son's self-emptying is vindicated, and he is raised by the Father to the highest degree and graciously given the name which is above all other names. As the language itself indicates, διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν, God exalts Christ on account of the Son's humility and obedient self-sacrifice. The term ὑπερύψωσεν (highly exalted) is *hapax legomenon* in the NT, and signifies that God is placing Christ over all of creation, a phrase evoking a similar use of language in the LXX version of Psalm 96[97]:9, where Yahweh is described as the "most high" above all the earth and is "exalted" (ὑπερυψώθης) far above all other deities. This linguistic similarity is carried over to the parallel assertion that in exalting the Son, God the Father bestows the "name that is above every name" (ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα) on Christ. While some would contend that the highly honorific name given to the Son is that of Jesus, the links with the Septuagintal Psalm would indicate that this onomastic exaltation points to the bestowal of God's own personal name on Christ. Indeed, the ἵνα clause of verses 10 and

11, which is subordinate to the main clause of verse 9, strongly indicates that Christ is to be identified with κύριος (“Lord”), the designation used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew Adonai (אֲדֹנָי), the title that stands in for Yahweh (יהוה), the ineffable name of God. This also clarifies verse 10, which states that at the bestowal of this name every knee “in heaven and on earth and under the earth” (ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων) should bow, along with the assertion in verse 11 that every tongue confess. The phrases “every knee shall bow” (πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη) and “every tongue confess” (πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται) are dependent on the LXX version of Isaiah 45:22-25, where the same phrases are invoked to indicate a future time when Yahweh’s supreme lordship over all creation will at last be universally acknowledge.²⁸ In the hymn, the exalted name has already been given to the Son, and his lordship over all creation already inaugurated, and it looks forward to the eschatological fulfillment of his universal acclimation as Lord, to the glory (*doxa/kavod*) of God (εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρός). An Eschaton wherein those who had the faith to see the glorious divine form of the Son in the enfleshed slave-form of Jesus, and participated in his humble self-abasement and exemplary servant-hood, will put on resurrected bodies as anticipated by the exalted Christ’s gloriously risen flesh (σώματι τῆς δόξης: Philippians 3:21).²⁹

3. Early Christian Witnesses

The followers of Christ in the years immediately following the time of Paul up until the final redaction of the Gospels (c. 90-150) did not overly concern themselves

²⁸ Isaiah 45:22-25 (LXX): “ἐπιστραφητε προς με και σωθησεσθε οι απ' εσχατου της γης εγω ειμι ο θεος και ουκ εστιν αλλος κατ' εμαυτου ομνυω η μην εξελευσεται εκ του στοματος μου δικαιοσυνη οι λογοι μου ουκ αποστραφησονται οτι εμοι καμψει παν γονυ και εξομολογησεται πασα γλωσσα τω θεω λεγων δικαιοσυνη και δοξα προς αυτον ηξουσιν και αισχυνθησονται παντες οι αφοριζοντες εαυτους απο κυριου δικαιοθησονται και εν τω θεω ενδοξασθησονται παν το σπερμα των υιων ισραηλ.”

²⁹ Kittel, “*Dokeo*,” p. 236: “The body is transformed in the resurrection into a body of glory (Phil 3:21). We are glorified together with Christ (Rom 8:17; Col 1:27; 3:4).”

with abstract Christological theory; rather the mysterious unity of God and man in Jesus was primarily proclaimed in terms of the kerygmatic teaching recounting the saving deed which the Father had accomplished through Christ, a soteriological action effectuated through the mediating life, passion, death, and resurrection of the Son.³⁰ The late apostolic First Epistle of Clement, dated to either the last two decades of first century or the very beginning of the second, and thus one of the earliest extant documents outside the New Testament,³¹ explicitly references the Philippians hymn in describing the mediating Son as the “scepter of the majesty of God, the Lord Jesus Christ,” who “appeared not with pomp of pride or arrogance, though well he might, but in humility.”³² Moreover, the author of First Clement continues, just as God is the proper title for the Father, so Lord (κύριος) is properly ascribed to the Son, for the pre-existent Christ is the splendor of the Father, who sent him into the world as a man—a high priest—to reconcile humanity with the Father, and for that reason he is exalted above all other creatures and united with God in glory. This proclamation is presented largely within the schema established by the New Testament of mission and return, with the Son being sent “for us” (*pro nobis*) into the world in order to draw fallen creatures back into communion

³⁰ See, for example, Ignatius of Antioch, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 7.2, which lists the contrasting characteristics of both the μορφή θεοῦ and the μορφήν δούλου of Christ, the healer “who is possessed both of flesh and spirit; both made and not made; God existing in flesh; true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first passible and then impassible—even Jesus Christ, our Lord.” Εἷς ἰατρός ἐστιν, σαρκικός τε καὶ πνευματικός, γεννητὸς καὶ ἀγέννητος, ἐν σαρκὶ γενόμενος θεός, ἐν θανάτῳ ζωὴ ἀληθινή, καὶ ἐκ Μαρίας καὶ ἐκ θεοῦ, πρῶτον παθητὸς καὶ τότε ἀπαθής, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ κύριος ἡμῶν. C.f., Aloys Grillmeier, *Christ in the Christian Tradition, Vol. 1: From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, Revised edition, trans. J. Bowden (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1975); Basil Studer, *Trinity and Incarnation: The Faith of the Early Church*, ed. A. Louth (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994).

³¹ See A.E. Wilhelm-Hooijbergh, “A Different View of Clement Romanus,” *Heythrop Journal* 16 (1975), pp. 266-288; L.L. Welborn, “On the Date of First Clement,” *Biblical Research* 29 (1984), pp. 35-54; and Thomas J. Herron, “The Most Probable Date of the First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians,” in ed. E.A. Livingstone, *Studia Patristica* 21 (Leuven: Peeter, 1989), pp. 106-121.

³² 16.2: το σκηπτρον [της μεγαλωσυνης] του θεου, ο κυριος [ημων] Χριστος Ιησους, ουκ ελθεν εν κομπω αλαζονειας ουδε υπερηφανιας, καιπερ δυναμενος, αλλα ταπεινοφρονων, καθως το πνευμα το αγιον περι αυτου αλαλησεν· φησιν γαρ. Text is taken from Michael W. Holmes, *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, Third revised edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), p.

with the Father. As yet, there is no attempt to go beyond a descriptive functional Christology and undertake an analysis of the ontological status of the Word, Christ as he is in his being (*Christus in se*), considered apart from the economy of salvation.

The first attempt to formulate a fully systematic understanding of the person of the Son can be attributed to Origen of Alexandria (184/85-254), who posited that there are two natures in Christ, divine and human.³³ For Origen, the Son is essentially divine since he is eternally generated by the Father, a distinct hypostasis or being, yet the Father shares everything with the Son, and that is why in the name of Jesus all shall bow and confess that he is Lord. In addition, since the incarnate Son is the image of the Father, he makes the invisible God known to humanity; he makes the transcendent Father's glory visible. Indeed, because the Son's eternal nature is to be the revealer and communicator of the Father's divinity, he is uniquely suited to undertake the mission of the Incarnation.³⁴ However, the enfleshment of the Word continues to trouble Origen, precisely because he conceives of the enfleshed Christ as possessing two integrally distinctive natures. The Gospel accounts of Christ are particularly worrisome in this regard, for along with their descriptions of Christ's divine majesty, they also relate episodes of Christ's all-too-human weakness which do not appear to reveal anything regarding the Father's glory. In response, Origen advocates a kind of partitive exegesis whereby each of these contrasting episodes, and their corresponding characteristics, are

³³ See Henri Crouzel, *Origène, Chrétiens aujourd'hui* 10 (Paris: Editions Letellieux, 1984); J. Nigel Rowe, *Origen's Doctrine of Subordination: A Study in Origen's Christology*, Europäische Hochschulschriften 272 (Bern and New York: Peter Lang, 1987); J. Rebecca Lyman, *Christology and Cosmology: Models of Divine Activity in Origen, Eusebius and Athanasius*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

³⁴ *On First Principles*, 1.2.6: "Imago' ergo est 'invisibilis dei' patris salvator noster, quantum ad ipsum quidem patrem 'veritas,' quantum autem ad nos, quibus revelat patrem, 'imago' est, per quam cognoscimus 'patrem.' quem nemo alius 'novit nisi filius et cui voluerit filius revelare.'" The Greek text is lost; this is the Latin translation by Rufinus of Aquileia (c. 340/345 – 410).

carefully distinguished and assigned to the respective natures, thus nothing unworthy can be attributed to the divinity of Christ, while human frailty is predicated of the incarnate Christ only because the two natures are so closely related with the person of the Son.

Here, Origen has begun to formulate not only a hermeneutical principle regarding how one should read the scriptural witness of the Son's mission, but also the first Christian attempt to establish an ontological explication for Christ's simultaneous existence as both *morphe Theou* and *morphe doulou*. Origen explains that this intimate conjunction of natures is due to the fact that Christ's soul, among all the pre-existent rational souls created by God before the foundation of the world, was the only one that clung to God with a kind of inseparable and indissoluble love. As a result, all other souls fell from their primordial state of blessedness into the material world, while the soul of Christ was assumed by the divine Son—the very Word of God generated from all eternity by the ungenerate Father—into itself, which is to say that Christ's human soul in turn entered fully into the divine being of the Son.³⁵ Because of this intimate union, Christ is the perfect mediator between the Creator and the creation, particularly when it takes creaturely material form in the Incarnation in its mission to reconcile fallen souls with God. Moreover, on account of this interpenetration of the Word and Christ everything that belongs to the flesh of Christ, to his servant-form, can be attributed of Word, and every characteristic of the Word can be predicated of human Christ. In effect, Origen establishes what will later be known as the *communicatio idiomatum* (communication of idioms), whereby divine attributes are ascribed to the humanity of the incarnate Christ,

³⁵ Ibid, 2.6.2.

and human attributes are ascribed to the divine Word.³⁶ Yet, despite this strong affirmation of mutual idiomatic inter-predication, Origen is always careful to distinguish those statements that belong naturally to the divine Word from those statements that refer principally to the humanity of Jesus, particularly those concerning his passion and death. So, even though Origen asserts that it was precisely when Christ humbled himself and was obedient unto death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:8), that he revealed the Father's true divinity, nevertheless he goes on to clarify that it is not the divine Son who is sacrificially crucified, rather he is the great high priest who does the sacrificing.³⁷

In other words, it was only the humanity of Christ who suffered and died on the cross.³⁸ The human Christ is offered as a propitiatory sacrifice to the Father, and it is soteriologically efficacious because the human soul of Christ is perfectly obedient and sinless in its sacrifice. In those who truly believe, the eyes of faith reveal the divine nature of the Word in perfect union with the humanity of Christ, particularly on the cross, and this vision of deity within the material brings about a transformation, so that the soul of the believer becomes progressively divinized. This moral progress come about primarily through the imitation of the humble self-emptying obedience displayed by Christ as the supreme moral exemplar, above all in his sacrificial suffering and death; an imitation which in turn further clarifies our perception of (and union with) Christ's divinity. For Origen, then, the Christological *pro nobis* falls squarely on the side of

³⁶ C.f., Gerhard Millier, "Idiomenkommunikation," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 3rd ed., vol. 4 (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1996), cols. 403-406.

³⁷ C.f., *Commentary on John* 1.231: Τολμητέον γὰρ εἰπεῖν πλείονα καὶ θειοτέραν καὶ ἀληθῶς κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ πατρὸς τὴν ἀγαθότητα φαίνεσθαι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὅτε «ἐαυτὸν ἐταπεινώσε γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ», ἢ εἰ «ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ», καὶ μὴ βουληθεὶς ἐπὶ τῇ τοῦ κόσμου σωτηρίᾳ γενέσθαι δοῦλος. "We must dare say that the goodness of Christ appeared greater and more divine and truly in accordance with the image of the Father when 'he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross,' than if He had judged it a thing to be grasped to be equal with God, and had not been willing to become a servant for the salvation of the world."

³⁸ Origen states this perhaps most clearly in *Contra Celsum*, 7.16-17.

humanity, both for Christ, who must use a human being who dwells in the Word to reveal God, and on fallen humans, who must strive to purify their senses in order to be made worthy of perceiving the divinity of the Word and thereby gain salvation. This soteriological imbalance can ultimately be traced back to Origen's inability to work out a satisfactory incarnational understanding, one that would account for both the distinctiveness of the two natures in Christ, while also establishing a true union of divinity and humanity in the one incarnate Word. In the end, Origen's fundamentally dualistic reading of the kenotic hymn cannot successfully reconcile the *μορφῇ θεοῦ* of Philippians 2:6 with the *μορφὴν δούλου* of verses 7-8.

Origen's contention that only the Father is ungenerate, and that the Son is generated by the Father, was one of the probable sources for the contentious theological debates that erupted at the start of the fourth century. For example, in Alexandria the presbyter Arius started to argue that, in words that bear a close similarity to some of Origen's teachings, the Son's generation from the Father renders the Word the highest example of creatureliness, thus "there was a time when the Son was not." Nevertheless, the created shared in the natural divinity of the Father to an unparalleled degree because of his foreseen meritorious obedience. Hence, Arius apparently had in mind Philippians 2:9, *διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα*, with its claim that it was on account of the obedience highlighted in v. 8 that God therefore exalted Christ. For Arius and his followers, this meritorious exaltation indicated that Christ was a creature raised by grace above the natural status of other creatures as a reward for his immutable love for the Father.³⁹ It is evident that even

³⁹ Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition*, revised edition (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 113-114.

though these debates about the ontological status of the Son largely revolved around the Trinitarian question of whether the Son can be construed to be divine by nature, there was also a strong Christological component to the ongoing controversy. In 325 the Council of Nicaea responded to Arius' doctrinal challenge by adopting the non-Biblical term *homoousios*, meaning "of the same substance," not so much to define the divine being, but rather to establish a correct understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son by ruling out that the Word was created.⁴⁰ But this was only the beginning of these debates, for in the following decades three groups emerged, each positing rival understandings of the Son's relations to the Father. The *homoian* group insisted that the Son was only like (*homoios*) the Father, and therefore ontologically subordinate to the one divine God. Another faction, variously labeled as *heterousian* or *anomian*, claimed that the principle appellation of the divine nature is *agennētos*, meaning unbegotten, ingenerate, or unoriginate. Therefore, since the Son is begotten of the Father, there must be an unbridgeable ontological disparity between the Father and the Word. Finally, a group of *homoiousians*, who continued to balk at the claim that the Son was ὁμοούσιον with the Father, yet wanted to preclude the reduction of the Son to mere creaturehood, adopted the compromise term *homoiousios* which posited that the Son is "alike in essence" to the Father.⁴¹

At the center of many of these debates was the towering figure of Athanasius (c.296-373), who in the course of a long and contentious life as Bishop of Alexandria

⁴⁰ Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἓνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, γεννηθέντα ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς μονογενῆ, τοῦτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς, θεὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινόν, γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί.

⁴¹ The literature on the Fourth-century Trinitarian debates is vast, but see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); John Behr, *The Formation of Christian Theology, Vol. 2: The Nicene Faith, Part 1: True God of True God* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004); R.P.C. Hanson, *The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God: The Arian Controversy, 318-381* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005); Khaled Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea: The Development and Meaning of Trinitarian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011).

became the leading proponent of Nicene Creed, defending the *homoousios* as the most suitable term—despite its non-Scriptural pedigree—to preclude a subordinationist misreading of the Bible that would mistakenly adduce the incarnate Son’s essential createdness. Supporters of Arius tended to argue their position based on the biblical account of Christ’s human limitations, sufferings, and crucifixion to buttress their contention that the Son was ontologically inferior to the Father. As a result, Athanasius came to believe that the coherence of the Christian faith rested on a correct understanding of the Word’s kenosis, his incarnational self-emptying, as presented in Philippians 2:5-11 and narrated in the Gospels.⁴² For Athanasius, the Son must be consubstantiality divine with the God the Father, his generation is not a temporal coming-to-be, but rather an eternal procession of the Word from the Father, so as a consequence the Son can reveal the Father directly. In other words, within the economy of salvation there is “epistemological correlativity” of mutual self-disclosure between the Father and the Son—with the Son revealing the glory of the Father, and the Father disclosing himself through his perfect image in the Son—which is only possible if both share the same divine *ousia*.⁴³ Athanasius is perhaps most critical of the *homoian* assertion that the Son was created primarily for the purpose of mediating between the transcendent Father and creation, so that his existence is for all intent and purposes reduced to a wholly functional role. Athanasius retorts by shifting the Christological *pro nobis* to the Son’s very being,

⁴² Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 1.3: Εἰς δὲ τὴν περὶ τούτων διήγησιν, χρειαί τῆς τῶν προειρημένων μνήμης· ἵνα καὶ τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς ἐν σώματι φανερώσεως τοῦ τοσοῦτου καὶ τηλικούτου πατρικοῦ Λόγου γινῶναι δυναθῇς, καὶ μὴ νομίσης ὅτι φύσεως ἀκολουθία σῶμα πεφόρεκεν ὁ Σωτὴρ· ἀλλ’ ὅτι ἀσώματος ὢν τῇ φύσει, καὶ Λόγος ὑπάρχων, ὅμως κατὰ φιλανθρωπίαν καὶ ἀγαθότητα τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ Πατρός, διὰ τὴν ἡμῶν σωτηρίαν, ἐν ἀνθρωπίνῳ σώματι ἡμῖν πεφανέρωται. But to treat this subject it is necessary to recall what has been previously said; in order that you may neither fail to know the cause of the bodily appearing of the Word of the Father, so high and so great, nor think it a consequence of His own nature that the Savior has worn a body; but that being incorporeal by nature, and Word from the beginning, He has yet of the loving-kindness and goodness of His own Father been manifested to us in a human body for our salvation.

⁴³ Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, pp. 105-106.

that is, to the divine *ousia* he shares with the Father as it is revealed in the economy of salvation. In other words, the Son's kenosis (Philippians 2:7), his assumption of a frail human nature "for us," as well as his obedient endurance of a painful and humiliating demise (Philippians 2:7-8) "for us," is ultimately grounded in the divine nature itself, in God's self-emptying love "for us" which is integral to the glorious divine essence.

Athanasius' reading of the Kenotic hymn thus allows him to properly construe the dynamics of the Christological *pro nobis* in the hymnic text, and thereby establish a criterion for the identification and predication of idioms. On the one hand, the narrative of abasement and subsequent exaltation are enacted through the Word's humanity and is thus properly predicated of that humanity. On the other, it establishes that the kenosis is a constitutive feature of the divine nature as well. Hence, the essential unity of the Father and Son are established, while at the same time the concordance of divine and human attributes in the one incarnate Word is recognized. Athanasius' full-fledged adumbration of this partitive exegesis, which we first saw in a nascent state in Origen, allows him to establish that the scriptural accounts of Christ's weaknesses are not an indicator of his subordinate ontological status, but rather a manifestation of divinity in Christ's human servant-form.⁴⁴ Thus Christ is presented in the scriptural Christological accounts as the single ontological subject of two distinct yet inter-communicative sets of properties that are united in the enfleshed Son of Father. Athanasius has succeeded in laying down the foundations for future ontological speculations about the two natures present in the one person of Christ, and done so in terms of the biblical witness as read through the hermeneutical key of the Philippians hymn.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Behr, *Nicene Faith, Part I*, pp. 208-215.

⁴⁵ Anatolios, *Retrieving Nicaea*, pp. 123-124.

In certain instances, however, Athanasius seems considerably more reluctant to affirm the full humanity of the Word's *morphe doulou*, especially when he insists that the body which was seen nailed on the cross was not the body of a human being, but rather the body of God in which he existed even when he was crucified.⁴⁶ The implication is that the Christ who died could not be a complete human being, so even though Christ's body exhibited all manner of human behavior, including suffering and death, that body's intellect and animating principle was given by the Word, for if this were not the case Christian's would have to worship a human being as their savior alongside the divine Word.⁴⁷ At times Athanasius describes the human body as an instrument (*organon*) used by the divine Son in order to accomplish his work, so that upon the cross only that instrument of flesh suffers and not the deity; nevertheless, it would be a distortion to see this as an attempt by Athanasius to distance the enfleshed humanness of Christ from his divine nature. Some modern critics have even contended that Athanasius' Logos-sarx model of the Incarnation denying a full-fledged human soul, once capable of feeling and reflecting upon his sufferings, to the enfleshed Son, but as the *Tomus ad Antiochenos*, chapter 7 indicates, Christ had to undergo his passion, death and resurrection in both body and soul.⁴⁸ Clearly then, Athanasius emphasizes the unity of both the human and the divine elements, so that everything the Christ does is what the Word does, and the Word accomplishes all he does in, though, and by the organon of his ensouled flesh. The

⁴⁶ C.f., Athanasius, *Letter to Maximus*, 2: Οὐ γὰρ ἀνθρώπου τινὸς ἦν τὸ βλέπομενον σῶμα, ἀλλὰ Θεοῦ, ἐν ᾧ τυγχάνων καὶ ὅτε ἐσταυροῦτο, ἤγειρε νεκρούς. "For the Body they beheld was not that of some man, but of God, being in which, even when being crucified, He raised the dead."

⁴⁷ See Christopher A. Beeley, *The Unity of Christ: Continuity and Conflict in Patristic Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 164-165.

⁴⁸ Athanasius writes: "Nor was the salvation effected in the Word himself a salvation of body only, but of soul also," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (Second Series), Vol. 4: St. Athanasius: Select Works and Letters*, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace, (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans, 1971), p. 485. C.f. Charles C. Twombly, "The Nature of Christ's Humanity: A Study in Athanasius," *The Patristic and Byzantine Review* 8:3 (1989), pp 227-241.

distinction is not so much between the divine Word and the human nature through which he undertakes his creaturely activities, but rather a distinction between the one personal subject of all the Gospel narratives, the Word, and the various actions he accomplishes in the economy of salvation.⁴⁹

Theological reflection on the person and mission of Christ flourished in the West in the second half of the Fourth century, inspired in large part as a reaction against the pro-*homoian* Council of Sirmium (357), which rejected both *homoousios* and *homoiousios* as unbiblical terminology, and affirmed that the Father was ontologically greater than the Son, as well as the equally anti-Nicene Council of Rimini (359), both held under the patronage of the Arian-sympathizing Emperor Constantius II. Hilary, the Bishop of Poitiers (c. 300 – c. 368) and a firm opponent of both *homoian* and *heterousian* theology, developed his mature Christology during a period of exile in the East in the years 356 to 361, where he seems to have been impressed by *homoiousian* thinkers.⁵⁰ Hilary's *De Trinitate*, composed sometime after the year 358, is largely grounded upon the notion of the Son's eternal generation from the Father, as interpreted through Origen's contention that this generation entails that the Son receives everything from the Father, including his divine essence or form, and is thereby the unique revealer of the Father's glory.⁵¹ Hilary's Christology is also informed by his reading of

⁴⁹ See Khaled Anatolios, *Athanasius: The Coherence of His Thought*, Routledge Early Church Monographs, (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), Thomas G. Weinandy, *Athanasius: A Theological Introduction* (London: Ashgate, 2007), Peter J. Leithart, *Athanasius*, Foundations of Theological Exegesis and Christian Spirituality (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011), pp. 125-127, David M. Gwynn, *Athanasius of Alexandria: Bishop, Theologian, Ascetic, Father*, Christian Theology in Context (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁵⁰ See George M. Newlands, *Hilary of Poitiers: A Study in Theological Method* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1978); Gilles Pelland, *L'expérience De Dieu avec Hilaire De Poitiers* (Quebec: Fides, 2003); Mark Weedman, *The Trinitarian Theology of Hilary of Poitiers*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 39 (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Carl C. Beckwith, *Hilary of Poitiers on the Trinity: From De Fide to De Trinitate*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009),

⁵¹ *De Trinitate*, 3.22, 6.23, 7.11.

Philippians 2:5-11, particularly his reading of the phrases “form of God” (*forma Dei*) and “form of a servant” (*forma servi*), which the Bishop of Poitiers takes to mean that in emptying himself, the pre-existent Son assumed the servant-form of a “living human being.” For Hilary, this self-emptying implies that in taking on the *forma servi*, Christ may be putting aside some properties of the *forma Dei*, which are only restored by the Son’s exaltation.⁵² Surprisingly, Hilary seems to tacitly accept the *homoian* claim that if Christ were to suffer in a truly human manner then that would prove the ontological subordination of the Son to the Father, so in his account of the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus expresses his anguish only to demonstrate his solidarity with his human disciples, not because he truly suffers.⁵³ Above all though, Hilary is determined to defend the idea that at the heart of the Christian mystery is the “double birth” of the one Son of God, that is, the unity of the one subject of the kenotic hymn, for “in him is the whole God of the Word,” as well as “the whole man Christ.”⁵⁴

Ambrose of Milan (c. 340 – 397), who was fluent in Greek and studied the works of Origen and Athanasius, also championed pro-Nicene teachings in the West, and wrote a number of works that directly addressed *homoian* doctrine. Like Hilary, Ambrose uses the Philippians hymn throughout his *De fide*, an important work defending his understanding of orthodox Trinitarian and Christological doctrines written early during his episcopate in Milan.⁵⁵ Ambrose also parallels Hilary in treating the text of Philippians 2: 5-11 as a summary of Christ’s mission and indeed of the Christian life as a whole, however, unlike Hilary, he does not interpret the pre-existent Christ’s kenosis as a

⁵² Ibid, 9.51-53.

⁵³ Ibid, 10.36-39.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 10.52; q.v. 9.14, 10.7, and 11.6 as well.

⁵⁵ This explicitly anti-*homoian* treatise was probably written in the late fall of 378. See Daniel H. Williams, *Ambrose of Milan and the End of the Arian-Nicene Conflicts*, Oxford Early Christian Studies (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 128-153 for details.

putting-aside of any aspect of the divine essence. In reading the Scripture accounts, Ambrose contends, one must carefully distinguish those things that are predicated of Christ as God and of Christ as man: As he writes, “It is one thing to be named Son according to the divine substance, but it is another thing to be so called according to the adoption of human flesh. For, according to the divine generation, the Son is equal to God the Father; and, according to the adoption of a body, He is a servant to God the Father, for, it says, ‘He took upon Him the form of a servant’” (Philippians 2:7). However, the Son remains one and the same, for “according to His glory” he remains Lord, even though he “emptied himself.”⁵⁶ To those *homoian* opponents who would misread the Bible in a subordinationist manner, Ambrose unambiguously states, “the Son thought it not robbery to be equal with God; (Philippians 2:6), but no creature is equal with God, the Son, however, is equal; therefore the Son is not a creature.”⁵⁷ Ambrose interprets the kenotic self-emptying, the *exinanio* of the Word, as the assumption of “all the perfections of humanity in their completeness, and obedience in its completeness,” for it is by his perfect obedience as a man that the salvation will be affected.⁵⁸ Here it is apparent that

⁵⁶ Ambrose, *De Fide ad Gratianum Imperatorem*, 5.106-107.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 5.138: “Filius non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem deo.”

⁵⁸ Ibid, 5.108-109: “Et ipse Filius ait: Sic dicit Dominus, qui finxit me ex utero servum sibi, et dixit mihi: Magnum tibi est vocari puerum meum. Ecce posui te in testamentum generis mei, in lucem gentium; ut sis in salutem usque ad extremum terrae. Cui hoc dicitur, nisi Christo? qui cum in forma Dei esset, exinanivit se, et formam servi accepit [Philippians 2:6-7]. Quid est in Dei forma, nisi in divinitatis plenitudine? Disce igitur quid sit: Formam servi accepit, id est, plenitudinem perfectionis humanae, plenitudinem obedientiae. Ideoque dicit in psalmo trigesimo: Statuisti in loco spatioso pedes meos. Super omnes inimicos meos factus sum opprobrium. Illustra faciem tuam super servum tuum. Servus dictus est homo, in quo sanctificatus est: servus homo, in quo unctus est: servus homo, in quo factus sub Lege, factus ex Virgine est; et ut compendio dicam, servus dictus est, in quo matrem habet, sicut scriptum est: O Domine, ego servus tuus, ego servus tuus, et filius ancillae tuae; et alibi: Afflictus sum et humiliatus sum nimis. “And the Son Himself says: “Thus says the Lord, that formed Me from the womb to be His servant, and said unto Me: It is a great thing for You to be called My Servant. Behold I have set You up for a witness to My people, and a light to the Gentiles, that You may be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.” Isaiah 49:5-6 To whom is this said, if not to Christ? Who being in the form of God, emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant [Philippians 2:6-7]. But what can be in the form of God, except that which exists in the fullness of the Godhead? Learn, then, what this means: “He took upon Him the form of a servant.” It means that He took upon Him all the perfections of humanity in their completeness, and obedience in its completeness. And so it says in the thirtieth Psalm: “You have set my feet in a large room. I am made a reproach above all mine enemies. Make Your face to shine upon Your servant.” “Servant” means the Man in

Ambrose understands Christ's salvific mission in a way which includes the divine nature in a much more integral manner than we see in Hilary, for Christ's did not humble himself by taking on a servant-form only in order to defeat sin through his obediential sacrifice of the cross. According to Ambrose, the Son also assumed human nature so that we too may be glorified—divinized—as Christ was exalted, and in that manner the Incarnate Word effects the entire mystery of salvation in both his divinity and humanity: “He received from us what he offered as his own for us, that he might redeem us from our own, and that he might confer upon us what was not our own from his divine liberality. According to our nature, then, he offered himself, that he might do a work beyond our nature. From that which is ours he took the sacrifice, from his the reward.”⁵⁹

4. Augustine: *Gemina Substantia, Una Persona*

It is a truism to state that Augustine (354-430) is the most influential Latin patristic theologian, that his immense influence, particularly during the medieval period which shall be the main focus of this study, was nearly ubiquitous, and that it is impossible to understand the course of western Christianity without taking his work into account. What is much less obvious is the tremendous impact that his Christological thought played in the West, and the centrality of the kenotic hymn of Philippians to a significant portion of that thought. This critical lacuna can at least be partly attributed to the fact that Augustine did not devote any one treatise to a systematic adumbration of his

whom He was sanctified; it means the Man in whom He was anointed; it means the Man in whom He was made under the law, made of the Virgin; and, to put it briefly, it means the Man in whose person He has a mother, as it is written: “O Lord, I am Your Servant, I am Your Servant, and the Son of Your hand-maid;” and again: “I am cast down and sore humbled.”

⁵⁹ Ambrose, *De incarnationis Dominicae sacramento*, 6.54. See J. Warren Smith, *Christian Grace and Pagan Virtue: The Theological Foundation of Ambrose's Ethics*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 85-86 and Beeley, *Unity of Christ*, p. 234.

Christology, but rather scattered his thoughts on the person and mission of Christ throughout many works over many years. Yet, as we shall see, Augustine's ruminations on the Son of God, and the value he placed on Philippians 2:5-11 as one of the key hermeneutical principles for understanding the identity and saving work of the incarnate Word, proved to be decisive in the development of Medieval Latin Christology up to the time of Aquinas.

Ambrose played a pivotal role in Augustine's conversion to Christianity, and while the Bishop of Milan's works were an important theological resource for the future Bishop of Hippo, and there are even some notable points of correspondence between Augustine and Ambrose on the particular significance of the Son's *exinatio*, especially in the way that both men will use the kenotic hymn in formulating anti-*homoian* Christologies, they nevertheless have a number of significantly divergent points of view. Perhaps the most conspicuous influence can be seen in Augustine's adoption of Ambrose's phrase "twin-substantiated giant" from *De fide* and *De incarnationis Dominicae sacramento* (a reference to Psalm 19:5 [Vulgate 18:6]: *Exsultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam*), in an attempt refute the *homoian* arguments contained in a contemporary Arian Sermon, by pointing out that Christ "was not only a human being, but also God; indeed, he revealed that there was only one person [*personam*] in both natures [*natura*]—namely, of God and a human being—lest, if he should form two persons, a quaternity should come to exist rather than a trinity! So there are twin substances, but one person (*gemina quidem substantia, sed una persona est*)!"⁶⁰ Here, with his incisive use of person and

⁶⁰ "Hoc est, non tantum homo, verum etiam Deus erat. Unam quippe ostendit esse personam in utraque natura, hoc est, Dei et hominis, ne si duas faciat, quaternitas incipiat esse, non trinitas. Quoniam itaque gemina quidem substantia, sed una persona est." Augustine, *Contra sermonem Arianorum liber unus*, 7.6, J.P. Minge, *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Latina*, Vol. 42 (Paris: 1844). Hereafter referred to as *PL*.

natures terminology, Augustine almost seems to anticipate the Chalcedonian doctrinal formulations of the fifth century.⁶¹ Even more striking, according to Augustine, is the fact that within the personal unity of Christ the distinctive integrity of both natures are nevertheless sustained. This insight will in turn serve Augustine as the theological basis for a robust defense of *the communicatio idiomatum*, as when the Bishop of Hippo goes on to boldly asserts that Christ on the cross is none other than the “crucified God.”⁶² The humanity of Christ was and remains complete, undiminished both in body and soul by its union with the Son, and very much like Origen before him, for Augustine the human soul is the connecting link between the *forma Dei* of the divine Word, and the *forma servi* of Christ the man.⁶³ Indeed, the relationship of the soul to the body will become a dominant Christological analogy for Augustine, exemplifying the intimate yet unconfused union of divinity and humanity in the enfleshed person.

In time, Augustine comes to describe this assumption of humanity as the “bearing” (*gerere, agere*) of a human being; or, inspired no doubt by the Latin of Philippians 2:7 (*sed semet ipsum exinanivit formam servi accipiens in similitudinem hominum factus et habitu inventus ut homo*), as the putting on of a human body by the Word in a manner analogous to our putting on a garment (*habitus*).⁶⁴ We can see this sort

⁶¹ See Brian E. Daley, “The Giant’s Twin Substances: Ambrose and the Christology of Augustine’s *Contra sermonem Arianorum*,” in *Collectanea Augustiniana: Augustine: Presbyter Factus Sum*, eds. J.T. Lienhard, E.C. Muller, R.J. Teske (New York, Bern, Berlin: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 477-496.

⁶² *Sermo*, 213.4.

⁶³ Origen, *On First Principles*, 2.6.3-6; for Augustine, c.f. *De diversis quaestionibus octaginta tribus* 83, q.80.1.

⁶⁴ See, for example, *Sermo* 263.3A, *Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Latina*, vol. 38, col. 1211: Nam et illud nonnullos calumniantibus haereticis movet, quemadmodum Dominus sine corpora descendit, cum corpore ascenderit; velut contrarium sit illis verbis quibus ait: Nemo ascendit in caelum, nisi qui de caelo descendit. Corpus ergo, inquiunt, quod non descendit de caelo, quomodo potuit ascendere in caelum? Quasi ille dixerit: Nihil ascendit in caelum, nisi quod de caelo descendit; sed ait: Nemo ascendit, nisi qui descendit. Hoc enim ad personam, non ad personae habitum retulit. Descendit sine corporis indumento, ascendit cum corporis indumento; nemo tamen, nisi qui descendit, ascendit. Nam si nos sibimet tamquam sua membra ita coaptavit, ut etiam nobis coniunctis idem ipse sit; quanto magis illud corpus, quod de virgine assumpsit, aliam non potest in illo habere personam?; and *Sermo* 264.7, PL vol. 38, col. 1214: “sed quid fecit? semetipsum, ait, exinaniuit,

of exegesis in Augustine's reading of Philippians 2: 6-7 in question 73 of *De diversis quaestionibus*, wherein he endeavors to explicate how the eternal, immutable, and invisible Word could assume a mutable, visible human nature in time. As Augustine indicates, it is "clear that habit (*habitus*) refers to that thing which is added (*accidit*) to someone in such a way that he could just as well not have it."⁶⁵ Augustine then proceeds to enumerate four ways in which a *habitus* may be added to someone or something. In the first way, the *habitus* is in itself unchanged, but changes the recipient, as the wisdom acquired by a fool changes him into a wise man. According to Augustine's second example, there is a way in which both the *habitus* and the recipient are changed, as food is changed when we take it into our body, and the food also effects a change in our body when it is consumed. In Augustine's third way, the recipient remains unchanged, but the *habitus* is changed, as a garment changes its shape when it is put on by its wearer. In the fourth example, neither the *habitus* nor the recipient are changed, as—for example—neither the ring nor the finger are changed when a ring is put on a finger. Augustine then adds that with respect to what pertains to his divinity, the Son is equal to the Father and remains so, retaining his *form Dei* even while emptying himself and taking on the "form of a servant" (*forma servi*).⁶⁶ The *habitus* referenced in v.7 of the hymn must therefore be an example of the third type, in which a garment is altered by the shape of the wearer, for Christ

took up humanity in such a way that it was transformed for the better,
and it was so formed (*formaretur*) by him in a manner more ineffably

formam serui accipiens; in similitudinem hominum factus, et habitu inuentus ut homo: humiliavit se, factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis.

⁶⁵ Manifestum est in ea re dici habitum, quae accidit alicui, ita ut eam possit etiam non habere.

⁶⁶ Q.v.: "Our Lord Jesus Christ is to be understood to be God's Son, both equal to the Father by the form of God in which he is, and less than the Father by the form of a servant which he took." *De Trinitate*. II, 2 [98].

excellent and intimate than in a garment when put on by a man. Thus, by this name habit (*habitus*), the Apostle has clearly indicated what he meant by saying “having been made in human likeness” (Philippian 2:7: *in similitudinem hominum factus*), because he became a man not by way of transformation, but by way of a habit (*habitus*) when he was clothed by a humanity which he, in some way uniting and adapting to himself, joined to his immortality and eternity.⁶⁷

This articulation of the pre-existent Son’s dual-natured Incarnation, whereby he retains essential equality with the Father’s divinity, while assuming a fully human manner of being in the world, allows Augustine to rebut the anti-Nicene exegesis of those contested scriptural passages often employed by *homoian* polemicists to prove that the Son’s human limitations disclose his ontological subordination. According to Augustine, these misguided readings miss out on the central soteriological and exegetical point of the biblical accounts, which is that the Incarnation and its kerygmatic proclamation in the words of Scripture are both given for our salvation; they are both equally constitutive features of the Christological *pro nobis* through which we are saved. Thus, for Augustine, the kenotic narrative in Philippians 2:6-7—which proclaims how Christ, being found in the form of God, emptied himself (*ipsum exinanivit*), assumed a servant-form, and was made in the likeness of men—summarizes a hermeneutical principle, a *regula*, whereby one can understand Christ as one subject who may be spoken of as he is eternally and as he is having assumed human flesh.⁶⁸ Moreover, Augustine’s interpretation shows us that the kenotic hymn also serves as a summary of the entire incarnational mission within the economy of salvation. Thus, to accept a partitive exegesis in which Scripture speaks of

⁶⁷ Sic enim assumptus est, ut commutaretur in melius, et ab eo formaretur ineffabiliter excellentius atque coniunctius quam vestis ab homine cum induitur. Hoc ergo nomine habitus satis significavit Apostolus, quemadmodum dixerit in similitudinem hominum factus, quia non transfiguratione in hominem, sed habitu factus est, cum indutus est hominem quem sibi uniens quodammodo atque conformans immortalitati aeternitatisque sociaret.

⁶⁸ Cf. Jaroslav Pelikan, “*Canonica regula: The Trinitarian Hermeneutics of Augustine*,” in eds. J.C. Schnaubel and F. van Fleteren, *Collectanea Augustiniana, I, Augustine: ‘Second Founder of the Faith’* (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), pp. 329-343.

the Son in both *forma servi* and in *forma Dei* is also to accept a “narrative of salvation in which Christ comes to purify and reshape the attention of human beings towards eternal contemplation of and in the incorporeal and invisible divine” persons of the triune God.⁶⁹

The Word’s enfleshment, then, was brought about because “it was impossible for him to be found as God by those who had unclean hearts,” and therefore it was “impossible for them to see the Word with the Father except by his assuming something which they could see, and something by which they might be led to that inner light.”⁷⁰ If those obsessed with the material world and its visual objects—those with “unclean hearts”—were incapable of seeing the *forma Dei* of Christ, then it was equally impossible for them to see how the Son was equal to the Father unless God’s Word took on a material form in the world—a *forma servi*—through which they might be led to see with the inner illumination of faith. Hence, for Augustine, the very movement from materialist illusion to contemplation of the divine is an innate aspect of the purification that is salvation, a movement mediated through and occurring in the two-natured Christ. By “his very nativity,” God made an “eye-salve to cleanse the eyes of our heart, and to enable us to see his majesty by means of his humility;” through Christ’s humble

⁶⁹ Lewis Ayers, *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 154. See also Mark D. Jordan, “Words and Word: Incarnation and Signification in Augustine’s *De Doctrina Christiana*,” *Augustinian Studies* 11 (1980), pp. 177-196; Goulven Madec, *La Patrie et la voie: Le Christ dans la vie et la pensée de saint Augustin* (Paris: Desclée, 1989); Basil Studer, *The Grace of Christ and the Grace of God in Augustine of Hippo: Christocentrism or Theocentrism?*, trans. M.J. O’Connell (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997); Joseph S. O’Leary, “The Invisible Mission of the Son in Origen and Augustine,” in eds. W. Beinert and U. Kühneweg, *Origeniana Septima* (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), pp. 605-622; Michel René Barnes, “Visible Christ and Invisible Trinity: Mt. 5:8 in Augustine’s Trinitarian Theology of 400,” *Modern Theology* 19:3 (2003), pp. 329-355; Kari Kloos, “Seeing the Invisible God: Augustine’s Reconfiguration of Theophany Narrative Exegesis,” *Augustinian Studies* 26 (2005), pp. 397-420; Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine’s De Trinitate*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Jean-Luc Marion, *Au lieu de soi: L’approche de saint Augustin* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2008); Ronnie Rombs, “Augustine on Christ,” in eds. C.C. Pecknold and T. Toom, *T&T Clark Companion to Augustine and Modern Theology* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013), pp. 36-53.

⁷⁰ *De diversis quaestionibus*, q.73.2: Non enim poterat inveniri ab his, qui cor immundum habebant et Verbum apud Patrem videre non poterant, nisi hoc suscipiendo quod possent videre, et per quod ad illud lumen interius ducerentur.

assumption of humanity God's glory is revealed and grace is mediated to humanity; indeed, no one can see the Word's glory "unless they are healed by the humility of his flesh."⁷¹ Christ is both *exemplum*, a model we are called to imitate, and *via*, the way through which we participate in the grace of God, for it is through the servant-like humility of Christ's humanity, humble and obedient even unto death on a cross, the very humility that Paul advocated to his Philippian interlocutors, that we are healed of our blind pridefulness, and it is by Christ as the source of participatory grace that we are integrated into God's divine plan of mercy realized by the enfleshed Son, and find our way, through the *via humilitatis*, to the final unmediated vision of the *form Dei*, the Father's divine glory.⁷²

5. Peter Lombard: On the Incarnation of the Word

The era of scholastic theology in the Latin West opened with a very limited knowledge of patristic theology and the acts of the various Christological councils. Unaware of the details of these earlier debates, medieval theologians often approached the same topics from different perspectives, so that the content and import of certain questions shifted. The authoritative source for many thirteenth-century Christological

⁷¹ *In Evangelium Ioannis tractatus CXXIV*, 2.16: Ipsa nativitate collyrium fecit, unde tergerentur oculi cordis nostri, et possemus videre maiestatem eius per eius humilitatem . . . Gloriam eius nemo posset videre, nisi carnis humilitate sanaretur.

⁷² Among the most important explorations of the kenotic hymn in Augustine, in addition to the works treated here, we should also note *De Trinitate* I. 7.14 [Phil 2:6-7], IV.21.31, XIII.17.22 [Phil 2:8]; *Sermo* 38 [Phil 2:6-9]; *Enchiridion* 35 [Phil 2:6-7]; and *In Evangelium Ioannis tractatus CXXIV* 104.3. For secondary literature, see P. Adnes, "L'humilité vertu spécifiquement chrétienne d'après saint Augustin," *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* 28 (1952), pp. 208-223; Tarsisius J. van Bavel, *Recherches sur la christologie de saint Augustin. L'humain et le Divin dans le Christ d'après saint Augustin* (Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, 1954); José Luis Azcona, *La doctrina augustiana de la humildad en los Tractatus in Iohannem* (Madrid: Ediciones Augustinus, 1972); Albert Verwilghen, *Christologie et spiritualité selon Saint Augustin: L'hymne aux Philippiens*, *Théologie historique* 72 (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985); Hubertus Dröbner, *Personexegese und Christologie bei Augustinus* (Leiden: Brill, 1986); Juan Manuel Cuenca Coloma, *El cristocentrismo de san Agustín* (Valladolid: Estudio Agustiniiano, 1986); Brian E. Daley, "A Humble Mediator: The Distinctive Element in Saint Augustine's Christology," *Word and Spirit* 9 (1987), pp. 100-117; Stephen Pardue, "Kenosis and its Discontents: Towards an Augustinian Account of Divine Humility," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 65:3 (2012), pp. 271-288.

debates were not the acts of Ephesus (431) or Chalcedon (451) but rather Peter Lombard's book of *Sentences*. The Lombard's treatment of the person and mission of Christ in book III of his treatise served as the ground upon which later medieval theologians, including Thomas Aquinas, would build their Christology. In *Sentences* III, Peter Lombard's list of *auctoritas* or theological authorities is unsurprisingly led by Augustine, followed by Hillary of Poitiers, Ambrose of Milan, Jerome, and various other Latin authorities. Significantly, there is no mention of Athanasius' authentic works, such as his *On the Incarnation*, anywhere in the *Sentences*, nor are there citations from Cyril of Alexandria or any other of the Greek Fathers engaged in the Christological disputes of the fifth and sixth centuries in book III.⁷³ And even though the Lombard is the first Western theologian to quote from John Damascene's important seventh-century summary of doctrine, *De fide orthodoxa*, he employed this source relative scarcely and then only quoted from a small portion of the work. Nonetheless, the influence of the Damascene can be detected in several parts of book III, especially in the way that Peter will frame the doctrinal disputes regarding the Incarnation in soteriological terms.⁷⁴ Despite the overall

⁷³ The only Eastern authority quoted with any regularity is John Chrysostom, who did not participate directly in the immediate post-Nicene development of Christological thought, although he was a valuable witness the growth of pro-Nicene orthodoxy in the latter half of the fourth century. Origen is cited sporadically, usually as a cautionary example of the deleterious effects of theological confusion and heresy.

⁷⁴ See Marcia L. Colish, *Peter Lombard*, Vol. 1, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 41 (Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1994), p. 419. According to Philipp W. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard*, Great Medieval Thinkers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 55: "A first version of the *Sentences* was completed after Peter's journey to Rome in 1154, during which he incorporated passages from Burgundio's new translation of John Damascene into his text. He then 'read,' or taught, the *Sentences* in the academic year 1156-1157, releasing a first edition for publication. But he continued to work on the book, as we know from remarks in manuscripts of his students, who frequently distinguish two *editiones* or *lectiones*. The students noticed that when Peter taught his second course on the *Sentences*, in 1157-1158 ... he added numerous notes and *glossae volatiles*, 'flying glosses,' in the margins. The second edition appeared in 1158." A partial version of *De fide*, which originated Hungary, and was attributed to Cerbanus, was available by 1145. A full translation was undertaken by Burgundio of Pisa at the request of Pope Eugene III. Peter Lombard read portions of Burgundio's translation in Rome, though he only ever quotes portions also translated by Cerbanus. According to Jacques-Guy Bougerol, "The Church Fathers and the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard," in ed. I. Backus, *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists* (Leiden/New York/Cologne: Brill, 1997), p. 133: "Peter Lombard is aware that in introducing John Damascene, he is introducing a completely new '*auctoritas*' in the West. He feels the need to support it with pontifical patronage." See E.M. Buytaert, "St. John of Damascus,

lack of knowledge of the Conciliar process whereby Christological doctrine was established, there was nevertheless a certain overlap between early medieval Latin Christology and the general tenets comprising the Chalcedonian definition, which as we will later see, is in part attributable to the transmission of Augustine's understanding of the *communicatio idiomatum*, through the *Tome of Leo*, to the final formulation of the Confession of Chalcedon.⁷⁵

Lombard commences his discussion of the Incarnation in book III with the position that in taking on human flesh the Word took on the fullness of humanity, which due to the deleterious effects of the fall, needs divine redemption. The mediatory agent between the human body of the incarnate Word and his divine essence is Christ's human soul, which as we have seen was advocated by Augustine. However, unlike the Bishop of Hippo—who speculated that the pre-existent Son first assumed the soul of a man, and then the body through that soul—for Peter, the flesh and the soul were not assumed separately, but rather from the very first instance of the Incarnation the Word took on the form of a slave, encompassing both a body and a soul.⁷⁶ The Son having simultaneously taken a soul and a body in union with his divine person, it remains to be determined whether “a person took on a nature, or a nature a nature, or a person a nature or a nature a

Peter Lombard, and Gerhoh of Reichersberg,” *Franciscan Studies* 10 (1950), pp. 323-343, and Irena Backus, “John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa*: Translations by Burgundio (1153/54), Grosseteste (1235/40) and Lefèvre d’Etaples (1507),” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 49 (1986), pp. 211-217.

⁷⁵ C.f., John Thomas Newton, Jr. “The Importance of Augustine's Use of the Neoplatonic Doctrine of Hypostatic Union for the Development of Christology,” *Augustinian Studies* 2 (1971), pp. 1-16; Joseph Torchia, “The Significance of the *communicatio idiomatum* in St. Augustine's Christology, with Special Reference to his Rebuttal of Later Arianism,” in eds. M. Wiles and E.J. Yarnold, *Studia Patristica: Papers Presented at the Thirteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 1999: Saint Augustine and his Opponents; Other Latin Writers* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), pp. 306-323; Bernard Green, *The Soteriology of Leo the Great*, Oxford Theological Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). In addition to Augustine, the most important influence on Pope Leo's use of the *communicatio idiomatum* in the *Tome* is the text from Philippians 2:5-11, often used in conjunction with the Prologue of John's Gospel (1:1-18) and the passages describing Christ as mediator in 1 Timothy (2:3-6).

⁷⁶ D. 2.4: “Totam igitur hominis naturam, id est animam et carnem. et horum proprietates sive accidentia assumpsit Deus: non carnem sine anima nec animam sine rationes.”

person; and whether it is suitable to say that the divine nature became flesh.”⁷⁷ For Lombard, Christ’s divine nature is consubstantial with the divinity shared by the three persons of the Trinity, and it is in this sense that the Son took his divine nature into the Incarnation. At the same time he took up a human nature, consisting of a body and soul, and consubstantial with all other humans, so Peter concludes that the best way to understand the Incarnation is to see that two distinct natures were assumed and united in the person of the Word. As to the claim that the Word became flesh, that denotes that Christ truly assumed a human nature, which is constituted by an ensouled body, but not a human person (*persona*). But how can Christ be fully human if he lacks a human *persona*? The Lombard responds by pointing out that Christ did not assume a pre-existent human person, since the human soul and body were not united to each other prior to the Incarnation; rather, the Son took on the distinct human components of a soul and a body, out of which a human nature was formed only when they were united to each other in the divine person of the Word. Moreover, a divine person, by its very nature, cannot be composed of more than one person nor can it change from being one person to another person, therefore, after the union of the human components in the Word, there could only be one divine person in Christ. Yet this absence of a human *persona* does not compromise the incarnate Christ’s full humanity, because Christ still possesses everything that is essentially human, since he is a unique individual possessing a human soul and a human body, along with all their attendant human faculties and characteristics. Hence, in response to the question of “whether Christ, insofar as He was a man, was a

⁷⁷ D. 5.1: “Praeterea inquiri oportet, cum ex praemissis constet Verbum Dei carnem et animam simul assumpsisse in unitatem personae, quid horum potius concedendum sit, scilicet quod persona personam, vel natura naturam, vel persona naturam, vel natura personam assumpserit.” All English translations are taken from Peter Lombard, *The Sentences, Book 3: On the Incarnation of the Word*, trans. G. Silano (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2008).

person (*persona*) , or, likewise, if He was anything (*aliquid*),” Lombard’s balanced approach is that in denying that the enfleshed Son possessed a human *persona* we are not thereby forced to fall into the error of denying that Christ’s humanity was therefore not anything at all (*non aliquid*), for insofar as he possessed a unique human nature, he was an *aliquid* composed of a human soul and a human body.

Peter further explores the mystery of the Incarnation, the union of the *forma Dei* and the *forma servi* in Christ, by explicating and analyzing the three most prevalent “opinions” or theories of the hypostatic union in the West during the twelfth century. The first opinion, later named the *assumptus homo* theory by scholars,⁷⁸ posited that the Word assumed a composite of body and soul and, therefore, a ‘man’ was assumed. As the Lombard presents it, the proponents of this position held that in the Incarnation of the Word a certain man, made up of a rational soul and a human body, which thus constituted a true and full human being, began to be God, not through the nature of God but through the person of the Word.⁷⁹ This man was assumed by the Word, is united to the Word, and (for all intent and purposes) is the Word. Given the prevalence of Augustine’s influence in the medieval Latin west, it is probably not surprising that proponents found a number of Augustinian texts that seem to authorize such a reading of the Incarnation, perhaps most appositely the statement that “Both are one, but one on account of the Word, the other on account of the man; not two sons, God and man, but one Son of God: God without beginning, man from a certain beginning.”⁸⁰ As we shall see, Augustinian texts

⁷⁸ The three terms were coined by Bernhard Barth in “Ein neues Dokument zur Geschichte der fröhscholastischen Christologie,” *Theologische Quartalschrift* [Tübingen] 100 (1919) 409-426; 101 (1920) 235-262.

⁷⁹ C.f., D 6.

⁸⁰ Augustine, *Enchiridion*, 35: Unus Dei Filius, idemque hominis filius, unus hominis filius, idemque Dei Filius, non duo filii Dei, Deus et homo, sed unus Dei Filius; Deus sine initio, homo a certo initio.

can be found that seem to bolster the other two opinions as well.⁸¹ Lombard's fear is that in establishing such a close analogy between the way the two natures are united in Christ and in the way which a soul and body are united in human beings, the *assumptus-homo* model produces a human individual who also possesses the power and knowledge of the divine nature. In fact, *assumptus-homo*-theorists effectively divinize the humanity of the Word, while theoretically keeping the two natures distinct, by actually creating a *tertium quid* that draws upon and mixes the two natures in order to arrive at the one Son of God.

The second opinion summarized by Lombard came to be called the *subsistence* theory. Proponents of this opinion held that Christ was made up out of three substances: divinity, a human body, and a human soul. Before the incarnation, Christ was a unitary and simple person, but in the enfleshment he became a composite person made up of both divinity and humanity. There are not two persons, but one and the same person of the Word and of a man, a person who previously existed only in one nature but now subsists in and through two natures, not only through the human soul united to a human body but also through the divinity. Lombard harbors several reservations about this second theory's resulting composite person, which in his estimation cannot be fully equated with the pre-existent person of the Word, since the incarnate Son must now subsist through his human elements in addition to his divinity. This indicates to Peter that the divinity of the pre-existent person has been somehow diluted in the process of being made man, which is impossible on two counts: the eternal and immutable person of the second person of the Trinity cannot undergo such change, and the notion of a composite person of the incarnate Son would seem to introduce a fourth person into the Trinity. In addition, the

⁸¹ C.f. Walter H. Principe, "Some Examples of Augustine's Influence on Medieval Christology," in eds. B. Bruning, M. Lamberigts, J. Van Houtem, *Collectanea Augustiniana: Mélanges T.J. van Bavel*, Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 92-B (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1990), pp. 955-974.

theory designates each of the components which constitute the incarnate Word—the body, soul, and divinity— as a separate substance, but a divine person is not a composite made up of parts, but rather is whole and complete for all eternity and lacks nothing—not even the Incarnation—to complete it.

The third opinion is an adaptation of Augustine’s *habitus* theory, which held that in the Incarnation a human body and a human soul were assumed, but not as a composite; that is, the body and soul were not united so as to form a substance but were rather joined to the person of the Word in the mode of a *habitus*, thereby preserving the Word from any change, and also precluding the existence of two persons in Christ. This theory seemed to have the explicit endorsement of the Bishop of Hippo, not to mention a scriptural warrant from the Latin text of Philippians 2:7 (*habitu inventus ut homo*). The Lombard himself had seemingly endorsed a version of the theory in his earlier commentary on Philippians, pointing to Augustine’s definition of *habitus*, in which the Word assumes a servant-form without compromising or changing his divinity, much in the way that one puts on a garment.⁸² Moreover, Peter explains that the humanity that Christ assumed was comprised of both a body and a soul united in the person of Word.⁸³ In *Sentences* III, Lombard reiterates the Augustinian conception of the *habitus* according to the understanding that the Son emptied himself, not by changing his *forma Dei*, but by taking on the habit of a *forma servi*. However, this does not imply that he was changed or transformed into a man, hereby losing his unchangeable ontological status, rather the taker himself was made in the likeness of a man, that is, by having human form; and not for himself, but rather for those to whom he appeared in his human form. This last point

⁸² *In Epistolam ad Philippenses*, 2:1-8, *PL* 192: 235A-D. For Augustine, see the discussion of *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*, q.73 above.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 2:1-8, *PL* 192: 231D-234C.

builds upon those epistemological dimensions of Augustine's incarnational theories which construed that one of the principal functions of the Son's humbly obedient enfleshment was to render humanly visible the invisible glory of God, and thereby elevate the human spirit from its sinful obsession with the merely material aspects of the world, upwards to a beatific contemplation of the transcendent Father. Notwithstanding this positive exposition of the *habitus* theory, Lombard's evaluation of the third opinion in the *Sentences* is not unqualifiedly positive. Indeed, in his critical appraisal of contemporary appropriations of the *habitus*, Peter raises one especially troubling feature of the predominant twelfth-century version of the theory: it denies that Christ's soul and body were joined to each other, but says that they were rather put on individually by the Word. And even though this denial precludes the *homo-assumptus* error of understanding this to be the assumption of a man, it comes at the expense of Christ's true humanity, because it posits that the Son's assumed manhood is purely accidental and therefore partible. Thus, while the *assumptus-homo* theory threatens to absorb Christ's humanity into his divinity by absorbing the humanity of Christ and changing it into something else, the *habitus* theory poses a similar threat, not only by making it difficult to conceive how the divine Word took on a human nature in such a way that the two natures became and continued to be united, but also by making it difficult to conceive how each nature retained its own distinctive characteristics after the union. With this final observation, Lombard comes to the end of his analysis of the various incarnational theories, without fully resolving their various conceptual liabilities, and therefore without openly endorsing any of the three opinions.

Peter Lombard's discussion of Christ's salvific role is also framed in the context of earlier twelfth-century debates regarding the correct understanding of the atonement in light of the incarnation. Whereas the traditional "ransom" model of salvation, instigated by Origen and elaborated by Gregory Nyssa, before being further developed by Gregory the Great in the West, centered on the idea that the fall had rendered humanity captives to the power of Satan, and that a price beyond the ability of any human ability to provide just recompense would have to be paid to the Devil in order to redeem fallen mankind—a debt which could only be satisfactorily paid by God in the person of the incarnate Son.⁸⁴ Beginning with Anselm of Canterbury, and then continuing with Peter Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux, Latin theologians began to develop rival soteriological models. Anselm marks a decisive shift away for the Ransom model when he postulates that the price that must be paid is not due to Satan's power but rather as recompense for God's lost honor. This price is beyond any mere human capacity to remunerate, so of necessity it must be paid by the God-man, the enfleshed Son, who in voluntarily offering himself as an unspotted and blameless victim makes satisfaction to the Father on the cross, and thereby earns a reward from God that he then transfers to fallen humanity.⁸⁵ This

⁸⁴ C.f. Gustav Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*, trans. A.G. Hebert (New York: Macmillan, 1969); however, Aulén tends to simplify his portrayal of Anselm's soteriology by invidiously contrasting it to an idealized Eastern model of salvation, one should supplement his account with more recent works, such as Gillian R. Evans, *Anselm and Talking about God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); Brian Leftow, "Anselm on the Necessity of the Incarnation," *Religious Studies* 31 (1995), pp. 167-185; Richard Campbell, "The Conceptual Roots of Anselm's Soteriology," in eds. D. E. Luscombe and G. R. Evans, *Anselm: Aosta, Bec and Canterbury* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 256-263; Giles E.M. Gasper, *Anselm of Canterbury and His Theological Inheritance* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004); Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, *Anselm, Great Medieval Thinkers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 213-240.

⁸⁵ *Cur Deus Homo* II.16. S 2.118.20-3. Thus, in Anselm's Christology, one can say that the general ontological Christological tradition derived from Chalcedon (*Christus in se*) is pressed into the service of a functional Christology of the Son's saving work (*Christus pro nobis*). See Eugene R. Fairweather, "Incarnation and Atonement: An Anselmian Response to Aulén's *Christus Victor*," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 7 (1961), pp. 167-175; Kevin McMahon, "The Cross and the Pearl: Anselm's Patristic Doctrine of Atonement," in ed. J.R. Fortin, *Saint Anselm—His Origins and Influence* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2001), pp. 57-69; Michael J. Deem, "A Christological Renaissance: The Chalcedonian Turn of St. Anselm of Canterbury," *The Saint*

supererogatory gift recompenses the honor of God, and thus changes the Father's relationship with humanity. Abelard and Bernard differ from Anselm's Satisfaction theory by stressing the point that the Incarnation was not necessary in order to change God's unfailingly loving attitude towards humanity, but rather to change humanity *vis-à-vis* God, which, according to Abelard, Christ accomplishes by demonstrating his infinitely merciful condescension in humbly becoming man, and through his teaching by word and example.⁸⁶ In Bernard's estimation, Christ triumphs over Satan by emptying himself, taking on a servant-form, and obediently enduring the sufferings of rejection and the crucifixion (Philippians 2: 6-8), thereby inspiring humans to empathetically repay the incarnate Son's example with love towards God. Thus, Bernard agrees with Abelard that in addition to the objective debt paid by Christ through his sacrificial death on the cross, there is also an important subjective element, one which brings about an intrinsic change by eliciting an affective response within the heart of the redeemed.⁸⁷ The Lombard will work out his own unique understanding of Christ's saving work in dialogue with these older theories of atonement.

Anselm Journal 2:1 (2004), pp. 42-51; David Brown, "Anselm on Atonement," in eds. B. Davies and B. Leftow, *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 279-302.

⁸⁶ C.f. Peter Abelard, *Commentarii super S. Pauli epistolam ad Romanos*, in *PL* 178, cols. 783-978.

For secondary literature on Abelard's theory of the atonement, see Richard E. Weingart, *The Logic of Divine Love: A Critical Analysis of the Soteriology of Peter Abailard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970); John Marenbon, *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Thomas Williams, "Sin, Grace, and Redemption," in ed. J. Marenbon, *The Cambridge Companion to Abelard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 258-277.

⁸⁷ C.f., Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica canticorum*, in ed. J. Leclercq and H.M. Rochais, *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, vols. 1-2 (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957-1958) 1: 11-14; 2: 2.6, 6.3-4, 11.7, 22.3.3-4.9. For secondary literature on Bernard's soteriology, see Robert S. Franks, *A History of the Doctrine of the Work of Christ*, 2 vols. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918), an older work that is still has many valuable insights; John R. Sommerfeldt, *The Spiritual Teachings of Bernard of Clairvaux*, *Cistercian Studies* 125, (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1991); G. R. Evans, *Bernard of Clairvaux*, *Great Medieval Thinkers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Mette B. Bruun, "Bernard of Clairvaux and the Landscape of Salvation," in ed. B.P. McGuire, *A Companion to Bernard of Clairvaux*, *Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 249-278.

Peter begins to explicate how exactly Christ merited salvation for fallen humanity through his passion in Distinction XVIII, where the kenotic hymn, and previous discussions about the Son's incarnational self-emptying, will play a crucial role in that explication because Lombard grounds his soteriology in his doctrine of Christ's full humanity. It is precisely because Christ has a fully functional human will capable of being tempted, and yet freely chooses to align his will perfectly with the Father's will which earns him merit for himself, which—being God—he does not need, so his this merit allows to earn redemption for humanity from the power of Satan, from sin, and the punishment due to sin.⁸⁸ On account of his perfect obedience, Christ earns the glory of impassibility and immortality through his humbling *exinanio* or self-emptying, and by becoming obedient even to death on the cross, for which God the Father exalts him and gives him a name above all other names (Philippians 2:8-9). Hence, the passion earned for Christ immortality and immunity from suffering in the hereafter, and Christ as human (*forma servi*), by being named Lord, is exalted or divinized, and thus we—as Christ's members—are also redeemed from sin and death.⁸⁹ So, while Christ's passion, humility, and death could not increase his own portion of grace, since he possessed them from the instant of his Incarnation, nevertheless Christ's sacrifice are the form and cause of our salvation. It does so in a twofold way. As an exemplary form, because Christ's perfect virtue and humility, his obedient assumption of a slave-form (Philippians 2:7), effects a change of heart in us, a turning away from sin and that enables us to receive the grace of salvation. This line of argumentation is taken directly from Augustine, who Lombard quotes at this point: "In order that Christ might be made glorious by his resurrection, he

⁸⁸ Lombard follows the older soteriological model which believes that because of the fall the devil has acquired certain rights over fallen humanity, in this he mirrors Bernard of Clairvaux's atonement theory.

⁸⁹ See Lombard, *Sentences*, III, d. 18, c. 5.

was first humbled by the passion; humility merits glory, and glory is the reward of humility. But all this was done in the form of a servant; glory, on the other hand, was and shall ever be in the form of God [Philippians 2:6-8].”⁹⁰ This affective transformation brought about by the example of Christ’s sacrifice has clear parallels with Abelard’s and Bernard’s respective soteriologies. In regard to the incarnate Son’s humanity, Lombard points out that if Christ were not truly human, then his suffering and death would not truly inspire a change of heart in us. Secondly, in terms of objective causality, it was the God-man’s consummate humility in obediently accepting death on our behalf which is the efficacious sacrifice that reconciles humanity, with its disobedient lack of humility, to the Father. Lombard thus combines the objective aspects of Christ’s atoning death on the cross, with the internal transformation which that sacrifice effectuates in, and he attempts to do so by linking the existence of the incarnate Son as both *forma Dei* and *forma servi* in the person of Christ (*Christus in se*), with the atoning mission of the Christological *pro nobis*.

6. Aquinas: Kenoticism, *Esse*, Instrumentality, and Theandry in the *Scriptum super Sententiis*

By the middle of the thirteenth century, Peter Lombard’s *Sentences* was firmly established as the dominant theological textbook of the schools, and producing a commentary on the *Sentences* had become one of the prerequisites for achieving the status of *magister* in theology. Thomas wrote his commentary, the *Scriptum super libros*

⁹⁰ *In Evangelium Ioannis tractatus CXXIV*, 104.3: Ut ergo mediator Dei et hominum homo Christus Iesus resurrectione clarificaretur vel glorificaretur, prius humiliatus est passione: non enim a mortuis resurrexisset, si mortuus non fuisset. Humilitas, claritatis est meritum; claritas, humilitatis est praemium. Sed hoc factum est in forma servi; in forma vero Dei semper fuit, semper erit claritas: imo non fuit quasi iam non sit, nec erit quasi nondum sit; sed sine initio, sine fine semper est claritas.

Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi episcopi Parisiensis (or *Scriptum super Sententiis*), from 1252 to 1256. Like other commentaries from this time period, Thomas' *Scriptum* follows the general order of topics found in the *Sentences*' four books fairly closely, along with the distinctions and articles into which Alexander of Hales, who introduced Peter's tome into the university curriculum in the early 1220s, had divided Lombard's treatise.⁹¹ Nonetheless, commentators on the *Sentences* were not slow to introduce new topics into their annotations, some of them quite foreign to Lombard's original text, but few were as innovative in their additions as the young Aquinas. One of the topics that Thomas takes over from Peter, but which he expands in many unexpected ways, is the way that the kenotic hymn informs questions about the person and mission of Jesus Christ.⁹² For example, in D.5, q.1, a.2, which queries whether the hypostatic union was brought about in the nature, Thomas adduces several reasons why the incarnate Word would seem to have only one nature. For example, since there is but one person of the Son from out of the divinity and humanity, as some of Augustine's pronouncements on Philippians 2:6 may be construed, then it would appear that he possesses just one

⁹¹ C.f. Ignatius Brady, "The Distinctions of Lombard's Book of Sentences and Alexander of Hales," *Franciscan Studies* 25 (1965), pp. 90-116; Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas, vol. 1: The Person and His Work*, revised edition, trans. R. Royal (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), pp. 39-45.

⁹² The only article exclusively examining Thomas' use of the kenotic hymn is Wanda Cizewski, "Forma Dei – Forma Servi: A Study of Thomas Aquinas' Use of Philippians 2: 6-7," *Divus Thomas* 92:1-2 (1989), pp. 3-32. Cizewski limits her survey to vv. 6-7 of the hymn, and concludes her essay by stating that Aquinas' use of this portion of the hymn in the *Summa Theologiae* is "not a great deal more profound or searching than the references made" in such early works as the *Commentary on the Sentences*. However, Cizewski does note one distinctive difference, which she attributes to an increased familiarity with the Philippians text, as evinced in his employment of the hymn in "unexpected contexts, using it as a clear, concise statement about the full humanity joined to true divinity in Christ," p. 30. Among other topics, this dissertation will demonstrate that Thomas' use of not just Philippians 2: 6-7, but of the entire kenotic hymn, displays a slow but profound development between the time of Aquinas' earliest works, the *Sentences* commentary, and later treatises, perhaps most markedly in the *Disputed Question on the incarnate Word*, and may also help to explain the hymn's deployment in a number of "unexpected contexts" in Thomas' final Christological ruminations.

composite nature blending aspects of both.⁹³ Furthermore, the practice of the *communicatio idiomatum*, which predicates human attributes to the divinity and divine characteristics to the humanity, would imply that there would be one mixed nature in the person possessing those attributes. Or, since the divine nature so far exceeds the human nature, when the two are united in the Son, perhaps the human nature is fully absorbed by the divine, or maybe even completely divinized, resulting in only one nature.⁹⁴

But Thomas firmly renounces such notions, observing that the term “nature,” which Aquinas takes to mean originally meant “to be born” (*nascendo*) was transferred to signifying the active principle of that generation, and from this it came to be used to signify the active principle of any natural motion. In time, it further came to signifying the material and formal principles of any substance, that is, of any individually subsisting thing, so we can identify a particular human being—i.e., “this man”—insofar as a substance is signified by the term person or hypostasis; but it can also designate the

⁹³ E.g., *Encheridion*, 35, Wherefore Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is both God and man; God before all worlds; man in our world: God, because the Word of God and man, because in His one person the Word was joined with a body and a rational soul. Wherefore, so far as He is God, He and the Father are one; so far as He is man, the Father is greater than He. For when He was the only Son of God, not by grace, but by nature, that He might be also full of grace, He became the Son of man; and He Himself unites both natures in His own identity, and both natures constitute one Christ; because, “being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be,” what He was by nature, “equal with God” [Philippians 2:6]. But He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Himself the form of a servant, not losing or lessening the form of God. And, accordingly, He was both made less and remained equal, being both in one, as has been said: but He was one of these as Word, and the other as man. As Word, He is equal with the Father; as man, less than the Father. One Son of God, and at the same time Son of man; one Son of man, and at the same time Son of God; not two Sons of God, God and man, but one Son of God: God without beginning; man with a beginning, our Lord Jesus Christ. Trans. J.F. Shaw, in ed. P. Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 3 (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887).

⁹⁴ C.f. 3 d. 5 q. 1 a. 2 arg. 1-5. Aquinas’s two *sed contras* ably summarize the general theological considerations which would preclude any possibility of a one-natured incarnate Son. 3 d. 5 q. 1 a. 2 s. c. 1-2: *Christus dicitur Filius Dei Patris et Virginis matris. Ergo est similis in natura utrique. Sed Virgo et Deus Pater non communicant in aliqua natura. Ergo oportet Christum ponere duarum naturarum. Praeterea, per proprietates naturales in cognitionem naturae devenimus. Sed in Christo invenimus proprietates duarum naturarum, ut humanae et divinae. Ergo oportet Christum duarum naturarum ponere.* Christ is called the Son of God the Father and of the Virgin mother. Therefore, he is similar in nature to both. But the Virgin and God the Father do not share in any nature. Therefore, it is necessary to posit a Christ of two natures. Further, we arrive at an understanding of a nature through natural properties. But in Christ we find the properties of two natures, that of human nature and that of divine nature. Therefore, it is necessary to posit a Christ of two natures.

essence or conceptual definition of a being, which also serves to distinguish things from each other. So, if Christ had only one nature—a unitary principle of activity, it would mean that either there was a divine active principle in the Son, which would imply that no assumption of a human nature had occurred at the incarnation; or there was only a human nature or active principle present in Christ, which would make him an ordinary human being, and thus “the Incarnation comes to nothing.” Or, alternatively, the divine nature changed into something essentially different when it joined to itself a human principle of activity, which is impossible, since the divine nature is immutable; or the human nature was transformed completely into the divine nature of God, which would signify that “the truth of the passion and of everything which Christ did corporeally would be destroyed.”⁹⁵ Conversely, if one nature were composed from two, then some third mixed principle of activity would remain, resulting in an utterly material divine nature, but if this were the case, then the faith concerning Christ to be true God and true man would also be diminished.

In this manner Thomas systematically eliminates a host of misapprehensions regarding the existence of the incarnate Christ (*Christus in se*) not only on ontological, but on soteriological grounds as well. In both instances, Aquinas is always at pains to preserve the integrity of both natures. Indeed, Thomas will affirm that in Christ the divine nature and the human nature are each a being in act (*divina autem natura et humana,*

⁹⁵ 3 d. 5 q. 1 a. 2 co.: Relictis ergo omnibus aliis significationibus naturae, secundum hanc tantum significationem quaeritur, utrum in Christo sit una natura vel plures. Si autem sit una tantum, vel altera earum tantum, vel composita ex utrisque. Si altera earum tantum, hoc erit dupliciter. Uno modo nulla adiunctione interveniente unius ad alteram; et sic si sit divina tantum, nihil novum accidit in hoc quod Verbum caro factum est, et incarnatio nihil est. Si vero sit humana tantum, non differt Christus ab aliis hominibus, et perit incarnatio. Alio modo altera naturarum transeunte in alteram; quod non potest esse: quia quae non communicant in materia, non possunt in invicem transire; divina autem natura penitus est immaterialis, nedum ut communicet humanae in materia. Praeterea si divina natura transiret in humanam, tolleretur simplicitas et immutabilitas divinae naturae; si vero humana verteretur in divinam, tolleretur veritas passionis, et omnium quae corporaliter operatus est Christus.

utraque est ens actu); in other words, even after the incarnation, each principle of motion, each nature, is actualized or brought into existence in its own essential integrity. As we shall see, this topic of the *esse*, or the respective acts of existence of the divinity and humanity of Christ, will come to play a pivotal role in Thomas' later understanding of incarnation, but even in this early work, Aquinas is adamant in his affirmation of the complete reality of Christ's human nature.

The flesh is called deified not because it was made the Godhead, but because it was made the flesh of God, and also because it shares more abundantly the gifts of the Godhead from the fact that it was united to the Godhead, and because it is like an instrument through which the divine power accomplishes our salvation: for by touching the leper in the flesh he healed by the power of the Godhead, and by dying in the flesh he conquered death through the power of the Godhead. Now, the power of an agent is in some way in the instrument, by which means the agent does something.⁹⁶

The humanity of Christ has to be fully authentic since it will be the instrument through which God's crucial work of salvation will be accomplished. Therefore, Aquinas retorts, the communication of idioms evinced in the miraculous healing of the leper (c.f., Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16, 17:11-19) is not an indication of a composite nature into which the human principle of activity has been absorbed, but rather of Christ's humanity and divinity working seamlessly together towards a common soteriological end. Thomas introduces here the vital concept of the instrumental character of the Word's *forma servi*, a notion which he will explicate further in Distinction 18, when he takes up the subject of Christ's meritoriously salvific passion and death.

⁹⁶ 3 d. 5 q. 1 a. 2 ad 6: Quod caro dicitur deificata, non quia sit facta ipsa Divinitas, sed quia facta est Dei caro, et etiam quia abundantius dona Divinitatis participat ex hoc quod est unita Divinitati, et quia est quasi instrumentum per quod divina virtus salutem nostram operatur: tangendo enim leprosum carne sanavit per Divinitatis virtutem, et moriendo carne mortem vicit per virtutem Divinitatis. Virtus autem agentis aliquo modo est in instrumento, quo mediante aliquid agit.

Both Lombard and Aquinas agree that the three incarnational theories presented in Distinction VI are attempts to give a metaphysical account of Christ's human nature. Medieval disputes concerning the reality of Christ's human nature focused, as we have partly seen, on the question of whether the Son—insofar as he was human—was “something” (*aliquid*), and the challenge posed by the claim, erroneously attributed to twelfth-century exponents of the *habitus* theory and in time even to Peter Lombard, that “Christus secundum quod est homo, non est aliquid.” In other words, that Christ's humanity cannot be an independently subsistent entity, and therefore it is properly considered “nothing.” After Lombard's death, this kind of Christological nihilianism and the concern raised by this erroneous point of view, became so pronounced that it was eventually condemned by Pope Alexander III in 1170 and again 1177.⁹⁷ Yet, the vexing question posed by the Philippians' account of the Word's kenosis remained: If natures do not have independent existence, then it seems we are committed to the disturbing view that Christ's human nature is *non aliquid*. What is at stake here is the metaphysical status of Christ as man. In saying that Christ's being a man does not entail that he is an *aliquid*,

⁹⁷ There is still considerable debate over whether Peter Lombard accurately related Augustine's *habitus* theory as it was interpreted in the twelfth century, as well as its precise relation to the interpretation of the *habitus* that came to be known as Christological Nihilianism, or even if Peter was in fact a proponent of this problematic understanding of the third opinion presented in the *Sentences*. In my estimation, Lombard did not ascribe to Nihilianism, and actually offered a fairly balanced account of Christ's human nature as *aliquid*. For further details regarding the vexed question of Lombard and the *habitus* theory see, among other works, P. Glorieux, “L'orthodoxie de III Sentences (d.6, 7 et 10),” in *Miscellanea Lombardiana*, pubblicata a chiusura delle celebrazioni centenarie organizzate in Novara per onorare Pietro Lombardo a cura del Pontificio Ateneo Salesiano di Torino (Novara: Istituto geografico De Agostini, 1957), pp.137-147; Horacio Santiago-Otero, “El ‘nihilianismo’ cristológico y las tres opiniones,” *Burgense: Collectanea Scientifica*, 10 (1969), pp.431-443; Lauge Olaf Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Gilbert Porreta's Thinking and the Theological Expositions of the Doctrine of the Incarnation during the Period 1130-1180*, Acta Theologica Danica 15 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982); Colish, *Peter Lombard*, vol. 1, pp. 427-438; idem., “Christological Nihilianism in the Second Half of the Twelfth Century,” *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 63 (1996), pp.146-155. For Pope Alexander's condemnations, see *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum*, eds. H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, S.J., 34th ed. (Barcelona: Herder, 1967), nos.749 and 750.

one seems to deny a sufficient degree of reality to the *forma servi*, the servant form or human nature, that Christ assumed.

As we have explored at some length in this chapter, the term *habitus* had strong scriptural warrant in the kenotic hymn, and as an interpretive key for the incarnation its influence could be traced back through a highly influential theological tradition that originated in earliest Christianity. And as we have also seen, one of the primary concerns for many twelfth-century proponents of the *habitus* theory was to effectively preclude the possibility of two persons in Christ after the Incarnation, which on their account the assumption of a human body with a soul would seem to entail, and also to foreclose the possibility of the Son's *exinatio* necessitating a change in the *forma Dei*. So *habitus*-theorists posited that the *forma servi* was united to the pre-existent Word in an accidental manner, hence the incarnate Christ could only be referred to as a man in an equivocal sense, because his humanity was *non aliquid*.⁹⁸ In his critique of the *habitus* theory, Aquinas will focus on these claims of a purely accidental union, and the consequent use of equivocation to describe Christ's humanity, in order to refute the third opinion. According to Thomas, in the *habitus* account the mere union of body and soul establishes the *ratio*, or character, of a man, indicating that the conjunction of a body and a rational soul is both necessary and sufficient for the formation of a human person.⁹⁹ Aquinas will argue against this assertion by accepting the *habitus*-theorist's line of reasoning regarding equivocation, but then turning that reasoning round against the *habitus* theory itself.

⁹⁸ See Walter H. Principe, "St. Thomas on the Habitus-Theory of the Incarnation," in *St Thomas Aquinas 1274-1974: Commemorative Studies*, vol. 1 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), pp. 381-418.

⁹⁹ 3 d. 6 q. 3 a. 1 co.: Tamen ista opinio videtur ex eodem fonte processisse cum prima, scilicet ex hoc quod credebant omne compositum ex anima et corpore habere rationem hominis; et ideo, quia prima opinio posuit animam et corpus unita ad invicem, esse assumpta, coacta fuit ponere hominem esse assumptum, et Christum esse duo. Haec autem opinio, ut hoc negaret, posuit animam et corpus esse assumpta non unita.

Thomas' argument is that if it is indeed the case that the body is not a human body when separated from the soul, and the soul is not a human soul if it is never conjoined to a body, then it follows that if Christ's assumed nature is not a true union of body and soul in Christ, then Christ is not a man truly and properly speaking, but only so equivocally, an implication that is obviously unacceptable from both a doctrinal and soteriological point of view.¹⁰⁰

In this respect, the error of the *habitus* theory mirrors the error of the *assumptus-homo* theory, for both believe that the mere conjunction of a body and soul instantiates a human person. Thus, according to the *assumptus-homo*-theorists, at the Incarnation the Word assumed as second person, with its own act of existence (*esse*), when it took for itself an ensouled human body, while the *habitus*-theorists deny that Christ assumed a body with a soul in order to prevent just such an erroneous misinterpretation of the incarnation, but in the process must deny any actual humanity to the enfleshed Son. Aquinas therefore embraces the alternative *subsistence* theory which holds that a composite of soul and body was assumed by Christ, but that this composite in and of itself does not constitute an independently subsistent person, as long as it is considered apart from its relation to the divine person of the Word. Aquinas thus contends that the conjunction of a soul and a body is necessary, but not sufficient; for it is also necessary that there be a subsistent person, with its own *esse* or act of existence, in order for there to be an authentic human being. Hence the assumptum—that which is assumed—considered in itself, prescinding from the fact of its being united to the divine person of the Son, does not have the *ratio* of a man. Before the incarnation, the pre-existent Word

¹⁰⁰ 3 d. 6 q. 3 a. 1 co.; the logic of Aquinas' argument is explored at length in Jason L.A. West, "Aquinas on Peter Lombard and the Metaphysical Status of Christ's Human Nature," *Gregorianum* 88:3 (2007), pp. 557-586.

is only one person, utterly simple, with a divine essence (*forma Dei*), afterwards it is a composite person wherein divinity and humanity are united. There are not two persons, but one and the same person of the Word and of a man who now subsists in and through two natures. The person who was only divine has become a truly human being who subsists not only through the soul and the body but also through the divinity of the Word.¹⁰¹

Hence, the notion of person cannot apply to the human nature standing by itself, for it only exists as a result of the union's completion in the divine *esse* of the Son. A *habitus* theory which ascribes an accidental union of natures would thus seem to posit a two-fold *esse* in Christ, with a divine act of existence extrinsically conjoined to an accidental human *esse*; the *assumptus-homo* model also posits a duplex *esse* wherein the person of the Word unites to himself an independently subsistent human person, so as a result there is an irreducible duality of being in Christ. In his exposition of the *subsistence* theory, Thomas attempts to circumvent these errors by positing a union of divinity and humanity in the Word according to a two-fold relation. This allows him to conceptualize the hypostatic union in such a way that all change is undergone on the part the assumed human nature (*forma servi*) when it is established in a new relation to the assuming Word (*forma Dei*), which as the terminus of that relation remains immutable.¹⁰² Moreover, this

¹⁰¹ C.f., Michael B. Raschko, "Aquinas' Theology of the Incarnation in Light of Lombard's Subsistence Theory," *The Thomist* 65 (2001), pp. 409-439; for a more critical view, see Michael Gorman, "Christ as Composite According to Aquinas," *Traditio* 55 (2000), pp. 143-157; idem., "Questions Concerning the Existences of Christ," in eds. K. Emery, R. Friedman, A. Speer, *Philosophy and Theology in the Long Middle Ages: A Tribute to Stephen F. Brown*, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 105 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 709-735.

¹⁰² 3 d. 6 q. 2 a. 2 co.: Prima ergo opinio, quae ponit duo subsistentia, ponit duo esse substantialia; similiter tertia opinio, quia ponit quod partes humanae naturae adveniunt divinae personae accidentaliter, ponit duo esse, unum substantiale, et aliud accidentale; secunda vero opinio, quia ponit unum subsistens, et ponit humanitatem non accidentaliter advenire divinae personae, oportet quod ponat unum esse. Impossibile est enim quod unum aliquid habeat duo esse substantialia; quia unum fundatur super ens: unde si sint plura esse, secundum quae aliquid dicitur ens simpliciter, impossibile est quod dicatur unum. Sed non est inconveniens quod

preserves the unicity of personhood in the Incarnation, for insofar as the Son is one divine subsistent being, he has one uncreated act of existence (*unius non est nisi unum esse. Sed Christus est unum, ut dictum est. Ergo habet unum esse tantum*).¹⁰³ In summary, the concrete human nature of Christ does not subsist as an independent human hypostasis or person, nor is it simply abandoned bereft of a hypostasis, a *non aliquid* lacking reality; rather it subsists *in* the hypostasis of the divine Word. The human nature does not simply *exist* in the person of the Word—for that would be a merely accidental existence—rather, it subsists; that is, it exists in its own right, but only *by*, and so in that sense *within* the subsistence, the very being of the divine Word.¹⁰⁴ On this account, then, the humanity of Christ has no distinctive, separate, integral act of human existence (*esse*) of its own.

esse unius subsistentis sit per respectum ad plura, sicut esse petri est unum, habens tamen respectum ad diversa principia constituenta ipsum: et similiter suo modo unum esse Christi habet duos respectus, unum ad naturam humanam, alterum ad divinam. As we will see, Aquinas will elaborate this theme of two-fold or mixed *relatio* at much greater length later in his career *ST* III, q.2, a.7. C.f. A. Krempel, *La doctrine de la relation chez Saint Thomas: Exposé historique et systématique* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1952). Thomas G. Weinandy first addressed this topic in “Aquinas and the Incarnational Act: ‘Become’ as a Mixed Relation” *Doctor Communis* 32 (1979), pp. 15-31, and has returned to in various subsequent works, including *Does God Change? The Word’s Becoming in the Incarnation* (Still River, M.A.: St. Bede’s Publications, 1985); and *Does God Suffer?* (Notre Dame, I.N.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000). His most recent essay touching upon subject of mixed relations in the incarnate Christ can be found in “Aquinas: God *IS* Man: The Marvel of the Incarnation,” in *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction*, ed. T. Weinandy, D. Keating, and J. Yocum (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), pp. 67-89.

¹⁰³ 3 d. 6 q. 2 a. 2 s. c. 3. Aquinas will continue to reiterate the presence of only one act of existence (*esse*) in Christ in many subsequent works, among them *Quodlibetal Questions*, 9.2.2 (3), *Compendium Theologiae*, I, 212, and most notably *ST* III, q.17, a.1. However, in *De unione Verbi Incarnati*, 4, Aquinas seemingly reverses himself and posits a secondary non-accidental human *esse* in the incarnate Word. As I discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, this is not a repudiation of his prior position, but rather—as subsequent chapters will demonstrate—the end-point or the final fruition of Thomas’ on-going engagement and reassessment of the meaning of the incarnation.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid: Aliquando tamen sumitur esse pro essentia, secundum quam res est: quia per actus consueverunt significari eorum principia, ut potentiae vel habitus. Loquendo igitur de esse secundum quod est actus entis, sic dico, quod secundum secundam opinionem oportet ponere tantum unum esse; secundum alias autem duas oportet ponere duo esse. Ens enim subsistens, est quod habet esse tamquam eius quod est, quamvis sit naturae vel formae tamquam eius quo est: unde nec natura rei nec partes eius proprie dicuntur esse, si esse praedicto modo accipiatur; similiter autem nec accidentia, sed suppositum completum, quod est secundum omnia illa. Unde etiam Philosophus dicit in 2 Metaph., quod accidens magis proprie est entis quam ens. As I will later explore, the non-accidental secondary human act of existence in Christ, the *esse secundarium* of *De unione Verbi Incarnati*, 4, may perhaps finds its earliest precursor in these observations.

Distinctions 17, 18, and 19 of book III of the *Sentences Comentary* all deal with a series of closely allied soteriological concerns: the presence and salvific efficacy of a human will in the incarnate Word, the merit that Christ earned in regard to himself and for others through the saving work of his passion, death, and resurrection, and finally the redemption from sin that Christ accomplished in his mediatorial and atoning death. At this juncture Aquinas' commentary departs considerably from Lombard's earlier treatment, adding several new subjects that were not covered by Peter in the original. Perhaps Thomas' most significant departure is the attention which he devotes to the question of whether there is a human operation in Christ that is distinct from the divine operation of God, a question that was undoubtedly suggested to him by his reading of John Damascene on this subject. As it turns out, this is an absolutely crucial question for Aquinas, since the very possibility of Christ meriting at all for us will depend on a meaningfully affirmative answer. Throughout his analysis, Aquinas will repeatedly recall the ontological doctrine of the two natures, in order to safeguard the reality of human activity, alongside that of the actions of the divinity. In the course of this exposition in Distinction 18, Thomas will draw attention to a couple of key interrelated concepts: The incarnate Son must have two distinct operations proceeding from his two distinct natures, and these two natures must also be so united that the human nature will be utilized as an *instrumental cause* by the divine Word. In other words, each of the operations must be integrally distinct yet *theandric* (divine-human); that is, produced by God through the assumed humanity in the one person of Christ Jesus, in order for that salvific activity to be truly efficacious.

Theandry is the older of these two concepts, introduced by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, the purported pagan converted by the Apostle Paul at the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17: 16-34), but in reality probably an anonymous late fifth-century monk. In his Fourth Epistle Dionysius attempts to answer the questions of a monk named Gaius, who was puzzled by references to Jesus as a man, since he was also said to be utterly transcendent. In his reply, Dionysius states that Christ is called man because he was “quite truly a man in all essential respects.”¹⁰⁵ However, Dionysius is quick to affirm that Christ is not an ordinary man, but in another sense completely beyond humanity. Christ became man out of love for humanity: “But we do not confine our definition of Jesus to the human domain, for he is not simply a man, nor would he be transcendent if he were only a man. Out of his great love for humanity, he became quite truly a human, both supra-human and yet like humans;” and—in a phrase reminiscent of Philippians 2:6-7—(ἀμέλει τῇ ταύτης περιουσίᾳ) “without concern for the fullness of his being, even though himself beyond being, he took upon himself the being of humans.” Yet, He is transcendent and remained so even after His taking on of the human flesh: “he is not less overflowing with transcendence.”¹⁰⁶ The proof that Christ was a true man, while still remaining transcendent, is his actions pertaining to humans; for example, his birth from a virgin mother and his walking on water: “[Jesus] does the work of a man. A proof for this is that a virgin supernaturally bore him and that flowing water, bearing the weight of his

¹⁰⁵ *Epistle 4 PG 3.1072 B*: “κατ’ οὐσίαν ὄλην ἀληθῶς ἄνθρωπος ὢν”. Unless otherwise indicated, the English text quoted in this work is that of C. Luibheid and P. Rorem’s translation of the *Corpus Dionysiacum*: *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* (New York, Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1987), pp. 264-265.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, “Ἰησοῦν οὐκ ἀνθρωπικῶς ἀφορίζομεν. οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος μόνον οὐδὲ ὑπερούσιος, εἰ ἄνθρωπος μόνον, ἀλλ’ ἄνθρωπος ἀληθῶς ὁ διεφερόντως φιλόανθρωπος, ὑπὲρ ἀνθρώπους καὶ κατὰ ἀνθρώπους ἐκ τῆς ἀνθρώπων οὐσίας ὁ ὑπερούσιος οὐσιωμένος Ἦστι δὲ οὐδὲν ἦττον ὑπερουσιότητος ὑπερπλήρης ὁ ἀεὶ ὑπερούσιος, ἀμέλει τῇ ταύτης περιουσίᾳ.”

corporeal, earthly feet, did not yield, but, rather, held him up with supernatural power.”¹⁰⁷

Dionysius concluded that in the final analysis the incarnate Word was neither human nor nonhuman, since “[Christ] did not do what is divine as God, nor what is human as man, but instead [as] God having become man, He has administered to [or, arranged for] us a certain, new divine-human activity” (οὐ κατὰ θεὸν τὰ θεῖα δράσας, οὐ τὰ ἀνθρώπεια κατὰ ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλ’ ἀνδρωθέντος θεοῦ, καινὴν τινα τὴν θεανδρικήν ἐνέργειαν ἡμῖν πεπολιτευμένος). The earliest students of Pseudo-Dionysius read this final line as advocating one of two possible views, one which insisted on a unitary, divine nature (Monophysitism) in Jesus after the Incarnation, which therefore possessed only one divine operation; or a second view which claimed that the enfleshed Son had one, composite (*synthetos*) divine-human nature, and therefore one composite activity which was neither strictly divine nor purely human.¹⁰⁸

At this point in his scholarly career, the young Thomas was unaware of the checkered tradition of this Dionysian term, and accepts it in the thoroughly Chalcedonian manner espoused by John of Damascus in the wake of the sixth and seventh century Christological debates, as when the Damascene writes that “when God became man, that is to say, was incarnate, his human operation was divine, that is to say, deified. And it was not excluded from his divine operation, nor was his divine operation excluded from

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., “[Ἰησοῦς] ἐνήργει τὰ ἀνθρώπου. Καὶ δηλοῖ παρθένοσ ὑπερφῶς κύουσα καὶ ὕδωρ ἄστατον ὑλικῶν καὶ γεηρῶν ποδῶν ἀνέχον βάρος καὶ μὴ ὑπεῖκον, ἀλλ’ ὑπερφεῖ δυνάμει πρὸς τὸ ἀδιάχυτον συνιστάμενον.”

¹⁰⁸ Debate has long surrounded this expression, questioning both the correct reading of the text – some manuscripts have ‘one theandric energy,’ others have ‘new theandric energy’ – and even the true meaning of the expression θεανδρικήν ἐνέργειαν. C.f., K. P. Wesche, “Christological Doctrine and Liturgical Interpretation in Pseudo-Dionysius” *St. Vladimir’s Quarterly* 33:1 (1989), pp. 53-74; István Perczel, “The Christology of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite: The Fourth Letter in its Indirect and Direct Text Traditions,” *Le Muséon* 117 (2004), pp. 409-446.

his human operation. On the contrary, each is found in the other.”¹⁰⁹ This reading of the concept was promulgated by Thomas’ mentor, Albert the Great, perhaps the first Latin schoolman to incorporate the notion of theandry into his Christology, and who invariably interprets Dionysius as advocating the position that Christ activities are always to be construed as the operations of the ontologically united God-man employing the capacities inherent in both his divine and human natures.¹¹⁰ So, when Aquinas raises the first objection on the topic of whether there is a distinct operation in Christ apart from the divine activity, he promptly advances the conjecture that “it seems that in Christ there is only one action. Indeed, Dionysius called the operation of Christ *theandricam*; that is to say, divine-human. However, this does not mean different actions, but one action in Christ, so there is only one action of divinity and humanity.”¹¹¹ Aquinas subsequently gives the answer that he reads in both Damascene and Albert, that Dionysius calls the action of Christ theandric not because there is only one action of divinity and humanity in

¹⁰⁹ *De Fide orthodoxa*, III, 19. John goes on to explain: “Thus, the theandric operation shows this: Now, when one expresses two things with one word, this figure of speech is called circumlocution. Thus, while we speak of the cut burn and the burnt cut of the red-hot knife, we nevertheless hold the cutting to be one operation and the burning another, the one belonging to one nature and the other to the other—the burning to the fire and the cutting to the steel. In the very same way, when we speak of one theandric operation of Christ, we understand the two operations of his two natures: the divine operation of the divinity and the human operation of the humanity.” C.f. *Saint John of Damascus: Writings*, trans. F.H. Chase, Jr., Fathers of the Church 37 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1958), p. 323.

¹¹⁰ In Albert’s own commentary on the *Sentences* (*Commentarii in III*, d.17, a.5, ad 4), Pseudo-Dionysius’ expression *theandric* is introduced, with the explanation that “there are distinct actions in Christ, not in comparison to the one acting, namely that Christ is many actors, but with respect to the principle of the acting, namely because he sometimes acted as man, sometimes as God” (Ad aliud dicendum, quod in Christo sunt actiones distinctae: non in comparatione ad agentem, scilicet quod Christus sit plures agentes: sed quoad rationem agendi, scilicet quia aliquando egit ut homo, aliquando ut Deus). It is clear to Albert that in both cases the incarnate Christ acted as the God-man, for Damascene, he explains, understood Christ’s operations in terms of the natural powers involved in an act. Hence, the one actor Christ acted always as the God-man, exercising both the divine and human natural powers. Moreover, Albert takes this to imply that Christ’s every action was as the God-man and therefore was salvific: “Et nota, quod hoc ipsum quod agens fuit unus Deus et homo, et inclinancia ad actum duo, scilicet creatum et increatum, facit omnem Christi actionem nobis salutarem: quia etiamsi comedit et dormivit, verum erat quod Deus hoc fecit: et ita pro nobis fecit, qui pro se non habuit quid faceret talium. Et idem est de tristitia, timore, et omnibus aliis.”

¹¹¹ 3 d. 18 q. 1 a. 1 arg. 1: Ad primum sic proceditur. Videtur quod in Christo sit tantum una actio. Dionysius enim actionem Christi nominat theandricam, idest deivirilem. Hoc autem non diversas actiones, sed unam significat. Ergo in Christo est tantum una actio divinitatis et humanitatis.

Christ, but rather because the actions of the two natures are united since they are performed by the one ontological subject, the person of the Word, seen—for example—in the unitary effect of the Word’s salvific actions, such as the cleansing of the leper.¹¹²

John of Damascus was the first theologian to describe Christ’s human nature as an instrument of his divinity (*instrumentum Divinitatis*, *οργανον της θεοτητος*).¹¹³

Damascene’s insight grew out of his understanding that a nature is never found except within a hypostasis, a person, and that person’s never act except in and through a nature. Hence, Damascene argues, if a nature is the principle of activity, then Christ’s two natural operations should not be seen as a form of dualism, but rather as the two natural operations through which the unitary ontological subject of the incarnate Word acts; and it is in relation to this distinction between the person of Christ, and the duality of natural principles through which he operates, that John will interpret the *communicatio idiomatum*.¹¹⁴ Thus, even though the divine and human operations of Christ are distinct, they are nevertheless not separated, for the divine nature indwells the human nature in such a way that the human operations of Christ are instruments for the operations and

¹¹² 3 d. 18 q. 1 a. 1 ad 1: “Primo quantum ad ipsum suppositum agens actionem divinam et humanam, quod est unum. Secundo quantum ad unum effectum, qui dicitur opus operatum, vel *apotelesma* secundum Damascenum, sicut mundatio leprosi.” In chapter four I explain how Aquinas’ later theology, particularly in the *tertia pars* of the *ST* and *De Unione*, reinterprets the Fourth Epistle’s pronouncements on Christ’s *theandric* operations in the light of his growing familiarity with post-Chalcedonian Dyothelite Christology.

¹¹³ “Instrumentum enim caro deitatis extitit. Et si igitur ex summa conceptione nihil divisum fuit alterutrius formae, sed unius personae omnis temporis actus alterutrius formae facti sunt, tamen ipsa quae indivisibiliter facta sunt, secundum nullum modum confundimus, sed quid cuius fuerit formae ex operum qualitate sentimus” (*De Fide orthodoxa*, III.15). This is the Latin version Aquinas would have used; c.f., John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa: Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus*, ed. E.M. Buytaert (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute/Louvain-Paderborn: E. Nauwelaerts-Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 1955). For a general overview of Damascene and his Christological work, see Keetje Rozemond, *La christologie de saint Jean Damascène*, *Studia Patristica et Byzantina*, vol. 8 (Buch Kunstverlag Ettal, 1959); Andrew Louth, *St. John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹¹⁴ *De Fide orthodoxa*, III, 19: “For we hold that the two operations are not divided and that the natures do not act separately, but that each conjointly in complete community with the other acts with its own proper activity.... We speak sometimes of His two natures and sometimes of His one person: and the one or the two is referred to one conception. For the two natures are one Christ and the one Christ is two natures. Wherefore it is all the same whether we say “Christ acts according to either of His natures,” or “either nature acts in Christ in communion with the other.”

effects of his divine life. Thus, when Christ heals a leper, he wills humanly to touch the man with the fleshly hand of his *forma servi*, yet the power of healing that proceeds forth from his human hand originates in the divinity (*forma Dei*) present in his person. This is nowhere more the case than with respect to the human mind and will of Christ, “since the latter are the human mind and will of God incarnate, they must operate according to their intrinsically natural principles, yet they are also altered as to their mode so as to function in concord with the divine life and will that dwell within the Word.”¹¹⁵

Given the overwhelming import of John of Damascus’ *De fide* in scholastic theology, especially in regards to Christology, it is remarkable that Thomas Aquinas was the first scholastic theologian to use the notion of instrumental causality in his examination of the Incarnation.¹¹⁶ Aquinas’ earliest treatment of the instrumental relation between the two natures and their operations is found in his commentary on question 1, article 1 of Distinction 18. As we shall see in the next chapter, Aquinas’ understanding of Christ’s instrumental causality was to develop notably between the time he wrote the

¹¹⁵ Thomas Joseph White, “Dyothelitism and the Instrumental Human Consciousness of Jesus,” *Pro Ecclesia* 17:4 (2008), pp. 396-422, here at p. 405. As White superbly demonstrates, Damascene reads the communication of idioms through the theandric instrumentality of Christ’s humanity, and in light of the Dyothelite consensus, forged in the wake of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople III) in 681, regarding Christ’s two natures, two wills, and two operations. The next several chapters of this dissertation recount Thomas’ retrieval of that consensus and his subsequent elaboration of two theandrically inter-communicative acts of existence in the incarnate Word. C.f., *De fide orthodoxa*, III, 15: “For through both, that is through the energy of the body and the energy of the soul, He displayed one and the same, cognate and equal divine energy. For just as we say that His natures were united and permeate one another, and yet do not deny that they are different but even enumerate them, although we know they are inseparable, so also in connection with the wills and the energies we know their union and we recognize their difference... without introducing separation. For just as the flesh was deified without undergoing change in its own nature, in the same way also will and operation are deified without transgressing their own proper limits. For whether He is the one or the other, that is as God or as man, He is one and the same.”

¹¹⁶ See Edouard Hugon, “La causalité instrumentale de l’humanité sainte de Jésus,” *Revue thomiste* 13 (1905), pp. 44-68; Humbert Bouëssé, “La causalité efficiente instrumentale et la causalité méritoire de la sainte humanité du Christ,” *Revue thomiste* 44 (1938), pp. 256-298; Joseph Lecuyer, “La causalité efficiente des mystères du Christ selon saint Thomas,” *Doctor Communis* 6 (1953), pp. 91-120; Nicholas Crotty, “The Redemptive Role of Christ’s Resurrection,” *Thomist* 25 (1962), pp. 54-106; Jean-Pierre Torrell, “La causalité salvifique de la résurrection du Christ selon saint Thomas,” *Revue thomiste* 96 (1996), pp. 179-208; Philip L. Reynolds, “Philosophy as the Handmaid of Theology: Aquinas on Christ’s Causality,” in ed. F. Kerr, *Contemplating Aquinas: On the Varieties of Interpretation* (London: SCM, 2003), pp. 217-245.

Sentences commentary and the *Summa Theologiae*.¹¹⁷ Here, Thomas will only go so far as to describe the instrumental causality of Christ's human nature as a means of disposing us for the reception of grace by meriting salvation on our behalf.¹¹⁸ The question posed by Thomas is whether there is only one source of activity in Christ. Aquinas frames the argument by pointing out that a singular action belongs to both the instrument that carries out an action and to the principle or cause of that activity. Quoting Damascene, Thomas notes that in the incarnate Word the flesh was the instrument of the divinity; therefore it would seem that there was but one action of Christ according to both his divinity and his humanity.¹¹⁹ A diversity of causes will be followed by a diversity of effects. The cause of an action is the species of that which acts, and whatever acts does so by reason of whatever form it has. Where there are diverse forms, there are therefore diverse actions,

¹¹⁷ Thomas' presentation of Christ's human nature as the instrument of the divinity changed throughout his works, as can be seen by contrasting his commentary on d.18 with various other parallel texts: *Summa Contra Gentiles* IV, 36; *De Veritate* q.20, a.1, ad 2; *Comp.* c. 212; *De Unione* q.1, a.1, ad 16 and a.5; *ST* III, q.19, a.1. For secondary literature on the instrumentality of Christ's human nature, cf. Theophil Tschipke, *L'humanité du Christ comme instrument de salut de la divinité*, *Studia Friburgensia* 94, trans. P. Secrétan (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2003); Joseph Wawrykow, "Instrumental Causality," *The Westminster Handbook to Thomas Aquinas*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), pp. 75-76; Corey L. Barnes, *Christ's Two Wills in Scholastic Thought: The Christology of Aquinas and Its Historical Contexts*, *Studies and Texts* 178 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012). T. Tschipke, *L'humanité du Christ*, p.112, notes that, despite the heavy use of the Damascene by Albert the Great, Bonaventure, and various other thirteenth-century theologians, only Thomas offers an account of Christ's human nature as instrument of the divinity.

¹¹⁸ E.g., 3 d. 18 q. 1 a. 6 qc. 1 co: dicit Damascenus, caro Christi et anima erat quasi instrumentum deitatis, unde quamvis esset alia operatio Dei et hominis, tamen operatio humana habebat in se vim divinitatis sicut instrumentum agit vi principalis agentis: et propter hoc dicit Damascenus quod ea quae hominis sunt, supra hominem agebat; unde et actio Christi meritoria, quamvis esset actio humana, tamen agebat in virtute divina: et ideo erat potestas ei supra totam naturam, quod non poterat esse de aliqua operatione puri hominis, quia homo singularis est minus dignus quam natura communis: quia divinius est bonum gentis quam bonum unius hominis. Et quia omnes homines sunt unus homo in natura communi, ut dicit Porphyrius, inde est quod meritum Christi, quod ad naturam se extendebat, etiam ad singulos se extendere poterat; et ita aliis mereri potuit. This passage and other relevant texts in the *Sentences* commentary, posit that the instrumental causality of Christ's human nature only functions in meritorious and dispositive manner, but we shall see how by the time he writes the *tertia pars* of the *ST*, Thomas depicts Christ's humanity as an instrument participating in the power of the principal cause. God remains that principal divine causal agent, but Christ's humanity participates in it as an efficient instrumental cause. Christ, in his humanity, makes satisfaction for human sin and acts as cause of salvation, even though the divine person of the Word is the subject of all of Christ's actions. C.f., James S. Albertson, "Instrumental Causality in St. Thomas," *The New Scholasticism* 28:4 (1954), pp. 409-435; Paul G. Crowley, "Instrumentum Divinitatis in Thomas Aquinas: Recovering the Divinity of Christ," *Theological Studies* 52 (1991), pp. 451-475.

¹¹⁹ 3 d. 18 q. 1 a. 1 arg. 4: "...instrumenti et principalis agentis est tantum una actio. Sed, sicut dicit Damascenus, caro est instrumentum divinitatis. Ergo est una actio Christi secundum divinitatem et humanitatem."

just as fire both dries things out and warms things up, and just as a person hears through the sense of hearing and sees through the sense of sight. Similarly, by virtue of his distinct natures, Christ had diverse actions.¹²⁰ Embracing Damascene's understanding of instrumentality, Thomas responds to the objection by pointing out that in Christ each of the natures will have their own causal principles, that operations proper to the human nature itself will bring about its own proper actions, but that these two causal orders cooperate with each other through a relationship of instrumental causality by which the two natures work together, one moved by the other: "the instrument does not act except as moved by the principal agent, and acts in virtue of the principal agent. And by this means of action there is some kind of power in the humanity of Christ, inasmuch as the humanity itself is the instrument of divinity."¹²¹ More often than not, however, Thomas identifies Christ's humanity as primarily a disposing cause, implying an efficient causal role to the actions of the assumed human nature of the Word, but as we shall see, this is almost inevitably reduced to a kind of meritorious satisfaction.

In addition, in these instances Aquinas always highlights the divine initiative in the meritorious activity of Christ's humanity, limiting the causal efficacy of the created humanity to the secondary role of preparing the believer for the exclusively divine infusion of sanctifying grace.¹²²

¹²⁰ 3, d. 18, q. 1, a. 1, resp.

¹²¹ 3, d. 18, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4: In quantum scilicet instrumentum non agit nisi motum a principali agente, et agit in virtute principalis agentis. Et hoc modo in ipsa actione humanitatis Christi est aliqua virtus, in quantum ipsa humanitas est instrumentum Divinitatis.

¹²² 3, d. 19, a. 1, q. 1, c.: Delere peccatum dicitur dupliciter. . . . Alio modo dicitur effective. Et hoc contingit tripliciter, secundum tria genera causae efficientis. Dicitur enim causa efficiens, uno modo perficiens effectum, et hoc est principale agens inducens formam; et sic Deus solus peccatum delet, quia ipse solus gratiam infundit. Alio modo dicitur efficiens, disponens materiam ad recipiendum formam: et sic dicitur peccatum delere ille qui meretur peccati deletionem, quia ex merito efficitur aliquis dignus quasi materia disposita ad recipiendum gratiam, per quam peccata deleantur. Hoc autem contingit dupliciter: vel sufficienter, vel insufficienter. Sufficienter quidem disposita est materia, quando fit necessitas ad formam: et similiter sufficienter aliquis per meritum disponitur ad aliquid, quando illud sibi efficitur debitum; et hoc est meritum condigni. . . . Solus autem

Aquinas then utilizes this nascent, still somewhat underdeveloped notion of instrumentality to further explicate the question of the purpose, role, and function of Christ's merit in the economy of salvation. Aquinas initially adopts a basic version of the Anselmian satisfaction theory as presented by the Lombard, but goes on to strengthen the links between Christ's redemptive activity and our participation in it to a much greater degree, primarily by taking up and elaborating Peter's dual concepts of form and cause in the atonement. As we have already seen, Lombard's Distinction 18 argues that Christ did not need the merit that the passion provided in order to gain the rewards that he receive from the Father, foremost among them the bestowal of the name that is above every name (Philippians 2:9-11). So, Lombard goes on to ask, why precisely did Christ undertake his passion? He underwent the passion for us (*pro nobis*), not for himself, Lombard answers, so that his suffering, death, and resurrection would be both the form (*forma*) and the cause (*causa*) of salvation in us. In many ways, these two terms, *forma* and *causa*, summarize the theological soteriology of both the mature Peter Lombard and the young Thomas Aquinas. As we have already briefly ascertained, for the Lombard, *forma* indicates the moral meaning of Christ's passion, inasmuch as the Son's sacrifice offers striking examples of human virtue, perhaps—above all—the example of his humility, which as we saw Paul advocates to the Philippians, and which Lombard would have understood Augustine strongly highlights in his interpretation of the Philippians hymn.¹²³

Causa embodies the objective efficaciousness of Christ's passion, a salvific efficacy

Christus aliis potest sufficienter mereri: quia in naturam potest, inquantum Deus est, et caritas sua quodammodo est infinita, sicut et gratia, ut supra dictum est, dist. 13, q. 1, a. 2, quaestiunc. 2. In hoc autem pro tota natura meruit, in quo debitum naturae, scilicet mortis quae pro peccato ei debebatur, exsolvit ipse peccatum non habens; ut sic non pro se mortem solvere teneretur, sed pro natura solveret; unde satisfaciendo pro natura tota, sufficienter meruit deletionem peccatorum aliis qui peccata habebant. Tertio modo dicitur agens instrumentale; et hoc modo sacramenta peccata delent, quia sunt instrumenta divinae misericordiae salvantis. Also see, 3, d. 18, a. 6, q. 1, s.c. 1; and IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, q. 3, ad 1.

¹²³ See Lombard, *Sentences*, III, d. 18, c. 1; d. 19, c. 1-5.

made possible because of the activity undertaken by Christ in his *forma servi*. On the moral, exemplary side, Lombard also mentions virtue of humility, along with obedience (Philippians 2:8), as the causes of glory, liberty, and redemption from sin, punishment, and the devil. In Lombard's understanding these two, form and cause, cannot be separated, since for him the means by which salvation is brought about centers around humility. The greatness of the Christ's humility, as exemplified in his kenotic self-emptying and assumption of the *forma servi*, is located opposite of the pride of Adam, and the obedient death on the cross of the Son as the means of conquering the death which has befallen the descendants of Adam; a humility which in its exemplarity, in turn elicits an inward transformation within the believer.¹²⁴

Aquinas fundamentally agrees with this aspect of Lombard's soteriology, and in his *Sentences* commentary he presents an argument concerning the correspondence between Christ's satisfaction and the satisfactions of the faithful, where he stresses that this relationship is primarily one of exemplarity, for the incarnate Son is the "model of all salvation."¹²⁵ In Thomas' estimation, it is incorrect to assume that satisfaction is solely on the side of cause, for it must be efficacious on the moral, exemplary side as well.¹²⁶ In other words, while Aquinas adopts Damascene's language of Christ's humanity as an

¹²⁴ Cf. Franks, *Work of Christ*, vol. 1, pp. 167-176; Colish, *Lombard*, vol.1, pp. 459-470; Rosemann, *Lombard*, pp. 135-139.

¹²⁵ 3 d. 20, q. 1 a. 3 co.: "Respondeo dicendum, quod Christi satisfactio fuit non pro uno homine tantum, sed pro tota humana natura; unde duas condiciones concernere debuit: ut esset universalis respectu omnium satisfactionum quodammodo, et ut esset exemplaris omnium satisfactionum particularium. Universalis autem erat non per praedicationem de multis, quasi per multas particulares satisfactiones multiplicata, sed habens virtutem respectu omnium; unde non oportebat quod ipse omnes poenas quae ex peccato quocumque modo consequi possent, assumeret in seipso; sed illam ad quam omnes ordinantur, et quae continet in se virtute omnes poenas, quamvis non actu. Finis autem omnium terribilium est mors, ut dicit philosophus, 3 Ethic.; et ideo per passionem mortis debuit satisfacere. In quantum vero fuit exemplaris respectu nostrarum satisfactionum, debuit habere magnitudinem excedentem omnes alias satisfactiones, quia exemplar debet esse praestantius exemplo; et ideo secundum maximam poenarum debuit satisfacere, scilicet mortem."

¹²⁶ See Henk J.M. Schoot, "Divine Transcendence and the Mystery of Salvation According to Thomas Aquinas," in eds. H. Goris, H. Rikhof, H. Schoot, *Divine Transcendence and Immanence in the Work of Thomas Aquinas*, Publications of the Thomas Instituut te Utrecht 13 (Leuven/Walpole, MA: Peeters 2009), pp. 255-281.

instrument of the divinity in regard to satisfaction, he nevertheless emphasizes the role of that humanity chiefly as a disposing cause of satisfaction in humans. Hence, even though Thomas hints at an efficient causal efficacy in Christ's sacrifice that will actualize the power of saving grace in the believer, this language is ultimately reduced in the *Sentences* commentary to a case of Christ's meritorious satisfaction, a form at best of moral causality. To be more precise, Christ merits salvation for us in his humanity, but has no direct relation to its efficient soteriological influence upon the soul, since Thomas has largely restricted the efficacy of the created cause to the task of preparing the human person for the exclusively divine infusion of sanctifying grace.¹²⁷ Thus, while Aquinas gives repeated expression in his ontological model of the incarnate Son's being (*Christus in se*) to the absolute necessity for a truly human mode of being and acting in Christ, this is significantly undermined, or at least largely unsupported, by a soteriological model which fails to adequately explain the importance of Christ's human sacrifice for us (*Christus pro nobis*) apart from its functional exemplarity.¹²⁸

7. Conclusion

In the Christ hymn preserved as chapter two, verses five through eleven, of Paul's Epistle to the Philippian, we encounter a text which posits the existence of a pre-existent Christ who is found in the form of God (*forma Dei*), yet willingly undergoes a kenosis or

¹²⁷ 3, d. 13, q. 2, a. 1, ad. 3.

¹²⁸ In the course of the next few chapters I will demonstrate that one can detect a clear development of the notion of instrumental causality in Aquinas, and that this evolution allows Thomas to establish the philosophical groundwork that will allow him to grasp the theoretical importance and soteriological consequences for post-Chalcedonian Christology of Christ's human *esse*. C.f. Bernhard Blankenhorn, "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," *Nova et Vetera* 4:2 (2006), pp. 255–294; idem., "The Place of Romans 6 in Aquinas's Doctrine of Sacramental Causality: A Balance of History and Metaphysics," in eds. R. Hütter and M. Levering, *Ressourcement Thomism: Sacred Doctrine, the Sacraments, and the Moral Life* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), pp. 136–149.

self-emptying whereby the Word assumes humanity in the form of a servant (*forma servi*), and in which he will obediently suffer death on the cross, a sacrifice for which the Father exalts him as Lord. This brief passage exerted a profound influence on Christian theology, particularly on the development of Christology, and the resulting conceptualization of the Incarnation. The witness of early Christianity and of the patristic fathers, both East and West, attests to the hymn's ongoing importance, particularly in the way that it aided the formulation doctrines describing the ontological status of the God-man who unites two distinct natures, divine and human, in his unique person. Building upon the text of Philippians, as elaborated by Augustine's understanding of the habitude of humanity assumed by the enfleshed Son, Latin medieval theologians proposed three contrasting opinions to account for the hypostatic union, and various rival theories to explicate the salvific efficacy of the God-man's sacrificial death. The young Thomas Aquinas attempted an initial comprehensive explication of the Incarnation in his Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, one in which the divine Son subsists in and through two intrinsic principles of activity or natures given their being by Word's unique act of divine existence (*esse*). Finally, employing two crucial concepts retrieved from the patristic era—instrumental causality and theandry, Aquinas posits that the divine nature utilizes the operations of Christ's human nature instrumentally in order to merit salvation for sinful humanity.

Aquinas' account of the Incarnation and of the saving work of the Son is problematic in two principal ways. By positing a model which denies an independent act of existence to the human nature of Christ, Thomas excludes any misunderstanding of the Son's kenosis as the assumption of a separate human being by the Word, but in the

process he also seems to weaken claims that the incarnate Christ possesses a true and full humanity. In addition, Aquinas' insufficiently robust concept of instrumentality reduces the efficacy of the Son's humanity to a kind of meritorious exemplarity that, at best, only disposes us to the reception of divine grace. As we will see in the following chapter, in two major works from the middle period of his teaching and writing career, a commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians, and his first mature theological synthesis, the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Thomas begins to work out the complex and inseparable relation of instrumental causality, theandry, and the human act of existence (*esse*) to the saving work of the incarnate Word, a development due in large part to Aquinas' creative retrieval of the rich theological heritage of patristic Christological texts and Conciliar documents, many of them influenced by the Christ hymn of Philippians 2:5-11.

III. Chapter 2: *Caro Est Instrumentum Divinitatis*: An Incarnational Instrumentality

1. Introduction:

Quoting from the *De fide* of John of Damascus in his *Scriptum* commentary, the young Thomas Aquinas wrote that the flesh of Christ, the very physical embodiment of the Word, was a salvific instrument of the divine Son of God.¹²⁹ However, as we concluded at the end of the previous chapter, Aquinas' conception of instrumentality, while seemingly espousing the actualizing power of saving grace as exercised by the Word through his assumed humanity, in point of fact problematically reduced the incarnate Son's instrumentalized humanity to little more than a disposing moral exemplar. Moreover, we also saw that in Thomas' earliest Christological reflections the assumed humanity of the Son was denied any independent ontological status apart from the divine act of existence of the assuming Word, relegating that humanity to the status of a nature devoid of any distinctive *esse* of its own. This denial of an autonomous ontological integrity for Christ's human nature, as we further saw, was predicated by the legitimate fear that upholding a distinct humanity in the Son, with its own act of existence, would inevitably lead to a Nestorian position of two separate hypostases after the incarnation of the Word, one divine and the other human.

The rationale for imposing such a strict hypostatic unicity of being in the incarnate Word, and the resulting understanding of the disparate instrumentalized relationship between the human and divine operations arising from these two natures (or

¹²⁹ "Sed, sicut dicit Damascenus, 'caro est instrumentum divinitatis.' Ergo una est actio Christi secundum divinitatem et humanitatem" (3 d. 18, a. 1, obj. 4).

principles of action) united in the one person of the Son, are ably summarized by Thomas in *Quodlibetum* IX, q.2, a.2 [3], a written record of a public academic dispute on theological subjects undertaken at the University of Paris shortly after the completion of his *Sentences* commentary (that is, circa 1256-58).¹³⁰ Thomas's primary concern in this portion of the Quodlibetal Question is to safeguard the unity and uniqueness of the Word by defending the oneness of being in the incarnate Son. In Thomas' mind, one of the strongest objections against any such unity would appear to come from the presence of two radically different sets of principles of activities in Christ, as evinced by distinctively divine or human operations, for just as a unity of kinds of operation does not follow from the unity of the person of Christ, so it appears that the uniqueness of the one incarnate Word would not necessarily entail the unicity of the act of being (*esse*) in the enfleshed Son.¹³¹ Aquinas counters by arguing that there are two ways of speaking about being: one kind of existence which confers substantiality—that is, which something to be a separate substance, and the being predicated of those accidental qualities or properties which inhere in a substantial form. Hence, “since we only posit one subsisting thing in Christ, to whose completeness his humanity accompanies, since there is one suppositum of both natures, thus we must say that the substantial being which is properly attributed to the suppositum, is only one in Christ, but it has unity from its suppositum, not from the natures.”¹³² However, if it were posited that Christ's human nature were to be separated

¹³⁰ See Kevin White, “The *Quodlibeta* of Thomas Aquinas in the Context of His Work,” in *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages: The Thirteenth Century*, ed. C. Schabel (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 49–133.

¹³¹ *Sicut esse est suppositi, ita et operatio. Sed unitas suppositi non facit quin in Christo sint plures operationes. Ergo nec faciet quod in Christo sit tantum unum esse.*

¹³² *Quia ergo in Christo ponimus unam rem subsistentem tantum, ad cuius integritatem concurrunt etiam humanitas, quia unum suppositum est utriusque naturae; ideo oportet dicere quod esse substantiale, quod proprie attribuitur supposito, in Christo est unum tantum; habet autem unitatem ex ipso supposito, et non ex naturis.*

from the divinity, then the humanity of the Word would possess its own separate substantial being apart from the divine *esse*: in other words, it would be a hypostasis, “for Christ's humanity was not impeded from having its own being except by the fact that it was not subsisting *per se*.”¹³³ And so, Thomas reiterates that we should adopt the conceptual model the second Christological opinion described by Peter Lombard in the Sentences, and affirm that there is only one substantial being in Christ, insofar as being is properly of a separate substance, a hypostasis, although there is a multiplicity of accidental being associated with the person.¹³⁴ Hence, Aquinas concludes, *operatio* is not the cause of unity or multiplicity in a substantial being, but rather its proper activities follow upon the unity of its substantial existence, so that a multiplicity of operations can be predicated according to the principles of action present in the one being.¹³⁵ Note that in defending the unity of Christ, and endorsing the Lombard's second formulization of the hypostatic union as the most effective defender of that unity, Thomas acknowledges only two possible instantiations of existence in the Word: substantial and accidental being.

According to Aquinas, neither of these are viable options for Christ's humanity, for as we already saw in the first chapter, a substantial existence would result in a separate human person, a hypostasis existing *per se*, while an accidental *esse* would result

¹³³ Si tamen ponatur humanitas a divinitate separari, tunc humanitas suum esse habebit aliud ab esse divino. Non enim impediēbat quin proprium esse haberet nisi hoc quod non erat per se subsistens.

¹³⁴ Et sic patet quod secundum opinionem secundam oportet dicere quod in Christo est unum esse substantiale, secundum quod esse est suppositi proprie, quamvis sit in eo multiplex esse accidentale.

¹³⁵ quod operatio suppositi non est de integritate unitatis eius, sed consequitur eius unitatem; unde unius suppositi invenimus multas operationes secundum diversa operationum principia, quae supposito insunt: sicut homo aliud operatur lingua et manu; sed esse est id in quo fundatur unitas suppositi: unde esse multiplex praeiudicat unitati essendi. “The operation of a *suppositum* is not to do with the integrity of its unity, but follows upon its unity, hence we find many operations of one *suppositum* according to the diverse principles of the operations which are present in the *suppositum*, just as a man uses his mouth and his hand differently; but being is that in which the unity of the *suppositum* is founded, hence multiple being is injurious to unity.”

in a mere agglomeration of divinity and humanity, but not a true union of God and man in the incarnate Word.¹³⁶ Moreover, Christ's human operation, arising from a humanity

¹³⁶ Aquinas explicates the dangers of such an accidental conjunction of disparate parts in *Quodlibetum* IX, q.2, a.2 [3]: Illud autem quod est subsistens in natura, est aliquod individuum et singulare: unde unitas Christi, in qua duae naturae uniuntur, attribuenda est alicui nomini per quod singularitas designetur. Nominum autem quae singularitatem designant, quaedam significant singulare in quolibet genere entis, sicut hoc nomen singulare et particulare et individuum, quia haec albedo est quoddam singulare et particulare et individuum; nam universale et particulare circumeunt omne genus. Quaedam vero significant singulare solum in genere substantiae; sicut hoc nomen hypostasis, quod significat individuum substantiam; et hoc nomen persona, quod significat substantiam individuum rationalis naturae: et similiter hoc nomen suppositum vel res naturae; quorum nullum de hac albedine potest praedicari, quamvis haec albedo sit singularis; eo quod unumquodque eorum significat aliquid ut subsistens, accidentia vero non subsistunt. Partes vero substantiarum quamvis sint de natura subsistentium, non tamen per se subsistunt, sed in alio sunt; unde etiam praedicta nomina de partibus substantiarum non dicuntur: non enim dicimus quod haec manus sit hypostasis vel persona, vel suppositum, vel res naturae, quamvis possit dici quod sit quoddam individuum, vel particulare, vel singulare, quae nomina de accidentibus dicebantur. "Now that which is subsisting in a nature is something individual or singular. Hence, the unity of Christ, in which the two natures are united, must be attributed to some name through which singularity is designated. However, of those names which designate singularity, certain ones signify a singular thing in any genus of beings, such as the name 'singular', so also both 'particular' and 'individual', because this whiteness is a certain singular both individual and particular. For the universal and the particular extend to every genus. But certain names signify singularity only in the genus of substance, as the name 'hypostasis', which signifies an individual substance, and the name 'person', which signifies an individual substance of a rational nature; and similarly the name 'suppositum' or 'a thing of nature', none of which can be predicated of this whiteness, although this whiteness is singular, to the extent that each of these names signify something subsisting per se, but accidents do not subsist [in this way]. In fact, the parts of substances, although they are of the nature of subsisting things, nevertheless do not subsist per se, but they are in another; thus, even the aforesaid names are not said of the parts of substances; for we do not say that this hand is a hypostasis, a person, a suppositum, or a thing of nature, although it may be said that it is a certain individual or particular or singular, which names are also said of accidents." As Thomas concludes: Non autem potest dici quod humana natura in Christo, vel aliqua pars eius, sit per se subsistens: hoc enim unioni repugnaret; nisi poneremus unionem secundum quid et non simpliciter: sicut uniuntur lapides in acervo, vel duo homines per effectum amoris, vel per aliquam imitationis similitudinem: quae omnia dicimus esse unum secundum quid, et non simpliciter. Quod enim est simpliciter unum et per se subsistens, nihil continet actu per subsistens, sed forte in potentia. Unde servata veritate unionis naturarum in Christo, oportet ponere sicut unam personam, ita unam hypostasim, et unum suppositum, et unam rem duarum naturarum. Sed ipsam humanam naturam in Christo nihil prohibet dicere esse quoddam individuum, aut singulare, aut particulare; et similiter quaslibet partes humanae naturae, ut manus et pedes et ossa, quorum quodlibet est quoddam individuum: non tamen quod de toto praedicetur, quia nullum eorum est individuum per se subsistens. Sed individuum per se subsistens, vel singulare, vel particulare, quod praedicatur de Christo, est unum tantum. "Now it cannot be said that the human nature in Christ or some part of it is subsisting per se: for this is contrary to the union, unless we posited a union in a certain respect and not absolutely [secundum quid et non simpliciter], as stones are united in a pile or [as] two men [are united] through the desire of love or through some likeness of imitation, all of which we call one in a certain respect and not simply. For that which is one thing, subsisting per se simply, contains nothing subsisting per se actually, but perhaps it does potentially. Hence, having preserved the truth of the union of natures in Christ, just as it is necessary to posit one person, so also one hypostasis, one suppositum and one thing of two natures [must be posited]. But nothing prevents saying that the human nature in Christ is a certain individual or singular or particular; and similarly any part of the human nature, as hands and feet and bones, each of which is a certain individual, yet it is not what is predicated of the whole, since none of them is an individual subsisting per se; but the individual subsisting per se, whether the singular or the particular which is predicated of Christ is only one."

precluded from possessing any possible mode of human existence, has no more of an integral being than does a hand or a mouth in relation to the substantial form of the body to which it belongs; that is, while each of these parts has a distinctive proper function, in and of themselves they have no substantive *esse* independent of the unitary being of the divine hypostasis in which they reside.¹³⁷ It is not difficult to see how Thomas would have difficulty elaborating a truly salvific efficacy to a humanity occupying at best only a subsidiary ontological role in the life of the enfleshed Son. As we shall see, by the time Thomas composes the *Disputed Question on the Incarnate Word* he will locate a second non-substantial yet nevertheless non-accidental *esse* in Christ. However, to reach this crucial breakthrough in his Christological thought, Aquinas will first have to re-conceptualize the precise manner in which the incarnate human nature relates to the divinity in the enfleshed—a process whereby the flesh of Christ will truly become the saving instrument of the divine Word.

2. A Disputed Question on Truth: Grace as Instrumental

The initial, somewhat tentative steps of this process towards a fuller understanding of Christ's instrumentality can be seen in the *Quaestiones disputata de Veritate*, a series of disputed questions that Thomas engaged in after the completion of the *Sententiis*, a period in which he was granted a licentiate in theology, made a *magister* of the sacred page, and began to teach at the University of Paris, and which also overlaps with the composition of the *Quodlibetal Questions* (c. 1256-1259). The Scholastic disputed question was one of the principle pedagogical tools of the medieval master

¹³⁷ See n. 7 above.

alongside the traditional classroom *lectio* on set texts. Unlike the lectures, however, the *disputatio* did not have a textual starting-point but rather an agreed-upon theme which set the parameters for the following extemporaneous debate between the master, his students, and on occasion even disputants from outside the school.¹³⁸

Thomas' *Disputed Question* consists of 23 questions grouped into 29 articles, the first of which—"Quid est veritas"—has given the title to the entire series. The series can be loosely characterized as a large grouping of questions concerning knowledge and veracity (qq.1-20), followed by a second, smaller grouping of questions concerning the theme of the good (qq.21-29).¹³⁹ Question 27 comprises seven articles on various themes relating to the topic of grace, such as the crucial question of whether grace is something created in humanity by God. In the first Article, Aquinas is anxious to affirm that grace is not merely an acceptance by God of a human being, since that would indicate that grace is nothing other than God willing the final supernatural good of someone, which is eternal life. But, as Thomas points out, God does not will this supernatural good for anyone unworthy; yet fallen humanity itself is not naturally worthy of this supreme good, since it is supernatural. Consequently, Thomas points out, by the "very fact that someone is affirmed to be pleasing to God with reference to this good," it must be correlatively affirmed that "there is in him something by which he is worthy of such a good above his natural endowments." The presence of this worthiness in a person does not, however, move the divine will to destine the man for that good, in fact—as Thomas explains—it is precisely the other way around: by the very fact that by His will God destines someone

¹³⁸ See Bernardo C. Bazán, "Les questions disputées, principalement dans les facultés de théologie" in *Les questions disputées et les questions quodlibétiques dans les facultés de théologie de droit et de médecine*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental 44-45, ed. B.C. Bazán, G. Fransen, J.F. Wippel, and D. Jacquart (Turnhout: Brepols, 1985), pp. 12-149.

¹³⁹ Cf., Torrell, *Saint Thomas*, pp. 62-66.

for eternal life, God supplies the person with something by which he is found worthy of eternal life. And the reason for this is that, “just as God’s knowledge is the cause of things and is not, like ours, caused by them, in the same way the act of His will is productive of good and not, like that of ours, caused by good.”¹⁴⁰ Human beings, then, can be said to have the grace of God, and not only on account of their being loved by God with a view to eternal life, but also from his being given the gift of grace, a grace created in them by the presence of God’s love, and by which they are made worthy of eternal life.¹⁴¹

This conclusion leads Aquinas to query in the third Article whether “any creature can be the cause of grace?” This question is of paramount importance for Thomas because it touches upon the issue of Christ’s created humanity, which in turn raises the further difficulty of whether the incarnate Son in his human nature can be the instrumental cause of grace. Among the signal examples of the Word’s seemingly grace-causing humanity, Aquinas calls attention to Christ’s death and resurrection. According to Thomas, these salvific actions belong to the incarnate Son according to His human nature, and quotes Psalm (29:6): “In the evening weeping shall have place,” pointing to the *Glossa ordinaria*’s claims that “Christ’s resurrection is the cause of the resurrection

¹⁴⁰ *Quaestiones disputatae de Veritate*, ed. A. Dondaine, Leonine edition, Vol. 22, 3 parts (Rome: Editore di San Tomasso, 1975-1976), q.27, a.1, resp.: Sed hoc bonum Deus non vult alicui indigno. Ex natura autem sua homo non est dignus tanto bono, cum sit supernaturale. Et ideo, ex hoc ipso quod ponitur aliquis Deo gratus respectu huius boni, ponitur quod sit dignus tali bono supra sua naturalia; quod quidem non movet divinam voluntatem ut hominem ad bonum illud ordinet, sed potius e converso: quia ex hoc ipso quod Deus sua voluntate aliquem ordinat ad vitam aeternam, praestat ei aliquid per quod sit dignus vita aeterna . . . Et huius ratio est, quia, sicut scientia Dei est causa rerum, non causata a rebus, ut nostra, ita voluntas eius est effectrix boni, et non causata a bono, sicut nostra.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, ad. 3: Ad tertium dicendum, quod esse naturale per creationem Deus facit in nobis nulla causa agente mediante, sed tamen mediante aliqua causa formali: forma enim naturalis principium est esse naturalis. Et similiter esse spirituale gratuitum Deus facit in nobis nullo agente mediante, sed tamen mediante aliqua forma creata, quae est gratia. “God causes natural existence in us by creation without the intervention of any agent cause, but nevertheless with the intervention of a formal cause; for a natural form is the principle of natural existence. Similarly God brings about gratuitous spiritual existence in us without the intervention of any agent, yet with the intervention of a created form, grace.”

of the soul in the present time and of the body in the future.”¹⁴² Since the resurrection of the soul in the present is through grace, this would certainly indicate that Christ is the cause of grace in us precisely through the causal agency of his created humanity.¹⁴³ Indeed, Thomas concludes (quoting once again from John of Damascus) to the effect that Christ’s assumed human nature was like an “instrument of His divinity,” and it is for this reason that the works of His humanity, such as passion, death, and resurrection, are instrumental with regard to the effect of His divinity. More specifically, “Christ’s resurrection does not cause spiritual resurrection in us as the principal agent but as the instrumental cause.—Or it can be said that it is the cause of our spiritual resurrection in so far as we are justified by faith in Him.—Or again the answer could be that it is the exemplary cause of spiritual resurrection inasmuch as there is in Christ’s resurrection a pattern of our spiritual resurrection.”¹⁴⁴ We must note that in this passage, very much like in the *Sentences Commentary*, Thomas retains only a disposing or ministerial causation of salvific grace for the Word’s assumed humanity, since “Christ as God imparts grace effectively, but as man by His ministry.”¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, despite this caveat, it is also notable that in other passages Aquinas is willing to concede that Christ’s instrumentalized humanness “shared somewhat in the working of the divine power. By touching a leper, for instance, Christ made him clean. The very touch of Christ thus

¹⁴² Cf. *Biblia latina cum glossa ordinaria: Facsimile reprint of the Editio Princeps* (Adolph Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81), 4 volumes, with an introduction by K. Froehlich and M. T. Gibson (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998). For a study of the importance of the *Glossa* for Thomas and other medieval thinkers, see M.T. Gibson, “The Place of the *Glossa ordinaria* in Medieval Exegesis,” in *Ad Litteram: Authoritative Texts and Their Medieval Readers*, ed. M.D. Jordan and K. Emery (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), pp. 5-27; Lesley Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria: The Making of a Medieval Bible Commentary* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

¹⁴³ *De veritate*, q.27 a.3 arg.7: Praeterea, mors et resurrectio Christi convenit ei secundum humanam naturam. Sed sicut dicit Glossa super illud Psalm. XXIX, 6, ad vesperum demorabitur fletus, resurrectio Christi est causa resurrectionis animae in praesenti, et corporis in futuro: resurrectio autem animae in praesenti est per gratiam. Ergo Christus secundum humanam naturam est causa gratiae.

¹⁴⁴ *De veritate*, q.27, a.3, ad. 7.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, q.27, a.3, ad. 5; q.v. *III Sent.*, d.13, q.2, a.1, ad.3.

caused the health of the leper instrumentally.”¹⁴⁶ It was not merely in corporeal effects that Christ’s human nature shared instrumentally in the effect of the divine power but also in spiritual effects. Thus Christ’s blood poured out for us had the ability to wash away sins, and so we can truly say that the humanity of Christ is the instrumental cause of our justification. Moreover, this causal efficacy is applied to us not only spiritually through faith and also bodily through the sacraments, because Christ’s humanity is comprised both of spirit, for Christ had a human soul which was the form of his corporeality and a human body.¹⁴⁷ And this is done, in Thomas’ estimation, so that we may receive within ourselves the effect of sanctification, which is had through the enfleshed Christ. As a consequence, “the most perfect sacrament is that in which the body of Christ is really contained, the Eucharist; and it is the consummation of all the others,” nevertheless, the other “sacraments also share some of the efficacy by which Christ’s humanity works instrumentally for our justification.”¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ *De veritate*, a.4, c.: Damascenus in libro III dicit quod humana natura in Christo erat velut quoddam organum divinitatis; et ideo humana natura aliquid communicabat in operatione virtutis divinae, sicut quod Christus tangendo leprosum mundavit; sic enim ipse tactus Christi causabat instrumentaliter salutem leprosi.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, Sicut autem humana natura in Christo communicabat ad effectus divinae virtutis instrumentaliter in corporalibus effectibus, ita in spiritualibus; unde sanguis Christi pro nobis effusus habuit vim ablutivam peccatorum; Apoc. I, 5: lavit nos a peccatis nostris in sanguine suo; et Rom. III, 24: iustificati (...) in sanguine ipsius. “It was not merely in corporeal effects that Christ’s human nature shared instrumentally in the effect of the divine power but also in spiritual effects. Thus Christ’s blood poured out for us had the ability to wash away sins, as is said in the Apocalypse (1: 5): ‘[Jesus Christ] washed us from our sins in his own blood,’ and in the Epistle to the Romans (3:24): ‘Being justified... in his blood.’”

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, Et sic humanitas Christi est instrumentalis causa iustificationis; quae quidem causa nobis applicatur spiritualiter per fidem, et corporaliter per sacramenta: quia humanitas Christi et spiritus et corpus est; ad hoc scilicet ut effectum sanctificationis, quae est Christi, in nobis percipiamus. Unde illud est perfectissimum sacramentum in quo corpus Christi realiter continetur, scilicet Eucharistia, et est omnium aliorum consummativum, ut Dionysius dicit in Eccl. Hierarch., cap. III. Alia vero sacramenta participant aliquid de virtute illa qua humanitas Christi instrumentaliter ad iustificationem operatur, ratione cuius sanctificatus Baptismo, sanctificatus sanguine Christi dicitur ab apostolo Hebr. X, 10. Unde passio Christi in sacramentis novae legis dicitur operari. Et sic sacramenta novae legis sunt causa gratiae quasi instrumentaliter operantia ad gratiam. “Thus the humanity of Christ is the instrumental cause of justification. This cause is applied to us spiritually through faith and bodily through the sacraments, because Christ’s humanity is both spirit and body. This is done to the end that we may receive within ourselves the effect of sanctification, which is had through Christ. As a consequence the most perfect

It would seem that it is through his engagement with the topic of the causative meditating capacity of the sacraments, particularly the sacrament of the Eucharist, that Thomas is inspired to inaugurate a tentative reformulation of the status and function of Christ's humanity in the economy of salvation, and to begin to rethink his position on the ability of the incarnated Word, precisely as enfleshed in human form, to mediate grace instrumentally. Aquinas had already wrestled with this topic in the Lombard commentary, where he concludes that the sacraments, as created agents, cannot share directly in the causality of grace. Thomas' argument is based on the notion that the grace of God is not the actualized form of any natural potential in human nature, since sanctifying grace is a supernatural, unmediated gift which joins us immediately with the divine, and must therefore be attributed to its principle source or agent, which is God.¹⁴⁹ With similar logic, Aquinas limits the function of Christ's assumed human nature in the *Scriptum*; so that while Christ merits grace for us due to do his sacrifice, he does not

sacrament is that in which the body of Christ is really contained, the Eucharist; and it is the consummation of all the others, as Dionysius says. But the other sacraments also share some of the efficacy by which Christ's humanity works instrumentally for our justification. By reason of it a person sanctified by baptism is said by the Apostle in the Epistle to the Hebrews (10: 10-2 2) to be sanctified by the blood of Christ. Christ's passion is accordingly said to work in the sacraments of the New Law. Thus the sacraments of the New Law are causes of grace working in some sense instrumentally to produce it."

¹⁴⁹ Cf. *IV Sent.*, d. 5, q. 1, a. 2, c: Respondeo dicendum, quod cooperari alicui agenti dicitur quatuor modis. Uno modo sicut adjuvans ei cui auxilium praebeat, cooperatur. Alio modo sicut consilium praebens. Tertio modo sicut quo mediante agens primum suum effectum inducit, sicut cooperantur instrumenta principali agenti. Quarto modo sicut disponens materiam ad effectum agentis principalis suscipiendum. Primis ergo duobus modis in nulla actione aliquid Deo cooperatur propter perfectam ejus potentiam, quae auxilio non indiget, et propter perfectam sapientiam, quae non indiget consilio, Isai. 40, 13: *quis adjuvit spiritum domini, aut quis consiliarius ejus fuit ?* Sed tertio modo cooperatur aliqua creatura Deo in aliqua actione, non tamen in omnibus. Cum enim Deus sit primum agens omnium naturalium actionum, quidquid natura agit, hoc efficit quasi instrumentale agens cooperans primo agenti, quod est Deus. Sed quaedam sunt quae sibi Deus retinuit, immediate ea operans; et in his creatura Deo non cooperatur hoc tertio modo, sed quarto modo potest ei cooperari; sicut patet in creatione animae rationalis, quam immediate Deus producit, sed tamen natura disponit materiam ad animae rationalis receptionem. Et quia recreatio animae rationalis creationi ipsius respondet, ideo in emundatione ipsius immediate operatur; nec aliquis ei quantum ad hoc cooperatur tertio modo, sed quarto; et hoc dupliciter: vel ex opere operante, sive docendo, sive merendo; et sic homines ei cooperantur in peccatorum remissione, de quibus dicitur 1 Corinth. 3, 9: *Dei adiutores sumus*, vel ex opere operato, sicut qui conferunt sacramenta, quae ad gratiam disponunt, per quam fit remissio peccatorum; et haec est cooperatio ministerii, quae ministris Ecclesiae competit, de quibus dicitur 1 Corinth. 4, 1: *sic nos existimet homo ut ministros Christi*.

effectuate that grace in us, but only disposes us to its reception.¹⁵⁰ It is interesting nevertheless to see that at this point the young Thomas is more willing to grant some measure of causal efficacy to the sacraments than to the incarnate Word's humanity. For example, while the Eucharist is fully subservient and wholly dependent upon the divine power of God as its principle cause, and finds its sacramental efficacy in Christ's sacrificial death, yet it acts efficiently in transmitting the merit of that atoning sacrifice to the recipient of the sacrament.¹⁵¹ However, Thomas is also careful to clarify that this transmission is limited to effectively disposing the soul to receive the infusion of actual sanctifying grace which finds its ultimate cause in the divine; thus any claim to a direct causal efficacy of grace by the sacrament itself is judiciously avoided.¹⁵²

There is, as we have already discussed, a certain amount of overlap in Aquinas' treatment of the humanity of Christ between the *Scriptum* and *De veritate*, so that at times Thomas appears, very much like his *Sentences* commentary, to restrict Christ's causality

¹⁵⁰ III Sent., d. 13, q. 2, a. 1, ad 3: "Ad tertium dicendum, quod in actione aliqua potest aliquid esse medium dupliciter; scilicet quantum ad perfectionem, et quantum ad dispositionem tantum: sicut natura est medium in operatione qua Deus producit animam sensibilem, quia ipsa perfectio ultima fit mediante natura; sed in operatione qua producit animam rationalem, natura non est medium, nisi quantum ad dispositionem. Similiter dico, quod Deus immediate format mentem nostram quantum ad ipsam perfectionem gratiae, tamen potest ibi cadere medium disponens; et sic gratia fluit a Deo mediante homine Christo: ipse enim disposuit totum humanum genus ad gratiae susceptionem; et hoc tripliciter. Uno modo secundum operationem nostram in ipsum: quia secundum quod credimus ipsum Deum et hominem, justificamur; Rom 3:25: 'quem posuit Deus propitiatorem per fidem in sanguine ipsius.' Alio modo per operationem ipsius (in nos), inquantum scilicet obstaculum removet, pro peccatis totius humani generis satisfaciendo; et etiam inquantum nobis gratiam et gloriam sui operibus meruit; et inquantum pro nobis interpellat ad Deum. Tertio modo ex ipsa affinitate ejus ad nos; quia ex hoc ipso quod naturam humanam assumpsit, humana natura est magis Deo accepta"

¹⁵¹ Cf. Ibid., d. 19, a. 1, q. 2, ad 4;

¹⁵² For example, Ibid., IV, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, c.: As Bernhard Blankenhorn writes, in this passage Thomas teaches that the sacraments "directly and efficiently cause the sacramental character as well as a certain 'decoration' of the soul, while acting as efficient disposing causes of sanctifying grace. Such disposing activity is really indistinct from the direct infusion of the sacramental character and soul's decoration, for these two modifications of the soul are precisely what prepare us for the exclusively divine infusion of grace. Any direct or perfecting efficient causality of grace by the sacraments is clearly excluded." See "The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet," *Nova et Vetera* 4:2 (2006), pp. 255–294, here at p. 264.

to the realm of merit.¹⁵³ In other passages, however, Aquinas ostensibly claims an efficient instrumental causality for the humanity of the Word as the medium of sanctifying grace. For example, discussing the Pauline doctrine of the supremacy or headship of Christ in Colossians 1 (*quia complacuit in ipso omnem plenitudinem inhabitare*),¹⁵⁴ Thomas argues that because of the proximity of Christ's assumed human nature to the divine nature, that humanity acted as an instrument of the divinity, because it participated in that divine goodness through the grace of union.

As a result there was a fitness in this humanity not only to have grace but also to communicate it to other beings, as the most shining bodies transmit the light of the sun to others. And because in some sense Christ communicates the effects of grace to all rational creatures, this is why He is in some sense the source of all grace in His humanity, just as God is the source of all being. Then, as all the perfection of being is united in God, in Christ the fullness of all grace and virtue is found, and because of it He not only is capable of the work of grace Himself but can bring others to grace. For this reason He has the headship.¹⁵⁵

This is precisely the sort of causal efficacy which in the *Commentary on the Sentences* Thomas—at least at first glance—seemed to reserve for actions that brought about change through the agency of efficient causation, but which he subsequently amended to indicate that Christ's humanity can only be ascribed a dispositive power.¹⁵⁶ By

¹⁵³ E.g., *De veritate*, q. 29, a. 4, ad 9 and 17.

¹⁵⁴ Colossians 1:15-20: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross."

¹⁵⁵ *De veritate*, q. 29, a. 5, c.: Ex quo idoneitas in ea fuit ut non solum gratiam haberet, sed etiam per eam gratia in alios transfunderetur, sicut per corpora magis lucentia lumen solis ad alia transit. Et quia Christus in omnes creaturas rationales quodammodo effectus gratiarum influit, inde est quod ipse est principium quodammodo omnis gratiae secundum humanitatem, sicut Deus est principium omnis esse: unde, sicut in Deo omnis essendi perfectio adunatur, ita in Christo omnis gratiae plenitudo et virtutis invenitur, per quam non solum ipse possit in gratiae opus, sed etiam alios in gratiam adducere. Et per hoc habet capitis rationem.

¹⁵⁶ E.g., III, d. 13, q. 2, a. 1, ad 2; d. 19, a. 1, c.

comparison, in these *Disputed Questions on Truth* there is an ambiguity in pronouncements regarding the soteriological powers of Christ's humanity that seems to mirror a more deep-seated ambiguity in Thomas' mind about the precise status and function of the Word's assumed nature. For example, Aquinas' claim here in the body of q. 29, a. 5 appear to be already forestalled by his previous pronouncements in q. 29, a. 4, ad 9, which gives an exhaustive listing of the causal powers of Christ's humanity in the process of human justification, stressing the disposing efficacy which the Word's human life elicits in the believer, but which is conspicuously bereft of any mention of efficient causality: "Christ as man is said to justify us in two ways: first by His own action, inasmuch as He merited and atoned for us, and secondly by our operation in His regard, in the sense that we are said to be justified by faith in Him."¹⁵⁷

Perhaps this ambiguity is most evident in Aquinas' treatment of the question of the soteriological efficacy of the incarnate Christ's atoning merit. In the *Scriptum*, the Son's merit is primarily a disposing preparatory cause for the reception of grace. In *De veritate*, Thomas' discussion centers largely on the questions of whether and how the Son could merit for us (*pro nobis*). Thomas mounts a series of objections against the possibility of the enfleshed Word meriting for us, perhaps the most convincing such objection being the charge that "Christ merited only inasmuch as He was a man, but other men cannot merit for others condignly, so then neither could Christ."¹⁵⁸ Aquinas begins to counter this and other such objections by making two general arguments about soteriological meritorious actions: A human action informed by grace has value for

¹⁵⁷ "Ita etiam Christus, secundum quod homo, dupliciter nos iustificare dicitur. Uno modo secundum suam actionem, in quantum nobis meruit et pro nobis satisfecit . . . Alio modo per operationem nostram in ipsum secundum quod dicimur per fidem eius iustificari."

¹⁵⁸ *De veritate*, q. 29, a. 7, obj.1: Christus enim non meruit nisi secundum quod homo. Sed alii homines non possunt aliis mereri ex condigno. Ergo nec Christus.

obtaining salvation in two ways which correspond to the two manners in which humanity falls short of attaining beatitude. First, humans fall short in regard to dignity, so as sinners we do are neither suited nor worthy of eternal life, whereas meritorious actions would be one that is worthy of glory because of its inherent dignity and aptness for beatitude. Thus, just as “an act of sin leads to a certain deformity of the soul, a meritorious act leads to the soul’s adornment and dignity. From this there arises merit that is called *condign*.”¹⁵⁹ Secondly, humans fall short of beatitude because the penalty of original sin impedes their attainment of glory. So a human action is “related to glory much like the price paid to free a man from a penalty due. Under this aspect the human action has the character of satisfaction.”¹⁶⁰ According to Thomas, in both of these respects Christ’s actions were more efficacious than those of other men. Because by

the actions of other men only the one acting is made suited for the reception of glory, because one man cannot exercise a spiritual influence upon another. As a consequence one cannot merit grace or eternal life for another *condignly*. But Christ in His humanity could exercise spiritual influence upon other men. His actions could accordingly cause in others suitability [or fittingness: *idoneitatem*] for the winning of glory. He could therefore merit *condignly* for others, just as He could exercise influence upon others, inasmuch as His humanity was “the instrument of His divinity,” as Damascene teaches.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, a. 7, co: Quorum primum est indignitas personae; sicut patet in eo qui non habet caritatem, qui non est idoneus nec dignus quod habeat vitam aeternam: et secundum hoc, opus humanum valet ad vitam aeternam consequendam, in quantum per ipsum quaedam dignitas et idoneitas in homine consequitur ad consecutionem gloriae. Sicut enim actus peccati redit in quamdam animae deformitatem, ita et actus meritorius in quemdam animae decorem et dignitatem; et ex hoc dicitur meritum *condignum*.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid: Aliud per quod deficit homo a consecutione gloriae, est aliquod impedimentum superveniens, ut homo qui alias est dignus, gloriam non consequatur; et hoc est reatus alicuius poenae temporalis. Et sic opus humanum ordinatur ad gloriam quasi per modum cuiusdam pretii, quo a reatu poena absolvitur; et ex hoc habet opus humanum rationem satisfactionis.

¹⁶¹ Ibid: Quantum ergo ad utrumque horum, opus Christi efficacius fuit operibus aliorum hominum. Nam per opus alterius hominis non redditur idoneus ad gloriae perceptionem nisi ille qui operatur, eo quod unus homo in alium spiritualiter influere non potest: et ideo unus alii ex *condigno* mereri non potuit gratiam vel vitam aeternam. Sed Christus secundum suam humanitatem spiritualiter influere potuit in alios homines: unde et eius opus in aliis causare potuit idoneitatem ad consecutionem gloriae. Et ideo potuit aliis ex *condigno* mereri, secundum quod influere in alios poterat, in quantum erat humanitas eius divinitatis instrumentum, secundum Damascenum.

So Thomas appears to frame his response in terms of instrumental causality, but a question nevertheless remains as to what exactly Christ's humanity is effectuating instrumentally. A long tradition of Thomist commentators and scholars has answered that vital question by positing that here we encounter the first articulation of Aquinas' mature understanding of efficient instrumental causality in his Christological writings.¹⁶² According to this interpretation, in this passage Thomas is positing that the enfleshed Son was indeed able to merit for others, since as an instrument of the divinity, his incarnate humanity could exert efficient causality upon others by configuring them for the reception of saving grace.¹⁶³ But this is a fundamental misreading of the text, particularly of the crucial term *idoneitas*, which Aquinas consistently employs—from his earliest work up through the *Disputed Questions on Truth*—to denote a certain suitability or fittingness or aptness in the soul for the reception of grace, rather than the salvific grace itself.¹⁶⁴ In other words, Christ's meritorious incarnational activity does not directly

¹⁶² See, among others, Palémon Glorieux, "Le mérite du Christ selon St. Thomas," *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 10 (1930), pp. 622-649.

¹⁶³ For example, Jean-Pierre Torrell claims that in Aquinas' work, the "transition to a true instrumental causality only occurs between questions 27 and 29 of the *De veritate*: from this point on, not only does the humanity of Christ truly work toward the production of grace, thus leaving its mark on this grace, but grace is also no longer simply divine but properly 'Christian' as well." In other words, it is only at this juncture in Thomas' Christology that he proposes a mediatorial role for Christ that takes full account of the mediatorial role of the assumed humanity in the transmission of a truly Christo-conforming form of grace. See Torrell, "Christ in the 'Spirituality' of St. Thomas," in idem, *Christ and Spirituality in St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. B. Blankenhorn (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of American Press, 2011), pp. 74-109, here at p. 92, note 43; originally published as "Le Christ dans la 'spiritualité' de saint Thomas," in *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans*, ed. K. Emery, Jr. and J. Wawrykow (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1998), pp. 197-219.

¹⁶⁴ E.g., III d. 19, a. 1, q1a. 1, c.: Alio modo dicitur efficiens, disponens materiam ad recipiendum formam: et sic dicitur peccatum delere ille qui meretur peccati deletionem, quia ex merito efficitur aliquis dignus quasi materia disposita ad recipiendum gratiam, per quam peccata deleantur. Hoc autem contingit dupliciter: vel sufficienter, vel insufficienter. Sufficienter quidem disposita est materia, quando fit necessitas ad formam: et similiter sufficienter aliquis per meritum disponitur ad aliquid, quando illud sibi efficitur debitum; et hoc est meritum condigni. In another way, is said to be efficient, disposing the matter for receiving form; consequently, the deletion of sin is called a sin to destroy he who merits, because it is made from the merit of the matter disposed to receive the grace to be worthy of, as it were, by which sins may be blotted out. Now this happens in two ways: either adequately or inadequately. To sufficiency, was disposed in the matter, when it is made to the form of necessity: and in like manner sufficiently through the

produce grace in the soul of the believer, but instead causally disposes the soul to receive this saving gift from God. As Aquinas explained earlier in the question, meritorious actions are those activities that are worthy of glory because of their inherent dignity and aptness for beatitude. As incarnate, Christ's life and actions were of greater dignity, more worthy of glory, than those of other human beings,¹⁶⁵ because they were not merely the earthly activities of a man, but because they were also the actions of a divine Person, and "for that reason were invested with an infinite dignity that rendered them more than condignly worthy of all the graces to be given to men."¹⁶⁶ This is the sense in which Aquinas understands how the atoning work of Christ's assumed humanity merits for us (*pro nobis*). As yet, Thomas has not developed a more fully articulated concept of the being of the God man (*Chistus in se*) which will allow him to elaborate a fuller role for the humanity of Christ, as an instrument of the divinity, in the economy of salvation.

3. The Book on the Truth of the Catholic Faith against the Errors of the Infidels

After completing his three-year regency as a master of theology at the University of Paris, in either late 1260 or early 1261, Aquinas was assigned as a Lector to the Dominican priory of San Domenico in Orvieto, north of Rome, and charged with the task of preparing his fellow brothers in the Order of Friars Preachers for their principal pastoral tasks of preaching and hearing confessions.¹⁶⁷ Thomas' tenure here coincided with the

merit of a person is disposed to something, when that is accomplished to himself his due; This is called condign.

¹⁶⁵ *De veritate*, q. 29, a. 7, ad.1: Christus, secundum quod homo, est aliis hominibus dignior.

¹⁶⁶ William D. Lynn, *Christ's Redemptive Merit: The Nature of Its Causality According to St. Thomas*, *Analecta Gregoriana*, Vol. 115 (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1962), p. 143.

¹⁶⁷ There is continuing uncertainty about the precise chronology of Thomas' academic appointments in this period of his teaching career. See Torrell, *Saint Thomas*, pp. 117-120.

time period when Orvieto became one of the main centers of the papal court, and Pope Urban IV resided there along with the administrative Roman curia, a large contingent of the Holy See's diplomatic corps, and a *studium generale* or papal school with faculties of theology, law, and grammar, from October 1262 until shortly before his death in late 1264.¹⁶⁸ While there is no documentation that Aquinas was officially attached to the papal palace in Orvieto in any capacity as either a teacher or preacher (i.e., a "Master of the Sacred Palace") during these years, nevertheless a close working relationship apparently arose between the Dominican friar and the Supreme Pontiff.¹⁶⁹ Reportedly at the pope's personal urging, Thomas composed the liturgy for the newly instituted feast of Corpus Christi, wrote the *oposculum* known as *Contra errores Graecorum, ad Urbanum IV Pontificem Maximum* in 1263-64 as a contribution to Urban IV's efforts at reunion with the Eastern Church, and undertook the massive task of assembling the *Glossa continua super Evangelia* or *Catenae aurea* (Golden Chain), a running commentary on the four Gospels composed of extensive excerpts from the Church Fathers.

The library attached to the papal *studium* gave Thomas unprecedented access to patristic material long lost to Western theology. At this time, Aquinas came into contact with the *acta* and *gesta* (proceedings) of the first five Ecumenical Councils contained in the *Synodicon*, a lengthy compendium of originally Greek documents, including conciliar *acta* and episcopal correspondence, which were arranged and translated into Latin by Rusticus, a Roman deacon and nephew of Pope Vigilius, during his sojourn in Constantinople in the later 560s. The sole Latin manuscript copy of this work is found in the twelfth-century codex Casinensis, in which the *Synodicon* forms the second half of

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Weisheipl, pp. 147-162.

¹⁶⁹ Torrell, *Saint Thomas*, pp. 136-138.

the so-called *Collectio Casinensis*. One of Rusticus' primary objectives was to provide the Latin west with a record of the aftermath of the First Council of Ephesus in 431, particularly the then recent Christological debates that had precipitated the so-called Three Chapters controversy (543-553), an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to reconcile non-Chalcedonian Christians and advocates of the emerging Christological consensus.¹⁷⁰ In putting together his own account, entitled the *Synodicon*, Rusticus drew extensively on an already existing documentary compilations which are now lost, some of which had been compiled and annotated more than a century earlier (ca. 435-436).¹⁷¹ It seems that from this and other rare manuscripts in the papal library, Aquinas gained first-hand knowledge of important citations and paraphrases of Christological works of by Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria, John Chrysostom, in addition to the seminal Christological texts contained in the conciliar documents of Ephesus and Chalcedon. Indeed, it is fair to say that Thomas had the most extensive familiarity with the two great Christological councils and the Greek Fathers of any Medieval Latin scholastic.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ See Richard M. Price, "The Three Chapters Controversy and the Council of Chalcedon," in *The Crisis of the Oikoumene: The Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-century Mediterranean*, Studies in the Early Middle Ages 14, ed. C.M. Chazelle and C. Cubitt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), pp. 17-38.

¹⁷¹ Cf. U.M. Lang, "Christological Themes in Rusticus Diaconus' *Contra Acephalos disputatio*," in *Studia Patristica* 38, pp., 429-434.

¹⁷² Thomas gained access to the *Collectio Casinensis* probably no later than the year 1264, when the papal court departed Orvieto. See *Collectionis Casinensis sive Synodici a Rustico Diacono compositi*, Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum vols.3 and 4, ed., Eduard Schwartz (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1922-1929). Aquinas' familiarity with later Ecumenical Councils, such as Constantinople II (553) can also be dated to the period circa 1264/65, while his encounter with the *acta* of Constantinople III cannot be dated earlier than 1271, the first approximate date when he quotes from the documents of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (in *ST III* q.18, a.5 and q.20, aa.1-2). Aquinas' debt to the rediscovered Chalcedonian material was initially explored by Gottfried Geenen, "En marge du concile de Chalcédoine. Les textes du quatrième Concile dans les œuvres de saint Thomas," *Angelicum* 29 (1952): 43-59; and "The Council of Chalcedon in the Theology of St. Thomas," in *From an Abundant Spring: The Walter Farrell Memorial Volume of the Thomist* (New York: P. J. Kennedy, 1952), pp. 172-217. More recently, Louis-Jacques Bataillon, "Saint Thomas et les Pères: de la Catena à la Tertia Pars," in *Ordo sapientiae et amoris: image et message de saint Thomas d'Aquin à travers les récentes études historiques, herméneutiques et doctrinales: hommage au professeur Jean-Pierre Torrell*, *Studia Friburgensia* 78, ed. C.-J. Pinto de Oliveira (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1993), pp. 15-36; Leo J. Elders, "Thomas Aquinas and

In addition to the material that he fortuitously encountered with the arrival of the papal collection to Orvieto, Thomas was also assiduous in commissioning new Latin translations of Greek works heretofore unavailable in the West, such as the biblical commentaries of Theophylact of Ohrid, an important Byzantine scholar who lived about a century before Thomas' birth, who was completely unknown to Latin Scholasticism before his extensive use by Aquinas in the later part of the *Catena aurea*.¹⁷³ The profound effect of these newly found and translated patristic texts on Thomas' Christology is already evident in the first volume of the *Glossa continua* on the Gospel of Matthew, finished in 1264 and dedicated to his patron Pope Urban IV. In the opening passage of the Matthean *catena*, commenting on the first sentence of Matthew's Messianic genealogy ("The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham" MT 1:1), Thomas employs heretofore inaccessible material from several key works by Cyril of Alexandria and other Greek patristic fathers to counter the sort of misreading of the incarnation of the Word associated with Nestorianism: "The error of Nestorius was that he taught that a man only was born of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom the Word of God received not into Unity of person and inseparable fellowship,"¹⁷⁴ With

the Fathers of the Church," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists*, ed. I. Backus (New York: E.J. Brill, 1997), pp. 337-366; and Martin Morard, "Thomas d'Aquin lecteur des conciles," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 98 (2005), pp. 211-365, have greatly expanded our understanding of Thomas' indebtedness to the Councils.

¹⁷³ See Joseph Reuss, "Der Mt-, Mk- und Jo-Kommentar des Theophylakt" in *Matthäus-, Markus und*

Johannes-Katenen nach handschriftlichen Quellen untersucht (Münster: Aschendorff, 1941 [= *Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen*, vol. 18/4-5]), pp. 221-237; Ernest W. Saunders, "Theophylact of Bulgaria as Writer and Biblical Interpreter," *Biblical Research* 2 (1957), pp. 31-44; Andrew J. Brown, "The Gospel Commentary of Theophylact, and a Neglected Manuscript in Oxford," *Novum Testamentum* 49 (2007), pp. 185-196; Roberto Andrés Soto Ayala "Teofilacto de Ocrida y la educación real: λόγοι ἐν τῷ ὄντι πορφυρογέννητον κύριον Κωνσταντῖνον (Παίδεια Βασιλική) c. 1081-1094 d.C.," *Byzantion Nea Hellás* 31 (2012), pp. 71-89.

¹⁷⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Catena aurea in quatuor Evangelia*, Vol. 1, ed. A. Guarienti (Taurini: Marietti, 1953), *Expositio in Matthaum*, cap. 1, lec. 1: "Nestorii autem perversitas fuit ut hominem tantummodo ex beata Maria virgine genitum praedicaret, quem verbum Dei non in unitatem personae, et in

the very next quote, Thomas offers a powerful rebuttal by offering extended extracts from two sections of Cyril's *Epistle to the Monks of Egypt*, an encyclical written in Easter 429, at the commencement of the Nestorian Christological controversy.¹⁷⁵ In this letter, Cyril is at pains to inform his monks on the grave dangers inherent in Nestorius' rejection of the title of *Theotokos* (Mother of God) for Mary, tracing this serious misinterpretation of the Virgin's true role in salvation to a profound confusion as to who Mary gave birth to in Bethlehem. For Nestorius, such a title seemed to threaten the full reality of Christ's humanity—in his mind, the term 'Christotokos,' the bearer/mother of Christ—seemed more fitting, a term denoting the distinctively human nature of the one the Virgin had borne.¹⁷⁶

societatem inseparabilem recepisset.” This quotation is taken from the appended portion of Augustine's very late work (c. 429) *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum liber unus*.

¹⁷⁵ PG 77, 9-40; the critical text can be found in *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum, Concilium universale Ephesenum*, Tome 1, Vol. 1, ed. E. Schwartz (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1927), pp.10-23, and an English translation in John A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy : Its History, Theology, and Texts* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2004), pp. 245-261.

¹⁷⁶ Nestorius, *III Epistula ad Celestinem*: “I have learned that Cyril, the most distinguished bishop of the city of Alexandria, has become worried about reports against him that we received, and is now hunting for subterfuges to avoid a Holy Synod taking place due to these reports. In the meantime he is devising some other disturbances over terms and has chosen [as a point of controversy] the term Theotokos and Christotokos: the first he allows, but as for Christotokos, sometimes he removes it from the gospels, and sometimes he allows it, on the basis of what I believe is a kind of excessive prudence. In the case of the term Theotokos, I am not opposed to those who want to say it, unless it should advance to the confusion of natures in the manner of the madness of Apollinaris or Arius. Nonetheless, I have no doubt that the term Theotokos is inferior to the term Christotokos, as the latter is mentioned by the angels and the gospels. And if I were not speaking to Your Worship who is already so knowledgeable, I would need to give a very long discourse on this topic. But even without a discourse, it is known in every way to Your Beatitude, that if we should think that there are two groups opposed to each other, the one using only the term Theotokos, the other only Anthopotokos, and each group draws [others] to what it confesses or, if they have not accomplished this, puts [others] in danger of falling from the church, it would be necessary to assign someone to such an affair if it arises who exercises concern for both groups and heals the danger of both parties by means of the term taken from the gospels that signifies both natures. For as I said, the term Christotokos keeps the assertion of both parties to the proper limits, because it both removes the blasphemy of Paul of Samosata, who claimed that Christ the Lord of all was simply a human being, and also flees the wickedness of Arius and Apollinaris. Now I have written these very things to the most distinguished bishop of Alexandria, as Your Beatitude can tell from the copies I have attached to this letter of mine, as well as from the copies of what he wrote to us. Moreover, with God's help it has also been agreed to announce a world-wide synod in order to inquire into the other ecclesiastical matters. For I do not think it will be difficult to investigate a uncertainty over words, and it is not a hindrance for a discussion of the divinity of Christ the Lord.” The original Greek text has been lost, the letter only survives in a fifth-century Latin

However, for Cyril, the rejection of the term Theotokos can only be the result of a dangerous misapprehension of how the preexistent Word came to be enfleshed: “The Apostle says of the Only-begotten, ‘Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God’ [Phil 2:6]. Who then is this who is in the form of God? Moreover, how did He empty Himself, and humbled Himself to the likeness of man?”¹⁷⁷ As Cyril argues, if Nestorians wish to divide Christ into two parts, that is, a man alongside the Word, and claim that it was the one born of the Virgin who was emptied of this divine glory at the incarnation, then they must first demonstrate “what form and equality with the Father are understood to be, and did exist, which might suffer any manner of emptying;” however, since there is “no creature, in its own proper nature, equal with the Father;” how then can it be said that this creature was emptied if he was a man by nature and born of a woman?¹⁷⁸ Conversely, if they claim that the term *kenosis* only denotes the dwelling of the divine Word within the man the Virgin brought into the world, Cyril questions whether this in fact connotes a true self-emptying? If this is the case, then a biblical passage like John 14:23, where Christ says that “If any man loves Me, he will keep My saying, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him,” means that the Father comes to dwell in those that love Him. But does that also indicate that in such instances the Father undergoes a kenotic self-emptying of His glory as well, and also takes on the form of a servant when He makes His abode in

version by Marius Mercator published in *Nestoriana: die Fragmente des Nestorius gesammelt*, ed. F. Loofs and S.A. Cook (Halle: M. Niemeyer, 1905), pp. 181-182.

¹⁷⁷ Cyril of Alexandria, *Letter to the Monks of Egypt*, c. 13.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

the hearts of them that love Him? Or, Cyril concludes, what about the Holy Spirit, “does He fulfil an assumption of human flesh when He dwells in our hearts?”¹⁷⁹

It is important to note that in these extracts Cyril presents his critique of Nestorianism specifically as a critique of Nestorius’ reading of the Kenotic hymn, and he will go on to offer in its place a rectified interpretation of Philippians 2:6. Indeed, the first eleven verses of Philippians 2 feature so prominently in many of Cyril’s anti-Nestorian polemics that one scholar has characterized the Alexandrian’s Christological writings as an extended exegesis of the Kenotic hymn, a reading of that hymn which focusses to an unprecedented degree on the profound soteriological significance of the Word taking on the form of a slave—that is, on assuming a human nature—in order to perform the saving work of the Cross.¹⁸⁰ Christ’s center of personal unity remains the pre-existent Word, but attention is shifted to the servant-form assumed by the Son, which does not entail a diminution of the divine essence, but rather the assumption of a new human mode of being undertaken for the sake of his salvific mission. As we saw in the first chapter, this focus on the Christ Hymn is not unique to Cyril, but is rather a thematic concern he shares with many other writers of the patristic era. In fact, Philippians 2:5-11

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, c. 14.

¹⁸⁰ Sarah Coakley, “Does Kenosis Rest on a Mistake? Three Kenotic Models in Patristic Exegesis,” in *Exploring Kenotic Christology: The Self-Emptying of God*, ed. C. Stephen Evans (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Publishing, 2010), pp. 246-264. Cf. Frances M. Young, *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background*, (London: SCM Press, 1983), pp. 255-68. *The Acts of Chalcedon*, Session II, contains the highly important *Letter* 39 of Cyril to John of Antioch which uses the Kenotic hymn as the basis for an orthodox interpretation of the incarnational union and the condemnation of Nestorius: “Although he was born according to his flesh, as just said, of the holy Virgin, yet God the Word came down from above and from heaven. He “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant,” and was called the Son of Man, yet remaining what he was, that is to say God. For he is unchanging and unchangeable according to nature; considered already as one with his own Flesh, he is said to have come down from heaven. He is also called the Man from heaven, being perfect in his Divinity and perfect in his Humanity, and considered as in one Person. For one is the Lord Jesus Christ, although the difference of his natures is not unknown, from which we say the ineffable union was made.” See also Paul L. Gavrilyuk, “Nestorianism Countered: Cyril’s Theology of the Divine Kenosis,” Chapter 6 of *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 135-71.

was a scriptural passage of particular importance in his Christological formulations. For Nestorius, on the other hand, the Kenotic hymn is a paradigmatic scriptural proof that the pre-existent Word did not assume a human nature, but rather conjoined to himself another *prosopon*, or human person, in a union of love—a union so strong that even though the two natures, divine and human, remained completely separate, nonetheless they were worshipped as one because of their shared dignity and the singular agreement of their will and purpose in carrying out the Father’s salvific plan. According to Nestorius, *prosopon*/person designates only that observable form that the Son took on in order to make himself known to the world. Hence, when Scripture relates that when the “Word took on the form of a slave (Philippians 2:7) for his person, but not for his nature.”¹⁸¹ But for Cyril, this duality of persons cannot be overcome merely by stipulating that Christ, as our object of worship, is worshipped as a single entity due only to the unbroken unity of purpose of the divine person and human person. Only a divine nature and a human nature united indissolubly—hypostatically—in the one person of the incarnate Christ, and carrying out the distinctive yet joint work of the Cross, can be worshipped as the one true salvific God-man.

Thus, in a text like Cyril’s *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* posits a vigorous notion of causal efficacy to Christ’s human nature working in unison with the divine nature in the economy of salvation, a notion of that unambiguously indicates the efficient causal efficacy of such distinctively human activities as the incarnate Word’s human touch in the miraculous work of healing. And it is precisely this text that Aquinas goes on to quote in his subsequent *Catena* of the Gospel of Luke:

¹⁸¹ Nestorius, *The Bazaar of Heracleides*, trans. G.R. Driver and L. Hodgson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 230.

But although as God He was able to drive away diseases by His word, He nevertheless touches them, showing that His flesh was powerful to apply remedies, since it was the flesh of God; for as fire, when applied to a brazen vessel, imprints on it the effect of its own heat, so the omnipotent Word of God, when He united to Himself in real assumption a living virgin temple, endued with understanding, implanted in it a participation of His own power.¹⁸²

This quotation from Cyril is significant for a number of reasons, most importantly in the way that it underscores the fact that it is Christ's human flesh—due to its hypostatic union with the divinity of the Word—which is the instrument through which God carries out his salvific God-human activity in the world, and this clarified understanding of the efficient causal efficacy of Christ's human instrumentality is a new feature of Thomas' Christology that becomes fully apparent in his next major work, the *Liber de veritate catholicae fidei contra errores infidelium*.

The precise purpose and even the exact overall structuring principle of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, as Thomas' book on the "Truth of the Catholic Faith against the Errors of the Infidels" came to be known, remain in dispute. However, a general pattern of creation as a procession from God and a return to its source through the agency of the Word can be perceived as a general architectonic form in the *Contra Gentiles*.¹⁸³ This *exitus/reditus* pattern, in which the divine, while remaining immanent in itself, emanates outward or downward due to a superfluity of its goodness and being, and then reverts or returns to itself, is found in such neo-Platonic sources as Proclus, which Aquinas would

¹⁸² Thomas Aquinas, *Catena aurea in quatuor Evangelia*, Vol. 2, ed. A. Guarienti (Taurini: Marietti, 1953), *Expositio in Lucam*, cap.4, lec. 9: Quamvis autem ut Deus potuisset omnes verbo pellere morbos, tamen tangit eos, ostendens propriam carnem efficacem ad praestanda remedia, nam caro Dei erat. Sicut enim ignis appositus vasi aeneo imprimit ei propriae caliditatis effectum; sic omnipotens Dei verbum, cum univit sibi veraciter assumptum templum ex virgine animatum et intellectivum, particeps suae potestatis, eius effectum inseruit.

¹⁸³ Questions regarding the compositional purpose and scope, as well as the theological structuring of the SCG, are explored most fully in Thomas S. Hibbs, *Dialectic and Narrative in Aquinas: An Interpretation of the Summa Contra Gentiles* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995). Cf. Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 101-116.

have become familiar with during his sojourn in Orvieto.¹⁸⁴ Unlike his Neo-Platonic sources, Thomas' conception of creaturely procession does not entail a necessary divine emanation, but is rather based on God's divine freedom and reflects his goodness and wisdom. As created, human beings can achieve goods proportionate to their creaturely natures, but their longing for happiness or beatitude can never be satisfied by created and finite goods, but by a non-contingent final goodness, a supernatural *telos* that is complicated by the mankind's fall into sinfulness. This sets the stage for Thomas' account in the fourth and final section of the *Contra Gentiles* of humanity's redemption and ultimate teleological fulfilment through the mediation of Christ the God-man.

The composition of Book IV of the *Contra Gentiles*, indeed of the work as whole, is also a point of contention, although it is now accepted that Thomas commenced work on the first section in 1259 while he was still in Paris, and that the fourth and final section was completed by shortly before his departure from Orvieto in 1265.¹⁸⁵ The late dating for Book IV places this Christological portion of the *Contra Gentiles* well after Aquinas' retrieval of the conciliar materials located in the Papal court at Orvieto, and the beginning of his extensive employment of that patristic material in the early volumes of the *Golden Chain*. Thomas' increasing utilization of these historical documents is quite evident in topics covered in *SGC* which follows to an unprecedented degree a historical

¹⁸⁴ See, for example, Paul Rorem, "'Procession and Return' in Thomas Aquinas and His Predecessors," *The Princeton Seminary Bulletin* (1992), pp. 147-163. At the beginning of the *SCG*, Thomas briefly mentions the exitus/reditus structure which informs the first three books; I, 9, [4]: *Intendentibus igitur nobis per viam rationis proseguere ea quae de Deo ratio humana investigare potest, primo, occurrit consideratio de his quae Deo secundum seipsum conveniunt; secundo, vero, de processu creaturarum ab ipso; tertio, autem, de ordine creaturarum in ipsum sicut in finem.* "We are aiming, then, to set out following the way of the reason and to inquire into what the human reason can investigate about God. In this aim the first consideration that confronts us is of that which belongs to God in Himself [Book I]. The second consideration concerns the coming forth of creatures from God [Book II]. The third concerns the ordering of creatures to God as to their end [Book III]."

¹⁸⁵ Cf. R.A. Gauthier, "Introduction historiques à S. Thomas d'Aquin," in *Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Contra Gentiles*, texte de l'édition léonine, trans. R. Bernier and M. Corvez, vol. 1 (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1961), pp. 31-59.

adumbration of the unfolding Christological debates during the patristic era. After an opening section on the Trinity comprised of fourteen chapters and a further twelve chapters focusing on questions regarding the Holy Spirit, Aquinas devotes an extensive portion of Book IV, comprising chapters 27 to 39, tracing various heretical misapprehensions of the Hypostatic Union, by such figures as Photinus and Sabellius (IV, 27), the Manicheans (29), Apollinaris (31), Arius (32), Nestorius and Theodore of Mopsuestia (34), Eutyches (35), and Macarius of Antioch (36).

This deeper engagement with the historical development of Christological thought has important consequences for two aspects of Thomas' own developing Christology that we have already touched upon. First, Aquinas, in delving deeper into the patristic sources becomes even more aware of the contested scriptural sources used in the Christological debates of the first six centuries of the Church, which in turn stimulates Aquinas to meditate even more deeply on the Biblical witness of Christ's person and mission. As a Master of the Sacred Page, one of Thomas' primary duties since his days as a student in Paris was to study, explicate, and preach on the word of God, and Thomas' reliance on the authority of the Bible is plainly seen in his *Commentary on the Sentences* and in all the other works we have looked at up to this point. Nevertheless, Thomas' readings in patristic scriptural commentaries, already manifest in his extensive use of them in the *Catena Aurea*, is even more evident in the attention he pays certain Biblical passages in *Summa Contra Gentiles* IV. Without doubt, the Kenotic hymn is the most cited scriptural pericope in the fourth book of the *SCG*, with over twenty-five quotations or allusions to Philippians 2:5-11. Indeed, Thomas begins his extensive exposition of the enfleshment of the Word in c. 27 ("The Incarnation of the Word According to the

Tradition of Scripture”) by citing two biblical texts—John 1:14 (“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us”) from the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel (1:1-18)—along with Philippians 2:6-7 (“Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man”) which best establish that the incarnate Christ was truly both God and man. As we shall see, the Johannine Prologue will prove to be of even greater importance in the development of Thomas’ Christological when he came to compose his *Commentary on John* shortly after his completion of *Contra Gentiles*. The kenotic hymn, on the other hand, can be traced as a theological leitmotif throughout the rest of *SCG IV*. In the very next chapter, discussing Photinus’ assertion that Christ had only a human nature, and whatever divinity he did possess was due only to his participation in the Father’s divine glory which merited by His deeds, Aquinas counters that if this were the case then the Philippian hymn’s claim that the pre-existent Word, “Who being in the form of God emptied Himself . . . taking the form of a servant” (2:6-7) would be meaningless, since Photinus only spoke of a glorification of the man through participation, and not a kenosis of God.

In *SCG c. 29*, Thomas is principally concerned with claims made by groups such as the Manicheans that in the Incarnation the Son assumed an illusory human nature, nothing more than a fictitious body, so that his various human actions, such as “being born, eating, drinking, walking, suffering, and being buried—were done not in truth but in a kind of false appearance,”¹⁸⁶ thereby rendering the whole mystery of the Incarnation

¹⁸⁶ *SCG IV*, 29, 1: Unde nec verus homo esse potuit, sed apparens: neque ea quae secundum hominem gessit, sicut quod natus est, quod comedit, bibit, ambulavit, passus est et sepultus, in veritate fuisse, sed in quadam simulatione, consequitur. Et sic patet quod totum incarnationis mysterium ad quandam fictionem deducunt.

to little more than an elaborate ruse. As Aquinas points out, among other things this position wipes out the authority of Scripture, since the mere appearance of flesh is not a true embodiment, and the likeness of walking is not walking at all; hence, the biblical texts must be lying when they make claims such as: “The Word was made flesh” (John 1:14)—if Jesus’ body was only a phantasm. It also lies when it says that Jesus Christ walked, ate, died, and was buried—if these things took place only in an apparent phantasy. Most importantly, if Christ’s redemptive life, suffering, death, and resurrection in the body were nothing more than a hoax, then there was nothing truly redemptive about his seemingly human existence: “if Christ did not have true blood, He did not truly shed it for us. Therefore, we are neither truly justified nor truly redeemed. Therefore, there is no usefulness to being in Christ.”¹⁸⁷ But the Kenotic hymn (2:7) expressly denies this misinterpretation of the Word’s enfleshment, for it expressly claims that the Word emptied himself and took on a true human nature, the form of a servant—that is, a humanity prone to all the mortal weaknesses of post-lapsarian humanity, including the ability to truly suffer and die, and it precisely Christ’s veritable human suffering and death which allows him to redeem us.¹⁸⁸ Thomas also uses the Philippian hymn to defend the communication of idioms, which predicates both divine and human attributes to the one person of the incarnate Word, but as Aquinas points, for Nestorius and Theodore of Mopsuestia, it was unbecoming to attribute qualities such as been born of a woman or that he suffered, died, was buried; although they would concede that there are

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 29, 13: Si igitur Christus non habuit verum sanguinem, neque vere pro nobis ipsum fudit. Neque igitur vere iustificati, neque vere redempti sumus. Ad nihil igitur utile est esse in Christo.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 29, 7: Vel per hoc quod dicit Philipp. 2-7: in similitudinem hominum factus, et habitu inventus ut homo. Hic autem sensus per ea quae adduntur excluditur. Non enim dicit solum in similitudinem carnis, sed addit peccati: quia Christus veram quidem carnem habuit, sed non carnem peccati, quia in eo peccatum non fuit, sed similem carni peccati, quia carnem passibilem habuit, qualis est facta caro hominis ex peccato. Similiter fictionis intellectus excluditur ab hoc quod dicit in similitudinem hominum factus, per hoc quod dicitur, formam servi accipiens.

certain names which, although they are chiefly befitting to God, are nonetheless communicated to men in a fashion—"Christ," "lord," "holy," and even "son of God"—nothing prevents us from predicating such names of the human Christ, especially since the man Jesus was united to God in special way because of the greater fullness of grace which dwelt within him.¹⁸⁹ However, this attribution of holiness or sonship to Christ used because the Word of God was united to that man only through an indwelling by grace, and the union of wills that follows, is not for God's Word to be made flesh. Again, however, this does not correlate with the statement that the Word, "being in the form of God, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:6-7). Rather, in Nestorius, Christ is divided into two—into that man who is the adoptive son, exalted by the Father for the fullness of his grace, and into God's natural Son who is the Word of God; hence, the Kenotic hymn cannot be understood of that man. For Christ, "if he is human in this manner, was not first in the form of God, so as to be made later in the likeness of man; on the contrary, the existing man was made to share in divinity;" hence he was not emptied, he did not undergo a kenosis, but rather was glorified by the Father. So, the "text must then be understood of the Word of God who first was eternally in the form of God, that is, in the nature of God, and later emptied Himself, made in the likeness of man."¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 32, 2: Sed quia sunt quaedam nomina quae, etsi Deo principaliter conveniant, communicantur tamen hominibus per aliquem modum, sicut Christus, dominus, sanctus, et etiam filius Dei, de huiusmodi nominibus secundum eos nihil prohibet praedicta praedicari. Convenienter enim dicimus secundum eos quod Christus, vel dominus gloriae, vel sanctus sanctorum, vel Dei filius, sit natus de virgine, passus, mortuus et sepultus. Unde et beatam virginem non matrem Dei vel verbi Dei, sed matrem Christi nominandam esse dicunt.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 34, 22: Apostolus dicit, Philipp. 2 de Christo Iesu, quod cum in forma Dei esset, exinanivit semetipsum, formam servi accipiens, in similitudinem hominum factus. Ubi manifestum est si, secundum Nestorium, Christum dividamus in duos, scilicet in hominem illum qui est filius adoptivus, et in filium Dei naturalem, qui est verbum Dei, quod non potest intelligi de homine illo. Ille enim homo, si purus homo sit, non prius fuit in forma Dei, ut postmodum in similitudinem hominum fieret: sed magis e

This defense of the full reality of Christ's assumed humanity as stated in the Philippian's hymn plays a central role in Thomas' subsequent analysis of the hypostatic union; an analysis wherein Aquinas will comprehensively expound the concept of Christological instrumentality which he had been developing on and off since the *Commentary on the Sentences* and the *Disputed Question on Truth*. However, even though the inseparable unity of the Word with humanity is of uppermost in Thomas' mind, he is all too aware that presuming the opposite error, that this union of divinity and humanity occurred in one nature, is equally problematic. According to Thomas, this is precisely the problem with Eutyches, who in order to preserve the unity of the enfleshed Word, posited that the union of God and man was in one nature and not in one person or hypostasis. In response, Aquinas once again calls upon the Kenotic hymn to point out the absurdity of such a claim, and recognize that there must be two nature—or principles of activity—in Christ even after the union. The hymn describes the Word as “in the form of God,” and only then taking on the “form of a servant” (Phil. 2:6-7), and of course, the divine form/nature of God is not the same as the human nature or the *forma servi*. For Thomas, this premise anchors several postulations about the incarnate Christ: nothing receives what it already has, and so, if the form or nature of God and of the servant were the same, the Word would not—since He already had the form of God—have received the form of servant. “Neither, again, can one say that the form of God in Christ is corrupted by the union, because thus after the union Christ would not be God. Nor, again, can one say that the form of the servant was corrupted in the union, because thus the Word would not have received the form of the servant.” But neither can one say that the

converso homo existens divinitatis particeps factus est, in quo non fuit exinanitus, sed exaltatus. Oportet igitur quod intelligatur de verbo Dei, quod prius fuerit ab aeterno in forma Dei, idest in natura Dei, et postmodum exinanivit semetipsum, in similitudinem hominum factus.

form of the servant is mixed thoroughly with the form of God, for things mixed thoroughly do not retain their integrity; rather, each is in part corrupted, and so the Philippians hymn would not say that the Word received the form of the servant, but only some partial aspect of the servant nature. Thus, one can only conclude that in Christ even after the hypostatic union there were two forms, and therefore, two natures.¹⁹¹

As Thomas further elucidates, every nature has a proper operation of its own, for a nature or form is the principle of operation for all beings, and in accord with its form every nature has an identifiable species, i.e., those structuring principle that organize things to be what they are and specify what is proper for them to do. Thus, if the presence of diverse natures in beings indicates diverse forms, where we discern a diversity of natures, so there must also be a diverse array of actions which follow from those natures. Clearly then, if in Christ there were only one form of natural activity, it would follow that in him there would be only one nature from which this action originated; this is precisely the Monophysite heresy that Eutyches fell into: that there is only one nature in the incarnate Word from which Christ's singular divine operation proceeds. But this completely discounts the enfleshed Word's human operations attested by Scripture; therefore, we must conclude that it is false to say there is but one natural

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 36, 4: Natura est secundum quam res aliqua dicitur res naturalis. Dicitur autem res naturalis ex hoc quod habet formam, sicut et res artificialis: non enim dicitur domus antequam habeat formam artis, et similiter non dicitur equus antequam habeat formam naturae suae. Forma igitur rei naturalis est eius natura. Oportet autem dicere quod in Christo sint duae formae, etiam post unionem. Dicit enim apostolus, Philipp. 2, de Christo Iesu, quod, cum in forma Dei esset, formam servi accepit. Non autem potest dici quod sit eadem forma Dei, et forma servi: nihil enim accipit quod iam habet; et sic, si eadem est forma Dei et forma servi, cum iam formam Dei habuisset, non accepisset formam servi. Neque iterum potest dici quod forma Dei in Christo per unionem sit corrupta: quia sic Christus post unionem non esset Deus. Neque iterum potest dici quod forma servi sit corrupta in unione: quia sic non accepisset formam servi. Sed nec dici potest quod forma servi sit permixta formae Dei: quia quae permiscerentur, non manent integra, sed partim utrumque corrumpitur; unde non diceret quod accepisset formam servi, sed aliquid eius. Et sic oportet dicere, secundum verba apostoli, quod in Christo, etiam post unionem, fuerunt duae formae. Ergo duae naturae.

operation proceeding from one nature in Christ.¹⁹² Similarly, we must disavow the claim that there is only one will in Christ, for if there was in Christ but one will, surely it could only be a the divine will, since the divine will which the Word had from eternity He could not lose. However, this raises a soteriological problem in Thomas' mind: the divine will is unrelated to merit because only those who are striving towards perfection can merit, but the eternally divine Word has always possessed Godly perfection. Thus, Christ by His life, death, and resurrection would have merited nothing—whether for Himself, or for us. The exact contrary of this, nevertheless, seems to be taught by the Kenotic hymn, which states: “He was made obedient to the Father even unto death, for which cause God also has exalted Him” (Phil. 2:8-9). What is more, if there was no human will in Christ then it would follow that by His assumed nature the incarnate Word did not have free choice. And if this is the case—Thomas contends—then Christ did not act in a human manner, but after the manner of those animals who lack free choice; hence, nothing in Christ's acts were “virtuous or laudable, nothing a model for imitation by us.”¹⁹³ Yet a diversity of wills is well attested by the Biblical witness, for example, when it relates that Christ said “I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me (John 6:38); and again: “Not My will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42). From these words it is clear that there was in Christ another will apart from the will of the Father. But clearly, there was also in Christ a will common to Him and the

¹⁹² Ibid, 36, 2: Cuiuslibet enim naturae est aliqua operatio propria: nam forma est operationis principium, secundum quam unaquaeque natura habet propriam speciem. Unde oportet quod, sicut diversarum naturarum sunt diversae formae, ita sint et diversae actiones. Si igitur in Christo sit una tantum actio, sequitur quod in eo sit una tantum natura: quod est Eutychianae haeresis. Relinquitur igitur falsum esse quod in Christo sit una tantum operatio.

¹⁹³ Ibid, 36, 6: Si in Christo voluntas humana non fuit, sequitur quod neque secundum naturam assumptam liberi arbitrii fuerit: nam secundum voluntatem est homo liberi arbitrii. Sic igitur non agebat Christus homo ad modum hominis, sed ad modum aliorum animalium, quae libero arbitrio carent. Nihil igitur in eius actibus virtuosum et laudabile, aut nobis imitandum, fuit.

Father. For, just as the Father's and the Son's nature is one, so also is their will; hence, there are two wills in Christ.¹⁹⁴

It is worthwhile to identify Thomas' debt to the Conciliar tradition in these passages and how they inform his argument. Above all, Aquinas writes this portion of the SCG with an attentive eye on the proceedings of the Second Council of Constantinople (convened in 553). The fifth Ecumenical Council, or Constantinople II, was above all an attempt to come to terms with the fractious aftermath of Chalcedon, where various attempts at reconciliation between the Monophysite and orthodox parties had only sown even more confusion and conflict, and the emergence of the notions that in the incarnate Christ the propositions, respectively, that Christ had only one function, operation, or *energeia* (Monoenergism) and a sole divine *thelema* or will (Monotheletism), by restating the Chalcedonian formula with greater clarity. The Council clearly saw that such doctrines were a kind of repristination of the Nestorian view that there was one dominant divine nature or *physis* (Monophysitism) in the Word made flesh. Constantinople II reaffirmed that the one and the same subject of Jesus Christ, as posited in the Chalcedonian creed, is identical with the hypostasis of the eternal Word:

If anyone understands the one hypostasis of our Lord Jesus Christ as admitting the meaning of several hypostases, and so tries to introduce into the mystery of Christ two hypostases or two persons, and after having introduced two persons, speaks of one person as regards dignity, honor and adoration, as Theodore and Nestorius have written senselessly; and if he makes the slanderous assertion that the holy Council of Chalcedon has used the term "one hypostasis" in this impious way and does not confess that the Word of God has been united to the flesh by way of hypostasis

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 36, 8: Ex auctoritate Scripturae manifeste ostenditur in Christo duas voluntates fuisse. Dicit enim ipse, Ioan. 6-38: descendi de caelo non ut faciam voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem eius qui misit me, et Lucae 22-42: non mea voluntas, sed tua fiat; ex quibus patet quod in Christo fuit quaedam voluntas propria eius, praeter voluntatem patris. Manifestum est autem quod in eo fuit voluntas quaedam communis sibi et patri: patris enim et filii, sicut est una natura, ita etiam est una voluntas. Sunt igitur in Christo duae voluntates.

and that, therefore, there is but one hypostasis or person, and that this is the sense in which the holy Council of Chalcedon confessed one hypostasis of our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.¹⁹⁵

Perhaps even more importantly, the texts of Constantinople II emphasize the fact that while Christ has a human nature apart from his divine nature, nonetheless the Son's distinctive human nature is decidedly non-hypostatic; in other words, it does not subsist in and of itself, and therefore does not constitute a separate human person or hypostasis. The two natures retain their distinctiveness, while remaining inextricably intertwined in their respective yet intimately conjoined activities or energies.¹⁹⁶ In affirming this crucial teaching at this point in the *SCG*, Thomas reintroduces the Dionysian concept of theandry to begin to explicate not only how Christ's human will can be autonomous yet ordered to the Father's will, but also how the singularly activities proceeding from two distinct principles of operation, one human and the other divine, are nevertheless united in the one person of enfleshed Word. According to Aquinas, the key to understanding this unification is to be found in the concept of ordering: the human will of Christ was ordered towards the Father's will in the way that human volitional activities in the moral order are ordained towards an ultimate good, a goal or *telos* that is found only in God; similarly, Christ did nothing in His human nature, whether by acting or by suffering, except as the divine will disposed.¹⁹⁷ The human operation of Christ, also "achieved a

¹⁹⁵ *Second Council of Constantinople, capitula v*, in Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, Vol. I (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), p. 116.

¹⁹⁶ Thomas does not cite specific texts from Constantinople II in his discussing this subject, but we can be sure that Thomas is familiar with the decrees of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, since he quotes them in other portions of the *SCG*, for example in IV, 24, 6—the first Latin medieval writer to do so—and his explication of the heresies of Nestorius and Theodore in these chapters indicates familiarity with the Constantinopolitan conciliar texts.

¹⁹⁷ IV, 36, 10: Videtur autem haec positio ortum habuisse ex hoc quod eius auctores nescierunt distinguere inter id quod est simpliciter unum, et ordine unum. Viderunt enim voluntatem humanam in Christo omnino sub voluntate divina ordinatam fuisse, ita quod nihil voluntate humana Christus voluit nisi

kind of divine efficacy by union with the divinity, just as the action of a secondary agent achieves a kind of efficacy from the principal agent,” and as a result, all of the incarnate Word’s action or suffering “were salutary.”¹⁹⁸ It is precisely for this reason, Aquinas claims, that the Areopagite called Christ’s human operation as “theandric,” that is, “God-human”; because it is of both God and a man. Moreover, according to Thomas, this seamless interaction of humanity and divinity in the unitary subject of Christ led to the Monophysite’s confusion, since they conflated personal unity with an identity of wills and a conflation of energies, because they could not conceive how the two natures, volitions, and actions are ordered to each other.¹⁹⁹

As we have already seen in some detail in the first chapter, Thomas had appropriated John Damascene’s Chalcedonian reading of theandry, as mediated by Albert the Great, as a means of explicating how integrally human and divine actions could proceed from the two distinctive natures of the one hypostasis of the incarnate Word. We also saw that as early as his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, Aquinas—in manner unique to Medieval Latin writers—raised this issue of theandric activity in conjunction with the topic of instrumentality. Nevertheless, while affirming the humanity of Christ’s assumed human nature and the human actions proceeding from that nature, Thomas failed to ascribe any efficiently salutary power to those human activities in his adumbration of instrumental causality, let alone integrate his notion of theandry to

quod eum velle voluntas divina disposuit. Similiter etiam nihil Christus secundum humanam naturam operatus est, vel agendo vel patiendo, nisi quod voluntas divina disposuit: secundum illud Ioan. 8-29: quae placita sunt ei, facio semper.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid: Humana etiam operatio Christi quandam efficaciam divinam ex unione divinitatis conseqebatur, sicut actio secundarii agentis consequitur efficaciam quandam ex principali agente: et ex hoc contigit quod quaelibet eius actio vel passio fuit salubris.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid: Propter quod Dionysius humanam Christi operationem vocat theandricam, idest dei-virilem; et etiam quia est Dei et hominis. Videntes igitur humanam voluntatem et operationem Christi sub divina ordinari infallibili ordine, iudicaverunt in Christo esse tantum voluntatem et operationem unam; quamvis non sit idem, ut dictum est, ordinis unum et simpliciter unum.

a truly causally efficacious instrumental activity of the Word's assumed humanity. Here we see the beginnings of precisely this sort of integration. Thomas had already thought deeply about the way both principle and instrumental agents achieved a desired end each according to their capacities. What distinguished instrumental causality *qua* instrumentality, that is, as a moved mover, was the fact that the instrument needed to be moved under the influence of a higher agent in order to achieve an effect surpassing its own natural ability.²⁰⁰ In the time since period elapsed since his *Scriptum* commentary, Aquinas had begun to think seriously about the fact that any activity proceeding from the instrument must also proceed from a principle which somehow really belongs to the instrument as well, albeit not as a proper or full portion of that instrument's principle of activity—its very nature—for even though the activity of a being belongs to it only insofar as that agent is an instrument, must proceed from the natural potentiality inherent within that being.²⁰¹

As Thomas had already noted earlier in the *Contra Gentiles*, the potential for acting resides within the principal and the instrumental agent in two distinct modalities, since “every agent acts so far as it is in act, the mode of action must follow the mode of a thing's actual being” (*Cum omne agens agat secundum quod actu est, oportet modum actionis esse secundum modum actus ipsius rei*).²⁰² So, the principle agent acts according to the exigencies or driving forces of its nature, or, to put it another way, the active power in it is a certain form or quality existentially rooted in the nature of that being; while the instrumental agent, since it is a moved mover, has a potentiality in

²⁰⁰ See, for example, *In IV Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 1 ad 4.

²⁰¹ Cf. among other instances, Thomas' exploration of this topic in *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia Dei*, III, 4.

²⁰² *SCG* II, 21, 9.

proportion to its being moved, a motion towards a final end the instrumental agent cannot carry out unless it exercises its own natural potential to act inherent within its own way of being. This could be taken to mean that in any instance of instrumental causation there are always two irreducibly separate activities, but as Aquinas points out, whenever the mover and the moved have diverse—that is, their action proceeds from diverse operative principles or natures—it is necessary that one operation be proper to the moving agent and another to the moved. Nevertheless, the moved participates in the operation of the mover, and the mover utilizes the operation of the moved, so that each acts in a commonality with the other. So, even though one can identify a diversity of operational principles at work in the resulting effect, the actual activity is unitary and that which it brings about or causes is the one effect of both the principle and instrumental causes, though the effect is brought about in diverse ways: “It is clear that one and the same effect is not attributed to the natural and to the divine power as though it came about partly from God and partly from the natural agent;” rather the entire “effect proceeds from both but in a different way from each, just as the whole effect is attributed to the instrument and the whole effect is attributed to the principal agent.”²⁰³ The

²⁰³ *SCG* III, 70, 8: Patet etiam quod non sic idem effectus causae naturali et divinae virtuti attribuitur quasi partim a Deo, et partim a naturali agente fiat, sed totus ab utroque secundum alium modum: sicut idem effectus totus attribuitur instrumento, et principali agenti etiam totus. Aquinas also writes in III, 70, 5: In quolibet enim agente est duo considerare, scilicet rem ipsam quae agit, et virtutem qua agit: sicut ignis calefacit per calorem. Virtus autem inferioris agentis dependet a virtute superioris agentis, inquantum superius agens dat virtutem ipsam inferiori agenti per quam agit; vel conservat eam; aut etiam applicat eam ad agendum, sicut artifex applicat instrumentum ad proprium effectum; cui tamen non dat formam per quam agit instrumentum, nec conservat, sed dat ei solum motum. Oportet ergo quod actio inferioris agentis non solum sit ab eo per virtutem propriam, sed per virtutem omnium superiorum agentium: agit enim in virtute omnium. Et sicut agens infimum invenitur immediatum activum, ita virtus primi agentis invenitur immediata ad producendum effectum: nam virtus infimi agentis non habet quod producat hunc effectum ex se, sed ex virtute proximi superioris; et virtus illius hoc habet ex virtute superioris; et sic virtus supremi agentis invenitur ex se productiva effectus, quasi causa immediata; sicut patet in principiis demonstrationum, quorum primum est immediatum. Sicut igitur non est inconveniens quod una actio producatur ex aliquo agente et eius virtute, ita non est inconveniens quod producatur idem effectus ab inferiori agente et Deo: ab utroque immediate, licet alio et alio modo. “In every agent, in fact,

Christological ramifications can be clearly drawn out from these basic metaphysical principles. The person of the incarnate Word produces single effects, even though the cause proceeds from diverse operational principles, one acting through the other, so that that the divine principle acts through the humanity and the human instruments effectuates the divine, so that they form one complete causal principle resulting in a single effect—in other words, *the distinctive divine and human natures operate theandrically*.

Thomas' clarification and extension of the metaphysical understanding of instrumental causality resolves once and for all the ambiguity present in his earlier treatments of the role and soteriological efficacy of the assumed human nature in the Incarnation. Aquinas no longer restricts the actions of the Word's instrumentality to a disposing, moral, or merely exemplar form of causality, in fact, quite the opposite. The enfleshed Son's human activities are now unambiguously presented as having a salvific power, precisely because of the hypostatic union, which safeguards the operative power proper to the instrumental human nature, which is used by a principle agent of a higher causality in order to effectuate a result that is superior to the operating principle of the human instrument, that is nevertheless proportioned to the nature of the principal agent. The instrument, Christ's assumed nature, is fully recognized as a cause—according to its

there are two things to consider: namely, the thing itself that acts, and the power by which it acts. Fire, for instance, heats by means of heat. But the power of a lower agent depends on the power of the superior agent, according as the superior agent gives this power to the lower agent whereby it may act; or preserves it; or even applies it to the action, as the artisan applies an instrument to its proper effect, though he neither gives the form whereby the instrument works, nor preserves it, but simply gives it motion. So, it is necessary for the action of a lower agent to result not only from the agent by its own power, but also from the power of all higher agents; it acts, therefore, through the power of all. And just as the lowest agent is found immediately active, so also is the power of the primary agent found immediate in the production of the effect. For the power of the lower agent is not adequate to produce this effect of itself, but from the power of the next higher agent; and the power of the next one gets this ability from the power of the next higher one; and thus the power of the highest agent is discovered to be of itself productive of the effect, as an immediate cause. This is evident in the case of the principles of demonstration, the first of which is immediate. So, just as it is not unfitting for one action to be produced by an agent and its power, so it is not inappropriate for the same effect to be produced by a lower agent and God: by both immediately, though in different ways."

natural human modality—of the singular saving effect of the Word’s activity, and so is wholly and truly an agent or mover, even though Thomas simultaneously acknowledges that the assumed nature is a causative with respect to this activity and effect “only because it is acting along with and under the direction of a higher cause which is adequate to account for the full formality of the effect.”²⁰⁴

This new understanding of the importance of the conjoined hypostatic activity allows Thomas to grasp the role of radical creaturely participation in the enfleshed Son’s divine operations, and thus distinctly proclaim that everything which Christ suffered and did in his humanity was indeed salutary.²⁰⁵ Thomas fullest articulation of this newly won insight is found in *Contra Gentiles* IV, 41, “*Quomodo oporteat intelligere incarnationem filii Dei,*” where the Angelic Doctor explicates that the hypostatic union of natures in the person of Christ, and the resulting theandric operations of the incarnate Word, far exceeds all other created unions in intensity. Aquinas briefly recapitulates the various ways in which the Incarnation was misunderstood, especially regarding how a human nature was assumed but the pre-existent word. As Thomas explains, since the Word already possessed a divine nature, the assumption of humanity could only be construed by many in an accidental and extrinsic conjunction—that is, as accidental quality such as a particular shade of skin pigmentation, or an acquired skill like playing a musical instrument, both of which can change over time—or as the relation of two natures to each other like the relation of a body to a garment which may be easily donned or just as

²⁰⁴ Albertson, “Instrumental Causality,” p. 426

²⁰⁵ *SCG* IV, 36, 10: *Humana etiam operatio Christi quandam efficaciam divinam ex unione divinitatis consequatur, sicut actio secundarii agentis consequitur efficaciam quandam ex principali agente: et ex hoc contingit quod quaelibet eius actio vel passio fuit salubris.*

quickly removed.²⁰⁶ The clear allusion to a Habitus theory, and its origins in the Kenotic hymn, are unmistakable.²⁰⁷ As always, for Thomas the danger in misconstruing the relationship of the assumed humanity to the Word in such a way that it almost inevitably leads to the error of Nestorius, who similarly imagined that the human nature of Christ stood to the Son as a kind of temple, so that the union of the Word to the human nature to be understood only as a kind of indwelling. However, since a temple possesses its substantial individuation apart from anyone who may dwell within it, and the substantial individuation proper to human nature is personality or hypostasis, there can only be one logical conclusion: that the hypostasis of the human nature was one, and that of the Word another; hence, the Word and that man were two persons.²⁰⁸ According to Thomas, perhaps the best way to understand the coming together of divinity and humanity in the hypostasis of Christ is to compare to the exceedingly intimate union of the body and the soul. Here Aquinas draws upon a deep vein of Patristic thinking, as he pointedly quotes from the *Quicumque Vult* (“sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo, ita Deus et homo

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 36, 5: Ea enim quae habenti aliquam naturam adveniunt nec tamen pertinent ad integritatem naturae illius, vel accidentia esse videntur, ut albedo et musica; vel accidentaliter se habere ad ipsum, sicut anulus, vestimentum, domus, et similia. Consideraverunt autem, quod, cum humana natura verbo Dei adveniat nec ad eius naturae integritatem pertineat, necesse est, ut putaverunt, quod humana natura accidentalem unionem haberet ad verbum. Et quidem manifestum est quod non potest inesse verbo ut accidens: tum quia Deus non est susceptivum accidentis, ut supra probatum est; tum quia humana natura, cum sit de genere substantiae, nullius accidens esse potest. Unde reliquum videbatur quod humana natura adveniret verbo, non sicut accidens, sed sicut accidentaliter se habens ad ipsum.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 36, 7: His igitur remotis per supra dicta, necessarium est ponere talem fuisse unionem verbi et hominis ut neque ex duabus una natura conflata sit; neque verbi ad humanam naturam talis fuerit unio sicut est alicuius substantiae, puta hominis, ad exteriora, quae accidentaliter se habent ad ipsum, ut domus et vestimentum

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 36, 5: Posuit igitur Nestorius quod humana natura Christi se habebat ad verbum sicut templum quoddam: ita quod secundum solam inhabitationem erat intelligenda unio verbi ad humanam naturam. Et quia templum seorsum habet suam individuationem ab eo qui inhabitat templum; individuatō autem conveniens humanae naturae est personalitas: reliquum erat quod alia esset personalitas humanae naturae, et alia verbi. Et sic verbum et ille homo erant duae personae.

unus est Christus”), the so-called Athanasian Creed, to the effect that just as the rational soul and the flesh are one human, so God and man are one Christ.²⁰⁹

Moreover, Thomas adds, the rational soul is united to the body as an instrument—a claim that, as we have seen, Thomas had been elaborating earlier in the *Contra Gentiles* on largely metaphysical ground, but which he now additionally defends as in full concordance with “the ancient Doctors, who held that the human nature in Christ was ‘a kind of organ of the divinity,’ just as the body is held to be an organ of the soul.”²¹⁰ This phrase, of course, is found in John of Damascus’ *De fide*, but as we saw in the first chapter, the notion that the humanity of the Word was an organ or instrument of the divinity has Patristic provenance traceable all the way back to Athanasius’ anti-Arian polemics.²¹¹ As Thomas explains, the body and its parts are in a certain sense an organ of

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 41, 9: The Athanasian Creed is not in fact the work of Athanasius, but it certainly includes much of the Chalcedonian Christological consensus, which can at least partly be traced back to Athanasius’ Logos-sarx: Sed necessarium est ad aeternam salutem, ut incarnationem quoque Domini nostri Iesu Christi fideliter credat. Est ergo fides recta ut credamus et confiteamur, quia Dominus noster Iesus Christus, Dei Filius, Deus [pariter] et homo est. Deus [est] ex substantia Patris ante saecula genitus: et homo est ex substantia matris in saeculo natus. Perfectus Deus, perfectus homo: ex anima rationali et humana carne subsistens. Aequalis Patri secundum divinitatem: minor Patri secundum humanitatem. Qui licet Deus sit et homo, non duo tamen, sed unus est Christus. Unus autem non conversione divinitatis in carnem, sed assumptione humanitatis in Deum. Unus omnino, non confusione substantiae, sed unitate personae. Nam sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est homo: ita Deus et homo unus est Christus.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 41, 10: Ad quod etiam dicta antiquorum doctorum concordant, qui humanam naturam in Christo organum quoddam divinitatis posuerunt, sicut et ponitur corpus organum animae.

²¹¹ John of Damascus, *De fide Orthodoxa*, III, 15: “And thus His divinity communicates its own glories to the body while it remains itself without part in the sufferings of the flesh. For His flesh did not suffer through His divinity in the same way that His divinity energized through the flesh. For the flesh acted as the instrument of His divinity. Although, therefore, from the first conception there was no division at all between the two forms, but the actions of either form through all the time became those of one person, nevertheless we do not in any way confuse those things that took place without separation, but recognize from the quality of its works what sort of form anything has.” Athanasius, *Orationes contra Arianos*, III, 31: “As the Apostle says, the Godhead dwelt in the flesh; as much as to say, ‘Being God, He had His own body, and using this as an instrument, He became man for our sakes.’ And on account of this, the properties of the flesh are said to be His, since He was in it, such as to hunger, to thirst, to suffer, to weary, and the like, of which the flesh is capable; while on the other hand the works proper to the Word Himself, such as to raise the dead, to restore sight to the blind, and to cure the woman with an issue of blood, He did through His own body. And the Word bore the infirmities of the flesh, as His own, for His was the flesh; and the flesh ministered to the works of the Godhead, because the Godhead was in it, for the body was God’s. And well has the Prophet said ‘carried Isaiah 53:4;’ and has not said, ‘He remedied our infirmities,’ lest, as being external to the body, and only healing it, as He has always done, He should leave

the conjoined soul, unlike external instruments or tools such as an axe: an axe is not the soul's very own instrument, as a hand is, for anyone can pick up the axe and operate it, but this hand is an intrinsic assistant to the soul by its very own operation.²¹² From this point of view, even the union of God and man can be considered in instrumental terms, since as creatures all humans are related to God as instruments of a sort, as the Apostle explained in his Letter to the Philippians, "for it is God who works in you both to will and to accomplish according to His good will" (2:3). Nevertheless, humans are related to God as extrinsic and separated instruments, analogously to the external relations of a hand and an axe; for "God does not move them only to operations which are His very own, but to the operations common to every rational nature, such as understand truth, loving the good, or doing what is just."²¹³ Yet the human nature in Christ is assumed with the result that the incarnate Word instrumentally performs things which are the proper operation of God alone: washing away sins, enlightening minds darkened through sin by means of grace, and leading souls to the beatific perfection of eternal life.²¹⁴

It is important to note that in all earlier works, such as the *Scriptum* commentary and *De veritate*, the phrase *sola Deo* had been used to definitively excluded any

men subject still to death; but He carries our infirmities, and He Himself bears our sins, that it might be shown that He has become man for us, and that the body which in Him bore them, was His own body; and, while He received no hurt Himself by 'bearing our sins in His body on the tree,' as Peter speaks, we men were redeemed from our own affections, and were filled with the righteousness of the Word."

²¹² *Summa contra gentiles* IV, 41, 11: Aliter enim est animae organum corpus et eius partes, et aliter exteriora instrumenta. Haec enim dolabra non est proprium instrumentum, sicut haec manus: per dolabram enim multi possunt operari, sed haec manus ad propriam operationem huius animae deputatur.

²¹³ Ibid: Propter quod manus est organum unitum et proprium: dolabra autem instrumentum exterius et commune. Sic igitur et in unione Dei et hominis considerari potest. Omnes enim homines comparantur ad Deum ut quaedam instrumenta quibus operatur: ipse enim est qui operatur in nobis velle et perficere pro bona voluntate, secundum apostolum, Philipp. 2:3. Sed alii homines comparantur ad Deum quasi instrumenta extrinseca et separata: moventur enim a Deo non ad operationes proprias sibi tantum, sed ad operationes communes omni rationali naturae, ut est intelligere veritatem, diligere bona, et operari iusta.

²¹⁴ Ibid: Sed humana natura in Christo assumpta est ut instrumentaliter operetur ea quae sunt operationes propriae solius Dei, sicut est mundare peccata, illuminare mentes per gratiam, et introducere in perfectionem vitae aeternae. Comparatur igitur humana natura Christi ad Deum sicut instrumentum proprium et coniunctum, ut manus ad animam.

creaturely share in the causality of grace, but now Thomas pointedly employs the very same phrase (*Sed humana natura in Christo assumpta est ut instrumentaliter operetur ea quae sunt operationes propriae solius Dei*) in order to emphasize the radical elevation of Christ's instrumental operation—precisely as human—through participation in the divine power by means of the hypostatic union. The human nature of Christ is joined to God as a proper and conjoined instrument, very much as a hand is conjoined to its animating soul, so that Christ's human actions are able to bring about both physical and spiritual healing. Indeed, there is a “flow of salvation from Christ to men” instrumentally mediated by the Word's soteriologically efficacious humanity.²¹⁵ This causal efficacy ensues from all the theandric and thus salutary activities of the Son, a causality which extends even to our present-day efficacious encounters with Christ in the Sacraments. Whereas in earlier texts sacramental activity was reduced by Thomas to a “sensible manifestation of a spiritual effect and a spiritual disposition for the divine infusion of sanctifying grace,” in the *Contra Gentiles* the sacraments are identified as instruments of the incarnate Word, their saving power effectuated through the Son's human life, meritorious passion, satisfactory death, and glorious resurrection, and thus particular causes of Christ' universal causality of salvation, and powered in their operation by the “principal cause so that they may apply the effect of the universal cause of grace” to specific believers.²¹⁶ Aquinas' Christological evolution has clearly reached a milestone. As with his teaching on the

²¹⁵ Ibid, IV, 55, 30: Effluxus salutis a Christo in homines.

²¹⁶ Blankenhorn, “Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments,” p. 282. Cf. *Summa contra gentiles* IV, 56, 1: Quia vero, sicut iam dictum est, mors Christi est quasi universalis causa humanae salutis; universalem autem causam oportet applicari ad unumquemque effectum: necessarium fuit exhiberi hominibus quaedam remedia per quae eis beneficium mortis Christi quodammodo coniungeretur. Huiusmodi autem esse dicuntur Ecclesiae sacramenta. Since, however, as has already been said, the death of Christ is, so to say, the universal cause of human salvation, and since a universal cause must be applied singly to each of its effects, it was necessary to show men some remedies through which the benefit of Christ's death could somehow be conjoined to them. It is of this sort, of course, that the sacraments of the Church are said to be.

efficacy of Christ's humanity, from this point on Aquinas will decline to describe sacramental causality as a type of disposing efficacy. The doctrinal change from the *Sentences Commentary* and *De veritate* is complete: the divine nature utilizes the operations of Christ's human nature instrumentally in order to merit salvation for sinful humanity.

4. Theandric Operations and the *Esse* of Christ: A Theological Compendium

It is notable that in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* Aquinas does not begin to explain how Christ's human nature is worked as an instrument of the divinity. Moreover, while the role of the incarnate Word's full humanity in the work of salvation is firmly established, Thomas does speculate on how the God-man's actions and their saving effect is related to the Son's human mode of existing in the world—in the other words, to the question of the Word's human *esse*. However, a composition in all probability begun in the immediate aftermath of the completion of the *Contra Gentiles* and Thomas's departure for Rome in 1265, the *Compendium theologiae, seu, Brevis compilatio theologiae ad fratrem Raynaldum* or *Compendium of Theology*, a brief compilation of theological doctrine put together at the behest of Reginald of Piperno, a fellow Dominican friar, as well as a father-confessor, faithful amanuensis, and constant travelling companion to the Angelic Doctor, begins to address some of these complex issues.²¹⁷ Unsurprisingly, the immediate general context of Thomas's brief doctrinal

²¹⁷ The exact dating of the *Compendium* is, as to be expected, not known with absolute precision, but the resemblance of many sections of this work with various passages in the *Contra Gentiles* suggests that the latter portion of the *SCG* and the much of the *Compendium theologiae* overlap or follow closely upon each other. The dates of composition are generally given as 1265-1267, but the work is incomplete,

meditations on the hypostatic union comes amidst a general discussion of the reasons for the Incarnation, a succinct review of sundry misapprehensions of the enfleshment of the Word, including the heretical teachings of Photinus, Nestorius, Arius, Apollinaris, and Eutyches, with the Kenotic hymn as a recurring thematic focus of the discussions. For Thomas, the gravamen of Philipians 2 remains the question of the means of the union of divinity and humanity in Christ, and the need to refute the dangerous notion that two natures came together in an extrinsic or accidental manner, thereby resulting in two hypostases or persons.²¹⁸

terminating abruptly near the beginning of the second part. The editor of the Leonine edition, Hyacinthe-François Dondaine, speculated that Thomas was prevented from any further writing on the *Compendium* shortly after the completion of part one, taking up work on the second section only after his return to Naples in 1272, which was then shortly thereafter permanently disrupted by the Saint's death in 1274. However, there is little evidence for such a protracted and episodic compositional history; on the contrary, the consistency of the writing throughout both sections would indicate that Thomas wrote the entire truncated work as it exists now by around 1267-1268, when he was precluded from continuing by his return to the University of Paris in 1268. Certainly, the Christological portions that we will be looking at, even though they come from the second part of the *Compendium*, are nevertheless quite compatible with Thomas' work on the person and mission of Christ from the concluding chapters of the earlier *Summa Contra Gentiles* (ca. 1264-1265); cf. Palémon Glorieux, "La Christologie du *Compendium theologiae*," *Sciences Ecclésiastiques* 13 (1961), pp. 7-34.

²¹⁸ For example, *Compendium theologiae* c. 209: Considerantes enim quidam, quod omne quod advenit alicui post esse completum, accidentaliter ei adiungitur, ut homini vestis, posuerunt quod humanitas accidentali unione fuerit in persona filii divinitati coniuncta, ita scilicet quod natura assumpta se haberet ad personam filii Dei sicut vestis ad hominem. Ad cuius confirmationem inducebant quod apostolus dicit ad Philip. de Christo, quod habitu inventus est ut homo. Rursus considerabant quod ex unione animae et corporis efficitur individuum quoddam rationalis naturae, quod nominatur persona. Si igitur anima in Christo fuisset corpori unita, videre non poterant quin sequeretur quod ex tali unione constitueretur persona. Sequeretur ergo in Christo duas esse personas, scilicet personam assumptam, et personam assumptam: in homine enim induto non sunt duae personae, quia indumentum rationem personae non habet. Si autem vestis esset persona, sequeretur in homine vestito duas esse personas. Ad hoc igitur excludendum, posuerunt quidam animam Christi unitam nunquam fuisse corpori, sed quod persona filii Dei animam et corpus separatim assumpsit. "In undertaking to explain this truth [of the Incarnation], some theologians have taken the wrong path. Persuaded that every perfection accruing to a being subsequent to its complete existence is joined to it accidentally, as a garment is joined to a man, certain theologians taught that humanity was joined to divinity in the person of the Son by an accidental union, in such a way that the assumed nature would be related to the person of God's Son as clothing is related to a man. To bolster up this view, they brought forward what the Apostle says of Christ in Philipians 2:7, that He was 'in habit found as a man.' Likewise, they reflected that from the union of soul and body an individual possessed of rational nature is formed, and that such an individual is called a person. If, therefore, the soul was united to the body in Christ, they were unable to see how they could escape the conclusion that a person would be constituted by such a union. In this event there would be two persons in Christ, the person who assumes and the person who is assumed. On the other hand, there are not two persons in a man who is clothed, because clothing does not possess what is required for the notion of a person. If, however, the clothes were

Aquinas attempts to resolve this issue by addressing the more specific issue of how many persons and supposits are to be found in the incarnated Christ. Aquinas accepts the traditional definition of a *supposit* as a distinct subsistent individual in a particular nature, an entitative whole or complete entity which is the subject of accidental properties and which exists with its own proper and proportionate act of existence. The term *nature* signifies the fundamental, substantial reason for the characteristic activities of such an existing being. A supposit in a rational nature has a special term all its own, namely that of *person*, while the equivalent Greek term for the Latin rational supposit is *hypostasis*.²¹⁹ A person then, in strict metaphysical terminology, is a rational supposit—or, in the famous definition formulated by Boethius—an individual substance of a rational nature.²²⁰ So personality, or that by which a person is a being, is the proper—or personal—act of existence (*esse*) proportioned to a hypostasis bearing a rational nature.²²¹ Chapter 12 of the *Compendium* follows from this by positing that since there are in Christ one person and two natures, we have to examine the relationship between them to determine what in Christ is to be understood as one, and what is to be spoken of as

a person, there would be two persons in a clothed man. To avoid this conclusion, therefore, some proposed that Christ's soul was never united to His body, but that the person of God's Son assumed soul and body separately."

²¹⁹ Cf. Corey L. Barnes, "Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas on Person, Hypostasis, and Hypostatic Union," *The Thomist* 72 (2008), pp. 107-146.

²²⁰ *De persona et duabus naturis*, c. ii: "Naturæ rationalis individua substantia."

²²¹ As early as *Quaestiones quodlibetales*, q. 2, a. 2, co., Thomas had begun to formulate a view according to which, the supposit is that which subsists in its nature and in its existence, or in other words, that which has the nature and has existence: it is the subsisting one as such constituted from these two principles. Moreover, that existence is limited to nature, essence, according to nature, since a nature or essence is a receptive potency: "Sed omne quod est participatum in aliquo, est in eo per modum participantis: quia nihil potest recipere ultra mensuram suam. Cum igitur modus cuiuslibet rei creatae sit finitus, quaelibet res creata recipit esse finitum." *Super libros Sententiarum*, 1, d. 8, q. 1, a. 2, s.c. 2. Cf. *In librum De Causis*, lc. 4: "Intelligentia est composita in suo esse ex finito et infinito, in quantum natura Intelligentiae, infinita dicitur secundum potentiam essendi et ipsum esse quod recipit est finitum." Moreover, what receives existence or *esse* is constituted in the very giving, and determining, of that act of existence/*esse*: "Deus simul dans esse, producit id quod esse recipit: et sic non oportet quod agat ex aliquo praeexistenti." *Quaestiones de potentia*, q. 3, ar. 1, ad 17. As we shall see, this insight that *esse* is received and expressed according to the mode of the nature/*esse* of the receiver.

multiple.²²² Whatever is multiplied in accord with the diversity of Christ's natures, Thomas commences his analysis, must be acknowledged to be also plural in the enfleshed Son. In this regard, since natures are received by generation there must then be not only two natures in Christ, but there must also be two generations: one that is eternal, corresponding to the divine nature, and the other occurring in time, whereby the incarnate Son received assumed a human nature.²²³ Hence, whatever activities can be attributed to God and humans as pertaining to their rational nature must be predicated of Christ in the plural. Among these Aquinas predicates intellect and will and their perfections, such as knowledge or wisdom. Likewise, Thomas also attributes these as integral aspects of rational human nature, since both will and intellect are faculties of the human soul. Therefore, Aquinas concludes, we must acknowledge two intellects in Christ, one human and one divine, and likewise two wills, as well as a double knowledge according to both the created and the uncreated intellect in the enfleshed Son.²²⁴

So far Thomas has provided a concise worded précis of the Dyophysite understanding of Chalcedon, and its Dyothelite Christological elaboration of two rational wills/intellects proceeding from the two natures of Christ that he had defended in the contemporaneous portions of the *Contra Gentiles*. However, Thomas' main concern here

²²² *Compendium theologiae* c. 212: Quia igitur in Christo est una persona et duae naturae, ex horum convenientia considerandum est, quid in Christo unum dici debeat, et quid multa.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid. Quia igitur in Christo est una persona et duae naturae, ex horum convenientia considerandum est, quid in Christo unum dici debeat, et quid multa. Quaecumque enim secundum naturae diversitatem multiplicantur, necesse est quod in Christo plura esse confiteamur. Inter quae primo considerandum est, quod cum per generationem sive per nativitatem natura recipiatur, necesse est quod sicut in Christo sunt duae naturae, ita etiam duas esse generationes sive nativitates: una aeterna, secundum quam accepit naturam divinam a patre; alia temporalis, secundum quam accepit humanam naturam a matre. Similiter etiam quaecumque Deo et homini convenienter attribuuntur ad naturam pertinentia, necesse est plura dicere in Christo. Attribuitur autem Deo intellectus et voluntas et horum perfectiones, puta scientia seu sapientia, et caritas, sive iustitia, quae homini etiam attribuuntur ad humanam naturam pertinentia. Nam voluntas et intellectus sunt partes animae, horum autem perfectiones sunt sapientia et iustitia et huiusmodi. Necesse est ergo in Christo ponere duos intellectus, humanum scilicet et divinum, et similiter duas voluntates, duplicem etiam scientiam sive caritatem, creatam scilicet et increatam.

is to balance this account of the plurality of natures with the unicity of the person of the Word. “But whatever belongs to the suppositum or hypostasis, must be declared to be one in Christ. Hence if existence is taken in the sense that one suppositum has one existence, we are forced, it appears, to assert that there is but one existence (*esse*) in Christ.”²²⁵ This is consistent with Thomas’s oft-repeated claim that the person has but one act of existence which gives it substantial being. Nevertheless, he quickly qualifies this statement in order to maintain the reality of the plurality of natures in the incarnated Word, as he points out that when a whole is divided, each separate part has its own proper existence; nonetheless, insofar as they are parts of a larger ontological whole, they do not have their own substantial act of existence (*esse*), for they have being in accordance with the existence of the whole. Therefore, if we look upon Christ as an integral suppositum having two natures, as a subsistent being his existence will be but one.

By affirming the one personal act of existence in Christ, Aquinas does not want to give credence to the mistaken Monoenergist notion that since actions belong to *supposita*, and there is but one *suppositum* in Christ, then there must be only one kind of action in Christ. This mistaken idea is belied, however, by the fact that a plurality of actions are discerned in any individual, if there are many principles of activity in him. Thus, in humans the action of understanding differs from the activity of sense perception, because of the difference between sense and intellect. In all such instances, we must remember

²²⁵ Ibid. Ea vero quae ad suppositum sive hypostasim pertinent, unum tantum in Christo confiteri oportet: unde si esse accipiat secundum quod unum esse est unius suppositi, videtur dicendum quod in Christo sit tantum unum esse. Manifestum est enim quod partes divisae singulae proprium esse habent, secundum autem quod in toto considerantur, non habent suum esse, sed omnes sunt per esse totius. Si ergo consideremus ipsum Christum ut quoddam integrum suppositum duarum naturarum, eius erit unum tantum esse, sicut et unum suppositum.

that nature is related to actions as its principle of activity. Therefore it is not true that Christ has only one kind of activity because of the one *suppositum*; rather, there are two kinds of activity in Christ because of the two natures, just as, conversely, there is in the Trinity but one essential activity of the three persons because of the one divine nature of the Godhead. In concurrence with this distinction, Aquinas also wishes to affirm that the activity of Christ's humanity has some part in the activity proper to the divine power. This he does by pointing out that of all of the natural capacities that are gathered together in the one *suppositum*, the most eminent—that is, the divinity—is served by the rest in an instrumental capacity, just as all the lesser faculties of man are instruments of his intellect. Hence, in Christ the human nature is held to be, as it were, the organ of the Word's divine nature, and since it is axiomatic that an instrument acts in virtue of the principal agent, this is the reason why in the characteristic or proper activities of an instrument, we are able to discern not only the power of the instrument, but also that of the principal agent: A piece of wooden furniture is indeed made by the action of an axe, but only in so far as the axe is directed by the hand of a carpenter. So, in an analogous manner the activity of the human nature in Christ received a certain efficacy from the divine nature, over and above its human power. "When Christ touched a leper, the action belonged to Christ's human nature, but the fact that the touch cured the man of his leprosy is due to the power of the divine nature."²²⁶ In this way all the human actions and

²²⁶ Participat tamen operatio humanitatis in Christo aliquid de operatione virtutis divinae. Omnium enim eorum quae conveniunt in unum *suppositum*, ei quod principalius est, cetera instrumentaliter deserviunt, sicut ceterae partes hominis sunt instrumenta intellectus. Sic igitur in Christo humanitas quasi quoddam organum divinitatis censetur. Patet autem quod instrumentum agit in virtute principalis agentis. Unde in actione instrumenti non solum invenitur virtus instrumenti, sed etiam principalis agentis, sicut per actionem securis fit arca, inquantum securis dirigitur ab artifice. Ita ergo et operatio humanae naturae in Christo quandam vim ex deitate habebat supra virtutem humanam. Quod enim tangeret leprosum, humanitatis actio fuit, sed quod tactus ille curaret a lepra, ex virtute divinitatis procedebat. Et per hunc modum omnes eius actiones et passionες humanae virtute divinitatis salutes fuerunt: et ideo Dionysius

sufferings of Christ were efficacious for our salvation in virtue of His divinity. For this reason Dionysius calls the human activity of Christ *theandric*, that is, divine-human, because actions of this sort proceeded from the Son's assumed human nature in such a way that the power of the divinity was operative in them.

5. Conclusion:

In the course of this chapter we have traced Thomas Aquinas' development of instrumental causality of the assumed human nature in the person of Jesus Christ. The instrumentality of the human nature to the divine is predicated of the hypostasis or person which is the active source of union. What we learn from *Summa Contra Gentiles* IV, 41, is that this relation is so intimate as to be called conjoined (*non separatum sed coniunctum*). Neither of the natures, human or divine, eclipses or diminishes the other, and neither can be reduced to the other. Each operates according to its integral operational principles, but in theandric co-operation with the other, and in such a way that the distinctive operations bring about their effect in a conjoined God-human manner.

vocat humanam Christi operationem theandricam, idest deivirilem, quia scilicet sic procedebat ex humanitate, quod tamen in ea vigeat divinitatis virtus.

IV. Chapter 3: Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysics of the Incarnate Son's Kenotic Existence

1. Introduction:

Following Thomas' writings on theandry, instrumentality, and the human existence of the incarnate Word in roughly chronological order, we have discerned a clear progression in his thought wherein the natural operations proceeding from the divine and human natures of Christ work in theandric unity in order to bring about salvation, along with a renewed emphasis on the importance of the integral humanity of the Son. As Chapter two indicated, a certain amount of this progress was at least partly spurred by Aquinas' rediscovery of detailed records of the Christological debates as preserved in various early Conciliar texts, and his realization of the decisive role that certain biblical pericopes played in those debates. Thomas' sophisticated engagement with scriptural texts is no surprise, considering the fact that he was a Master of the Sacred Page in the Order of Preachers, and the heir to a rich Western legacy of biblical hermeneutics, but credit must be given to Thomas' exceptional encounters, at least among Latin scholastics, with a notable portion of the Patristic biblical tradition as contained in the various homiletic and commentarial literature Thomas had access to during the composition of the *Catena Aurea*. As we have already pointed out, certain Scriptural passages were particularly relevant in Thomas' Christological thought during this period of development, particularly Philippians 2:5-11 (alongside John 1:14, etc.), which emphasized the singular importance of Christ's assumed humanity in the economy of salvation. Thomas' newfound appreciation for the centrality of the Word's human

nature, and its profound soteriological role in the economy of salvation, can be seen in the emergence of Aquinas' mature articulation of the function of instrumental causality in the Incarnation, an articulation which closely corresponds with Thomas's most active period of scriptural commentary.

Despite this newly honed appreciation of the criticality of the Son's instrumentalized humanity, Aquinas nonetheless continues to scrupulously highlight the uniqueness of the divine and substantial personal act of being (*esse*) of the enfleshed Word in order to safeguard Christ from being divided into two separate hypostases. However, as we know, in a few short years Thomas will make the astonishing proposal that along with this uncreated divine *esse* of the Word, we must also take account of a non-accidental secondary human act of existence in the one person of Christ, the *esse secundarium* which will be posited in the Disputed Question on the *unione Verbi Incarnati*. Our contention is that this is not a baffling theological aberration that manifests itself at the tail-end of Aquinas' career, but rather the culmination of a natural progression in Thomas' Christological thought, and that the conceptual groundwork for that seemingly inexplicable proposition is developed precisely through Thomas' ongoing critical encounters with the Bible. Apropos of that contention, in this chapter we will examine Thomas' most extensive detailed exposition of Philippians 2:5-11—arguably the single most important biblical text in Thomas' Christological thought—in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians*, focusing especially on the theme of humility, perhaps one of Augustine's key themes in his examination of the soteriological purpose and efficacy of Christ's kenosis, as well as Aquinas' adumbration of the function of moral and ontological exemplarity in the salvific role played by the kenotic Son. In

the *Commentary*, Thomas concisely yet deftly connects the hypostatic union of divinity and humanity brought about by the Son's obedient self-emptying, and the resulting theandric interweaving of operations and wills in the person of Christ, to our own sanctifying conformity to the enfleshed Word through our participation in that saving work, as effectuated by means of the instrumental causality of the humanity, which the Son united to himself in the kenotic Incarnation.

Aquinas' *Lectura super Ioannem* has long been recognized as the most extensive and theologically rich of his scriptural commentaries and it plays an equally important part in Thomas Aquinas's Christology. One of the *Commentary*'s most conspicuous characteristics is the way that Thomas elaborately explicates and vigorously defends the full humanity of Christ in the Fourth Gospel. As Paul Gondreau has pointed out, Thomas' recurring dictum positing that the "humanity of Christ is the way that leads us to God" (cap. 7, lect. 4, no. 1074) clearly indicates that Aquinas understand that upholding the truth of the true humanity assumed by the Word to be one of his principal tasks in composing this work.²²⁷ Gondreau argues that in the *Lectura* Aquinas is specifically defending Christ from the dangers of Docetism—that is, the doctrine that the human form of Christ was nothing more than an illusion. Any such teaching that would deny the true and full humanity of the incarnate Word would vitiate the enfleshed Son's saving work, since a completely spiritualized and utterly non-human Christ could not in fact save humanity. However, Thomas never specifically mentions Docetism in the *Lectura*, so while Gondreau's position that Thomas's argumentation is broadly anti-Docetic, and that he wishes to defend the integral humanity of the Words assumed nature, is generally true, I will argue that in this *Commentary* Aquinas is actually working out the implications of

²²⁷ Gondreau, "Anti-Docetism in Aquinas's *Super Ioannem*, p. 255.

the interrelated concepts of instrumentality and theandry, already formulated in the *Contra Gentiles*, but now within the context of an extended analysis and deeper reading of the Scriptural sources. More specifically, I posit that the *Commentary* should be read in light of Thomas' retrieval of the post-Chalcedonian Monophysite denial of the full integrity of Christ's humanity, and the anti-Monothelite and anti-Monoenergism debates regarding the two wills of Christ, rather than as a generic anti-Docetic polemic, and that Aquinas deploys his dynamic vindication of Christ's integral humanity, his mode of being in the world (*esse*) as the man Jesus Christ, as a distinctively Dyothelite-Dyoenergist counter-arguments against those heretical teachings he had encountered in the material from Constantinople II, whose Acts he explicitly cites in the *Commentary*.

Next, Thomas' continuing engagement with these Christological passages from Scripture, and the parallel development of his thought on the function of Christ's specifically human mode of being in the world, is traced to the commencement of his second Paris residency, and the start of his most renowned work, the *Summa Theologiae*. Unlike Aquinas' treatment of passages such as Philippians 2:5-11 in earlier works, particularly the *Scriptum* commentary, Thomas now clearly employs an understanding of exemplarity which clearly functions now as a form of ontological exemplarity, since the 'example' that Thomas discerns Paul as presenting is that of the humanity of Christ as head of the Church. This expanded understanding of the soteriological significance of Christ's kenotic *exemplum* is of particular importance in Aquinas' elaboration of the salvific efficacy of the Incarnation, for Thomas will now connect, with notable urgency, the personal unity of the human and divine natures, and of their theandric acts in Christ, to that process whereby we are brought into sanctifying conformity to the Son. In other

words, our imitation and participation in the instrumental causal efficiency of that human manner of living and acting which Christ has united to Himself is in turn the very means by which we are divinized. Indeed, as Aquinas writes, with “regard to the full participation of the Divinity, which is the true bliss of man and end of human life; and this is bestowed upon us by Christ’s humanity.”²²⁸ Without kenosis, without the assumption of a human mode of existing and acting, there can be no theosis for fallen humanity, for it is through the divinized humanity of Christ that we become God-like. It is only in light of the working out of this doctrine that the seemingly contradictory explication found in of the *De unione*, composed contemporaneously with the Christological sections of the *Summa*, can be seen as a complement to Thomas’ consistent teaching on the divine *esse* of the Word. The basis of this resolution of apparent contrarities can already be discerned in Thomas exploration of the question of Christ’s subsistence in both His divine and human natures in the opening articles of the *De unione*. Already in a. 1, in one more in a series of fruitful encounter with the text of the Philippians Hymn, Aquinas’ reexamination of kenosis begins to yield new insights into how subsisting in a human modality entails a secondary, created human *esse* in the Word which for all of its distinctive integrity does not entail a divided Christ.

2. Commentary on Philippians: “How beautiful to say that He emptied Himself, for the empty is opposed to the full!”

It is impossible to date Aquinas’ commentaries on the Pauline corpus with absolute precision, but it is generally agreed that he lecture on the Epistles during his stay

²²⁸ *ST III*, q.1, a.2: Quantum ad plenam participationem divinitatis, quae vere est hominis beatitudo, et finis humanae vitae. Et hoc collatum est nobis per Christi humanitatem, dicit enim Augustinus, in quodam sermone de Nativ. domini, factus est Deus homo, ut homo fieret Deus.

in Rome from 1265 to 1268, although it is speculated that he taught the course a second time after his second departure from Paris and his relocation to Naples in 1272.

Nevertheless, this would place even the first round of the surviving lectures on Paul after both the composition of the Christological portion of the *Contra Gentiles* and the completion of the *Catena Aurea*. The Commentary on the Philippians Epistle evinces clear affinities and therefore suggests a close compositional proximity to the Christology of *SCG* IV, especially chapter 34. As he begins to analyze the beginning of the Kenotic hymn, Thomas queries how Christ' came to possess a human nature, and what this assumption of humanity indicates about his divinity. For Thomas, such all-important issues as the identity of the God-man, the structuring of his ontological composition, and the purpose and method of his saving mission all hinge on answering these key questions. The answer follows from the Apostle's exhortation to the Philippians church to allow Christ's humility to be their constant example, an exemplarity that begins with a consideration of the Son's divinity as indicated by the phrase "qui cum in forma Dei." The term form specifies a nature; hence the form is called the nature of a thing. Consequently, to be in the form of God is to be in the nature of God, so the Son was truly God.²²⁹ However, this raises the question why the Word is said to be in the "form" rather than in the "nature" of God? According to Thomas, this due to the fact that the term "form" is connected to the three proper names of Christ: the Son, the Word and the Image. The Son is the one begotten, and the terminus of that begetting is the form. Therefore, to show the perfect Son of God he says, in the form, as though having the form of the Father perfectly. Similarly, a word is not perfect unless it leads to knowledge

²²⁹ Cap. 2, lect.2: Dicit ergo qui, scilicet Christus, cum in forma, et cetera. Unumquodque enim dicitur in natura generis vel speciei per suam formam, unde forma dicitur natura rei. Et sic esse in forma Dei est esse in natura Dei, per quod intelligitur quod sit verus Deus.

of a thing's nature; and so the Word of God is said to be in the form of God, because He has the entire nature of the Father. Finally, an image is not perfect, unless it has the form of that of which it is the image: "He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature" (Heb. 1:3).²³⁰ It is precisely for this reason that the Son did not count equality with God as something to be grasped, since the Word already possessed the fullness of the Father's divinity in his very nature.²³¹

It is only with the ontological primacy of the Word's divinity well established that Thomas can proceed to a consideration of the kenosis. The hymn reports that the Son emptied himself, but since He was filled with the divinity, did the Son jettison His divine nature? No, Aquinas replies, because the Son remained what He was; it was only that which the Word was not that was assumed. For just as the Son descended from heaven without ceasing to exist in heaven, Aquinas explains, so the Son began to exist in a new way on earth, and thereby emptied Himself, not by putting off the divine nature, but by assuming a human nature. "How beautiful to say that He emptied himself," Thomas concludes, "for the empty is opposed to the full! For the divine nature is sufficiently full, because every perfection of goodness is there. But human nature and the soul are not full, but capable of fullness, because it was made as a slate not written upon. Therefore, human nature is empty. Hence he says, He emptied himself, because He assumed a

²³⁰ Sed quare potius dicit in forma, quam in natura? Quia hoc competit nominibus propriis filii tripliciter. Dicitur enim et filius, et verbum, et imago. Filius enim est qui generatur, et finis generationis est forma. Et ideo, ut ostendatur perfectus Dei filius, dicit in forma, quasi habens perfecte formam patris. Similiter verbum non est perfectum nisi quando ducit in cognitionem naturae rei; et sic verbum Dei in forma Dei dicitur, quia habet totam naturam patris. Similiter nec imago dicitur perfecta, nisi habeat formam cuius est imago. Hebr. I, 3: cum sit splendor gloriae, et figura substantiae eius, et cetera.

²³¹ Ibid: Ergo dicendum est, quod arbitratus est non esse rapinam, scilicet se esse aequalem Deo, quia est in forma Dei, et cognoscit bene naturam suam. Et quia cognoscit hoc, ideo dicitur Io. V, 18: aequalem se Deo facit.

human nature.”²³² This passage is charged with meaning: the kenosis, the supreme act of divine humility, is not as eschewal of the divine nature, but rather the assumption of humanity—which is nothing else than Son coming to be in a human mode of existence—a human existence which in contrast to the perfect fullness of every divine actuality is comparatively empty. Indeed, this taking on of humanity is akin to assuming the form of a servile slave. But it is by conforming ourselves to Christ’s exemplary humility and obedience in assuming such servility, the very manner in which he assumed our human emptiness, that we in turn will be made worthy to receive the fullness of the Son’s divinity within our own humanity. Transformed in such a manner that we will come not only to see the divine glory, but become more Christ-like “so that being enlightened, we may be conformed to Him: ‘Your eyes will see the king in his beauty’ (Is. 33:17); ” made glorious, for as the Apostle writes “‘And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another’” (2 Cor. 3:18).²³³

In order to begin to appreciate how Christ’s self-emptying is the condition for the possibility of our divinized fulfilment, Thomas feels the need to clarify why the assumption of a human nature is referred to as taking on the “form of a servant” rather than just becoming a “servant.” As Aquinas explains, this is because “servant” is the name of a hypostasis, which was not assumed, but the nature was; for that which is assumed is distinct from the one assuming it. Therefore, the Son of God did not assume a

²³² Ibid: Pulchre autem dicit exinanivit. Inane enim opponitur pleno. Natura autem divina satis plena est, quia ibi est omnis bonitatis perfectio. Ex. XXXIII, 19: ostendam tibi omne bonum. Natura autem humana, et anima non est plena, sed in potentia ad plenitudinem; quia est facta quasi tabula rasa. Est ergo natura humana inanis. Dicit ergo exinanivit, quia naturam humanam assumpsit.

²³³ Ibid: Primo videre eius charitatem, ut ei conformemur illuminati. Is. XXXIII, 17: regem in decore suo videbunt, et cetera. II Cor. III, 18: nos autem omnes revelata facie gloriam Dei speculantes.

man, because that would mean that he was other than the Son of God; nevertheless, the Son of God became man; therefore, “He took the nature to His own person, so that the Son of God and the Son of man would be the same in person.”²³⁴ Moreover, the term “in the form of a servant” highlights the conformity of the incarnate Word’s nature to ours when the hymn further claims that the Son was “born in the likeness of men;” that is, human in every way, “Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect” (Heb. 2:17). This avoids the error of thinking that the assumption of humanity results in a new nature comprised out of the both the Word’s divinity and humanity, since this would mean that either the divine nature changed in some fundamental sense in response to this assumption, or that the human nature was absorbed into some sort of hybrid divine-human *tertium quid*. Finally, the term “and being found in human form” (2:8, *et habitu inventus ut homo*—literally, in the habit of a man), for Aquinas denotes the material outward conditions of the Word’s humanity. According to Thomas, this phrase emphasizes the fact that the Son assumed all the defects and properties associated with the human species, except sin. Thus, in his human mode of existence, the Word endured hunger and thirst, became tired, suffered pain, and so on. Even more importantly, “form” refers to all of Christ’s outward human activities, those operations which find their principle of action in the human nature as lived out by the incarnate Son.²³⁵

²³⁴ Ibid: Tangit ergo, primo, naturae humanae assumptionem, dicens formam servi accipiens. Homo enim ex sua creatione est servus Dei, et natura humana est forma servi. Ps. XCIX, 3: scitote quoniam dominus ipse est Deus, et cetera. Is. XLII, 1: ecce servus meus, et cetera. Ps. III, 4: tu autem, domine, susceptor meus es, et cetera. Cur dicitur convenientius formam servi, quam servum? Quia servus est nomen hypostasis vel suppositi, quod non est assumptum sed natura: quod enim suscipitur, distinguitur a suscipiente. Non ergo filius Dei assumpsit hominem; quia daretur intelligi quod homo esset aliud a filio Dei, cum tamen filius Dei factus sit homo. Accepit ergo naturam in persona sua, ut esset idem in persona filius Dei et filius hominis.

²³⁵ Ibid: Tertio naturae humanae conditiones ponit, dicens et habitu inventus ut homo, quia defectus omnes et proprietates continentes speciem, praeter peccatum, suscepit. Et ideo habitu inventus ut homo, scilicet in exteriori conversatione, quia esuriit ut homo, fatigatus fuit, et huiusmodi. Hebr. IV, 15:

This introduction of the term form/habit allows Thomas to recapitulate Augustine's four-fold classification of the term *habitus* from his treatise *De diversis quaestionibus*.²³⁶ It is Augustine's classification of *habitus* in which another is changed but it does not change the possessor, as a dress. It is only in this manner that the human nature in Christ is called a *habitus* or "something had"; because it comes to the divine person without changing the Son, but the assumed nature itself is transformed for the better, because it is filled with grace and truth, as when the Evangelist writes, "We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father" (Jn. 1:14). It is this assumption of a human nature which divinizes the humanity without in the process either changing the divinity or eliminating the humanity, this transformative vision of glory which at once also glorifies the beholder, which will eventually come to dominate Thomas' later articulations of the Philippians hymn. Because the assumed humanity retains its natural integrity, the manner in which the Son displays his supreme act of humility, with his obedience to the Father's divine will, must be attributed to his human will conforming itself to the will of God. That this "obedience is great and commendable is evident from the fact that obedience is great when it follows the will of another against one's own. Now the movement of the human will tends toward two things, namely, to life

tentatum per omnia pro similitudine absque peccato. Bar. III, 38: post haec in terris visus est, et cum hominibus conversatus est. Et sic habitum possumus referre ad exteriores habitudines.

²³⁶ Ibid: Vel habitu, quia ipsam humanitatem accepit quasi habitum. Est autem habitus quadruplex. Unus mutat habentem, et ipse non mutatur, ut stultus per sapientiam. Alius mutatur et mutat, ut cibus. Alius, qui nec mutat, nec mutatur, ut annulus adveniens digito. Alius, qui mutatur, et non mutat, ut vestimentum. Et per hanc similitudinem natura humana in Christo dicitur habitus, qui sic advenit divinae personae, quod non mutavit ipsam; sed mutata est in melius, quia impleta est gratia et veritate. Io. I, 14: vidimus gloriam eius, gloriam quasi unigeniti a patre, plenum gratiae et veritatis. Dicit ergo in similitudinem hominum factus, ita tamen quod non mutatur, quia habitu inventus est ut homo. For Augustine's explication of the term *habitus* within the larger context of his Christology, see Chapter 1, section 4, "Augustine: *Gemina Substantia, Una Persona*," above.

and to honor. But Christ did not refuse death.”²³⁷ While not explicitly mentioning instrumentality, Thomas argument here at least implicitly calls upon his earlier delineation of Christ’s humanity as the conjoined instrument of the divinity, a humanity which lacks nothing that is truly human, least of all a freely functioning will. Indeed, the incarnate Word’s salvific mission itself would not be efficacious if He had not suffered out of obedience; nor would Christ’s passion be so commendable, for obedience gives merit to our sufferings. Indeed, it is precisely through his human mode of being in the world, and his freely willed natural human activities that the enfleshed Words suffers and dies meritoriously for our salvation.

It is due to the obedient sufferings of the God-man that the Father highly exalted the Son and bestowed upon him the name which is above every other name. Now, for someone like Photinus, if this is truly a reward for Christ’s humility then that it does not mean the Jesus is true God, but merely that He received a certain pre-eminence over the creature and a likeness of the godhead. This however, cannot be correct, Aquinas contends, because the hymn unambiguously states that Christ was in the form of God. Hence, one must reinforce the fact that there are two natures and one hypostasis in Christ, that person of the Son *is* simultaneously both God and man. So the bestowal of the exalted name can be explicated in two ways: in one way, that the Father gave Him this name inasmuch as He is the Son of God; and this from all eternity by an eternal

²³⁷ Ibid: Unde volens ostendere perfectionem humilitatis et passionis Christi, dicit quod factus est obediens, quia si fuisset passus non ex obedientia, non fuisset ita commendabilis: quia obedientia dat meritum passionibus nostris. Sed quomodo factus est obediens? Non voluntate divina, quia ipsa est regula; sed voluntate humana, quae regulata est in omnibus secundum voluntatem paternam. Matth. c. XXVI, 39: verumtamen non sicut ego volo, sed sicut tu. Et convenienter introducit in passione obedientiam, quia prima praevaricatio est facta per inobedientiam. Rom. V, 19: sicut enim per inobedientiam unius hominis peccatores constituti sunt multi, ita et per obedientiam unius hominis, iusti constituuntur multi. Prov. XXI, 28: vir obediens loquetur victorias. Sed quod magna et commendabilis sit haec obedientia, patet: quia tunc est obedientia magna, quando sequitur imperium alterius contra motum proprium; motus autem voluntatis humanae ad duo tendit: ad vitam et ad honorem; sed Christus non recusavit mortem.

engendering, so that this giving is no more than His eternal generation: “For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself” (Jn. 5:26). In another way it can refer to Christ as man; and then the Father gave that man the name of being God not by nature, because God’s nature is distinct from the nature of man, but to be God by the grace, not of adoption, but of union, by which Christ is at once God and man: “Designated Son of God in power,” He, namely, “who was descended from David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:4).

3. *Lectura* on the Gospel According to John

Thomas’ full-throated defense of Christ’s full humanity is also a touchstone of his Commentary on the Fourth Gospel, the *Lectura super Ioannem*, begun sometime in the early portion of Aquinas’ second Parisian regency, perhaps in the years 1270-1272. It will probably come as little surprise that the Kenotic hymn is a leitmotiv throughout the initial sections of the *Lectura*. In cap. 1, lect. 7, nos. 174-176, commenting on John 1:14a: “And the Word was made flesh, and made his dwelling among us,” Thomas defends the term “dwelling” from a Nestorian misreading; according to Aquinas, the Son was united to man in such a way that there was not as a result one divine person and also a fully subsistent man, since the Word was united to human nature only by an indwelling through grace, hence it follows that the Son is not a human person.²³⁸ Among the refutations Aquinas offers is the Kenotic hymn’s assertion that the union of God and man as an emptying, saying of the Word “being in the form of God ... emptied himself, taking

²³⁸ No. 174: Ex quo verbo Nestorius occasionem sumens erroris, dixit, filium Dei sic esse unitum homini ut tamen Dei et hominis non esset una persona: voluit enim quod verbum per solam inhabitationem per gratiam fuerit humanae naturae unitum. Ex hoc autem sequitur quod filius Dei non sit homo.

the form of a servant” (Philippians 2:6). Clearly, God is not said to empty himself insofar as he dwells in the rational creature by grace, because then the Father and the Spirit would be emptying themselves, since they are also said to dwell in us through grace, as John 14:23(“Whoever loves me will keep my word. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them”) indicates.²³⁹ In lect. 8, no. 182, Aquinas tells us that Christ became man precisely so that we may be able to behold the divine glory of God, a paraphrase of Augustine’s *Tract.* 2. 16, but perhaps an allusion as well to *De Trinitate* I. 15 and its use of Philippians 3:21, where it is the kenotic Son “who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like His glorious body.” Finally, in cap. 1, lect. 13, no. 246, kenosis is invoked once more, this time in reference to the phrase “standing in your midst” from John 1:26, in order to point out the ordinary human existence that the incarnate Word undertook: “It refers to the ordinary way Christ lived among men,” Thomas writes, “because according to his human nature he appeared to be like other men: ‘He, being in the form of God ... emptied himself, taking the form of a servant’”(Philippians 2:6). Christ’s assumption of a fully human mode of existence is revelatory, and is itself part of the saving mission of the enfleshed Word. According to Aquinas, this is the reason why the Evangelist says, “there is one standing in your midst, i.e., in many ways he lived as one of you: ‘I am in your midst’ (Lk 22:27), whom you do not recognize, i.e., you cannot grasp the fact that God was made man.” Likewise, humanity does not “recognize how great he is according to the divine nature which is

²³⁹ No. 176: Quod autem blasphematur Nestorius, auctoritate sacrae Scripturae evidenter refellitur. Apostolus enim Phil. II, 6 unionem Dei et hominis exinanitionem vocat, dicens de filio Dei: qui cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est se esse aequalem Deo; sed semetipsum exinanivit, formam servi accipiens. Non autem dicitur Deus exinaniri Deus ex eo quod creaturam rationalem per gratiam inhabitet, quia sic pater et spiritus sanctus exinanirentur, cum et ipsi inhabitare hominem dicantur per gratiam; dicit enim Christus de se et de patre loquens, infra XIV, 23: ad eum veniemus et mansionem apud eum faciemus.

concealed in him: ‘God is great, and exceeds our knowledge’ (Job 36:26). And so, as Augustine says (Tract. 4.9), ‘The lantern was lighted,’ namely, John, ‘so that Christ might be found.’ ‘I have prepared a lamp for my anointed’ (Ps 131:17).”²⁴⁰

One of the most extensive meditations on the specific efficacy of Christ’s humanity comes in Thomas’ detailed exposition of how Christ’ flesh itself gives life. Using Augustine as his interlocutor, Aquinas explains that in Christ there is both a divine nature and a human nature, and in each he has life-giving power from the Father, although not in the same way. According to his divinity he has the power to give life to souls; but according to his assumed nature, he gives life to bodies. Hence, as Augustine writes in his *Tractate on John* 19.6, “The Word gives life to souls; but the Word made flesh gives life to bodies.”²⁴¹ For the resurrection of Christ and the mysteries which Christ fulfilled in his flesh is the efficient cause of the future resurrection of bodies. So, while the first manifestation of life-giving power he has from eternity; the other life-giving power he has in time, a power made manifest precisely as human by the fact that the incarnate Word will raise the dead: first Lazarus, then others, and finally he will raise

²⁴⁰ Quod quidem exponitur multipliciter. Uno siquidem modo, secundum Gregorium, Chrysostomum et Augustinum, ut referatur ad communem Christi conversationem inter homines, quia, secundum naturam humanam, aliis hominibus similis apparuit; Phil. II, 6: qui cum in forma Dei esset, non rapinam arbitratus est esse se aequalem Deo; sed semetipsum exinanivit formam servi accipiens, in similitudinem hominum factus, et habitu inventus ut homo. Et secundum hoc dicit medius vestrum stetit, idest multoties conversatus est quasi unus ex vobis; Lc. XXII, v. 27: ego in medio vestrum sum. Quem vos nescitis, idest, hoc quod Deus factus est homo, capere non potestis. Item, nescitis quam magnus sit secundum naturam divinam, quae in eo latebat; Iob XXXVI, 26: ecce dominus magnus vincens scientiam vestram. Et ideo, ut Augustinus dicit, accensa est lucerna, scilicet Ioannes, ut inveniatur Christus. Ps. CXXXI, 17: paravi lucernam Christo meo.

²⁴¹ Cap. 5, lect.4, no, 759: In Christo enim est et natura divina et natura humana; et secundum utramque habet a patre potestatem vivificativam; sed aliter et aliter, quia secundum divinitatem habet potestatem vivificandi animas, sed secundum naturam assumptam vivificat corpora unde Augustinus: verbum vivificat animas, sed verbum caro factum vivificat corpora. Nam resurrectio Christi, et mysteria quae Christus implevit in carne, sunt causa futurae resurrectionis corporum

everyone on the Day of Judgment.”²⁴² This life-giving power, which the Son exercises precisely as human, is closely allied to the Son’s power to judge, which he also effectuates in his humanity. Once again utilizing Augustine’s *Johanine Tractate* (21.11) as his thematic springboard, Thomas explains by quoting Christ’s words from John 5:21 where he says that just as the Father raises the dead, so also does the Son. However, in order that no one should think that this refers only to those miracles the Son performs in raising the dead to this life, and not to the Son’s raising to eternal life, the Word “leads them to the deeper consideration of the resurrection to occur at the future judgment,” referring explicitly to the judgment, saying, “the Father himself judges no one.”²⁴³ Unlike the resurrection of souls, which is accomplished through the person of the Father and of the Son, the resurrection of bodies is accomplished through the humanity of the Son, according to which he is not coeternal with the Father; hence the Fourth Gospel attributes judgment solely to the incarnate Son.

As Thomas subsequently explains, it is due to the enfleshed Son’s meritorious life, death, and resurrection, the very humanity of Christ, which is the cause of both the resurrection of the soul and the body: because through the mysteries accomplished in the flesh of Christ we are restored not only to an incorruptible life in our bodies, but also to a spiritual life in our souls. In fact, as Thomas suggests, it is by means of the hypostatic union of the divine and human natures in the person of the Word, and a kind of

²⁴² Ibid: Sed primum habet ab aeterno, et hoc ostendit cum supra dixit: et omnia demonstrat ei quae ipse facit; quae quidem omnia demonstrat carni; sed alia ex tempore, et quantum ad hoc dicit: et maiora his demonstrabit ei, idest demonstratur potestas eius in hoc quod maiora faciet, suscitando mortuos: quosdam quidem hic, sicut Lazarum, puellam et unicum matris; omnes tandem in die iudicii.

²⁴³ Ibid, n. 762: Secundum Augustinum quidem exponitur sic. Dixerat dominus supra, quod sicut pater suscitavit mortuos ita et filius. Sed ne intelligeres illam mortuorum resuscitationem tantum qua aliquos ad hanc vitam resuscitavit ad miraculi ostensionem et non illam qua resuscitat ad vitam aeternam, ideo ducit eos ad altiore considerationem alterius, scilicet resurrectionis quae erit in futuro iudicio. Unde et specialiter de iudicio mentionem facit, dicens neque enim pater iudicat quemquam.

ontological exemplarity through which the kenotic Son conforms fallen humanity, that we are raised both spiritually and bodily. exemplary cause and of that cause by which anything that is brought to life is made conformable to that which brings it to life, for everything that lives through another is conformed to that through which it lives.

However, the resurrection of souls does not consist in souls being conformed to the humanity of Christ, but to the divine Word, because the life of the soul is vivified through the divinity alone, hence the resurrection of souls takes place through the Word. But the resurrection of the body will consist in our bodies being conformed to the body of Christ through the life of glory, that is, through the glory of our bodies. Accordingly, the resurrection of the body will take place through the Word made flesh. Even more than that, here Aquinas is reiterating a principle that he had already begun to develop his *Philippians Commentary*: the Son's kenotic assumption of humanity (Philippians 2:6-11) establishes the means whereby our own bodies will eventually be glorified through theosis (Philippians 3:21: "He will change our lowly body so it is like his glorious body").²⁴⁴

Upon this conceptual undergirding, Thomas now begins to explicate the importance of obedience to his understanding of the Son's kenotic existence. This is the order of exposition which Thomas employed in his analysis of the Son's obedience to the Father's will in his *Philippians Commentary*, but now employed in an even more rigorous

²⁴⁴ Ibid, no. 791: Augustinus loquitur de causa exemplari et de causa qua illud quod vivificatur, conformatur vivificatori: nam omne illud quod per aliud vivit, conformatur ei per quod vivit. Resurrectio autem animarum non est per hoc quod animae conformantur humanitati Christi, sed verbo, quia vita animae est per solum verbum; et ideo dicit animarum resurrectionem fieri per verbum. Resurrectio vero corporum erit per hoc quod corpora nostra conformabuntur corpori Christi per vitam gloriae, videlicet per claritatem corporum; secundum illud Phil. III, v. 21: reformabit corpus humilitatis nostrae, configuratum corpori claritatis suae. Et secundum hoc dicit resurrectionem corporum fieri per verbum carnem factum.

reading of John 5:26-30.²⁴⁵ For Aquinas, “sicut audio” is the key to unlocking this entire passage, for in this context to hear is the same as to obey—the hallmark of the Son’s kenotic obedience in Philippians 2, and the key passage as well for John Damascene’s discussion of Dyothelitism in *De Fide* III, 14. “Now to obey belongs to one who receives a command, while to command pertains to one who is superior. Accordingly, because Christ, as man, is inferior to the Father, he says, as I hear it, i.e., as infused into my soul by God.”²⁴⁶ Moreover, it is because the Son aligns his human will with the Father’s divine will that his judgment can be seen to be truly just, since in the Son reason is not seeking his own will, but rather the will of the one who sent him. “For there are two wills in our Lord Jesus Christ: one is a divine will, which is the same as the will of the Father; the other is a human will, which is proper to himself, just as it is proper to him to be a man. A human will is borne to its own good; but in Christ it was ruled and regulated by right reason, so that it would always be conformed in all things to the divine will.”²⁴⁷

Aquinas does not have access to the texts of Constantinople III at this point, which is why he does not quote the relevant Conciliar documents in contrast to his parallel discussion of the incarnate Word’s two wills in ST III (e.g. q.18, a.5 and q.20, aa.1-20, nevertheless, it is apparent that the question of Dyothelitism plays an important part in Thomas’s discussion of the Son’s kenotic mode of being.

²⁴⁵ Sicut enim Pater habet vitam in semet ipso sic dedit et Filio vitam habere in semet ipso. Et potestatem dedit ei et iudicium facere quia Filius hominis est. Nolite mirari hoc quia venit hora in qua omnes qui in monumentis sunt audient vocem eius. Et procedent qui bona fecerunt in resurrectionem vitae qui vero mala egerunt in resurrectionem iudicii. Non possum ego a me ipso facere quicquam sicut audio iudico et iudicium meum iustum est quia non quaero voluntatem meam sed voluntatem eius qui misit me.

²⁴⁶ Ibid 795: Obedire autem pertinet ad illum qui fit imperium. Imperare autem pertinet ad superiorem. Et ideo, quia Christus inquantum homo minor est patre, dicit sicut audio; idest, secundum quod inspiratur a Deo in anima mea. Non possum ego a me ipso facere quicquam sicut audio iudico et iudicium meum iustum est quia non quaero voluntatem meam sed voluntatem eius qui misit me

²⁴⁷ Ibid 796: n domino enim Iesu Christo sunt duae voluntates. Una divina quam habet eamdem cum patre; alia humana, quae est sibi propria, sicut est proprium eius esse hominem. Voluntas humana fertur in bonum proprium; sed in Christo per rectitudinem rationis regebatur et regulabatur, ut semper in omnibus voluntati divinae conformaretur.

So which theological issue is most relevant for understanding Thomas' thematic concerns in the *Lectio* and the arc of his developing Christology—Dyothelitism or Docetism? According to Paul Gondreau in his essay “Anti-Docetism in Aquinas’s *Super Ioannem*: St. Thomas as Defender of the Full Humanity of Christ,” in the Gospel of John Commentary Aquinas is specifically defending Christ from Docetic attacks that would deny the real humanity of the incarnate Christ. As Gondreau explains, this sort of attack has a two-fold danger: soteriological—since a non-human Christ cannot in fact save humanity, and a metaphysical danger, since the denial of Christ’s material body denigrates the material in order to exalt the spiritual. Gondreau points to Thomas’ dictum that “the humanity of Christ is the way that leads us to God” (*Super Io.*, cap. 7, lect. 4, no. 1074) to defend his thesis that Aquinas’ main task in the *Lectio* is to uphold the “truth of the human nature” (*veritas humanae naturae*; *Super Io.*, cap. 4, lect. 1, no. 563) assumed by Christ, that is, a man who possesses a body [matter] and a soul [form] which were substantially (hylemorphically) united. Gondreau focuses on the Passion as the most important aspect of Thomas’ defense of Christ’s truly human body (*Corpus Verum Christi*), for “any meaningful proclamation of Christian redemption hinges strictly on the realism of the torturous crucifixion and death of Christ’s body.”²⁴⁸ But this is a misunderstanding of Aquinas’ soteriology as regards Christ’s humanity and its relation to Thomas’ mature understanding of the Satisfaction theory of atonement; it certainly does not take account of Word’s enfleshment and the body’s role in human divinization.

Gondreau also points out that “in addition to his mortality, the other physical weaknesses Jesus exhibits (hunger, thirst, fatigue) betray the humanness as well. This Aquinas affirms in his gloss on John 4: 6, where Jesus sits down at Jacob’s well because

²⁴⁸ Gondreau, “Anti-Docetism,” p. 261.

‘he was tired from his journey.’”²⁴⁹: Jesus, tired from his journey, rested there at the well, and through this act he reveals his weakness, not because of a lack of power, but to show us the reality of the human nature he assumed. As Thomas elaborates, Jesus is strong, for “In the beginning was the Word” (1:1); but he is weak, for “the Word was made flesh” (1:14). And so Christ, wishing to show the truth of his human nature, allowed it to do and to endure things proper to men; and to show the truth of his divine nature, he worked and performed things proper to God. “Hence when he checked the inflow of divine power to his body, he became hungry and tired; but when he let his divine power influence his body, he did not become hungry in spite of a lack of food, and he did not become tired in his labors.”²⁵⁰ As Gondreau rightly notes, this passage “gives witness to the vibrant patristic voice that often reverberates in Aquinas’ writings.” Its very locution recalls the noted Christological formula penned by Leo the Great († 461): “Each form accomplishes in concert what is appropriate to it, the Word performing what belongs to the Word, and the flesh carrying out what belongs to the flesh.”²⁵¹ This axiom, which was devised in order to counter the Monophysite denial of the full integrity of Christ’s humanity was appropriated by Damascene and used extensively in his *De Fide*, especially in III, 15, 19-20; and while Thomas will cite Leo’s axiom itself on occasion,²⁵² he prefers Damascene’s

²⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 269; quoting here from *Super Io.*, cap. 4, lect. 1, no. 563.

²⁵⁰ *In Ioan.*, cap. 4, lect. 1, no. 563: Sessio autem Christi innuitur cum subdit Iesus autem fatigatus ex itinere, sedebat sic supra fontem. Ostendit infirmitatem, quamquam esset virtutis immensae, non propter defectum virtutis, sed ut ostenderet veritatem naturae assumptae. Nam, secundum Augustinum, Iesus fortis est, quia (supra I, 1) in principio erat verbum, sed infirmus est, quia verbum caro factum est. Christus ergo volens ostendere veritatem humanae naturae, permittebat eam agere et pati quae sunt propria homini: volens etiam ostendere in se veritatem divinae naturae, faciebat et operabatur propria Dei. Unde quando retrahebat influxum virtutis divinae a corpore, esuriebat et fatigabatur; quando vero ipsam virtutem divinam corpori exhibebat, sine cibo non esuriebat, et in laboribus non fatigabatur. Matth. IV, 2: ieiunavit quadraginta diebus et quadraginta noctibus, et postea esuriit.

²⁵¹ Tome of Leo; DS 294; Migne, Pat. Lat., Tom. LIV, col. 756.

²⁵² Cf. *ST* III, q. 19, a. 1

use of it.²⁵³ So, while Gondreau acknowledges the importance of Leo for Chalcedon, and of Chalcedon's anti-Monophysite teaching, he posits that Thomas uses it in an largely anti-Docetic manner, when it would make more sense to see Aquinas' use as pointedly anti-Monophysite, especially since he is attacking Monophysite teachings, and doing so after he has recovered and absorbed the teachings of Chalcedon and Constantinople II, both of which are explicitly cited earlier in the Commentary, for example in Cap. 1, lect. 7, nos. 166, 171.

Moreover, as Gondreau himself goes on to explain, in defending the full humanity of Christ, Thomas will not only uphold the reality of Christ's assumed human body, but of a body conjoined to a truly human soul, an *Anima Vera Christi*. If the enfleshed Word had assumed a body without a sensitive and rational soul it would not be a true incarnation, and it would have no soteriological efficacy. In addition, it would deny those portions of Scripture wherein Christ is shown to feel and suffer in a human way. This extends to Christ's human will, attested to by Scripture, and without which there is no salvation. "It is, after all, by his human will that Jesus freely accepts his cross—'not as I will, but as you will' (Matthew 26:39)—and, hence, freely chooses to redeem the human race."²⁵⁴ As we have seen Aquinas returns to this theme at various points during his career.²⁵⁵ However, it is only in the latter treatments of the subject, from ST III onward, that Aquinas has direct access to the material from the recovered Acts of the Dyothelite Council of Constantinople III. Gondreau, of course is aware of these developments, he even affirms that for Thomas, body and soul unite as matter and form into an integrated

²⁵³ E.g., ST III, q. 14, a. 2; q. 46, a. 6, *Super Sent.* III, d. 15, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2, ad. 2.

²⁵⁴ Gondreau, p. 266.

²⁵⁵ *Super Sent.* III, d. 15, q. 2, a. 3, sol. 2; *De Veritate*, q. 26, a. 9, ad 7; *In Matt.*, 26, lect. 5; ST III, q. 18, aa. 1-6 (especially a. 1, ad 1, and a. 5); q. 47, a. 2, ad 2; and a. 3, ad 1 and ad 2; *De unione*, a. 5.

whole, so that a true human being is a unified composite of body and soul. And the very same principle holds for Christ; indeed, Aquinas often refers to a “dynamic hylemorphic exchange between Jesus’ body and his soul, such that the experience of one (like the bodily pain he endured in his tortuous crucifixion) always affected (or ‘redounded into’) the other.”²⁵⁶ Finally, Gondreau goes on to write that Aquinas’ anti-Docetism surfaces in another recurring theme in the Commentary: the need “for credibility in the Incarnation, that is, the need for Christ to appear as a true and genuine being. This need follows from the fact that faith in a God incarnate is little served if the human family cannot fully believe that Christ’s humanity accurately reflects the truth of human nature.”²⁵⁷ In fact, Christ’s possession of a fully believable human nature is directly tied with the need for a true human model or exemplar to imitate. As Gondreau points out, inspired by biblical texts (e.g., 1 Peter 2:21: “Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.”) and rooted in a rich Patristic tradition, this notion of Christ’s exemplarity appears throughout Aquinas’ work.

These claims are true enough: As we saw in chapter 1, Augustine already understood and pointed out the soteriological importance of the credibility of the kenotic *forma servi*. Moreover, while Aquinas is indeed working within a long tradition emphasizing the reality of Christ’s incarnational humanity for the sake of exemplarity, Gondreau fails to make a distinction between moral and ontological exemplarity. So, while he correctly points out that this theme of credibility leading to exemplarity is most often brought up when Thomas is dealing with Christ’s affectivity, since the virtuous movement of the passions in Christ is a model for us to follow, Gondreau fails to

²⁵⁶ Gondreau, p. 268.

²⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 269.

underscore the fact that there was a profound sea change between Thomas's utilization of exemplarity in the *Scriptum Commentary* and his later works. Much of this change, as we have already examined, is due to Thomas deepened understanding of the efficient instrumental causality of Christ's assumed humanity. In his analysis of the Eucharistic aspects of Thomas's defense of the incarnated Word's full humanity in the *Lectio*, Gondreau certainly grasps the uniqueness of Thomas fully worked-out understanding of instrumentality. In his explication of the phrase "and the bread which I will give is my flesh" (John 6:52), Thomas explains

He then speaks of his body when he says, And the bread which I will give is my flesh. For he had said that he was the living bread; and so that we do not think that he is such so far as he is the Word or in his soul alone, he shows that even his flesh is life-giving, for it is an instrument of his divinity. Thus, since an instrument acts by virtue of the agent, then just as the divinity of Christ is life-giving, so too his flesh gives life (as Damascene says) because of the Word to which it is united. Thus Christ healed the sick by his touch. So what he said above, I am the living bread, pertained to the power of the Word; but what he is saying here pertains to the sharing in his body, that is, to the sacrament of the Eucharist.²⁵⁸

Christ's body—his very humanity—is life-giving because it instrumentally mediates God's grace, not only in his earthly embodiment, but sacramentally in the transubstantiated Eucharistic species, and this instrumental causal efficacy flows forth directly from the kenotic existence and actions of the theandrically conjoined natures of the God-man who divinizes through his human flesh.

²⁵⁸ *In Ioan.*, cap. 6, lect. 4, no. 959: Consequenter loquitur de corpore, cum dicit et panis quem ego dabo, caro mea est. Dixerat enim, quod erat panis vivus, et ne intelligatur quod hoc ei esset inquantum est verbum, vel secundum animam tantum; ideo ostendit quod etiam caro sua vivificativa est: est enim organum divinitatis suae; unde, cum instrumentum agat virtute agentis, sicut divinitas Christi vivificativa est, ita ut Damascenus dicit et caro virtute verbi adiuncti vivificat: unde Christus tactu suo sanabat infirmos. Sic ergo quod dixit supra, ego sum panis vivus, pertinet ad virtutem verbi; hic vero quod subdit pertinet ad communionem sui corporis, scilicet ad Eucharistiae sacramentum.

4. ST III, qq.1-16: Self-Emptying, Hypostatic Union, and Divinization; Or, No Theosis Without Kenosis

Thomas Aquinas' final months in Rome and his arrival in Paris for a second residency is marked above all by commencement of the Angelic Doctor's most celebrated work, the *Summa Theologiae*. It is quite probable that the entirety of the *Prima Pars* was finished in Rome, while the *Tertia Pars*, devoted in large part to the person and mission of Jesus Christ, was likely begun in Paris the winter of 1271-1272, and remained incomplete at the time of Thomas' death in early 1274.²⁵⁹ The early sections of the *Tertia Pars*, from at least one point of view, can be seen as a vast recapitulation of questions already dealt with at length in both the *Sentences* Commentary and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Initially, Thomas is concerned with establishing the fittingness of the Incarnation, and his reasoning is largely given over to the theme of God's supreme goodness. Following Dionysius the Areopagite's Neo-Platonic axiom that the good is self-communicative, and the Supreme Good must therefore be supremely so (*Div. Nom.* iv), hence God wishes to communicate his goodness to fallen humanity most effectively, and this takes form as the Incarnation. We should note that this analysis mirrors the *Prima Pars*, where creation is explained as the natural yet voluntary, outward expression of God's supremely good, loving, and self-communicative essence; similarly, he indicates that the incarnation is the result of God's divine desire for self-communication and union with humanity.²⁶⁰ To speak of Christ's significance in this way in the first

²⁵⁹ Cf. Torrell, *Saint Thomas*, pp. 146-147. See also Palemon Glorieux, "Pour la chronologie de la Somme," *Mélanges de Science Religieuse* 2 (1945), pp. 59-98.

²⁶⁰ ST III, q.1, a.1: Respondeo dicendum quod unicuique rei conveniens est illud quod competit sibi secundum rationem propriae naturae, sicut homini conveniens est ratiocinari quia hoc convenit sibi inquantum est rationalis secundum suam naturam. Ipsa autem natura Dei est bonitas, ut patet per Dionysium, I cap. de Div. Nom. Unde quidquid pertinet ad rationem boni, conveniens est Deo. Pertinet autem ad rationem boni ut se aliis communicet, ut patet per Dionysium, IV cap. de Div. Nom. Unde ad

instance, rather than in terms of satisfaction, redemption, reconciliation, atonement, or sacrifice, is highly significant, it indicates that for Thomas the Word's incarnation is, above all, God's sharing of his own life with humanity.

The efficacy of this fittingness is evident in various ways, most notably in the fact that the Word-made-man is exemplum of right conduct; hence Augustine says in a sermon (xxii de Temp.): "Man who might be seen was not to be followed; but God was to be followed, Who could not be seen. And therefore God was made man, that He Who might be seen by man, and Whom man might follow, might be shown to man." The culminating reason, though, is given as full participation of the Divinity, which is the true bliss of man and end of human life; and this is precisely bestowed upon us *by Christ's humanity*; for Augustine says in a sermon (xiii de Temp.): "God was made man, that man might be made God." Let us note as well the emphasis on theosis/divinization as exemplified in the quote from Augustine paraphrasing Athanasius. There is an extensive use of Augustine throughout the early sections of the *Tertia Pars*, most importantly perhaps Aquinas' appropriation of Augustine's Christology, particularly his use of Philippians: Christ the humble mediator between God the Father; Christ as revelation: The incarnate Son, through his human *forma servi*, reveals the glorious invisible *forma Dei* of the Father to sinful humanity. Faith in the Son's divinity thus leads to knowledge/beatific vision of God. The path to salvation/vision proceeds through participation in Christ in the *forma servi*; that is, through self-emptying humility, obedience, and sacrificial love. The Son's kenosis, death on the cross, and ultimate exaltation is the paradigm of the Christian life.

rationem summi boni pertinet quod summo modo se creaturae communicet. Quod quidem maxime fit per hoc quod naturam creatam sic sibi coniungit ut una persona fiat ex tribus, verbo, anima et carne, sicut dicit Augustinus, XIII de Trin. Unde manifestum est quod conveniens fuit Deum incarnari.

While denying that the end of the Incarnation could have been achieved in no other way than by the Incarnation itself, Aquinas claims it was the best way of achieving that end. The first reason he gives is that humanity's furtherance in good could have been achieved by no better means. By furtherance in good, he explains, he means primarily growth in faith, hope, and charity, the latter of which is "greatly enkindled [excitatur]" by the Incarnation (III, q. 1, a. 2, resp.). Moreover, furtherance in the good is to be interpreted "with regard to the full participation of the Divinity, which is the true bliss of man and end of human life;" and this is bestowed upon us by Christ's humanity. Aquinas subsequently combines both these themes at the question's end, when he contends that by the Incarnation human nature is raised to its highest perfection because the Word incarnate is the efficient cause of the perfection of human nature (III, q. 1, a. 6, resp.). The Incarnation thus brings about human satisfaction-unto-glory in two quite distinct ways: by renovating human nature itself, a renovation effected by the hypostatic union, and by some more specific form of influence, presumably over the individual human subject. Thomas has already indicated how such influence might work in the *secunda pars*: "Reply to Objection 2: Matters concerning the Godhead are, in themselves, the strongest incentive to love and consequently to devotion, because God is supremely lovable. Yet such is the weakness of the human mind that it needs a guiding hand, not only to the knowledge, but also to the love of Divine things by means of certain sensible objects known to us. Chief among these is the humanity of Christ, according to the words of Thomas' Preface, "that through knowing God visibly, we may be caught up to the love of things invisible." Wherefore matters relating to Christ's humanity are the chief

incentive to devotion, leading us thither as a guiding hand, although devotion itself has for its object matters concerning the Godhead” (ST, II-II, q. 82, a. 3, ad 2).²⁶¹

The mode of hypostatic union moreover parallels that of the union between God and humanity. As grace is the medium between God and humanity in mystical union, so it is in the hypostatic union. The union of the Incarnation is said to have taken place by grace, on two grounds: “if grace be understood as the will of God gratuitously doing something or reputing anything as well-pleasing or acceptable to Him, the union of Incarnation took place by grace, even as the union of the saints with God by knowledge and love. But if grace be taken as the free gift of God, then the fact that the human nature is united to the Divine Person may be called a grace, inasmuch as it took place without being preceded by any merits.” Here Thomas explicitly compares the union of the divine and human in Christ by grace with the human person’s union with God by grace. Aquinas is not simply drawing our attention to two situations that happen to be similar; later on he makes clear that the one pattern is understood to be the form of the other: “When it is said that the Father ‘doth not give the Spirit by measure,’ it may be expounded of the gift which God the Father from all eternity gave the Son, viz. the Divine Nature, which is an infinite gift. Hence the comment of a certain gloss: ‘So that the Son may be as great as the Father is.’ Or again, it may be referred to the gift which is given the human nature, to be united to the Divine Person, and this also is an infinite gift” (ST III, q. 7, a. 11, ad 1). So not just the human nature of Christ benefits from the hypostatic union, then, but all of human nature.

Christ’s kenotic existence then—his instrumental humanity—is the source of grace. In other words, as an individual man Christ had such a fullness of grace that it

²⁶¹ Cf. in particular, A.N. Williams, *The Ground of Union*, pp. 90-91.

flowed out to others. Christ's *gratia capita*, grace as the head of the Church, stresses not 'the imitation of Christ so much as Christ's role in our deification' or theosis. This emphasis on deification was already prominently displayed in *Commentary on John* (15:9):

But the Son did not love the disciples in either of these ways. For he did not love them to the point of their being gods by nature, nor to the point that they would be united to God so as to form one person with him. But he did love them up to a similar point: he loved them to the extent that they would be gods by their participation in grace—"I say, 'You are gods'" (Ps 82:6); "He has granted to us precious and very great promises, that through these you may become partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4)—yet he loved them to the extent that they would be united to God in affection: "He who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him" (1 Cor 6:17); "For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Rom 8:29). Thus the Father communicated to the Son a greater good, with respect to each nature of the Son, than the Son did to his disciples; yet there is a similarity, as was said.²⁶²

As Aquinas goes on to explain, the soul of the one who has grace 'participates, by way of a kind of likeness, in the divine nature' through the mediation of Christ's humanity acting as a 'living instrument with a spiritual soul' (ST III, q. 7, a. 1, ad. 3). Thomas takes the opening verses of Philippians 2, specially the Kenotic hymn, as a clear exhortation: 'Let your manner towards one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus. For the divine nature was his from the first; yet he did not think to snatch at equality with

²⁶² *In Ioan.*, cap. 15, lect. 2, no. 1999: Et ad nihil horum filius dilexit discipulos, nam neque ad hoc dilexit eos ut essent Deus per naturam, neque essent uniti Deo in persona; sed ad quamdam horum similitudinem eos dilexit, ut scilicet essent dii per participationem gratiae; Ps. LXXXI, 6: ego dixi: dii estis; II Petr. I, 4: per quem magna nobis et pretiosa promissa donavit, ut divinae per hoc efficiamur consortes naturae. Item ut assumerentur in unitatem affectus: quia qui adhaeret Deo, unus spiritus est; I Cor. VI, 17. Rom. VIII, 29: quos praescivit, conformes fieri imaginis filii sui, ut sit ipse primogenitus in multis fratribus. Sic ergo maius bonum Deus pater posuit filio secundum utramque naturam, quam filius discipulis, sed tamen simile, ut dictum est. This idea is also echoed in ST I-II, q. 112, a.1: "Nothing can act beyond its species, since the cause must always be more powerful than its effect. Now the gift of grace surpasses every capability of created nature, since it is nothing short of a partaking of the divine nature, which exceeds every other nature. And thus it is impossible that any creature should cause grace. For it is as necessary that God alone should deify, bestowing a partaking of the divine nature by a participated likeness as it is impossible that anything save fire should enkindle."

God, but made himself nothing, assuming the nature of a slave. Bearing the human likeness, revealed in human shape, he humbled himself, and in obedience accepted even death—death on a cross.’ In this exhortation, Paul’s urging to the Philippians to the virtue of humility by the example of Christ marks a very clear connection with Augustine and his emphasis on humility at this point. But—and this must be emphasized—this is not a mere ‘moralizing,’ or exemplarist, reading of Philippians—unlike Thomas’ earliest reading in the *Scriptum*, for there is now a clear ontological exemplarity at work, since the ‘example’ that Thomas discerns Paul as presenting is that of the humanity of Christ as head of the Church.

In Q. 8, a. 1, ad. 1, Thomas emphasizes once more that Christ’s “humanity was the instrument of his divinity,” and it will be in relation to this notion of instrumentality that Aquinas will work out his theory of *gratia capita*—Christ’s personal grace as the grace of the head of the body of Christ/the Church. Christ’s headship in relation to the ‘body’ can be seen in terms of order, perfection, and efficacy or ‘power-source.’ “Order, indeed; for the head is the first part of man, beginning from the higher part.” Under the relationship of perfection, Thomas says that ‘it is in the head that one finds all the internal and external senses which are in the other members, whereas in the other members there is only touch... Under the relationship of power “because the power and movement of the other members, together with the direction of them in their acts, is from the head, by reason of the sensitive and motive power there ruling... Now these three things belong spiritually to Christ. First, on account of His nearness to God His grace is the highest and first, though not in time, since all have received grace on account of His grace, according to Romans 8:29: ‘For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable

to the image of His Son; that He might be the first-born amongst many brethren.’

Secondly, He had perfection as regards the fullness of all graces, according to John 1:14,

‘We saw Him [Vulgate: ‘His glory’] . . . full of grace and truth,’ as was shown, 7, 9].

Thirdly, He has the power of bestowing grace on all the members of the Church,

according to John 1:16: “Of His fullness we have all received.’ And thus it is plain that

Christ is fittingly called the Head of the Church” [ST III, q. 8, a. 1].

So, not only the factual ‘being’ [existence, *esse*] of the humanity of Christ, but ‘his [human] actions through the power of his divinity [and actualized, as human, by his human act of existence and through his human nature or principle of activity], give us salvation by causing grace in us, simultaneously by merit and by a certain efficacy’ [ST III, q.8, a.1, ad 1: “To give grace or the Holy Ghost belongs to Christ as He is God, authoritatively; but instrumentally it belongs also to Him as man, inasmuch as His manhood is the instrument of His Godhead. And hence by the power of the Godhead His actions were beneficial, i.e. by causing grace in us, both meritoriously and efficiently. But Augustine denies that Christ as man gives the Holy Ghost authoritatively. Even other saints are said to give the Holy Ghost instrumentally, or ministerially, according to Galatians 3:5: ‘He . . . who gives to you the Spirit.’ We have already seen this in nascent form in Thomas’ *Commentary* reading of Philippians 2:5, where Christ’s humility shapes our own [saving] experience. For Aquinas, this ability to ‘experience’ Christ’s humility requires us to receive a gift—that is, the supernatural inclination to, or connaturality with, Christ’s goodness infused by grace. This is an affective or experiential coming-to-know of God in the senses and in the will.²⁶³ ‘Perhaps the most striking example of the unity of sanctification and glory in Thomas’ Christology is his analysis of the person of Christ

²⁶³ Cf. ST II-II, q. 97, a. 2, ad 2.

himself. Before the passion, Christ possesses the status of both wayfarer and comprehensor—of a wayfarer chiefly with respect to the body [which also entails nature, will, operation, and, by implication, the human *esse*], and of a comprehensor chiefly on the part of the soul (I answer that, In the state before His Passion Christ was at the same time a wayfarer and a comprehensor, as will be more clearly shown [q. 15, a. 10]. Especially had He the conditions of a wayfarer on the part of the body, which was passible; but the conditions of a comprehensor He had chiefly on the part of the soul. Now this is the condition of the soul of a comprehensor, viz. that it is nowise subject to its body, or dependent upon it, but wholly dominates it. Hence after the resurrection glory will flow from the soul to the body. But the soul of man on earth needs to turn to phantasms, because it is fettered by the body and in a measure subject to and dependent upon it. And hence the blessed both before and after the resurrection can understand without turning to phantasms. And this must be said of the soul of Christ, which had fully the capabilities of a comprehensor.

Q. 15, a. 10: ‘I answer that, A man is called a wayfarer from tending to beatitude, and a comprehensor from having already obtained beatitude, according to 1 Corinthians 9:24: “So run that you may comprehend [Douay: obtain];” and Philippians 3:12: “I follow after, if by any means I may comprehend [Douay: obtain],” Now man's perfect beatitude consists in both soul and body, as stated in I-II, 4, 6. In the soul, as regards what is proper to it, inasmuch as the mind sees and enjoys God; in the body, inasmuch as the body “will rise spiritual in power and glory and incorruption,” as is written 1 Corinthians 15:42. Now before His passion Christ's mind saw God fully, and thus He had beatitude as far as it regards what is proper to the soul; but beatitude was wanting with regard to all

else, since His soul was passible, and His body both passible and mortal, as is clear from the above (4; 14, 1,2). Hence He was at once comprehensor, inasmuch as He had the beatitude proper to the soul, and at the same time wayfarer, inasmuch as He was tending to beatitude, as regards what was wanting to His beatitude.’ In Christ’s person, then, we find the entire story of human sanctification: the one being perfected as he travels along the road to God, and the other glorified as he sees the face of God. As we have traced at some length, in these early questions of the *Tertia Pars* dealing with the fittingness, method, structure, and purpose of the Incarnation, Thomas links the personal unity of the human-divine nature (or perhaps we should say the theandric interrelation of the natures in the divine person) in Christ to our sanctifying conformity to that divine-human nature. In other words, our imitation and participation in God through the instrumental causality of that humanity which Christ has united to himself.

5. *De unione*, aa. 1-3: The Son’s Kenosis as Prelude to an *Esse Secundarium*

While some have sought to diminish the importance—or even question the authenticity—of the *De Unione*, it is important to note that both the Christological portion of the *Summa* and the *De Unione*, despite differences of scope, size, and levels of elaboration, are actually structured along very similar conceptual lines. Most significant in this regard is the fact that in both texts Aquinas feels it is of vital importance to clarify the crucial matter of Christ’s human and divine natures as it relates to the issue of Christ’s act of existence before he goes on to explore the question of Christ’s specifically *theandric* operations. Perhaps the simplest way to overcome the present difficulty regarding the importance and meaning of the *De Unione*, and its controversial position

regarding the *esse* of Christ, would be to simply dismiss the problematic text as spurious. This is precisely what some earlier Thomist scholars, such as Louis Billot, did, whereas others, Cajetan for instance, being more conservative in their assessment of the text's authenticity, argued that *De Unione* was a very early work eventually rejected by a more mature Aquinas.²⁶⁴ Cajetan's position gradually became codified as the majority-opinion among Thomists, who developed an 'ecstasy of existence' theory, according to which Christ's human nature has no separate created existence, for in this case God not only creates that nature, but also communicates his divine existence to it. As a result, Christ's human nature possesses no *esse proprium* (proper personal act of being), but instead it can be said to have—analogously with the ecstasy of knowledge and love that Christ's human nature enjoys through the beatific vision—an ecstasy of being or existence, since an 'ecstasy' is literally a being out of oneself.²⁶⁵ This has been in favor with Thomists generally since the seventeenth century, particularly in those self-professed followers of the Cajetan School—such as Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange—and, much more recently, Shawn Colberg.²⁶⁶

While, as we shall explore at much greater length in our next chapter, a small number of unorthodox Thomists, such as Maurice de la Taille and his theory of created actuation, left room for a created existential reality which they were willing to call a secondary human *esse* in their account of Aquinas' Christology, for the most part Thomists insisted on the axiom *unum ens ergo unum esse* (one being, therefore one [act

²⁶⁴ See, for example, Billot, *De Verbo Incarnato: commentarius in tertiam partem S. Thomae* (Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1949).

²⁶⁵ For an illuminating examination of this topic, see Adrian Hastings, "Christ's Act of Existence," *Downside Review* 73 (1955), pp. 139-159.

²⁶⁶ Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Christo Salvatore, commentarius in IIIam partem Summæ theologicæ sancti Thomae*. (Turin: R. Berruti, 1945); Colberg, "Accrued Eyes and Sixth Digits: Thomas Aquinas and Cardinal Cajetan on Christ's Single *Esse* and the Union of Natures," *Nova et Vetera* 8:1 (2010), pp. 55-87.

of] existence), and defended the basic concept of the ‘ecstasy of existence’ as the authentic view of Thomas.²⁶⁷ This opinion was weakened in its historical foundations by the pioneering scholarship of Franz Pelster and others, who established that the *Quaestio de Unione Verbi Incarnati* was not only authentic but probably a late work of Aquinas, and thus Aquinas did seemingly espouse a twofold existence in Christ.²⁶⁸ More significantly, some prominent students of Thomas in the 1950s, among them Bernard Lonergan, argued for the important role that this concept played in Aquinas’ mature Christology, and incorporated it into their own work.²⁶⁹ Perhaps the most significant figure in this regard was Herman Diepen, who wrote an extensive series of provocative articles defending just such a thesis in the pages of the *Revue Thomiste*.²⁷⁰ Indeed, no less a luminary of twentieth-century Thomism than Jacques Maritain, late in his career admitted that Diepen’s critique of the prevailing ecstasy of existence theory had caused him to abandon his own previous position, and acknowledge the presence in Christ of a secondary, created *esse*.²⁷¹ With the passage of time, however, this predominantly intra-mural debate—carried out for the most part within the somewhat limited precinct of pre-

²⁶⁷ Maurice de la Taille’s major Christological pieces, including “Actuation créée par Acte increé, lumière de gloire, grâce sanctifiante, union hypostatique,” originally published in *Revue des Sciences Religieuses* 18 (1928), 253-268, are all conveniently collected in *The Hypostatic Union and Created Actuation by Uncreated Act*, trans. C. Vollert (West Baden Springs, I.N.: West Baden College, 1952).

²⁶⁸ See Pelster’s seminal essay, “La Quaestio disputata de saint Thomas *De unione Verbi incarnati*,” *Archives de Philosophie* 3 (1925), pp. 198-245.

²⁶⁹ Lonergan’s most significant contribution during this period is contained in *De Verbo Incarnato*, third edition (Rome: Pontificia Università Gregoriana, 1964), and *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, trans. M.G. Shields, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 7 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

²⁷⁰ Among many others, we should especially note: “La psychologie humaine du Christ selon saint Thomas d’Aquin,” *Revue Thomiste* 50 (1950), 515-562; “L’unique Seigneur Jésus-Christ, bilan d’une étude christologique,” *Revue Thomiste* 53 (1953), 28-80; “Les implications métaphysiques du mystère de l’Incarnation,” *Revue Thomiste* 54 (1954), 257-266; and “L’existence humaine du Christ en métaphysique thomiste,” *Revue Thomiste* 58 (1958), 197-213.

²⁷¹ See Maritain, “Sur la notion de subsistance,” *Revue Thomiste* 54 (1954), 242-256, and idem, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, translated from the fourth French edition under the supervision of G.B. Phelan (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1959).

Vatican II Thomism—had been largely forgotten. The fact that these debates were undertaken primarily within the ambit of one French-language journal has restricted the extent of its influence within contemporary Anglophone debates about Christology even further.

More recently, Jean-Pierre Torrell has reported in his survey of Thomas' work that the authoritative Leonine commission, charged with the task of establishing a definitive critical edition of Aquinas' oeuvre, through an extended and careful examination of the manuscript tradition has demonstrated the work's authenticity beyond any shadow of a doubt; and, in addition, the commission now judges *De Unione* to be a mature Thomistic text.²⁷² Torrell, along with a few selected older scholars, such as James Weisheipl and Palémon Glorieux, locates the text's composition in Paris in the spring of 1272, a date concurrent with the writing of the *Summa Theologiae*'s *tertia pars*.²⁷³ Most recently, the magisterial work of Klaus Obenauer, which we will explore in more depth in our next chapter, has used the work so far completed by the Leonine Commission, to publish a critical edition of the *De unione* which comes closer than ever to proving that this Disputed Question clearly belongs to Thomas' second Parisian period.²⁷⁴

The historical evidence, it seems then, will no longer support any easy dismissal whatsoever of the *De Unione* as either an apocryphal text or a youthful indiscretion on

²⁷² *Saint Thomas Aquinas, Vol. 1: The Person and His Work*, revised edition, trans. R. Royal (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005).

²⁷³ Glorieux, "Les Questions Disputées de S. Thomas et leur suite chronologique," *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale* 4 (1932), 5-33; Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1983).

²⁷⁴ *Die Quaestio disputata >De unione Verbi incarnati< (>Über die Union des fleischgewordenen Wortes<): Thomas von Aquin; lateinischer Text erstellt von Walter Senner OP, Barbara Bartocci, Klaus Obenauer; Übersetzung, ausführlicher wissenschaftlicher Kommentar und theologisch-theologiegeschichtliche Reflexion von Klaus Obenauer* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 2011).

the part of Aquinas. For better or worse, this work is now and forevermore firmly ensconced in the *Corpus Thomisticum*.

Some recent scholarship has appealed to this chronology of Thomas' works to develop a possible resolution to the difficulties surrounding the text. For example, Donald Goergen agrees with the assertion that *De Unione* was written only a few months prior to Aquinas' authoritative solution found in the *tertia pars*.²⁷⁵ According to Goergen, Thomas' opinion in ST III shows a development in his own thinking on the Incarnation, while in q.4 of *De Unione* we see that Thomas is still groping toward an adequate solution, as evidenced by the fact that he allows Christ to have a human *esse*. In other words, *De Unione* must ultimately be dismissed, not as spurious, or as immature, but as a provisional work-in-progress. Yet this position seems highly problematic, for Goergen's argument depends largely upon the extraordinarily difficult task of precisely and conclusively fixing the date of *De Unione* to within a matter of months *prior* to the composition of the relevant portion in the *tertia pars*. Furthermore, Goergen's claim that ST III represents a development in Aquinas' thought seems untenable in light of the fact that in Thomas' other more youthful works he advanced arguments similar to the one found in the *tertia pars*. Thus, far from representing an evolution in Aquinas' thought, the *tertia pars*, according to Goergen's own reasoning, would suggest instead a regression away from *De Unione* and back to an earlier position. It seems to me, then, that Goergen does not take seriously the difficulty that *De Unione* poses since he fails to offer an account of why Aquinas apparently vacillates back and forth on such a vital issue.

J.L.A. West also bases his negative reading of the *De Unione* on chronological criteria, arguing that it seems unlikely that Thomas would change his elsewhere firm

²⁷⁵ *The Jesus of Christian History* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1992).

stance that Christ has one *esse* in writing a preparatory work for the *Summa*, only to revert to his original position in the course of the work itself.²⁷⁶ Therefore, in West's estimation, only reading the *De Unione* as an early work mitigates these concerns, notably the one concerning Christ's *esse*, as it is more believable that it was written at a stage where Thomas' views were not yet fixed than to claim that he wavered on this crucial point during, or immediately prior to, the writing of the *tertia pars*. However, as we have already seen, discounting the *De Unione* as the ill-considered musings of a young and inexperienced scholar is no longer a viable option. By contrast, Marian Michèle Mulchahey uses such chronological issues to argue for a later dating of *De Unione*, citing medieval sources roughly contemporaneous with the life of Thomas, which seem to indicate that Aquinas continued to formulate disputed questions, very much like *De Unione*, even after the conclusion of his Paris sojourn. However, Mulchahey fails to engage deeply enough with the Christological issues at hand, and so she is unable to establish a thoroughly plausible and fully argued theological rationale for such a momentous change in Aquinas' opinion so late in his career.²⁷⁷

Any attempt to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable positions on the act of existence in Christ as presented by *De unione* on the one hand, and the *Summa Theologiae* and much of the rest of Thomas' oeuvre must begin by illustrating how conventional—in other words, how much of it perfectly aligns with all of Thomas' other mature Christological texts—the vast majority of the *De unione* actually is. This is quite clear right from the opening article, which unsurprisingly once again affirms that the union of the divine and human natures in Christ was made in the Person of the

²⁷⁶ West, "Aquinas on the Metaphysics of *Esse* in Christ," *The Thomist* 66 (2002), pp. 231-250.

²⁷⁷ Marian Michèle Mulchahey, *"First the Bow is Bent in Study": Dominican Education Before 1350* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1998).

Word and not in the natures. To establish the intelligibility of the truth of the union in person, Aquinas considers seventeen objections to the contrary, each concluding that the union must have been made in the nature, and not in the person. The objections can be grouped into three broad categories, with each category identifying a speculative problem that must be overcome if the incarnation is to be rendered intelligible. These groupings, in their own right correspond to actual arguments made by advocates of the various heresies that deny the possibility of two natures being united in one person. According to the first area of difficulty, it seems that the union of any two things results in the establishment of one nature. Secondly, there is the seemingly insurmountable fact that the Word, as God, shares wholly in the divine nature with the Father and Holy Spirit. How could the person of the Word be united to a human nature without the human nature being united to the divine nature itself? Finally, a third grouping of objections maintains that every existent nature must necessarily be a suppositum (or person) of that nature, consequently there could not be a distinction between the suppositum of any nature and the nature itself.

In the response, Thomas sets forth a tripartite order of inquiry that must be followed if clarity on the question of the union is to be obtained: “it is necessary to consider first what nature is; second, what person is; third, how the union of the Word Incarnate was made in the person and not in the nature.” To the third point of consideration: how does this understanding of nature and person vindicate the Christian truth of the incarnation as a union of two natures in one person? Given that nature is the specific difference that makes a thing the certain kind of being that it is, and given that

person is a concretely subsisting suppositum (individual substance) of a rational nature, Aquinas is able to draw the following conclusion:

nothing prohibits some things from being united in a person, which are not united in a nature, for an individual substance of a rational nature can have something that does not belong to the nature of the species: this something is united to it personally, not naturally.

This is a very important consideration to take note of. Because, particularly with material substances, there is a real distinction between person and nature, the person can be united to things that are not included in that person's nature. This fact makes it possible for the Person of the Word to unite to himself the human nature which he assumed. The two natures, divine and human, would each retain their own specificity or uniqueness in being joined together in the one person. "It should be taken in this way," Aquinas argues, "that the human nature was united to the Word of God in the person and not in the nature because if the human nature does not belong to the divine nature, it does however belong to his person, in so far as the person of the Word joined to himself a human nature by assuming it." The difficulty in articulating the revealed reality of the union of God and man in Christ is pinpointing exactly what type of union is brought about. "For we see that in creatures," Aquinas observes, "that one thing comes to another in two ways: namely, accidentally or essentially."

One objection that Thomas considers argues that nothing that is included in another stretches out to something outside, just as what is found in a place is not also outside the place. But the suppositum of any nature is found in that nature, hence it is called a thing of nature. In this way, the individual is included under a species, just as the species is included under a genus. So since the Word is the suppositum of the divine nature, it is not able to stretch out to another nature so as to be its suppositum, unless one

nature is brought about.²⁷⁸ In his subsequent reply to the objection, Aquinas utilizes the by-now all too familiar Kenotic hymn to argue that the person of the Word is included under the nature of the Word, nor can it extend itself to something beyond. But the nature of the Word, by reason of its own infinity, includes every finite nature. Thus, when the person of the Word assumes human nature, it does not extend itself beyond the divine nature, but the greater receives what is beneath it. Hence, it is said in Philippians (2:6-7) that while the Son of God was in the form of God, he emptied his very self. Not only laying aside the greatness of the form of God, but also assuming the smallness of human nature.²⁷⁹

Since, in conclusion, person and nature differ in composite things, it is possible, Aquinas conjectures, by the divine power, that the person of Word could subsist personally in a created (rational) nature. In responding to the objections, Aquinas refers to the Word “subsisting” in a human nature several times. “Although in divine things nature and suppositum (or person) are not really different, nevertheless they are different according to reason as was said,” Aquinas explains in the reply to the second objection. Nevertheless, “Because the same is subsisting in human and divine nature, the same essence, however, is not composed from both natures. Thus it is that the union was made in the person, to whose notion it pertains to subsist.” Furthermore, Aquinas argues that

²⁷⁸ Obj. 14: Praeterea, nihil quod comprehenditur sub alio, extendit se ad aliquid extrinsecum; sicut quod comprehenditur loco non est in exteriori loco. Sed suppositum cuiuslibet naturae comprehenditur sub natura illa, unde et dicitur res naturae. Sic enim comprehenditur individuum sub specie, sicut species sub genere. Cum ergo verbum sit suppositum divinae naturae, non potest se extendere ad aliam naturam ut sit eius suppositum, nisi efficiatur natura una.

²⁷⁹ Ad. 14: Ad decimumquartum dicendum quod persona verbi comprehenditur sub natura verbi, nec potest se ad aliquid ultra extendere. Sed natura verbi, ratione suae infinitatis, comprehendit omnem naturam finitam. Et ideo, cum persona verbi assumit naturam humanam, non se extendit ultra naturam divinam, sed magis accipit quod est infra. Unde dicitur Ad Philipp. ii, quod cum in forma Dei esset Dei Filius, semetipsum exinanivit; non quidem deponens magnitudinem formae dei, sed assumens parvitatem humanae naturae.

“the union is said to be made in the person in so far as the un-composed divine person subsists in two natures, namely divine and human.” The distinction between person and nature enables Aquinas to speak of the Incarnate Word as one according to person, but composite according to nature: “the being of the person of the Word incarnate is one from the perspective of the person subsisting, but not from the perspective of the nature.”

The second article of the *De unione* addresses an extremely demanding question: namely, what is the metaphysical status of the nature assumed by the Word? Aquinas approaches the problem by posing the question “Whether in Christ there is only one hypostasis?” This question forces a speculative articulation, primarily of the nature assumed, because the perfection of the hypostasis of the Word is not in question. Furthermore, given the single person and hypostasis, it appears difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile in what sense Christ is two on account of the two natures versus his hypostatic unity on account of the one person. “A particular substance is a hypostasis. As a result, the human nature in Christ was a hypostasis. But the human nature in Christ is something in addition to the hypostasis of the Word of God. Hence, in Christ there is a hypostasis in addition to the hypostasis of the Word of God which means that in Christ there are several hypostases.” On the one hand, then, given the unity of the Person of the Word, it would seem that Christ could not be two, while on the other hand, given the substantiality of the human nature, it would seem that he is two supposita and hypostases.

Aquinas also considered, in several of the objections in article 2, the problem of relating a person of the infinite divine nature to a created human nature. “There is no proportion,” says the objection “of the divine nature which is infinite to the human which

is finite. Therefore, one hypostasis or one suppositum cannot be made out of two natures.” “If, therefore, in Christ there were one suppositum of the man and another of God, it could not be said that ‘man is God’ or ‘God is man.’ That position is erroneous. Therefore, in Christ there is not one suppositum of God and another of the man.” If there were two persons and supposita, the actions and operations predicated of each of the natures would belong to the person or suppositum of that particular nature. There would, on this account, be no personal or hypostatic union between the natures. Aquinas, however, judges the *homo assumptus* theory here, as well as in the *Summa Theologiae*, to regress into the heresy of Nestorianism which it sought to avoid. What Aquinas specifically rejects is the claim that there could be a suppositum of a rational nature that is not a person. “If in Christ there is a true hypostasis of the human nature or a true suppositum in addition to the hypostasis or suppositum of the Word of God,” Aquinas explains, “it would follow that there is a true person of the human nature in Christ in addition to the hypostasis of the Word. And thus this position is not different from the position of Nestorius.” Such a position, Aquinas points out, is explicitly condemned by Constantinople II which declares: “If anyone tries to introduce into the mystery of Christ two subsistences or two persons, and having brought in two persons then talks of one person only in respect of dignity, honor or adoration, as both Theodore and Nestorius have written in their madness let him be anathema.”

What then is the status of Christ’s human nature if it is not a subsisting suppositum and hence person? “The human nature in Christ can indeed be called something individual or particular or singular,” Thomas explains, “but nevertheless as it is not a person Christ’s human nature cannot be called either a hypostasis or a

suppositum.” Given that it is “something individual or particular” Christ’s human nature is not an accident. Is it, therefore, a substance? Aquinas is careful about this. It appears that he is quite comfortable speaking of Christ’s human nature as a substance in the sense of completeness or wholeness. There is, in Christ, a complete human nature, including a rational soul with an intellect and will. However, since that integral nature was assumed by the Word, that nature lacks the substantial property of *perseity*, which is why the body-soul composite of Christ did not bring about a human person. And, thus, responding to an objection asserting that as a particular substance of a rational nature Christ’s human nature must indeed be a person, Aquinas replies: “In relation to the notion of hypostasis or suppositum, it is not sufficient that something be a particular in the category of substance, but it is further required that it be complete and subsisting in itself, as was said.” Aquinas clearly recognizes the singular uniqueness of the Incarnate Word. The human nature is in the category of substance, as a non-accidental whole, but it is not a person or suppositum because the human nature subsists in the Word, who already possessed the being of personhood prior to assuming the human nature.

In the third article of *De unione* Thomas asks: Is the incarnate Christ one or two “things?” The objections focus on duality in Christ arguing that any being having two natures could not be considered one thing. For example: “Just as there is one nature in three divine persons, so too in the one person of Christ there are two natures. Yet, the three divine persons are called one on account of the unity of the nature. Therefore, Christ should be called two on account of the two natures.” Likewise, divine and human realities can be predicated of Christ. Aquinas says something arresting in the *Sed contra*: “Christ is not two persons nor two hypostases nor two supposita, as is evident from the

things already noted. Christ is also not two natures since human nature is not predicated of Christ. Therefore, Christ is not two.” Christ is not two natures? What Thomas clarifies here is that though Christ has two natures, divine and human, the one Person of the Word is both, and thus Christ is, indeed, not two natures in the sense of being two things. Christ is one reality: a composite person of a divine and human nature. The union (hypostatic) of the two natures in the one subsisting person constitutes the one reality of Christ.

How then is Christ to be understood and spoken of in relationship to the duality of natures without violating his hypostatic and subsistent unity? Aquinas distinguishes the way in which any being is spoken of as one and many: “as there is accidental being and substantial being, so too some thing is said to be either one or many according to an accidental form or according to a substantial form.” To make this point Aquinas draws heavily on the distinction between a thing’s absolute (*simpliciter*) unity and unity only in a certain respect (*secundum quid*). One thing can be called many *secundum quid* because of its accidents: so, for example, a single man can be simultaneously heavy, white, and drunk. As such that one man is many things *secundum quid*. A thing’s absolute unity, or unity *simpliciter*, is established in the order of substance, and Aquinas closely follows Aristotle when he uses this principle to articulate Christ’s unity. “According to the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* V,” Aquinas observes, “substance is spoken of in two ways: namely, as a *suppositum*, which is not predicated of something else, and as the form or nature of a species, which is predicated of a *suppositum*.” This is the Aristotelian distinction between first and second substance which Aquinas then applies in an analogous way to the unique case of Christ: “It is therefore evident that Christ can in some way be called one thing because he is one by the *suppositum*, and he can in some

way be called many things, or two, because he has two natures,” much more so than Socrates, “about whom one thing is predicated in so far as he is one subject, and many things in so far as he is white and musical.” Aquinas then concludes that “if one certain suppositum has many substantial natures, it will be one thing simpliciter, and many in a certain respect . . . Consequently, since Christ is one suppositum possessing two natures it follows that he is one simpliciter and two in a certain respect.” The error of the position that holds that Christ must be two things on account of the duality of natures is that it fails to reason through Christ’s unity from the pre-established truth of the hypostatic union. As was noted above, Aquinas views the reality Christ’s unity as a consequence of the union of the two natures in one person and subsistence. It is from the truth of the hypostatic unity of the two natures in the one person that the further understanding of Christ as one thing is derived. This is not a type of crypto-monophysitism; Aquinas carefully affirms the reality of each nature, but the duality of natures, is a *secundum quid* duality, which is made one in the absolute unity of the Word.

6. Conclusion

Through a close analysis of Thomas Commentary on Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians and his *Lectura super Ioannem*, we saw the importance of the theme of the humility of the enfleshed Word in Philippians 2 for Thomas, a key theme as well, as we have already noted, in Augustine’s own examination of kenosis, indeed one of the principal reasons for the Word’s incarnation, as well as the primary means for fallen humanity to be redeemed through becoming more Christ-like in their humility. In his extended explications of the kenotic hymn, Thomas extends this connection beyond the

traditional confines of moral exemplarity, connects the personal or hypostatic unity of divinity and humanity, that is, the theandric interrelation of the natures in the divine person of the incarnated Christ, to our sanctifying conformity to that union of natures, or our imitation and participation in the theandry of the Word through the instrumental causality of that humanity which Christ has united to himself. I also note the emphasis that Aquinas gives to the volitional dimensions of the God-man's theandric existence, for it is Christ's will in obedience to the Father that is the means of our salvation. Thomas' comprehensive utilization of the newly discovered documents of Constantinople II to begin to construct an argument for the importance of the two wills for the incarnate Word's salvific mission. It is the Son's freely given assent to undergo the passion willed for him by the Father, which finally allow Thomas to fully explicate the significance of the kenotic form of obedience that he firmly locates in Philippians 2:8. Thomas connects the personal unity of the human-divine nature (or perhaps we should say the theandric interrelation of the natures in the divine person) in Christ to our sanctifying conformity to that divine-human nature. In other words: our imitation and participation in God through the instrumental causality of that humanity which Christ has united to himself. The challenge presented at the end of this chapter is found in Thomas's late Disputed Question on the Incarnate Word, which posits a second act of existence with the enfleshed Son. An exploration of the first three questions of this work begins to indicate how the personal unity of the Word is compatible with Christ's kenotic existence.

V. Chapter 4: The Being of Christ: The Ontology of *Esse* in the *Quaestio Disputata de Unione Verbi Incarnati* and its Modern Reception History

1. Introduction:

Thomas Aquinas's thoughts on the question of Christ's act of existence (*esse*) have seemed for many to be a settled issue. Part of this is due to Thomas' seeming unanimity on the issue throughout a significant span of his career. In both early texts, like the *Commentary on the Sentences* and *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, as well as in much later works, such as the *Compendium Theologiae*, and perhaps most prominently in the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas consistently argues that there can only be one substantial being in Christ since he is one hypostasis or person.²⁸⁰ Even the one apparent anomaly in Thomas' oeuvre, the *Disputed Question on the Incarnate Word*, does not contradict this basic insight. In the controversial fourth article of *De unione*, Aquinas' argument for there being only one *esse* in Christ is rooted in the divinity of being enjoyed by the Word. In a rigorous consideration of the being of the Word's human nature, Thomas will argue that "in Christ the subsisting suppositum is the person of the Son of God, who is sustained *simpliciter* by the divine nature." To be precise, the enfleshed Word is not given a personal act of existence by his assumed humanity: "the person of the Son of God is not sustained by the human nature." "This is so," Aquinas concludes, "because the

²⁸⁰ The passages in which Aquinas focuses on the theme of Christ's act of existence are found principally in *Scriptum in Sententias*, III, d. 6, q. 2, a. 2; *Quodlibet* 9, a. 3; *Compendium theologiae*, c. 212; *ST*, III, 17, a. 2; and *De unione*, a. 4.

person of the Son of God existed before he assumed the humanity, and his person was not in any way augmented or perfected by having assumed a human nature.”²⁸¹

This line of reasoning does not differ significantly from Aquinas’ thinking on this topic in his earliest writings, where he already affirmed that the hypostasis of the Word is a suppositum; that is, one substantial unified being sustained by one act of existence, a fact which safeguards both the unity and the oneness of the Son. As far back as his *Scriptum* commentary, we already see Thomas arguing that “It is impossible that something should have two substantial beings [*esse*], since unity is founded upon being [*ens*]: whence if there were a plurality of *esse*, according to which something is said to be being [*ens*] *simpliciter*, it would be impossible for it to be called one.”²⁸² In other words, to the degree that something is, it is a singular being with one act of existence. The suppositum of Christ is a complete whole, which is to say a single substance subsisting through itself, since that in virtue of which a hypostasis is a substance is its *esse*, specifically that unique act of existence which brings about its substantial unity. *De unione*, a. 4 unsurprisingly proclaims that Christ “has one being simply on account of the one being of the eternal suppositum” (*habet unum esse simpliciter propter unum esse aeternum aeterni suppositi*). However, what is surprising is the subsequent assertion that the eternal suppositum is sustained by the human nature in so far as it is *this man*, and

²⁸¹ *De unione*, a. 4, c. The entire argument reads: Dicendum quod huius quaestionis est quodammodo eadem ratio et praemissae; quia ex eodem dicitur aliquid esse unum, et ens. Esse enim proprie et vere dicitur de supposito subsistente. Accidentia enim et formae non subsistentes dicuntur esse, in quantum eis aliquid subsistit; sicut albedo dicitur ens, in quantum ea est aliquid album. Considerandum est autem, quod aliquae formae sunt quibus est aliquid ens non simpliciter, sed secundum quid; sicut sunt omnes formae accidentales. Aliquae autem formae sunt quibus res subsistens simpliciter habet esse; quia videlicet constituunt esse substantiale rei subsistentis. In Christo autem suppositum subsistens est persona Filii Dei, quae simpliciter substantificatur per naturam divinam, non autem simpliciter substantificatur per naturam humanam. Quia persona Filii Dei fuit ante humanitatem assumptam, nec in aliquo persona est augmentata, seu perfectior, per naturam humanam assumptam.

²⁸² III *Sent.*, d. 6, q. 2, a. 2: Impossibile est enim quod unum aliquid habeat duo esse substantialia; quia unum fundatur super ens. Unde si sint plura esse, secundum quae aliquid dicitur ens simpliciter, impossibile est quod dicatur unum.

that this human, temporal, created mode of subsisting in the world is characterized by Thomas as a secondary *esse* or created act of existence in the person of the Word. The elucidation of this line of argument in *De unione*, its apparently bold contradiction of Aquinas' traditional understanding on the one *esse* of Christ, its contentious reception and interpretation in modern Thomistic theology, and its potential complementarity with a one-*esse* Christology, are all the subjects of this chapter.

2. *De Unione*, a. 4: Christ's Human *Esse* in Relation to ST III, Q. 17

It would be instructive to begin an analysis of *De unione*'s apparent novelty regarding Christ's human act of existence with a look at *Summa Theologiae* III, q. 17, since it has been historically understood to be the *locus classicus* of Thomas' one *esse* position, and thus in direct contradiction to Aquinas's innovative secondary *esse* proposal in *De unione*. a.4 The first article of Question 17 queries "whether Christ is one or two," and goes on to affirm that in fact there is both something singular and something plural in Christ. However, even though Thomas is proposing to examine Christ's being in regard to the duality of his two natures, nevertheless he affirms that "Whatever is, inasmuch as it is, is one; we confess that Christ is; therefore Christ is one."²⁸³ In other words, substantial unity entails one substantial act of existence in the person of Christ. Thomas further strengthens this assertion by arguing that Christ's concrete human nature cannot be predicated of him in the abstract because the person of Christ is the divine person of the Word, and in the abstract, the Word does not naturally possess a human nature. Rather,

²⁸³ Sed contra est quod Boetius dicit, in libro de duabus naturis, omne quod est, inquantum est, unum est. Sed Christum esse confitemur. Ergo Christus est unum.

the Word assumes a concrete human nature to himself in the incarnation, but not as something inherent to his utterly simple divine essence and existence as God. Hence, given that human nature cannot be predicated of the incarnate Christ, whose suppositum²⁸⁴ is the pre-existent Word, in the abstract, there is no duality that can be predicated of his being. Rather, Christ's two natures are predicated of him "in the suppositum," which is the person of Christ, and his suppositum is singular—although Thomas quickly adds that we must also affirm that in the concrete the supposit possesses two natures—both before and after the incarnation. The singular ontological uniqueness of the suppositum of the Word establishes beyond a doubt that Christ is a single subject. As we already saw in part five of the previous chapter, this line of argumentation is almost identical to the way Aquinas addresses the very same topic in *De unione*, a.3.

Question 17, article 2 further advances this argument for the unity of Christ from the first article, but here Thomas specifically addresses the metaphysics which underlie his affirmation of one subsistent *esse* in the suppositum of Christ. As the *sed contra* succinctly proclaims "Everything is said to be a being inasmuch as it is one, for one and being are convertible."²⁸⁵ Thus, it would seem to follow from the position established in article 1 that "Christ is one" that the Word must consequently possess only one being or

²⁸⁴ Just to clarify, according to Roy Deferrari's *A Latin-English Dictionary of St Thomas Aquinas: Based on The Summa Theologica and Selected Passages of His Other Writings*, (Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1960), a suppositum can be defined a number of ways, among them: "That which underlies all the accidents of a thing, i.e. the individual substance of a certain kind which is the subject of existence and all accidental modifications which constitute the individual, synonym of hypostasis, subjectum, and substantia . . . - Kinds of suppositum in this sense are (a) suppositum aeternum seu increatum and suppositum temporale seu creatum, the eternal or increated and the temporal or created individual substance. - (b) suppositum completum ultima completionem, the individual substance of highest completion . . ." In short, a suppositum denotes the incommunicable existence of any nature, while person/hypostasis specifically designates the incommunicable existence of an individual substance a rational nature This is the range of meaning that I will employ when using the term suppositum in the remainder of this chapter.

²⁸⁵ ST III, q.17, a.2: Sed contra, unumquodque, secundum quod dicitur ens, dicitur unum, quia unum et ens convertuntur. Si ergo in Christo duo essent esse, et non tantum unum, Christus esset duo, et non unum.

esse. However, in the corpus of the article Aquinas problematizes this straightforward assertion, which uncomplicatedly associated *esse* with the act of existence which belongs properly to Christ's *suppositum*, by conceding that *esse* is related not only to Christ's *suppositum* but in some regard to his two natures as well. Thomas goes on to explain that "being pertains both to the nature and to the hypostasis; to the hypostasis as to that *which* [*quod*] has being—and to the nature as to that *whereby* [*quo*] it has being."²⁸⁶ The *suppositum* or *hypostasis* is that "which is"—*quod est*—or which has *esse* in and of itself, and therefore signifies the existing subject. For example, the *suppositum* underlies everything that constitutes the person of Socrates, and only the whole person, Socrates as an individual substance, exists. On the other hand, nature is that "whereby"—*quo est*—a thing exists, and so it signifies the *quiddity* (the what-ness or essence) of a thing. Socrates exists *as* a human being: his nature as rational animal defines the what-ness of his *suppositum* or *hypostasis* and in that sense nature is related to *esse* as that "whereby" the *suppositum* exists, in this case as a human.

Thomas additionally complicates the relations of *suppositum* and nature to the act of existence by distinguishing two types of *esse*—"personal" and "accidental." A *suppositum* possesses one personal *esse*; and as that which constitutes a thing's individual existence, it cannot be multiplied under any circumstances. Accidental *esse* is the being which a *suppositum* has in virtue of a certain accident; so, to use Aquinas own illustrations, Socrates can be both "white" and a "musician" and thus have two accidental

²⁸⁶ Ibid: Respondeo: dicendum quod, quia in Christo sunt duae naturae et una hypostasis, necesse est quod ea quae ad naturam pertinent in Christo sint duo, quae autem pertinent ad hypostasim in Christo sint unum tantum. Esse autem pertinet ad hypostasim et ad naturam, ad hypostasim quidem sicut ad id quod habet esse; ad naturam autem sicut ad id quo aliquid habet esse; natura enim significatur per modum formae, quae dicitur ens ex eo quod ea aliquid est, sicut albedine est aliquid album, et humanitate est aliquis homo.

esse, both whiteness and musicianship, which inhere in or are attached to his *suppositum*.²⁸⁷ They are “attached” to the man Socrates inasmuch as they do not constitute the personal *esse* of Socrates but actually gain their act of existence from their inherence to the personal *esse* of the *suppositum*. However, Thomas is firm in his conviction that Christ’s human nature possesses neither a personal *esse* nor an accidental *esse*, which raises the question as to how Christ’s human nature can be said to exist at all.

Aquinas’ response to this perplexing quandary is that Christ’s *suppositum* takes human nature to itself as “a constitutive part of the whole.” In other words, Thomas compares the human nature assumed by the *suppositum* of Christ to the way constitutive bodily parts, such as Socrates’ head or Socrates’ hand, exist in relation to the one substantial being of Socrates. So, just as the addition and conjunction of a “constitutive part of the whole”—such as a head—does not add any new being to the *suppositum* of Socrates; so, in Aquinas’ estimation the accrual of a human nature by the Word does not add any further substantial being to the *suppositum* of Christ. As Thomas writes, if it so happened that “after the person of Socrates was constituted there accrued to him hands or feet or eyes, as happened to him who was born blind, no new being would be thereby added to Socrates, but only a relation to these,” that is inasmuch as “he would be said to be, not only with reference to what he had previously, but also with reference to what accrued to him afterwards.” Likewise, the accrued human nature constitutes a “new

²⁸⁷ Ibid: For nature is taken after the manner of a form, which is said to be a being because something is by it; as by whiteness a thing is white, and by manhood a thing is man. Now it must be borne in mind that if there is a form or nature which does not pertain to the personal being of the subsisting hypostasis, this being is not said to belong to the person simply, but relatively; as to be white is the being of Socrates, not as he is Socrates, but inasmuch as he is white. And there is no reason why this being should not be multiplied in one hypostasis or person; for the being whereby Socrates is white is distinct from the being whereby he is a musician. But the being which belongs to the very hypostasis or person in itself cannot possibly be multiplied in one hypostasis or person, since it is impossible that there should not be one being for one thing.

relation” to the pre-existing *suppositum* of Christ, which signifies something radically different, but nonetheless does not signify new act of existence. The Word’s accrued human nature brings no new *esse* to the divine *suppositum* because it is as if that assumed humanity always essentially belonged to Christ.²⁸⁸

As a consequence of this, “the eternal being of the Son of God, which is the Divine Nature, becomes the being of man, inasmuch as the human nature is assumed by the Son of God to the unity of Person.”²⁸⁹ The Incarnate Son’s human nature—unlike other human natures which are instantiated and subsist in a human *suppositum*, and participate in divine being for their actualization—is conjoined to the Son of God as its *suppositum*, and it has existence directly from the divine *esse* and not through any sort of participation. To put it as succinctly as possible: the enfleshed Christ can be said to enjoy the personal divine *esse* of the Son of God. Accordingly, this divine act of existence makes Christ’s human nature wholly elevated and perfected; it makes Christ a perfectly graced human being whose human nature is fully actualized in view of its divine *esse*. And, as we shall see in the concluding chapter, thereby acts as both a moral and ontological exemplar for all humankind.

²⁸⁸ Ibid: Si igitur humana natura adveniret filio Dei, non hypostatice vel personaliter, sed accidentaliter, sicut quidam posuerunt, oporteret ponere in Christo duo esse, unum quidem secundum quod est Deus; aliud autem secundum quod est homo. Sicut in Socrate ponitur aliud esse secundum quod est albus, aliud secundum quod est homo, quia esse album non pertinet ad ipsum esse personale Socratis. Esse autem capitatum, et esse corporeum, et esse animatum, totum pertinet ad unam personam Socratis, et ideo ex omnibus his non fit nisi unum esse in Socrate. Et si contingeret quod, post constitutionem personae Socratis, advenirent Socrati manus vel pedes vel oculi, sicut accidit in caeco nato, ex his non accresceret Socrati aliud esse, sed solum relatio quaedam ad huiusmodi, quia scilicet diceretur esse non solum secundum ea quae prius habebat, sed etiam secundum ea quae postmodum sibi adveniunt. Sic igitur, cum humana natura coniungatur filio Dei hypostatice vel personaliter, ut supra dictum est, et non accidentaliter, consequens est quod secundum humanam naturam non adveniat sibi novum esse personale, sed solum nova habitudo esse personalis praeexistentis ad naturam humanam, ut scilicet persona illa iam dicatur subsistere, non solum secundum naturam divinam, sed etiam humanam.

²⁸⁹ Ibid, ad. 2: Ad secundum dicendum quod illud esse aeternum filii Dei quod est divina natura, fit esse hominis, inquantum humana natura assumitur a filio Dei in unitate personae.

We come now to the fourth article of *De unione*, which raises the question of whether in Christ there is only one being, and follows quickly upon the thematic heels of the previous article of this *Disputed Question*, one that has already proven to establish a firm foundation for Christ's ontological and existential oneness in much the same manner as does ST III, q.17, a.1. Indeed, as Thomas himself readily acknowledges at the commencement of *De unione*, a.4: "It should be said that this argument is, in a certain sense, the same argument as the previous question, because something is said to be one and a being from the same thing."²⁹⁰ The three opening objections point out the duality of Christ's two distinct natures, asserting that there must be an *esse* or being corresponding to each of the natures. Objection two is of particular interest, since it once again utilizes the Kenotic hymn, this time to argue that every form corresponds to its own being or act of existence, and uses as its example the fact that it is one thing to exist as white, and quite another to exist as man. Moreover, it is in an undisputed fact that in Christ there are two forms; since, as Philippians 2:7 says, "While Christ was in the form of God, he took the form of a slave," yet he did not set aside the form of God, rather he assumed a human form. Therefore, in Christ there is a two-fold being.²⁹¹ In the third objection, Thomas invokes the authority of Aristotle when he writes that "according to the Philosopher, in book II of the *de Anima* [com. 37], in living things, living is being. But there is a two-fold life in Christ; namely a human life, which he was deprived of through death; and a divine

²⁹⁰ *De unione*, a.4: Respondeo. Dicendum quod huius quaestionis est quodammodo eadem ratio et praemissae; quia ex eodem dicitur aliquid esse unum, et ens.

²⁹¹ Ibid, obj. 2: cuilibet formae respondet suum esse: aliud enim est esse album, et aliud esse hominem. Sed in Christo sunt duae formae; quia, cum in forma Dei esset, formam servi accepit, ut dicitur Philipp. ii, non tamen formam dei deposuit. Ergo in Christo est duplex esse.

life, which he could not be deprived of through death. Therefore, there is not only one being in Christ, but two.”²⁹²

In the body of the article Thomas responds in an altogether familiar manner to these objections by pointing out once again that *esse* is truly and properly said only of the subsisting *suppositum*, since accidental properties and other non-subsisting forms are said to *be* only insofar as something subsists by means of them; so, whiteness is called a being, but only insofar as something is white, for example by means of the person of Socrates. As Thomas has argued before, this is the only coherent way of thinking about the peculiar existence of accidental properties: they are forms by which something has existence, not *simpliciter*, but rather in a certain qualified manner.²⁹³ Aquinas contrasts this with forms by which a subsisting thing has *esse* simply; in other words, forms that constitute the substantial act of existence of an individually subsisting thing.²⁹⁴ With these initial considerations reminiscent of the arguments put forth in *ST* III, q.17 out of way, Thomas further argues that in Christ the subsisting *suppositum* is the person of the Son of God, which is sustained in existence simply through the divine nature, but is decidedly *not* sustained as a substance simply through the human nature; since the person of the Son of God existed before he assumed humanity. Nor was the pre-existent Word changed, or increased, or perfected in any way when he underwent this kenosis.²⁹⁵

²⁹² Ibid, obj. 3: Praeterea, secundum Philosophum, in ii de Anima, vivere viventibus est esse. Sed in Christo est duplex vita; scilicet humana, quae fuit privata per mortem; et divina, quae per mortem privari non potuit. Ergo in Christo non est tantum unum esse, sed duo..

²⁹³ Ibid, Resp: Esse enim proprie et vere dicitur de supposito subsistente. Accidentia enim et formae non subsistentes dicuntur esse, in quantum eis aliquid subsistit; sicut albedo dicitur ens, in quantum ea est aliquid album. Considerandum est autem, quod aliquae formae sunt quibus est aliquid ens non simpliciter, sed secundum quid; sicut sunt omnes formae accidentales.

²⁹⁴ Ibid: Aliquae autem formae sunt quibus res subsistens simpliciter habet esse; quia videlicet constituunt esse substantiale rei subsistentis.

²⁹⁵ Ibid: In Christo autem suppositum subsistens est persona Filii Dei, quae simpliciter sustentificatur per naturam divinam, non autem simpliciter sustentificatur per naturam humanam. Quia

Nevertheless, and this is a crucial distinction, the eternal *suppositum* now subsists through the human nature insofar as it is *this man* (*Sustentificatur autem suppositum aeternum per naturam humanam, in quantum est hic homo*). And so, Thomas concludes, just as Christ is one simply on account of the singular ontological unity of the *suppositum*, and two in a certain respect on account of the two natures by which he now subsists as both divine and human, he nonetheless “has one divine act of existence simply on account of the one divine *esse* of the eternal *suppositum*.”²⁹⁶

Yet, notwithstanding these by now recognizably characteristic arguments, Aquinas goes on to insist that there in fact must be another *esse* or act of existence in the *suppositum* of Christ, “not insofar as it is eternal, but insofar as it became a man in time.” And that this secondary *esse*, even if it is not an accidental act of existence, because humanity is not an accidentally predicated characteristic of the eternal *suppositum* of the Word (as Thomas had argued in *De unione*, a. 1 and, indeed, in every other Christological text since the time of the *Sentences Commentary*), is nonetheless present and active in the enfleshed Word, not the principle *esse* of its *suppositum*, but rather only as a secondary *esse*. As Aquinas clarifies, only if there were two separate persons or *supposita* in Christ, would each *suppositum* then have its own singular *esse* or distinct principle act of existence. Consequently, there would be a two-fold *esse* in the Word simply, but as a result this would utterly destroy the ontological unity of the incarnate Son.²⁹⁷ Thomas concludes this analysis with a single, somewhat gnomic response to all

persona Filii Dei fuit ante humanitatem assumptam, nec in aliquo persona est augmentata, seu perfectior, per naturam humanam assumptam.

²⁹⁶ Ibid: Et ideo sicut Christus est unum simpliciter propter unitatem suppositi, et duo secundum quid propter duas naturas, ita habet unum esse simpliciter propter unum esse aeternum aeterni suppositi.

²⁹⁷ Ibid: Est autem et aliud esse huius suppositi, non in quantum est aeternum, sed in quantum est temporaliter homo factum. Quod esse, etsi non sit esse accidentale - quia homo non praedicatur accidentaliter de Filio Dei, ut supra habitum est - non tamen est esse principale sui suppositi, sed

the previous objections: The *esse* of the human nature is distinctively not the *esse* of the divine nature. Yet we cannot simply state that Christ is two in regard to *esse*, because neither nature “relate in an equal way to the eternal suppositum.”²⁹⁸

The controversy engendered by this article proceeds primarily from Aquinas’ introduction of this novel notion of an *esse secundarium* in such a seemingly enigmatic manner. On the face of it, a secondary act of existence seems to directly contradict Aquinas’ treatment of Christ’s *esse* elsewhere in his work—certainly *De unione*, a.4 is the only text in his vast *oeuvre* in which Aquinas speaks of any other non-accidental *esse* in Christ other than the divine *esse* of the Word. Nevertheless, it seems indubitably clear that the position articulated in the *De unione* on Christ’s personal act of existence is without a doubt the traditional *single-esse* position seen in earlier works. In the body of the article Thomas makes it abundantly clear that there can only be one *esse simpliciter* in the incarnate Word. So, we are left to ponder, what can Aquinas intend for us to understand by the introduction of an *esse secundarium*? At the very least, it would seem to be a serious error to interpret the term *secundarium* as an affirmation of a second additional substance pertaining to Christ’s assumed humanity. In that regard, we may take it that the adjective *secundarium* does not refer to separate substantial being, or numerically second *esse* in Christ pertaining to the assumed humanity. In this article Aquinas never indicates that he is juxtaposing two ontologically and numerically distinct entities, but rather comparing that which is preeminent with that which is subordinate. A summary review of Thomas’ use of the word *secundarium* elsewhere clearly indicates the

secundarium. Si autem in Christo essent duo supposita, tunc utrumque suppositum haberet proprium esse sibi principale. Et sic in Christo esset simpliciter duplex esse.

²⁹⁸ Ibid, Obj. 1: Ad primum ergo dicendum quod esse humanae naturae non est esse divinae. Nec tamen simpliciter dicendum est quod Christus sit duo secundum esse; quia non ex aequo respicit utrumque esse suppositum aeternum.

term refers to an order of dependency, one in which that which is identified as *secundarium* is contingent upon that which is *principale*.²⁹⁹ To take but one example, in addressing a question relating to the teleology of the causal order, Aquinas points out that “just as there is an order in agent causes, so too there is an order in final causes: as, namely, a secondary end [*secundarius finis*] depends on a principal one [*a principali dependeat*], just as a secondary agent depends on a principal one.”³⁰⁰ In other words, the primary and secondary ends are two-fold, but the *finis secundarium* does not contribute “finis” to the primary end, and the secondary end exists as an end in a relation of dependency on the primary end.³⁰¹ Applying this to the question of Christ’s human act of existence, we can say then that there is a genuine *secundarium* in the enfleshed Word in regard to the assumed human nature. Because the assumed humanity depends on the Word’s primary *esse* it does not contribute a principal act of existence to the one reality of Christ. Nevertheless, this distinction does not fully explicate what precise role this dependent secondary act of existence plays in the Hypostatic Union. As we will now see, the various answers proposed to this lingering question by a host of Thomist scholars during the course of the last century have been as varied as they have been contentious.

3. Maurice de La Taille and Bernard Lonergan

Maurice de la Taille

²⁹⁹ See Roger Nutt’s introduction to his translation of this Disputed Question: Thomas Aquinas: *De unione Verbi incarnati*, Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations 41, trans. R.W. Nutt (Leuven: Peeters, 2015), pp. 1-78, especially pp. 57-66.

³⁰⁰ *Summa contra gentiles*, III, 109, 5: Sicut est ordo in causis agentibus, ita etiam in causis finalibus: ut scilicet secundarius finis a principali dependeat, sicut secundarium agens a principali dependet. Accidit autem peccatum in causis agentibus quando secundarium agens exit ab ordine principalis agentis

³⁰¹ Nutt, p. 59.

During his life Maurice de la Taille (1872-1933) was primarily known for to his writings on the Mass, which he closely identified with Christ at Calvary, describing the Mass above all as the Sacrifice of the Church and the Eucharist as the paradigmatic Sacrament of that sacrifice.³⁰² This unity between Christ's sacrifice begun at the Last Supper, consummated on the Cross, ratified in the Resurrection, and commemorated in the Holy Mass, indicated for de la Taille that there was only one immolation, undertaken once and for all by Christ on the Cross, and which the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass recalled and recapitulated. De la Taille's singular interest in the sacrifice of the God-man in the crucifixion led him in time to examine and develop a highly original explication of the Hypostatic Union, a theandric enfleshment of the Word that for de la Taille entails a true secondary created act of existence in Christ. De la Taille's great insight was to regard the Hypostatic Union from an ontological point of view wherein the incarnational act is the actualization of a potentiality, and the secondary human act of existence in Christ is understood to be a created actuation brought about by the divine *esse*, or uncreated Act, of the pre-existent Word.³⁰³ According to this model, Christ's human *esse* is in only a potential existence until it is brought into being by the Son's eternal actualization, the Word's very act of divine existence. This actualization can be looked at simultaneously

³⁰² Cf. Maurice de la Taille, *Mysterium fidei de augustissimo corporis et sanguinis christi sacrificio atque sacramento: Elucidationes L in tres libros distinctae* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1921), *Esquisse du mystère de la foi, suivie de quelques éclaircissements* (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1924), *The Mystery of Faith: Regarding the Most August Sacrament and Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ: Book I, The Sacrifice of Our Lord* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1940), and *The Mystery of Faith: Regarding the Most August Sacrament and Sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ: Book II, The Sacrifice of the Church* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1940). See also Francis J. Wengier, *The Eucharist Sacrifice* (Milwaukee, WI: Bruce Publishing Co., 1955); Michon M. Matthiesen, *Sacrifice as Gift: Eucharist, Grace, and Contemplative Prayer in Maurice de la Taille* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012).

³⁰³ De la Taille, "Created Actuation by Uncreated Act: Light of Glory, Sanctifying Grace, Hypostatic Union," in *The Hypostatic Union and Created Actuation by Uncreated Act*, Readings in Philosophy and Theology, trans. C. Vollert (West Baden Springs, IN: West Baden College, 1952), pp. 26–41. Originally published as "Actuation créé par Acte incréé" in *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 18 (1928), pp. 253-268.

as both the communication of an act of existence to the potency and also the reception of that act of existence within that potency. From either point of view, in de la Taille's accounting, the potency is carried over into an act through a process of actuation, which is to say that the imperfect is reduced to or brought to an actual perfection, (that is, actualized) by a perfecting act (or by that which is already actualized).³⁰⁴

De la Taille goes on to make an important distinction by pointing out that actualization has two characteristic features. In the first instance, act is that within an entity that makes it a being with a particular essential natural perfection, but act is also that which causes a perfection to be added to a thing's essential nature. So, whereas the first actuation is always a perfection within the essence, the second actuation is something outside the essence which is added to and thereby brings a potency to perfection (or actuation). The correlative term to act is potency, which de la Taille refers to as an imperfection, not because something potential is defective, but rather because it is an unrealized potential that needs to be brought to perfection precisely by being actualized. This two-fold way of understanding the characterizing feature of actualization in relation to potency leads de la Taille to posit a further distinction, one that is based entirely on whether or not the act depends on the potency to carry out its actualizing function. In the first instance of actuation, the act depends on the potency in such a way that the act informs the potency. The communication of form, of course, is a fundamental aspect of the notion of hylemorphism that Aquinas adopts from Aristotle, who taught that every entity is composed of a physical substrate arranged in a certain way. The concrete dimension of the entity is its matter (*hyle*), while the manner according to which the entity is arranged is the form (*morphe*). To take one example from Thomas, a human

³⁰⁴ De la Taille, "Created Actuation," p. 29.

being is composed of both a body and soul, the latter being the form and the former the matter.³⁰⁵ Nevertheless, as with any hylemorphic compound, a human being cannot be reduced to either a soul (its form) or a body (its matter); rather, it must be considered as a composite unity, the soul being the actualizing principle that depends of the material body as that potentiality which the soul informs or brings into act.

The second instance of actuation involves an act which does not depend on a potency in order to carry out its actualizing function, and thus in such a case actuation and the communication of form do not coincide. The paradigmatic example of this sort of actualization is to be found in God, who as perfectly actualized—as uncreated Act—has no unrealized or potential perfections within himself. Indeed, as pure Act, God is even less dependent upon any potentialities in those things that he chooses to actualize. This last point is important because it safeguards God’s utter transcendence. If God as uncreated Act were dependent on a created potency, then the actualization of that potential, its information by an Uncreated act, would inevitably result in a sort of pantheism where God becomes the essential form of every created entity that he actualizes. All instantiations of actuation and information concurring together perforce happen within the natural or created order, the place where form and matter come together in hylemorphically composite entities. On the other hand, when actuation and information do not concur, it can only be an instance of actuation within the supernatural order, that is, where uncreated Act is not upon potency for its ability to endow any potential with actuality.

³⁰⁵ Cf. Jeffrey E. Brower, “Matter, Form, and Individuation,” in *The Oxford Handbook to Aquinas*, ed. B. Davies and E. Stump (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 85-103

When de la Taille subsequently turns to the question of the Incarnation, he emphasizes that both of these instances of actualization must be kept distinct yet nevertheless dynamically integrated within the Hypostatic Union. That is, within the enfleshed Word the divine transcendence of the uncreated Act, free from any dependency upon potentiality, is united to the immanence of God as that uncreated Act which brings created potency into actuality. This integration within the divine person of Christ cannot be attributed to the communication of a form, since as uncreated Act cannot be dependent on the created potentiality of the assumed humanity. Thus, in order to integrate Jesus' human potency to Christ's perfect actualization, something must be created in that potentiality, or added to its created essence, so that it will be united to the uncreated Act. In other words, there must be a created change within the potency itself that allows the assumed humanity to be joined to the term of the union, which is the uncreated Act. Succinctly put, this integration can be nothing other than created actuation by uncreated Act.

Moreover, as de la Taille argues, this integration, this Hypostatic Union, must be a created actuation within the substantial rather than the accidental order of things because it brings about a communion of the Word and the assumed humanity into a substantial composite, the incarnate God-man. When the uncreated Act actualizes the potentiality of the assumed humanity, it is a full communication of the divine existence to the humanity of Christ bringing the substance from potency to act. This created actuation in the Hypostatic Union is called the grace of union. It is a grace, a substantial adaptation that brings about a relationship of union between the uncreated Word and the humanity of

Christ.³⁰⁶ As de la Taille would later explain, this grace that unites the divinity and the humanity in the person of the Son is not a separate *tertium quid*, or distinct medium, between the Word and the assumed humanity which connects them. On the contrary, the grace of union is nothing other than the created actuation communicated by the uncreated Act, which in its very act of communication brings about a new relation in the substantial order. Finally, de la Taille counsels us, we should not be misled into thinking of the Hypostatic Union as a kind of actuation by the communication of a form, because as uncreated Act the Word is not dependent on the potency of the assumed humanity. In this unique integration of the divine and the human, actualization and information do not coincide; nevertheless, there is a real relationship of union because the terminus of the union is solely in the uncreated Word.

De la Taille goes on to apply this understanding of created actuation by uncreated Act to the problem of Christ's secondary human *esse*. He first points out that two possible meanings of *esse* must be distinguished when reflecting upon the actuation of a created nature by the uncreated Act of existence, since the actuation of the created existence by Act will take place in the created temporal realm, while the uncreated Act itself subsists beyond time. As a consequence, when we enquire as to how many *esse* or acts of existence there are in Christ, we "shall have to reply, one or two, according to the sense of the inquiry."³⁰⁷ We can see that Christ's act of existence is singular if the manner of the nature's existence is considered, i.e., the actuation of both the divine and the human natures by the one uncreated Act of the divine Word. Conversely, we can also recognize that there are two distinctive acts of existence in Christ if the question is how many

³⁰⁶ De la Taille, "Created Actuation," pp. 34–5.

³⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 40.

actuations exist. For there is clearly one uncreated Act of existence in the divine nature and one created act of existence in the human nature, since the former is a temporal actuation and the latter is eternal. De la Taille reconciles the apparent contradictions between the two accounts of Christ's *esse* in the *Summa* and the *Disputed Question* by suggesting that the first treatment is written solely from the point of view of the uncreated Act, while the second enumerates both the temporal and atemporal acts of existence in the incarnate Son.

Bernard Lonergan

This approach to formulating the nature of the Hypostatic Union and the *esse* of Christ was challenged by Bernard Lonergan, particularly the analogy that de la Taille draws from created things and their composition (essence and *esse*, matter and form). Lonergan argued that this schema was unsuited for the purpose, and in its stead turned to an analogy in what we naturally know of God in whom being and knowledge and willing are one. As Lonergan points out, de la Taille's account lacks a true analogy based on the composition of finite created being, since there is no created potency proportionate to uncreated Act, nor is the Act received in the potency, nor is the Act limited by the potency. As a result of this significant disanalogousness in de la Taille's theory, Lonergan felt compelled to devise an alternative answer to the question of Christ's secondary human *esse* within the larger ambit of his own discussion of the incarnate Son's psychological and ontological constitution.³⁰⁸ Lonergan's early treatise on the *Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ* examines in some depth issues

³⁰⁸ Bernard Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*. Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, vol. 7, ed. M.G. Shields, F. E. Crowe, and R.M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

relating to both the unity and the duality of Christ's consciousness, an outgrowth of the earlier Chalcedonian diophysite understanding of the ontology of the incarnation. In the first section of the book Lonergan addresses the questions of the Son's human mode of existence, using the conciliar understanding of Christ as one divine person subsisting in two natures, along with the Thomistic determination of the Son as "one supposit, one being, one reality," as the point of departure for his subsequent analysis.³⁰⁹ His basic idea is that, in the case of the Incarnation, the divine, eternal, and infinite *esse* of the Son is the intrinsic constitutive cause of the Hypostatic Union, from which there follows of necessity a secondary *esse*, a substantial act, by means of a terminus or terminating result.

As Lonergan explains, God knows and wills by the selfsame act of knowing and willing both what is necessary and what is contingent; moreover, because as the doctrine of divine Simplicity teaches, God's acts of knowing and of willing are not distinct from God's divine *esse* or act of existence.³¹⁰ Correlatively, God also, by the same act of divine existence, is what God is of necessity, that is essentially, and what he becomes contingently through his kenosis when God assumes a human nature. Lonergan further elucidates that just as God's act of knowing and of willing what is necessary and what is contingent are really just one single act, so also, applying this to what the faith tells us about the Incarnation, "in the Word, 'to be God' and 'to be man' are really one because it

³⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 117.

³¹⁰ C.F. Aquinas, *ST I*, q.3. and Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran, vol. 3 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 680-692. For more recent scholarship see, among others, William E. Mann, "Divine Simplicity," *Religious Studies* 18:4 (1982), pp. 451-471; Katherin Rogers, "The Traditional Doctrine of Divine Simplicity," *Religious Studies* 32:2 (1996), pp. 165-186; Jeffrey E. Brower, "Making Sense of Divine Simplicity," *Faith and Philosophy* 25:1 (2008), pp. 3-30; Brian Leftow, "Aquinas, Divine Simplicity and Divine Freedom," in *Metaphysics and God: Essays in Honor of Eleonore Stump*, ed. K. Timpe (New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 21-38; Anders Kraal, "Logic and Divine Simplicity," *Philosophy Compass* 6:4 (2011), pp. 282-294; Barry D. Smith, *The Oneness and Simplicity of God* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2014).

is through the same act of being that the Word is both God and man.”³¹¹ Hence, we must conclude that the divine *esse* of the Word itself establishes the real union of the divine and the human natures, since by this unitary *esse* one and the same person is God necessarily and also becomes human contingently. Another way of putting this is to say that, since in God to know, will, and exist necessarily, and to know, will, and exist contingently are actually one and the same act of knowing, willing, and existing, then it must be by the selfsame act of being that the Word is both God of necessity and human contingently. In addition, Lonergan characterizes this unitary act to be at once both the intrinsic and the constitutive cause of the Hypostatic Union, the coming together of the divine and human natures in the one person of Christ. It is by becoming human in a contingent manner, by virtue of the same act of divine *esse* by which the Word is God, that the assumed humanity begins to exist in a human modality. Thus, the constitutive cause of the Hypostatic Union of the Word and the assumed humanity—or the reason why the same Word is both God and man—is nothing other than the divine *esse* of the Son, by whose infinite act of existence the Word is both what he is essentially or necessarily, and what he becomes in time contingently: the theandric God-man.

This means that in addition to the eternal and uncreated cause of the Hypostatic Union in the divine *esse* of the Word, there must also be a temporal and created term, since what is true of a divine Person *ad intra*, must have a correlative temporal and created term *ad extra*. For Lonergan, this terminus must be the foundation for the union of the assumed humanity with the Word, as a created yet substantial act of existence. Moreover, it must be distinct from the uncreated *esse* of the Son. In other words, it must be received in the human nature in such a way so as to exclude from that assumed

³¹¹ Lonergan, *Ontological and Psychological*, p. 131.

humanity its own separate personal existence apart from the Person of the Word. To this extent, Lonergan's understanding of the function of created term is close to de la Taille's concept of created actuation, yet Lonergan goes on to deny that the substantial act of Christ's humanity is necessary for the real existence of that humanity; it is only necessary for that humanity to be in a real relation with the person of the Word.³¹² So, rather than actuating any natural potency in the human nature to be assumed by God, Lonergan by contrast posits the actuation of a purely obediential potency. That is, a potency which is best characterized as the openness of a created nature to the Creator's power to effect in it something beyond the powers of ordinary natural causes—or, put another way, the very being of an existing creature as obedient, subject, or positively ordered to God's power to act in it. According to Lonergan, it is this divine power working upon the obediential potency of the assumed human nature which actuates that temporal, created, contingent nature in Christ. However, and most importantly, this same obediential actuation prevents Christ's humanity from being a substantial being or a unity in the strict sense, and thus, from being a separate person.³¹³ As a result, the Person of the Word is that which is at once both God and human, the incarnate God-man. Ontologically speaking, the eternal, uncreated act of existence (*esse*) of the Word is that by which the eternal Word is, as well as that by which person of the Word begins to exist in a temporal, contingent, and created human manner. For this reason, Lonergan insists that the existence of the humanity must be understood as "secondary," consciously adopting the terminology employed by Thomas in the *De Unione*, a.4, and which Lonergan takes to mean simply as posterior to,

³¹² Ibid, p. 149.

³¹³ Ibid, pp. 143-145.

consequent upon, or a mere resultant of the union.³¹⁴ Simply put, there is a logical and metaphysical necessity between the constitutive cause of the Hypostatic Union and its resulting extrinsic terminus: They are correlatives to each other and indeed inconceivable one without the other, but the term is ontologically in no way previous or concomitant to the union; rather, it must be seen as exclusively consequent and posterior to the union, to the exclusion of any concomitant or previous disposition on the part of the assumed humanity.

This is a definitive rejection of de la Taille's concept of created actuation, which in an important sense does ascribe a concomitant and previous disposition within the created nature for the reception of the uncreated Act of being, since, according to de la Taille, that act of divine existence does not account for the union, except by being communicated to the assumed humanity in a created actuation. In other words, for de la Taille, in actualizing a created nature and thereby becoming man, the Word transforms that assumed humanity in one all-important respect: its natural act of existence is replaced by the created communication of the act of the divine existence—a secondary *esse*, which is not a separate and personal act of existence, but rather an actuation. This is quite different from Lonergan's account, wherein this secondary *esse*, a substantial act, is no less necessary, but only as a term *ad extra* consequent on the Word becoming united to the humanity in a contingent manner.

4. H.-M. Diepen and Jacques Maritain

Herman-Michel Diepen

³¹⁴ Ibid, pp. 146-151.

Maurice de la Taille's and Bernard Lonergan's analyses of the Hypostatic Union can be seen as attempts to develop an explication of Thomas' incarnational theology that moves beyond the received Thomistic tradition that ignored, or at least downplayed Aquinas' speculations about a secondary human act of existence in the enfleshed Word. As indicated in the previous chapter, the most widely accepted interpretation of the Angelic Doctor's position prior to the modern reception of *De Unione*, a. 4, was adumbrated by Thomas Cardinal Cajetan in the sixteenth century, who defended Aquinas account in *ST* III, q. 17, a. 2 as the final word on the subject. In his commentary on this article, Cajetan upholds the finality of that position upholding the uniqueness of the divine act of existence in Christ by reiterating the distinction that Thomas made in a.2 of Question 17 between *quod est*, or that which has being, and the *quo est*, or that whereby something has being or how something exists.³¹⁵ Cajetan interprets this distinction to mean that the human *esse* of Christ can only refer to the way that Word comes to live in a human manner after it has assumed a human nature—in other words, only to the *quo est* of Christ, for if it referred to a secondary existence *quod est*, then there would be a second separate hypostasis as a result. When he comes to the fourth article of *De unione*, Cajetan will only allow that when Thomas discusses two acts of existence, he is doing so solely in regard to the two natures whereby Christ exists *quo est*. If Aquinas's discussion of a secondary created human *esse* in the *De unione* cannot be thus reconciled with Thomas' explication of the one *esse* in the *Summa*—as well as in earlier accounts, such as the one found in the *Quodlibetal Questions*—then Cajetan urges that the *Disputed Question on the Incarnate Word* should be dismissed out of hand as a relatively

³¹⁵ Citations from Cajetan are taken from the text of his commentary included in the Leonine Edition of the *tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae*, vol. XI (Rome: 1903). "Persona enim est cui primo convenit esse ut subiecto, seu quod habet esse, seu quod est" (13, 226).

inconsequential or confused early work by Thomas.³¹⁶ In time, Cajetan's own explication of a one-*esse* model of the Word's incarnation became normative in most Thomistic circles, at least, as we have seen, until the first half of the twentieth century.

The historical theologian Dom Herman-Michel Diepen's initial foray into the subject of Christ's act of existence came in a series of articles that critiqued certain key aspects of Cajetan's consensus position. As we have previously noted, this traditional interpretation came to be called the "ecstasy of being" theory because it posited that Christ's humanity was caught up—assumed by the divine person; raptured in a sense—and given an act of existence that prevented it from having any independent *esse* of its own. Diepen found this theory highly problematic for a number of reasons. The first and perhaps most serious concern is that of pantheism, for even though orthodox Christianity affirms that God is intimately present in all things that he creates, the Creator cannot be that which he creates. Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy teaches that the act of existence, the *esse*, by which something exists is a constitutive part of that actually existing entity, so if the created existence of Christ's humanity exists only by the divine *esse*, then the divine uncreated Creator problematically becomes a part of that derivatively extant creature. Moreover, since an act of existence is determined by the nature in which it exists, then not only would the result be a composition of the created and uncreated, but in addition that which is created by God would seem to be ontologically determining in some manner its divine Creator. The Thomist followers of Cardinal Cajetan's theory

³¹⁶ "Dicitur quod opinio illa, posita in Quaestione illa de *Unione Verbi*, ut retractata censenda est: nisi quis adeo desipiat ut putet doctrinam in hoc ultimo libro traditam, et in authenticis libris etiam prius probatam, scilicet in III *Sent.*, dist. VI, q. II, et in *Quodlib.* IX, q. II, reducendam esse ad quaestiunculam vix cognitam inter opera Auctoris, et longe ante factam" (ibid). Also see, Shawn Colberg, "Accrued Eyes and Sixth Digits: Thomas Aquinas and Cardinal Cajetan on Christ's Single *Esse* and the Union of Natures," *Nova et Vetera* 8:1 (2010), pp. 55–87, especially pp. 81–82

were of course aware of this incipient danger in his theory, a danger that perhaps could be at least theoretically avoided if the divine existence were actually not a formal cause of the created existence, but rather simply reduced to the latter.³¹⁷ In fact, avoiding this danger was one of the main motivational imperatives of de la Taille's theory of created actuation by uncreated Act, wherein actuation and information do not coincide, so that as a result God cannot be said to be dependent on the potency of his creation. But even the most ardent proponents of the ecstasy of being theory concede that on the Cajetanian account of Christ's unique *esse*, the formal cause must indeed be a constitutive element of a created being, even though they also insist that the divine act of existence cannot be a strictly formal cause, since a formal cause performs two distinct functions, it actuates a potency and it unites with it to form a compound substance. However, they will point out, an act of existence only fulfils the first function, it draws the essence out of the realm of possibilities, and gives it reality—it actuates that thing—but does not thereby inform it. In other words, it merely brings it out of non-existent potentiality, but without entering into composition with it.

However, this defense of the “ecstasy of being” theory has at least one fatal flaw, for the notion that the divine *esse* can actuate Christ's human existence without entering into the composition of that created nature contradicts one of the basic tenets of Thomistic thought—the real distinction between essence and existence. As Thomas consistently explains from even his earliest works, everything has two principles that correlatively explicate its being, essence and existence.³¹⁸ The real distinction between

³¹⁷ See, for example, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, “La possibilité de l'Incarnation sans aucune déviation panthéistique.” *Angelicum* 30 (1953), pp. 337-346.

³¹⁸ Cf. In 1 *Sent.* d.8 q.4 a.2; *De ente et essentia*; *De Veritate* 27.1.ad.8; *Summa contra gentiles* II, 52. For secondary literature, see Cornelio Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione*, 2nd ed. (Turin,

essence and existence is, at its heart, an all-important distinction between what a thing is (*quid est*) and whether a thing is (*an est*). Since the term essence refers to the definition of a thing (*essentia*), essence therefore refers to the nature of a thing: both essence and nature express the same reality as envisaged from the points of view of being or acting. As the essence is that whereby any given thing is that which it is, the ground of its characteristics and the principle of its being, so its nature is that whereby it acts as it does; or more simply stated, the essence considered as the foundation and principle of an entity's operations. Moreover, in all beings except for God, these principles are both equally necessary in order for the actually existing individual thing to be. Each is distinct from the other, and this is a real, not merely a logical, distinction, so the fact that something has *esse*, that it actually exists, is a separate question from its essence/nature, or what it is. Therefore, there must be something about really existing things that accounts for their *esse*, and it cannot be their essence; in fact, it cannot be anything other than their very act of existence. *Esse* then is that which makes essences to be, to exercise the act of existing. In addition, by describing existence as the *esse* exercised by beings, Aquinas understands *esse* to be comparable to form, in that the act of existence actualizes a potency much in the way a form actualizes matter. Hence, just as the substantial form of a material being determines and makes actual some part of matter, so *esse* actualizes the potency of a thing's essence. This similarity is an analogous one because the act of existence and the essence of a thing are not separable in actual entities, as the form is separable from matter in abstraction; the two are only distinguishable because of their

1950), pp. 218-219; Leo Sweeney, "Existence/Essence in Thomas Aquinas' Early Writings," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 37 (1963), pp 97-131; Joseph Bobik, *Aquinas on Being and Essence* (Notre Dame, IN, 1965), pp. 162-170; Armand Maurer, *St. Thomas Aquinas, On Being and Essence* (Toronto, 1968), pp. 21ff.

own very real distinction. In conclusion, for Thomas *esse* is indeed a formal cause, which not only actuates an essence but also really unites itself to it, composes with it; it is a formal cause whose formal effect cannot be distinguished from it; hence it not only actuates essence, it is the very actuation of essence itself.

As a consequence, if the humanity of Christ is not a composite of a created human essence/nature and a created human act of existence, but is only an actuated essence/nature, then the real distinction between essence and existence has been disastrously collapsed. As Dom Diepen clarifies, if Christ's human nature does not have its own act of existence, then it is an essentially imperfect thing, an unactualized potency, since essence is related to existence as potency to act. As a matter of fact, the whole purpose of a potency resides in its eventual actualization, and something which is created without its actualization being at all possible is to all intents and purposes created in vain. However, as Diepen forcefully concludes, God does not create anything in vain.³¹⁹ To be precise, existence itself has no specification apart from its reception and determination in the potency with which it unites, thus there is a perfect relation holding between each specific *esse* and essence, so that—as Thomas states—“everything has a specific being distinct from all others.”³²⁰ But this is exactly what Christ's created human essence /nature lacks, since it is completely devoid of its own proper created act of existence with which to unite. Perhaps most egregiously, this casts into grave doubt whether the Word's assumed nature is a created human nature at all, for the telltale sign of creation is a proper act of existence. Again, as Aquinas himself argues, creation is the production of the

³¹⁹ This and the following critiques are drawn primarily from three articles by Diepen: “La Critique du Baslisme selon S. Thomas,” *Revue Thomiste*, 1950, I, pp. 82-118 and II, pp. 290-329, and “L'Unique Seigneur Jesus-Christ,” *Revue Thomiste*, 1953, I, pp. 28-81.

³²⁰ *Summa contra gentiles*, I, 1, c. 14: enim res unaquaeque in seipsa esse proprium ab omnibus aliis distinctum.

whole being, but precisely as an existent participating through its limited act of existence in the divine *esse* itself.³²¹ According to this principle, if Christ's human nature lacks a proper act of human existence then it is not created, and if it is not created, then it really is not human at all. On this account, the ecstasy of being theory veers dangerously close to a kind of Monophysitism in which Christ's humanity has no existential reality at all. Diepen culminates his critique of the ecstasy of being position with the damning judgment that this theory involves itself in extricable difficulties from every point of view; the only way out is to abandon altogether the theory of the divine actuation of Christ's human nature by some kind of formal causality, and to return to what Diepen will go on to assert was Thomas' own final thoughts on the matter, contained in *De unione*'s bold assertion that Christ's humanity has its own proper created act of existence, but that this is so integrated, together with the nature which it actuates, that is, into the one complex subsistent reality which is the incarnate Son, that it in no way subtracts from the profound unicity of the Hypostatic Union.

Diepen believes that such a position is the only one capable of respecting the absolute distinction between Creator and creature, while at the same time maintaining the fundamental ontological principles of the real distinction, and thereby safeguarding the true mystery of the God-man. Furthermore, Diepen contends that this position must follow Thomas' original intent to integrate the one *esse* doctrine presented in the *Summa* and various other works, along with a reading of the created human act of existence of the *De unione* which affirms a secondary *esse* in Christ. As a result, article 4 of the *De unione* is central to Diepen's Christological project in so far as he holds that this text

³²¹ Ibid, II, 16, c. 13: Hanc autem veritatem divina Scriptura confirmat, dicens, Gen. 1-1: in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram. Nihil enim est aliud creare quam absque materia praeiacenti aliquid in esse producere.

represents Thomas' best and most mature formulation of the dual *esse* question. Along with traditional Thomists, Diepen upholds the real distinction between essence and existence, yet—against the objections of Cajetan and his followers—he defends Aquinas' later elaboration of a secondary created act of existence in the enfleshed Word. In fact, Diepen goes so far as to assert that this formulation of a secondary *esse* is simply a retrieval by Thomas of the authentic teaching of Cyril of Alexandria's Christology. And in this Thomistic retrieval, Diepen claims, we uncover the somewhat neglected yet most profound meaning of the Cyrilline formula 'from two natures,' included in the original draft of the Council of Chalcedon, but which was excised due to fears that it sounded vaguely Monophysite. The redacted Cyrilline phrase only reaffirms that two natures are not two separate parts because the divine person is a unity, and so the human nature, without conferring anything to the person of the Word regardless of the self-emptying of the kenosis, was assumed integrally by the Word.³²² On Diepen's account, this is precisely the sense that *ex duabis naturis* had for Cyril, a sense recovered in the sixth century, especially in Rome, in the wake of the full reception of the Tome of Leo, in a new formula: *in and from two natures*. In Diepen's opinion, this understanding of place and purpose of the two natures entered the dogmatic decrees of the Latin west, and eventually influenced the formulation of Lombard's second opinion, the Subsistence theory of the incarnation. And, Diepen concludes, it was this at times misunderstood Cyrilline meaning that was re-discovered and adapted by Thomas in his conceptualization of a secondary human *esse* in his later Christology.³²³

³²² See Hans Van Loon, *The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*, Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 96 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), especially pp. 554-569.

³²³ "On retrouve ici le sens le plus profond de la formule cyrillienne *ex duabus naturis*, écartée, on le sait, par le concile de Chalcédoine et remplacée par le terme leonine *in duabis naturis* [On aura noté

Diepen is quick to point out that this dual-*esse* conceptualization does not entail in any way the dissolution of Christ's personal unity, since *esse*—he explains following Aquinas' argument in *De Unione*, a. 1, ad 10—is consequent upon nature, or upon that whereby a thing is; but rather, it is consequent upon person or hypostasis, as upon that which has being. Hence the person of Christ has unity from the oneness of the hypostasis, rather than duality from the duality of the natures. Nonetheless, the *esse* which actualizes the human nature is not the act of existence of the divine nature, for the being of the person of the Word incarnate is one from the perspective of the person subsisting, but not from the perspective of the nature. Yet personal unity is maintained, for if the two existences were juxtaposed in the person, and each regarded ontologically equal, any substantial unity would no longer be conceivable; that is to say, there would then be two separate beings. If the two acts of existence do remain irreducibly distinct, then Diepen argues there must be an essential subordination in Christ of the human act of existence (the *esse* of a non-personalized nature) to the divine act of existence of the person of the

en lisant le long passage cité du Compendium, combine soigneusement saint Thomas a su éviter l'abus de la formule ex duabis naturis par Eutychès, cause de son éclipse de 451 à la fin du siècle. Les deux natures ne sont pas deux parties. La personne divine est un tout et la nature humaine, sans rien lui conférer (sinon l'abaissement de la kénose), entre comme partie dans ce tout, assumée qu'elle est à son intégrité. Mais c'est là précisément le sens que l'ex duabis naturis avait chez saint Cyrille, comme on le verra en quelques instants], mais reprise universellement dès le VI^e siècle, notamment à Rome, dans une nouvelle formule synthétique: in duabis et ex duabis naturis. Celle-ci est entrée dans les formulaires dogmatiques et jusque dans la formulation de la secunda opinio par Lombard. Son contenu est passé dans la christologie de saint Thomas;" Dom H. M. Diepen, O.S.B., *La Théologie de l'Emmanuel: Les lignes maîtresses d'une christologie*, Textes et Etudes théologiques (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960), p. 152. Diepen will attempt to traces a direct line of development backwards to Leo's Tome and it's description of a human *esse* in Christ which comes to exist in time: Mais n'est-ce pas la description même du mystère de l'Incarnation? Les formulaires de notre foi ne nous disent pas seulement que la Personne unique du Christ possède deux natures et qu'elle est née deux fois, ils ajoutent encore et par suite qu'elle existe deux fois: *Ante tempora manens, esse coepit ex tempore* [Tome of Leo, IV; "Invisible in his own he became visible in ours; incomprehensible he willed to be comprehended; remaining before times he began to be in time; the Lord of the universe took a servile form, the immensity of his majesty obscured; the impassible God did not disdain to be passible man and, immortal, to be subject to mortal laws" (p. 157). See also Diepen's groundbreaking study *Aux Origines de l'Anthropologie de Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Bruges: Desclée de Brouwer, 1957)

Word. This, Diepen reiterates, is what Aquinas intended when he emphasized the reality of the unity of the complete and personal being of Christ. It is a unity, Diepen contends, made by exemplarity and participation, by subordination and integration, but for all that it, it must still involve a certain duality.³²⁴ For Diepen, this is the same duality of natures spoken of at Chalcedon, a duality that is not a division or an opposition, but which rather signifies that both natures maintain their distinct properties even in the Hypostatic Union, so that in the final analysis, invoking Thomas' own words from *De unione*, a. 4, ad 1, the *esse* of the human nature is not the divine *esse*.³²⁵

Jacques Maritain

Jacques Maritain, arguably the most famous lay Thomist philosopher of the twentieth-century, caused something of a commotion within the close-knit yet contentious world of 1950s French Thomism, as chronicled in the pages of the journal *Revue Thomiste*, when he publicly repudiated his long-standing support for the traditional one-*esse* Christology associated with the ecstasy of being theory—a theory he had been defending in print and in public debates for over twenty years—and embraced the notion of a secondary created human act of existence in the Incarnate Son.³²⁶ Maritain credited this somewhat notorious *volte-face* to Herman-Michel Diepen's critiques of the notion of

³²⁴ Cette unité se réalise par participation et exemplarité, par subordination et intégration, mais elle comporte nécessairement une certaine dualité. Relaté aux deux principes de l'être, cet exister est un être double. Ibid, p. 155.

³²⁵ Il s'agit d'une unité réalisée par participation et exemplarité, par subordination et intégration, mais elle comporte nécessairement une certaine dualité... C'est la dualité même des natures dont parle Chalcédoine, dualité qui ne fait pas nombres, mais qui signifie que l'une et l'autre gardent leurs irréductibles propriétés: "*esse* humaine nature non est *esse* divine." Ibid.

³²⁶ This debate is presented with great lucidity in Torrell, Jean-Pierre. "Le thomisme dans le débat christologique contemporain," in *Saint Thomas au XXe siècle*. Actes du colloque du Centenaire de la *Revue Thomiste* (1893-1992): Toulouse, 25-28 mars 1993, ed. S.-T. Bonino. (Paris: Éditions Saint-Paul, 1994), pp. 379-393.

the ecstasy of being outlined above; but perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the groundwork for this dramatic change had been carefully established in Maritain's decades-long meditation upon the Scholastic concept of subsistence. The earliest stages of this meditation can be traced back to 1932, at the conclusion of *Les Degrés du Savoir; ou Distinguer pour Unir*, which laid the foundations for what would become Maritain's own particular strain of existential Thomism, with its focus on the centrality on the act of existence. In subsequent editions, Maritain added a long appendix entitled "On the Notion of Subsistence," wherein he attempted to expand Aquinas' understanding of potency and act by demonstrating their analogous functions in the relation between essence and *esse*.

As Maritain explained it, an essence remains a pure potentiality in relation to *esse*; or better yet said, essence still needs to appropriate an act of existence for itself in order to be actualized, in order to be made actually real. Essence requires a final ontological disposition in order to be terminated, or brought to completion in the order of existence, through a process whereby the pure act of being is joined to the essence, and thus completed within the order of existence as a particular being. This termination is achieved by what came to be known in Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy as subsistence, which is neither a constitutive part of the essence itself, nor the actualization of its being (for this function is reserved only to *esse* itself), but is rather that ultimate fulfilment of the potential inherent in an essence, and which allows the essence to transition from a mere potentiality to a real instantiation. "Subsistence appears as a sort of individuation,"

Martian writes, “by whose means the essence, individuated in its own life, appropriates to itself alone the existence it receives.”³²⁷

This appendix continued to appear in subsequent editions in its original form until 1954, when Maritain announced to the world his revised ideas on the notion subsistence, along with its groundbreaking implications for his Christology, in a newly added section entitled “Further Elucidations.” In this expanded portion of the appendix, Maritain once again returns to the fundamental insight that essence is in potentiality in relation to the actuality of the *esse* or act of existence. Indeed, Martian reasons, perhaps the best way to see what the concept of *esse* may mean, is to see it precisely as an “exercised act;” or better yet, “an activity in which the existent, itself, is engaged,” by way of the actualizing “energy that it exerts” upon essence.³²⁸ From this newly clarified conceptual vantage point, Maritain goes on to argue that essence, rather than merely needing subsistence in order to receive a delimiting form of existence, in point of fact requires subsistence in order to exercise the act of existence that it receives from *esse*: “essence, or nature can *receive* existence only by *exercising* it.”³²⁹ So, the specific function of subsistence is to allow essence to transition into the existential order since essence is best understood as a “kind of ultimate disposition for the exercise of *esse*.”³³⁰ This is the case because the act of existence is not received by the “essence as in a pre-existing subject which would thus already be an existential act. The essence which receives existence holds from it – in

³²⁷ Jacques Maritain, *Distinguish To Unite or The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. G. Phelan (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1959), p. 433.

³²⁸ Ibid, p. 436.

³²⁹ Ibid, p. 437.

³³⁰ Ibid, p. 439

what concerns the existential order – absolutely all its actuality, in short is nothing without it.”³³¹

Having elucidated the role of subsistence in relation to *esse*, Maritain is now ready to apply it to the vexing question of the *esse* of the enfleshed Word. In his first version of the appendix, while still convinced of the veracity of the older understanding of subsistence as merely the termination of essence in the act of existence, Maritain could easily dovetail this metaphysical notion with the traditional Cajetanian-inspired account of the primary divine subsistence of the Son as that which terminated the assumed human nature of Christ in the divine act of existence, without however giving that humanity the sort of independent subsistence that would render it a separate human hypostasis. In other words, an assumed and hypostatically united human nature which only “subsists and exists by the divine subsistence and the divine existence.”³³² At this juncture, when he raises the subject of Christ’s human existence, Maritain cites Diepen’s work as the immediate source of his change of mind, and invokes the example of the *Disputed Question on the Incarnate Word*—a text which Maritain had previously considered of dubious value—with evident approval. In particular, Maritain now embraces the notion of a secondary created human *esse* in Christ, one that does not threaten to supplant in any way the Word’s primary divine personal *esse*, but could best be described as a “simple, temporal and created echo... of his uncreated personal existence.”³³³ What exactly does Maritain mean by this somewhat ambiguous phrase? As Maritain proceeds to elucidate, this means that the incarnate Christ must exist in a human manner, but in such a way that his humanity is precluded from having a purely human subsistence, for this *esse* is

³³¹ Ibid, p. 437.

³³² Ibid, p. 432.

³³³ Ibid, p. 442.

received in the human nature, yet exercised by an un-created divine hypostasis (the Word) which pre-exists this created act of existence, and towards whose being as a divine person it in no way contributes. This observation, however, raises a further question in Maritain's mind:

Does St. Thomas' teaching on this point indicate that the uncreated subsistence acts as subsistence for the human nature by divinely conferring on it the completion which created subsistence, of which this nature is deprived, would confer on it? Or does it indicate that the uncreated subsistence renders useless the human nature's being perfected or completed by such a completion? For our part, we believe that it is the second interpretation that is better founded. In other words, a human nature, on which this mode or state in which subsistence consists is not at all conferred, is assumed, possessed and used by the eternally subsisting Person of the Word.³³⁴

In other words, the Son's divine existence does not render the assumed human nature subsistent, rather "it dispenses it from subsisting, or from being itself achieved and completed by that mode or state in which subsistence consists."³³⁵

Maritain concludes his thesis by affirming that "in Christ the Person, who is Divine, lives and acts at once in two totally distinct orders;" on the one hand, because "in virtue of the Divine Nature with which it is identical," and on the other hand, "in virtue of the human nature which it has assumed"—hence it is "by His humanity, or always humanly, always by the exercise of His human operations" utilized instrumentally by the divinity, "that the Son of God has accomplished everything He did here below, has spoken, acted, suffered, accomplished His divine mission."³³⁶ This solution elegantly avoids the great danger of imparting to the human nature of the Son the sort of separate subsistence that would result in a second, created hypostasis alongside the divine person.

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid, pp. 442-443.

Nevertheless, if the function of subsistence is to allow an essence to exercise existence, then how can we simultaneously affirm that Christ has a human act of existence, if we also posit that Christ's human nature does not subsist in a human manner? Maritain's revised appendix leaves this perplexing question unresolved.

5. Richard Cross and Thomas Weinandy

Richard Cross

One of the most vocal critics of the Thomas' view of the Hypostatic Union, and indeed of the entire Thomistic project insofar as it treats of the incarnation, in both its pro- and anti-ecstasy of being manifestations, is Richard Cross.³³⁷ For Cross, the crux of the problem is Thomas's consistent appeal, except in the seemingly eccentric *De unione*, to an incarnational model based primarily upon the relation of a whole substance to its parts. To Cross' consternations, in this whole-part model Aquinas "argues that the concrete parts of a substance do not in any sense contribute existence to a substance," rather the parts share in the individual substance's existence.³³⁸ As Cross explains, for Aquinas the "relation of the human nature to the divine person is like this. The human nature shares in the existence of the divine person; it does this by having the same sort of relation to the divine person as a concrete part has to its substance."³³⁹ The fundamental problem with the whole-part relation as an analogy for the incarnation, as Cross sees it, is that in his estimation concrete parts have to be either essential or accidental. If they are

³³⁷ See Richard Cross, *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); *Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), especially 114–115; and "Aquinas on Nature, Hypostasis, and the Metaphysics of the Incarnation," *The Thomist* 60 (1996), pp. 171–202.

³³⁸ Cross, *Duns Scotus*, p. 114.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

essential, then it makes sense to claim that they share in the substantial existence of a substance.”³⁴⁰ Cross finds this account especially objectionable: “in this case the analogy of concrete parts and substance cannot be a good one for the hypostatic union, because it would entail that the human nature is an essential property of the divine person, which would be a version of the monophysite heresy.”³⁴¹ Looking at the *De unione*, however, Cross finds Thomas defending a completely different view of the incarnation, one that in his opinion “rejects” the whole-part analogy.³⁴² By speaking of the *esse secundarium* in article 4, Cross maintains that *De unione* avoids the pitfalls of the one-*esse* model found in Thomas’ other works. The all-important difference between *De unione* and Aquinas’ other works “lies in his abandoning the claim that the human nature is a truth-maker precisely in virtue of its sharing in the *esse* of the suppositum,” by which Cross means that according to this account the *esse secundarium*, Christ’s human nature, does in fact communicate some sort of *esse*, a secondary, created act of existence, to its suppositum, the person of the Word.³⁴³

Does Cross’ claim, that by *esse secundarium* Aquinas intends to affirm an *esse*-communicating status to Christ’s human nature, square with what Thomas says regarding the Hypostatic Union in the rest of *De unione*? If Christ’s human nature exists such that it contributes an act of existence to its suppositum, as Cross claims, it is unclear how this could be reconciled with Aquinas’ clear teaching in article 3 that Christ is one thing

³⁴⁰ Ibid, p. 115.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Cross, *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation*, p. 63.

³⁴³ Ibid. pp. 63-64. Truthmaker theory is branch of contemporary metaphysics in the analytic tradition that begins form the premise the tuth derives form being, and not vice versa. Truth makers are in some ways anticipated in Aristotle’s work, and also played an important part in certain debates within post-Medieval Scholasticism; see, for example, Allan T. Bäck, *Aristotle’s Theory of Predication*, *Philosophia antiqua* 84 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), and Jacob Schmutz, “Réalistes, nihilistes et incompatibilistes. Le débat sur les *negative truth-makers* dans la scolastique jésuite espagnole,” in *Dire le néant*, ed. J. Laurent, *Cahiers de Philosophie de l’Université de Caen* 43:131 (Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2007), pp. 131–178.

simpliciter. In article 3 Aquinas explains that “something is said to be such a thing *simpliciter* and in the proper sense when it is such a thing according to itself.”³⁴⁴ On Cross’s account, however, the Word is said to be man, not vis-à-vis that nature as *quo est*, but in regard to the *esse* that the human nature communicates to the Word. Moreover, in the same article of the *De unione* Thomas asserts that since Christ is one suppositum possessing two natures, then it must follow that he is one *simpliciter* and two in a certain respect.³⁴⁵ If Christ is one thing *simpliciter* but two in a certain respect according to the natures, and being one thing *simpliciter* is indicated when something is such a thing according to itself (*quod est secundum seipsum tale*), then Cross’s interpretation of the *esse secundarium* is problematic. Even more telling, in article 4, in the passage prior to the introduction of *esse secundarium*, Aquinas states clearly that in Christ the subsisting *suppositum* is the person of the Word, who is sustained *simpliciter* by the divine nature; however, the *suppositum* of the person of the Word is not sustained by the human nature. In fact, the person of the Son “was not in any way augmented or perfected by the assumed human nature,” rather the “eternal suppositum is sustained by the human nature in so far as it is this man.”³⁴⁶ In addition, Thomas prefaces the passage that introduces the *esse secundarium* by drawing a direct parallel between Christ’s unity *simpliciter* and his *esse simpliciter*: “just as Christ is one *simpliciter* on account of the unity of the

³⁴⁴ *De unione*, a.3, sc: Sed considerandum est, quid horum dicatur simpliciter, et quid secundum quid. Sciendum est ergo, quod simpliciter et proprie dicitur aliquid esse tale, quod est secundum seipsum tale.

³⁴⁵ Ibid, ad. 5: Quia ergo suppositum humanae naturae et divinae in Christo, secundum quod accipitur in sua singularitate discretum, est unum et idem in duabus naturis determinatis; est quidem simpliciter unum secundum seipsum, secundum quid autem duo, in quantum scilicet habet duas naturas.

³⁴⁶ Ibid, a.4, sc: In Christo autem suppositum subsistens est persona Filii Dei, quae simpliciter substantificatur per naturam divinam, non autem simpliciter substantificatur per naturam humanam. Quia persona Filii Dei fuit ante humanitatem assumptam, nec in aliquo persona est augmentata, seu perfectior, per naturam humanam assumptam. Substantificatur autem suppositum aeternum per naturam humanam, in quantum est hic homo.

suppositum and two in a certain respect on account of the two natures, likewise he has one being simpliciter on account of the one eternal being of the eternal suppositum.”³⁴⁷

According to Cross, Aquinas intends to affirm that the human nature contributes a secondary act of existence to the *suppositum*, but Aquinas asserts the exact opposite: that as a direct consequence of Christ’s numerical unity, there is necessarily only one *esse simpliciter* of the *suppositum* of the enfleshed Word. In the end, Cross’s narrowly focused reading of the *esse secundarium* in article 4 cannot be defended in light of how this passage stands within the broader context of *De unione* as a whole.

At least part of Cross’ confusion may reside in the fact that he propounds a conception of subsistence that seems quite at odds with the way that Aquinas and various other medieval thinkers had come to understand this term. Subsistence, for medieval thinkers was generally a term used to indicate a sort of quasi-existence that is not the real act of existence of individual substances. This usage of the term can be traced back to an Aristotelian position that in the category of relation the *relata* are—strictly speaking—not the individual substances themselves, but rather certain non-substantial attributes of individual substances.³⁴⁸ Hence, subsistence came to signify the sort of existence such

³⁴⁷ Ibid: Et ideo sicut Christus est unum simpliciter propter unitatem suppositi, et duo secundum quid propter duas naturas, ita habet unum esse simpliciter propter unum esse aeternum aeterni suppositi.

³⁴⁸ Cf. Aristotle, *Categories*, 7: It may be questioned whether it is true that no substance is relative, as seems to be the case, or whether exception is to be made in the case of certain secondary substances. With regard to primary substances, it is quite true that there is no such possibility, for neither wholes nor parts of primary substances are relative. The individual man or ox is not defined with reference to something external. Similarly with the parts: a particular hand or head is not defined as a particular hand or head of a particular person, but as the hand or head of a particular person. It is true also, for the most part at least, in the case of secondary substances; the species 'man' and the species 'ox' are not defined with reference to anything outside themselves. Wood, again, is only relative in so far as it is some one's property, not in so far as it is wood. It is plain, then, that in the cases mentioned substance is not relative. But with regard to some secondary substances there is a difference of opinion; thus, such terms as 'head' and 'hand' are defined with reference to that of which the things indicated are a part, and so it comes about that these appear to have a relative character. Indeed, if our definition of that which is relative was complete, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to prove that no substance is relative. If, however, our definition was not complete, if those things only are properly called relative in the case of which relation to

relations had, and the same notion came to be applied also to universals or quiddities that had some sort of objective reality independent from the things in which they were instantiated, yet nonetheless did not exist substantially as independent entities. In other words, these quiddities in themselves ‘subsist’ but do not ‘exist’.³⁴⁹ This use of ‘subsistence’ became yet more pronounced in dealing with the subject of the Trinity, where we have three divine Persons distinguished by relations like paternity, filiation, and spiration—the irreducible personal distinctions which distinguish the Persons—while nevertheless remaining only one God in essence. So, to take just one example, for the Cappadocians a divine Person has subsistence but not existence (*huparxis*; *esse*) as a separately existing individual, a notion which avoids the ever-present Trinitarian danger of polytheism.³⁵⁰ However, in his analysis of what he takes to be Thomas’ paradigmatic whole-part model of the Hypostatic Union, Cross consistently refers to the type of existence *in re* peculiar to substances as ‘subsistence,’ completely ignoring the fact that for the most part the relational understanding of subsistence remains I play for Thomas and his contemporaries, and in the process confusingly collapsing various conceptions of ‘existence’ that Aquinas and many other medievals were at pains to keep apart. Indeed, Cross tends to conflate subsistence with the act of existence (*esse*), and then think of this ‘subsistence’ (that is, *esse*), as a thing or a metaphysical part that can be added to a nature. But, as Maritain pointed out, and Cross fails to acknowledge, the act of existence, the *esse*, is a way in which natures are or exist, not a constitutive part of the nature, and

an external object is a necessary condition of existence, perhaps some explanation of the dilemma may be found.

³⁴⁹ See, for example, Alexander of Aphrodisias, *On Aristotle's Metaphysics*, 483, 26.

³⁵⁰ E.g., Basil of Caesarea, *De Homini Structura Oratio*, 1, 14 C (*Patrologia Graeca* Vol. 30.2). The whole issue is discussed at greater length in Lucian Turcescu, *Gregory of Nyssa and the Concept of Divine Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2005).

thus subsistence cannot be the act of existence *simpliciter*, but that which terminates a potential nature in a particular actuality, or—at most—that which allows an essence to exercise the act of existence that it receives from *esse*.

In contrast to this ultimately misrepresentative account of Thomistic subsistence as simply identical to the act of existence, Cross expounds upon what he refers to as the “negation theory of subsistence,” which he claims to find in a fairly inchoate form in the work of several thirteenth-century thinkers, such as Peter John Olivi, Godfrey of Fontaines, and Hervaeus Natalis. In general terms, negation theories of subsistence argue against two different sorts of subsistence theories: “those that explain subsistence by appealing to some sort of relation added to a nature, and those that explain subsistence by appealing to some sort of non-relational entity added to nature,” which, according to Cross, would include Thomas’ whole-part account of *esse*.³⁵¹ When these theories are used within a Christological context, there is no appeal to some sort of “positive” metaphysical concept, such as Aquinas’ act of existence, which accounts for a human being’s subsistence. Rather subsistence is merely accounted for by something negative, in this case a human nature *not* being assumed by the Word. Hence the purported importance of the negative theory for the incarnation: All human natures possess the passive potency of being assumed, but only Christ’s actually was, so it is only because all other human natures were not assumed that they exist as who they are. The upshot is that such a theory allows the human nature of Christ to be independent and concrete in that it can exist apart from the Word, and yet is now assumed by the Word and so is in fact the humanity through which the Son subsists humanly.

³⁵¹ Cross, *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation*, p. 297.

Cross locates the most advanced and potent articulation of the negation theory in Duns Scotus, who argued against the danger of adopting a Thomistic model wherein subsistence is explained by the presence of a positive feature over and above nature, for if this is granted, then on this account Christ's human nature is given existence wholly through the divine *esse*, and therefore fails to be a subsistent entity. As Scotus warns us, this is theologically disastrous, using as example the work of John of Damascus, who echoed Gregory of Nazianzen's venerable soteriological principle when he wrote that what cannot be assumed cannot be healed.³⁵² Thus, if there were a feature of human existence that could not be assumed, then of necessity this particular characteristic of human existence would be excluded from redemption. Not only is this position theologically insalubrious, Scotus argues, but it is also philosophically undesirable. As Cross explains, "On the face of it, every created entity is equally susceptible of hypostatic dependence on the divine person," however, no positive feature "explanatorily sufficient for subsistence could hypostatically depend on the divine person. (If it did so depend, it would be both, by definition, a subsistent (or a property of a subsistent) and, as dependent, a non-subsistent (or a property as a non-subsistent))."³⁵³ But, as this is in fact contradictory, Scotus will argue that there can be no positive ontological feature explanatorily sufficient for the reality of subsistence. Rather, Scotus accepts that a *suppositum*, or an independently existing substance of a rational nature, must satisfy two conditions. "For a nature to subsist—for it to be a *suppositum*—it must not only be factually independent, it must have a natural inclination for independence."³⁵⁴ Or, as

³⁵² "For that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved." Ep. 101, 32, *ad Cleodinium*.

³⁵³ Cross, *Metaphysics of the Incarnation*, pp. 297-298.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 302.

Scotus will describe it, it must be independent unless it is otherwise prevented.³⁵⁵ Why should Scotus believe that every created nature has a passive potency for assumption? The reason is that an ontological impediment to assumption could only result from the presence of some sort of positive entity explaining subsistence. The lack of a passive potency must be the result of the way something is, not the way it is not. Thus, Scotus' negation theory entails that independence cannot be a necessary feature of a created nature. On Scotus' negation theory, independence is not some sort of positive feature of a nature. Neither does it result from any such feature. So nothing about independence entails that a nature lacks a potency for dependence.³⁵⁶

So, even though subsistence is only a negative capability, for Scotus there must nevertheless be two ways in which the enfleshed Word lives in the world. Scotus is lead to the position that each nature in Christ must have a two-fold act of existence or *duplex-esse*, something that is obvious from the fact that Christ lost one of his modes of existing upon his death at Golgotha, which indicates the Christ existed not only divinely through his divine nature, but also humanly by means of his human nature. However, Scotus rejects Aquinas' whole-parts model, which means that "Christ exists *formaliter* by his assumed nature"—by this Scotus means that the Word's humanity is related to him not as a part to a whole, and thus must relate instead either as an accident is related to a substance or as a nature relates to a *suppositum*.³⁵⁷ Along with Thomas, Scotus will argue that Christ's assumed humanity does not exist as an accidental manner as contingent or transitory property, there indicating that Christ's assumed human nature is truly related to

³⁵⁵ Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio*, 3, d.1, q.1, 9, *Opera Omnia* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950–2013).

³⁵⁶ Cross, *Metaphysics of the Incarnation*, pp. 302-303.

³⁵⁷ See Michael Gorman "On a Thomistic Worry about Scotus's Doctrine of the *esse Christi*," *Antonianum* 84 (2009), pp. 719-733; here at 729.

the *suppositum* of the Word. Indeed, Scotus will go so far as to claim that based on this relationship the Word exists *simpliciter* through the existence of the human nature, which is another way of saying that the Word's humanity, the assumed nature, has its own existence. Consequently, Scotus also says that Christ, the person, exists *simpliciter* by virtue of the assumed human nature. By claiming that Christ has existence *simpliciter* in virtue of his human nature, Scotus obviously wants to emphasize the fact that the Word's human existence is not a merely accidental one. Hence, Christ's human existence is truly substantial, despite the fact that it does not have subsistence. This is precisely the aspect of Scotus' incarnational model that appeals to Cross, since it seems to bypass what he takes to be the inherent problems of Thomas' one-*esse*, whole-parts formulation of the Hypostatic Union. Yet, if the incarnate Word's human nature has its own existence, an existence that is an existence in Christ, then the nature might seem to be a person—but this would mean that there are two persons in Christ, in which case Scotus would be guilty of Nestorianism.

Scotus attempts to avoid this problem by affirming that there is one subsisting existence in the incarnate Word just as there is only one suppositum or person, so that “this nature . . . necessarily has its own proper actual existence ... but it does not have a proper existence of subsistence.”³⁵⁸ Again, while avowing that the assumed human nature of Christ exists, nevertheless denies once more that the humanity of Christ subsists. On this account, at least in Scotus' own mind, the *duplex-esse* model of the Hypostatic Union appears to avoid the charge of Nestorianism. However, there still remains the question of the *esse* of the person, which Scotus argues is the *esse* not only in Christ but of Christ,

³⁵⁸ Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* 3, d. 6, q. 1, a. 1, 31: Natura ista ... necessario habet propriam existentiam eius actuaalem ... sed non habet proprium esse subsistentiae.

since he claims that Christ exists *simpliciter* by virtue of his human nature. The worry, in sum, would appear to be as follows: “Let us grant that Christ exists in two ways, as God and as man, and let us then accept that as long as we speak carefully”, it is right to say that Christ has a two-fold existence. Still, according to this criticism, “Scotus way of affirming the twofold existence is dangerous or worse,” for he says that “Christ not only has his divine existence *simpliciter* but also his human existence *simpliciter*,” and this is not compatible with Christ’s being just one person or *suppositum*.³⁵⁹ Despite Scotus’ best efforts, it appears that his model can only result in a position very much akin to that of Nestorius.³⁶⁰

Irregardless of these worries, Cross still believes that a Christology based at least partially on Scotus’ insights may be a way to get beyond the unworkable incarnational model as traditionally understood in the Thomist tradition. According to Cross, a modified Scotus-style conceptualization of the Hypostatic Union would begin from the premise that the assumed humanity of Christ as, at least in some sense, a substance—a bearer of properties and accidents albeit not an ultimate subject of properties and accidents, some of whose properties are also properties of the Word. For Cross, the great

³⁵⁹ Gorman, “On a Thomistic Worry,” pp.733-734.

³⁶⁰ In his exploration of Aquinas’ notion of a secondary act of human existence in the Word, H.-M. Diepen also considered Duns Scotus’ *duplex esse* position and found it similarly worrisome: “Est-il possible de méconnaître que *duplex ens* est logiquement impliqué dans le *duplex esse*, et par conséquent que le théologien scotiste risque de trouver au bout de son chemin, redisons-les franchement, la négation du dogme d’Éphèse? Nous posions au début de ce paragraphe qu’une telle affirmation ne prétend nullement être une censure théologique. Du moins elle ne l’est que pour celui-là d’entre les scotistes qui préférerait les corollaires de sa théologie à la foi de Duns Scot. Ces théologiens, hélas, se sont trouvés. ... Le maître dépassé, c’est néanmoins par la voie du scotisme qu’on en est venu là! (Diepen, *La critique du baslisme selon saint Thomas d’Aquin II*, in *Revue thomiste*, 50 (1950), p. 329); Can one fail to see that a *duplex ens* is logically implied by the *duplex esse*, and therefore that the Scotistic theologian runs the risk of finding at the end of his path—let us say it again openly—the negation of the dogma of Ephesus? At the start of this paragraph we stated that such an affirmation claims in no way to be a theological censure. At least, it is one only for those among the Scotists who prefer the corollaries of Scotus’ theology to his faith. Such theologians are, alas, to be found. . . .The master having been bypassed, nonetheless it is by the path of Scotism that they have arrived there.

advantage of this model is that it “relies on the view that the Word and his individual human nature are two overlapping individuals,” a view that “entails the non-identity of Christ and the Word.”³⁶¹ On this account, one can locate a subject for properties had by Christ that are incompatible with properties necessarily had by the Word, such as Christ’s human physical limitations over against the limitless divine omnipotence residing in the Word. In effect, Cross sees this as a more plausible way of accounting for the communication of incommensurable idioms in the enfleshed God-man. Cross goes so far as to argue that it may be best to posit two distinct centers of consciousness in the Hypostatic Union, one human the other divine, in order to account for the Word’s two modes of knowing and willing. Of course, Cross concedes that all this “might seem absurdly Nestorian, to compromise irreparably the unity of person in the incarnate Christ” after all, this account is broadly Scotistic in its sympathies, “small wonder, a reader may be thinking, that Scotus has always been suspected of Nestorianism.” Nevertheless, Cross dismisses this concern, since both he and Scotus insist that in such a model there is only one person the Word, and that the human nature is something like a property of this person. Thus, claiming that “this property might be an individual substance—even one which has some properties of its own over and above relational ones such as being *assumed*—does not entail Nestorianism, provided that the nature is a property of the Word’s.”³⁶²

Thomas Weinandy

³⁶¹ Cross, *Metaphysics*, p. 322.

³⁶² *Ibid.*

If Richard Cross is one of the most severe detractors of what he takes to be the fatal shortcomings of the traditional Thomistic understanding of the Hypostatic Union, then Thomas Weinandy may be one of the most ardent contemporary defenders and expositors of Aquinas's incarnational theology, and—perhaps unsurprisingly—also one of Cross' most trenchant critics. In Weinandy's estimation Cross' analysis fails to grasp a number of important elements of Aquinas' understanding of the incarnation. First, Weinandy argues, Aquinas clearly did not hold a whole-part model for the Hypostatic Union as Cross delineates it, as if the humanity were an individual, discrete ontological 'part' that came to exist as part of and within the larger whole of the divine person. If this were an accurate account of Thomas' incarnational theology, then Weinandy agrees that Cross' critiques would be valid, since this would make Aquinas an adherent of Monophysitism. However, this is a serious misinterpretation, since what Thomas actually wanted to uphold, Weinandy will forcefully argue, were three interrelated incarnational truths: that it is *truly the Son of God* who is man; that it is *truly man* that the Son of God is; and that the Son of God *truly is* man.³⁶³ According to Weinandy, these three basic Christological claims can only be upheld if we understand that for Aquinas the assumed humanity of Christ simultaneously both comes to exist, and is hypostatically (and so ontologically) united to the person of the Word in such a way that the Word actually comes to exist as man—the result (what Lonergan referred to as the *terminus*) of this incarnational coming to be must be that the Son *is* man. However, the Son does not come to be a new person; that is, no new personal *esse* comes to the Son. What is new is that an “authentic humanity does actually come to exist, but it does so only as it is united to the

³⁶³ Thomas Weinandy, “Aquinas: God *IS* Man: The Marvel of the Incarnation,” in *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction*, ed. T. Weinandy, D. Keating, and J. Yocum (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), pp. 68-69.

person of the Son, thus allowing the person of the Son to exist newly as man” . . . the incarnational act “by which the humanity is united hypostatically to the Son is the very same act that guarantees that the Son is actually man.”³⁶⁴ In addition, in opposition to Cross, Weinandy argue that Aquinas does allow for a sort of twofold *esse* in Christ. Taking his lead from the *De unione*, Weinandy contends that in Thomas the incarnate Christ is one being due to the uncreated and eternal *esse* of the Word, but he is one only because the created *esse*, the real relational effect in the humanity, comes to be and is united to the Son in such a way that the Word actually subsists as man. However, in contrast to Cross, Weinandy asserts that this union with the divine Person does not jeopardize the reality of Christ’s humanity. As a matter of fact, it ensures that the reality of the assumed humanity is so united to the Word that the Word does actually come to exist in a genuinely human way.

Weinandy is notable among contemporary followers of Thomas for his robust defense of the orthodoxy of the *esse secundarium*. In his discussion of Aquinas’ theology and metaphysics of the incarnation, Weinandy readily acknowledges that in all of his writings on Christ’s *esse*, save for the *De unione*, Aquinas defended an explicit single-*esse* understanding of Christ. So the two-*esse* position of article 4 of the Disputed Question “may appear to be a contradiction,” yet Weinandy asserts that Aquinas nonetheless “implicitly held two *esse* from the start . . . but only explicitly stated this position on the one occasion in the *De unione Verbi Incarnati*.”³⁶⁵ If this were not the case, if Thomas had indeed advocated a one-*esse* position as it has come to be traditional understood within Thomism “that Christ possessed only one *esse* and that uncreated,”

³⁶⁴ Thomas Weinandy, Review of *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus*, by Richard Cross. *The Thomist* 66:4 (2002), p. 639.

³⁶⁵ Weinandy, “Aquinas: God *IS* Man,” p. 80.

then Thomas “was a Monophysite.”³⁶⁶ Weinandy believes that the doctrines of Chalcedonian Christology when properly understood dictate the reality of a secondary human act of existence in the Hypostatic Union. “Jesus is one being/reality and the one being/reality he is the Son of God incarnate,” moreover what “establishes the one being/reality of Jesus is the *esse personale* of the Son,” for it is precisely by Christ’s humanity being assumed and united to the Son’s *esse personale* “that the Son actually comes to exist as man and so is man”. . . and this position, in Weinandy’s mind “demands that Christ also possess a created *esse*.”³⁶⁷

If there were but one divine act of existence in Christ, Weinandy argues that this would cause Christ’s humanity to be “divinized” in a manner that would absorb the assumed human nature and abrogate its authentic humanness. Weinandy reminds us that Aquinas categorically stated that the “being of the human nature is not the being of the divine nature.”³⁶⁸ So, if the *esse* of the humanity’s existence were simply the divine uncreated *esse* of the Son, then that humanity would not be truly divinized in the sense of it becoming perfectly human within its relationship with the Word, and thereby acquiring divine qualities and virtues in a human manner. Rather such divinization would demand that the humanity actually be subsumed and so exist within the very divine *esse*, similar to an accident, such as whiteness, existing within a substance, for example Socrates. As a result, we would “once more be within the realm of the monophysite *tertium quid*.”³⁶⁹

In stark contrast to this sort of ‘ecstasy of being’ single-*esse* theory, Weinandy argues that “if the Son of God actually did assume the substantial nature of the manhood

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid, pp. 80-81.

³⁶⁸ *De unione*, a.4, ad.1: *Esse humanae naturae non est esse diivinae*.

³⁶⁹ Weinandy, “Aquinas: God *IS* Man,” p. 81.

and so come to exist as an authentic man, then the authenticity of that substantial manhood demands a human created *esse*.³⁷⁰ On this account, then, the secondary created act of existence in *De unione* is nothing more than Thomas' "attempt at saying both what it is not—neither an accidental *esse* nor a principal *esse*, and also positively what it is—a substantial *esse* that is such only in that it is in ontological union with the Son."³⁷¹ As Weinandy is at pains to point out, if the Word actually did assume the substantial nature of manhood and so come to exist as an actual man, then the authenticity of that manhood demands nothing less than a human created *esse*. As Thomas maintained even from his earliest works, Weinandy adds, the divine nature and the human nature are each a being in act.³⁷² So, while the assumed humanity only exists within its ontological union with the Word, thus making Jesus one reality, yet that humanity's existence is a created act of existence in that it has come to be. The humanity is in act (exists) as a man and thus its act is human. As Weinandy concludes, if Christ's humanity lacked a finite human created *esse*, it would simply not exist, since it only is (that is, exists) because it has been created.

According to Weinandy, this is the key to understanding why in *De unione* Thomas insists that this created human *esse* is neither an accidental nor a primary act of being, but rather a secondary *esse*. "The created *esse*," Weinandy explains, "is more than accidental because the humanity is an authentic substance in its own right (manhood), and thus possesses its own integral created human *esse*."³⁷³ Yet the created human act of existence is not the principal *esse* of the incarnate Son, since the assumed humanity does not exist independently of the Word as a separate *suppositum*, i.e., as a substantial person

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁷¹ Ibid. p. 82.

³⁷² III *Sent.* 5.1.2. Divina autem natura et humana est ens actu.

³⁷³ Weinandy, "Aquinas: God *IS* Man," p. 82.

or hypostasis in its own right. The human act of existence is a substantial *esse* only insofar as it is ontologically united with the divine person of the Son. The created *esse* is wholly dependent upon the uncreated *esse* of the Word for its very being. For all that, there is a certain ambiguity to Weinandy's claim that Christ's secondary *esse* is a substantial existence. Even taking into account that this is a unique manifestation of *esse*, one limited solely to the assumed humanity within the Hypostatic Union, nevertheless Aquinas is quite firm in his position that "existence is twofold: one is essential existence or the substantial existence of a thing, for example man exists, and this is existence *simpliciter*. The other is accidental existence, for example man is white, and this is existence *secundum quid*."³⁷⁴ So, while on this account Christ's human *esse* is positively not of the accidental or *secundum quid* variety, it would seem that in his defense Weinandy may be stretching the concept of substance beyond the breaking point when he claims that the assumed humanity's created *esse* as postulated in *De unione*, a. 4 is a "substantial manhood" or "substantial *esse*." In point of fact, nowhere in this *Disputed Question* does Aquinas refer to the secondary act of existence in these terms, let alone as the existence of the incarnate Word *simpliciter*.

6. Klaus Obenauer and John Tomarchio

Klaus Obenauer

For the contemporary Thomist scholar Klaus Obenauer, the application of the divine *esse* to Christ's human nature has to be made without positing a distinction

³⁷⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *De principiis naturae*, c.1: Nota quod quoddam potest esse licet non sit, quoddam vero est. Illud quod potest esse dicitur esse potentia; illud quod iam est, dicitur esse actu. Sed duplex est esse: scilicet esse essenziale rei, sive substantiale ut hominem esse, et hoc est esse simpliciter. Est autem aliud esse accidentale, ut hominem esse album, et hoc est esse aliquid.

between the Word's subsistence and *esse* or act of substantial existence. So, when it comes to the issue of whether there may be a second substantial *esse*, as Weinandy would have it, in addition to the divine personal act of existence, Obenauer is very clear that insofar as this secondary mode of being only refers to the Word's authentically human life, then it is acceptable. Nonetheless, Obenauer adds the proviso that this second *esse* must not differ numerically from the one personal divine act of existence. In this way, Obenauer will concede a certain similarity between his position and the incarnational theory propounded by Maurice De la Taille and earlier critics of the 'ecstasy of being' model of the Hypostatic Union.

Obenauer commences his extensive analysis of *De unione*, a.4 with the observation that the human nature of Christ, even as a singular occurrence of the human mode or type of being in the world, is exclusively the substantial 'whereby something is,' in contradistinction to the divine hypostasis of the Word and its corresponding *quod est*, or 'that which is.' In other words, the human nature assumed by Christ is, as such, a singular occurrence, inasmuch as the hypostasis of the Word subsists according to it and in it; or, in other words, the incarnated Son is precisely determined—is subsistent—by means of this unique event. To put it simply, the Word *is human* in exactly this singular manner.³⁷⁵ So, we can, Obenauer concedes, say in a certain sense that in Christ there are two irreducibly distinct things, namely the uniquely self-subsistent divine nature, alongside the human nature by which the Words begins to exist humanly. Yet these are

³⁷⁵ "Die menschliche Natur Christi, und zwar auch *als* einzelne, *als* Einzelvorkommen der menschlichen Artnatur, ist exklusiv als ein *substantiales* 'quo est' für die göttliche Hypostase des Logos als entsprechendes 'quod est' (s.o.). Mit anderen Worten: Diese menschliche Natur in Christus ist, und zwar auch als solches Einzelvorkommen, *insofern die Logoshypostase gemäß ihr und in ihr* und so auf diese Weise, näherhin auf diese bestimmt einzelne Weise, *subsistent* ist, in genau dieser einzelnen Weise Mensch ist." Klaus Obenauer[p. 247]

not two ontological individuals (*supposita*) that have independent existences apart from each other, for it is the person or hypostasis of Christ himself who is the substantial individual possessing ontological independence, not each of his distinct natures. As Obenauer reminds us, in Christ there are diverse individual things or particulars, but we cannot say that Christ is several individuals or several individual things or particulars. The ultimate ontic independence of the hypostasis or person of the Word remains absolute.³⁷⁶

This question regarding the ontological status of the human nature in relation to the person of Christ, whether it merely indicates a manner in which the hypostasis of the Word, with its act of existence also subsists humanly, or whether the secondary *esse* associated with the assumed human nature is a distinct and separate substantiation of the person of the Word, this time as human, is of great importance for Obenauer because of what recent work on the critical text of *De unione* has revealed. The manuscript sources used in all printed versions of this Disputed Question have almost invariably presented a crucial portion of the main response of De union, a. 4 as “In Christo autem suppositum subsistens est persona Filii Dei, quae simpliciter *substantificatur* per naturam divinam, non autem simpliciter *substantificatur* per naturam humanam. Quia persona Filii Dei fuit ante humanitatem assumptam, nec in aliquo persona est augmentata, seu perfectior, per naturam humanam assumptam,” and conclude with the words “*substantificatur* autem

³⁷⁶ As Obenauer further reminds us, this is Thomas’ constant teaching, even in the very early *Quodlibetal Question IX*, q.2, a.1: “Individuum per se subsistens vel singulare vel particulare quod predicatur de Christo, est unum tantum. Unde possumus dicere in Christo esse plura individua vel singularia vel particularia, non autem possumus dicere Christum esse plura individua vel singularia vel particularia.”

suppositum aeternum per naturam humanam, in quantum est hic homo.”³⁷⁷ However, in consultation with Walter Senner, O.P. and other members the Leonine Commission who are responsible for establishing a critical edition of *De unione*, Obenauer has now been able to establish that an older manuscript tradition attests to the widespread use of “sustentificare” rather than the later variant of “substantificare” in this important passage.³⁷⁸ What are we to make of this difference?

As Obenauer tells us, there is only one other significant use of the term *sustentificare* in Aquinas, in *Quodlibetal Question III*, q. 2, a. 2, arg. 1 and ad. 1, a significantly earlier work than the *Disputed Question*. The topic being debated in this portion of *Quodlibetal III* raises the question of the substantial existence and unity of the incarnate Word after the crucifixion, particularly as it relates to the body of Christ after death. According to Aquinas, it seems that we must affirm that the body of Christ and any of its parts are “sustentificatum mansit per hypostasim Dei Verbi,” thus we must conclude that even after death of the body and its parts, the substance of Christ remains numerically one in accordance with the oneness of the hypostasis or the supposit, which is the Person of the Word. This line of argument strongly suggests that in this passage the term “sustentificare” means to constitute something to an ontologically substantial manner. In other words, here “sustentificare” is merely another way of indicating “substantificare,” and this variant use is indeed found in several other extant manuscripts of *Quodlibetal III*, q. 2, a. 2, arg. 1.³⁷⁹ Thomas’ subsequent reply to the objection seems

³⁷⁷ For example, this is the text as it is found in the widely used edition of the *Quaestio disputata De Unione Verbi incarnati*, published in *Quaestiones Disputatae*, Vol. 2, ed. M. Calcaterra and T.S. Centi (Rome: Marietti, 1949), p. 423.

³⁷⁸ See Obenauer, *Über die Union des fleischgewordenen Wortes*, pp. 371-373. For a full listing of all the manuscripts of *De unione* consulted, see pp. 6-11.

³⁷⁹ Several manuscript versions of 3, q.2, a. 2, arg. 1 and ad. 1 utilize the term *substantificare* rather than *sustentificatur*—perhaps indicating that for some time the two terms were used interchangeably.

to corroborate this dual-variant use of the term when he explains that substance can be predicated in two ways. Sometimes it is taken for the hypostasis, and so it is true that Christ's body remained *sustentificare* from the hypostasis of the Word of God, so it is undoubtedly true that death did not dissolve the union of the Word nor the soul nor the body, and so there remains the same numerical identity according to the hypostasis of the body. It can also be taken for the essence or nature of the substance, or that by which a substance is this particular substance and no other; and so the body of Christ is made real through the soul as it was by its form, but not by the Word, because the Word is not united to the body as its form. Neither does it follow that it was a union of God and man in the nature, thus Christ's human body continues to subsist as the body of the Word, in accordance with the substance of the hypostasis of the Word, even after death.³⁸⁰ The point to be taken from this line of reasoning is that for Thomas, at least in this period of his work, the indicated meaning of the two terms is perhaps best understood as "to constitute as a substantial whole," and that this substantiation is primarily seen as the constitutive function of the being of the hypostasis.

However, Obenauer speculates that the use of this same term, *sustentificare*, may be notably different in the *De unione*. He begins by asking what could be the sense of this

E.g., Codex Vat. lat. 1015. The text printed in *Quaestiones disputatae et quaestiones duodecim quodlibetales ad fidem optimarum editionum diligenter recusae. Volumen V. Quaestiones quodlibetales* (Taurini: Ex officina "Marietti," 1956), and reprinted online at *Corpus Thomisticum*: <http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/q03.html>, uses *substantificare*.

³⁸⁰ Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod substantia dicitur dupliciter. Quandoque enim sumitur pro hypostasi; et sic verum est quod corpus Christi sustentificatum mansit per hypostasim Dei verbi. Non enim per mortem soluta est unio verbi neque ad animam neque ad corpus; et sic remanet simpliciter idem corpus numero secundum hypostasim sive suppositum, quod est persona verbi. Alio modo accipitur substantia pro essentia vel natura; et sic corpus Christi sustentificatur per animam sicut per suam formam, non autem per verbum, quia verbum non unitur corpori ut forma: hoc enim est haereticum, secundum haeresim Arii et Apollinaris, qui posuerunt verbum esse in Christo loco animae. Sequeretur etiam quod esset unio Dei et hominis facta in natura, quod pertinet ad haeresim Eutychetis. Sic ergo corpus Christi post mortem est simpliciter idem secundum substantiam quae est hypostasis, non autem secundum substantiam quae est essentia vel natura. Univocatio autem et aequivocatio non respicit suppositum, sed essentiam vel naturam, quam significat definitio.

rather cumbersome word “sustentificare” for Thomas. Obenauer posits that use of this term could be explained by the fact that Aquinas wants to name the function of the assumed nature in terms of substantially having being, without, however, referring back to the terminology of “being,” because that language is to be reserved for the act of existence. Seen from this vantage point, our “sustentificare” may be a way of beginning to distinguishing what constitutes being at the substantial level, as distinct from what constitutes being only at the accidental level. When it comes to the Hypostatic Union, that suppositum is referred to as that which is subsisting, yet the mode of subsisting for the Son of Man and the Son of God is different. Therefore in the enfleshed Word they are one suppositum and yet the difference remains, and so in a real sense Christ is not one but two. Nevertheless, just as it is not necessary that as a consequence of this difference that Christ be “two sons,” simply on account of the fact that in one way he was born from the Father and in another way from his human mother; so also, it is not necessary that he be two according to the suppositum, on account of a different manner of subsisting by which he subsists insofar as he is God and insofar as he is man. As God and as human, in accordance with each distinct nature, Christ subsists by virtue of the respective modalities of subsistence. Having being is thus the substantifying function of the two natures of the divine person of the Son; simply put, he is substantified *simpliciter* by the divine nature, but only as regards his mode of living as this man in the world is he substantified by means of the human nature.³⁸¹

³⁸¹ “Entsprechend der präliminarisch erläuterten konstitutiven Funktion der Form in bezug auf die, gerade auch substantiale, Seinshabe wird also die “sustentifikative” Funktion der beiden Naturen für die göttliche Person des Sohnes ins Spiel gebracht: einfachhin wird er durch die göttliche Natur ‘sustentifiziert,’ nicht einfachhin, sondern nur als dieser Mensch durch die menschliche Natur ‘sustentifiziert;’ Obenauer, *Über die Union*, p. 373.

However, as Obenauer is careful to point out, it is not possible for the human nature of Christ to be granted the constitutive function of substantiality in the same way that this constitutive function is granted to being *simpliciter*. The human nature constitutes a divine Person, not simply, but only insofar as the hypostasis is denominated from such a nature. For human nature does not make the Son of Man to be *simpliciter*, since He is from all eternity, but only came to be man in time. Obenauer does not deny that the assumed human nature has a significance for the hypostasis precisely as hypostasis, namely as the enfleshed Word subsists in the human nature. Substance in the fullest sense cannot be predicated of created human nature, but only to the supposit, in this case Christ, the nature-bearing divine person.³⁸² Christ has only one act of being *simpliciter* because of the eternal *esse* of the pre-existent *suppositum*; which is not to deny that there is indeed another form of being that is accrued to this *suppositum*, i.e. not to that extent that the Word exists eternally, but only insofar as it became human in time. So, for Thomas, the Word has a single-*esse* according to that singular act of existence which is due to the unity of the supposit; and the Word also has a certain duality of *esse*, an act of existence in accord with each of the distinct natures.³⁸³

As Obenauer points out, in *De unione* a. 4, Thomas makes the principle of unity or plurality of being strongly correlated to the unity or plurality of natural forms, whether

³⁸² “Die menschliche Natur hat (wiees auch immer mit dem “simpliciter” bestellt sein mag) bedeutung für die Hypostase als Hypostase, nämlich als *in der menschlichen Natur subsistierende*. Überdies ist besagte Wendung im Unterschied zu den umgekehrten Wendungen subsistenztheoretisch markant formuliert: Substanz im vollsten Sinne (erste Substanz) ist nicht die (menschliche) Natur, sondern das Suppositum, also im Falle Christi die die Natur tragende göttliche Person; also wird letztere auch durch diese Natur sustentifiziert = als substantiale Größe konstituiert.” Ibid. 374-375.

³⁸³ “Und deshalb hält er zum einen fest, Christus habe nur ein Einfachhin-Sein *wegen des einen ewigen Seins des ewigen Suppositums*; und dies, um zum anderen sofort nachzuschieben, es gebe noch ein anderes Sein, und zwar *dieses Suppositums*, nämlich nicht insofern es ewig, sondern *insofern es* in der Zeit *Mensch* geworden ist. Also: *ein Einfachhin-Sein* entsprechend dem Einfachhineines-Sein aufgrund der Einheit des Suppositums; entsprechend dem Gewissermaßen-zwei-Sein aufgrund der beiden Naturen *ein je anderes Sein* aufgrund der je anderen Natur.” Ibid. p. 376.

that be simply the divine form that Son shares with the Father essentially, or the additional servant form that Son kenotically assumes. Thus Thomas adduces the *simpliciter* substantification solely due to the divine nature—i.e., the ownership of a single-*esse* by Christ on account of the one eternal being of eternal supposit; as the basis of the subsequent substantification by means of the human nature (in a non-*simpliciter* sense) to person of the Son of God in regard to his being this man. In other words, only insofar as the Word has been enfleshed; and from this Aquinas infers that the latter is expressly not the principal *esse* of Christ, but only the secondary act of existence that leaves a principal *esse* in the incarnate Word, without, by any means, relegating the human mode of existence to an accidental property.³⁸⁴ Now, if, according to this model, which postulates that Christ has a single-*esse* on account of the eternal being of the divine *supposit*, and a singular substantification of the person of the Word by the divine nature, this raises the urgent question for Obenauer of how this single-*esse* on account of the eternal being of the Word is precisely to be understood: If one takes this interpretation as the basis for our understanding of the Hypostatic Union, then in Obenauer's opinion the secondary, substantial human act of existence in Christ must be flatly denied, or the existence of the single-*esse* of the enfleshed Word must disavowed.

As Obenauer correctly points out, it is almost insurmountably difficult to reconcile these two distinct modalities of being, the *esse* of the one *suppositum* of Christ,

³⁸⁴ “Thomas macht sich also in *De unione*, a. 4 das Prinzip der Einheit oder Pluralität des Seins in strikter Korrelation zur Einheit oder Pluralität der Form zu eigen. Entsprechend scheint Thomas aus der *Simpliciter*-Sustentifikation nur durch die *göttliche* Natur [das Innehaben eines *einzigsten Einfachhin*-Seins seitens Christus] wegen des *einen ewigen* Seins des ewigen Suppositums zu folgern; entsprechend aus der Sustentifikation durch die menschliche Natur, und zwar als nicht einfachhin solcher, sondern die Person des Gottessohnes nur als dieser Mensch betreffender, das Innehaben eines anderen Seins seitens des Logos, nämlich als des Mensch gewordenen, ein akthaft eigenes Mensch-Sein eben; und zwar letzteres zu folgern ausdrücklich als solches, das *nicht das prinzipale*, sondern *nur das sekundäre* Sein des Logosuppositums darstellt und es daher bei dem einen Einfachhin-Sein Christi beläßt, um jedoch zugleich den nicht-akzidentellen Charakter des Mensch-Seins in Erinnerung zu rufen.” Ibid, p. 377.

insofar as it is this man, which has the explicit status of a non-accident, and the singular, eternal, essentially divine *esse* of the Son. Or, as Obenauer designates it, the unavoidably irreconcilable alternatives between *esse simpliciter* or “simple existence” versus the notion of “being-to-some-extent or in-a-certain-mode” (i.e. only insofar as the Word is this man) of the *esse secundarium*. Or better yet, the paradoxical alternative between necessary and eternal “being at the foundational level” and contingent and temporal “being at the level of further determination.”³⁸⁵ Obenauer puts it starkly—in the natural order the only alternatives imaginable are either substantial being and accidental being, so that this concept which Thomas so briefly gives us of a secondary *esse* which is neither of these alternatives, yet has some features of both, so that it as a kind of being that exists only to-some-extent or only in-a-certain-mode, is on the face of it nigh incomprehensible. In no other work does Thomas acknowledge such a modal attenuation for the intrinsically correlated term of substance, since to do so would be to deny the essential characteristic of substantial *esse* as *simpliciter*, for to do so would be to lose sight of the transcendental convertibility of “one” and “being.” So, Obenauer has to conclude, Christ must be “one” simply, and he must have one “being,” or a single-*esse*, in exactly the same sense.

³⁸⁵ “Allerdings: Legt man diese Interpretation zugrunde, dann ergeben sich massive Folgeprobleme, die sie als wenigstens sachlogisch nicht haltbar erweisen. Denn entweder wird dem “anderen Sein dieses Suppositums,” dem Mensch-Sein, rundweg abgesprochen, Einfachhin-Sein zu sein . . . das andere Sein des einen Suppositums Christi, insofern es dieser Mensch ist, hat den Status des Nicht-Akzidentellen . . . Und umgekehrt ist die Alternative “Einfachhin-Sein” versus “Gewissermaßen-Sein” nicht hintergebar, wie sie auch mit der Alternative von ‘Sein auf der Ebene der Grundlegung’ und ‘Sein auf der Ebene der Weiterbestimmung,’ und letztere wiederum mit der Alternative von ‘substantiales Sein’ und ‘akzidentales Sein’ untrennbar korreliert: ein substantiales Gewissermaßen-Sein ist ein Unbegriff. Und im Sinne dieser unhintergebaren Alternative und besagter untrennbarer Korrelation ist die zweite Ausgangsprämisse formuliert. Auch machen Bedeutungs differenzierungen im Sinne modaler Abschwächungen (“modal akzidentell = gewissermaßen”) keinen Sinn: die Unvermittelbarkeit der Alternative von “einfachhin” versus “gewissermaßen” steht dem ebenso entgegen, wie umgekehrt Thomas, wie gesehen, für das untrennbar korrelierende “substantialiter” eine solche modale Abschwächung auch nicht kennt.” Ibid, pp. 378-379.

From this line of argument Obenauer can draw only one conclusion: The human-existence of Christ is the single-*esse* of the Word, and although distinguished from the eternal being of the Word as another act, not present as a second being *simpliciter* alongside to the eternal being of the Word, and so the single-*esse* that actualizes the humanity of Christ remains numerically indistinguishable from the eternal *esse* of the Word. Accordingly, what we have in Christ is multiple being as effectuated in the order of the single-*esse*, namely the being of God, or divine *esse*, along with the created human existence *esse*, but without a multiplication of the *esse simpliciter*. Since Thomas consistently presents the singular *esse* of Christ as two distinct acts of existence, one of which is divinely and the other humanly determined, then the divine *esse* is not the human act of existence *simpliciter*. However, since the single-*esse* is determined in each act according to the divinity or humanity, but in such a manner that the substantial difference of divine and human acts of existence are not numerically different from the *esse simpliciter*, then the personal *esse* of the Word is distinguished from the *esse secundarium* only to the extent that it is a distinct actualization of the Word's single act of existence, but not a separate *esse simpliciter*.³⁸⁶

John Tomarchio

John Tomarchio begins his considerations on *esse* and subsistence by pondering the meaning of a line from Aquinas: "when I speak of the existence of man or of horse or of any other thing, existence itself is considered formally and as received, and not that to

³⁸⁶ "Da aber das Einfachhin-Sein im je anderen Seinsakt derart göttlich oder menschlich bestimmt ist, daß diese substantiale Differenz von 'göttlich' und 'menschliche' den menschlichen Seinsakt nicht (und zwar: numerisch) als Einfachhin-Sein vom göttlichen unterscheidet, dann kommt der Sachverhalt, wonach das göttliche Einfachhin-Sein nicht das menschliche Einfachhin-Sein ist, eben nur auf jenen hinaus, daß es ein, akthaft, *je anderes Sein* ist; *nicht* aber darauf, daß es ein je anderes Einfachhin-Sein ist." Ibid. p. 383.

which existence belongs.”³⁸⁷ As Tomarchio points out, the “when I speak” of this last sentence signals that Aquinas is consciously employing singular terminology. In other words, in contrast with either the being or the essence to which an entity’s existence pertains, Aquinas will refer to a thing’s *qualitatively distinct existence*, to its existence as modified and thus capable of being considered as received and differentiated.³⁸⁸ The upshot all this is that even though the entity’s mode of existing accords with its form or nature/essence, it is nevertheless not reducible to it. The existence of a man or of a horse—the act of existence proper to a human or an equine nature/essence—must above all be considered precisely as modified existence. This indicates for Tomarchio that in Thomas’ estimation the idea of existential modality, the way something exists, in the end cannot be reduced to any of the various principles of existence, whether we are speaking of the that things essence, form, or matter, nor—in turn—can those elements be reduced to a things act of existence. Rather, a finite mode of existing should be understood as the qualification of existence that is necessary for it be united with these principles. To be in composition with essence, Tomarchio explains, existence must be modified or determined to a particular kind of actualization. So, for Aquinas there is no parceling out of unspecified portions of common *esse* to this or that thing. Rather, the existence of a horse is precisely an equine existence, proportionate to equine essence in all its finite equine specificity. Tomarchio will point out that Aquinas argues, in the *Summa* as well other texts, the necessity for this type of proportion in any such composite union, otherwise it would not even be capable of being cognized: “The object must have a

³⁸⁷ *ST I*, q. 4, a. 1, ad 3.

³⁸⁸ John Tomarchio, “Aquinas’s Division of Being According to Modes of Existing,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 54:3 (2001), pp. 585-613; at 600-601.

certain proportion to the cognitive power—more specifically, a proportion of what is active to what is passive, and a proportion of what is perfect to what is perfectible.”³⁸⁹

With respect in particular to the relation between a finite being’s essence and its act of existence, Tomarchio cites Maritain’s approving comments regarding Diepen’s formulation that “the act of existing is of itself perfectly adapted and accommodated to the essence which is its formal principle; so perfectly that it can be joined to no other essence in the actuation of the latter.”³⁹⁰ Despite this approbation, Tomarchio nonetheless disagree with Maritain’s adoption of that traditional notion which considered modality as nothing more than a mere terminus, that closing off of the essence which allows it to appropriate its own act of existence. On the contrary, Tomarchio proposes that the necessary termination required by an essence is its completion by an *esse* that is proper to it, i.e., the act of existence by which it is actually constituted the individual essence of a distinct and ontologically completed being. Tomarchio highlights the fact that in his discussion of persons, Aquinas explains that “Existence pertains to the very constitution of the person, and in this respect has the formality of a limit. Thus the unity of the person requires the unity of a complete and personal existence as such.”³⁹¹ The implication is that a modality of being cannot be reducible to either essence or *esse* itself, but nevertheless it is not a *tertium quid* either—“It is a pure *terminus* in the order of existence, expressive of the intrinsic relation between an individual essence and its

³⁸⁹ *ST* I, q.88, a.1, ad.3: requiritur aliqua proportio obiecti ad potentiam cognoscitivam, ut activi ad passivum, et perfectionis ad perfectibile.

³⁹⁰ Jacques Maritain, "On the Notion of Subsistence," Appendix 4 in *Distinguish to Unite or The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. G. B. Phelan (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1959), 434 n. 1. For Diepen’s formulation, see “La critique du Basilième selon saint Thomas d’Aquin,” *Revue thomiste* 50 (1950), pp.115 and 304.

³⁹¹ *ST* III, q.19, a.1, ad 4: Nam esse pertinet ad ipsam constitutionem personae: et sic quantum ad hoc se habet in ratione termini. Et ideo unitas personae requirit unitatem ipsius esse completi et personalis.

correlatively and constitutively proper act of existing.”³⁹² A being’s nature/essence, its very substantial form is thus in potency, while a thing’s mode of existing, its actualizing *esse*, is obviously in act. In accordance with the Aristotelian understanding of the ontological priority of act over potency,³⁹³ modality first pertains to an entity’s act existence and only secondarily to its nature/essence.

This is not to say that the reception and limitation of existence is identical with the essence, or that an entity’s nature/essence can be reduced to a mere limitation of the act of existence. Rather, what Tomarchio takes Aquinas to be saying is that the mode of a thing’s *esse* is proportioned to the mode of its essence in such a way that the ontological modality of the thing in itself is precisely the proportion or relation between its essence and its act of existing. This is the basis for Tomarchio’s assertion that the mode of existing is the “specific determination of an act of existing necessary to its composition with a particular essence,” which is why he will ultimately maintain that Thomas “uses the term *modus* to name the specification itself that an act of existing has as constituted in relation to an individual essence and as proper to the finite being of which they are the principles.”³⁹⁴ The proportionality of being and essence in the created order is established by the Creator, since a participated act of existence and its proportionate essence are cannot be limited before being conjoined. As Aquinas explains, “In giving existence God at the same time produces that which receives existence.”³⁹⁵ In other words, their reciprocal proportionality precedes their composition “in the intention of the creative

³⁹² Tomarchio, “Aquinas’s Division of Being,” p. 602.

³⁹³ See Giovanni Reale, *The Concept of First Philosophy and the Unity of the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, trans. J.R. Catan (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1980); Christos Y. Panayides, “Aristotle on the Priority of Actuality in Substance,” *Ancient Philosophy* 19:2 (1999), pp. 327-344.

³⁹⁴ Tomarchio, “Aquinas’s Division of Being,” p. 603.

³⁹⁵ *Quaestiones de potentia*, q. 3, a. 1, ad 17: Deus simul dans esse, producit id quod esse recipit: et sic non oportet quod agat ex aliquo praeexistenti.

agent which orders them to one another and proportionately limits them to one another in creating the being of which they are the principles. This culmination is the prerequisite of their being the composite principles of a complete being.”³⁹⁶ The nature/essence of any given entity, along with its concomitant delimiting *esse*, are simultaneously co-created and determined to one another in the very same act of creation. In fact, all the distinguishing characteristics of a thing, whether they be essential or accidental, are actual only in virtue of the determinate mode of *esse* of a particular entity, for it only due to the distinct act of existence by which a nature exists *simpliciter* that any other perfections can accrue to it. God as Creator assigns to each creature its own proper mode of existing, is present in every creature according to its proper mode, and knows each of these creations according to the proper mode of each.³⁹⁷

Even though Tomarchio references Maritain’s approbation of Diepen in the course of his analysis of Christ’s modalities of subsistence, Tomarchio never extends his own examination of the Thomas’ employment of the concept of existential modality to the question of the Hypostatic Union. He is content to merely gesture in that Christological direction when he, in the course of explication how the perfection of a thing cannot be found solely in the nature, but rather in the ontological union of a nature and an act of existence, Tomarchio quotes from the *ST* III, q.7, a.1, where Aquinas is arguing that there is no numerical plurality in the enfleshed Word. This absence of

³⁹⁶ Tomarchio, “Aquinas’s Division of Being,” p. 604.

³⁹⁷ *Quaestiones de veritate*, q. 10, a. 11, ad 8: Ad octavum dicendum, quod mens nostra cum intelligibilitate, quam habet ut proprium quoddam, et cum aliis communiter habet esse: unde, quamvis in ea sit Deus, non oportet quod semper sit in ea ut forma intelligibilis; sed ut dans esse, sicut est in aliis creaturis. Quamvis autem creaturis omnibus communiter det esse, tamen cuilibet creaturae dat proprium modum essendi; et sic etiam quantum ad hoc quod in omnibus est per essentiam, praesentiam, potentiam, invenitur esse diversimode in diversis, et in unoquoque secundum proprium eius modum.

numerical plurality is directly attributable to the fact that there is only one *suppositum* of the incarnate Christ, however there is still something “other” (*aliud*) in the Son in a relative manner.³⁹⁸ That is to say, an irreducible distinction present in Christ according to the subsisting modality of the assumed human nature, which in turns finds its subsistence only in relation to the divine mode of existence of the Word.

7. Conclusion

An examination of the contested fourth article of de unione, a. 4, with a subsequent analysis of various modern receptions of the text yielded some potential insights into what the controversial secondary act of existence may be for Thomas, especially the notion that it should perhaps be seen as a particular way in which he incarnate Son subsists in the temporal world. However, it is unclear precisely in what way this modality of the assumed human nature interacts with and finds its own created existence within the Hypostatic Union. These unanswered questions are addressed in the next chapter.

³⁹⁸ Dicendum quod alterum importat diversitatem accidentis, et ideo diversitas accidentis sufficit ad hoc quod aliquid simpliciter dicatur alterum. Sed aliud importat diversitatem substantiae. Substantia autem dicitur non solum natura, sed etiam suppositum, ut dicitur in V Metaphys. Et ideo diversitas naturae non sufficit ad hoc quod aliquid simpliciter dicatur aliud, nisi adsit diversitas secundum suppositum. Sed diversitas naturae facit aliud secundum quid, scilicet secundum naturam, si non adsit diversitas suppositi.

VI. Chapter 5: The Saving Mystery of the Kenotic God-Man

1. Introduction

The previous chapter reached an inconclusive end with a potentially rich observation, that the *esse secundarium* of *De unione* may be most fruitfully conceptualized as the specifically human modality by which the incarnate Word subsists kenotically in a human way. In addition, it was postulated that the signal character of this creaturely mode of subsistence is to be seen in the assumed nature's inability to achieve ontological independence. However, the precise manner in which the Word's humanity subsists in the Hypostatic Union was left unresolved. In this chapter I explore these unanswered quandaries, and I connect it specifically to the Kenoticism of the Son. Finally, I devote the remainder of the chapter to an in-depth analysis of the soteriological ramifications of the Word's kenotic existence in a soteriological register, with special emphasis on the theandric instrumentality and ontological exemplarity evinced by the Word made flesh.

2. Kenosis as a Mode of Subsistence

As we have seen in many previous instances, for Aquinas a human nature is an individual but not a person, which is to say that by which something is human does not constitute a person or an individual in and of itself (*per/in se*). As Stephen A. Hipp will

put it, humanity does not lack personality, but rather proper personality—personality of and in itself. We can thus say that the human nature of Christ is not merely individual but an individual, and it is a person insofar as it is united to the person of the Word, and that it subsists in a human mode of subsistence, although it is certainly not an individual, or a person, nor subsistent in and of itself. This quality of being in and of itself, or *per/in-seity*, is thus the principal distinguishing characteristic of the person or *supposit* over and against natures. It provides the individualization without which the nature can never be an individual. Thus *esse*, the act of existence—existence *per se* and *in se*—which is proper to the *supposit* or person, is not proper to natures as such.

However, the fact that an individual substantial nature does not subsist *per/in se* does not mean that it does not subsist, since in addition to subsisting *in/per se* there is also a further manner or mode of subsisting: subsistence *in alio* (in another). In such later cases, a thing subsists derivatively as part of another being that does subsist *per se* and *in se*. The humanity of Christ subsists *in alio*, yet nevertheless it is a complete individual substance, precisely because it has been assumed into the subsisting individual supposit of the Word in the Hypostatic Union. Thus, the humanity of Christ lacks nothing except a separate *per/in se* subsistence. Its hypostatic perfection is a result of that union, and forms the ontological basis for an authentic communication of idioms. As Stephen Hipp explains, “There must exist something by which the human nature actually possesses the subsistence of God (or subsists in God). There is a certain passive capacity by reason of which, formally speaking, it is attained by the hypostatic act of the Word,” since the reality of the Incarnation—the actual change or effect—is rooted in the created humanity,

which is nothing other than the counterpart to the unitive act whereby the human nature is assumed.³⁹⁹

This simultaneity and reciprocity of the assumptive act and the actualization of the assumed humanity has a number implications. Among the most important is the fact of the enfleshed Word's compositeness, that is, the notion that we have already looked at some length that the assumed human nature can best be understood as a constituent part, and as such derives its existence from the primary personal being of the Son. Even more so, it indicates that the hypostatic union is much more than a mere conjunction of the divine person and a human nature, it also invokes "both the intrinsicness of the union as well as the dynamical (mutually influencing/conditioning) relationship" obtaining between the person and the assumed humanity.⁴⁰⁰ This integrally united dynamism is evinced in the Word's dual subsistence, for the Son at once hypostasizes the human nature—i.e., the human nature is actualized by the divine person—and correlatively the Word comes to be through the human nature in time—i.e., there is a new substantive modality in which and out of which the Son exists that is rooted in the assumed humanity. Although the Word is not constituted as a supposit by the human nature, nevertheless the Word is made, substantially, to be a man.

In this regard, hypostatization and hominization are the correlative terms of the one subsistent act. To be more precise, the supposit has two distinct properties, it exists *in se and per se*, but it also has the capacity of subsisting a nature (or even a plurality of natures). The first property allows us to say that a supposit subsists in the sense that it has an *in/per se* mode of existence or *esse*. The second property also allows to declare that

³⁹⁹ Stephen A. Hipp, *The Doctrine of Personal Subsistence: Historical and Systematic Synthesis*, Studia Friburgensia, 114 (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2012), p. 84.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 87.

the supposit subsists in a correlative manner because it substands or stands beneath or bears a substantial nature, thereby not only conferring a portion of the supposit's individuality to the nature that is borne, but also integrating it into the being of the supposit (in other words, "substantifying" the nature). As a result of this ontological integration, the supposit also now has the property of subsisting in the particular mode of being (that is, it is "substantified" by the nature) appropriate to that nature. In other words, the subsisting nature confers its manner of existence to the supposit which bears it.

As we have already explored at some length, this is not to suggest that that the assumed nature gives something to the Word that it did not have before, or that it perfects some potential that the Son lacked before the incarnation, let alone that the assumption of a human nature causes a change in the pre-existent divine person. Aquinas is nothing if not scrupulous in his insistence that the incarnation is rooted in the absolutely perfect and immutable divinity of God, hence the assumed humanity cannot add any perfection to the assuming Word, but only contributes an obediential potentiality, an ontological availability, to be the vessel through which the divine condescends to subsist in a spatio-temporal manner. This delimited modality of being, nonetheless, indicates that the assumed humanity does have some intrinsic quality which it possesses in itself that is of importance to the Word's being in the world, even if it is at most only a relative kind of being. So, though Christ's humanity is a not subsisting entity unto itself (it only subsists *in alio*), yet it nevertheless remains that by means of which the subsisting hypostasis of the Word has a certain mode of being. Above all, it allows the subsistent act of the Word

to be the “principle of subjective singularity for a human nature, and for that nature to operate in such a manner that its actions belong to God.”⁴⁰¹

Thomas’ appreciation of the assumed humanity’s intrinsically distinctive worth in its dynamically integral relation to the divine hypostasis is strikingly evident in his probing answer to that perennial medieval conundrum of whether Christ’s humanity is something (*aliquid*). As we saw in the first chapter, twelfth- and thirteenth-century theological debates regarding the metaphysical status of Christ’s human nature often revolved around the question of whether the Word, *qua* human, was “something” (*aliquid*). Since, the theologically orthodox consensus eventually decided, Christ’s humanity could not be ascribed a wholly autonomous subsistence (the trap of Nestorianism), then it could only be accurately designated as “nothing”—an ontological non-entity. Even though this type of radical Christological nihilism was eventually proscribed, nonetheless a troubling paradox remained. If natures do not have independent existence, then it seems we are committed to the disturbing view that Christ’s assumed human nature, in and of itself, is *non aliquid* (not something). In his earliest engagement with this topic, in the *Commentary* on the Lombard, Thomas argues that strictly speaking one cannot say that the humanity of Christ is something (*aliquid*) individual. As Aquinas explains, man (*homo*) taken in general is not something particular, only this man (*iste homo*) can be said to be something individual (“Christ is not something particular as man, but only as this man”); in other words, the Son’s individuality as this man is a function of his assumption of a human nature whereby he subsists as the particular human individual Christ Jesus—without the divine person’s assumptive act, Christ’s humanity remains a

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, p. 94.

generalized abstraction (*homo*) without any individuating singularity.⁴⁰² The ultimate implication of this line of argument is that apart from the hypostasis, the assumed humanity of Christ seems to be for all intent and purposes *non-aliquid*.

By the time Aquinas reengages with this topic in the *Summa* his argument for Christ's individuation has changed in subtle yet important ways. On the one hand, Thomas is characteristically concerned with denying that the assumed human nature is a distinct person, and he does this by clarifying the two ways in which the phrase "Christ as Man is a person" can be understood, using the venerable doctrine from the Kenotic Hymn as a the problematic proof text in the initial objection. "It would seem that Christ as Man is a hypostasis or person. For what belongs to every man belongs to Christ as Man, since He is like other men according to Phil. 2:7: 'Being made in the likeness of men.' But every man is a person. Therefore Christ as Man is a person."⁴⁰³ As Thomas explains, if such passages are taken as referring to the suppositum or subsisting subject of the incarnate Word, then it is clear that Christ as man is indeed a person, since the subject subsisting in the human nature is none other than person of the Word.⁴⁰⁴ However if the term 'man' is understood as referring to the nature, it may be parsed in two different ways. First, we may understand it as if it belonged to human nature to be in a person, and in this way it is true, for whatever subsists in a human nature is indeed a person.

⁴⁰² *Super Sent.*, lib. 3 d. 10 q. 1 a. 2 qc. 2 ad 1: Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod Christus, secundum quod homo, est aliquid; non tamen sequitur: ergo secundum quod homo, est aliquid universale vel particulare: quia homini accidit esse universale vel particulare: unde haec est per accidens: homo est aliquid particulare; haec autem per se: iste homo est aliquid particulare. Unde Christus non est aliquid particulare secundum quod homo, sed secundum quod iste homo.

⁴⁰³ *ST III*, q. 16, a. 12, obj. 1: Videtur quod Christus, secundum quod homo, sit hypostasis vel persona. Illud enim quod convenit cuilibet homini, convenit Christo secundum quod est homo, est enim aliis hominibus similis, secundum illud Philipp. II, in similitudinem hominum factus. Sed omnis homo est persona. Ergo Christus, secundum quod homo, est persona.

⁴⁰⁴ *ST III*, q. 16, a. 12, c.: Christus, secundum quod homo, est persona, si accipiat ratione suppositi, manifestum est quod Christus, secundum quod homo, est persona, quia suppositum humanae naturae nihil est aliud quam persona filii Dei.

Secondly, it may be taken to mean that Christ's humanity ought to have personhood as brought about by the principles of the human nature. However, in this sense Christ as man is cannot be a person, since the human nature does not exist of itself apart from the divine nature, as the very concept of personhood.⁴⁰⁵

This clarification lays the groundwork for Thomas' discussion of the assertion that "Christ is something (*aliquid*) that the Father is, and something (*aliquid*) that the Father is not" (*Christus est aliquid quod est pater, et est aliquid quod non est pater*). The gravamen of this problematic statement lies in the fact that if the Christ has both a divine and a human nature, then Christ is one thing and another (something divine and something human), and therefore Christ is two.⁴⁰⁶ Aquinas responds by pointing out that when it is said, "Christ is something (*aliquid*) that the Father is," this instance of *aliquid* corresponds to the divine nature, which is held in common, and thus predicated even in the abstract of both the Father and Son. However, when one says that "Christ is something (*aliquid*) that is not the Father," then here *aliquid* signifies, not to the human nature as it is in the abstract, but as it is in the concrete. In other words, it signifies the humanity of Christ as it is in the supposit or person of the Word, concretely, truly (i.e., not merely conceptually), yet nonetheless not distinctly, but rather indistinctly (*indistinctum*).⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid: Si autem accipiatur ratione naturae, sic potest intelligi dupliciter. Uno modo, quod intelligatur quod naturae humanae competat esse in aliqua persona. Et hoc etiam modo verum est, omne enim quod subsistit in humana natura, est persona. Alio modo potest intelligi ut naturae humanae in Christo propria personalitas debeatur, causata ex principiis humanae naturae. Et sic Christus, secundum quod homo, non est persona, quia humana natura non est per se seorsum existens a divina natura, quod requirit ratio personae.

⁴⁰⁶ ST III, q. 17, a.1, obj.4: Praeterea, Christus est aliquid quod est pater, et est aliquid quod non est pater. Ergo Christus est aliquid et aliquid. Ergo Christus est duo.

⁴⁰⁷ ST III, q.17, a. 1, ad. 4: Cum dicitur, Christus est aliquid quod est pater, ly aliquid tenetur pro natura divina, quae etiam in abstracto praedicatur de patre et filio. Sed cum dicitur, Christus est aliquid quod non est pater, ly aliquid tenetur non pro ipsa natura humana secundum quod significatur in abstracto,

What does this last qualification regarding the indistinctiveness of the humanity mean? For Thomas, the force of this qualitative stipulation resides in the fact that here the term *aliquid* designates the human nature as it is in the supposit, not as it points to *this man* Christ Jesus, but rather as it signifies man in its essence, since a nature is that by which something is and is thus referenced abstractly. That is, Christ is man insofar as he possesses a human nature, which this *aliquid* denotes. Alternatively, if it were a distinctive signification, that would locate Christ's ontological distinctiveness, his *aliquid*, in a *per se/in se* human subsistence, thereby rendering Jesus Christ a distinct human hypostasis. Hence, the *aliquid* in the phrase *Christus est aliquid quod non est pater* (Christ is something that the Father is not) designates a supposit, a distinct subsisting substance other than the divine supposit of the Father, but only as that supposit underlies the human nature and not the individuating properties that would constitute an ontologically separate human supposit. Hence, Aquinas can conclude, "it does not follow that Christ is one thing and another, or that He is two, since the suppositum of the human nature in Christ, which is the Person of the Son of God, does not reckon numerically with the divine nature, which is predicated of the Father and Son."⁴⁰⁸

Note well that with this superbly balanced qualification Aquinas has precisely located the *aliquid* of Christ without sacrificing the personal unity of the incarnate Word. From the vantage point of the individuating properties that ontologically distinguish this supposit from all others, there is simply one individual supposit in Christ. As Thomas forcefully reiterates, "Two signifies what has duality, not in another, but in the same

sed secundum quod significatur in concreto; non quidem secundum suppositum distinctum, sed secundum suppositum indistinctum.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid: Prout scilicet substat naturae, non autem proprietatibus individuantibus. Et ideo non sequitur quod Christus sit aliud et aliud, vel quod sit duo, quia suppositum humanae naturae in Christo quod est persona filii Dei, non ponit in numerum cum natura divina, quae praedicatur de patre et filio.

thing of which ‘two’ is predicated. Now what is predicated is said of the suppositum, which is implied by the word ‘Christ.’ Hence, although Christ has duality of nature, yet, because He has not a duality of suppositum, it cannot be said that Christ is two.”⁴⁰⁹

However, from the perspective of the subsisting that actualize the assumed nature, there is a supposit that is unmistakably identified with the human nature—a conceptually distinct secondary suppositional act that substantifies the Word in a fully human manner—in addition to that ontological subsisting associated with the suppositional act of the Word’s divine nature. To be more exact, the selfsame suppositional act results in an irreducibly two-fold articulation of subsistent modalities in the one person.

While Thomas’ exploration of the two-fold *esse* in *De unione* a.4 is not couched in terms of *aliquid*, nonetheless—as we have already elaborated—the parallels with the preceding argument are too obvious to ignore. In the *Disputed Question* the Angelic Doctor is concerned with securing the unicity of the incarnate Word within the thematic ambit of possible misreadings of the kenotic hymn, much as in *ST* III, q. 16, a. 12 he is apprehensive about correctly answering the query of whether Christ as man is a person in the face of the text from Philippians 2:7. As we saw in our analysis of *De unione* in Chapter 3, in *De unione* a. 3 Aquinas establishes that in Christ, “the son of man is said to be one thing and the son of God another, because each name predicates a different nature; not because there is a different suppositum [for each nature], from which it would follow that Christ is two simply.”⁴¹⁰ Quite reminiscent to the argumentative thrust that bridges

⁴⁰⁹ *ST* III, q.17, a. 1, ad. 6: Dicendum quod duo dicitur quasi habens dualitatem, non quidem in aliquo alio, sed in ipso de quo duo praedicantur. Fit autem praedicatio de supposito, quod importatur per hoc nomen Christus. Quamvis igitur Christus habeat dualitatem naturarum, quia tamen non habet dualitatem suppositorum, non potest dici esse duo.

⁴¹⁰ *De unione*, a.3, ad. 3: In Christo dicitur esse aliud filius hominis, et aliud Filius Dei, propter hoc quod aliam et aliam naturam praedicat utrumque nomen; non propter hoc quod sit aliud et aliud suppositum, ad quod sequeretur Christum esse simpliciter duo.

across from the conclusion of *ST* III, q.16, a.12, Thomas commences his exposition in *De unione* a. 4, by pointing that his answer is in an important sense a mere continuation of his explanation in *De unione* a. 3: “in a certain measure solution of this question and the previous one is the same” (*Dicendum quod huius quaestionis est quodammodo eadem ratio et praemissae*).

Again, at the risk of belaboring a previously argued point, the parallels run even deeper between *De unione*, a. 3 and *ST* III, q.17, a.1. In the third article of the *Disputed Question*, Thomas initially framed his argument on the simplicity or duality of Christ with the query “Whether Christ is one or two in the neuter? For seems that he is two in the neuter (*Tertio quaeritur utrum christus sit unum neutraliter vel duo. Et videtur quod sit duo neutraliter*). Following typical linguistic usage of the time, Aquinas uses the term “neuter” to indicate Christ in the abstract, and employs the term “masculine” to designate Christ in the concrete. Hence, he will go on to argue that a “word formulated in the masculine gender is customarily referred to the person; and thus it is clear that Christ is not two in the masculine, but one; since there are not two persons in Christ, but one.”⁴¹¹ But, certain authors, positing one person in Christ, posited two supposita or hypostases, one of the Son of God and another of the son of man (Cf. *S.T.* III, q. 2, a. 3). Hence, although they did not say that Christ is two in the masculine because of the unity of person, still they said that he was two in the neuter because of the duality of supposita. But, because this opinion too is contrary to the truth of the faith, as was said above; thus, leaving aside this opinion, we must consider whether, supposing that in Christ there is

⁴¹¹ *De unione*, a.3, resp.: Dicendum quod masculinum genus, quia est formatum, consuevit ad personam referri; et ideo manifestum est quod Christus non est duo masculine, sed unus: quia in Christo non sunt duae personae, sed una. This way of stating the problem of duality in Christ is already evident in Thomas’ *Scriptum super Sententiis* III, d.VI where, in q. 2, a. 1 he asks, “Is Christ two in the neuter?”

one hypostasis and one suppositum, Christ ought to be called two in the neuter or one. for just as in his defense of the principal being of the Word in *ST* III, q.17 is accompanied by a subtle yet important caveat about the distinctive suppositional act of the assumed humanity, so in *De unione*, a.4 Thomas' compelling argument that in Christ "the subsisting suppositum is the person of the Son of God, which is made a substance simply through the divine nature" (*In Christo autem suppositum subsistens est persona Filii Dei, quae simpliciter substantificatur per naturam divinam*), is followed almost immediately by the equally subtle yet important caveat that even thou there is a unity of suppositum in the word, nonetheless there are subsisting modalities of being in the Word, one ascribed to the divine person, the other associated with the assumed humanity. While the language is slightly different, the two arguments come to the same conclusion—in the incarnate Word the selfsame suppositional act results in an irreducibly two-fold effectuation of subsistent modalities in the one person.

This account of the simultaneity of distinctive suppositional actions within the hypostatic union has yet to address the reciprocal dimensions of the Word's assumption of a human nature. So far we have focused on the mode of subsistence through which the Son is human, and the assumed nature that allows the Son to subsist in such a manner, so that while the person of the Word becomes a man in time, nonetheless the assumed natures never becomes a human person. But what is the actual mechanism within that hypostatic union that prevents a fully independent human supposit from arising out of such a union? As we saw in the previous chapter, for Jacques Maritain the function of subsistence is to allow an essence to exercise an ontologically independent existence, which leads him to the conclusion that in the hypostatic union Christ subsists in a human

manner in such a way that his human nature never attains personal existence apart from the assuming Word. Maritain's insight is not completely unique within Thomism. In fact Cajetan, the originator of the ecstasy of being theory of the incarnation, had initially developed this concept, speculating that subsistence precedes and prepares the way for essence to be ushered into existence, a perfection which *esse* cannot bring about of itself but is only completed in the very actualization of being.⁴¹² Moreover, subsistence makes the *esse* to be received in a certain modality, in this case a human modality, for—as Thomas himself had often remarked—whatever is received into something is received according to the mode of the receiver.⁴¹³

This human mode of subsistence is of course predicated on Christ's human nature, a nature that is a perfect example of its type, except for the fact that it does not subsist in a full-fledged human person the way that all other actualized human natures do. Maritain later appropriated and expanded upon this notion of Cajetan's, arguing that essence receives its final ontological completion or terminus only when it is completed in the order of existence within a particular being. But for Cajetan, as well as Maritain, and Lonergan, and others, the question remains as to what precisely this terminus can rightly be, since it is neither a constitutive part of the essence, nor the actualization of being itself, but only a non-essential tendency in an essence, "by whose means the essence, individuated in its own life, appropriates to itself alone the existence it receives."⁴¹⁴ Even more puzzling is the difficulty of explaining how this terminus of subsistence in Christ's assumed humanity does not terminate in a fully-fledged human person. Cajetan merely

⁴¹² Cf. Cajetan, *In III*, q.4, a. 2. See also Marcel Niesen, *Organum Deitatis: Die Christologie des Thomas de Vio Cajetan*, Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought 62 (Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1997), pp. 58-69,

⁴¹³ Cf. *ST I* q. 75, a. 5: Quidquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur.

⁴¹⁴ Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, p. 433.

says that, barring any impediment in the natural course of events, a human nature is invariably terminated as a self-subsistent *supposit*—i.e., a person.⁴¹⁵ At best, one can only surmise that the absence of a fully subsistent human personality in Christ is due solely to the impediment of being assumed by the Word, which somehow prevents the humanity from achieving its natural ontological finality. Indeed, this view seems to be strongly endorsed by Cajetan: “remove the impediment, and there is no reason to search for another cause ... for the very nature in itself has of itself what is sufficient for its terminus to follow.”⁴¹⁶ For Cajetan’s followers down through the centuries, this impediment could only be explicated by means of the ecstasy of being theory, but its attendant weakness as a theory, particular in this regard, have already been enumerated. The most readily apparent of these danger is that of pantheism, since the *esse* by which any entity exists is part of that actually existent thing, so if the created existence of Christ’s humanity exists only by recourse to the divine *esse*, then the Word’s act of existence becomes a constituent part of the humanity by actuating its potential to be, and in the process uniting with the assumed humanity in such a way as to form a compound substance.

The contemporary theologian Jean-Hervé Nicholas has offered an elegant solution to this metaphysical impasse, while retaining his loyalty to a broadly Cajetanian understanding of the incarnation. According to Nicholas, subsistence distinguishes between primary substances—which as subjects have ontological independence, and thus subsist *per/in se*—and secondary substances, such as accidents, which have no individual subsistence, but merely subsist *in alio* in other, truly independent metaphysical entities.

⁴¹⁵ Cajetan, *In III*, q.4, a. 2. n.28.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid: “Sublato impedimento non oportet quærere aliam causam donantem complementum: quoniam ipsa natura secundum se habet in se sufficiens consecutivam sui termini.” Cf, Othmar Schweizer, *Person und hypostatische Union bei Thomas von Aquin* (Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag, 1957), pp. 30-31.

In the manner of Cajetan and Maritain before him, Nicholas posits that subsistence is a termination in the line of being; i.e., that which makes an essence pass from the province of the purely conceptual into the realm of actual existents.⁴¹⁷ But what is it about subsistence that allows a primary substance to achieve this individuating mode of being through and of itself? Nicholas' distinctive answer is that the key must reside in the relational modality of that subsistence. In other words, its mode of subsistence is to be related to *esse* as something for and in itself, as opposed to those things (such as accidents) that receive their act of existence for and in another. With this basic relational insight in place, Nicholas goes on to speculate that the failure of Christ's assumed humanity to terminate as an independently existing substance can be explained in terms of its assumptive relation to the assuming Word.

To be more precise, in Nicholas' estimation, it is exclusively the fact that in the assumptive act the humanity of Christ is drawn into and wholly ordered to the Word which alone can account for its lack substantive termination as a distinct human person. Moreover, the basis of this assumptive ordering of the human nature to the assuming Word can be located within the assumed humanity of the Word itself. The non-substantive termination of the assumed nature is thus formally constituted by the humanity's relation of belonging, while the very foundation for that relation in the assumed humanity accounts for the actuality of belonging.⁴¹⁸ Even though Nicholas'

⁴¹⁷ Jean-Hervé Nicholas, *Synthèse dogmatique. Tome 1: de la Trinité à la Trinité* (Fribourg, Suisse: Éditions Universitaires/Paris: Éditions Beauchesne, 1985), p. 311: "Or, l''être," par rapport au 'sujet qui est,' à l'étant (*ens*), est l'acte par rapport à la puissance. La puissance demeure distincte de l'acte, même quand elle est actualisée: c'est-à-dire que le sujet, la 'substance première,' l'étant, demeure distinct de l'être, tout en étant *réel*, appartenant à l'univers extramental. Eh bien! La subsistence est ce caractère de réalité par quoi la substance première se distingue de la substance seconde (aussi déterminée qu'on voudra) qui se réalise en elle. Le 'principe de subsistence' que nous cherchons est ce qui confère à la substance ce caractère de réalité par quoi elle est le sujet de l'être, ce qui est, la substance première."

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, 312-314.

explication is strikingly simple yet evocative, it is not altogether unique. The importance of the assumptive act for the fate of the assumed humanity's individual being was always seen as dependent upon its assumption by the word—it is in some sense what Dom Diepen emphasized when he pointed out that the Word's assumed humanity is both integrated and subordinated to the assuming Divine Person.⁴¹⁹ Nonetheless, it does have the positive feature of explicating the assumed nature's depersonalization strictly in terms of the act of assumption. However, as critics such as Stephen Hipp point out, in merely stating that that the basis of the human nature's belonging to the Word is that humanity insofar as it belongs to Word, Nicolas has not yet provided a “satisfying explanation of a positive principle by which the Word or the assumptive act provides for the subsistence (*in alio*) of the human nature.”⁴²⁰ The difficulty of providing such an explanation, as Hipp shrewdly points, resides in the fact that the assuming Word cannot provide anything to the assumed humanity in the order of efficient causality, otherwise it would be seen as part of a composite with the human nature. Hence, the Son can only act as the extrinsic formal term of a relation which finds its foundation in the assumed humanity as radically appropriated and ordered to the assuming Word. That is to say, the assumptive act itself conditions the mode in which the assumed natures comes to be; or, reciprocally, the very modality of the assumed humanity's *esse* is determined by the union resulting from the assumptive act.⁴²¹ Hence, Hipp concludes, what ultimately has to be explicated at once is

⁴¹⁹ Diepen, *La Théologie de l'Emmanuel*: “Il s’agit d’une unité réalisée par participation et exemplarité, par subordination et intégration,” p. 155.

⁴²⁰ Hipp, *Doctrine of Personal Subsistence*, p. 178.

⁴²¹ Nicholas, *Synthèse dogmatique*, p. 316.

both the relationship between the humanity's assumptive ordering to the Word, and the assumed human nature's relation to its act of existence.⁴²²

Hipp brings us one step closer to such an explication when he attempts to develop the notion of how the modality of the secondary *esse* of Christ's assumed humanity may be determined in some fundamental way by its assumptive ordering to the assuming Word. As we have seen, every Thomist concurs that the divine act of existence of the Word is the personal, primary *esse* of the Son, and since there is no real distinction between essence and existence in God, the Word's divine essence is identical to his *esse*—a divine essence/existence that he shares equally with all the persons of the Trinity. All the activities of the Triune Godhead are equally ascribed to this shared divine essence *in se*, and extends as well to all of God's divine activities *pro nobis*, including the incarnation/assumption of a human nature by the Word, which is a shared work of the Godhead. Yet, as Hipp readily points out, the assumed humanity does not terminate in the Godhead as a whole, but only in the second Person of the Trinity, the Son. So, even though the personal property of the Word solely as the second person of the Trinity cannot account for the assumptive act through which the assumed humanity comes to be, since this is the common work of all three Divine Persons, nonetheless in Hipp's estimation it must "account for the modality of the being thus conferred, since the human nature is actuated only *in* and as *belonging to* the Word."⁴²³ So, while the act of assumption itself is attributed to the Godhead in general, the termination of that act in the Word, and in no other Divine Person, indicates that it occurs with a relational ordering principle that is specific to the distinctive, irreducibly personal properties of the Word. In

⁴²² Hipp, *Doctrine*, p. 179.

⁴²³ *Ibid*, p. 180.

other words, the distinguishing personality of the Son not only specifies the conditions in which the humanity is brought into being, but also specifies the modality under which that assumed nature will exercise its created act of existence by conditioning the humanity's existential relation to the assuming Divine Person. Concisely stated, the very mode of subsistence that individuates and brings into being the humanity of Christ would "be owing to the distinctive personality of the Word and inconceivable apart from it."⁴²⁴

This more profound reformulation of Nicholas' Cajetanian interpretation of Thomas' incarnational doctrine holds a wealth of potential new insights into our understanding of the function of the hypostatic union, especially relating to the question of the Christ's secondary act of existence. However, what Hipp fails to identify in this provocative proposal is what could be the specifying personal property or individuating characteristic of the assumptive Son, which would condition the very being of the assumed humanity in the manner we that we see in the incarnate Word. The underlying thematic structure of this dissertation, which has traced an intrinsic link, from earliest Christianity, between the very being of the Son as he is himself (*Christus in se*) and Christ's salvific mission for us (*Christus pro nobis*), along with the attendant convictions that the manner in which the enfleshed Word assumed a human nature reveals something profound about God as Godself, I believe has laid much of the conceptual groundwork to provide the crucial missing element in Hipp's formulation. As we have seen, from the Western tradition, from Augustine to Lombard, Aquinas is working within the larger soteriological framework which understand the kenotic narrative in Philippians 2:6-7—which proclaims how Christ, being found in the form of God, emptied himself (*ipsum exinanivit*), assumed a servant-form, and was made in the likeness of men—establishes a

⁴²⁴ Ibid, p. 182.

hermeneutical lens through which one can understand how the Word is one subject who may be spoken of as he is eternally and as he is having assumed human flesh, but also serves as a summary of the entire incarnational mission within the economy of salvation. In other words, everything that the Word did in his humanity he did for us (*pro nobis*) and everything that the incarnate Word is he is for us. The person of Christ is not just God acting for our salvation, it is God acting as a man for us.

Adding this Christological hermeneutic to Hipp's insight, we now have a way to account for the being of the Word *in se* alongside the Word's saving mission *pro nobis*, an account that not only establishes the precise ontic mode in which the Word's humanity subsists, but also locates that modality within the assumptive relationality of the Word's divine personal characteristics to the assumed humanity. Building upon the previously explicated work of John Tomarchio, we had already intimated that the *terminus* of subsistence could perhaps best be seen as the reception and delimitation of an essence within a determinative way of being in the world, a specific *esse*—in other words, the completion of a nature/essence by an act of existence proper to it. In the Hypostatic Union, this terminus finds its completion of the assumed human nature in its existence *in alio*, a secondary act of created existence that, as Diepen had already articulated, is ordered towards and subservient to the primary divine *esse* of the Word, which exists in and for itself (*in/per se*). But with Stephen Hipp we have also pointed out the insufficiency of the argument which fails to see that the subsistent terminus is expressive, not only of the intrinsic relation between an individual essence and its correlatively and constitutively proper act of existing, but that in the unique case of the incarnation the

assumed humanity's subsistence *in alio* is itself conditioned by the assumptive act which brings it into hypostatic union with the Word.

This means that the very modality of the Word's being in the world in a human manner mirrors a basic personal property of the assuming divine Person, which, as has been amply argued at length over the course of this entire study, is nothing other than the Son's uniquely kenotic character. As Aquinas forcefully articulates, when arguing for the equality of divinity in the shared essence of the Father and Son by recourse to Philippians 2:6 ("He thought it not robbery to be equal with God"), yet maintaining the relative distinction of the Son from the Father precisely in the Son's personal humility, the filial piety whereby he subjects himself obediently to the Father's paternal authority.⁴²⁵ The direct result of this inner-Trinitarian relation of Fatherhood to Sonship in God *ad intra* is the Word's incarnational mission *ad extra*, wherein in his assumed humanity he can truly state "the Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). But, as Thomas further clarifies, while these words are to be understood of Christ's human nature, wherein Jesus is less than the Father, and subject to Him; but in His divine nature He is equal to the Father.⁴²⁶ Nonetheless, the Son's visible mission in the World is a direct reflection of the Son's obediential relation to the Father from whom he receives everything that he possesses. The relation of the Son's personal kenoticism, and his kenotic assumption of a human nature, are thus intrinsically united—as united as the two natures in the hypostatic union—and hence cannot be fully appreciated apart from each other. As we have already glimpsed in previous chapters, the best means of understanding this kenotical reciprocity is to be found in the incarnate Word's theandric existence, at once both truly human and

⁴²⁵ *ST I*, q.42, a.4, ad 1: Subiectio filii naturae pietas est, idest recognitio auctoritatis paternae

⁴²⁶ *Ibid*, Ad primum ergo dicendum quod verba illa intelliguntur dicta de Christo secundum humanam naturam, in qua minor est patre, et ei subiectus.

fully divine, and in the divine-human instrumentality of the God-man's operations. The remainder of this chapter will explore these related issues in some depth.

3. Dyoennergism and Dyotheletism: Reading *De Unione* A.5 Along With *ST III*, QQ.18-19

Consequent upon the Hypostatic Union of natures in the divine person of the Word, Thomas elucidates a distinction in unity of both operations and wills in the enfleshed Son. After the formulation of Chalcedonian Christology, certain theologians argued that there must be a singular activity and a unique manner of volition in Christ, the heresies of Monenergism and Montheletism. In both the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa* and in the final article of *De unione*, Thomas concludes his theoretical exposition of the person of Christ with a defense of two operations and wills of Christ, Dyoennergism and Dyotheletism. Significantly, near the beginning of a.5, as well as in *ST III*, q.19, a.1 of the *Summa*, Aquinas quotes from the Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople III), focusing on the grave misinterpretation of the precise character of the Hypostatic Union by heretics such as Severus, who recognized that Christ both performed human and divine activities, yet nonetheless concluded that despite this diversity of actions they must be the selfsame operation of the one incarnate Son.⁴²⁷ If Aquinas' defense of the one-esse

⁴²⁷ Unde in sexta synodo inducuntur verba Severi haeretici sic dicentis, ea quae agebantur et operabantur ab uno Christo, multum differunt. Quaedam enim sunt Deo decibilia, quaedam humana. Veluti, corporaliter vadere super terram profecto humanum est, cruribus vero vexatis, et ambulare super terram penitus non valentibus, sanum gressum donare Deo decibile est. Sed unum, scilicet incarnatum verbum,

in Christ in the Word were as single-minded as some have argued, then perhaps Thomas would be have attracted by arguments for an analogous singularity of activity and volition in Christ. In fact, this is the very sort of argument that Thomas presents in objection six, when he posits that since the enfleshed Word does not have a separate hypostasis, then it would make sense that Christ would have a distinct human operation to an even lesser extent.⁴²⁸

Aquinas' initiates his responses by referring to the authoritative texts of Constantinople III and their recapitulation in John of Damascus. As Constantinople III declares: "Two natural operations, without division, change, separation, confusion, we honor in the same our Lord and true God Jesus Christ, that is, a divine operation and a human operation."⁴²⁹ Along with the corresponding questions from *ST* III, this is the first utilization of the texts from the Sixth Ecumenical Council in Aquinas. Indeed, as already mentioned, Thomas was the first Latin theologian to employ the findings of Constantinople III in more than half a millennium. Using these texts, along with Damascene's elaborations of the Council's findings in *De fide*, Thomas will finally bring the whole of Patristic Conciliar Christology to bear upon the crucial questions of kenosis, theandry, and instrumentality in a. 5 of the *De unione*.

As even Aquinas is the first to concede, Christ's human activity, insofar as it is moved instrumentality by the divinity would not seem to be proceeding for the assumed human nature as a principle of operation. However, as we have already explored in earlier

hoc et illud operatum est et nequaquam hoc quidem huius, hoc vero huius est naturae. Neque, eo quod diversa sunt operamenta, ideo duas operatrices naturas atque formas iuste definiemus.

⁴²⁸ *De unione Verbi*, a. 5 ad 6: Ad sextum dicendum quod suppositum est quod est ab aliis distinctum; et ideo si natura humana haberet per se suppositum, repugnaret unioni personali. Operatio autem non importat rationem alicuius distinctionis; et ideo ratio non sequitur.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.* sc: Est quod in sententia sextae synodi dicitur: duas naturales operationes indivise, inconvertibiliter, inconfuse et inseparabiliter in eodem domino Iesu Christo vero Deo nostro glorificamus, hoc est divinam et humanam operationem.

chapters, instrumental causality respects the natural integrity of the utilized nature as a secondary causal agent. Indeed, Aquinas will elucidate how to distinguish the respective contributions of each causal agent within instrumental operations. Offering an analogy from the human operations of seeing and hearing, Aquinas argues these sensations with be separate when operated by two different humans, but that these two distinct operations can be distinguished even in one person, wince seeing in hearing and hearing is not seeing. Even in that one person, a multitude of distinct capacities may be utilized to bring about one unified action. This is particularly true when we talk about the human will, which is the controlling or superior motivation power for all operations involving the human senses. Hence, although in one human agent there may appear to be a multitude of distinct activities due to the diverse sensorial capacities involved, in point of act they all proceed from the one principal volitional action that controls and directs them towards singularly united operation.⁴³⁰

So human operations derive their unity from the will as an intrinsic principle of activity proceeding from the human nature, and thus the movement of the senses is something that is more acted upon than an action, since it is subject to the movement of the primary volitional power. Building upon this premise, Aquinas will now argue that in Christ, the human volitional power which has control over its acts, namely the will, is moved by a superior divine power in such a way that it is not only acted upon, but also

⁴³⁰ Ibid. Considerandum tamen quod, si virtus quae est actionis principium, ab alia superiori virtute moveatur, operatio ab ipsa procedens non solum est actio, sed etiam passio; in quantum scilicet procedit a virtute quae a superiori movetur. In homine autem omnes virtutes sensitivae partis moventur quodammodo a voluntate sicut a quodam primo principio. Et ideo et audire et videre et imaginari et concupiscere et irasci non tantum sunt actiones, sed etiam quaedam passiones procedentes a motione voluntatis; in quantum scilicet homo ex propria voluntate ad praedicta progreditur. Et ideo, licet in uno homine secundum diversas potentias et habitus videantur esse plures actiones specie differentes; tamen, quia omnes procedunt ab una prima actione voluntatis, dicitur esse una actio unius hominis. Sicut si unus artifex per multa instrumenta operaretur, una eius operatio diceretur.

acts. And since Christ has a human will as part of his assumed human nature, then this human will necessarily had control over its human as well.⁴³¹ In this manner, Thomas safeguards the causal integrity of the secondary agent in an instrumental operation. As Aquinas finally argues, if operations derive an absolute unity from the activity of another agent, even one superior in power, then it would follow that all things would be one action, since there is one first principle that ultimately moves all things, namely God. As a consequence, Thomas concludes that Christ must have two distinct operations on account of his two distinct natures, and the fact that Christ's instrumental human operation is moved by God as the principal agent does not compromise its integrity as a human operation.⁴³² For Aquinas, this all-important conclusion grounds the very possibility of Christ meriting our salvation through his theandric operations, since if Christ had been merely moved by God and had not also been freely knowing and loving through his human intellect and will, then he would not have been able to merit according to his human nature. The volitional operation proper to the assumed human nature makes Christ's humanity a unique soteriological instrument of the divinity.

⁴³¹ Ibid. Secundum ergo hunc modum aliqui posuerunt quod in Christo est una tantum operatio, eo quod humana natura in eo divinae operationi subiicitur, et ab eo movetur. Et sic actio humanae naturae in comparatione ad divinam magis habet rationem passionis. Unde propter virtutem divinae actionis dicebant in Christo esse unam tantum actionem. Sed hoc irrationabiliter dicebatur, duplici ratione. Primo quidem, quia quaecumque virtus non habet dominium sui actus, sic a superiori movetur, quod ipsa non agit, sed potius agitur. Unde et philosophus dicit, IV Ethic., quod sensus non est alicuius actionis principium. Sed virtus quae habet dominium sui actus, scilicet voluntas, sic movetur a superiori, scilicet a Deo, quod non solum agitur, sed etiam agit. Et quia in Christo secundum humanam naturam est creata potentia voluntatis sicut et intellectus creatus, cum nihil ei desit eorum quae pertinent ad perfectionem naturae humanae, consequens est quod motus voluntatis humanae in Christo, actio sit et non solum passio.

⁴³² Ibid. Secundo, quia operatio alicuius speciem et unitatem habet a primo principio pertinente ad eandem naturam. Sicut voluntas, a qua habent unitatem omnes actiones humanae, est quoddam principium intrinsecum humanae naturae. Non autem aliquae actiones habent unitatem ex hoc quod reducuntur in aliquod primum principium alterius naturae; alioquin sequeretur quod omnium rerum esset actio una, quia est unum primum principium movens omnia, scilicet Deus. Sic igitur, etsi humana natura in Christo moveatur a divina, quia tamen sunt duae naturae distinctae, necesse est etiam quod sint duae actiones. Quia igitur ex hoc quod aliquis ponit unam actionem in Christo, sequitur quod sit ibi una sola natura et una sola voluntas. Ideo haec positio est tamquam haeretica in sexta synodo condemnata.

In his analysis of *De unione*, a.5, Klaus Obenauer conjectures that here Thomas' understanding of instrumental causality is influenced to such an extent by the line of argumentation explored in a. 4, that Thomas' understanding of instrumental causality can retrospectively be seen as applied beyond natures and operations to the topic of *esse*. So, even though Aquinas' examination of instrumentality entails that there cannot be only one operation in Christ identified solely with the divine activity, nonetheless, the instrumentality nature of theandric or divine-human operations in Christ as proceeding from the primary agency of the divine finds an analogy in the relationship of the secondary kenotic subsistence of the assumed humanity to the principal divine act of existence. In both instances, we can say that in an entity in accord with a higher principle, the greater power transfers its actualization of movement to the lower principle that moved or actualized by it, so that the movement of the lower principles cannot be adduced to be the primary source of self-actuation. On this reading, the relationship of the single divine *esse* to the *esse secundarium* is analogous to the intricate interrelation of the divine will/operation to the conjoined instrument that is the assumed humanity. Obenauer concludes that one can find at least some circumstantial support for this hypothesis that in some texts, instead of the regular causal binary connections of "primary" with "secondary" or of "principal" with "instrumental"—he sometimes will pair "principal" with "secondary," thereby at least putting "instrumental" in the conceptual vicinity of "secondary," and even (on occasion) identifying "secondary" with "instrumental," as, for example, in *ST* II-II, q. 17, a. 4,⁴³³ where Aquinas seems to posit that a principal efficient cause can be considered as a first agent, while the secondary efficient cause is equated

⁴³³ In genere autem utriusque causae invenitur principale et secundarium. Principalis enim finis est finis ultimus; secundarius autem finis est bonum quod est ad finem. Similiter principalis causa agens est primum agens; secundaria vero causa efficiens est agens secundarium instrumentale.

with a secondary and instrumental agent.⁴³⁴ While these are only tantalizing hints, it does perhaps appear to indicate that there is a theoretical connection in Thomas's mind between the kenotic modality of Christ's human subsistence as an instrumental cause and the soteriological efficacy of his volitional theandric operations.

4. Kenosis and Exemplarism: The Soteriological Consequences of Christ's Self-Emptying

Questions 26 of the *Summa*, particularly the final article on Christ as mediator *pro nobis*, or *secundum quod homo*, brings together many of Thomas' previously articulated thoughts of the relation between the kenotic mode of the enfleshed Word and the saving mission of the incarnate Christ, and prepares the reader for an informed perusal of qq.27-59, which focus on what Christ did and underwent in the flesh (*acta et passa Christ in carne*). On the whole, question 26 may perhaps best be considered as an extended commentary on *I Timothy* 2:5: "There is one mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ," and Aquinas will encapsulate his answer in the singular observation that "it pertains to the office of mediator to conjoin and to unite those between whom the mediator stands, for extremes are united in the middle."⁴³⁵ Thus, this soteriological mission is perfectly fitting to Christ, precisely because humanity is united to God

⁴³⁴ "Eine Untermauerung kann die Hypothese, es liege hier eine (uneigentliche) Proportionalität zum Verhältnis eines prinzipal gegenüber einem instrumental Verursachen bzw. Agierenden vor, durch Loci erhalten, in denen Thomas—statt der regulären Verknüpfung von "primär" mit "sekundär" ("causa prima et secunda") bzw. von "prinzipal" mit "instrumental"—"prinzipal" mit "sekundär" verbinder, um dadurch "sekundär" wenigstens in die Nähe von "instrumental" zu rücken bzw. "sekundär" mit "instrumental" zu identifizieren, so z.B. in ST II-II, q. 17, a. 4." Obenauer, *Über die Union*, p. 386. As further evidence Obenauer cites ST I, q. 45, a. 5, in which the specified term-pairs are more or less equated. See also SCG II, 89, n.1749 and SCG III, 148, n.3212.

⁴³⁵ ST III, q.26, a.1, c.: Respondeo dicendum quod mediatoris officium proprie est coniungere eos inter quos est mediator, nam extrema uniuntur in medio.

perfectly through the reconciling mode of existence and subsequent operation of the God-man Jesus Christ. The culmination of this entire section asks the crucial question whether Christ was the mediator of God and humanity *secundum quod homo*, and we cannot understand the answer the Thomas provides unless we appreciate the nuanced meanings of the phrase *secundum quod homo*. As Aquinas argues here and in earlier texts the term can designate either materially for the *supposit* or formally for the nature.⁴³⁶ Taken in a material sense, *secundum quod homo* indicates the supposit as one having human nature distinctly, and it is this sense that will be of crucial importance for an accurate understanding of the role of Christ's assumed humanity in the economy of salvation.

The three opening objections of a.2 argue that Christ was not mediator only *secundum quod homo*, but rather as both God and man; the second objection posits that inasmuch as Christ is a man, then he is not a middle point between God and human beings but himself a human being, hence Christ as man is not a medium between God and humanity; while the third and final objection contends that Christ was mediator inasmuch as he is God, since only God can reconcile us to himself by remitting our sins.⁴³⁷ In the *sed contra* Aquinas quotes from Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, IX.15 to the effect that Christ is our mediator *secundum quod homo*. As Thomas goes on to explain in

⁴³⁶ See in *III*, D.10, q.1, aa.1 and 2 and D.19, a.5, qua.2.

⁴³⁷ *ST III*, q.26, a.1, ob, 1-3: Ad secundum sic proceditur. Videtur quod Christus non sit mediator Dei et hominum secundum quod homo. Dicit enim Augustinus, in libro contra Felicianum, una est Christi persona, ne sit non unus Christus, non una substantia; ne, mediatoris dispensatione submota, aut Dei tantum aut hominis dicatur filius. Sed non est Dei et hominis filius secundum quod homo, sed simul secundum quod Deus et homo. Ergo neque dicendum est quod sit mediator Dei et hominum solum secundum quod homo. Praeterea, sicut Christus, in quantum est Deus, convenit cum patre et spiritu sancto, ita, in quantum est homo, convenit cum hominibus. Sed propter hoc quod, in quantum est Deus, convenit cum patre et spiritu sancto, non potest dici mediator in quantum est Deus, quia super illud I Tim. II, mediator Dei et hominum, dicit Glossa, in quantum est verbum, non medius est, quia aequalis est Deo, et Deus apud Deum, et simul unus Deus. Ergo nec etiam in quantum homo, potest dici mediator, propter convenientiam quam cum hominibus habet. Praeterea, Christus dicitur mediator in quantum reconciliavit nos Deo, quod quidem fecit auferendo peccatum, quod nos separabat a Deo. Sed auferre peccatum convenit Christo non in quantum est homo, sed in quantum est Deus. Ergo Christus, in quantum est homo, non est mediator, sed in quantum est Deus.

the corpus, a true mediator must be a medium between extremes and fulfill the action of conjoining, and this is true for Christ only *secundum quod homo*, since in his kenotic modality as man, a natural distance separates Christ as human from God, just as his divine dignity, grace, and glory distance him from other human beings. Thomas replies that if the divine nature is taken away from Christ, then he loses all the fullness of grace that makes him a medium between God and human beings. Removal of the divine nature alters Christ *secundum quod homo*, for even the removal of the divine nature does not alter Christ's human nature considered in the abstract. This removal drastically alters Christ *secundum quod homo*, for this refers to Christ's human nature in the concrete, as an individual subsists in it. The individual in question is the person of the Word, so removal of the divine nature removes the very constitution of this concrete human individual.

In order to fully comprehend Thomas' response to the third objection we must briefly recall once again his teaching concerning efficient instrumental causality, how he found in it John of Damascus's description of Christ's human nature as an instrument of his divinity (*instrumentum Divinitatis*, *οργανον της θεοτητος*), and how Aquinas already deployed it in the very early *Scriptum* commentary, although at that point he described the instrumental causality of the assumed human nature as only meritorious and dispositive (e.g. *in III, D.18, a.6, qua.1*). After a series of developments, perhaps most notably witnessed in the *De Veritate*, by the time we arrive at the *Tertia Pars* of the *Summa*, as we have explored at some length, Thomas depicts Christ's humanity as an instrument working in conjunction with the power of the principal divine cause. So, when Aquinas refers to Christ *secundum quod homo* as the one who establishes satisfaction for

human sin and acts as cause of salvation, we must understand that the phrase designates at one both the principal cause of salvation in the person of the Word and the efficient instrumental cause in Christ's human nature. The person of the Word is the actor in all of Christ's actions. Each of Christ's human actions was the human action of the divine person of the Word and so expressed a *theandric* activity. Christ's human actions participated in the divine power and so acted with a divine efficacy, and his passion causes our salvation not simply as a medium or conduit for the divine power but as its instrument.

As we have already explicated at some length in previous sections, the Word did not assume a generic human nature, but rather *this* humanity, a unique, individual principle of activity which was expressed through the truly human life of *this* man, Jesus Christ. And as we have also seen, that which at once both actualized the purely potential humanity of Christ, and individuated it was subsistence, conceived as that which not only terminates an essence/nature in *this* particular modality of *esse*, but which allows it to exercise that act of existence. An act the reciprocally mirrors the proper Kenoticism of the Son of the Father through its deferral of full personal existence through and in itself. Hence, the created instrument which the Son utilizes is simultaneously the assumed humanity through which the Son subsist as *this* man, Christ Jesus, and through which the Word mediates God's salvific activity *pro nobis*. Thus, in defending the full integrity of the human will and human operation of this human nature, Aquinas is also affirming the full integrity and reality of that conjoined human instrument's act of existence or kenotic mode of being in the world. With the issue thus framed, we can return to q.26, a.2, *ad* 3. Aquinas argues there that "although to bear away sin as author of the action befits Christ

secundum quod est Deus, nevertheless to make satisfaction for the sin of the human race befits him *secundum quod est homo*.⁴³⁸ Here, the phrase *secundum quod homo* indicates both Christ's human nature and the person of the Word, indeed it refers to them not merely as distinct principles of operation, but in their theandric interrelationship. The task of making satisfaction falls to Christ's humanity, which out of obedience freely wills the passion as a sacrifice satisfying the debt of sin. This free human act can satisfy the debt of sin because it participates in the divine power. Christ's freely willed human act takes its efficacy from the divine operation, and since Christ's human will operates in communion with his divine operation (*ST III*, q.19, a.1), that human will wields the divine power precisely as human, and this soteriological result could not be brought about without the Words' kenotic modality as evinced in its human activity.

The theandric intertwining of divinity and assumed kenotic humanity also plays a pivotal role in the way that Christ undertakes his saving role as an exemplar. Already, in a sermon for the First Sunday after Epiphany, probably preached in January of 1271 during his second stay in Paris, Thomas claims that "everything that the Lord did or suffered in the flesh is an instruction and an example for our salvation." This brief assertion brings together two central aspects of Aquinas' mature Christology: that "every action of Christ is for our instruction," such that there is no aspect of Jesus's life that is not exemplary, whether in a moral, spiritual, or doctrinal manner. And secondly, that "all Christ's actions and sufferings operate instrumentally in virtue of His Godhead for the salvation of men" in order to show the salvific efficacy of every moment of Christ's human life, since his humanity is united to and operates as the instrument of his divinity.

⁴³⁸ Ad tertium dicendum quod, licet auctoritative peccatum auferre conveniat Christo secundum quod est Deus, tamen satisfacere pro peccato humani generis convenit ei secundum quod homo. Et secundum hoc dicitur Dei et hominum mediator.

This combination of the concepts of exemplarity and instrumentality brings to surface a theme which is consistently present—but only periodically made explicit—in Thomas’ Christology, that Christ’s exemplarity is not merely an external influence upon human beings but rather that it possesses a genuinely causal dimension.

Scholars such as Jean-Pierre Torrell have noted this connection and adumbrated how exemplarity and the salvific efficacy of Christ’s human activity are intricately related in Thomas’ work. In articulating the way in which Christ’s exemplarity is efficacious, Torrell posits a distinction between moral exemplarity and ontological exemplarity. The former, he asserts, “places the focus both on Christ as the living Incarnation of the evangelical virtues and on the human effort to collaborate with God through the grace received from him.”⁴³⁹ The latter, in contrast, “explains how the imitation of Christ is made possible only by the grace that he gives us, a grace that has already conformed us to him” and in this way “the accent lies not so much on human effort as on the work of God in the human being.”⁴⁴⁰ Torrell’s exposition of Christ’s exemplarity is quite valuable, for it highlights the ontological depth that attends Christ’s moral example on account of the hypostatic union and places a particular emphasis on the necessity of not only imitation of Christ but also conformity to Christ. Nevertheless, Torrell’s schema contains two flaws which do not so much render it invalid as much as call for its clarification and expansion. First, and perhaps less importantly, Torrell’s account of moral exemplarity seems tacitly to reduce the incarnate Christ’s activity to actions for human beings to imitate and thereby divorces Christ’s moral example from

⁴³⁹ Jean-Pierre Torrell, “Christ in the ‘Spirituality’ of St. Thomas” in *Christ and Spirituality in St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. B. Blankenhorn (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), pp. 74-109, at p. 87.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

the causality that his actions possess by virtue of his humanity being the instrument of his divinity. I would submit instead that Christ's moral exemplarity ought to be considered as a species of his ontological exemplarity. Second, Torrell confines ontological exemplarity to the domain of efficient causality. He focuses primarily on the way that Christ is the exemplar in the production of creatures and in their regeneration by bringing these about as efficient cause. This reduction of exemplarity to efficient causality, however, fails to convey the richness and diversity that characterizes Aquinas' broader account of exemplar causality.

As an amendment to Torrell's account of Christ's exemplarity, I propose a way of reading Aquinas's treatment of the mysteries of Christ's life that highlights the way in which Christ, through the instrumentality of his kenotic humanity, serves as the exemplar of humanity in a way that entails efficient, formal, and final causality. One of the key texts for understanding Aquinas's account of the exemplarity of Christ is found in his commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:1-3, where he writes:

[T]he primordial principle of the production of things is the Son of God, as it says in John (1:3): "All things were made through him." He is, therefore, the primordial exemplar, which all creatures imitate as the true and perfect image of God. Hence it says in Col (1:15); "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, for in him all things were created." But in a special way He is the exemplar of spiritual graces, with which spiritual creatures are endowed, as is said to the Son in Ps 110 (v. 3): "In the splendors of the saints before the morning star I begot you," namely, because He was begotten before every creature through resplendent grace, having in Himself as exemplar the splendors of all the saints. But this exemplar of God has been very remote from us at first, as it says in Ec (2:12); "What is man that he could follow the king, his Maker?" And therefore He willed to become man, that He might offer humans a human exemplar.⁴⁴¹

This text encapsulates Aquinas's understanding of the exemplarity of the pre-existent Word and gestures toward the further manifestation of this exemplarity in the

⁴⁴¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Super I Corinthios*, ch.. 11, lect. 1, no. 583; trans. F. Larcher, O.P.

incarnation. Because “in the Word is implied the operative idea of what God makes,” Aquinas perceives an affinity between the Second Person of the Trinity and creation since the Word is the idea through which God knows and makes all that is.⁴⁴² Furthermore, Aquinas notes that the Word bears a unique likeness to human beings “since the Word is a concept of the eternal Wisdom, from whom all man's wisdom is derived.”⁴⁴³ Nevertheless, while the pre-existent Word is the pattern according to which rational creatures are made, human beings nonetheless have scant knowledge of their exemplar. Citing Augustine, Aquinas proposes that the incarnation is a remedy to this dilemma, because “Man who might be seen was not to be followed; but God was to be followed, who could not be seen. And therefore God was made man, that He Who might be seen by man, and whom man might follow, might be shown to man.”⁴⁴⁴ For this reason, one of Aquinas’s arguments for the fittingness of the incarnation concerns “right action, in which He set us an example.”⁴⁴⁵ As this argument shows, Aquinas’s understanding of Christ’s exemplarity is intimately related to his understanding of the incarnation and of Christ’s humanity because it is through these that Christ’s exemplarity is made manifest most clearly to human beings. Therefore, it is necessary to examine Aquinas’s discussion of the union of divinity and humanity in Christ in order to discern how the incarnate Christ reveals his exemplarity in his assumed humanity.

Aquinas’ account of the Hypostatic Union, his articulation of the doctrine of the instrumentality of the incarnate Christ’s humanity, and his insights into the kenotic mode that exemplifies the Word’s way of being in the world, all provide helpful resources for

⁴⁴² *ST I* q.34, a.3.

⁴⁴³ *ST III* q.3, a.8.

⁴⁴⁴ *ST III* q.1, a.2.

⁴⁴⁵ *ST III* q.1, a.2 : “ad rectam operationem, in qua nobis exemplum se prae-buit.”

understanding how the incarnation both intensifies and widens the scope of his exemplarity. The Hypostatic Union renders the example of the incarnate Christ sure and certain, for although “doubts may be raised about the teaching and the life of any other man because of a defect in his human knowledge and his mastery of truth.”⁴⁴⁶

Furthermore, because the humanity of Christ is hypostatically united to his divinity and operates instrumentally in virtue of that divinity, Aquinas affirms that “since the flesh is the instrument of His divinity, and since an instrument operates in virtue of the principal cause... everything done in Christ’s flesh was salutary for us by reason of the divinity united to that flesh.”⁴⁴⁷ For Thomas, it is precisely by virtue of the incarnation and the assumption of a human nature, i.e., his kenotic modality of being, that Christ may be said to be an efficacious exemplar for human beings.

Aquinas’ persistent claim that every action of the kenotic Christ is an instruction and example for human beings and that every action of the Son possesses some causal dimension ordered toward their salvation demands that any account of Christ’s exemplarity possess explanatory power for how it manifests itself concretely. To take but one example, Aquinas’s treatment of Jesus’s healing of the blind man in the *Super Iohannem* highlights the efficient dimension of the exemplarity of Christ in a unique way, illustrating it most clearly through the instrumentality of Christ’s humanity. Aquinas identifies five steps to Christ’s action.⁴⁴⁸ First, he spits on the ground to moisten the earth; second, he makes clay with the spittle; third, he smears the clay onto the blind man’s eyes; fourth, he commands the man to go and wash in the pool of Siloam; and

⁴⁴⁶ *Compendium Theologiae*, trans. C. Vollert, SJ (St Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1947), §217.

⁴⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, §239.

⁴⁴⁸ *Super Iohannem*, ch. 9, lect. 1, no. 1309.

finally, the man's sight is restored. Thomas observes that while Christ "could have performed all his miracles by his mere word," he instead "used his body to show in them that as an instrument of his divinity it held a definite healing power."⁴⁴⁹ Yet, Aquinas does not believe that it is merely a generic type of divine power that Christ's humanity manifests in this miracle but precisely the efficiency that belongs to him as the exemplar cause of rational creatures.

Aquinas explicitly links Christ's activity in this miracle to his role in creation, observing that "He made clay from his spittle to show that he who had formed the entire first man can reshape the deficient members of a man. Thus, just as he formed the first man from clay, so he made clay to re-form the eyes of the one born blind."⁴⁵⁰ Thomas understands this miracle to represent—both mystically and literally—the refashioning of the blind man and his more perfect conformity to the exemplar of humanity. Aquinas maintains that in this miracle, "by repairing the eye, which is more excellent than the other bodily members, [Christ] showed that he was the creator of the entire man."⁴⁵¹ The incarnate Christ's exemplarity as the one through whom all things were made is here rendered efficacious by remaking the body of the blind man, and this is so to such an extent that Thomas, citing Augustine, notes that "the man's appearance changed when he regained his sight."⁴⁵²

As in all of Jesus's miracles, Aquinas holds that the restoration of the blind man's sight was not merely a physical healing but also that "what was accomplished in him

⁴⁴⁹ *Super Iohannem*, ch. 9, lect. 1, no. 1310.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵² *Super Iohannem*, ch.9, lect. 2, no. 1314.

physically represents what is accomplished spiritually.”⁴⁵³ After his healing, when the Pharisees interrogate the man concerning who had restored his vision, he answers that “*the man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes.*”⁴⁵⁴ For Aquinas, this “answer was remarkable” because it points out that the blind man knew that Christ “was a man, and that he was true man.”⁴⁵⁵ While Thomas finds this answer impressive because the blind man could perceive that Jesus was human despite being unable to see him and despite his performance of such a miracle, it is noteworthy for our purposes to see Aquinas here describe Christ not only as a man but as *verus homo*, true man, the exemplar of humanity due to his kenotic assumption of a human nature, and his authentically human mode of subsisting. It is this exemplarity which enables Christ to conform the blind man more perfectly to himself, healing him both physically and spiritually. Aquinas further highlights the faith of the blind man engendered through this miracle when Thomas observes that the blind man comes to believe in the divinity of Christ both through the confession of his lips, “*Lord, I believe,*” and through his external actions, “*and he worshipped him.*”⁴⁵⁶ This belief comes about, Thomas suggests, precisely because “those whose consciences have been cleansed know Christ not only as the son of man...but as the Son of God who had taken flesh.”⁴⁵⁷ Christ’s restoration of the blind man’s vision not only healed him and so conformed him more closely to the exemplar of humanity physically, but it also cleansed his conscience, conforming him more closely to Christ such that the blind man could now come to believe in and follow

⁴⁵³ *Super Iohannem*, ch.9, lect. 2, no. 1319.

⁴⁵⁴ John 9:11.

⁴⁵⁵ *Super Iohannem*, ch. 9, lect. 2, no. 1318.

⁴⁵⁶ John 9:38.

⁴⁵⁷ *Super Iohannem*, ch.9, lect. 4, no. 1358.

Jesus. In this pericope, the efficient dimension of Christ's exemplarity is acutely present and at work.

5. The Eschatological Fulfilment of the Kenotic Principle

We have just seen how some previous accounts of Thomas' notion of exemplarity fail to take account of how Christ's kenosis, enfleshment, theandry, and instrumentality all help expand our understanding of his role as exemplar beyond the narrowly moralistic. This shortcoming is perhaps most evident in the interpretations of Aquinas' account of the resurrection. For Torrell, the rising of Christ is merely another instance of the Word's efficient causality at work in the economy of salvation. However, he fails to take account of the way Thomas highlights the crucial distinction between efficiency and exemplarity any further in Aquinas' assertion that "although the efficiency of Christ's Resurrection extends to the resurrection of the good and wicked alike, still its exemplarity extends properly only to the just, who are made conformable with His Sonship."⁴⁵⁸ As we will see, these distinct causal principles differ in their modality. The efficiency of Christ's resurrection brings about a change in all human beings regardless of the pattern to which they are conformed; all human beings will be raised whether to righteousness or to condemnation. The exemplarity of the Son's resurrection, however, extends only to those who are raised unto their final glory, for their resurrection has been patterned after his. Hence, although Christ's resurrection brings about the resurrection of the wicked according to efficient causality, their resurrection is not modeled after his example.

⁴⁵⁸ *ST* III, q.56, a.1, ad 3:

To appreciate the importance of this causal differentiation we must look more closely at *ST III*, qq. 53-56 of the *Summa*, where Aquinas explores a number of topics related to Christ's rising from the dead, not only such basic questions regarding the facts of the resurrection in itself, such as its necessity, timing, and order, but also—and perhaps most crucially—the cause of the resurrection. In the process, Thomas will also explore the nature of the Christ's resurrected kenotic body, before returning to the all-important question of resurrection and its causal power, that is, how Christ's rising will effectuate our own rising, and if that rising will be merely corporeal, or also spiritual. These questions are also of the utmost importance for the topics that we have been discussing in this dissertation because they are the soteriological outgrowth of Aquinas' Christological project of explicating the function of the Word's kenotically assumed humanity in the economy of salvation.

In q. 53, Aquinas devotes four articles designed to establish some basic facts about the resurrection itself. In a. 1, Aquinas affirms the necessity of Christ's rising in five ways. First because it is necessary to exalt those who humble themselves for God's sake; an explanation that parallels the theme of obedience that as we have seen runs like a leitmotiv throughout Christian discussions of Christ's kenotic enfleshment. Secondly, because it is necessary to reveal not only the Son's assumed humanity, but also the power of Christ's divinity, and thereby show that the God which Jesus spoke of is true and worthy of our faith. Third, because of the necessity to give humanity hope in their desire for bodily and spiritual resurrection by demonstrating that the human person might also attain these resurrections. Fourthly, in order to give us new life. Fifth, and finally, because it is necessary for Christ to rise again, since it completes God's plan of salvation

for humanity. In a. 2, Aquinas affirms that Christ should have risen again on the third day, since to defer His bodily resurrection until the end of the world would not have benefited the faith of his followers, and to enact His bodily resurrection on the day of his death may have aroused doubt or suspicion as to whether He truly died. In the subsequent article, Thomas affirms that even though Lazarus and others rose from the dead prior to Christ, they did so in a manner that was imperfect, which is why they had to die again. Thus, Thomas affirms that Christ was the first to rise from the dead perfectly so as to never die again. Finally, in a. 5, Aquinas explains that Christ is the cause of His resurrection insofar as He has a divine nature. With respect to his created kenotic nature, and its attendant secondary act of existence, there was no power in that assumed humanity in and of itself that could have caused Christ's own resurrection.

In Question 54, Aquinas explores four further topics, this time regarding the quality or characteristics of the person rising. First, Aquinas affirms that Christ had a true body after His Resurrection, for if Christ had an imaginary body “then His Resurrection would not have been true, but apparent.”⁴⁵⁹ Christ says to His disciples, “A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me to have” (Luke 24:39), and for the resurrection to be true, the same body which died must be the same body which resurrects. In A. 2, Aquinas affirms that Christ's body rose glorified by the lowliness of His passion—an allusion to Philippians 2:8 and the Word's kenotic obedience even unto death. Christ's *entire* body rose glorified, Thomas explains in A. 3, otherwise “it would not have been a complete resurrection, if whatever was lost by death had not been

⁴⁵⁹ ST III, q. 54 a. 1, sc: Si autem ejus corpus fuisset phantasticum, non fuisset vera resurrectio, sed apparens” (20).

restored.”⁴⁶⁰ Lastly, in a. 4, with regards to the quality of the person rising, Aquinas affirms that Christ’s kenotic human body ought to have risen with its scars. One reason is so that Christ may enhance the faith of his disciples: “Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe’” (Jn. 20:27). Another reason is so that his scarification would serve as an everlasting sign of His victory before those he saves, before those who persecute Him, and before the Father through Whom He salvifically intercedes on our behalf.

In the aforementioned question 56, Aquinas devotes two decisive articles to the causality of the resurrection, wherein he affirms that Christ’s rising from the dead causes the twin-effects of the resurrection of our bodies and the resurrection of our souls. The resurrection of Christ can achieve both of these by being at once an instrumental, efficient, and exemplar cause. That is, Christ is both the instrumental, efficient and exemplar cause of our *bodily* resurrection, as well as the instrumental, efficient and exemplar cause of our *spiritual* resurrection. With regards to our bodily resurrection, Christ is the *instrumental* cause insofar as the divine power of God works through the assumed humanity of Christ to bring about our own physical rising. Christ is the *efficient* cause insofar as the resurrection took place and achieved its proper effect of raising the dead to life.⁴⁶¹ Finally, Christ is the *exemplar* cause insofar as our “wretched” bodies are likewise to be raised into glorious copies of His body.⁴⁶² With regard to our spiritual

⁴⁶⁰ ST III, q.54 a. 2, sc: Et etiam integraliter, absque omni diminutione: alioquin non fuisset perfecta resurrectio, si non fuisset reintegratum quidquid per mortem ceciderat.

⁴⁶¹ ST III q. 56 a. 1, ad 3: Et ideo, sicut alia quae Christus in sua humanitate fecit vel passus est ex virtute divinitatis ipsius sunt nobis salutaria, ut supra dictum est, ita et resurrectio Christi est causa efficiens nostrae resurrectionis virtute divina, cujus proprium est mortuos vivificare.

⁴⁶² Ibid: “Et ideo resurrectio Christi est exemplar nostrae resurrectionis. Quod quidem necessarium est, non ex parte resuscitantis, qui non indigent exemplari, sed ex parte resuscitatorum, quos oportet illi

resurrection, Christ is the *instrumental* cause insofar as the divine power of God works through the humanity of Christ to bring about our spiritual resurrection. Christ is the *efficient* cause insofar as the resurrection took place and achieved its proper (twin) effect of the justification of souls.⁴⁶³ Lastly, Christ is the *exemplar* cause insofar as our souls are ordered to be ultimately conformed to Christ's soul which is just, good and eternal.⁴⁶⁴

Thomas invokes a number of significant objections that are worth mentioning regarding the causality of the resurrection. For example, in the second objection raised in q. 56 a. 1, which proposes that divine justice could have been achieved without the Resurrection of Christ, but rather by some other instrument, so that Christ's resurrection would not have to be the cause of our bodily resurrection. Aquinas agrees that this is true insofar as the power of the principle agent is not restricted to "act in a predetermined way with respect to the instrument."⁴⁶⁵ However, Christ's resurrection *is* the instrument of choice; therefore it is the necessary cause of our bodily resurrection. The instrumental character of the resurrection is further explained in this manner: It is a tool or means through which the power of a principle cause works, but it is not disregarded in the final result of the effect since the effect bears its stamp.⁴⁶⁶ Thus, it is not "merely the divine power which acts, but also the resurrection itself... hence. true power and true activity

resurrectioni conformari, secundum illud Philipp., Reformabit corpus humilitatis nostrae, configuratum corpori claritatis suae."

⁴⁶³ ST III q. 56 a. 2, sc: Et ideo resurrection Christi habet instrumentaliter virtutem effectivam non solum respect resurrectionis corporum, sed etiam respect resurrectionis animarum.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid: Similiter autem habet rationem exemplaritatis respect resurrectionis animarum. Quia Christo resurgenti debemus etiam secundum animam conformari, ut sicut, secundum Apostolum, Rom., Christus resurrexit per gloriam Patris, ita et nos in novitate vitae ambulemus, et sicut ipse resurgens ex mortuis jam non moritur, ita et nos existimeus mortuos nos esse peccato, ut iterum nos vivamus cum illo.

⁴⁶⁵ ST III q. 56 a. 1, ob 2.

⁴⁶⁶ ST III q.56 a. 1 ad. 2

must be attributed to it [the instrument].”⁴⁶⁷ Also, the instrumentality of Christ is proximate. In other words, by being first in the order of our resurrection and the closest to the Godhead, Christ extends the effects of His resurrection to enact ours. So, just as “death came through one man,” in the same way the resurrection of the dead will come through the one man Jesus Christ.⁴⁶⁸

Notably, the third objection raised in q. 56 a. 1 proposes that Christ’s bodily resurrection could not in fact be attributed as the exemplar or efficient cause of our bodily resurrection. As Thomas writes, God needs no other model for the resurrection besides Himself. And this objection is undoubtedly true, since it is we, as less perfect beings, who need an exemplar conformity to Christ, the highest and first being in dignity and perfection: “Less perfect beings imitate in their own fashion whatever is at the summit of perfection and is the model.”⁴⁶⁹ Efficient causality, on the other hand, requires spiritual or bodily contact in order for something to be affected, and thus cannot be efficacious, since without contact of any kind there simply cannot be efficient causality. Indeed, how can the resurrection which happened almost two-thousand years ago effect the present time? To answer this question, we must carefully distinguish between the resurrection as a historic event (*in facto esse*) and the resurrection as an ongoing reality (*in fieri*). Aquinas will contend that the Christ who rose centuries ago is still the risen Christ in His glorified kenotic humanity today. The divine power of the Godhead, as united to the Word, is

⁴⁶⁷ Nicholas Crotty, “The Redemptive Role of Christ’s Resurrection,” *The Thomist* 25:1 (1962), p.70

⁴⁶⁸ ST III q. 56 a. 1, sc. “Et hoc est quod Apostolus dicit, in 1 Cor., Christus resurrexit a mortuis primitia dormientium: quoniam quidem per hominem mors, et per hominem resurrectio mortuorum.”

⁴⁶⁹ ST III q. 56 a. 1, ad. 3: “Semper autem id quod est perfectissimum, est exemplar quod imitantur minus perfecta secundum suum modum.”

extended “by being present in all times and places, and this contact of power is sufficient to fulfil the definition of efficient causality.”⁴⁷⁰ Thus, the resurrection is ongoing.

Before addressing a third objection regarding the causality of the Resurrection, let us compare and contrast exemplar and efficient causality, in order to remind ourselves of similarities and differences, which are important, though subtle. As we have already established, efficient causality may be defined as the first principle of movement in the order of execution. It brings something new into being, or causes something already in existence to undergo a substantial change.⁴⁷¹ Exemplar causality, in contrast, may be thought of as the form or idea according to which something is made or changed. It is the form of the effect to be imitated or participated in, and this effect to be achieved may be described as the goal, or the *telos*, such that the imitation or participation in that form may be best understood as the specific activity by which one achieves that goal. As we elaborated at the commencement of this section, regarding the question of the raising of the dead, Christ’s resurrection is the efficient cause for the resurrection of all—the good and the evil, the faithful and the unbelieving alike. The power of divine justice extends that far, so as to effect in everyone the resurrection in their body and soul.⁴⁷² Exemplar causality, on the other hand, “extends only to good men who become conformed to the image” of Christ’s own sonship.”⁴⁷³ Hence, exemplar causality with respect to the

⁴⁷⁰ ST III q. 56 a. 1, ad. 3: “Quae quidem virtus praesentialiter attingit omnia loca et tempora. Et talis contactus virtualis sufficit ad rationem hujus efficientiae.”

⁴⁷¹ Cf. ST I, q.3, a.8, and q.44; *De Ver.* q. 3, a. 1; *In V Metaphys.* lect. 2, no. 764. For secondary literature, see Charles A. Hart, *Thomistic Metaphysics: An Inquiry into the Act of Existence* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1959), pp. 321-23; Vivian Boland, *Ideas in God according to Saint Thomas Aquinas: Sources and Synthesis* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 255-57

⁴⁷² ST III q. 56 a. 1 ad. 3: “Virtus effective resurrectionis ejus se extendit non solum ad bonos, sed etiam ad malos, qui sunt ejus judicio subjecti.”

⁴⁷³ ST III q. 56 a. 1 ad. 3

resurrection is achieved in us to the extent that we have Christ's glorified body as our final end or beatitude.

As we have already seen, in his exposition of Thomas' Christology, Torrell at first discusses the exemplarity of Christ in largely moral terms. Everything Christ performed in his humanity was and continues to be for our instruction, "for when it comes to the Christian life, the imitation of Christ certainly marks the way of salvation."⁴⁷⁴ Torrell thinks this is the most immediate and obvious point to be taken from Aquinas' notion of exemplarity. Torrell continues his discussion of exemplarity by assessing Christ's function as an ontological exemplar, explaining, "God the Father, acting in us by the grace that he grants us through the mediation of Christ, conforms us through this very act to the image of his first-born Son."⁴⁷⁵ Made possible by the grace He gives, God makes New Adams and New Eves out of a humanity born unto original sin, and Torrell explains how this ontological transformation is accomplished through efficient causality:

The argument centers on the established law according to which the efficient agent can only produce what is similar to it; in this way, there exists in all actions a certain likeness of the effect to its cause. Applied to the issue at hand, this law means that the mysteries of Christ's life produce in us a likeness first to Jesus and then, through him, to God himself.... Such an understanding strikes at the very heart of ontological exemplarity and the mystery of Christo-forming grace.⁴⁷⁶

"Christo-formation" is the change that is brought about—the "something new" that comes into being in us due to Christ's exemplarity. Torrell implies a central role for instrumental causality here as well, although he discusses it more explicitly when quoting Aquinas' articulation of that subject in the *Summa* (III, q. 19, a. 1, ad 2; p. 93). Insofar as

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 91.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 98.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

the mysteries of Christ's life serve as the instrument of God who affects Christ-likeness, then the mysteries of Christ's life are instrumental.

As explained in the preceding section, from the restricted viewpoint of instrumental causality viewed primarily in terms of efficiency, Torrell's account of ontological change is well-presented. However, his account is sorely lacking when Aquinas makes a crucial distinction in the resurrection-event between efficient and ontological exemplar causality. According to Aquinas, we not only partake in a general resurrection where, by default, we are all raised from the dead in body and soul (since the Divine power extends to all by being present in all times and places). But, in addition, we partake in a resurrection where we are conformed to Christ as our exemplar to the extent that we have Christ's glorified humanity as our final end or beatitude. Some of us are conformed to Christ perfectly and others imperfectly. In his study Torrell appears to ignore the resurrection understood in this sense. In fact, he cites the very place where Aquinas makes this distinction to begin with, but excludes some significant details: Aquinas does not posit that we are all raised from the dead to a glorified state, since this is reserved only for those who have been conformed to Christ through his exemplarity. Hence, Torrell's single-minded focus on causal efficiency fails to account for the importance of exemplar causality, and even more seriously, the centrality of Christ's kenotic modality of human subsistence, in Thomas' explication of the resurrection,

This serious imbalance can be redressed, to a certain extent, by recalling fuller accounts in the earlier work of scholars of the resurrection, such as Nicholas Crotty. In "The Redemptive Role of Christ's Resurrection," Crotty traced the development of Aquinas' understanding of the resurrection, from its earliest manifestations in the

Commentary on the Sentences, to its final fruition in the *Summa*. In the process Crotty critiques earlier, incomplete explications of Thomas doctrine on the resurrection. In the process of closely tracing the development of Aquinas' theological progress on this topic, Crotty rightfully focuses a significant portion of his attention on Aquinas' notion of instrumentally in its relation to efficient and exemplar causality, pointing out an important distinction between the resurrection considered as a historical event (*in facto esse*) versus the resurrection considered as an ongoing reality (*in fieri*). Crotty first points out that in his *Sentences* commentary Aquinas does not fully articulate the idea that Christ's resurrection is the instrumentally-efficient cause of the resurrection of souls or the resurrection of bodies. "At this period," he explains, "the young Thomas regarded the production of grace as an act of creation and accordingly denied that there are any instruments co-operating in this work, so that in our justification nothing created can be posited as an instrumental cause." Aquinas' immature understanding of causality further leads him to attribute virtue and activity to the divine power alone. Yet, "it must be said that [the risen Humanity] is the cause of ours inasmuch as it works by the divine power." There is a real disposition for the resurrection of those united to the risen Christ, and the two (divine power along with the assumed humanity) are not entirely separable. By the time he gets to the *Summa*, the instrumentally-efficient cause of Christ's resurrection is expressed with much greater clarity. In fact, this shift is already evident in the earlier *Contra Gentiles*, where Thomas teaches that Christ is the efficient cause of the resurrection of all, but his efficiency extends perfectly only to those united to His mysteries and imperfectly in the case of others. Here, the resurrection of the just and the damned are explained, it seems to Crotty, in terms of efficiency. Compared with the

updated notion of exemplarity alongside efficiency as found in the later Thomistic texts—that Christ’s resurrection is the efficient cause of the resurrection of all, the exemplary cause only of the glorious resurrection of the just—it might be said that Torrell’s partial understanding of the resurrection parallels the thoughts of the young Thomas. Either way, Crotty makes use of the noteworthy distinction and insightfully accounts for the moral agent’s hope for, tendency towards and movement in the practice and progress of virtue, to adumbrate how for Thomas the resurrection may be achieved in the moral agent seeking beatitude.

Crotty further contends that for the later Aquinas the exemplarity of Christ extends not merely to the moment of justification itself, but also to the whole pattern of subsequent, Christian life. By the time he comes to write on this subject in the *Summa*, Aquinas will attribute to the resurrection the exemplary cause of positive justification and newness of life by grace, whereas to Christ’s passion, he attributes the exemplary cause of the remission of sin and the destruction of death. Both the passion and the resurrection are attributed a single, efficient cause, as Crotty explains: “It is equally obvious that the Passion of Christ must be the efficient cause of eternal life, if it is the efficient cause of the destruction of death, and His Resurrection must destroy death if it is the efficient cause of the newness of life.”⁴⁷⁷

At this point, Crotty raises the question of the resurrection’s historical character (*in facto esse*) as well as the ongoing efficacy (*in fieri*) of that long-ago event. The resurrection *in facto esse* defines the resurrection-event as the act in which Christ’s kenotic body rose from the dead. The resurrection *in fieri* defines that event in terms of the ongoing reality of Christ rising. While Crotty points out the importance of exemplar

⁴⁷⁷ Crotty, “Redemptive Role,” p. 88.

causality along with instrumentally-efficient causality in the risen Christ (*in facto esse*), he fails to explicate the relationship of exemplarity to the resurrection considered *in fieri*. It is clear that the resurrected Christ must be efficacious by means of the assumed humanity as used instrumentally by divine power, and also that the resurrecting Christ is efficacious due to the fact that the divine power enacts resurrections in all times and places. Also, it is clear that the resurrected Christ is exemplary in some fashion, both Torrell and Crotty agree that the life of Christ is not only morally exemplary but also displays some aspect of ontological exemplarism. However, the question of how exactly the resurrection *in fieri*—the resurrecting Christ, is also exemplary in an ontological manner, which, as we have seen, Aquinas explicitly associates with the conformity of those to Christ as their final end or telos, remains unanswered by Crotty and is never even raised by Torrell. Ultimately, although he does not intend to, Crotty excludes exemplar causality as a central part of the ongoing, dynamic event of the resurrection *in fieri*.

Perhaps this ongoing confusion about the precise role of exemplarism, and indeed ontological causation itself, may be one of reasons why Aquinas' complete understanding of the resurrection has yet to be fully embraced. At least, that seems to be the contention of the next scholar we will look at, Gerald O'Collins, who presents a provocative theory of why modern Thomism has failed in its ambitious attempt integrate Aquinas' understanding of the resurrection into the very center of Catholic theology. According to O'Collins, Western Christianity has persistently concentrated on Calvary and neglected the lesson of Easter Sunday. Indeed, the Resurrection has been displaced from its proper place at the heart of Catholic thought and, despite all attempts by various modern Thomists to correct this one-sidedness, the imbalance remains. For O'Collins, the source

of the problem seems to reside in two theological misapprehensions, Manicheanism and Pelagianism, both of which are evident throughout Christian history, and are still present in modern Catholic thought.⁴⁷⁸ As Crotty explains, a “Manichean irreverence towards man's physical being” inevitably leads to a “weakened interest in our resurrection implied less concern for Christ's resurrection.” For the Pelagianism, on the other hand, “a crucifixion-oriented trend offered more possibilities for man's spontaneous activity, whereas the Resurrection confronts us as God's sovereignly free action. No created agent, not even Jesus' humanity, could share in that divine intervention.”⁴⁷⁹ So, Pelagians turn to the Passion to find a moral example of virtuous action, since the unearned, freely-given gift of the Resurrection is not something that can be humanly imitated. In addition, modern ideas of radical individualism oppose the notion of the Resurrection on similar grounds—because it seems to undercut modern notions of human autonomy by placing emphasis on God as the sole author and source of saving grace necessary for the Resurrection of all. In O’Collins’ opinion, Aquinas is the happy exception, indeed a counterweight, to this individualizing trend; in fact, O’Collins thinks Thomas’ exposition of the Resurrection can serve as a powerful corrective to the contemporary Christian misunderstandings on this topic, since “in the face of a preoccupation with the crucifixion,” Thomas “asserts the essential place of the Resurrection within an adequate Christology.” O’Collins goes on to list some of Aquinas’s other accomplishments in this regard: Thomas distinguishes between a perfect and imperfect resurrection, he discusses the difference between our resurrection and Christ’s resurrection, he maintains the

⁴⁷⁸ Gerald O’Collins, “Thomas Aquinas and Christ’s Resurrection,” *Theological Studies* 31(1970), p. 514.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

distinction between the testimony of the apostles and later believers and finally, he values the difference between visible signs and argumentative proof.⁴⁸⁰

Taking Aquinas' exposition of the Resurrection as their point of departure, in the years immediately preceding and shortly following the Second Vatican Council (1963-65), a number of Catholic scholars, such as Francis X. Durrwell, wrote various articles and books in attempt to highlight the importance of a true understanding of the theological significance of Christ's rising. Unfortunately, in their attempt to do so, O'Collins believes they have instead affected a collapse of interest in the soteriological appraisal of Christ's Resurrection.⁴⁸¹ *Why?* O'Collins speculates that there is a certain, innate weakness in the very idea of causality employed, not only by Durrwell and Crotty, but by Aquinas himself, which is antithetical to contemporary notions.. As O'Collins explains, "properly speaking, an exemplar functions as a model, the first product, according to which a maker fashions further specimens of the same type. Instrumental efficient causes like hammers, brushes, and typewriters require the intervention of a principal cause before they can affect anything."⁴⁸² Among other things, O'Collins notes the almost inevitable modern construal instrumental efficiency as a kind of passivity, more apparent in "dead tools" than in living ones, so he concludes that a theology of the Christ's resurrection should be sought elsewhere than in Aristotelian Categories of causality.⁴⁸³ While O'Collins' critique of the displacement of the resurrection has merit, I think he misapprehends Aquinas's conception of causality in ways which are akin to Torrell and Crotty. For the remainder of this presentation, I hope to show the merits of

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid, p. 512

⁴⁸² Ibid, p. 522

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

Francis Durrwell's work on the resurrection, and begin to point out how a fuller understanding of causality, particularly exempla causation, can resurrect Durrwell's seemingly deceased theological project.

According to Durrwell, "Christianity derives its source precisely where it finds its ultimate achievement. It is only through the exemplary act of glorification that the death of Christ becomes meaningful, in which we are then "invited to reconsider the notion that Christ paid a price to repair sin, and that the merits he thus acquired are applied to humans." Similarly, it is only by His death on the cross that He becomes exalted and glorified. Durrwell imagines the death and Resurrection of Christ as one exemplar action: "Being lifted up on a cross symbolizes being lifted up above earth into the bosom of God. Raised by the cross into glory, Jesus can draw all people to himself and give them life . . . In one movement, it is the end that provides meaning. In some way, the end is first." The Passion and Resurrection are interwoven and inseparable; the newness of the Resurrection is simultaneously a mystery of death, and the suffering of the Passion a mystery of life. This paradox of an end that is also a beginning is already found in the Gospel of John (11:25) where Jesus calls Himself the Resurrection: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?" This Paschal mystery of the Passion and the Resurrection, the Resurrection functioning as the "culmination of the Passion in full," is incarnated in the very hypostatic union of the truly divine and fully human God-man.

For Durrwell, this new appreciation of the Resurrection as an exemplary event may begin to correct theologies which "make the entire weight of redemption reside in

only the passion of Christ.” Durrwell recalls the conditions in which the kenotically incarnated Christ descended upon earth as a slave obedient unto His death on the cross. His kenotic entry into creation in the form of a servant was also his ascent toward the glory of the Father, and for this reason God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Philippians 2: 9-11). So, rather than speak of atonement in a way that is merely juridical or predominantly legalistic, as in the old understanding of the Satisfaction theory of the atonement, where “reparation of sin constituted the point of departure and ended with the Passion,” Durrwell proposes we should instead speak of communion with Christ as “the true point of departure [in] the mystery of the Resurrection.” Durrwell mentions how Christ, becoming our salvation through his Passover, was the work of the loving Father. The Resurrection was an “act of love, an act of eternally begetting the Son according to the fullness of the Holy Spirit. That love is infinite and gratuitous. Absolutely gratuitous, it supersedes any notion of repairing sin or of satisfying justice.” Indeed, the Resurrection (*in fieri*) continues to be realized in Christ and is eternally operative because of his filial relationship with the Father. Though the Son allows himself to be emptied and handed over unto death, He is assumed into glorious communion with the Father. Thus, the Father’s infinite act of reception and the Son’s infinite act of begetting are “two infinities... joined together in the death and resurrection.” Christ’s death and Resurrection are everlasting acts of obedience and love which form the unique paschal mystery. Eternal glorification holds Jesus in the death from which glory is inseparable. Though he rises and leaves the tomb,

Jesus never leaves the mystery of his death. When Christians encounter Christ today, it is not the crucified Christ who once rose from the dead, but rather “it is Christ in His death as he is being raised.” For Durrwell, redemption could never be a business transaction to pay back for something which was lost. Rather, Christ by his incarnation, as the ontologically exemplary embodiment of deliverance, was the “very event of salvation.”

Humanity is born to die, Durrwell claims, but it is not the death incurred by all flesh in the aftermath of the fall, a death which is a permanent estrangement from God. This separation could never be part of God’s eternal plan of salvation, so if humanity is indeed “created for death, then death must be something other than what it seem.” The Father begets his children in love, and whoever loves says to the other: “You must not die, I love you forever;” therefore, if “created humanity is mortal, then in God’s plan death can only be at the service of humanity’s birth as children of God.” For Durrwell, the Paschal mystery of Christ is the place where this filiation takes place, since the Son in his kenotically assumed humanity is the “point of convergence for mortal humanity.” In other words, humanity is created toward Christ as its telos. Already, Durrwell points out, many begin to “unite themselves to Christ from the beginning of their lives on earth through baptisms” and other sources of grace, preparing themselves even in this life, for “for the ultimate encounter with him in death.” All of humanity, to the extent that is created mortal, is created toward Christ as its ultimate orientation, for all are destined to die Christ’s obediently relational and kenotic death with him. This is because Christ is not only our destination but also the road we must travel in order to attain this destiny, he is both the passage and the means of passage. Christ comes to us while we are trapped in our mortality. And he comes to us “by drawing us to himself—he always comes in that

way. He attracts us by revealing himself—he always attracts in that way.” Christ both “truth and its splendor, its beauty and its sweetness. These are things that the human person loves. Jesus was transformed by the Spirit of love. Now we have the joy of being loved. Can anyone resist such a great attraction?”⁴⁸⁴

Here we see perhaps the greatest point of convergence between Durrwell’s explication of the true meaning of death unto eternal life and Aquinas’ true understanding of Christ’s resurrection, a convergence that is all the stronger for connection our own resurrections to Christ’s ontological exemplarity, a connection that Torrell, as we have pointed out repeatedly, either ignored or left unspoken. And a connection potentially severed by some theologians through a mis-characterization which focused on that exemplarity in terms of a long-ago occurrence, rather than to the resurrecting person of Christ himself. For Durrwell, in stark contrast, the kenotic Son’s glorification is eternal today: Christ’s redemptive death “was not only a past act, it is eternal. Christ . . . is the redemption in person, the permanent crucible, recasting sinful humanity into ‘a new creation.’” And thus, because redemption is not reduced to “a simple act the occurred long ago,” it continues to be “realized in Christ, and is forever in Christ, through his relationship with the Father.” This is an understanding of the Resurrection which fully embraces and articulates the notion that it is through an encounter with the kenotic Christ’s rising *in fieri* that we are ourselves come to eternal life. Moreover, for Durrwell, much like Aquinas, Christ is not a mere moral exemplar to be imitated, but also an ontologically exemplary icon of our own journey toward beatitude, a divinized image of humanity to which we are continuously conformed. The grace through which we become

⁴⁸⁴ All these quotations are to be found in Durrwell, *Christ Our Passover: The Indispensable Role of Resurrection in Our Salvation*, pp. 137-139.

Christ-like is an efficient cause, but the goal to which we are oriented is that final exemplary cause that is the ultimate good towards which we are drawn. Lastly, like Thomas, for Durrwell it is the person of Christ, through the assumed humanity instrumentally conjoined to his divinity, who brings this about, since the enfleshed Word is the “point of convergence” between mortal humanity and God, and so he is thus both the “passage and the means of passage.”

The final judgment and entry into the Beatific Vision, the teleological end-point for humanity within the economy of salvation, is the culmination of the Resurrection. Aquinas and Durrwell both pay special attention to this topic- Aquinas by devoting all of question 59 in ST III to this point and Durrwell in ch.10 of his book by discussing “A Purifying Judgment,” “The Final Resurrection,” “The Last Judgment,” and “The Life of the World to Come.” Through of an examination of these works and in light of what has already been said about Torrell, Crotty and O’Collins, we can see how the judiciary power of the kenotically enfleshed Christ is at once instrumental, efficient, and exemplary. Beginning with a.1 of Question 59, Thomas indicates the way in which judiciary power is specially attributed to Christ. The son is “wisdom begotten, the Truth proceeding from the Father and His perfect image.”⁴⁸⁵ Though judiciary power is common to the whole trinity, it is by special appropriation to the Son that makes Him the art and rule of judgment.⁴⁸⁶ Christ possesses the necessary conditions for judiciary judgment—strength, power and perfect zeal—and He is recognized by Aquinas as the very embodiment of living justice: “judgment belongs to truth as its standard, while it belongs to the man imbued with truth, according as he is as it were one with truth, as a

⁴⁸⁵ ST III q. 59, a.1, sc: Et quia filius est sapientia genita, et veritas a patre procedens et ipsum perfecte repraesentans, ideo proprie iudiciaria potestas attribuitur filio Dei.

⁴⁸⁶ ST III q. 59, a. 1 ad. 3.

kind of law and living ‘justice.’”⁴⁸⁷ In a. 2 Aquinas clearly posits that the judiciary power of Christ belongs to Him as man, not on account of his human nature alone but rather on account of His graced kenotic humanity. So, while “it belongs to God alone to bestow beatitude upon souls,” by participation with Himself, it is “Christ’s prerogative to bring them to such beatitude, inasmuch as He is their Head and the author of their salvation.”⁴⁸⁸ The overflow of the Godhead into Christ’s soul allows Christ in His Humanity to know and judge the secret desires of men. While in a. 3, Aquinas further explicates how judiciary power belongs to the kenotic Christ on two accounts: due to his His divine persona and on account of His merits. The dignity of his headship and the fullness of habitual grace were obtained by his merits so that “in accordance with Divine Justice, He should be judge who fought for God’s justice, and conquered, and was unjustly condemned.”⁴⁸⁹ Subsequently, in a. 4, Aquinas elucidates how judiciary power belongs to Christ with respect to all human affairs: “The Father hath given all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22) and, if what is said in Corinthians 2:15 is true, that “the spiritual man judges all things,” then, “inasmuch as his souls clings to the Word of God, [even more so] Christ’s soul, which is filled with the truth of the Word of God, passes judgment on all things.”⁴⁹⁰ Finally, in articles 5- 6, Aquinas discusses the general judgment which takes place at the end of time and he expresses the judiciary power of the kenotic Son as

⁴⁸⁷ ST III q. 59, a. 2, ad. 1: “Ad primum ergo dicendum quod iudicium pertinet ad veritatem sicut ad regulam iudicii, sed ad hominem qui est veritate imbutus pertinet secundum quod est unum quodammodo cum ipsa veritate, quasi quaedam lex et quaedam iustitia animata

⁴⁸⁸ ST III q. 59, a. 2, ad. 2: “Ad secundum dicendum quod solius Dei est sui participatione animas beatas facere. Sed adducere homines ad beatitudinem, inquantum est caput et auctor salutis eorum, Christi est, secundum illud Heb. II, qui multos filios in gloriam adduxerat, auctorem salutis eorum per passionem consummari.

⁴⁸⁹ ST III q. 59, a. 3, sc: “Secundum Dei iustitiam, iudex esset qui pro Dei iustitia pugnavit et vicit, et iniuste iudicatus est. Unde ipse dicit Apoc. III, ego vici, et sedi in throno patris mei.”

⁴⁹⁰ ST. III q. 59, a. 4, sc: Si enim spiritualis iudicat omnia, ut dicitur I Cor. II, inquantum mens eius verbo Dei inhaeret; multo magis anima Christi, quae plena est veritate verbi Dei, super omnia iudicium habet.

extending over all creatures. With regards to the general judgment, Thomas explains the reason for both the first and final judgment: After death man enters into an unchangeable state as to all that concerns the soul: and therefore there is no need for postponing judgment as to the reward of the soul. But since there are some other things pertaining to a man which go on through the whole course of time, and which are not foreign to the Divine judgment, all these things must be brought to judgment at the end of time. For although in regard to such things a man neither merits nor demerits, still in a measure they accompany his reward or punishment. Consequently all these things must be weighed in the final judgment.⁴⁹¹

For Aquinas, the final judgment is a perfect and public judgment which concerns every human in every respect. By this judgment, God does not judge twice the same thing in the same respect; rather, he judges the same thing according to different respects.⁴⁹² Christ has judiciary power of the good and wicked angels, since Christ's soul is above every creature and He is the head of angels in a similar manner. With regards to our present and final judgments, Christ as man will be the *instrumental* cause of our judgments insofar as the Divine power of God works through the humanity of the Son to bring about our present and final judgment. According to Aquinas, God does so as stated above in a. 2. Christ as the kenotically incarnated God-man is also the *efficient* cause of our present and final judgments insofar as our judgments take place and achieve its proper effect of blessing the good and damning the wicked. According to a.5, this efficiency is occurring in the present and will occur again on the last day. Finally, the Word is the exemplary cause of our present and final judgments insofar as we are to be

⁴⁹¹ ST. III q. 59, a. 5, ad. 1

⁴⁹² ST. III q. 59, a. 5, ad. 2

judged blameless and worthy unto eternal life as Christ Himself was blameless and worthy. All of humanity is judged in their present and final judgment by efficiency; the degree to which they are judged as having either conformed perfectly or imperfectly to the image of the Son, is an effect of exemplarity. We look to Durrwell for a fuller explication of how Christ is the exemplary cause of our entry into the Beatific Vision.

Durrwell describes the singular power of Christ to raise the dead and to judge the dead in raising them. This power is God-given which Christ exercises through His resurrecting action. Souls may be judged in one of two exemplary ways: Some are judged simply in the fact of rising to life: “Anyone who hears my word... has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life” (John 5:24). For others, the resurrection turns into condemnation: “All who are in their graves will come out—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:28-29).⁴⁹³ For Durrwell, to be saved is to be with Christ in our actions and to be like Christ in our hearts. If we wish to be Christ-like in our hearts, then we must similarly will our entry unto eternal life through good judgment since it is the will of God that we also become eternal like Him. Ultimately, “God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but [so] the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:17). Here, Durrwell confirms the instrumental nature of Christ’s Judiciary power: the kenotic Son is the mediator of justice in which God appointed Him “as judge of the living and the dead” (Acts 10:42). By the power of His resurrection, the enfleshed Christ was established as judge for the sake of our

⁴⁹³ Durrwell pp. 149

Resurrection: “God saves us in his risen Son by exercising his kind of justice. And he exercises it by leading people to their eternal life.”⁴⁹⁴

6. Conclusion

In this chapter I explored how the particular subsistent modality exercised by Word by virtue of its assumed humanity can be nothing other than the proper Kenoticism of the Word as mirrored in the *esse secundarium* of the enfleshed Son. This insight was subsequently explored through a detailed reading of *De Unione* a.5 in parallel with *ST* III qq.17-19, both of which treat Dyoennergism and Dyotheletism in the light of instrumentality of the natures as actualized in the two-fold being of the enfleshed Word. I further contended that it is the very Kenoticism proper to the Son of the father that establishes the kenotic mode of subsistence of the enfleshed Word in creation. This theme is then explored in an examination of Thomas’ exposition on theandric activity, meritoriously redemptive death, and resurrection of the God-man as efficient, instrumental, and exemplary cause of salvation in us, and the final judgment of Christ as man.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

VII. Conclusion

Christ's human operation evinces a principle of nature through which a person—in this unique case the incarnate Word—lives and acts humanly, so that when Christ acts as a man, he does so by virtue of his created human existence (*esse secundarium*), but the one who actualizes the operation is the eternally begotten divine Word, and this divine employment of the God-man's distinctively human modes of being, willing, and acting grants them with their unique soteriological efficacy, since they are enacted, and indeed exist, for our redemption on account of the divinity itself. Hence, the *esse secundarium* of *De unione* is not a aberration on the part of Thoma, but rather an articulation of his deepest insight on the kenotic mode of the Word's human subsistence in the created and temporal order, a modality that mirrors the pre-existent and divine Word's own proper kenoticism.

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