CHALLENGES IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY

DIVINE ILLUMINATION

The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge

Lydia Schumacher

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DIVINE ILLUMINATION

Challenges in Contemporary Theology

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For my parents, Richard and Pam

Realities … must be learned and sought out not from names, but rather through themselves.
Plato, *Cratylus* 439B

Realities signified are to be valued more highly than their signs.
Augustine, De magistro 9.25

It would be unreasonable and silly to look at words rather than at the power of the meanings. Anyone seeking to understand divine things should never do this, for this is the procedure followed by those who … do not wish to know what a particular phrase means or how to convey its sense through equivalent but more efficient phrases.
Pseudo-Dionysius, De divinis nominibus 708C

Contents

Acknowledgments ix
Editions x
Abbreviations xii

Introduction 1
Augustine on Divine Illumination 4
Interpretations of Divine Illumination in Augustine's Thought 7
Interpretations of Divine Illumination in Medieval Thought 14
Re-interpreting the History of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge 16

1 Augustine 25
Introduction 25
The Doctrine of God 29
Creation in the Image of God 30
The Fall and Redemption 39
Conforming to the Image of God 42
Divine Illumination 58

2 Anselm 66
Introduction 66
The Image of God 74
Conforming to the Image of God 76
Divine Illumination 82
Anselm the Augustinian 83

3 Divine Illumination in Transition 85
Introduction 85
New Schools 85
New Translations 88

New Religious Challenges 100
New Religious Orders 101
New Intellectual Traditions 103

4 Bonaventure 110
Introduction 110
The Doctrine of God 117
Creation in the Image of God 121
The Fall and Redemption 132
Conforming to the Image of God 135
Divine Illumination 141
Bonaventure the Augustinian? 143

5 Aquinas 154
Introduction 154
The Image of God 160
Conforming to the Image of God 165
Divine Illumination 173
Aquinas the Augustinian 178

6 Divine Illumination in Decline 181
Introduction 181
Peter John Olivi 182
Henry of Ghent 186
John Duns Scotus 194
Augustinian and Franciscan Thought 201
Franciscan and Modern Thought 208

7 The Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge 217
Introduction to a Theological Theory of Knowledge 217
Reason in a Theological Theory of Knowledge 223
Faith in a Theological Theory of Knowledge 226

Conclusion 234

Index 240

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Chapter 1: "The Theo-Logic of St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge by Divine Illumination" (*Augustinian Studies*)

Chapter 2: "The Lost Legacy of Anselm's Argument: Rethinking the Purpose of Proofs for the Existence of God" (*Modern Theology*)

Chapter 7: "The Logic of Faith: Prolegomena to a Theological Theory of Knowledge" (*New Blackfriars*)

Editions

In preparing this work, I used the following editions of the primary texts:

Anselm. *Sancti Anselmi cantuariensis archiepiscopi Opera omnia,* 6 vols. Edited by F.S. Schmitt. Edinburgh: T. Nelson and Sons, 1946–61.

Augustine. *Confessiones*. Edited by Lucas Verheijen in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* vol. 27. Turnhout: Brepols, 1981.

Augustine. *Contra academicos, De ordine, De beata vita, De magistro, De libero arbitrio*. Edited by W.M. Green in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* vol. 29. Turnhout: Brepols, 1970.

Augustine. *De civitate Dei*. Edited by B. Dombart and A. Kalb in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* vols 47–8. Turnhout: Brepols, 1955.

Augustine. *De doctrina Christiana*. Edited by Joseph Martin in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* vol. 27. Turnhout: Brepols, 1962.

Augustine. *De Genesi ad litteram*. Edited by P. Agaesse and A. Solignac in *Oeuvres de St. Augustin* vols 48–9. Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1970.

Augustine. *De Trinitate*. Edited by W.J. Mountain and Fr Glorie in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* vols 50–50A. Turnhout: Brepols, 1968.

Augustine. *De fide rerum quae non videntur, De utilitate credendi, Enchiridion* in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* vol. 46. Turnhout: Brepols, 1969.

Augustine. *Retractationes*. Edited by Almut Mutzenbecher in *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* vol. 46. Turnhout: Brepols, 1984.

Bonaventure. *Doctoris Seraphici S. Bonaventurae opera omnia*, 10 vols. Florence: Quaracchi, 1882–1902.

t. 1, *Comm. In I Libr. Sent.* (1882).

t. 2, *Comm. In II Libr. Sent.* (1885).

t. 3, *Comm. In III Libr. Sent.* (1887).

t. 4, *Comm. In IV Libr. Sent.* (1889).

Bonaventure. *Collationes in Hexaëmeron et Bonaventuriana quaedam selecta*. Florence: Quaracchi, 1938.

Bonaventure. *Tria opuscula Seraphici Doctoris S. Bonaventurae. Breviloquium, Itinerarium mentis in Deum, et De reductione artium ad theologiam*. Florence: Quaracchi, 1938.

Henrici de Gandavo. *Opera Omnia,* 38 vols. Edited by G.A. Wilson et al. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1978–2008.

Olivi, Peter John. *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, 3 vols. Edited by Bernard Jansen S.J. Florence: Quaracchi, 1922–26.

Scotus, John Duns. *Opera omnia*. Vatican: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950.

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae,* 60 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Abbreviations

CCL *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina*

The works of Augustine are abbreviated as follows:

beata v.	*De beata vita*
civ.	*De civitate Dei*
conf.	*Confessiones*
c. mend.	*Contra mendacium*
div. qu.	*De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus*
doct. chr.	*De doctrina christiana*
ench.	*Enchiridion*
ep.	*Epistula*
Gn. litt.	*De Genesi ad litteram*
lib. arb.	*De libero arbitrio*
mag.	*De magistro*
mend.	*De mendacio*
ord.	*De ordine*
retr.	*Retractiones*
trin.	*De Trinitate*
sol.	*Soliloquia*
util. cred.	*De utilitate credendi*

The works of Anselm are abbreviated as follows:

CDH	*Cur Deus Homo*
DC	*De concordia*
DV	*De veritate*
M	*Monologion*
P	*Proslogion*

The works of Bonaventure are abbreviated as follows:

brev.	*Breviloquium*
C. Mag.	*Christus unus omnium Magister*
coll.	*Collationes in Hexaemeron*
ev. qu.	*Quaestiones disputatae de perfectione evangelica*
itin.	*Itinerarium mentis in Deum*
LM	*Legenda major*
red. art.	*De reductione artium ad theologiam*
s. C. qu.	*Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi*
trin. qu.	*Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio trinitatis*

The works of Thomas Aquinas are abbreviated as follows:

ST	*Summa Theologiae*

Introduction

This is a book about the history and future of the theory of knowledge by divine illumination that St. Augustine appropriated from the Platonic tradition in the fourth century, baptized for Christian purposes, and passed down to subsequent medieval thinkers, who generally regarded his account as intelligible and authoritative, at least until the end of the thirteenth century. At that time, members of the Franciscan order who had previously claimed to be the foremost champions of Augustine's intellectual tradition pronounced illumination theory untenable.

In inquiring into the *history* of the illumination account, I have three main goals in mind. The first is to identify what Augustine meant when he spoke of divine illumination as the condition of possibility of all human knowledge and what it would mean to update his views on this topic in a later context. The second is to challenge the common scholarly assumption that thirteenth-century Franciscans, specifically Bonaventure, were Augustine's chief representatives in the later Middle Ages. This argument is crucial to accomplishing the third goal of my historical inquiry, which is to identify why Franciscans after Bonaventure abandoned illumination, such that a theory of knowledge like Augustine's is not advocated in the present.

Throughout the historical part of the study, my arguments turn on the contention that any given theory of knowledge by *divine* illumination derives its meaning from the *theological* assumptions that underlie it and

Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge,
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must therefore be read in its proper theological context.[1] By doing this in the case of Augustine, I strive to settle a longstanding scholarly controversy concerning the cognitive function the Bishop of Hippo attributes to the divine light. By employing a theological method of inquiry in my study of Anselm, moreover, I build a case for the claim that updating Augustine's thought on illumination means adopting the theological assumptions that found his concept of knowledge, while articulating that concept in forms of philosophical argumentation that are relevant at a given time – forms which may differ from Augustine's.

On the grounds that Bonaventure adopted innovative theological views, which generated an altogether novel account of knowledge, I bolster the argument that the Seraphic Doctor is not in fact the last great champion of Augustine, his appeals to Augustine's authority notwithstanding. Instead of a sign of Bonaventure's intellectual fidelity to Augustine, I submit that those appeals are indicative of the Franciscan's skill at the scholastic practice of bolstering personal opinions through efforts to "find" those opinions in authoritative sources. To reinforce my argument that Bonaventure is not *the* Augustinian of the thirteenth century, I demonstrate that Thomas Aquinas *is* such a figure, inasmuch as he maintains Augustine's theological perspective and takes that as the point of departure for his efforts to translate the concept of knowledge that follows from Augustine's theological doctrines into the philosophical terms that were current at the time: those of Aristotle as well as many others.

Questioning yet another common scholarly opinion, I contend that when Franciscans after Bonaventure abandoned illumination, they did not do so because they had come to regard Augustine's views on illumination as outmoded. In point of fact, late medieval Franciscans did not even have his views on illumination in mind when they prepared their critiques of

[1] David Burrell argues that it is important to trace philosophical arguments and controversies to their theological roots, "since theologians of particular doctrinal persuasions will often be drawn to those philosophical approaches which they find consonant with their beliefs." See "Aquinas and Scotus: Contrary Patterns for Philosophical Theology," in *Faith and Freedom: An Interfaith Perspective* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 91. Similarly, Russell L. Friedman suggests that the doctrine of the Trinity is linked to the philosophy of knowledge in the work of many late medieval scholars; see *Medieval Trinitarian Theology from Aquinas to Ockham* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). I am grateful to Nicholas Adams for urging me to develop an approach to historical-philosophical inquiry that would make it possible to identify conceptual continuity and discontinuity amongst thinkers, even when they employ different and similar forms of argumentation, respectively. His guidance helped me see the need for a theologically contextualized reading of medieval arguments concerning divine illumination.

the account. Rather, they reacted against Bonaventure's version of the account, which they had come to perceive as incompatible with the novel theory of knowledge that Bonaventure himself had delineated. Although they eliminated illumination as their eminent predecessor understood it, Bonaventure's successors did not reject the account of knowledge he had invoked illumination to illustrate. They only challenged the idea that divine intervention is the condition of possibility of knowledge as Bonaventure basically understood it, in the interest of promulgating what had become the distinctly Franciscan epistemological point of view.

In turning from this discussion to envisage the possible *future* of Augustine's theory of knowledge, I have two objectives. The first is to identify the sense in which the late medieval rejection of illumination is and is not connected to the rise of quintessentially modern epistemological assumptions and the seemingly insurmountable problems they generate, including the problem of proving the rationality of faith in God and that of establishing the very possibility of knowing anything objectively at all. The second aim is to raise awareness of the Augustinian alternative to the modern epistemological outlook, which has become foreign to modern minds on account of its late medieval decline; to call attention to the fact that this pre-modern paradigm of knowledge does not generate the problems that preoccupy philosophers in the present; and to argue on those grounds that future efforts to resolve the current problems might include a recovery of Augustine's theory of knowledge. In making that recovery, I will argue, a highly effective approach would involve following the precedent of Anselm and Aquinas by translating the bishop's account into forms of philosophical argumentation that are intelligible and relevant in the present context.

Before delving into the discussion of the history and future of Augustine's illumination account that I have just outlined, there are a few introductory matters I need to cover. In the first place, I must mention the main ways Augustine describes illumination, the major interpretations of his account that have been offered by late medieval and modern thinkers, and the problems that are typically associated with the various interpretations. Subsequently, I will sketch the situation in the scholarship on late medieval thought relating to the reception of Augustine's illumination account in that period. After describing the opinions past scholars have formed about Augustine's views on illumination and those of his late medieval readers, I will explain my own way of evaluating these issues, briefly summarizing the conclusions that result from taking this approach, which will be more fully elaborated in the following chapters.

Augustine on Divine Illumination

In his writings, Augustine suggests that the function of illumination in cognition is five-fold. Illumination serves as the source of the cognitive capacity, cognitive content, help with the process of cognition, certitude, and knowledge of God. The quotations below are organized according to these categories. Many of these passages became common citations in medieval scholastic works.

Cognitive capacity

> Truth is found "in the truth itself, the light of the mind."[2]
>
> "There is a mind capable of the intellectual light, by which we distinguish between right and wrong."[3]

Cognitive content

> "If both of us see that what you say is true and that what I say is true then where I ask do we see this? I do not see it in you, nor you in me, but both of us see it in the immutable truth which is higher than our minds … the light from the Lord our God."[4]
>
> "The things which we behold with the mind … we directly perceive as present in that inner light of truth … if one sees what is true … one is being taught … by the realities themselves made manifest by the enlightening action of God from within."[5]

[2] *De Trinitate* 14.7.9 (CCL 50A, 434), trans. Stephen McKenna in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 45 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963): *sed quas veras esse etiam ipse invenit sive apud se sive ipsa mentis duce veritate.*

[3] *De civitate Dei* 12.3 (CCL 48, 358), trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin, 2003): *De vitiis quippe nunc loquimur eius naturae, cui mens inest capax intellegibilis lucis, qua discernitur justum ab injusto.*

[4] *Confessiones* 12.25.35 (CCL 27, 235), trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991): *Si ambo videmus verum esse quod dicis et ambo videmus verum esse quod dico, ubi, quaeso, id videmus? Nec ego utique in te nec tu in me, sed ambo ipsa quae supra mentes nostras est incommutabili veritate. Cum ergo de ipsa domini dei nostri luce non contendamus.*

[5] *De magistro* 12.40 (CCL 29, 197–8), trans. Robert P. Russell O.S.A. in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 59 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1968): *Cum vero de his agitur, quae mente conspicimus, id est intellectu atque ratione, ea quidem loquimur, quae praesentia contuemur in illa interiore luce veritatis, qua ipse … Ergo ne hunc quidem doceo vera dicens vera intuentem; docetur enim non verbis meis, sed ipsis rebus deo intus pandente manifestis.*

"We contemplate the inviolable truth … in the light of the eternal types."[6]

"The ideas [forms/*formae*, species, reasons/*rationes*] are certain original and principle forms of things, i.e. reasons, fixed and unchangeable … eternal and existing always in the same state, contained in the Divine Intelligence. Though they themselves neither come into being nor pass away, nevertheless everything which can come into being and pass away … is formed in accord with these ideas … it is by participation in these that whatever is exists in whatever manner it does exist. … the rational soul … can contemplate these ideas … by a certain inner and intelligible countenance, indeed an eye of its own … in the measure that [the rational soul] has clung to God … [it is] imbued in some way and illumined by Him with light, intelligible light … and discerns … those reasons … called ideas, or forms, or species."[7]

Cognitive process

"The earth is visible and light is visible but the earth cannot be seen unless it is brightened by light. So, likewise for those things, which … everyone understands and acknowledges … to be most true, one must believe they cannot be understood unless they are illumined by something else as by their own sun. Therefore just as in the sun one may remark three certain things, namely that it is, that it shines, and that it illumines, so also in that most hidden God whom you wish to know there are three things, namely, that He is, that He is known, and that He makes other things to be known."[8]

[6] *trin.* 9.6.9 (CCL 50, 301), trans. McKenna: *sed intuemur inviolabilem veritatem ex qua perfecte quantum possumus definiamus non quails sit uniuscuiusque hominis mens, sed quails esse sempiternis rationibus debeat.*

[7] *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* 46 (CCL 44A, 70–3), trans. David L. Mosher in *The Fathers of the Church,* vol. 70 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1982): *ideas … vel formas vel species dicere, ut verbum e verbo transferre videamur … Sunt namque ideae principales quaedam formae vel rationes rerum stabiles atque incommutabiles, quae ipsae formatae non sunt ac per hoc aeternae ac semper eodem modo sese habentes, quae divina intellegentia continentur. Et cum ipsae neque oriantur neque intereant, secundum eas tamen formari dicitur omne quod oriri et interire potest et omne quod oritur et interit. Anima vero negatur eas intueri posse nisi rationalis, ea sui parte qua excellit, id est ipsa mente atque ratione, quasi quadam facie vel oculo suo interiore atque intellegibili … Sed anima rationalis inter eas res, quae sunt a deo conditae omnia superat et deo proxima est, quando pura est; eique in quantum caritate cohaeserit, in tantum ab eo lumine illo intellegibili perfusa quodammodo et inlustrata cernit non per corporeos oculos, sed per ipsius sui principale quo excellit, id est per intellegentiam suam, istas rationes, quarum visione fit beatissima. Quas rationes, ut dictum est, sive ideas sive formas sive species sive rationes licet vocare, et mulits conceditur appelare quod libet, sed paucissimis videre quod verum est.*

[8] *Soliloquia* 1.8.15, trans. Thomas F. Gilligan in *The Fathers of the Church,* vol. 5 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008): *Nam et terra visibilis et lux; sed terra nisi luce inlustrata videri non potest. Ergo et illa, quae in disciplinis traduntur, quae quisquis intellegit verissima esse nulla dubitatione concedit, credendum est ea non posse intellegi, nisi ab alio quasi suo sole inlustrentur.*

"He who teaches us, namely, Christ … is the Wisdom which every rational soul does indeed consult. … If the soul is sometimes mistaken, this does not come about because of any defect on the part of the truth it consulted just as it is not through any defect in the light outside us that our bodily eyes are often deceived."[9]

"The nature of the intellectual mind is so formed as to see those things, which according to the disposition of the Creator are subjoined to intelligible things in the natural order, in a sort of incorporeal light of its own kind, as the eye of the flesh sees the things that lie about it in this corporeal light, of which light it is made to be receptive and to which it is adapted."[10]

"You have seen many true things and you distinguished them by that light which shone upon you when you saw them; raise your eyes to that light itself and fix them upon it, if you can. … It is impossible, however, to fix your gaze upon this, so as to behold it clearly and distinctly."[11]

Cognitive certitude

"That light revealed to our interior eyes these and other things that are likewise certain."[12]

[9] *mag.* 11.38 (CCL 29, 196), trans. Russell: *Ille autem, qui consulitur, docet, qui in interiore homine habitare dictus est Christus, id est incommutabilis dei virtus atque sempiterna sapientia, quam quidem omnis rationalis anima consulit, sed tantum cuique panditur, quantum capere propter propriam siue malam siue bonam voluntatem potest. Et si quando fallitur, non fit vitio consultae veritatis, ut neque huius quae foris est, lucis vitium est, quod corporei oculi saepe falluntur, quam lucem de rebus visibilibus consuli fatemur, ut eas nobis, quantum cernere valemus, ostendat.*

[10] *trin.* 12.15.24 (CCL 50, 378), trans. McKenna *Sed potius credendum est mentis intellectualis ita conditam esse naturam ut rebus intellegibilibus naturali ordine disponente conditore subjuncta sic ista videat in quadam luce sui generis incorporea quemadmodum oculus carnis videt quae in hac corporea luce circumadiacent, cuius lucis capax eique congruens est creatus.*

[11] *trin.* 15.27.50 (CCL 50, 532–3), trans. McKenna: *Nempe ergo multa vera vidisti eaque discreuisti ab illa luce qua tibi lucente vidisti. Attolle oculos in ipsam lucem et eos in ea fige si potes…Sed ad hoc dilucide perspicueque cernendum non potes ibi aciem figere…sed illa lux quae non est quod tu et hoc tibi ostendit aliud esse illas incorporeas simultudines corporum et aliud esse verum quod eis reprobatis intellegentia contuemur.*

[12] *trin.* 15.27.50 (CCL 50A, 533), trans. McKenna: *Haec et alia similiter certa oculis tuis interioribus lux illa monstrauit.*

Knowledge of God

> "It remains for it to be converted to Him by whom it was made more and more to live by the fount of life to see light in His light (Psalm 35:10) and to become perfect, radiant with light, and in complete happiness."[13]

> "The Light by which the soul is illumined in order that it may see and truly understand everything … is God Himself … when it tries to behold the Light, it trembles in its weakness and finds itself unable to do so. … When it is carried off and after being withdrawn from the senses of the body is made present to this vision in a more perfect manner, it also sees above itself that Light, in whose illumination it is enabled to see all the objects that it sees and understands in itself."[14]

Interpretations of Divine Illumination in Augustine's Thought

According to the general scholarly consensus, "no other important aspect of Augustine's philosophy is as difficult to understand and to explain as this notion that God in some way illumines the mind of man."[15] Because of the many alleged ambiguities surrounding illumination theory, some have argued that Augustine never intended to present a coherent and comprehensive account of cognition; either that, or he simply assumed that his meaning would be intelligible to his readers.[16] For one or both

[13] *conf.* 13.4.5, trans. Chadwick: *cui restat converti ad eum, a quo facta est, et magis magisque vivere apud fontem vitae, et in lumine eius videre lumen et perfici et inlustrari et beari.*

[14] *De Genesi ad litteram* 12.31.59, ed. P. Agaesse and A. Solignac in *Oeuvres de St. Augustin*, vols 48–9; trans. John Hammond Taylor, in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, vol. 2 (New York: Paulist Press, 1982): *Nam illud iam ipse Deus est, haec autem creatura, quamvis rationalis et intellectualis ad eius imaginem facta, quae cum conatur lumen illud intueri palpitat infirmitate et minus valet. Inde est tamen quidquid intellegit sicut valet. Cum ergo illuc rapitur et a carnalibus subtracta sensibus illi visioni expressius praesentatur non spatiis localibus, sed modo quodam suo, etiam supra se videt illud quo adiuta videt quidquid etiam in se intellegendo videt.*

[15] Ronald Nash, *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 92; see also Gareth B. Matthews, "Knowledge and Illumination," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 180.

[16] R. Allers, "St. Augustine's Doctrine on Illumination," *Franciscan Studies* 12 (1952), 27–46.

of these reasons, some scholars have said that the bishop made no effort to compile a doctrine of knowledge in one specific work but remained content to scatter his remarks about the divine light all throughout his writings.[17]

Although many who hold these viewpoints proclaim it impossible and pointless to try to decipher Augustine's meaning concerning illumination, others insist there is an account to be found in the pages of his works and strive to uncover it. The interpretations that have been formulated by scholars since the later Middle Ages – when diverse opinions concerning the nature of illumination began to emerge for what seems to be the first time – can be classified into two main categories.[18]

Thomism

According to the interpretation of illumination that falls within the first category, that of the thirteenth-century theologian Thomas Aquinas, the divine light simply imparts an intrinsic cognitive capacity to form ideas in the way Aristotle described.[19] In other words, it is the source of the mind's competence to form mental images of sense objects and subsequently employ those images in formulating ideas about related realities, which is to engage in abstractive reasoning.

The interpretations that fall within the second category define illumination in one way or another as an extrinsic influence, or as a force that is super-added to the cognitive capacity. In this instance, illumination does not provide an intrinsic capacity to form ideas from experience or "from below." Rather, it bestows the ideas themselves. By some accounts, these ideas that flow from above provide the very content of thought; in others, they regulate thought processes or verify the certitude of the thoughts the mind formulates.

[17] C .E. Scheutzinger, *The German Controversy on Saint Augustine's Illumination Theory* (New York: Pageant Press, 1960), 11ff.

[18] For a more elaborate treatment of the interpretations that have been offered in the late medieval and modern periods, see Nash (2003) and Scheutzinger (1960). For an account that covers the medieval period through the thirteenth century, see Lydia Schumacher, "Divine Illumination," in *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

[19] Some modern advocates of this account include Maurice De Wulf, Charles Boyer, and F. Cayre.

Ontologism

On the ontologist interpretation propounded by Renaissance figures such as Marsilio Ficino, the seventeenth-century philosopher Nicholas Malebranche, and later modern scholars like Vicenzo Gioberti, G. Ubaghs, and Johannes Hessen, the divine light immediately imparts all of the content of knowledge, whether it be about empirical reality or abstract ideas formed upon the basis of experience.[20] As a result of illumination's intellectual impact in these respects, all things are said to be seen "in God," who gives the mind His own ideas about everything there is.

Innatism

Another interpretation of illumination, perhaps the most popular amongst contemporary scholars, holds that the light is the source of a set of innate ideas for all things from ordinary objects to abstract concepts like goodness, truth, beauty, and justice.[21] Following Plato, Augustine apparently held these ideas (ultimately located in the mind of God) to be essential to human knowing, insofar as "everything which the bodily sense touches and which is called sensible is constantly changing … [and] that which does not remain stable cannot be perceived; therefore, truth in any genuine sense is not something to be expected from the bodily senses."[22]

[20] Nash, *The Light of the Mind*, 102ff. and Scheutzinger *The German Controversy on Saint Augustine's Illumination Theory* (1960), 30ff.

[21] John Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); see also Richard Ackworth, "Two Studies in Augustine's Thought: God and Human Knowledge," *The Downside Review* 75 (1957), 207–14; Vernon J. Bourke, "Light of Love: Augustine on Moral Illumination," *Mediaevalia* 4 (1978), 13–31; Brian Hardin, "Skepticism, Illumination and Christianity in Augustine's Contra Academicos," *Augustinian Studies* 34:2 (2003), 197–212; Peter King, "Augustine on the Impossibility of Teaching," *Metaphilosophy* 29 (1998), 179–95; Robert Lauder, "Augustine: Illumination, Mysticism, and Person," in *Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994); Louis H. Mackey, "The Mediator Mediated: Faith and Reason in Augustine's *De magistro,*" *Franciscan Studies* 42 (1982), 135–65; Gareth B. Matthews, "Knowledge and Illumination," 171–85; Michael Mendelson, "By the Things Themselves: Eudaimonism, Direct Acquaintance, and Illumination in Augustine's *De magistro,*" *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 39:4 (2001), 467–89; Joseph Owens, "Faith, Ideas, Illumination, and Experience," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 440–59; Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002), 103–7.

[22] *div. qu.* 9, trans. Mosher.

In order to eliminate the threat of skepticism that accompanies the affirmation that perceptual experience of changing reality cannot afford any true or certain knowledge, innatist interpreters argue, Augustine demonstrates as Plato does that the mind has access to eternal and unchanging intelligible truths.[23] By turning away from the changing senses and into the self where these ideas for things are stored, the mind recovers or is illumined by its deep-seated ideas and thereby gains access to the genuine knowledge of created realities that it cannot actually derive from the experience of created reality itself.

Although Augustine rejects the supposedly Platonic notion that this act of illumination, which Plato described in terms of recollection, involves remembering ideas perceived in a previous life, he maintains that these ideas are in some sense constitutive of the human mind.[24] In fact, they are the sign of Christ's presence in the mind. To make use of them is to come under the influence of His continuous illumination, which saves human knowledge from skepticism.

Franciscanism

In the standard Franciscan interpretation, most famously formulated by Bonaventure, illumination is the source of certain *a priori* or transcendental concepts. These concepts do not afford the actual content of knowledge as in the ontologist and innatist interpretations. Rather, they regulate the process of cognition so as to ensure that the concepts the mind generates with respect to its experiences correspond to the divine ideas about reality and are therefore absolutely certain. Some of Bonaventure's Franciscan colleagues, including William of Auvergne, Roger Bacon, and Roger Marston, went so far as to say (after the eleventh-century Arab scholar Avicenna) that the mind that performs the work of the human mind is that of God Himself.[25] For his own part, Bonaventure preferred to argue that human knowing is something like a cooperative effort or shared "concursus" on the part of the human and divine minds.

[23] Rist, *Augustine* 42ff.

[24] Ibid., 31.

[25] E. Portalie has more recently espoused this interpretation of illumination in an article on Augustine reprinted in *A Guide to the Thought of St. Augustine*, trans. Ralph Bastian (Chicago: Regnery, 1960).

Idealism

The idealist interpretation that has recently been espoused by Bruce Bubacz resembles the Franciscan one in many respects.[26] For Bubacz, illumination is the source of *a priori* concepts, which he calls "principal ideas." The mind gains access to these ideas when it attends to the "inner man" where the ideas are stored. In Bubacz' view, the innate nature of the principal ideas does not undermine the empirical sources of human knowledge. On what he calls his "cartographic model," the principal ideas only provide a blueprint or map for comprehending the "terrain" of created reality and for making sense of the objects that are encountered there. In sum, the principal ideas act as rules of judgment. In the last chapter of his work, Bubacz likens Augustinian illumination construed "cartographically" to idealist epistemologies, and thus recasts the theory in a "non-theistic" manner, which he hopes contemporary philosophers will find plausible.

Formalism

Formalism is the interpretation of illumination that was advocated by the renowned medievalist, Étienne Gilson. According to Gilson, Augustine never gave a full-fledged account of knowledge and illumination. Even so, it is possible to deduce from his writings an account of divine illumination that seems to anticipate the more systematic theory of Bonaventure and other Franciscans, in which the divine light is not only the source of the natural light of the human intellect, but also the means through which certain divine ideas are impressed on the mind. Although those ideas do not produce the content of cognition itself, nor "take the place of the intellect when it thinks the truth,"[27] Gilson nonetheless affirms that the innate ideas act as the rules by which the mind validates ideas. In this way, he concludes, illumination plays a "formal" role in human cognition; it "checks" the truth of the ideas the mind forms of its own accord so as to serve as the final guarantor of their certitude.

[26] Bruce Bubacz, *Saint Augustine's Theory of Knowledge: A Contemporary Analysis* (New York: Edwin Mellin Press, 1981); idem., "Augustine's Illumination Theory and Epistemic Structuring," *Augustinian Studies* 11 (1980), 35–48.

[27] Étienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, trans. L. E. M. Lynch (London: Victor Gollancz, 1961), 79. For the full discussion of illumination, see 77–97.

Problems in interpretation

Although all these interpretations of illumination assume that the divine light is the source of the natural human capacity to make sense of the world, only the reading of Thomas Aquinas limits the light to that. What human persons passively receive through illumination on his account is the ability to be active knowing agents. From this perspective, the mind is illumined in order to illumine reality as it generates its own ideas. In the "extrinsic" interpretations, by contrast, the mind is simply illumined. It assumes a passive role in its own acts of knowing, to the extent that illumination provides not only a capacity to form ideas but also the ideas themselves, which either offer the very content of thought, sustain the process of cognition, or establish the certitude of human notions.

While many scholars are prepared to recognize the genius of Thomas' interpretation of illumination, and they often acknowledge that there is nothing intrinsically problematic about identifying illumination with source of the intellectual capacity, they virtually unanimously deny that this reading captures what Augustine meant by illumination.[28] Some go so far as to say that Aquinas' Aristotelian rendering of illumination is "contrary to the [Platonic] spirit of Augustine's philosophy,"[29] according to which God gives ideas to the mind "from above" as opposed to enabling them to be formed by the mind itself, as if "from below."

For many readers, Platonic recollection or Augustinian illumination and Aristotelian abstraction represent mutually exclusive theories of knowledge.[30] In spite of the virtues of the Aristotelian interpretation of Augustine, consequently, that interpretation is not generally believed to find support in the writings of Augustine himself.[31] According to some readers, Thomas

[28] Ibid., 83–6; Lauder, "Augustine: Illumination, Mysticism, and Person," 181; TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian*, 105.

[29] Nash, *The Light of the Mind*, 100.

[30] This view is espoused by Mary Beth Ingham and Mechthild Dryer in *The Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004). See also Gordon Leff, *The Dissolution of the Medieval Outlook: An Essay on Intellectual and Spiritual Change in the Fourteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1996). The author writes that illumination and abstraction as "two modes of knowledge are fundamentally antithetical and can be legitimately regarded as the touchstone of the difference between Augustinian and Aristotelian epistemology" (p.9).

[31] Étienne Gilson, "Réflexions sur la controverse S. Thomas-S. Augustin," in *Mélanges Mandonnet: etudes d'histoire littéraire et doctrinale du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Vrin, 1930), 371–83.

was well aware that he undermined Augustine's real views when he formulated his own thoughts on the matter.[32]

The interpretations that construe illumination as some sort of extrinsic intellectual conditioning are normally said to present viable readings of Augustine's texts on illumination, inasmuch as they emphasize the radical reliance of the human intellect on the ongoing aid of the divine ideas in what is supposed to be a characteristically Augustinian way. Unfortunately, however, these interpretations are accompanied by numerous philosophical problems. Where illumination offers all cognitive content as in the ontologist account, for instance, it appears to provide premature recourse to the thoughts or even the vision of God. In this case and in that of the innatist interpretation, illumination bypasses the indispensable empirical sources of human knowledge, promoting a dualistic perspective according to which the senses are inferior to and unnecessary for the work of the mind.

Moreover, when illumination is said to interfere with the cognitive process, as per the Franciscan interpretation, it seems to overtake the work that is technically proper to the mind. Here, human acts of knowing become a "zero-sum game"[33] in which human and divine minds compete to accomplish one and the same task, which is the specifically human task of knowing. In cases where illumination serves to guarantee the truth and certitude of the mind's ideas, it is hard to say how the mind's certainty is anything but artificial; and if the mind's certainty is not generated of its own accord but imposed from the outside, knowledge becomes subject to skepticism: the very end that illumination is introduced to help the intellect evade.[34]

With the situation in the scholarship on Augustine's illumination account in view, it becomes fairly plain to see why questions concerning the purpose and plausibility of Augustine's theory of knowledge have long remained so controversial and unresolved. The impasse in the interpretation of Augustine's account is attributable to the fact that there seems to be no philosophically viable way to interpret illumination that remains faithful to Augustine's intentions. The scholar must opt to construe illumination in a manner that undermines the mind's integrity or to preserve that integrity at the high cost of denying that God interferes in human cognition in the ways Augustine seems to imply that He does.

[32] Nash, *The Light of the Mind*, 96.

[33] This is how David Burrell describes it in *Faith and Freedom*, 171.

[34] Étienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), 447.

Interpretations of Divine Illumination in Medieval Thought

In the late nineteenth century, there was a great flourishing of scholarship on the Middle Ages. Around this time, Pope Leo XIII issued his encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, which called Catholic thinkers to conduct new inquiries into scholastic thought. His summons was motivated by the desire to glean resources from the works of Aquinas for dealing with the challenges to religious faith that were posed by the predominant philosophies of the times. Around and after the time of his call, an immense body of scholarship on high medieval thought was constructed, and the academic assumptions that crystallized during the period – above all in the work of Étienne Gilson – have in many cases been taken for granted by medievalists ever since.[35]

For the present purposes, the most important of these assumptions have to do with the division of late-medieval thinkers into "Augustinian" or "Aristotelian" schools.[36] While thirteenth-century Augustinians supposedly advocated the illumination account, Aristotelians allegedly abandoned it. Amongst medievalists, the accepted view is that members of the Franciscan order, which was founded in the early thirteenth century, were the last great proponents of the Augustinian tradition that went into decline at the end of the century, mainly, if ironically, owing to intellectual maneuvers made by the Franciscans themselves.

This view is based on two further presuppositions. The first is that Augustine never had a clearly defined theory of knowledge in mind when he referred to illumination. The second is that Franciscans were especially conservative scholars who wanted to give systematic expression to Augustine's account for the very first time.[37] Bonaventure is the Franciscan who is believed to have accomplished this most effectively; he is the one who codified the interpretation of Augustine according to which the divine light is an extrinsic influence that supervises acts of knowing in order to ensure the truth and certitude of the mind's concepts.

[35] See Gilson's *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*; as it concerns illumination, the most complete accounts that have appeared in contemporary scholarship and that draw their inspiration from Gilson are Patrick James Doyle, "The Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory in the Franciscan School" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1984), and Steven P. Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and the Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

[36] Maurice De Wulf, "Augustinisme et Aristotélisme au XIIIe siècle: contribution á la classification des écoles scolastiques," *Revue Neoscolastique* 8 (1901), 151–66.

[37] Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance,* vol. 1, 134.

When Franciscans established themselves as conservative followers of Augustine's tradition, they supposedly set themselves up against "progressive" members of the Dominican order, which was also founded early in the thirteenth century. Thomas Aquinas was perhaps the most important scholar of that order. Together with his teacher Albert the Great, Aquinas allegedly made a daring and drastic departure from the longstanding tradition of Augustine in his efforts to accommodate the recently rediscovered works of Aristotle. At the expense of eliminating Augustinian illumination, Aquinas appropriated Aristotle's idea that the mind maintains an independent capacity to engage in knowing by abstraction.

By invoking Augustine, most medievalists assume, Franciscans made one last attempt to give his understanding of knowledge a chance to compete with Aristotle's.[38] If Franciscans at the end of the thirteenth century rejected illumination and other traditional Augustinian arguments, it is because they finally accepted the fact that Augustine had offered no philosophy of knowledge as feasible as Aristotle's.[39] While Augustine, as Bonaventure interpreted him, posited an intellectually offensive divine interference in human knowledge, Aristotle upheld the autonomous power of the human mind, while explaining the mind's operations at an unprecedented level of complexity and precision.

Since Aristotle's ideas were more philosophically plausible than Augustine's, late thirteenth-century Franciscan thinkers, above all John Duns Scotus, finally determined to abandon the tradition of Augustine, especially his account of knowledge by illumination, as Aquinas had supposedly already done. Scotus' decision to side with Aristotle over Augustine has led many medievalists to conclude that there is a basic break within the Franciscan intellectual tradition itself.[40] This break occurred as a result

[38] Doyle, "Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory," 4.

[39] Ibid., 114. In *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, Gilson writes that thirteenth-century Franciscans put forth "an attempt to develop an Augustinian doctrine of knowledge employing in some way the notions which had been introduced by Aristotle." Yet "the Middle Ages searched the writings of Augustine in vain for a theory of the formation of concepts comparable to that of Aristotle," inasmuch as a doctrine of abstraction is impossible to find in Augustine. These words of Gilson are quoted by Doyle in "Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory in the Franciscan School," 14–15; cf. Étienne Gilson, "Sur quelques difficultés de l'illumination augustinienne," *Revue néoscolastique de philosophie* 36 (1934), 321–31.

[40] Doyle, "Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory," 6; Ingham and Dreyer, *Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus*, 22–3. Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5: "we cannot talk of a Franciscan tradition of theology that would embrace Bonaventure and Scotus, the two most significant Franciscan theologians of the middle ages. Scotus disagrees with Bonaventure almost as much as he disagrees with the Dominican Aquinas. On the other hand, much Franciscan theology after Scotus was driven by the agenda set by Scotus."

of a growing preference for Aristotle over Augustine in the thirteenth century.[41] While the earlier Franciscan school included genuine champions of Augustine such as Bonaventure, the later school was led by the likes of Scotus, who adopted an Aristotelianism that anticipated the rise of modern philosophical ideologies.

Re-interpreting the History of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge

For all their differences, scholarly interpreters of illumination in the thought of Augustine and his medieval readers appear to have one thing in common: they seem to assume that the most effective way to analyze arguments concerning illumination is to turn directly to them, that is, to take medieval writings on illumination at face value, and to take these face-value readings as the basis for efforts to determine what Augustine means when he speaks of the divine light as well as to identify who upholds his views on this topic in the later Middle Ages. From my perspective, this approach to interpreting illumination fails to take into consideration the fact that medieval philosophers from Augustine to the thirteenth century were theologians first and foremost. In other words, they conceived their views on *divine* illumination in keeping with preconceived *theological* notions.

It seems reasonable to affirm that most contemporary philosophers do not work from an explicitly theological point of view. In stark contrast to Augustine and his medieval readers, philosophers today exhibit a tendency to analyze questions of ordinary knowledge under one rubric and questions of religious knowledge under another. Because they presuppose these separate categories, which did not exist for Augustine and his premodern interpreters, it seems unlikely that they will avoid projecting their categories on to medieval texts – that is, unless they can devise a way to interpret the texts and the theory of divine illumination discussed in them from the theological outlook that the authors of the texts took for granted.

In addition to helping determine what Augustine and others meant by illumination, a mode of inquiry that takes theological context into consideration would make it possible to identify where there is continuity

[41] Leff, *Dissolution of the Medieval Outlook*, 26.

and discontinuity of thought on illumination amongst Augustine and his late medieval readers. The latter commonly employed a method of arguing for their own opinions that involved "finding" those opinions in the writings of authorities who stood for a cause with which they wished to associate themselves – trustworthy tradition, in the case of Augustine, and progressive thinking, in the case of Aristotle.

Since those who invoked Augustine were usually more concerned with bolstering their views than his or those of any other authority, it is not entirely safe to assume that the scholars who appealed most often to Augustine were genuinely Augustinian scholars, that is, to identify continuity of thought on the basis of face-value readings of the relevant texts. Incidentally, the same holds true in the case of charges scholastic thinkers sometimes leveled against authorities. Such challenges were not normally directed against the authoritative source itself but against what was deemed to be a questionable contemporary interpretation of that source. When a scholar questioned an opinion attributed to Augustine or Anselm, for example, he was not likely undermining the authority of the authorities themselves but arguing against colleagues who espoused a reading of Augustine or Anselm he found problematic. Later on, I will suggest that this is precisely what Aquinas was doing when he criticized Augustine: he was criticizing the *Franciscan* Augustine.

Because scholastics used the names of authorities as "code names" for supporters and opponents of the views they themselves wanted to establish, the contemporary interpreter of scholastic texts must always bear in mind that the substance of scholastic argument counts more than the authorities invoked in the presentation of the argument. For this reason, it is essential to look not merely to the philosophical terms that medieval thinkers employed but also to the source of the meaning those terms and arguments were being assigned, which in the case of divine illumination is theological.

To this end, I am proposing to adopt a theological method in my inquiry into the history of Augustine's illumination theory. Where this method is utilized, the investigation of any divine illumination theory begins with a preliminary study of the underlying doctrine of God and the corollary doctrine of creation and above all human minds as images of God. The latter doctrine determines the nature of the cognitive work the mind performs as an image, and has implications for the way the effects of the fall and redemption on the image, as well as the cognitive process involved in re-conforming to the image, are construed.

Since illumination serves to illustrate cognition – or the process of conforming to the image of God – my argument is that these preliminary

theological inquiries are the key to determining what the operation of the light involves on any given account. Although undertaking such investigations might seem like a roundabout way to arrive at an interpretation of illumination, and it is admittedly exceptional in the scholarship, I have already indicated my reasons for taking this approach. In a contemporary situation where the theological mindset of Augustine and his medieval interpreters is not automatically assumed, the most direct way to discern what they meant by illumination is in fact the roundabout way through which the modern mind takes on the medieval thinker's theological point of view.

Augustine

In the first chapter, on Augustine, I will employ the theological method of interpretation outlined above to determine the function of illumination in the bishop's thought. In order to do this, I will conduct a focused study of his treatise *De Trinitate*, which will be supplemented by an excursus into *De Genesi ad litteram* (and occasionally, references to *Confessiones*). These two theological works of Augustine's maturity, which complement one another and were composed over roughly the same period of time, are not normally consulted by interpreters of illumination, who tend to turn straight to the most famous references to illumination Augustine makes in early writings such as *Soliloquia* and *De magistro*.

In the first half of *De Trinitate*, Augustine outlines his doctrine of God. For this reason, my study begins there. Next, I turn to *De Genesi ad litteram*, where the bishop explains what it means to say that the created order and above all the human mind are made in the image of God, and to acknowledge that the image was effaced at the fall. Returning to the second half of *De Trinitate*, I cover Augustine's account of the effects Christ's redemptive work can have on those who lost God's image at the fall and discuss as he does what the gradual process of re-conforming to that image entails. In this context, I explain the sense in which the seven famous, albeit controversial, "psychological analogies" to the Trinity, which Augustine outlines in the second half of his treatise, are designed to facilitate that process. Inasmuch as illumination illustrates cognition, which is for Augustine the process of re-conforming the mind to God, this study enables me to draw some conclusions as to what Augustine means by illumination, especially in his early works.

This theologically contextualized investigation of illumination theory will reveal that, contrary to popular opinion, Augustine conceived the

light as the source of an intrinsic cognitive capacity that the mind gradually recovers as it forms a habit of operating by faith in God – that illumination is not, therefore, some form of extrinsic intellectual conditioning. As the study of *De Trinitate* throws these things into relief, the theologically contextualized reading of the illumination account underscores the status of *De Trinitate* as a pedagogical work intended to facilitate the efforts of intellectually-gifted readers to harness their whole minds for the understanding and advancement of Christian faith. In this way, the chapter corroborates recent scholarly work that highlights the pastoral purpose of the text and thereby clears it of some serious accusations that have been leveled against it, accusations which only carry weight when that purpose is overlooked.

Anselm

The second chapter, on Anselm, represents a first attempt to make a statement about what it means to update Augustine's views on knowledge and illumination. On the grounds that Anselm upheld Augustine's theological viewpoint, I will bypass some of the preliminary theological inquiries and move straight into a study of the way Anselm envisages the acts of imaging God – or knowing – and re-conforming to His image.

The argument of this chapter turns on the contention that Anselm's *Monologion* and *Proslogion* fulfill much the same pedagogical purpose as the two halves of Augustine's *De Trinitate* – as Anselm himself intimates. In the first text, Anselm delineates his obviously Augustinian doctrine of the Trinity and creation in the image of God. In the second, he presents his notorious argument for the existence of God. Far from the sort of *a priori* proof for God that many modern readers have imagined it to be, I contend that this argument is a "formula" for conforming to the image of God – for becoming "living proof" for His existence – not unlike the psychological analogies Augustine presents in the second half of his treatise on the Trinity.

Anselm claims to have received this conceptual tool for conforming to God in a moment of illumination. Furthermore, he claims to present it in the interest of helping those seeking to undergo an increase in illumination, which is simply to undergo the renewal of the image of God. Although Anselm offers his resource in a form of argument that differs significantly from Augustine's, for the sake of relevance in his eleventh-century intellectual context, he seems to have the same theologically-motivated goal as Augustine in mind, which is to help his readers learn

to see all reality in light of faith in God, as if by second nature. By translating Augustine's message into what were then more helpful terms, I conclude that Anselm updates Augustine's pastoral project.

Divine illumination in transition

The years intervening between the death of Anselm in 1109 and 1257, when Bonaventure became Minister General of the Franciscan order, were years of tremendous transition in the West. The first step toward showing that Bonaventure developed innovative views on knowledge and illumination involves a discussion of the changes that transpired during this period which made it possible for him to re-define knowledge and illumination, even on the authority of Augustine. In early sections of the chapter, I describe some of the most important intellectual phenomena that occurred during this time, including the founding of the universities, the development of scholastic method, and the translation movement which introduced the writings of Arab and Greek philosophers, especially Avicenna and Aristotle, to Latin thinkers. In this context, I briefly outline Avicenna's account of knowledge, which exerted a strong influence on early Franciscan thought.

Later in the chapter, I cover some of the key changes that took place in society at this time, explaining how the Franciscan and Dominican orders were founded in response to some of the new religious needs. From this point, I proceed to discuss how the new orders of mendicant friars became involved in the life of the young University of Paris. In demonstrating how the Franciscans in particular went about the task of establishing their own intellectual tradition in the academic context, I note that they adopted the new theology of Richard of St. Victor. This theology lent itself to the appropriation of an Avicennian philosophical outlook, which Franciscans articulated in the terms of Augustine for the sake of associating themselves with his longstanding tradition. The mature expression of the theological and philosophical views that early Franciscan scholars developed can be found in the writings of Bonaventure.

Bonaventure

In chapter four, I resume the use of the full-fledged theological method of interpretation I employed in investigating Augustine's thought on

illumination. I start by explaining the description of God's Triune nature which Bonaventure derives from the work of the twelfth-century mystic, Richard of St. Victor, following the example set by his predecessors in the first generation of Franciscan scholars. From that account, I demonstrate that Bonaventure deduces a novel theory about the natural order and the human being as creations in God's image.

In order to give philosophical articulation to the innovative philosophical views that follow from his theological perspective, Bonaventure turns to Avicenna, not explicitly, but implicitly, through his efforts to codify and elaborate the metaphysics and theory of knowledge that had been formulated by his Franciscan forebears. In Bonaventure's theory of knowledge, the re-interpretation of Anselm's argument along Avicennian lines as an *a priori* argument for God's existence – the first of its kind in the West – had an instrumental role to play in giving an account of St. Francis' intimate cognitive connection with God.

In keeping with the new and distinctly Franciscan understanding of what it means to reflect God's image or to know, I show that Bonaventure advances an unprecedented account of conformity to God in his landmark treatise, the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, a work that is typically thought to be the last and best medieval expression of the ascent to the knowledge of God which Augustine outlined in works like *De Trinitate*. There and elsewhere, Bonaventure depicts illumination as an extrinsic divine aid that regulates human thought processes in order to ensure that knowledge as he defines it is readily attainable for those who express love for God in a distinctly Franciscan way.

By expressing such views in the language of Augustine and Anselm, Bonaventure lends authoritative support to his Franciscan ideals. Although his invocation of Augustine and Anselm has led the majority of scholars to conclude that the Franciscan General is the last great medieval champion of the Augustinian tradition, my efforts to identify the connection between Bonaventure's theological assumptions and philosophical perspectives confirm that he departs from the longstanding Augustinian tradition on the authority of Augustine himself.

Aquinas

The purpose of the fifth chapter, on Aquinas, is to throw the non-Augustinian character of Bonaventure's thought on illumination into fuller relief by arguing that it is Aquinas rather than Bonaventure who works in continuity with Augustine in the thirteenth century. While advancing

this argument, incidentally, I will gesture once again toward what is involved in updating Augustine's views on knowledge and illumination in a new context. My argument for Aquinas' Augustinianism runs counter to the majority view, according to which Thomas abandoned traditional Augustinian views on knowledge, including illumination and an *a priori* proof for God's existence, in favor of the Aristotelian theory of knowledge by abstraction and *a posteriori* proofs.

That argument is based on the common knowledge that Aquinas, like Anselm, upheld Augustine's essential theological positions, even though he rendered them more precise in many respects. On the uncontested grounds that Aquinas is a theological Augustinian, I will bypass some of the preliminary theological inquiries as I did in the chapter on Anselm and turn directly to an investigation of the way Aquinas conceives the nature of knowing or imaging God in his *Summa Theologiae*.

That work, I contend, falls within a genre of pedagogical works, together with Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Anselm's *Monologion* and *Proslogion*, which are designed to carry the reader all the way through the process of conforming to the image of God. Following the example of his Augustinian forebears, Aquinas seeks to facilitate this process by providing contextually relevant conceptual resources for engaging in it, namely, his famous "five ways" of demonstrating God's existence. Although Aquinas admittedly rejects the Franciscan interpretation of Augustine's ideas about knowledge and illumination in his *Summa*, I show that he continues to advocate genuinely Augustinian notions about cognition even while advancing them in a new intellectual situation through the invocation of authorities such as Aristotle.

Divine illumination in decline

The purpose of the sixth chapter is to explain why late thirteenth-century Franciscans, above all John Duns Scotus, finally abandoned the account of knowledge by illumination. My study begins with a brief treatment of Peter John Olivi, a controversial Franciscan figure who came under the influence of Bonaventure's teachings during his studies in Paris, and who was the first to call attention to inconsistencies in the interpretation of illumination as an extrinsic or supervisory influence that his Franciscan master had espoused. Although Bonaventure had welcomed the interference of the divine in human knowing, taking it as a sign of the mind's intimate relationship with God, successors such as Olivi regarded that intervention as intellectually offensive and philosophically problematic.

In the wake of Olivi's critique, Henry of Ghent, a member of the clergy and a great Franciscan sympathizer, recast the role of illumination in the hope of enabling the account as Bonaventure more or less understood it to evade the problems Olivi had justly associated with it. John Duns Scotus rejected all forms of illumination theory derived from Bonaventure once and for all when he pronounced Henry's attempts to argue for illumination irreparably flawed. Although Scotus and many of his Franciscan contemporaries abandoned illumination, I will note that the version of the account they rejected was not Augustine's but Bonaventure's, or the reduced version of Bonaventure's theory that was formulated by Henry of Ghent. Contrary to common opinion, consequently, Augustine's account was never pronounced implausible; it was simply obscured.

Though late thirteenth-century Franciscans ceased to invoke illumination, I contend that they continued to proffer the Franciscan definition of knowledge that had been essential to their intellectual tradition from the start. By eradicating what came to be regarded as a philosophical inconsistency in Bonaventure's definition of knowledge, they only carried his account to its logical conclusion, positioning it to prevail against competing accounts, above all, that of Aquinas.

Toward the end of this chapter, I will highlight how efforts to interpret the philosophical views of key medieval thinkers like Augustine, Anselm, Bonaventure, and Aquinas in their proper theological context tends to reconfigure the picture of the late medieval intellectual landscape that is generally portrayed in the scholarly literature. In fact, those efforts reinforce the reverse of many common opinions about the character of late medieval thought. They confirm, for example, that illumination was not some kind of extrinsic and thus implausible intellectual influence for Augustine, but the source of an intrinsic cognitive capacity that is gradually recovered as the mind regains the ability to work for its originally intended purpose, namely, for the glory of God; that Aquinas rather than Bonaventure upheld a genuinely Augustinian outlook on knowledge; that there is not so great a break between the schools of Bonaventure and Scotus as is normally supposed; in summary, that the standard divisions between "Augustinian" and "Aristotelian" philosophers of the Middle Ages are not entirely tenable and might plausibly be replaced with *theological* categories.

The introduction of theological categories would call for a distinction between Augustinian theologians who put Aristotle and many other thinkers to use in advancing an apologetic agenda, and Victorine theologians who put Avicenna into the service of articulating a certain

spirituality. In other words, it would lead contemporary scholars to draw the lines of medieval schools of thought between Dominicans and Franciscans rather than Aristotelians and Augustinians, and thus to study late medieval intellectual phenomena from the perspective of late medieval thinkers, that is, from a perspective that is theological.

In closing this chapter I will note that, in recent years, numerous scholars have called attention to the fact that many of the philosophical views that late medieval Franciscans such as John Duns Scotus promoted bear striking resemblance to those that came to dominate in the modern period, many of which have had problematic repercussions. In light of that, I will evaluate the extent to which a connection between late medieval Franciscan and modern thought can and cannot be made. Here, my main line of argument will be that Franciscan ideals, especially epistemological ones, served and still serve a highly beneficial purpose within the context of Franciscan faith. If they came to cause problems, this can only be because the ideals were removed from their original context and used for purposes that the Franciscans themselves never envisaged or intended.

Divine illumination: the future of Augustine's theory of knowledge

Although I resist holding Franciscan thinkers accountable for the later de-contextualization of their views, I will nevertheless acknowledge in the last chapter of this book that the de-contextualization of the Franciscan philosophy of knowledge did apparently occur. Furthermore, I will briefly describe the epistemological consequences of this intellectual phenomenon, above all, the genesis of the problems of proving the rationality of faith and the very possibility of knowledge that plague philosophers today.

As I will have hinted earlier, knowledge as Augustine and his followers understood it does not create such insurmountable problems. In light of that, I will suggest in concluding that contemporary philosophers may wish to go about addressing these problems in a new way in future. This way would not involve relying on or reacting against the epistemological presuppositions that have been handed down as a result of certain late medieval epistemological developments, but recovering Augustine's account of knowledge by illumination after the manner of Anselm and Aquinas, namely, by translating it into philosophical terms that are intelligible and relevant today.

1

Augustine (AD 354–430)

Introduction

When scholars turn to interpret Augustine's account of knowledge by illumination, they usually look first at works such as *Soliloquia*, and above all *De magistro*, which he composed shortly after his conversion in 386, for these contain some of the most well-known and extended passages dealing explicitly with illumination. Those who consult later works normally only do so to obtain additional references to the divine light rather than theological context. If neglecting to consider Augustinian illumination within its proper theological framework complicates the effort to interpret its function, as I have already suggested, then one may wonder why the scholarly habit of taking Augustine's illumination arguments at face value has not been challenged in the past.

So far as I can tell, there are at least two main reasons why divine illumination has not yet been the subject of a theological interpretation. The first is that the treatise where Augustine offers the theological context most pertinent to the interpretation of illumination, namely *De Trinitate*, has been criticized on the basis of misapprehensions for quite some time. For the most part, the account of the relevant sections of *De Trinitate* I offer in this chapter presupposes the unity and coherence of the work, which scholars in the fairly recent past have called into question, along with the doctrine of the Trinity that is developed in the first half of the

Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge,
by Lydia Schumacher

book and the seven psychological analogies to the Trinity that are delineated in the second.[1]

The reason my engagement in the controversies surrounding *De Trinitate* is limited is that I assume knowledge of the comprehensive work other scholars have done to settle those controversies. While Rowan Williams, Lewis Ayres, and Michel René Barnes have addressed the problems associated with Augustine's Trinitarian theology and theological anthropology, both these and others have met the charges against the psychological analogies by showing that the treatise is a progressive line of inquiry designed to reform the reader into the image of God.[2]

Assuming that it is such an inquiry, I elaborate on the ways in which the treatise is designed to carry the reader through the process of conforming to the image of God, in an effort to interpret the doctrine of illumination that serves to illustrate that process. Apart from the groundbreaking efforts of other scholars who have worked on Augustine's theology, this effort to read his account of illumination in its theological context would not be possible. The fact that these efforts have been put forward only fairly recently may be one reason why a reading of illumination that is attentive to the theological context of *De Trinitate* has not been given in the past.

In her recent book, Carol Harrison discusses a second aspect of the situation in Augustinian studies that has undoubtedly encouraged the scholarly tendency to read Augustine's writings on illumination, especially the early ones, without reference to the theological context he later elucidates in works like *De Trinitate*. For over a century, she explains, scholars have operated on the assumption that Augustine underwent an intellectual revolution just before he became Bishop of Hippo in 396. In writings,

[1] Incidentally, Augustine appropriated and transformed some of these analogies from the late antique philosophical tradition, as Edward Booth notes in "St. Augustine's 'notitia sui' related to Aristotle and the Early Neo-Platonists," *Augustiniana* 29 (1979), 97–124.

[2] For responses to the criticisms associated with Augustine's Trinitarian theology, see Lewis Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth Century Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); idem., *Augustine and the Trinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Michel René Barnes, "Augustine in Contemporary Trinitarian Theology," *Theological Studies* 56:2 (1995), 237–50; idem., "Rereading Augustine on the Trinity," in *The Trinity: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Trinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Luigi Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Rowan Williams, "De Trinitate," in *Augustine through the Ages* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999). For works that address the charges against the psychological analogies, see the notes to 56–7 "Criticisms of the psychological analogies" below.

including the *Confessiones*, dating from this time, Augustine began to work out his mature theological perspective. Because the doctrines he codified during this period are supposedly unidentifiable in the more "philosophical" writings that date to the decade after his conversion in 386, scholars virtually universally see 396 rather than 386 as the real turning-point in his thought.[3]

As Harrison points out, Peter Brown, in his immensely influential biography of Augustine, perpetuated this notion that there are "two Augustines": the Augustine of the early works, a young devotee of Christian philosophy, and the Augustine of 396 and onwards, a mature and devout clergyman.[4] Following the publication of Brown's book in 1967, Harrison observes that the "two Augustines" theory became established in the scholarship. As a result, the author of the early works came to be considered as "no more and no less than a philosopher."[5]

Because Augustine supposedly remained under the spell of Neo-Platonism during the first decade of his Christian life, his early writings are said to be "of doubtful significance for appreciating his mature thought."[6] According to Harrison, the "two Augustines" thesis is simply a revised version of the old and long since dispatched idea that Augustine converted to Neo-Platonism rather than Christianity in 386.[7] However, she thinks the "two Augustines" theory undermines "the nature and importance of his conversion in 386 in a manner just as radical as those who held that Augustine was initially converted to Neo-Platonism."[8]

As Harrison indicates, Brown admits in the 2000 edition of his biography that the "two Augustines" thesis was more of a theoretical experiment than a statement of fact.[9] By this time, however, his thesis had already earned universal acclaim.[10] In the effort to counteract the scholarly effects of the wide acceptance of that thesis, Harrison contends that the real revolution in Augustine's thought happened in 386. Just prior to that time, Platonism had freed him from a false Manichean concept of God as "an

[3] Carol Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology: An Argument for Continuity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[4] Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).

[5] Harrison, *Rethinking Augustine's Early Theology*, 4.

[6] Ibid., 4.

[7] Ibid., 18.

[8] Ibid., 6.

[9] Ibid., 17.

[10] Ibid., 15.

infinitely diffused material substance,"[11] and had instilled in him a sense of God's transcendence and of the reliance of all reality on Him. By reading the books of the Platonists, Augustine was prepared to realize at his conversion that faith in the Triune Incarnate God fulfills the Platonic vision. When he went on to construct his theology, he did so on a foundation laid in the Garden of Milan.

Harrison contends that Augustine's mature understanding of sin, grace, free will, and so on, is inchoately present in his early works. In this way, she advances an argument for the continuity between the early and late theological thought of St. Augustine. The argument of this chapter, not unlike Harrison's, turns on the assumption that there is continuity in Augustine's thought.[12] While her goal was to "find" Augustine's later theological thought in his early writings, mine is to show that the early works in which Augustine first and perhaps most forcibly articulates his theory of knowledge by illumination can and should be read in the theological context of the later works, which shed light on the logic of the account.

Around the time of his conversion, it would seem that Augustine came to see that faith in Christ enacts the Platonic theory of knowledge by illumination, the contours of which had become clear to him through the prior reading of Platonist works. Although he had yet to explain for the sake of his readers how exactly the Christian doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation enact the account, Augustine gestures in the early works toward the distinctly Christian conception of illumination he already has in mind.

If Augustine's initial references to divine illumination have not yet been retrospectively read in their theological context, this must be to some

[11] Ayres, *Nicaea and Its Legacy*, 366; cf. *conf.* 7.10.16ff.

[12] In *retr.* 1 prol. 3, Augustine testifies to the continuity of his thought; cf. *ep.*143.2, 143.7, 224.2. I am grateful to Karla Pollmann for bringing these texts to my attention. See her article, "*Alium sub meo nomine*: Augustine Between His Own Self-Fashioning and His Later Reception," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum/Journal for Ancient Christianity* 14 (2010), 409–24. Although Augustine is willing to admit that he changed the way he presented some of his ideas over the course of his career, he explains that those changes do not represent fundamental shifts in his perspective. Rather, they are indicative of the fact that he made progress in understanding ideas he entertained from the first. For further support for this claim, one might look to the *retr.* entry on *mag.*, where Augustine expresses satisfaction with the work and makes no amendments to it. In the retraction on *sol.*, moreover, he affirms that what he wrote about illumination in this work is consistent with what he wrote about it in *trin.* In the entry on *trin.* itself, the bishop states that he wrote the work for the audience he had addressed in his earlier philosophical dialogues, which was inclusive of all believers who longed to understand how their faith pertains to their intellectual pursuits.

extent attributable to the wide acceptance of the "two Augustines" theory – the tenability of which Harrison has now decisively challenged – which has prompted scholars in the past to regard works from the two "phases" of Augustine's career in separation. The groundbreaking work she and others have recently accomplished is the foundation on which I will proceed to present a theologically contextualized rendering of Augustine's illumination theory, which starts with the account of the Trinitarian doctrine he delineates in the first half of *De Trinitate*.

The Doctrine of God

One point Augustine makes abundantly clear in *De Trinitate* is that the nature of God is not like the nature of any thing that human beings know.[13] By contrast to material beings that come into existence at a point in time and gradually become the finite creatures they were made to be – development that is made possible by the cooperation of their component parts – God is an immaterial Being that never changes. He is not constituted by parts but is one thing, which is all that is Good, all the time: infinite and eternal.[14] To sum up: He is simple, and it is His simplicity that renders Him unknowable to those beings that occupy the realm of diverse things He has made.

In the first half of his treatise on the Trinity, Augustine acknowledges that some find the notion of divine simplicity difficult to reconcile with the Catholic teaching that God is Triune. In response to those who suppose that the plurality of Persons threatens the unity of the divine being and divine action, Augustine argues that the participation of the three Persons is precisely what makes it possible to affirm that there is one God who always does one thing, which is to know and make known His own glory.[15]

In elaborating this claim, Augustine distinguishes between the substance of God and the relations in God. Whatever can be said of the substance of God, such as that He is Good or that He acts for His own glory, the bishop writes, can be affirmed of all three Persons.[16] Whatever can be said specifically of one Person – such as that the Father is the unbegotten beginning who generates the Son; that the Son proceeds from the

[13] *trin.* 1.1.3; 2.8.14.
[14] *trin.* 5.1.1.
[15] *trin.* 6.7.9.
[16] *trin.* 5.8.9.

Father;[17] or that the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the Son and therefore proceeds from both, binding them together[18] – is said relatively of the Person in question.[19]

Far from undermining the singularity of the divine substance and divine action, Augustine contends that the three Persons enact it as they subsist in their different relations. When the Father communicates Himself or His glory to the Son, the Son expresses what He receives, which is nothing but the Spirit of God that gestures back toward the divine glory the Father first made manifest. Because the Father works through the Son in the Spirit, such that the three work inseparably, it is possible to affirm that there is one God whose nature is to know and make known His own glory.[20] Because "the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit constitute a divine unity of one and the same substance in an indivisible equality," in summary, "they are not three gods but one God."[21]

Creation in the Image of God

The natural order

Augustine's most elaborate account of God's creation is found in the twelve books of his *De Genesi ad litteram*. In that treatise, the bishop begins his discussion of God's creative work with an explanation of the role that each Person of the Trinity played in creation. This explanation comes by way of the exegesis of Genesis 1:3: "then God said, 'let there be light'!"[22] According to Augustine, all three Persons were involved in this initial proclamation of light, inasmuch as the Word the Father uttered was His Son, who gave outward expression to the Spirit that is eternally expressed within the Godhead.[23]

The Triune proclamation of the Uncreated Light gave rise to a created light, which participated in the Uncreated Light that was nonetheless

[17] *trin.* 5.13.14.

[18] *trin.* 6.5.7: on the Spirit as the "bond" between the Father and the Son; 5.14.15: on double procession.

[19] *trin.* 5.11.12.

[20] *trin.* 2.1.2, 2.3.1: the Son's work is to glorify the Father; 2.3.5: thereby, the Son expresses the very Spirit of God.

[21] *trin.* 1.4.7.

[22] *Gn. litt.* 1.2.4.

[23] *Gn. litt.* 1.2.6: Son; 1.5.10: Spirit; 1.6.12: Trinity.

distinct from and undiminished by the light it engendered. Augustine speculates that the created light must have consisted in creatures that exist in a spiritual mode of being like that of God Himself, a mode that entails constant orientation toward the knowledge of God and so is at once intellectual.[24] To put it more precisely, God's words "let there be light" illumined the angels to participate in the eternal vision God has of Himself. God did not speak those words into time, Augustine insists, but issued his proclamation of light on the first day of creation, which was prior to the start of time.

On that day, the Genesis account relates that God separated the light from the darkness. The darkness as Augustine describes it consisted in the absence of light or "nothingness" that arose where there was that which God and spiritual beings like Him are not, namely, formlessness and mutability. Presumably, then, darkness became separable from light as a result of the fall of the devil and a third of the angels.[25] Although what was inherently formless could not impose form on itself, Augustine notes that it was naturally receptive to the modification and imposition of form.[26] It was therefore from this stuff of nothing that God created the world.[27]

At this stage in his argument, Augustine makes a point of stressing the significance of the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. Because God did not fashion created reality from His own immaterial substance but simply imposed His form on matter, he contends, there is a radical disparity between the nature of the Creator and His creatures. The creation of those creatures does not detract from God's being or render Him dependent on what He made, even though it renders what He made dependent on Him. So far as God caused matter that was virtually nothing to become something, to the extent it was *formed* nothingness, God caused creatures to become images of Him who is ever an image of them.[28]

When God gave form to what was formless, Augustine elaborates, the creatures that resulted retained both the mutability characteristic of formlessness and the immutability they derived from their form. The form or essence of each creature ensured that its parts were always structured to comprise one and the same kind of being that was suited to perform the same sorts of operations. Owing to the interplay of immutability and

[24] *Gn. litt.* 1.5.10, 1.9.15; cf. *conf.* 12.15.21, 12.17.24, 13.3.4.
[25] *Gn. litt.* 1.10.18, 1.14.28; on the fall of the devil see 11.16.21.
[26] *conf.* 12.8.8; 13.19.28.
[27] *conf.* 12.7.7.
[28] *conf.* 13.2.2.

mutability, however, creatures were constrained gradually to develop into their forms. The forms God imparted were not fully actualized, in other words. Instead, they instilled in creatures the potential to become the things they were made to be – the potential for their actual "existence" to catch up, as it were, with the essence they were designed to instantiate. For this reason, Augustine writes that creation from nothing must be creation in time.[29] For time enacts the possibility of change.

In order to explain how creatures grow into their designated forms, Augustine introduces his doctrine of "causal," "eternal," or "seminal" reasons (*rationes seminales*). A causal reason, he states, is simply the form the creature has the potential to actualize as it develops in the course of time.[30] When God created the heavens and earth at the first moment in time, He brought all the causal reasons into effect at once, thus enacting the potential existence of all things. As the creation narrative of *Ecclesiasticus* 18 teaches, He created all things simultaneously.[31] Although this is true from the perspective of Him who stands outside of time and eternally sees the potential of all things in act, the Genesis account of creation in the course of time is also true from the standpoint of the creatures situated within it.[32]

Augustine's description of the way creatures actualize the potential that a causal reason instills comes in the form of comments on *Wisdom* 11:20. This verse states that God ordered all things in virtue of measure, number, and weight (*mensura, numerus, pondus*).[33] On Augustine's account, "measure" is a being's finite limit or maximum potential. "Number" is the form or causal reason the creature has the potential to fully instantiate. Weight is the characteristic operation of the creature, through which it increases in number and approximates its measure.[34] Number gauges the extent to which a creature has met its measure by operating in accordance with its weight and thus mediates between measure and weight, facilitating a creature's efforts to become what it was made to be, that is, to reach its measure.

In order for beings to actualize the potential to be what they were made to be through the cooperation of measure, number, and weight,

[29] *conf.* 12.8.8, 12.11.14; *Gn. litt.* 1.14.28.

[30] *Gn. litt.* 6.14.25.

[31] *Gn. litt.* 4.33.51.

[32] *Gn. litt.* 4.33.52–34.53.

[33] See Carol Harrison, "Measure, Number, and Weight in Saint Augustine's Aesthetics," *Augustinianum* 28 (1998), 591–602.

[34] *Gn. litt.* 4.3.7; cf. *conf.* 13.4.

Augustine insists that a Being must exist which is not in the process of becoming the particular type of being it was made to be but which is always already what it is, which is all that there is – a being whose number is eternally equal to an infinite measure because His weight is Himself. In other words, there must be a "Measure without measure," a "Number without number, by which all things are formed, but that receives no form," and a "Weight without weight," to which beings are drawn, but which "is not drawn to any other."[35]

According to Augustine, the Triune God is this Being who *is* Measure, Number, and Weight, who is not becoming Himself, but is "Being Itself" (*esse ipsum*), inasmuch as the Son is the exact likeness of the Father in the Spirit.[36] Although there may appear to be many finite instances of measure that increase in number by carrying weight, Augustine argues that they are simply different manifestations of one Measure, Number, and Weight, which pre-contains and makes possible without predetermining all finite modes of measure, all increase in number, and all operation in accordance with weight. If the causal reasons that impart measure, number, and weight to particular created beings are described as eternal, it is owing to the fact that the one who imparts them is eternal. His eternal and fully actualized existence is the reason why beings not fully actualized can progressively become so, given time, through the cooperation of three elements: measure, number, and weight.

As they thus participate in their own modes of being, Augustine affirms that creatures participate in the divine mode of being, which is to be one thing in virtue of the involvement of three elements. By becoming the singular entities they were made by God to be, creatures become like Him in the way and to the extent they can; they serve to reflect Him. Thus, although God Himself cannot be known in this life, inasmuch as He exists in an eternal and unchangeable manner "far different from beings which are made … and cannot be spoken of in any way with human language without recourse to expression of time and space,"[37] Augustine insists that the goodness of His simple nature can be indirectly perceived as creatures improvingly exhibit their own simplicity. They leave traces of Him in the world, not because they disclose Him in part or in full, but because the very structure of their being is analogous to His.

[35] *Gn. litt.* 4.4.8.
[36] *conf.* 12.7.7.
[37] *Gn. litt.* 5.16.34.

While Augustine believes all creatures are analogues to their Creator, he does not think they all are analogous at the same level. Rather, he states that creatures express the goodness of God "according to the appointed capacity granted to each entity according to its genus."[38] Even though all substances are naturally good, Augustine affirms that some "abide close to God in the graded hierarchy of being, or stand further away from Him."[39] Put differently, there are levels to the goodness of what God has made.

One reason Augustine thinks the account of creation in time is important is that it discloses the hierarchical order God established. In the first place, God produced vegetation, or non-sentient, non-rational creatures, and called them good. He then created the animals, or sentient, non-rational creatures, and called them good. Finally, He made human beings sentient, rational creatures and called them very good, locating them at the top of the hierarchy of being and indicating that they have a unique role to play in the governance of the natural order.[40]

The human being

While the first six books of *De Genesi ad litteram* treat the creation of the natural order in God's image, the last six explain what it means for human beings to be made in the image of God. On Augustine's account, being made in God's image means being made with an ability to do the one thing God does, which is simply to know and make known the glory of God. For the mind to attain to God, in fact, is for it to meet its measure. In Augustine's explanation, love for God compels the mind to do this, that is, to move in keeping with its weight, through the acquisition of knowledge, which represents an increase in number.[41]

Human beings gradually become what they were made to be, namely, knowers of God, through the cooperation of measure, number, and weight, or the mind, its knowledge, and its love, as they employ their capacity to engage in a unifying mode of cognition that, like God's, is facilitated by three elements, doing so in view of the fact that there is one God who is the source of this capacity and the goal of its use.

[38] *Gn. litt.* 4.17.29, trans. Taylor.
[39] *conf.* 12.28.38, trans. Chadwick.
[40] *Gn. litt.* 3.20.30.
[41] *conf.* 13.9.10.

Augustine calls the first element or "mode" of cognition "corporeal vision" (*ratio*). In this mode, the mind passively receives empirical data through sense perception.[42] The second mode is spiritual vision (*intellectus*), otherwise known as the imagination.[43] Since the five sense-perceptive faculties are not suited to generating images of experienced realities themselves, this is something the spirit accomplishes, as it perceives created realities by means of the body and makes mental images (*phantasms*) of them.[44]

Although the imagination is the faculty that, by definition, engages in the consideration of bodies that are absent, Augustine notes that it is possible to do this in any one of three ways. The imagination can be used simply to recall objects that have been perceived in the past, insofar as the images of objects the mind forms on experiencing them give the objects a spiritual existence in the mind, which allows the mind to retain them in the memory even when they are no longer physically present.[45]

Additionally, the imaginative faculty can be employed to "arbitrarily or fancifully fashion objects which have no real existence,"[46] that is, to combine and multiply and vary images of things that have been perceived in order to form images of things that have not been or cannot be perceived in reality. Although the resources for human cognition are limited to what the mind passively receives by way of the senses, Augustine affirms that it is possible to exceed the limitations imposed by the corporeal faculties in the act of thinking imaginatively about corporeal reality.[47]

The imaginative power to utilize images of objects that have been seen for the purpose of conceptualizing ones that have not been seen is the same power that makes it possible to envision a future course of events or plan of action in the third use of the imagination Augustine mentions.[48] As he points out, the imagination is the faculty that enacts the possibility of human ingenuity and creativity.[49]

On the basis of multiple images of related objects, Augustine explains, the mind has the power conceptually to "combine and separate" related

[42] *Gn. litt.* 12.7.16.
[43] *Gn. litt.* 12.7.16.
[44] *Gn. litt.* 12.16.32–33, 12.24.51.
[45] *Gn. litt.* 12.7.16.
[46] *Gn. litt.* 12.12.25.
[47] *trin.* 11.8.13.
[48] *Gn. litt.* 12.16.33.
[49] *trin.* 8.4.7.

and unrelated things and thus unite and distinguish them under universal concepts.[50] In this third mode of intellectual vision (*intelligentia*), the mind determines the form or "causal reason" a creature exhibits, comparing creatures with different forms on the basis of different measures and comparing creatures that possess the same form on the grounds of differences in number and weight.

To think (*cogere*) along these lines, Augustine writes, is to "gather together ideas which the memory contains in a dispersed and disordered way, and by concentrating attention, arrange them in order as if ready to hand, stored in the very memory where previously they lay hidden, scattered, and neglected."[51] In other words, it is to engage in abstraction. According to Augustine, any idea that has been abstracted can be called upon in further efforts to make sense of images that come through new experiences. Through those experiences, conversely, the mind's ideas are expanded and revised over the course of time.

An incidental point that comes into relief here is that Augustine does not reject sense knowledge or confirm his adherence to a theory of innate ideas when he denies the possibility of deriving ideas from the incessantly changing sense realm and insists that this can only be accomplished by the intellect.[52] When the details of the theory of knowledge he presents in *De Genesi ad litteram* are taken into consideration, Augustine's claim concerning the unreliable nature of sense knowledge need not be taken to undermine the importance of the empirical sources but merely to establish that the sense-perceptive faculties that provide the resources for the formation of ideas are not suited to perform the work of the intellectual faculty to form ideas.[53]

The frequent references Augustine makes in his writings to human knowledge of the "ideas" or "reasons" for reality, which ultimately exist in the mind of God, have led many readers of Augustine to conclude that he thinks God actually impresses ideas on the mind that serve as the rules or laws by which it judges reality or even affords those judgments themselves – that His influence on the mind is an extrinsic one.[54] The point the foregoing discussion has underscored, however, is that God does not so much impart the reasons or rules of judgment themselves – innate ideas

[50] *trin.* 11.8.15.
[51] *conf.* 10.11.18, trans. Chadwick.
[52] *div. qu.* 9.
[53] *civ.* 11.27.
[54] *trin.* 9.6.9–20, 12.2.2.

like goodness, beauty, justice, and so on – but an intrinsic intellectual capacity to formulate such reasons.[55]

Those reasons, unlike God's, are based on experience and are subject to change with further experience. As such, they are in the full possession of the mind that produces them; God does not directly impose them nor directly intervene in the intellectual processes that produce them. Even so, however, the mind that forms its ideas in the awareness of God comes of its own accord to know what God eternally knows, namely, His goodness through all its diverse manifestations. In that sense, it can be said to know what God knows and to owe its success in knowing to divine aid. This is not because God imposes His knowledge on the mind, but because He enables the mind to participate of its own accord in a unifying pattern of cognition analogous to that of Him who thinks one thing – Himself – in virtue of the plurality of Persons involved in His cognitive act, and thus to come to see the divine goodness He already sees in full.[56]

In employing this cognitive ability to engage in abstractive or unifying acts of reasoning, which "has been impressed upon human nature as if it were a law,"[57] Augustine writes that the mind reflects the image of God. The ability to do this is facilitated by corporeal and spiritual vision, which constitute what Augustine calls the "lower reason" that seeks knowledge of the natural order (*scientia*), by contrast to higher reason, the proper objects of which are not corporeal but incorporeal.[58]

Since the mind cannot grasp the incorporeal God so long as it forms concepts about the realm of corporeal things He has made, Augustine states that it knows Him in the present by forming incorporeal ideas about the things it can see through thinking in unifying terms in view of the existence of the one God who is the ultimate Good.[59] By doing this, the intellect judges those things as He does, namely, as manifestations of His

[55] What comes through divine grace, in other words, is simply human nature; Henri de Lubac famously argued this with reference to Augustine and Aquinas in his *The Mystery of the Supernatural* (New York: Herder and Herder, 2000).

[56] God's primary causality gives creatures the power to be secondary causes. In other words, He wills that they be what they want to be; *Gn. litt.* 6.17.28–6.18.28, 8.12.25, 8.21.40–8.26.48. On this topic, see Jacob Schmutz, "La doctrine médiévale des causes et la théologie de la nature pure 13–17 siécles," *Revue Thomiste* 101 (2001), 217–64; especially 221–9.

[57] *trin.* 8.4.7.

[58] *Gn. litt.* 7.7.16.

[59] *Gn. litt.* 12.7.16.

goodness. In forming ideas about the manner and degree to which things perform a function that is good, Augustine writes, the mind forms an indirect idea of the Goodness of God, which is to say that it gains insight into the wisdom (*sapientia*) of God. This idea grows as its knowledge of reality grows.

Although the "matter" for that thought comes into the mind from without, Augustine observes that, "the intellect completes its operation within, and nothing in it lies outside the nature of the mind itself."[60] On those grounds, he infers that the final mode of vision in which God's goodness is known need not pass away, even when the first two modes of vision that operate on corporeal bodies do. When the corporeal order is replaced with an incorporeal one, Augustine writes, the intellect will go on operating for eternity on spiritual realities in a manner continuous with the way it worked with respect to corporeal bodies in time.[61] In paradise, the three modes of vision will be perfected.[62]

As human persons employ the God-given power to identify His Goodness in the goods He has made, that is, to order various goods according to their type and level of goodness, they acquire a view of all things in their proper order, a divine perspective on the goodness of the natural order that doubles as the knowledge of the Goodness of God that is currently attainable.[63] This is the wise outlook that is needed in order to exercise dominion over creation and thus do what God wants human beings to do, which is to call His creation good, as He does.[64]

Since the mind that operates in the light of the knowledge of God's ultimate Goodness evaluates finite goods in view of the fact that they originate from an all-inclusive good, it is kept from reducing the ultimate good to any particular finite good and thus from entertaining narrow-minded ideas of what is good that prevent it from finding the good in all things. Since human happiness hinges on the experience of reality as good, Augustine writes, those who think about reality in terms of the existence of a supremely good God become free to find happiness in all things.[65] By maintaining this perspective on reality and thus enjoying a constant experience of goodness in the present, human beings reflect the

[60] *trin.* 11.7.12.
[61] *Gn. litt.* 12.35.68.
[62] *Gn. litt.* 12.36.69.
[63] *trin.* 14.12.15.
[64] *Gn. litt.* 3.20.30.
[65] *Gn. litt.* 8.12.25, 8.14.31, 8.25.46.

image of God and prepare to encounter the Reality of His Goodness.[66] They begin to participate already in an eternal life that consists in knowing God.[67]

The Fall and Redemption

When God gave human beings lower and higher reason, He gave them faculties designed to grasp corporeal realities as well as a faculty that remains fixed on God; in short, He gave them faculties that are subject to change and one faculty that is not and is therefore apt to supervise the mind's assessment of reality. Although the mutability of the human mind was not originally a detriment to it, since it enabled human beings to be creative and to grow in knowledge, the interplay of the mutable and the immutable in human nature is what eventually made it conceivable for the first man and woman to fall away from God.

In forfeiting the knowledge of God as Highest Good at their fall, Augustine writes, the first human beings lost the knowledge of themselves as creatures made in His image for the purpose of glorifying Him. As a result, their overriding desire to please God was replaced by a desire to please themselves through the pursuit and attainment of those things they thought would bring them the greatest immediate happiness.[68] This desire caused the first man and woman and all human beings after them automatically to perceive tangible things and temporal circumstances as the ultimate realities that only God is, and thus to operate on the assumption that such things have the power to make or break human happiness.[69]

Ironically, Augustine observes, the fallen human proclivity for pursuing personal happiness often leads to great unhappiness, inasmuch as it enslaves people to desires for finite goods that are either fleeting or hard to find in fallen circumstances, compelling them to organize their whole lives around the attainment of pleasures that cannot be guaranteed.[70] So far as human beings try to be useful to themselves by looking out for their own interests, placing hopes for contentment in fleeting things, they end up undermining their own happiness.[71] Even more ironically, most are

[66] *Gn. litt.* 12.26.54, 12.28.56.
[67] *trin.* 1.6.10.
[68] *Gn. litt.* 11.5.7, 11.15.19.
[69] *trin.* 10.6.8–7.9, 10.8.11, 13.7.10, 14.16.22.
[70] *trin.* 12.9.14.
[71] *trin.* 14.14.18.

left perplexed when they find that their efforts to prioritize personal happiness fail to bring the desired fulfillment.[72]

In many passages, Augustine refers to evil as a privation of the good and denies that is has any positive existence.[73] Far from denying the detrimental effects of sin in doing so, Augustine rightly underscores the fact that sin diminishes the freedom or ability human beings have to be themselves. By fostering the fear of not obtaining or losing the temporal and transient things in which hopes for happiness have been placed, sin inhibits and distorts the free expression of the human spirit.

Apart from promoting personal unhappiness, the fallen tendency to go after finite goods as if they were infinite ones frequently creates conflict amongst those with different notions of what is good and what brings happiness.[74] It promotes attitudes like envy and pride and the destructive behaviors these attitudes engender. In summary, sin makes it impossible for people to find the good in all things and in other people, making it impossible for them to find happiness both in the temporal circumstances and eternally.[75]

In his *De Trinitate*, Augustine explains how the Son of God restored the knowledge of God as the Highest Good that He originally imparted to human beings He made in His image.[76] Since the scope of human knowledge had been restricted to corporeal goods after the knowledge of the incorporeal Good was lost at the fall, the Son of God took on bodily form.[77] In that form, Augustine insists, Christ maintained his divine form. That is to say, He continued His eternal work of reflecting the Spirit of God, who gestures toward the Father: His work of being the Image of the Trinity.

For Augustine, no contradiction is inherent in the claim that Christ was fully man and fully God, inasmuch as human beings were created with the potential to know God fully. In assuming a human body, the Son did not abandon his divinity; He only actualized the potential for the full knowledge of God that human beings are bound to realize eschatologically. Insofar as the Son accomplished this feat in the form of a man, Augustine writes, one can affirm that the Father was greater than Him, albeit in a qualified sense. For inasmuch as He retained His divine form

[72] *trin.* 12.10.15, 13.4.7.
[73] *Gn. litt.* 8.14.31.
[74] *trin.* 13.7.10.
[75] *Gn. litt.* 11.15.20.
[76] *doct. chr.* 1.11–17.
[77] *trin.* 13.9.12ff.

through His life on earth, He and the Spirit He expressed remained co-equal with the Father at all times.[78]

By coming to reveal God in the form of a man who expressed the Spirit of God to the glory of the Father, the Incarnate Son fully revealed for the first time that the nature of God is Triune.[79] Because He revealed the Triune nature of God while in the form of a human person, the Incarnate Son at once revealed that all human persons are made in the image of the Trinity and are therefore designed to work as He does, that is, to bring glory to the Father in all the work the human spirit (*animus* = spirit, mind) undertakes.[80]

When Christ ascended into heaven, withdrawing the fully actualized presence of God's Spirit from a human person inhabiting the world, and sent His Spirit upon His followers at Pentecost, He reinstated the potential of all human persons to live by the Spirit He expressed, the Spirit that seeks to do the Father's will.[81] By placing faith in Christ, Augustine teaches, the mind remembers that it was made in the image of God and thus for the purpose of considering all things in light of the knowledge of His goodness.[82]

In making this discovery, the mind realizes that its ultimate cognitive objective is to know the Good it cannot yet know in full and to evaluate the created goods it can know now with that goal in mind.[83] Although faith raises awareness of the image, Augustine emphasizes that it does not immediately break fallen habits and restore the image in full. On his account, it remains for faith to be made completely effective through ongoing efforts to re-learn the skill of using the cognitive powers that were given by the Son in the spirit He modeled, glorifying the Father, until doing so is second nature, such that the image is constantly reflected. It remains, in other words, for the people of faith to learn to take full advantage of the grace God unfailingly gives.

If Christ did not instantaneously restore human beings to their original state of happiness on accomplishing the redemption of humankind once and for all, Augustine states that it was so that they might re-learn to be exactly what He originally made them to be, namely, people who consistently work of their own accord in the spirit that prioritizes the Highest

[78] *trin.* 1.7.14, 1.11.22.
[79] *trin.* 13.11.15.
[80] *trin.* 12.6.7–7.12.
[81] *trin.* 13.10.14.
[82] *Gn. litt.* 3.20.32.
[83] *trin.* 13.17.22.

Good over temporal goods – that God's purposes might be fulfilled. Although laborious, Augustine thinks human efforts to reform a habit of reasoning in light of the knowledge of God are nonetheless gratifying, inasmuch as they help the laborer appreciate what it means to be made in God's image in a way that was not possible before the fall. For in the struggle to re-conform to the lost image of God, the people of God gain the opportunity to experience a double measure of the grace God unfailingly gives.

Conforming to the Image of God

In what follows, I will argue that the seven psychological analogies which Augustine delineates in the second half of his treatise on the Trinity are designed to lead the reader all the way through the process whereby a habit of reasoning under the influence of faith in the Father's ultimate goodness is formed. That habit, of course, is one of thinking in a manner analogous to Christ, who constantly expressed His Spirit to the Father's glory – who always bears the image of the Trinity.[84] In short, it is a process of conforming to the image of God, or learning to glorify Him as constantly as He glorifies Himself. Although Augustine's analogies have long been subjected to serious criticisms, recent research has revealed that those criticisms were often based on misapprehensions of the text, which resulted from a failure to understand it as something like the guide to conforming to the image of God it is now starting to be understood to be.[85]

*Intellect, knowledge, love (*mens, notitia, amor*)*

The first psychological analogy to the Trinity Augustine introduces is that of the mind, its knowledge, and its love, which respectively correspond to the measure, number, and weight of the human being.[86] With this trinity, he reinforces the point that the intellect only ever accumulates knowledge that it desires to accumulate, or knowledge of what it truly loves. If the intellect prizes temporal attainments above all else, the implication is that it is bound to refer all its actions to achieving those things rather than God. For this reason, it will never attain God.[87]

[84] *trin.* 11.5.8–9.
[85] See notes under "Criticisms of the psychological analogies."
[86] *trin.* 9.3.3.
[87] *trin.* 13.20.26.

If the intellect places its faith in God, indicating that its desire is to know and love Him above all else, however, the knowledge of Him as Highest Good is reinstated upon it. As a result, this knowledge can be applied in acts of knowing the things He is not, namely, the created order and the circumstances that transpire in it.[88] Each time the mind brings faith in God to bear in this way, its fallen tendency to operate on the assumption that the objects of experience have the power to make or break its happiness is checked; in this, the effects of the fall are partially overcome. The image is restored to some extent, and faith is made effective as reason's perspective on reality is aligned to the professed belief in the Triune God as the Highest Good. The first psychological analogy is presented in an effort to summon readers to embark on the cognitive process through which these changes transpire.

Memory, understanding, will (memoria, intelligentia, voluntas)

The second trinity of memory, understanding, and will seems to be the means through which Augustine explains how knowledge is actually acquired and the image of God reflected and renewed in the mode of intellectual vision.[89] On Augustine's account, the memory retains all the information that has been acquired through the three modes of cognition.[90] It preserves the understanding or judgments that have been attained through intellectual abstraction – actual matters of knowledge – as well as a great deal of cognitive resources that create the potential for new discoveries to be made: all the experiences a person has had, the thoughts and feelings that were associated with those experiences, desires for certain kinds of experience, skills acquired through experience, and stories about others' experiences.[91]

The mind also contains information that has come to it in the past but has not yet been scrutinized because it was not thought important or understood at the time it was acquired. This happens, for example, when one person says something to another who is not paying attention and therefore cannot account for what was said when asked to do so.[92] As

[88] *trin.* 8.2.3.
[89] *trin.* 10.11.17–18; *conf.* 10.8.12; *Gn. litt.* 12.
[90] *conf.* 10.8.12.
[91] *conf.* 10.8.13ff.
[92] *trin.* 11.8.15.

Augustine emphasizes, people only tend to pay attention to input when their will compels them to do so. The will is what forms the intellect's desires for understanding. The understanding the mind already has, conversely, is indicative of the kind of understanding the will tends to desire. It attunes the will to seek new understanding that satisfies those same fundamental desires.

Whenever the memory becomes aware of something that the mind's current understanding cannot explain but has been predisposed by the will to desire to explain, a will for new understanding arises. The sense of dissatisfaction or restlessness that accompanies the sudden realization that the understanding is inadequate to the will for understanding incites the mind to search through the resources in the memory that were previously unnoticed, unused, or thought unimportant in order to render the new experience intelligible.[93]

If the resources needed to answer the question which the will aims to address cannot be found in the memory, the will may direct the intellect to go out in search of new information that seems to serve that end.[94] Since this is often necessary, Augustine points out that the quest for understanding is not entirely straightforward. The intellect gains understanding not by fully obtaining it at the outset of an inquiry, but by acknowledging at that point that it does not already know what it desires to know. That desire for understanding, which is indicative of faith that the understanding is attainable, compels the mind to convert what it does know into speculations about the truth that is as yet unknown.

To illustrate this, Augustine cites as an example how he tried to form a picture of the city of Alexandria, which he had never seen, on the basis of his knowledge of the city of Carthage, which he had seen.[95] In order to do this, he sought information about Alexandria and sought to compare it with what he knew about Carthage and other cities in general. The discovery of something new about cities in general or about Alexandria in particular caused him to adjust or even reject existing opinions about Alexandria in order to render them more precise. In time, he says, he developed a more accurate picture of Alexandria, which not only increased his desire to go there, but also instilled in him the confidence he would need to navigate it on arrival – to find things there as he would have expected them to be.

[93] *conf.* 10.8.12.
[94] *conf.* 10.11.18.
[95] *trin.* 8.6.9.

Although he acknowledges that he had to hold many incomplete or "erroneous" ideas provisionally in the course of coming to a clearer conception of Alexandria, Augustine insists that these ideas were not detrimental but beneficial to his efforts to acquire knowledge, because they enabled him to proceed by degrees toward better understanding.[96] Such provisional ideas, he notes, are "in some respects true precisely because they are in other respects false."[97] By "false," Augustine simply means less than totally true. Since the knowledge that something is false is knowledge of the sense in which it is less than entirely true, however, Augustine regards it as knowledge of the way in which an idea can come closer to the truth.[98] It is knowledge that is not to be dreaded but welcomed, inasmuch as things cannot succeed in becoming "what they want or ought to be as long as they refuse to be false."[99]

According to Augustine, the only way to err, such that what is false utterly fails to bear the truth and is patently false, is to settle on a notion of the truth that obviously falls short of the desired truth, that is, intentionally and counter-intuitively to obstruct the way to truth through the passivity of apathy or the activity of lying to oneself and others about the nature of the truth.[100] Because what is found out to be false – opinions held, then doubted – has a truth-bearing function, it does not hinder attempts to gain understanding. Rather, it indicates that the mind is actively and effectively engaged in knowing. As Augustine sums up: "if I doubt, I exist." (*si fallor, sum*)[101]

In affirming this, Augustine suggests that the way toward attaining any desired understanding is basically a way of "negation" in which the intellect converts the things it knows, which are not the things it desires to know, but has faith that it can and will know, into speculations about the truth it wishes to know, testing, revising, and rejecting possible answers until it senses that it has alighted on the object of its faith and desire.

On this model of knowing, all knowing entails a process of "faith seeking understanding" (*fides quaerens intellectum*), because it begins with an unfulfilled cognitive objective, which is reached by degrees as the intellect employs its knowledge to pursue understanding of the unknown,

[96] *ench.* 17, 19–21; *util. cred.* 10–11.
[97] *sol.* 2.10.18.
[98] *sol.* 2.5–10.
[99] *sol.* 2.10.18.
[100] *ench.* 18, 22; cf. *mend.* and *c. mend.*
[101] *trin.* 10.10.14.

to wit, an object of faith. Inasmuch as the mind knows what its cognitive objective is and believes in the attainability of that objective which governs all its actions, it can be said to "know" that objective by anticipation or faith – potentially – if not yet actually or explicitly. The underlying distinction between potential and actual knowledge – or faith and understanding – is what enables Augustine to affirm that the mind may simultaneously know and not know the objects of its knowledge and thus to resolve the notorious Platonic paradox of inquiry, according to which the mind must already know X in order to be able to identify it, yet need not discover X if it already knows it.[102]

Each time the intellect forms or adjusts a provisional idea about something it seeks to know, Augustine states that the result is the product of "that which was hidden in the memory in a dispersed and disordered way before [the thought] was conceived, the [understanding], which arises from memory in the thought when it is perceived, and the will which combines both and so from these two and itself as a third completes one single thing."[103] He calls the resulting instance of understanding a "trinity of understanding."[104] On his account, the trinities of the understanding return to the memory where they come into contact with the resources that are already stored there. In that context, they may prompt the will to pursue new understanding, which it could not have thought to pursue previously, such that the process of concept production that is facilitated by the cooperation of memory, understanding, and will, begins all over again, causing the trinities of thought to be combined in new ways, to expand, continually change, and multiply *ad infinitum*.[105]

The more automatically a trinity of thought – or idea – is brought to bear in efforts to make sense of new experiences, Augustine goes on to say, the more deeply rooted in the memory it can be said to be. The more the mind puts its faith in its ideas by memorizing how to operate in accordance with them, moreover, the more it can be described as certain concerning their truth. The mind that has memorized how to implement the rules and vocabulary of foreign language, to take Augustine's example, applies them as a matter of habit and fluently speaks the language. Its confidence in the certifiable nature of those rules arises from its effective use of them for the purposes of interpersonal communication.[106]

[102] *trin.* 12.15.24, 15.21.40; cf. *conf.* 10.18.27.
[103] *trin.* 11.7.12.
[104] *trin.* 15.11.20.
[105] *trin.* 11.8.12.
[106] *conf.* 1.8.27.

By this account, certitude, like knowledge itself, is not an all or nothing affair, but a matter of degrees. In cases like language learning, the mind can be said to know the language better and with greater certainty the less it needs to pause to think about the rules and vocabulary. Stopping to think about these things is actually a sign that knowledge is still deficient in some respect. The less time the intellect has to spend determining whether or how to regard reality in light of certain ideas and the more easily it simply acts on those ideas, the more understanding and certainty it can be said to have with respect to them. To sum up: the evidence that the memory has truly grasped an idea is in the impact it has on human behavior. Ideas that have been genuinely interiorized are exteriorized, and their justification is in the effects of their exteriorization.

Turning the subject slightly, Augustine contends that the most basic memory the mind contains is the thought of the object it desires most, that is, the object it believes will bring it the greatest happiness.[107] That thought dictates everything the mind does. When the mind remembers that its desire for happiness is indicative of a desire not for any temporal attainment but for God, as per the first psychological analogy, the forgotten thought of Him is reinstated in the memory. This recollection puts the mind in a position to bring faith in God to bear in every cognitive effort that is cooperatively undertaken by the memory, the understanding, and the will, that is, to perform its "unifying" acts of cognition in ultimate terms of the existence of the one true God.

Although these acts of knowing reveal nothing about the nature of the unknown God Himself, they allow the mind to experience the world in the light of the knowledge of His Goodness and to therefore identify the good in or make the best of all things.[108] To put it in other words, faith affects the way the mind perceives things, and that way of seeing things doubles as the knowledge of God that is presently attainable through what "God is not" but what has been made possible by His creative hand. To sum up, faith enables engagement in the enterprise of "negative theology" that is enacted by the positive affirmation of God's Triune nature and by the Incarnation of the Son.

Although initial faith restores the knowledge of the Triune, Incarnate God as the intellect's ultimate cognitive goal, Augustine points out that the recollection of Him is inevitably only a faint one at first. Even though faith removes the cause of the mind's disease, which is the loss of the knowledge of God, that disease has yet to be completely healed, as

[107] *conf.* 10.20.29ff.
[108] *trin.* 8.4.6–8.5.8.

the mind recovers awareness in all things of Him as the real source of human happiness.[109] As with any act of "faith seeking understanding," it waits for the object of faith to be fully known, and the object of faith is increasingly known as the mind brings its desire to know that object, in this case God, to bear in its efforts to know other things.[110] That desire directs the mind to attend to some things and ignore others. It determines what the mind perceives and the way it perceives it. It checks the inordinate desire for temporal things, and transfers those desires from "temporal to eternal things, from visible to intelligible things, from carnal to spiritual things."[111]

On Augustine's account, the mind that perseveres in performing its work in the Spirit of Christ that esteems the Father to be the highest good, performs its work in remembrance of Christ and thereby memorizes how to think after the manner of Christ, praying as much as it thinks.[112] Each time the mind cultivates the habit of seeing things from the perspective of Him who remained confident that the Father's good purposes are always fulfilled, even in the hour of His death, it checks the ingrained habit of operating according to its own norms; it overcomes the limited concepts of what is good that have no place in the mind of Christ; it increasingly realizes through its acts of reasoning the profundity of the faith it professes. In all this, it gradually becomes more conformed to the image of Christ who is the image of God. To sum up: the human mind becomes an ever better analogy of the mind of Christ, who never sought to serve Himself but only His Father God.

*Ability, learning, use (***ingenium, doctrina, usus***)*

The next analogy Augustine presents is that of ability, learning, and use. With this analogy, he acknowledges that there are many different ways of putting memory, understanding, and will to work – many means of directing thoughts and actions to the Father, through the Son, in the human spirit or mind. Although he affirms that all people with faith share the objective of knowing God, Augustine emphasizes that each one inevitably strives to obtain that objective in accordance with an individual level and type of ability, applying the faith in different situations and in different

[109] *trin.* 14.17.23.
[110] *trin.* 8.4.6–8.5.8.
[111] *trin.* 14.17.23; cf. *conf.* 10.17.26.
[112] *trin.* 8.5.7–8, 14.16.22, 15.2.2.

ways. For this reason, he concludes that the faith which the faithful share is not one in number, but one in kind.

For the same reason, he allows that there are as many ways to work in the spirit of Christ as there are human spirits, where the way in which one imitates Christ can both inspire and instruct others how to do the same in their own distinctive ways. Since no one who has faith has achieved the goal of knowing God that all with faith share, Augustine observes that the efforts to reason in faith that one makes in one way can inform those of another working to do so in another. In the Christian community, the different types and level of ability are not a cause for competition but celebration, inasmuch as the way one person imitates Christ can stimulate another to imitate Him in yet another of countless possible ways.

Corporeal and spiritual analogies

As the intellect learns to work habitually in accordance with its abilities from the standpoint of faith, Augustine notes that it learns to know and make known what is eternal, namely God, through the knowledge of what is temporal; it gains wisdom through science. As the intellect is redeemed by Christ, in other words, the faculties of sensation and imagination that previously distracted it from God are redeemed as well. They serve their originally intended purpose, which was to enable the intellect to discover God in the world He made in preparation for knowing Him in Himself.[113]

Because the first and second ways of knowing are gradually recovered together with the third, Augustine argues that analogies to the Trinity can be detected not only in the memory, understanding, and will, that is, in intellectual vision, but also in corporeal vision, which consists in the sight of the eyes, the object seen, and the perceptive faculties' attention to an object;[114] as well as in spiritual vision, which involves the memory of sense perceptions, the internal comparison of perceptions, and the production of an image.[115]

Although the corporeal and spiritual – scientific – faculties cannot rightly be said to bear the image of God, since the natural order on which they operate will one day pass away, Augustine affirms that they are

[113] *trin.* 12.15.25.
[114] *trin.* 11.2.2.
[115] *trin.* 11.3.6.

properly described as analogues, because they will be perfected even as they are replaced with two related faculties, which will carry on operating in an incorporeal order as the "imperfect" faculties worked in the corporeal one.

From this point in his discussion, the bishop proceeds to treat the topics of knowledge and wisdom, as well as their inter-relationship, offering what seems to be the mature statement of the views on these issues he espoused in early "philosophical" works like *De ordine* and *De beata vita*.[116] In the former, Augustine had stressed the importance of acquiring scientific training, or the ability to identify order in creation, prior to engaging in philosophical speculation about the principles that underlie the natural order, an inquiry that falls within the domain of wisdom.[117] There, he argued that the most effective way to form a habit of identifying order in the cosmos is through a course of study in the liberal arts (i.e. the *trivium*: grammar, logic, rhetoric, and the *quadrivium*: arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy).

Although these studies must precede the study of the principles that account for the natural order, Augustine affirms that some cursory concept of the source of that order – some wisdom – is needed even for pursuing knowledge. For if young minds go out in search of knowledge while lacking awareness of God's wisdom, they may come to the conclusion that there is no ultimate purpose to the acquisition of knowledge and thus fail to do anything useful with it.[118] Alternatively, they may feel they have the liberty to define wisdom as they wish and grow inordinately proud of their own understanding. Otherwise, they may become so disturbed by the disordered state of the fallen world as to declare that there are no principles of order – no underlying wisdom – at all.[119]

While Augustine acknowledges that some, like the Platonists, find a way to give a sound explanation of the principles that uphold the natural order, he notes their failure to account adequately for the identity of the divine being that sustains that order as well as His ability to intervene in it. Because they do not provide such a fully satisfying account, which is in fact offered by the Christian doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation, Augustine argues that the Platonists fail to enact their true

[116] Frederick Van Fleteren has made this suggestion in "Augustine and Anselm: Faith and Reason," in *Faith Seeking Understanding: Learning and the Catholic Tradition* (Manchester, NH: St. Anselm College Press, 1991), 59.

[117] *ord.* 1.9.27.

[118] *beata v.* 1.2.

[119] *ord.* 2.17.

understanding.[120] Even though Augustine praises the Platonists for their intellectual achievements, consequently, he struggles to call the wisdom of philosophers genuine, inasmuch as they do not name the source of their wisdom.[121]

Augustine describes the dangers associated with embarking on the pursuit of knowledge without a preliminary notion of wisdom in order to underscore the importance of beginning with the belief that wisdom belongs to the Triune God. There are two ways Augustine thinks a person of faith can adhere to divine wisdom: the way of authority and the way of reason. The first way more or less bypasses the road to wisdom through knowledge outlined above. It is the shortest and safest way of achieving wisdom because it involves holding fast to wisdom and never letting go of it.

Many of the faithful take this first way. "Although they are exceedingly strong in the faith itself," Augustine writes, "they are not exceedingly strong in science."[122] Though the wisdom of Christ predisposes them to affirm that there are indeed principles of order, above all, the goodness of God, that underlie reality, they are not particularly inclined to explore those principles and their profound implications.[123] For their purposes, it is enough to know what Christ revealed, which is that God is the Highest Good and that He works all things for Good;[124] that nothing can therefore make or break human happiness;[125] that supposed evils can fulfill divine purposes just as much as apparent goods, inordinately desired, can hinder the realization of those purposes.[126] For the people of faith, in fact, the "evil" or difficult circumstances through which "good" things are taken away can be regarded as goods, inasmuch as they check the human tendency to see those goods as the sole source of human contentment and lead the faithful to the realization that happiness consists in clinging to no one thing but receiving all things as gracious gifts from a good God.

While the way of authority schools people of faith in the wisdom they need to survive this life and arrive in the next one, Augustine does not

[120] *conf.* 7.9.
[121] Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate,* 40–67, 219–31.
[122] *trin.* 14.1.3.
[123] *ord.* 1.10.28.
[124] *ord.* 2.7.24; cf. *trin.* 13.7.10, 13.16.20.
[125] *trin.* 12.13.21.
[126] *ord.* 1.6–7, 1.9.27, 2.4–8.

think it fosters the highest possible level of enjoyment of the present life for which human beings were made. While the way of authority takes priority in the order of operation since faith is the forerunner of understanding, consequently, the way of reason is the more highly prized object of desire.[127] This is because the way of reason leads one to the eternal, not by passing over but by passing through the temporal; it thereby promotes the happy life of using all things on earth to enjoy God, which human beings were originally intended to live. Those that desire such a life are instructed not merely to believe that God is the source of order but also to seek to grasp the profundity of that belief by bringing it to bear on the very study of His order, however they are gifted to undertake it.

Although those who take the way of authority have the potential to reflect God's image just as constantly as those on the way of reason, such that there is no objective discrepancy as regards the clarity of the image, there is a subjectively realizable difference, which those that take the way of reason become aware of when they find what happiness accompanies discoveries of the implications of God's wisdom for science, faith for the endeavors of human reason.[128] Those that bring their faith to bear on efforts to explore reality make this discovery each time they locate a principle of order underlying reality and discern how to identify that principle with the work of the Father, through the Son, in the Holy Spirit, which is precisely the principle that Christ revealed.[129]

As they do this, the study of order becomes the sort of enterprise in negative theology that Augustine encourages his readers to undertake in the second half of *De Trinitate*, that is, an inquiry in which all things that are "not God" are regarded under the formality of a positive affirmation of the existence of a Triune God who made Himself Incarnate. In mediating or doubling as the knowledge of God, these studies anticipate the attainment of that knowledge, rendering both the intellectual pursuits and the faith profoundly meaningful to the inquirers who come to find God in all things.[130]

Although the circumstances in which this is done may change, Augustine insists that the perspective cultivated by those with faith need never alter.[131] These can "survey all things and find nothing unarranged, unclassed, or

[127] *ord*. 2.9.26.
[128] *beata v*. 2.9; cf. *trin*. 13.4.7ff.
[129] *ord*. 2.16.
[130] *ord*. 2.2.4.
[131] *ord*. 2.6.18.

unassigned to its own place."[132] They consistently find traces of spiritual things in material things;[133] they conform to God rather than the world in every encounter with reality.[134] The steadfastness of their outlook prepares them to gaze unflinchingly on God. In the present, it enables them to find the purpose in everything, and thus, to enjoy life and be happy.[135]

To Augustine's mind, this wise outlook on reality is what equips those who maintain it to "help the godly and defend against the godless."[136] For a perspective on the temporal that is informed by the eternal prepares those that have it to address questions about the relationship between faith and life that may arise amongst believers. In addition to its instructive power in the Christian context, Augustine suggests that a wise perspective is the source of persuasive power in the context of dialogue with unbelieving thinkers. It allows the wise to address the same questions that concern philosophers from the standpoint of faith and to appropriate "pagan" philosophical insights in the process.[137]

In doing this, the faithful can challenge and correct the mistakes of philosophers even while substantiating their true insights, as Augustine did with the philosophy of the Neo-Platonists. In *De Trinitate*, Augustine testifies that his purpose is to provide his erudite Christian readers with the conceptual tools to grow in Christian wisdom, that is, to form a habit of reconciling reason and faith in the only place possible, namely in their own minds, so as to be ready on demand to bring faith in Christ to bear in dealing with any dilemma that might arise from dialogue with those that have or lack faith. By learning to bring the wisdom of God to bear on practical or "scientific" matters, Augustine concludes, believers in Christ carry on His redemptive work in the world, even as they discover how to receive all that the world offers as a gift that allows for the enjoyment of God, just as God originally intended.

Memory, understanding, and love of the self (meminit sui, intellegit se, diligit se)

On the argument I have been advancing, the five psychological analogies that have been discussed thus far are designed to help readers of *De*

[132] *ord.* 2.4.11.
[133] *trin.* 12.4.4.
[134] *trin.* 14.7.10.
[135] *ord.* 1.8.25.
[136] *trin.* 14.1.3.
[137] *doct. chr.* 2.40.

Trinitate memorize how to perform acts of reasoning, as they are gifted to perform them, under the influence of faith in God's ultimate goodness. When the mind fully remembers, understands, and loves God in this way, Augustine writes, it simultaneously remembers, understands, and loves itself, such that the sixth psychological analogy becomes apparent on it.[138] This is true because the mind that remembers God at once remembers that its purpose is to work for His glory rather than its own.

So long as the mind operates on the mistaken notion that its first task is to fulfill its own immediate desires, it remains subject to fallen attitudes like envy, pride, and fear, which prevent it from freely employing its abilities. So long as, and to the extent that it is selfish, in other words, it is inhibited from being itself. By making a commitment to unlearn the fallen habit of clinging to temporal things – to sacrifice itself – and to cling instead in faith to the God Christ revealed, the mind chooses to follow Him figuratively to Golgotha from Gethsemane, where He gave up the will to do His own will.[139]

Far from a decision to abandon an individual identity, the mind's decision to traverse this sacrificial path only represents a decision to abandon the enslaving sentiments that encumbered the free expression of the human spirit. As the empty tomb at the end of Christ's own sacrificial path confirms, this loss of the self is really the resurrection of the self. In point of fact, it is a gain, where what is gained is the freedom of the human spirit to glory in God at all times.[140] The mind that memorizes how to glorify God in its own way, and thereby memorizes how to imitate Christ, is one that memorizes how to express itself without hindrance, that is, to be itself. To sum up, a mind conformed to Christ is pre-disposed to receive all events as a gracious gift that reinforces the belief in the goodness of God.

Unlike a mind still subject to sin, which is constantly preoccupied with itself and its own concerns, the self that has memorized how to be itself need not think of itself, for it automatically knows how to respond in any circumstance that may arise.[141] By recovering the image of God, it recovers the freedom of the will to direct the intellect anywhere and discern the nature and degree to which God's goodness is exhibited in the things that come into view and to judge wisely on those grounds how to order them with respect to one another.

[138] *trin.* 14.8.11.

[139] See Oliver O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (Ann Arbor: Yale University Press, 1980); cf. *trin.* 9.4.4.

[140] *trin.* 14.8.11.

[141] *trin.* 14.5.7.

Just as wisdom helps the mind discern the finite purpose of different things and use them accordingly, so Augustine explains that it further enables the intellect to come to terms with itself as a finite creature that is capable of meeting some needs, not others; to behave in keeping with its limitations; and in doing this, to serve others in the way and to the extent it can – no more, no less.[142] As the mind reconciles itself to the ways in which it is and is not suited to serve the world, letting go of the human tendency to over or under estimate personal abilities, Augustine writes, the intellect also learns to leave room for others to be their unique selves.

Instead of attempting to persuade them to do things in one's own way, one learns to respect others' limitations and to encourage them to make the most of the gifts they actually have. In learning how to love God and thereby self, in summary, one may finally realize what it means to love one's neighbors as oneself, which is to love them not as one wants to love them but in the way their own natures dictate that they should be loved.

By helping his readers overcome hindrances to being themselves through efforts to teach them how to regain a predisposition to work at all times in the spirit of Christ, Augustine describes the experience individuals must undergo, namely, the restoration of the image of God, in order to draw close to others.[143] It is in being renewed and conformed to Christ's image, Augustine affirms, that the intellect is prepared not only for relationship with other human beings but above all for an ultimate encounter with the reality of God that accomplishes the perfection of the image.[144] For when Christ returns and the need for faith passes away, the memory, understanding, and love of the self – which is the memory, understanding, and love of the faith one placed in God during life – will be transformed into a seventh and final Trinitarian analogue which will determine the way in which the mind will know and love the Triune God for eternity.[145]

The whole goal of *De Trinitate*, Augustine concludes, is to re-train readers to live continually by faith in God with respect to temporal things. To do this is to form the habit that brings the mind to the height of the ascent to God it can reach in this life through the steps that are

[142] *trin.* 14.14.18.
[143] *trin.* 10.1.2.
[144] *trin.* 14.9.12.
[145] *trin.* 14.2.4.

represented by the first six psychological analogies. The attainment of that height is what allows the intellect to make a seamless transition to the immediate vision of the Trinity at the end of time, when the mind will become marked with the seventh and last psychological analogy. The idea behind Augustine's treatise, then, is to enable human beings to learn to enjoy God as they are able to do so to the greatest possible extent in the present, so as to maximize the experience of Him for eternity.[146]

Criticisms of the psychological analogies

The foregoing treatment of Augustine's psychological analogies rests on the assumption that those analogies outline the cognitive process involved in conforming to the image of God. Although a reading of the latter half of *De Trinitate* that proceeds along these lines has recently been developed by a number of other scholars, it has by no means been the predominant reading of the recent past.[147] Moreover, the readings that have prevailed have been highly critical of the project Augustine supposedly undertakes in presenting his analogies.

Chief amongst the accusations that have been directed against Augustine's analogies is the one that holds that they promote an introverted individualism. In encouraging his readers to reflect on themselves as images of God, Augustine purportedly implies that human beings need

[146] *trin*. 13.20.26.

[147] Lewis Ayres, "The Christological Context of Augustine's De Trinitate Thirteen: Toward Relocating Books Eight through Fifteen," *Augustinian Studies*, 29:1 (1998), 111–39; idem., "The Discipline of Self-Knowledge in Augustine's *De Trinitate* Book X," in *The Passionate Intellect* (Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University, 1995), 261–96; Isabelle Bochet, *Saint Augustin et le désir de Dieu* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1982); Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Gioia, *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate*; Michael Hanby, *Augustine and Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003); O'Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine;* Anna Williams, "Contemplation: Knowledge of God in Augustine's *De Trinitate,*" in *Knowing the Triune God: The Work of the Spirit in the Practices of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); Rowan Williams, "Sapientia and the Trinity: Reflections on the *De Trinitate,*" in *Melanges T.J. van Bavel, Collectanea Augustiniana*, ed. B. Brunner (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1990), 317–32; idem., "The Paradoxes of Self-Knowledge in the *De Trinitate,*" in *Collectanea Augustiniana: Augustine: Presbyter factus sum* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 121–34.

look no further than themselves to find the foundations for all knowledge, and that they should withdraw from reality and human relationships in order to tap into their innate and fully actualized intellectual powers.[148] In doing this, Augustine is thought to have instigated the "turn to the subject" that took place in the thought of Descartes and Kant.[149] Inasmuch as reflection on the image of God entails virtual reflection on God Himself, Augustine is also said to have argued for the possibility of knowing God purely rationally and thus to have founded the discipline of natural theology, in which the existence of God is supposedly established without reference to the revelation of God the Son or to experience.

The account of the analogies I and others before me have endeavored to give indicates that Augustine actually subverts the very trends he has been accused of setting. Far from implying that human beings possess fully actualized cognitive powers, he suggests that the power to know, which is a power to know with a view to the existence of God, is one that must be gradually recovered by bringing faith in the revelation of Christ to bear in ordinary experience. Since the knowledge of God, like His image on the cognitive capacity, is something that must be gradually recovered, Augustine cannot be accused of giving any natural theological argument that provides definitive knowledge of God outside the context of faith and human experience.

Furthermore, though Augustine exhorts his readers to progressively recover the image of God and thus to recover their humanity individually, those that rightly interpret and follow these instructions do not withdraw from the world, but attain the position in which it becomes possible to enter into genuine human relationships – something one cannot do to the extent one remains un-conformed to God's image and thus self-absorbed or unsure of oneself. In Augustine's account, human beings conform to Christ not by engaging in static and solipsistic reflection but through participation in a dynamic process of Christian transformation that enacts the possibility of human community.

[148] For example, Catherine La Cugna, Olivier Du Roy, Colin Gunton, Karl Rahner.

[149] Phillip Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Gareth B. Matthews, *Thought's Ego in Augustine and Descartes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992); Stephen Menn, *Descartes and Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Charles Taylor, "In Interiore Homine," in *The Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

Divine Illumination

In both *De Trinitate* and *De Genesi ad litteram* Augustine invokes illumination to illustrate the work of the human intellect as the *imago dei*.[150] These references invite the reader to interpret illumination as it is mentioned in earlier works like *De magistro* and *Soliloquia* in a larger theological context, that is, as an illustration of the process involved in conforming to God's image, or recovering the cognitive capacity by regaining the ability to use it for its proper purpose. This is the sort of interpretation of illumination I will offer in what follows.

De magistro

In *De magistro*, Augustine recounts a dialogue between himself and his son Adeodatus concerning the nature of signs and the possibility of teaching and learning using signs, especially words.[151] Toward the end of the discussion, the father and son conclude that it is impossible to teach solely by means of signs. Although teachers can create an environment that is conducive to comprehending signs and can stimulate their students to attend to the realities the signs signify, their efforts merely give students the potential to learn the meaning of the signs under consideration. For they cannot enforce learning on students that have no drive to discover or that lack the skills or knowledge that might be needed to help them make sense of the signs.[152]

Only willing and capable learners are in a position to benefit from the guidance and expertise of their teachers. If a teacher calls on such students to draw a conclusion about the meaning of signs that the students do not know on the basis of ones they do, they will be able to give a response. Furthermore, they will be able to anticipate, comprehend, and disagree with their teacher's interpretation of various signs. In light of all this, Augustine and Adeodatus emphasize that the efficacy of teaching is just as contingent on the teachable spirit of the students as it is on the skills of the teacher.

From this point, Augustine proceeds to claim that divine illumination enacts the possibility of the teaching and learning, which would not

[150] *Gn. litt.* 12.29.57, 12.30.58, 12.31.59; *trin.* 9.6.9, 10.1.2, 12.15.24,14.7.9, 15.25.44, 15.27.49–50.

[151] *mag.* 1.2.

[152] *mag.* 10.33, 12.40.

otherwise be possible. He describes Christ as the inner Teacher, the light all consult to gain understanding.[153] Christ, Augustine states, both bestowed "the light of the mind by His enlightening act"[154] at creation and reminded that the light was dwelling within at His Incarnation.[155] Because of His illumination, human minds may continually experience the enlightening action of God.[156]

When *De magistro* is interpreted at face value, these citations may seem to support some of the extrinsic interpretations of illumination I have mentioned. However, a reading of the text that takes into account Augustine's mature theological treatises makes it possible to affirm that the function of Christ's illumination in human knowing as it is envisioned in this dialogue is simply to illumine the Triune nature of God and His image on the human mind in the same instance – to illumine an intrinsic intellectual capacity and its Triune source.[157]

Augustine already hints at this in the *Soliloquia*, where he speaks of God as "the intelligible Light, from whom and through whom and in whom all things intelligibly shine."[158] Just as there are three things in the sun, "that it is, that it shines, and that it illumines," he writes, "so also in that most hidden God there are three things, namely, that He is, that He is known, and that He makes other things to be known."[159] In making these claims, Augustine speaks obliquely of the three Persons of the Trinity that the Person of Jesus Christ revealed as He illumined God's Triune nature. He suggests, moreover, that the doctrine of the Trinity is required to enact the account of knowledge by illumination which the Platonists espoused.

As *the* image of the Trinity, Christ demonstrated that reflecting the image means expressing the spirit or intrinsic intellectual ability He gave at creation for the purpose He exemplified through His Incarnate life, which is to illumine the nature of the Father. By this account, divine illumination works two ways: Christ illumines human minds so that they

[153] *mag.* 11.

[154] *ep. 147*, trans. Sister Wilfrid Parsons in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 20 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1953), 45.

[155] *mag.* 14.

[156] *mag.* 12.

[157] *sol.* 1.1.3, 1.8.15.

[158] *sol.* 1.1.3.

[159] *sol.* 1.8.15, trans. Gilligan: *Nam et terra visibilis et lux; sed terra nisi luce inlustrata videri non potest. Ergo et illa, quae in disciplines traduntur, quae quisquis intellegit verissima esse nulla dubitatione concedit, credendum est ea non posse intellegi, nisi ab alio quasi suo sole inlustrentur.*

can illumine the divine being. Augustine wholeheartedly affirms that all are made in the image of God and therefore possess the ability to illumine reality. This is why it is both possible and necessary for people with faith to learn from, converse with, and by these means influence those that reason without faith. Nevertheless, he struggles to call the latter truly illumined, inasmuch as they do not recognize the light through which they know and are therefore particularly prone to "reduce" the light by which they judge to some particular, created light.

The tendency to do this is exactly the one human beings acquired at the fall. As a result of the fall, they began to judge the world by restrictive ideas and thus in an exclusive light. Instead of judging the relative worth of things, they employed the capacity for judgment to be judgmental. In this way, they lost the ability to learn from and to teach one another. Christ reinstated the ability to learn and to communicate with others when He modelled the openness of mind that makes it possible to find the good – and God – in all things. He revealed that those with divergent interests can pursue their interests with the shared goal of glorifying the God who gave them those interests as ways to discover Him and to inspire others to do the same. Far from suspending normal human patterns of interpersonal communication, the theologically contextualized interpretation of *De magistro* confirms that Christ restores them for those who recover the capacity He originally gave them to know God by learning to work for His glory.

Soliloquia

According to Augustine in *Soliloquia*, the process of recovery begins when initial faith opens or cleanses the eyes of the mind, converting them from darkness to the light of the realization that the mind is created in God's image in order to know like God, and eventually, to know God.[160] This realization entails another, namely, that the material things that are seen all around are not ultimate; that the "interior eyes are judges of the exterior ones" and that "the former [should be preferred] to the latter."[161] Although the opening or cleansing of the eyes through faith instigates the process of the mind's conversion to the light, it does not at once adjust it fully to the light. Although reinstated, the image of God on the mind is still an effaced one, or as Augustine elaborates, the all-encompassing

[160] *sol.* 1.6.12–13.
[161] *ep.* 147, 41.

Light of God is too bright for those whose limited concepts of goodness and light have left them unaccustomed to it.[162]

Stated otherwise, the newly illumined are still "bent over" (*incurvatus se*) particular goods; their heads are bowed and eyes covered for protection from the light that reveals the goodness of all things which is as yet too bright for them to bear. In order to stand upright and actually see the world in this light of faith, Augustine exhorts the illumined to invite the influence of more illumination, which is to undergo the renewal of the image of God.[163] On his account, the eyes of the mind adjust to the vision of the world at ever higher, more inclusive grades of light by judging whatever can be seen under the level of light they are able to bear. Judging by the light means acknowledging that nothing that is seen by the light is itself an all-consuming light by which to judge the world. The light by which all things are perceived and distinguished is not diffused in any special place.[164] The low grade of light at which the mind initially sees results in narrow-minded judgments, since darkness excludes what light subsumes and appropriately includes. Dimness of vision prevents the mind from grasping fully that the unspeakable and incomprehensible light of minds encompasses far more than the light of one outlook ever could - from seeing that there is more than one road to wisdom and allowing others to guide and be guided toward that light "according to their health and endurance."[165] Darkened vision, in summary, makes the mind unsure about what can be subsumed under the light, fostering aversions and fears and inhibiting the human ability to navigate the world confidently in the knowledge that there is a place for everything in it in the divine order, and thus to identify God's goodness in all things.

Even so, vision at a low grade of illumination naturally leads to vision at a higher degree of light. The mind cannot stay in the dimness of light forever if it faithfully adheres to the knowledge that the light includes all things but is reduced to none, for it is impossible to forget what it was like to come to see more clearly and to realize where vision remained obscure. The contrast between darkness and light trains the eyes of the mind to move by trial and error out of darkness and into brighter levels of light that dispel the shadows that prevent the realization that the light is an all-inclusive one, in which a greater share can be gained as one learns

[162] *sol.* 1.8.15.

[163] See *conf.* 13.20.2; *ord.* 1.8.23.

[164] *ep.* 120, trans. Sister Wilfrid Parsons in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 18 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1953).

[165] Ibid.

from others how that light operates. Each time the intellect attempts to judge in the light, it cultivates the habit of doing so, undergoing the renewal of God's image and bringing that blurry image into clearer focus.

As the mind comes to an ever better realization of the fact that there is a place for all things under the common light, Augustine elaborates, the head is lifted by degrees and the hands drawn away from the eyes until the illumined stands upright with arms outstretched so as to see all that surrounds it under the constant ray of divine light that exposes the distinctive purpose and worth of all things. Augustine calls attention to the fact that those who assume this cognitive stance poise with eyes and mind and heart and arms wide open as Christ did when He accomplished the redemption of mankind on the cross.[166] Following in His steps, they become free to maneuver the world without the inhibitions of narrow-mindedness and fear that formerly tainted the light of the mind and to find what is good in all circumstances.[167]

In doing that, Augustine believes that people of faith gain the ability to further the redemptive work of Christ, and thus encourage others to see things in His light. Although the circumstances in which this is done may change, Augustine insists that an illumined perspective on the circumstances themselves need not shift any more than the Son's steady gaze on the Father in the Spirit. Changes in circumstance, far from upsetting the illumined outlook, can only broaden the scope of illumined judgment.[168] As this happens, Augustine affirms, "each one according to his strength grows more proficient … and [prepares to] sooner or later behold the sun without flinching and with immense delight."[169] Each one, in other words, prepares at their own pace and in accordance with their own abilities to see God.

Defining Augustinian illumination

What has been said to this point serves to bolster the contention that illumination for Augustine is the source of an intrinsic cognitive capacity rather than any sort of intellectually offensive extrinsic conditioning. So construed, illumination evades the problems commonly associated with the claims that the divine light interferes in the process of cognition or that it imposes the very content or certitude of thoughts. By defining

[166] *ep.* 140, 26.
[167] *conf.* 13.20.2; *ep.* 147, 44.
[168] *ord.* 1.8.25.
[169] *sol.* 1.13.23.

illumination as the source of the mind's ability, however, I do not intend to imply that Augustinian illumination has no bearing on cognitive processes, content, or certainty. This is manifestly not the case, inasmuch as the cognitive capacity is one that must be gradually recovered as the mind cultivates a habit of reasoning in the light of faith in God.

As the mind does this, Augustine relates that it begins to employ the innate ability the Son gave to think in terms of unifying categories, in ultimate terms of the existence of one God, and thus to think in the way the Incarnate Son Himself exemplified: in the Spirit that glorifies God the Father. In the sense that the mind seeking to recover its capacity must follow Christ's example concerning how to think, Christ affects cognitive processes, not by performing them on behalf of the mind but by putting the mind in the position to perform them of its own accord by way of the example He set at His Incarnation.

As the mind imitates Christ's way of knowing, it gains greater insight into the object of His knowledge, which is the goodness of God the Father – not yet directly, of course, but indirectly, as it realizes the impact faith in Him has on its efforts to form ideas about reality. By forming ideas in the way the Father does, namely, through the Son and in His Spirit, the intellect increasingly participates at its own initiative in an eternal life that consists in contemplating the idea of God. While the search for God's Truth may be in the making of the mind that undertakes it, the Truth that is discovered is not the mind's invention. Rather, the mind through its own workings conceptually alights on an aspect of the way God has made things to be: good.

For this reason, one can affirm that illumination bears on the content of thought, not because God imposes thoughts on the human mind but because the intellect, to the extent it has recovered its capacity, comes to know what God already knows in full, which is quite simply the goodness of God, as it can be perceived through the mediation of natural experiences scrutinized from the standpoint of faith. Although the knowledge of Truth is something that is sought after "from below" or through the use of the natural capacity to comprehend natural reality, one can still affirm in a qualified sense that it is something that is received from above, to the extent that the mind acknowledges that the employment of its natural capacity represents a participation in the knowledge of what is above.

The more the mind participates in the knowledge of God as it presently can, learning to see the signs of God's goodness everywhere it turns to look, the more the mind becomes confident in the veracity of the idea it entertained from the beginning, which is that God is good. The "proof"

for the truth of the doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation, consequently, is in the effects the application of those doctrines on the mind that uses them to find the good – and God – in all things, overcoming in the process the idea that the circumstances can make or break happiness while discerning how to make the best of all circumstances and find happiness in them.

As the truth of Christian faith is reinforced for the believing mind by these means, the opportunity to demonstrate its viability in the face of unbelievers also arises. For the capacity to put all things into a perspective that locates the good in them – the capacity to "redeem" them – is a testament to the powerful effect that faith in the Triune, Incarnate God can have whenever it is invoked.[170] While those who are aware that God is an all-inclusive good can identify the sense in which God can bring good from virtually anything, and in that, find a way to overcome difficulties and reconcile differences in perspective, those that are not aware of the all-inclusive nature of that light, who tend to reduce it to some finite light, do not have the resources to embrace all that surrounds. By making use of the resources of faith to redeem the circumstances and incorporate the ideas of others, as Augustine did with the ideas of the Platonists, for example, the people of faith acquire a charitable attitude of open-mindedness that is conducive to promoting unity and peace and that serves as the source of their faith's persuasive power.

That attitude is one of the effects of faith in God, which provides perhaps the most convincing evidence for the truth of Christian doctrine that can be produced in an order where God Himself is never fully disclosed. Since those effects can only be identified by a human mind that is affected by faith and that is prepared to give an account of the object of faith by which it is affected – the Triune God – and how it is affected – through the Incarnation of God's Son – Augustine insists that those wishing to lead others to belief in God must go about this in the way Christ modeled: not by shining the light of faith in the eyes of those who reason in the dark, but by showing how effective it is to walk in the light that makes the way forward clear and fosters fellowship with others. He urges his readers to persuade others to believe through the application of the belief in the goodness of God, which produces certainty about the goodness of all that happens in reality, which in turn reinforces belief in the goodness of God. Here, illumination can be said to afford cognitive certitude not because this is imposed from the outside but because the mind that recovers its capacity inevitably experiences a directly propor-

[170] *trin.* 15.3–8.

tional increase in certainty with respect to belief in God. The certainty that results from seeing reality by the light of faith doubles as the confidence in the Light Itself that remains as yet unseen but will surely be seen by the eyes that adjust to it by faith.[171]

All this may be summarized by saying that divine illumination is the source of an intrinsic intellectual capacity all human beings have to illumine the nature of God. So construed the theory evades the problems typically associated with interpretations that treat the divine light as though it were some sort of extrinsic force. Those interpretations have not done justice to the later developed theological context of the account Augustine most famously mentions in early "philosophical" works. Inasmuch as the capacity that comes through illumination is one that must be gradually recovered, however, it is possible to affirm that illumination enters into cognition in the three other ways Augustine admittedly mentions, namely, as an ongoing help in the cognitive process and as the source of cognitive content and of certitude. This is not because Christ the illuminator directly instigates or interferes with the cognitive process or imposes ideas and certainty about them, but because the human mind can only recover its capacity by following the example He set through engagement in a process of cognition that is analogous to His and that results in a growing understanding of and certainty about the Being of God that He always knows in full.

With all this in view, one can conclude that the illumination of Christ does not bear on cognition in any way that undermines the autonomy or integrity of the intellect but in a way that reinstates it, at least for the intellect that stokes rather than extinguishes His light through a decision to work with faith in Him.[172] On Augustine's account, all that comes to the intellect from the outside is the power to be renewed on the inside; this is the power to illumine the divine being that is received through divine illumination – the power to know like God and thus know God. Here at last the logic of Augustine's claim that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of all human knowledge comes into relief – for unless God gives the capacity to know Him and it is used to the end of knowing Him, there is no such thing as knowing or knowledge at all. After all, there is nothing to see in the dark.

[171] *beata v.* 4.35.
[172] *trin.* 14.14.18.

2

Anselm (AD 1033–1109)

Introduction

When it comes to forms of philosophical argument, the writings of St. Anselm of Canterbury do not obviously resemble those of St. Augustine. In spite of the obvious methodological discrepancies between the two thinkers, there is hardly anything controversial about the claim that the eleventh-century Benedictine was Augustine's foremost representative in the early medieval period, when it would appear that Augustine's theological outlook was widely, if not universally, presupposed.[1]

Although the lines of continuity between Augustine and Anselm are often drawn on the basis of assumptions concerning the contours of Augustine's thought that I have questioned, my main concern in this chapter is not to explain or take issue with other readings of Anselm. Instead, my goal is to demonstrate that Anselm does indeed think along the lines of Augustine, as I have interpreted Augustine, on the matter of divine illumination, an aspect of the Benedictine's thought that has received little to no scholarly attention. Assuming that Anselm adheres to an essentially Augustinian Trinitarian theology, I will move almost straight into investigating his understanding of what is involved in reflecting the image of God, recovering that image which was effaced at the fall, and

[1] Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, *Anselm* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 16.

Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge, by Lydia Schumacher

undergoing an experience of divine illumination, a metaphor Anselm invokes to illustrate the process of recovery.[2]

The main reason for conducting this analysis of Anselm's thought on illumination, rather than proceeding directly to evaluate the thirteenth-century developments more pertinent to the inquiry into the decline of the illumination account, is to establish on fairly non-controversial grounds what it means to work in continuity with Augustine's thought on knowledge and illumination. On my understanding, doing this means adhering to the bishop's theological assumptions and translating the concept of human knowing that can be derived from them into contemporarily relevant terms, even ones that differ from Augustine's own.

Since the study of St. Anselm illustrates what it means to update the thought of Augustine in a new context, it will facilitate the effort I make later on to advance the potentially controversial argument that Thomas Aquinas rather than Bonaventure is Augustine's main champion in the thirteenth century. The study of Anselm will ground this argument on another level, inasmuch as Franciscan thinkers like Bonaventure appropriated his work as part of the project of associating themselves with the intellectual tradition of Augustine, for it will eventually reveal that the Franciscan use of Anselm, like that of Augustine, was not necessarily a faithful one. Therefore, the theologically grounded account of Anselm's view on illumination which I give in this chapter lays the foundation for subsequent work to make a case for the claim that Franciscans did not bolster traditional Augustinian ideas, even as Anselm presented them.

Before I delve into this study of Anselm's thought, a word about the intellectual context in which he worked is in order. Anselm lived at the end of a period in history during which Western civilization had been subject to an immense amount of division and unrest. The sociopolitical tide was already turning for the worse during the last days of Augustine, who watched the Roman Empire enter the initial stages of its decline due to barbarian invasions as he composed his *De civitate Dei*. In that treatise, he exhorts his readers to bear in mind that the "city of God" will not come to the same end as the "city of man" in which it is presently situated, and he encourages them to face the trials of the times with that truth in view. He urges his readers, in summary, to maintain an illumined outlook on reality.

[2] Brian Leftow, "Anselm's Perfect-Being Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Anselm* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 132; Katherin A. Rogers, *Perfect Being Theology* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000); Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 133–46.

Although invasions of the Empire eventually led to the division of its once vast territory, undermining political and economic stability and decentralizing learning in the process, the darkness that overshadowed the city of man as a result of all this did not at once prevail in the city of God, just as Augustine had predicted. If anything, the uncertain times threw the constancy of the light into sharper relief. Statesmen such as Boethius and Cassiodorus, for example, testified that an illumined outlook is what enabled them to negotiate the volatile political circumstances of the day.[3]

The sixth-century pope Gregory the Great also admitted to relying on illumination in his efforts to lead the Church through these times. Gregory even preached a message of Augustinian illumination, calling the faithful to repent of placing their hopes in the present life and thus make themselves receptive to the inner light of God that puts tumultuous external circumstances into a right perspective.[4] In his hagiographical writings, Gregory presents St. Benedict as the model of an illumined mindset.[5] He recounts a vision in which Benedict perceived the whole world gathered under one brilliant beam of light which showed how to manage great challenges and serve others who were facing them.

In 529, Benedict had founded his first monastic community. Many of the many abbeys that were opened across the Western world between 550 and 1150, and even beyond the original borders of the former Roman Empire, were associated with his order. In between the regular periods of prayer prescribed by the liturgy of the hours, Benedictine monks pored over and painstakingly copied and commented on the classic works of the Christian tradition, especially those of Augustine. They also labored to support themselves. Through their intellectual, economic, and agricultural enterprises, the Benedictines came to hold "a prominent position in the social landscape of Europe as landowning corporations, ecclesiastical patrons, and [proponents of] learning."[6] In an era characterized by uncertainty and disunity, the Benedictine abbeys scattered throughout Western Christendom created intellectual, religious, and social continuity. In summary, Benedict's illumined outlook, brought to bear on a grand scale,

[3] See Boethius, *De Trinitate* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978); Cassiodorus, *On the Soul*, trans. James W. Halporn and Mark Vessey (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2004).

[4] Gregory the Great, *The Life of St. Benedict*, trans. Terrence G. Kardong (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009), 5.13–14; 6.26–46.

[5] Ibid., 2.35.

[6] C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism* (London: Longman, 1985), 17.

contributed to the preservation and perpetuation of Christian thought and culture in the early Middle Ages. In view of this, one might go so far as to say that the application of Augustine's account of illumination is what saw medieval thinkers through the period that intervened between the death of Augustine and the lifespan of Anselm.

Just prior to the time of Anselm, the light began to return to the city of man, in conjunction with the rise of the Holy Roman Empire. During the rule of Charlemagne and his successors, the West started to enjoy a measure of government-driven political, economic, and intellectual stability once again. For his own part, Charlemagne initiated a revival of learning by founding schools based in the local cathedrals, where select members of the clergy could receive basic training in the liberal arts, Scripture, and the Church Fathers, and thus become more competent administrators of church affairs.[7] He appointed Alcuin of York as master of the arts for members of his own court; he collected the classical texts that were available in Latin at the time, including Boethius' Latin translation of Aristotle's six logical treatises (*Organon*), Boethius' own philosophical and theological works, and a few works by Cicero and Plato;[8] and he commissioned independent scholars to complete new translations. One of the most important of these was John Scotus Eriugena's Latin version of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius.

Prior to the Carolingian renaissance, scholars working in the monastic setting had focused their intellectual energies on the study of Scripture and the Fathers. That is not to say that they had no training in the liberal arts or that their research was not well-informed or comprehensive, but it is to suggest that, with exceptions like Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede, the pursuit of *sapientia* rather than *scientia* was the order of the day.[9] By the eleventh century, the trends that were set

[7] G.R. Evans, *Philosophy and Theology in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1993), 17.

[8] Other texts available during this period included Porphyry's *Isagogue*, a commentary on Aristotle's *Categoriae*; Boethius' commentaries on Porphyry's *Isagogue*, Aristotle's *De interpretatione* and *Categoriae*, and on Cicero's *Topica*; Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae* and *Opuscula sacra*; an early medieval paraphrase of the *Categoriae* known as the *Categoriae decem*, for a long time mistakenly attributed to Augustine; Macrobius' commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* and *Topica*; and Calcidius' fourth-century translation and commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*. Until Henricus Aristippus' translation of the *Meno* and the *Phaedo* in the twelfth century, the *Timaeus* was the only text of Plato available in the Latin West.

[9] John Marenbon, *From the Circle of Alcuin to the School of Auxerre: Logic, Theology, and Philosophy in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2.

during the Carolingian renaissance had become norms. Scholarly work was undertaken in monasteries as well as in cathedral schools and the rapidly proliferating intellectual circles that were sheltered by no institution but were governed by a master of the arts who determined the course of study his pupils would undertake.[10]

In most of these institutions, there was a growing interest in the liberal arts and philosophy and in the logical or dialectical methods of inquiry that were employed in these disciplines. By Anselm's day, this development had rendered it necessary to re-appraise the relationship between science and wisdom, reason and faith.[11] After so long a time on the "way of authority," as Augustine had called it, eleventh-century scholars faced the challenge of determining what it would mean in their context to take his "way of reason."

Naturally, there were those who favored the use of logic in the study of Scripture as well as those that opposed it to varying degrees. Contrary to what has been supposed for some time, however, the so-called "dialecticians" did not construe reason as the only source of truth, and the "anti-dialecticians" did not declare reason superfluous for the purposes of faith.[12] Stated otherwise, eleventh-century thinkers did not operate on rationalist and fideist assumptions about the mutually exclusive nature of reason and faith that modern thinkers tend to presuppose. On the contrary, they commonly affirmed that faith and reason are mutually interdependent. They only disagreed when it came to deciding where and how to lay the emphasis.[13]

Through his studies at the Benedictine abbey of Bec, Anselm would have become well-versed in Augustine's thought before he succeeded his master Lanfranc as prior there.[14] As prior and later abbot, Anselm composed treatises that have been called the "most perfect definitions" of Augustine's views.[15] In the process, he built the abbey's reputation as one of the foremost centers of learning in Europe, until he was appointed

[10] G.R. Evans, *Old Arts, New Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 1.

[11] Ibid., 3.

[12] Toivo J. Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology in the Eleventh Century* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 2. Holopainen challenges the received view espoused by J.A. Endres in *Forschungen zur Geschichte der Fruhmittelalterlichen Philosophie* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1915).

[13] Holopainen, *Dialectic and Theology*, 156.

[14] See G.R. Evans, "Putting Theory into Practice: Anselm and the Augustinian Model," in *Augustine: Mystic and Mystagogue* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 367.

[15] Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1938), 23–4.

Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093. For these reasons, the monks who were in his care at Bec requested that he explain, in the light of the contemporary controversies, how they might come to know God through the use of reason and logic.[16]

The response Anselm offered can be found in his *Monologion* and its sequel, the *Proslogion*. In the preface to the *Monologion*, Anselm intimates that his purpose in the treatise is effectively to update the *De Trinitate*, where Augustine gave his account of God, the image of God, and the process of re-conforming to the image of God. In that work and others, Augustine had indicated that the ways of authority and reason are equally legitimate ways to God, inasmuch as they begin and end with the wisdom that God is the Highest Good, that He is so because He is Triune, and that this is known because He made Himself Incarnate.

Even so, Augustine argued that the way of reason, which proceeds from wisdom through science back to wisdom, can be a far more satisfying way to take, inasmuch as it reveals the profound depths of the wisdom of God that cannot be fathomed on the way of authority. Augustine had advanced such arguments on the basis of Scriptural authority. However, those arguments were of limited use to Anselm's monks, who were already convinced that the way of authority was a viable one. Although they merely needed to be reminded of what Augustine had communicated in *De Trinitate*, they needed the reminder to come in a new form, which would reveal how the conclusions they took on authority could be reached by reason as well as by faith.

The *Monologion* represents Anselm's attempt to summarize Augustine's *De Trinitate* briefly in the contextually relevant way his readers required.[17] Instead of building arguments on the basis of Scriptural authority, Anselm chose to present arguments from "reason alone" (*sola ratione*). When discussing the logic behind divine actions, he cites "necessary reasons" (*rationes necessariae*). When explaining what is proper action for human beings created in God's image, Anselm presents arguments from fittingness (*convenientia*). The only authority Anselm names explicitly is Augustine himself, and even his name appears a mere eight times in six passages, all of which

[16] Anselm, *Monologion*, in *Sancti Anselmi cantuariensis archiepiscopi Opera omnia*, vols 1–6, ed. F.S. Schmitt (Edinburgh: T. Nelson and Sons, 1946–61), Preface. All translated citations of Anselm are taken from *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G.R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[17] Frederick Van Fleteren, "Augustine and Anselm: Faith and Reason," in *Faith Seeking Understanding: Learning and the Catholic Tradition* (Manchester, NH: St. Anselm College Press, 1991), 58.

are found in the *Monologion* or *Proslogion* and refer to *De Trinitate*.[18] By appealing to what is logically necessary or fitting rather than to authority, Anselm threw the contours of some essential Augustinian positions into relief in a way that illustrated how to take Augustine's way of reason.

Although he apparently tried to tackle the whole task of modernizing Augustine's treatise on the Trinity in the *Monologion* itself, Anselm states at the outset of the *Proslogion* that in his own opinion he did not successfully do so. Even though he had given a satisfactory account of the Triune God and creation in God's image through the use of reason alone in that context, he hints that he had not adequately or at least concisely done the same when it came to demonstrating how to conform to God's image. In other words, he had not provided a catalyst for the renewal of the image, as Augustine had done with his psychological analogies.

For a long time, Anselm says he sought to no avail for a single logical argument (*unum argumentum*) or single formula, as the phrase can be translated, which his readers could employ in their efforts to conform to God.[19] Just after he had given up on the project, the idea came to him in a flash of insight that disclosed the famous proof for the existence of God he proceeded to outline in the *Proslogion*. In that brief treatise, Anselm completed in his own way the project Augustine had undertaken in the latter half of his *De Trinitate* and which he himself had begun in the *Monologion*.

In spite of Anselm's instructions to read the *Monologion* and *Proslogion* as counterparts to the two halves of Augustine's *De Trinitate*, and thus to interpret the latter and the famous "proof" for the existence of God its second chapter contains as a guide to conforming to God's image, most modern interpreters have not taken into consideration the relevance of Augustine's work, much less the other twenty-five chapters of the *Proslogion* itself. One possible reason for this oversight has already been mentioned, which is that Augustine's *De Trinitate* has been misunderstood and criticized on the basis of misapprehensions until only very recently. This situation in the scholarship on Augustine's thought seems to have discouraged or at least failed to promote any attempts that might have been made to give a reading of Anselm's *Proslogion* that is informed by an understanding of Augustine's treatise on the Trinity.

Another reason why the proof Anselm presents in chapter two has not been evaluated in relation to Augustine's *De Trinitate* and the rest of the *Proslogion* itself is that it has been retrospectively read through the lens of one specific late medieval interpretation. In later chapters, I will elaborate

[18] Ibid.

[19] Anselm, *Proslogion*, preface.

on just what that lens was. In this context, suffice it to say that Anselm's argument, which was largely neglected during the twelfth century, was adopted in the early thirteenth century by Franciscan scholars who interpreted it as an *a priori* argument for God's existence – the first of its kind in the West – which affords total and immediate access to the knowledge that God exists through intellectual reflection on God, as part of an effort to account for St. Francis' constant cognitive connection with God.[20]

Once modern thinkers removed Anselm's proof so construed from the context of Franciscan faith and life, many came to believe that such *a priori* proof for God could be offered on the basis of reason alone, without recourse to faith in God's revelation or to experience. In offering such a proof, Anselm is supposed to have given an ontological proof for God, as Augustine allegedly did with his psychological analogies, that is, a proof that provides full access to the knowledge of God purely rationally, or through reflection on Him or more specifically His image on the mind. This interpretation of Anselm's argument which makes no reference to Augustine is the one that been presupposed ever since, both by the scholars that have advocated the argument and by those who have challenged its viability.[21]

Although some theologians in the fairly recent past have observed that an aprioristic reading of Anselm is inconsistent with his outlook – that the argument was designed to make faith intelligible to those that already adhere to it and was not an enterprise in natural theology aimed to convince unbelievers of truth about God on purely rational grounds – they have not always explained in great detail how exactly the argument helps

[20] On the neglect of Anselm's argument, see Visser and Williams, *Anselm*, 73. On the Franciscan appropriation of the argument, see Scott Matthews, *Reason, Community, and Religious Tradition: Anselm's Argument and the Friars* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); Ian Logan, *Reading Anselm's Proslogion: The History of the Argument and Its Significance Today* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009).

[21] Early modern philosophers who propounded an *a priori* or "ontological"' argument for God's existence include René Descartes and Gottfried Leibniz. Versions of this argument have been espoused more recently by Norman Malcolm and Alvin Plantinga. Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell are amongst the most avid critics of ontological arguments. Anselm scholars who have seen his argument as a rationalist proof include M.J. Charlesworth, *St. Anselm's Proslogion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992); Charles Hartshorne, *Anselm's Discovery: A Reexamination of the Ontological Proof for God's Existence* (La Salle: Open Court, 1965); Jasper Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm* (Minneapolis: Lund Press, 1972); Edward Synan, "Prayer, Proof, and Anselm's *Proslogion*," in *Standing Before God: Studies on Prayer in Scriptures and in Tradition* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1981).

render faith intelligible.[22] Building on the insights of those who have come before me, I will endeavor to do this as I give an account of what is involved in imaging God, according to Anselm, and describe how the *Proslogion* and its proof provide a resource for those seeking to engage in the process of recovering the image of God, which Anselm illustrates by appealing to divine illumination.

The Image of God

Like Augustine, Anselm affirms that human beings are created in the image of a God who is simple: a God who is one thing, which is all that is good, all the time or – as later thinkers would put it – whose essence is His existence. Since God need not undergo change in order to be what He is, He is the Highest Good there is.[23] On Anselm's account, this God knows and makes known His supreme goodness – that is, the Truth – in virtue of the fact that He is Triune.[24]

Although the beings God creates are nothing like Him – He is what He is, which is an infinite and eternal Truth, while they must become what they were made to be – finite and temporal things – Anselm nevertheless affirms that created realities are like Him inasmuch as He gives them a single way of exhibiting truth ("rectitude" or "correctness"),[25] in virtue of the involvement of numerous component parts.[26] Through the collaboration of those parts, creatures perform their proper functions and become by degrees the specific beings they were made to be. In this way, Anselm writes, creaturely "existence" approximates creaturely essence; creatures participate in their own ways of being true. By doing this, they participate in the way and to the extent they can in the unend-

[22] Karl Barth, *Anselm: Fides quaerens intellectum: Anselm's Proof of the Existence of God in the Context of His Theological Scheme* (London: SCM, 1960); David Hogg, *Anselm of Canterbury: The Beauty of Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), ch. 4; Logan, *Reading Anselm's Proslogion*; E.L. Mascall, "Faith and Reason: Anselm and Aquinas," *Journal of Theological Studies* 13:1 (1963), 67–90; Anton Pegis, "St. Anselm and the Argument of the Proslogion," *Mediaeval Studies* 28 (1966), 228–67; Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 9–10.

[23] *M* 1: goodness; 17: simplicity.

[24] *M* 26–64.

[25] Anselm, *De veritate* 2.

[26] See Richard Campbell's article, "Anselm's Background Metaphysics," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 33: 4 (1980), 327; cf. *M* 9.

ing Truth that pre-contains and makes possible without predetermining all manifestations of and growth in truth. To sum up, the things that have the potential to exhibit truth in a limited sense become more analogous to God, who bears no resemblance to the things He has made inasmuch as He is actual, absolute Truth.

While the fundamental discrepancy between divine and created natures prevents human beings from forming thoughts that capture anything directly about God, Anselm nonetheless affirms that human beings can know God by pursuing knowledge of the things that are accessible to them in view of the fact that no finite instance of truth is or can capture the all-inclusive Truth-in-Itself that God is.[27] Such an approach to knowing fosters an understanding of all things in their just or proper order.[28]

By attaining this sort of understanding, Anselm indicates, human beings do what God made them to do and wants them to do.[29] That is not to say that they have no freedom. To the contrary, human freedom is affirmed in this statement, insofar as doing what God made one to do prevents one from entertaining the narrow-minded ideas as to what is true that keeps the mind from finding what is good, and therefore happiness, wherever it turns its attention.[30]

Of course, Anselm acknowledges that the ability to obey God is one that human beings lost at the fall when they failed to regard God as the ultimate source of their happiness, choosing to believe instead that things other than God can afford complete happiness. As a result of this loss, humanity forfeited the image of God, together with the power to regain it.[31] For this reason, Anselm states that the image had to be restored by the one who originally gave it, namely, the Son of God.[32] Moreover, it needed to be restored by a son of man, since it was man and not God who had caused the loss in the first place.[33] This is why Anselm affirms that God the Son became a man. In doing this, the Son reinstated the human capacity to reflect the image of God by reflecting that image in the form of a human person.[34]

[27] *M* 68.
[28] *M* 68; *DV* 3.
[29] *DV* 12.
[30] See Anselm's *De concordia*.
[31] Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo* 1.23.
[32] *CDH* 2.11.
[33] *CDH* 2.7.
[34] *CDH* 2.18.

Toward the end of the *Monologion*, Anselm exhorts his readers to follow Christ's example in order to recover the lost image. He observes that it is one thing to profess belief in God's supreme goodness – to recall one's creation in God's image – and quite another to live in accordance with this belief – and so actually reflect the image. If human beings seek to have an effective faith, Anselm contends, they must think and act like what they say about God is true, else they appear not to believe and possess a dead faith.[35]

Conforming to the Image of God

The *Proslogion* picks up where *Monologion* leaves off. In the frequently neglected first chapter of this work, Anselm confesses that in his fallen state, he has lost the ability to know God and thus to do that for which he was made.[36] He admits that the image of God on his mind is so effaced and worn away by vice that it cannot reflect the reality of God in this life or the next unless God Himself renews and reforms it. For this reason, Anselm pleads with God to show him how to undergo the renewal of the image. This open-minded attitude of repentance put Anselm in the right frame of mind to receive the understanding he sought – the single argument – which he proceeds to present in chapter two. The premises and conclusion of the argument can be summarized as follows:

1. God is a Being than which none greater can be thought, i.e. the Supreme Being.
2. The Supreme Being exists in the mind.
3. It is greater to exist in reality than only in the mind.
4. God exists in reality as well as in the mind because He is the Supreme Being, and the Supreme Being must be whatever it is best to be.

With this argument, Anselm concisely states what Christians believe about the Triune God, namely, that He is supreme. On the monk's account, the meaning of the thought that God supremely exists entails the belief that He does in fact exist in reality, inasmuch as it is best to exist in reality, and God is what is best, or supreme, by definition. As Anselm had explained along Augustinian lines in the *Monologion*, God is one thing – all that is good – all the time, by contrast to creatures that

[35] *M* 78.
[36] *P* 1.

come into existence at a point in time and become the finite beings they were made to be in the course of time.

Unless His existence as the infinite and eternal Good-in-Itself is posited, there is no way to account for the source of all the finite and temporal goods in reality as well as the human ability to know them, though not Him, inasmuch as the knowledge of finite and infinite, developing and totalized realities, is mutually exclusive. This God who is greater than can be conceived – the God of Christian belief – must exist in reality as He does in thought, to wit, supremely, else He would not be the Supreme Being that He is, and it would be impossible to explain the existence of all known beings.

The point of the third chapter of the *Proslogion*, it would appear, is to start spelling out the implications of this argument for those who grasp its first premise, according to which God is the Supreme Being, as per premise two, not unlike Augustine had done in the second half of his *De Trinitate* after delineating his doctrine of God in the first. The main implication of the argument for those who apprehend God's supremacy is that they cannot deny that He exists in reality, since the thought of His supremacy entails His reality. In order to deny that He really exists, Anselm argues in chapter four, one would have to fail or refuse to understand the meaning of what is being said about Him. Although Anselm affirms that it is nonsensical or foolish in one sense to hear of God and then resist believing in Him whose supreme existence is the sole way to account for the existence of all things, he further contends that it is foolish or at best inconsistent in another respect to affirm that God exists and subsequently behave as if one thinks otherwise.

Since God's existence in reality logically follows from His existence in thought, Anselm implicitly concludes in chapter four that it is fitting for those who claim to think that God is the Supreme Being to act as though that belief is true. While those who refuse, albeit foolishly, to assent to God's existence may stake their hopes on temporal things instead of on Him and thereby act as though He does not supremely exist, this behavior involves a logical inconsistency for anyone who genuinely professes to believe that God exists. So-called believers who deny that God is real by their patterns of thought and action are for Anselm just as foolish as the ones who deny God altogether, if not more so, inasmuch as they negate their own truth claims and live a lie.

The message Anselm has communicated to this point in his *Proslogion* can be summarized as follows: God supremely exists. Those who refuse to accept this refuse to acknowledge the transcendent condition of possibility of their own immanent existence as well as the existence of all

things, which is foolish. Those that do accept it should behave in ways that are consistent with the belief that God exists. That is to say, they should bring the thought of God as Highest Good to bear in reality, or in acts of reasoning about ordinary circumstances. By doing this, incidentally, they may reveal to fools who lack faith how sensible it is to assess the immanent in light of trust in the transcendent existence of God.

Although he urges his readers to be consistent with respect to their belief in God, and to bear witness to the truth of their belief by these means, Anselm is by no means unaware of the fact that Christian believers do not always act as if what they say is true; that their testimony often leaves much to be desired. In fact, he seems to have formulated his *unum argumentum* or "single formula" precisely because he was aware that in their fallen state, those who profess faith frequently fail to live in a way that is fitting for people of faith.

Anselm is conscious that because of their fallen condition, Christians must be regularly reminded to repent from operating on the assumption that they know best and turn their desires over to the God who knows best, because He is the best.[37] Anselm offers such a reminder as he outlines a chain of reasoning – a formula, as it were – the use of which would facilitate efforts to break the prideful habit of thinking in terms of the all-importance of the self and its desires while forming the habit of regarding all things in the light of the supreme greatness of God.

Although initial faith reinstates the thought of God as Highest Good that was forgotten at the fall, that is, the awareness of His image, Anselm recognizes that the consequence of the fall, which was the effacement of the image and thus the loss of the ability to bring the knowledge of God to bear in knowing the world, is not totally overcome in the same instance. It remains for people of faith to make faith effective by forming a habit of reasoning in faith, or by undergoing the renewal of the image, as Anselm stresses at the end of the *Monologion* and at the start of the *Proslogion*.

As a concise and valid syllogism, Anselm's argument was one that those with basic training in logic could easily memorize and utilize in striving to cultivate this habit of reasoning in the light of the knowledge of God's supremacy and thereby break the habit of reasoning without it. In evaluating any situation, they simply needed to pause and run through the basic cognitive steps which Anselm describes, acknowledging (1) that God is the Supreme Being; (2) that they believe this; and (3) that it is therefore

[37] See Richard Campbell, *From Belief to Understanding* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1976), 10.

right for them to act as though they believe this in the reality of the circumstances under consideration.

Those who follow through on these cognitive steps, Anselm implies, reconcile faith in God with reason by allowing faith to shape their outlook on whatever they happen to be thinking about. Although the objects of their rational acts are natural rather than supernatural, meaning that God's essence is not disclosed through them, these acts nonetheless enable those who engage in them to apprehend God indirectly, through the perspective on ordinary life that faith in Him affords.

Through this perspective, formed by those who use the argument to reconcile faith and reason, Anselm suggests that the rationality or intelligibility of the faith is perceived as the mind realizes the power that faith has to promote efforts to put things in a proper or rational perspective. That power lies in faith's penchant for preventing the mind from operating on the fallen assumption that temporal circumstances can make or break human happiness. Those who habitually operate on that assumption tend to go to all sorts of extremes to satisfy their immediate desires, often doing harm to themselves and others in the process. Paradoxically, this quest for personal happiness can never afford lasting happiness, inasmuch as the objects of the quest are temporal attainments that are either fleeting or hard to find in fallen circumstances. Such a self-serving quest is ironically irrational because it is a quest for things that cannot always be secured, and is likely for that very reason to result in the discontentment, envy, and fear that disrupt the stability of the mind.

In clear contrast to this, the mind that stakes all hopes for happiness not on the present circumstances but on the God who is beyond them does not put its sanity at the mercy of those circumstances but makes the circumstances subject to itself. As it trusts in the goodness of a God who works all things for good, it becomes able to make the best of any given situation and thus to see the situation from the "divine perspective" that doubles as the knowledge of God that is attainable in this life. Each time it does so, incidentally, it experiences the renewal of the image of God and reflects that image with greater constancy and clarity. It discovers that its faith is rational because it taps into the power faith has to render reason sound.

The significance of the oft-neglected chapters five to twenty-six of the *Proslogion* comes into relief here, so far as these describe the repercussions of efforts to bring faith in God's existence to bear in real life. The main effect of such efforts is that those who make them become ever more certain of God's existence. For they become increasingly cognizant of the evidence of God's goodness, that is, His essence, which is everywhere to be found. By operating on the assumption that a God exists who is always

Good, Anselm elaborates, the faithful learn to perceive that all-encompassing attribute of His through all its various aspects and thus acquire the ability to resolve some apparent contradictions in God's character, such as His justice and His willingness to allow good to come to the unjust, or His mercy and His willingness to permit injustices to be done to the good.[38]

When faith informs efforts to make sense of these things, it reminds the believer that God works all things for good and therefore makes it possible to interpret His mercy as justice, His justice as mercy, and the injustices that can never be attributed to Him as a means to accomplishing the ends of both justice and mercy. When circumstances change so as seemingly to reveal more of His justice than His mercy, the belief in His goodness prevents the mind from thinking Him unmerciful and fosters its ability to find the goodness of the God who is seen at no one place and time in all places and times and thus to know Him as He really is: omnipresent and eternal.[39]

Through the on-going use of the argument for God's existence, in summary, the mind cultivates a predisposition to discern God's essence, which is goodness, shining through all things: to receive every event as a gracious gift from His hands. In the same instance, it unlearns its fallen tendency to operate on the assumption "I know best" while learning to think automatically in light of the fact that God knows best. As indirect experiences of God's essence become coextensive with direct experiences of the world, the mind's confidence in the soundness of the argument for His supremely good existence is reinforced. The results of this confidence are thoughts and actions that are compatible with the idea that God is the supreme good, or conformity to the image of Him who always thinks and acts in the knowledge of His supreme goodness and consequently, for His glory.

As the use of the argument promotes efforts to find the good and glorify God in all circumstances, Anselm further notes that it fosters happiness, since happiness hinges on the experience of reality as good. By finding contentment in all things, Anselm insinuates that human minds know God in the sense they presently can and prepare for the joy of gazing on the essence of the Good God Himself.[40] This inner transformation which Anselm intends his argument to bring about for his readers affects more than them as individuals, however. For as faithful people discover the intelligibility of their belief by bringing it to bear on the

[38] *P* 5–12.
[39] *P* 13–21.
[40] *P* 24–6.

objects of their knowledge, they simultaneously make faith intelligible in the face of others. They reveal through their perspective on the things in the world that those who lack faith also consider what a positive impact faith can have on efforts to make sense of things that the faithful and faithless alike experience. They illustrate how faith checks irrational behaviors and fosters integrity and clarity of mind; they show that, inasmuch as faith forces the mind to be reasonable in evaluating its objects, it is rational to believe in God.

By habitually allowing faith to inform their ordinary lives, Christian believers fulfill the ultimate purpose of the argument Anselm presents in chapter two of his *Proslogion*. As a result of using that proof concerning God's existence as the standard by which to form their patterns of thinking and living, they transform their habits into the sort of "living proof" for God that cannot help but be compelling, even if it is rejected. By offering themselves to God in this way, they offer the only tangible evidence that can substantiate the claim that there is a God short of an order in which God Himself appears. For this reason, and for the sake of their own happiness, Anselm urges readers of his *Proslogion* not to lead foolish lives that are inconsistent with their professed belief in God, but to learn to reason with faith and to use the conceptual tools he gives them to do so.

So construed, Anselm's argument is far from an enterprise in natural theology that provides total and immediate access to proof that God exists, solely on the basis of the definition of His nature, and thus purely rationally, without recourse to revelation and without any bearing on experience. In point of fact, Anselm's argument hangs on the revelation of God's supremacy through Christ, who *is* the Image of God inasmuch as He eternally expresses the Spirit that acknowledges the supremacy of the Father, and who therefore is the supreme model of what it means to reason in the light of God's supremacy. Furthermore, the argument has everything to do with real-life experience, insofar as it is designed to help those with faith in God find God in all things and thereby discover the intelligibility of their faith while making it intelligible to others.

Although Anselm admittedly draws the conclusion that God supremely exists from the very definition of God as the Supreme Being, what has been said thus far serves to confirm that he does not thereby provide an *a priori* proof, which gives full recourse to the knowledge that God exists, much less independently of revelation. To affirm that he does, one would have to extract chapter two from the rest of the treatise, which suggests that the proof is a catalyst for the gradual recovery of a constant (*a priori*) awareness of God through the awareness of the world. This removal is in fact one that many late medieval and modern readers have made. When

the whole of the *Proslogion*, as well as the context provided by the *Monologion* and Augustine's *De Trinitate* is taken into account, however, the second chapter emerges as a statement of what Christians believe the unknown, unseen God to be, that serves as an intellectual standard to which they may raise their minds by bringing belief in Him to bear in their lives in increasing measure, until they obtain the constant awareness of His workings in the world that is a foretaste of the immediate awareness of Him that they will come to enjoy at His eschatological appearance.

Divine Illumination

In the preface to the *Proslogion*, Anselm states that the formula for conforming to God's image which he presents in this treatise came to him in a flash of insight or illumination.[41] Throughout the treatise, moreover, he invokes divine illumination in ways that suggest that he regards it as an illustration of the process of conforming to God's image that he seeks to facilitate there. His intellectual fidelity to Augustine is therefore confirmed, not because he explicitly defends the Augustinian character of his views on illumination, but simply because he uses the account in the same way as Augustine and thus reveals that he presupposes the Augustinian understanding of what the purpose of illumination is.

Early on in the *Proslogion*, Anselm acknowledges that human beings have been "deprived of light and surrounded with darkness … cast down from the vision of God into the present blindness" as a result of the fall;[42] in short, that they have lost the image of God. In an initial profession of faith, Anselm asks God to enlighten his blinded eyes. Yet he admits that the consequences of the fall are not immediately overcome through that profession. For this reason, he recognizes that he must re-learn to regard all of reality in the light of faith. To this end, he entreats God to help him learn to see things in the divine light and thereby raise his eyes upwards so that he can eventually gaze on God.

From this point, Anselm proceeds to present his famous formula, which facilitates the renewal of God's image and thus the growth of the mind's ability to see reality in the light of the belief that God is the Supreme Good, which is divine illumination. Subsequently, he expounds some of the implications that the more consistent use of that formula, or the increase in illumination, have on the mind's perspective. When the intellect neglects the use of the argument and therefore fails to consider its

[41] *P* preface.
[42] *P* 1.

objects in the light of belief in God, Anselm writes, it plunges back into its own darkness. It cannot find the good, or God, in things.[43]

However, when it applies the argument – and the knowledge that the inaccessible light of God is an all-inclusive one that cannot be reduced to anything in particular – it finds God's light and consequently, truth, everywhere it turns its gaze, even as it overcomes the false and fallen notion that any finite truth is so great a light by which to judge the world.[44] The more habitually the mind does this, the more constant its vision by the light becomes. The more easily the intellect sees the good in whatever comes before its attention. Illumined vision, conversely, renders intelligible the belief in the inaccessible divine light to which the mind adheres.[45] Although the light the mind sees is not the light of God Himself, since this is too much for human eyes to bear, the vision of reality in the light of the reality of God is a vision which allows the intellect to anticipate the vision of the light itself.[46] Cognitive operation on the assumption that all truth is God's truth, in brief, predisposes the mind to encounter the God who is Truth.

Anselm the Augustinian

Although there are differences in opinion when it comes to identifying what it means to be a follower of Augustine, there is hardly anything controversial about the idea that Anselm is a genuine representative of Augustine's intellectual tradition. The argument of this chapter has turned on the assumption that working in continuity with Augustine involves adopting his theological doctrines and allowing those doctrines to dictate the meaning and purpose of philosophical arguments concerning issues like the nature of human knowledge.

What I have endeavoured to show is that this is exactly what Anselm did when he drew on the resources of logic and dialectic. Through arguments advanced on the basis of "reason alone," Anselm conveyed the sense of Augustine's views on the nature of God, the image of God, the effects of the fall and redemption on the image, and the cognitive process involved in re-conforming to the image in a way that was more relevant for his readers. Far from an *a priori* proof that makes no recourse

[43] *P* 14.
[44] Ibid.
[45] *P* 4.
[46] *P* 16.

to revelation or experience, I have argued that Anselm's argument is a formula for conforming to God's image, along the lines of Augustine's psychological analogies. With that famous argument, Anselm outlines a chain of reasoning that can be followed to re-train the intellect to evaluate temporal circumstances in light of the truth that God is supreme and that the circumstances under consideration cannot therefore make or break human happiness.

The cultivation and formation of the habit of bringing faith in God's supreme existence to bear on ordinary acts of reasoning allows the mind to identify how God is working His good purposes through the circumstances that arise, and thus to make the best of them or to receive them as a gift. As the mind improves at this art of reconciling reason and faith in the only place possible, that is, in its own perspective, it discovers faith's power to help it evaluate reality in a clear and open-minded manner, and thereby realizes the intelligibility or rationality of its faith. In the same instance, it produces thoughts and actions that are consistent with the professed belief in God. By living a consistent life, or by thinking and acting in a manner that is fitting for those who claim that a God supremely exists, those that have faith do what Anselm urged and enabled them to do with his argument, which is to provide the "living proof" for His existence that cannot go unnoticed, even if it is rejected.

In Anselm's thought as in Augustine's, illumination serves to illustrate the process through which the mind undergoes the renewal of God's image until a habit of reasoning in faith is formed and the image is constantly reflected in each and every cognitive act. For the mind is illumined to the degree that it regards real circumstances in the light of faith. By explaining the conception of human knowing that is illustrated by divine illumination in terms that were intelligible and helpful in his own context, Anselm updated Augustine's account of knowledge by divine illumination.

3

Divine Illumination in Transition (AD 1109–1257)

Introduction

The years intervening between the death of Anselm in 1109 and 1257, when Bonaventure was elected Minister General of the Franciscan Order, were years of great transition in the West. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the events that took place during this time that had an effect on the historical reception of Augustine's illumination account, particularly in Franciscan thought. Those events include the founding of new schools and universities; the development of scholastic method; the Latin translation of Greek and Arabic texts, especially those written by Avicenna; and the establishment of the Dominican and Franciscan religious orders which became involved in the life of the new universities, establishing distinct intellectual traditions within them.

New Schools

At the dawn of the twelfth century, the West was entering into "a phase of extraordinary economic and demographic expansion which was to continue gathering momentum for the next two hundred years."[1] The increase in commercial and industrial activity gave rise to a class of

[1] C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society* (London: Longman, 1994), 1.

Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge, by Lydia Schumacher

tradesmen and artisans who congregated in the rapidly proliferating towns. Amongst members of the burgeoning middle class, it became increasingly common to pursue an education at one of the growing number of schools organized by independent masters of the liberal arts. By the turn of the thirteenth century, so many of these schools had sprung up in the city of Paris that the king declared them a consortium of masters and students: a university.[2]

In the university and local schools, scholars employed a method of inquiry that had been developed by the twelfth-century thinker Peter Abelard, namely, the scholastic method. Whether the method was utilized in oral disputations or in written works, it involved the same basic steps. The first step was to make a succinct assertion about some subject and support it with statements drawn from the writings of authoritative figures such as Augustine, Aristotle, Boethius, or Pseudo-Dionysius. The second step was to raise possible objections to the initial assertion, drawing on other authorities to do so. The last step was to address the objection and in the process bolster, nuance, reject, or re-define the originally stated view.

In his famous work *Sic et non*, Abelard compiled key passages from authoritative sources, organizing them according to topic and juxtaposing those that appeared to contradict one another. His purpose in doing this was to facilitate his students' efforts to apply the scholastic method to their study of Scripture and the Fathers. At the time, Abelard's methods were highly controversial. His famous opponent, the Cistercian monk Bernard of Clairvaux, called attention to the risks involved in removing authoritative citations from their original context and authorizing students to evaluate them critically. From Bernard's perspective, Abelard's methods were likely to lead to the distortion or even the rejection of Christian truth.

In response to this accusation, Abelard insisted that his intention was not to undermine fundamental truths, but to inspire his students to attain a deeper understanding of their cogency and implications by grappling with apparent contradictions in scholarly opinion and clarifying points of ambiguity.[3] In order to do this, students would have to give preliminary assent to the authoritative status, meaning, and context of the works cited in the *Sic et non*. Even so, the use of the method would force them to

[2] Roger Cunningham and Andrew French, *Before Science: The Invention of the Friars' Natural Philosophy* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996), 63.

[3] Ibid., 58.

push beyond indiscriminate acceptance of points taken on authority, which was precisely the goal of Abelard's instruction.[4]

Though Abelard and numerous other twelfth-century scholars prepared compendia of authoritative *sententiae* or opinions, the most comprehensive and widely circulated collection was Peter Lombard's four books of Sentences. The first book of Lombard's Sentences contains key passages on the topic of God's nature; the second includes texts on creation and the fall; the third, redemption; and the fourth, the sacraments and eschatology. Though Lombard drew quotations from the *Glossa ordinaria* – the standard edition of the Bible at the time – and many of the patristic authorities quoted in its margins, as well as from contemporaries like Hugh of St. Victor and Peter Abelard, his principal source was St. Augustine, quotations from whom number almost 1,100.[5]

Although Lombard published a finalized version of his work in 1158, the tradition of commentating on it did not begin until the 1220s.[6] In that decade, Alexander of Hales, who was at the time one of the most celebrated and sophisticated theologians at the University of Paris, composed the first major commentary on Lombard's Sentences. In addition to this, Alexander organized his lectures around the themes covered in the Sentences instead of around Scripture – a controversial move at first – and utilized the work in facilitating the disputations that he contributed to establishing as the core of a university education.

In ways like these, Alexander helped to found the discipline of systematic theology;[7] he also set the precedent for all future work in the field of theology.[8] After Alexander, most academic theologians used the Sentences as an official textbook. Moreover, candidates seeking to qualify as masters in theology were required to write a commentary on the Sentences – the medieval equivalent to a doctoral thesis – in order to obtain their degree.

In composing a commentary on the Sentences, a scholar demonstrated his understanding of the doctrines covered in that work by calling on old

[4] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. 3: *The Growth of Medieval Theology 600–1300* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 223ff.

[5] Philipp W. Rosemann, *Peter Lombard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 55–6.

[6] Marcia L. Colish, "The Sentence Collection and the Education of Professional Theologians in the Twelfth Century," in *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University: Essays in Honor of Otto Grundler* (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1997).

[7] Christopher M. Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 16.

[8] Nancy Spatz, "Approaches and Attitudes to a New Theology Textbook: the Sentences of Peter Lombard," in *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University*.

and new authorities in order to tease out or update those doctrines. Although this use of the scholastic method made it possible to render traditional ideals more comprehensible, it also created an opportunity for scholars to read new philosophical ideals into traditional terms and arguments. The freedom it afforded, in short, was a freedom either to advance or supplant longstanding theological and philosophical presuppositions. The first outcome was the one Abelard apparently aimed for; the second was the one that Bernard expected, and feared.

New Translations

By the first quarter of the thirteenth century, a wealth of new material had become available to Latin scholars, including those preparing Sentence commentaries. During the earlier Middle Ages, Islamic forces had overtaken some formerly Christian territories and had established their own centers of learning. When Westerners reclaimed some of these Moorish strongholds, especially Sicily, Italy, and Toledo, Spain in the twelfth century, they gained access to the Greek and Arabic works that were available in these places.

Work ensued at once to translate the Greek and Arabic works that had been discovered. Owing to its close relations with Byzantium, "Italy was the privileged land for Greco-Latin translations."[9] By 1160, James of Venice had translated numerous works of Aristotle, including *De anima*.[10] By the late twelfth century, moreover, the translation of Aristotle's magisterial *Metaphysics* was virtually complete.[11] Most of the translation from Arabic to Latin took place in Toledo. Between 1152 and 1166, Dominicus Gundissalinus, Archdeacon of Toledo, commissioned a group of scholars to undertake the translation of Avicenna's vast philosophical encyclopedia, which included treatises on topics such as metaphysics, psychology, theology, science, and medicine.[12] Gerard of Cremona was the most prolific translator in the group; records indicate that he translated seventy-one

[9] Marie-Therese D'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," in *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 458.

[10] Bernard G. Dod, "Aristoteles latinus," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 46. John of Venice also translated Aristotle's *Physics, Sophistical Refutations, Posterior Analytics*, and *Parva naturalia*.

[11] D'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," 436; also nearly complete were the first three books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Prior Analytics*.

[12] Ibid., 451.

Arabic texts.[13] In addition, Gerard produced his own versions of a number of Aristotle's works and translated the Neo-Platonic *Liber de causis*, an Arabic paraphrase of Proclus' *Elements of Theology*.[14]

Although modern scholarship often gives the impression that Latin thinkers were mainly interested in incorporating the rediscovered works of Aristotle and that most Arab scholars were mere commentators on Aristotle, the historical evidence indicates that Western scholars working in the first part of the translation movement (c.1150–c.1250) were most interested in the writings of Arab thinkers, above all, Avicenna. The treatises on science and medicine Avicenna included in his encyclopedia had no rival in Aristotelian or existing Latin literature. In addition to these treatises, Avicenna's more purely philosophical works held a special appeal for many Western scholars, for reasons that will become clear toward the end of this chapter.

The availability and quality of Avicenna's writings was another factor that encouraged Latin interest in them. By 1166, Avicenna's oeuvre had appeared in a complete and impeccable translation, while all of Aristotle's works were not finished until decades later. When the Aristotelian translations were at last completed, moreover, they were so riddled with errors that many scholars hesitated even to try to interpret them, at least until improved translations were produced in and after the 1250s. Prior to that time, scholars simply tended to derive their ideas about Aristotle and Plato from Avicenna; conversely, they had a habit of attributing Avicennian ideas to the two Greek philosophers.[15]

This is highly significant, given that Avicenna – contrary to popular opinion – was no mere commentator on Aristotle.[16] In works that bear some of the same titles as those of Aristotle, such as *De anima* and *Metaphysics*, he presents an interpretation of Aristotle as well as of Plato that differ greatly from interpretations that had hitherto circulated in the West and that diverged even from the plain sense of the pertinent primary texts. In short, he proffers a philosophical system that is his own, although he admittedly learned much from some of his Arab predecessors.[17]

[13] Dod, "Aristoteles latinus," 58.

[14] D'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," 543–4.

[15] Richard C. Dales, "The Understanding of Aristotle's Natural Philosophy by the Early Scholastics," in *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University*, 142; Dag Nikolaus Hasse, *Avicenna's* De Anima *in the Latin West* (London: Warburg Institute, 2000), 63.

[16] See Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 1; F. Rahman (ed.), *Avicenna's Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 21.

[17] Dales, "The Understanding of Aristotle's Natural Philosophy by the Early Scholastics," 143.

Far from focusing only on Aristotle, Latin scholars labored to locate their thought in relation to this Avicennian system, at least until the 1240s and 1250s. In that time frame, the first major Dominican scholar Albert the Great instigated work to interpret Aristotle in his own right, as part of an effort to formulate a philosophical system consistent with Christian thought. The efforts of Albert and others to interpret Aristotle were facilitated by further developments in the Latin translation movement. In the 1220s and 1230s, Michael Scot had translated the commentaries on Aristotle written by Averroes, an Arab scholar who was still working in Toledo when the translation project began.[18] Those commentaries provided both a model and a source for thirteenth-century scholastic commentators on Aristotle.[19] In the 1250s, William of Moerbeke completed new and far more refined translations of Aristotle's texts. In 1268, Thomas Aquinas traced the *Liber de causis* to Proclean sources, challenging the common assumption that this work was one of Aristotle's – an assumption that had until that time been fostering a distorted perception of Aristotelianism.

These intellectual events contributed to a mid-thirteenth-century shift in interest toward the works of Aristotle and Averroes and the interpretive issues and philosophical problems their writings engendered.[20] Because of such events, the era of Avicenna gave way to that of Aristotle. Though Aristotle's works became the canon of university education from that point forwards, it is crucial to recognize the extent to which Avicenna's thought preoccupied Latin scholars in the previous century. For it was during that period that the structures of Avicenna's thought were incorporated into Latin, and especially Franciscan thought, where they would continue to provide a conceptual foundation and framework even when attention turned toward Aristotle, to the effect that lingering debts to Avicenna often went unmentioned.[21]

The philosophy of Avicenna

In the light of the Avicennian background of Latin and especially Franciscan thought, it is relevant to give a brief account of the aspects of the Arab's philosophy that would eventually have an impact on the late medieval

[18] D'Alverny, "Translations and Translators," 456.
[19] Hasse, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 75.
[20] Ibid., 75, 227.
[21] Ibid., 221.

reception of illumination. I will therefore outline the contours of the theory of knowledge Avicenna presents in his *De anima* (c. 1027), at least in the abridged version of the text that he himself prepared on the basis of the original version, which appeared in his comprehensive philosophical encyclopedia.[22]

Like so many ancient and medieval theorists of knowledge, Avicenna speaks of three types or modes of knowledge. The first, of course, is sense perception, which Avicenna calls the "external sense," and which consists in the abilities to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch.[23] The second faculty is that of internal sensation or imagination. The first of the internal senses is the common sense. The common sense receives all the information that is transferred to it from the five external senses. Its apprehensions exactly reflect the objects the external senses perceive. For this reason, Avicenna affirms that the common sense not only receives information about empirical objects but also coordinates all the different elements that constitute that object. Without this sense, the "animal soul," as Avicenna calls it, would see each of the parts or forms that comprise its objects individually. For example, it would see hardness, roughness, brownness, woodenness, and so on, instead of a tree.

Although the common sense represents the forms that constitute sense objects, it is unable to retain those forms. The retentive imagination is the faculty that keeps the forms of things even after the external senses have lost contact with them. It preserves the knowledge of objects together with all the determining attributes or accidents that distinguish them – the image of the tree as well as its shape, size, and color. The images stored in the retentive imagination are transmitted to the compositive imagination in animals and the cogitative faculty in humans. This faculty makes it possible to separate the particular forms that can be identified in any given being, to recombine forms that have been separated, and make images of things that have not yet been experienced or that may not even exist.

The next faculty of estimation assigns positive or negative connotations to the forms that have been apprehended. It identifies things as helpful or as dangerous, for instance, and thus transforms the images of forms into what Avicenna calls "intentions." Intentions – which are arguably the most distinctive feature of Avicenna's psychology – are what enable a sheep, for example, to anticipate that a wolf it encounters may be

[22] The exegesis provided will follow the translation made by Rahman in *Avicenna's Psychology*.

[23] Ibid., 25–9.

dangerous even before this proves to be the case.[24] According to Avicenna, an intention is the final product of external and internal sensation; it is the perfect image of a particular form that is derived from an encounter with a material instantiation of the form. Although the internal senses enable the animal soul to consider the forms independently from the material objects, Avicenna stresses that those forms are still regarded as particulars at this phase in the cognitive process.

While the process of abstracting universals has begun, at least for the one with a rational in addition to an animal soul, that process cannot be completed by the animal soul. Instead, the intentions are stored in the fifth and final faculty associated with the internal senses – the memory – where they are made available to the rational soul. According to Avicenna, there are two "faces" to the rational soul: a theoretical and a practical.[25] The theoretical face is turned upwards toward the realm of universal forms, while the practical face is turned downwards. It uses the universals which the theoretical faculty acquires to deal with matters pertaining to bodily life.

Although the theoretical intellect obtains from the memory the intentions – ultimately based on sense perceptions – that provide the material for its operations, Avicenna stresses that it does not require the body or any of the senses in order to perform those operations.[26] In point of fact, the theoretical faculty is utterly disconnected from the body and could only be hindered by interference from the body. Any reliance on and relation to the body can only be mentioned with reference to the practical faculty.

This argument for a rather strong form of mind–body dualism is further reinforced by the "flying man" illustration Avicenna introduces in the context of the *De anima* as well as elsewhere in his writings.[27] In presenting this thought experiment, which has been compared to Descartes' famous *cogito ergo sum* ("I think therefore I am"), Avicenna wonders if a man who was created flying in the air and who could not therefore feel his body would still affirm the existence of his rational soul. The philosopher insists that the "flying man" would indeed do so, because his inability to feel his body has no bearing on and poses no hindrance to his ability

[24] Ibid., 30–1.

[25] Ibid., 32–3.

[26] Ibid., 50–6.

[27] Ibid., 49–50; see also R. Arnaldez, "Un precedent avicennien du 'cogito' Cartesien?" *Annales Islamologiques* 2 (1972), 341–9; Hasse *Avicenna's De Anima*, 80ff; M. Marmura, "Avicenna's 'Flying Man' in Context," *Monist* 69 (1986), 383–95.

to sense with his mind. In positing that the rational soul is effectively detachable from the body, Avicenna argues implicitly for the immortality of the soul, that is, for the mind's ability to survive after the death of the body.[28]

Following the discussion of the two faces of the soul, Avicenna explains how the theoretical faculty abstracts universals.[29] By his account, there are four intellects involved in abstraction, or better, four phases in the process of procuring an abstract concept.[30] The first three create the potential for obtaining such a concept; as such, they are said to constitute the "potential intellect." The last is the stage in which the abstract concept is actually acquired; for this reason, it is called the active intellect. The first intellect is called the material intellect (*intellectus materialis*), and Avicenna likens it to the primitive intellectual state of human beings before they reach the age of reason, or more concretely, to the potential an infant has eventually to learn to write.

When the soul reaches the age of reason, the material intellect receives what Avicenna calls primary intelligibles, which are analogous to the knowledge of the principles of writing, such as the letters of the alphabet or the proper use of writing instruments, which heighten the human person's potential to write.[31] The primary intelligible forms or innate concepts that are possessed by what is now called the habitual intellect (*intellectus in habitu*) are not themselves the universal concepts that will result from abstraction; instead they are guides for abstraction. The first intelligible (*primum cognitum*) the habitual intellect intuits is the concept of Being Itself (*ens*).[32] Avicenna argues that Being is the first object of the

[28] Rahman (ed.), *Avicenna's Psychology*, 58–64; Therese-Ann Druart, "The Soul and Body Problem: Avicenna and Descartes," in *Arabic Philosophy and the West: Continuity and Interaction*, ed. Th.-A. Druart (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1988), 27–49; idem., "The Human Soul's Individuation and its Survival After the Body's Death: Avicenna on the Causal Relation Between Body and Soul," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 10 (2000), 259–73.

[29] Hasse, "Avicenna on Abstraction," in *Aspects of Avicenna*, ed. R. Wisnovsky (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2001), 39–72. A good summary of the whole cognitive process as Avicenna understands it can be found in Peter Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 2.4–5.

[30] Rahman (ed.), *Avicenna's Psychology*, 33–5.

[31] M.E. Marmura, "Avicenna on Primary Concepts," in *Logos Islamikos: Studia Islamica in Honorem Georgii Michaelis Wickens*, ed. R.M. Savory and D.A. Agius (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies Press, 1984), 219–39.

[32] Dimitri Gutas, "Intuition and Thinking: The Evolving Structure of Avicenna's Epistemology," in *Aspects of Avicenna*, 1–38.

intellect on the grounds that the knowledge of it is the necessary condition for the knowledge of any particular being that comes from the source of all beings. Since God is this source, Avicenna contends that the mind may derive proof for His existence *a priori* or without recourse to experience, simply by reflecting on its intuitive knowledge of Being. In arguing this, Avicenna became one if not the first of philosophers to present an ontological proof, or a proof that confirms the existence of God on the basis of a rational analysis of the concept of God.[33]

In addition to advocating an ontological proof, Avicenna argues that the intellect can derive proof for the existence of God from the knowledge of any particular created being. Inasmuch as the knowledge of the existence of these beings presupposes the preliminary knowledge of the existence of Being, the ontological proof effectively contains cosmological proof.[34] By espousing ontological and cosmological arguments, Avicenna clearly distinguished his views on theistic proof from those of Averroes and Aristotle, who held that the way to argue for the existence of God was not from cause to effects (Being to beings) but from effects to their cause, and who affirmed on those grounds that the project of proving God's existence does not fall within the domain of metaphysics, per Avicenna, but of physics.

Besides Being, Avicenna argues that the intellect knows the transcendental properties of Being, such as one, true, and good.[35] The intuitive knowledge of these primary intelligible concepts is what helps the mind strip an intention of its particularizing features or material determinations (location, time, shape, and so on), so as to seize conceptual hold of the essence that is at the core of the intention, that is, the peculiar manner in which the being exhibits unity, truth, and goodness. This "stripped down" version of the intention is the abstract or disembodied concept that Avicenna calls a secondary intelligible form: a universal.[36] According to him, only one intention is needed to procure an abstract concept. A slight detour into Avicenna's metaphysics will reveal why.

[33] Herbert Davidson, "Avicenna's Proof of the Existence of God as a Necessarily Existent Being," in *Islamic Philosophical Theology*, ed. Parviz Morewedge (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1979), 180; Jules Janssens, *Ibn Sina and His Influence on the Arabic and Latin World* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 4; Lenn Goodman, *Avicenna* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 76.

[34] M. Marmura, "Avicenna's Proof from Contingency for God's Existence in the Metaphysics of the Shifâ'," *Medieval Studies* 42 (1980), 337–52.

[35] Goodman, *Avicenna*, 130 ff.

[36] Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), 200.

One of Avicenna's greatest contributions to the history of thought was the metaphysical distinction he drew between "essence" and "existence."[37] He was the first to define God explicitly as the being whose essence simply is His existence, although earlier thinkers admittedly anticipated this claim. To affirm that God's essence is His existence is basically to affirm that God always completely is what He is, which is all that is, or Being Itself. When He created the world, Avicenna argues, God created a large mass of formless "existence" called prime matter. Prime matter had a negative or privative existence only in the sense that it was receptive to the impression of forms; otherwise, it was substantially positive.

According to Avicenna, the forms or essences that God impresses on to prime matter exist in the same "absolute" mode of being as God Himself; for them as for Him, in other words, essence equals existence.[38] When forms are instantiated, consequently, the resulting instantiations fully conform to the forms after which they are patterned, such that all that belongs to the forms or essences belongs to the corresponding existing things.[39]

On this account, the difference between creatures and their Creator does not come down to a difference between beings that develop into their essences through increasing participation in a particular mode of existence and a Being that is not subject to development at all, as it did for Augustine and many other pre-modern thinkers. Rather, created forms differ from God only inasmuch as they are finite and material instances of what He is infinitely and immaterially. Here, God and His creatures are not totally different but the same (univocal) kinds of being. As Being Itself, God is the sum total of all the beings that do exist and could possibly exist. By impressing essences on to prime matter, He chooses to confer the property of existence to some of the essences in His mind, which do not have to be.[40] Inasmuch as prime matter underlies all the beings God creates, those beings are tied together in one interdependent network of beings that speak to the existence of Being.

One implication of Avicenna's "essentialist" metaphysics, according to which forms subsist in a fixed or absolute sense, is that any creature that

[37] David B. Burrell C.S.C., *Knowing the Unknowable God: Ibn-Sina, Maimonides, Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 19–34; Goodman, *Avicenna*, 67; F. Rahman, "Essence and Existence in Avicenna," *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies* 4 (1958), 1-16.

[38] Burrell, *Knowing the Unknowable God*, 38.

[39] Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 191.

[40] Ibid., 191–2; Burrell, *Knowing the Unknowable God*, 35; idem., "Creation and Actualism: The Dialectical Dimension of Philosophical Theology," in *Faith and Freedom: An Interfaith Perspective*, 76–90; Goodman, *Avicenna*, 77.

has a plurality of properties necessarily possesses a plurality of substantial forms.[41] Where there are distinct attributes, in other words, there are distinct forms. When a creature seems to change in color or shape or so forth, consequently, the change is not owing to the creature's development into a single form, but to the coming and going of forms – activity which is determined by a "governing form," which is the rational soul in the case of human beings. Since Avicenna conceives God as the efficient cause that impresses forms on to matter, giving existence to essences, he concludes that the divine being is the direct cause of every change a creature undergoes.[42]

In affirming this, Avicenna introduces a novel notion of divine causality that "exhibits a tendency to invade the order of natural causality"[43] and that stands in clear contrast to the account of divine causation that many pre-modern thinkers had given. Augustine, for one, had intimated that God gives each creature a single substantial form and thereby gives it the potential to actualize that form or essence through on-going participation in the mode of existence or characteristic behaviors that are determined by the essence. Although the changes the creature undergoes can be indirectly attributed to the moving hand of God, inasmuch as He initially gave the creature the ability to be itself, they are not said to be brought about by a God who is directly removing an old form or impressing a new one every time an alteration occurs, per Avicenna. In short, the changes in form in Augustine's thought appear to be accidental, not substantial.

The background knowledge of Avicenna's essentialist outlook discloses the reason why the philosopher argues that only one intention is needed in order to seize hold of its underlying essence. Since instantiations of essences are full instantiations, even if they are obscured by other attached forms, the fullness of the essence under consideration is bound to be perceived as soon as those attachments are removed. Whenever the mind removes material determinations associated with a form so as to grasp the "thing in itself," Avicenna affirms that it makes contact with the essence as it exists in the mind of God. Here at last, when the intellect achieves

[41] On Avicenna's essentialism see Janssens, *Ibn Sina and His Influence on the Arabic and Latin World*, 2.

[42] M. Marmura, "The Metaphysics of Efficient Causality in Avicenna," in *Islamic Theology and Philosophy*, ed. M. Marmura (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 172–87.

[43] Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 210–11. See also Jacob Schmutz, "La Doctrine mediévale des causes et la théologie de la nature pure (XIIIe-XVIIe siécles)," *Revue Thomiste* 101 (2001), 217–64.

the status of acquired or active intellect, the essence exists in the three states in which Avicenna affirms it can conceivably exist, namely, in the mind of God, instantiated in a concrete object, and in the human intellect.[44] For Avicenna, an essence comes to exist in the human intellect as well as in the divine intellect and in reality not because the mind actively forms its own concept of some reality but because it rids itself of the material distractions that inhibited its ability to receive passively the concept of the thing in its disembodied or completely abstract form – the concept that the God who is the "Giver of Forms" has in mind Himself.[45]

Since the human act of knowing involves nothing but making a connection with this Giver of Forms, who is the only mind that is always in act and so is constantly aware of all things in their universal form, Avicenna goes so far as to say that human beings do not possess individualized active intellects. If anything is proper to them personally, it is merely the tripartite passive intellect; the only time the human mind can rightly be called active is when it gets in touch with the Active Intellect by purging itself of the material distractions that prevent it from making that connection. This rite of purification is one that God Himself makes possible by imposing the primary knowledge of Being, through which He guides the intellect to the secondary knowledge of beings as He knows them, through a cooperative effort or shared concursus.

Once a connection with the Active Intellect has been established, Avicenna states that it is preserved in the effective intellect (*intellectus in effectu*), which is the third of the potential intellects and thus technically prior to the fourth and active intellect. The philosopher likens the effective intellect to the state of one who has learned to write and has written in the past but is not presently doing so. Although the secondary intelligible idea itself is not retained, the connection to the divine that is needed to access it is, so that the mind can automatically re-make the connection whenever it pleases, as opposed to going through the whole process of acquiring the abstract concept again. Although the process of connecting with and receiving from the Active Intellect is laborious for many, it is virtually effortless for some who possess what Avicenna calls the sacred intellect, which allows them to bypass the phases of potency in knowledge and maintain a constant connection with the Active Intellect, enjoying immediate or intuitive insight into the meaning of all things.

As he draws his discussion of the four intellects to a close, Avicenna appeals to the common pre-modern trope of illumination to illustrate all

[44] Rahman (ed.), *Avicenna's Psychology*, 68–9.

[45] Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 205.

that he has said about human knowledge. In his description, the Active Intellect, or God, illumines the mind with the primary intelligible forms, which are like the capacity for vision. These in turn enable the mind to perceive the secondary intelligible forms, which Avicenna compares to the objects the sun brings to light – objects that are ultimately retained in the Active Intellect. Because the light of that Intellect provides both the capacity to know and the objects of knowledge, Avicenna concludes that its concurrence in knowing is the condition of possibility of all human knowledge.

Although this tour of Avicenna's philosophy has been fairly short, it should suffice to suggest that his thought, especially on knowledge, is innovative on a number of levels. In his *De anima*, Avicenna does not merely rehearse the arguments that Aristotle presents in his own work by that title.[46] The fundamental tenet of Aristotle's psychology was of course that all knowledge must begin with the senses. According to Aristotle, the imagination makes images (*phantasmata* or sense species) of its empirical objects, and these are stored in the "passive intellect," which is so called on account of the fact that the mind does not usually have much control over the experiences that come to it from the outside, which will end up being its resources for intellectual cognition.

Aristotle contrasts such simple apprehension or knowledge of a "singular" entity with the act of complex apprehension in which the agent intellect infers a universal concept (intelligible species) on the basis of multiple images of related things. The intelligible species – an idea or universal – is stored in the possible intellect or memory, where it can be drawn upon in future efforts to make sense of new experiences. Through new experiences, conversely, the mind expands and revises the original species.

In the Aristotelian account, the species is said to be similar to its object to the extent that it captures the object in all its conceivable manifestations; it is not "like" the object in the sense of corresponding fully to it, insofar as it is impossible for one person to experience any cognitive object in all its conceivable spatio-temporal manifestations. Far from a "thing in itself" to be grasped, the intelligible species as Aristotle seems to understand it is a tool that enables the mind to account for new manifestations of an object. Abstraction is simply the unifying cognitive process of formulating the provisional and ever-expanding universal concept that constitutes that conceptual tool.

[46] Aristotle, *On the Soul*, trans. J.A. Smith in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). A helpful summary is provided in Leen Spruit, *Species intelligibilis: From Perception to Knowledge*, vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), introduction and chapter 1.

Because abstraction so construed is an on-going process of forming and reforming ideas on the basis of experiences, the senses and the intellect are here in constant communication, albeit through the mediation of the imagination. In this case, consequently, there is no hint of the dualism that characterizes the account of Avicenna. In describing abstraction as an event in which the abstract or disembodied form of an object is received through an illumination from above rather than formulated through the operations of human reason, Avicenna completely redefines the Aristotelian idea of abstraction.[47] He begins to do this in his discussion of the images or intentions that are the basis for abstraction. In affirming that the intention fully captures the essence of its object, albeit together with other superfluous attributes, Avicenna shifts the focus away from the "functional" character to the contents of ideas – from the on-going activity of abstraction to the abstract concept or "thing in itself."[48]

Although scholars have often spoken in the past as though there was only one account of abstraction that became available in the late medieval period, that is, the Aristotelian account, the foregoing discussion suggests that there were two: the Aristotelian as well as the Avicennian. By briefly describing these accounts of abstraction, I have been hinting at my view that the Aristotelian understanding of abstraction is more compatible with the Augustinian, not to mention the Platonic, understanding of the mind's cognitive work than the Avicennian one.[49] Augustine, as I have interpreted him, defines human cognition in terms of an on-going engagement in a unifying mode of cognition, rather than a once-and-for-all grasp of a totalized "thing in itself." For him, knowing the forms of things through illumination does not involve receiving them from God but making them from below through the use of a God-given capacity to do so.

[47] This has been recognized by: Olivier Boulnois, *Etre et representation: Une généalogie de la métaphysique moderne à l'époque de Duns Scot* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999); Burrell, *Knowing the Unknowable God*, 29; Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 205; Henrik Lagerlund (ed.), *Representation and Objects of Thought in Medieval Philosophy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); Spruit, *Species intelligibilis*, 79ff.

[48] Hasse, *Avicenna's De anima*, 127.

[49] I argue for the continuity of Platonic and Aristotelian thought on knowledge in "Rethinking Recollection and Plato's Theory of Forms," *Lyceum* (Spring 2010). Some who argue for the continuity of Aristotelian and Augustinian thought on knowledge include Edward Booth, "St. Augustine's *Notitia Sui* Related to Aristotle and the Early Neo-Platonists," *Augustiniana* 27: 70–132, 364–401; 28: 183–221; 29: 29–124; Montague Brown, "Aristotle and Augustine on the Way to Truth: Essential Agreement and Existential Difference," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 67 (1993), 253–67.

Such conclusions run counter to the view commonly held amongst medievalists, according to which Augustine's illumination account is more closely related to Avicenna's theory about ideas that flow down from above than it is to Aristotle's conception of the way ideas a formed by the mind from below. Because scholars have long operated on the assumption that there is a conceptual affinity between Augustine and Avicenna, many of them have described illumination and abstraction as mutually exclusive accounts of knowledge.

If illumination in Augustine's thought is something like I have described, however, then the opposite of the received view proves true: Augustinian illumination and Aristotelian abstraction – not to mention Platonic recollection – are the accounts that exhibit definite conceptual continuity, notwithstanding obvious terminological and methodological differences. Furthermore, such "pre-modern" accounts can be clearly distinguished from the account of Avicenna, who forged a new path in the field of cognitive theory, which many Franciscans would eventually traverse.

New Religious Challenges

As translations of Arabic and Greek texts poured into the Latin West, as enrolment in the schools and universities increased, and as standards of literacy and living more generally rose over the course of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, there was a simultaneous decrease in church attendance. This decline in religious participation had much to do with the fact that the parochial clergy were unprepared to meet the needs of the educated, town-dwelling class that was quickly replacing the rural and relatively unlearned population of the past.[50] Although some parish priests received training in the cathedral schools, most of those who did were hired to perform administrative duties for the church or state. The typical clergyman had little more education than the members of his congregation.

If the intellectual and in many cases moral ineptitude of the clergy was not enough to discourage the middle class from going to church, then the old spiritual ideal of retreat from the world that many clergymen continued to propound was.[51] This ideal was not only impracticable for the late medieval laity; it was also a direct affront to their lifestyle and vocational choices. As the prevailing lack of meaningful spiritual direction put people off to the idea of church involvement, it also contributed to

[50] See Lawrence, *The Friars*, 18.
[51] Ibid., 15.

the rise of radical religious movements.[52] During the latter half of the twelfth century, lay ministers who neither solicited nor possessed official authorization began to wander around Europe preaching and in many cases spreading false teachings. The charisma and commitment of these itinerant preachers attracted many followers.

The Cathars were by far the most influential heretical group in operation at the time. As dualists, they believed in two divine forces, one good and one evil, and they saw the material world as the product of the evil power. The leaders of the sect drew on Scripture and on Aristotle's philosophical works to support their positions. In addition to erudition, they exhibited discipline, commitment, and moral character – all the virtues the Catholic clergy were perceived to lack. In fact, the negligence of the Catholic prelates who governed Italy and southern France was arguably what made it possible for the Cathar heresy to spread so rampantly in those regions.

By 1215, the religious situation in Western Europe had become critical. In this year, the Fourth Lateran Council convened to enact a comprehensive plan to educate the parish clergy, curtail their immoral behaviour and the power struggles amongst them, prevent the spread of radical religious movements and heresies, and draw the laity back into the Church, mainly by means of a mandate to receive communion and attend confession at least once a year.[53]

New Religious Orders

Although the plan of the Lateran councillors met with mild success at best, help soon came from other quarters. In the first part of the thirteenth century, two new religious orders were founded – the Dominicans and Franciscans – and the "friars preachers" and "friars minor," as they were respectively called soon began to play a major role in reversing the anti-religious trends of the age.[54] Although the Dominicans and Franciscans established their orders within the same timeframe and had much in common – both made a radical departure from the monastic tradition of

[52] Ibid., 1–25.

[53] Ibid., 218.

[54] See the overview in Michael Robson, "A Ministry of Preachers and Confessors: The Pastoral Impact of the Friars," in *The History of Pastoral Care* (London: Cassell, 2000), 126–47.

the past, abandoning enclosure for life in the towns and exchanging industry for mendicancy – they began separately and with very different purposes.

Dominic Guzman founded his order as a response to the situation with the Cathars in southern France.[55] Initially, his vision was to train preachers who were equipped to address the arguments the Cathars advanced on the basis of the authority of Scripture and Aristotle, with counter-arguments derived from the same sources. Quickly, this vision expanded so that it involved addressing any intellectual challenge to the faith whatsoever. In keeping with this vision, Dominic sought to establish a study centre in every town where there was a major school so that his preachers could prepare for their task and be available to interact with the local intellectuals.[56]

The founder of the Franciscan order was Francis of Assisi, the son of a wealthy Italian cloth merchant. Late in his youth, Francis had begun to grow disillusioned with the self-indulgent life he had led to that point, and he started to seek God's direction for his life.[57] During one of his regular visits to the ruined church of San Damiano outside Assisi, Francis had an encounter with Christ that provided this direction. While praying before the altar, he heard the icon of the crucified command him three times to repair the ruined house of God.

Francis interpreted this as a command to deliver a message of repentance, so he began to wander the countryside preaching and performing acts of service wherever he could. He and the disciples who soon joined him took seriously Christ's instructions to abandon all possessions.[58] Every day, they relied on the good will of the people they met for their provisions. By living in such poverty and humility, they sought literally to imitate the life of Christ, who abandoned His glory when He came to earth. Following Christ, they aimed to see even the lowliest creatures as reflections of God's love and to love them accordingly.[59]

Through the preaching of Francis and his followers, vast numbers of laypeople were persuaded to join the Franciscans and to help them establish new outposts across Europe. As both the Franciscans and Dominicans moved into the major cities of Europe, they earned a reputation as preachers who could be depended on to impart and uphold Christian truth, hear

[55] W.A. Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order: Origins and Growth to 1500* (Staten Island: Alba House, 1966).

[56] Cunningham and French, *Before Science*, 151; see also chapters 7–8.

[57] John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 5.

[58] Lawrence, *The Friars*, 32.

[59] Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order*, 26.

confessions, administer the sacraments, and so on. Because they were compensating so effectively for the deficiencies of the institutional Church, the popes and prelates of the period came to rely primarily on them to meet the pastoral demands of the parishes and carry out the Lateran reforms.

New Intellectual Traditions

In an effort to ensure that the friars were well-equipped to complete ministerial tasks, ecclesial authorities urged and assisted them to establish themselves in local study centers and in the universities, where recruits could be trained to reach an educated society.[60] When it came to planning academic endeavors, the Dominicans did not need much help. On moving to a new town, their first course of action was to set up a study house and organize themselves for the scholarly pursuits that were so integral to their mission. With this mission in mind, the Dominicans headed for the university towns at the first opportunity.

On arriving in Paris in 1217 and Oxford in 1221, they established independent schools where they could oversee the studies their novices undertook in preparation for preaching. Since Dominic had originally been an Augustinian canon, his followers adopted Augustine's theology from the outset. On Augustinian theological assumptions, they proceeded to investigate and incorporate the sources that were of interest to their conversation partners, in order to be ready to address the challenges to the faith those interlocutors posed. From the first, in fact, the hallmark of the Dominican intellectual tradition was the underlying assumption that there is something in every philosophical truth that can be identified as God's Truth, and that identifying and embracing that truth is the way to lead unbelieving minds to the Truth.

Although the Franciscans appeared in the university towns not long after the Dominicans, arriving at Paris in 1219 and Oxford in 1224, they did not start by establishing study centres in those locations.[61] Francis had actually forbidden his followers from doing this, not because he despised studies in principle, but because he supposed that they would interfere with the life of poverty and humility he wanted the friars minor to lead. By the time the minorites arrived in the university towns, however, those

[60] One privilege the pope granted was the recognition of a Franciscan or Dominican training course as the equivalent of a university bachelor's degree. Because of this privilege, exceptional students could proceed to take a higher degree at the university itself.

[61] The following account of early Franciscan history draws on Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order*.

ideals were beginning to prove impracticable for the order, which had grown to include approximately five thousand members, a vast number by comparison to the Dominican order, which numbered its members in the hundreds.

Some of the new Franciscans had previous clerical or academic training. These "literati" believed that the time had come to qualify Francis' original rule in a way that would allow his disciples to settle down in convents and complete the studies they needed to become respected preachers and teachers. With the help of a cardinal called Ugolino, who had been appointed as protector of the order, some of the more learned friars composed in 1223 a new rule that accomplished just this. Although Francis fiercely disapproved of their efforts to relax his original standards, he had very little opportunity to counteract them. In 1224, on a retreat to the mountain of Alverna that had been donated to the Franciscans as a place for prayer, he had his famous vision of a fiery seraph nailed to a cross, and received the stigmata, or wounds of Christ, which contributed to his declining health and his death in 1226.

Just after Francis' passing, Ugolino was named Pope Gregory IX. As pope, he took measures to ensure that the Franciscans became an academic institution like the Dominicans. In 1230, Gregory issued the bull *Quo elongati*, which declared that the friars were no longer bound to observe literally the vow of absolute poverty – that they were permitted to "use" things like accommodation and books so long as these were technically in the "possession" of the Holy See. This pronouncement made it possible for the friars to establish their own independent school in the city of Paris. Until that time, their training had mainly come through voluntary attendance at university lectures. When King Louis IX donated the extensive buildings of the Couvent des Cordeliers in central Paris in 1231, the friars moved from their base on the outskirts of the city and started to organize themselves seriously for study.[62] As some members of the university faculty had already joined the order, there were scholars available to serve as lectors in the new Franciscan school.

Within the Franciscan order itself, the trend toward institutionalization sparked no little controversy. Many of the lay members who had determined to follow Francis precisely because they felt called to observe literally the vows of poverty and humility he prescribed were still active in the order. These more conservative members, many of whom had known Francis personally, backed their convictions by appealing to a theology

[62] Jacques Guy Bougerol, *Introduction to the Writings of St. Bonaventure* (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild, 1964), 13.

that was inspired by the work of the Cistercian monk, Joachim of Fiore (1132–1202). Joachim had taught that there are three stages in salvation history that correspond to the three Persons of the Trinity. The first stage, recorded in the Old Testament, was that of the Father. The second stage, which includes the period covered in the New Testament and the first thousand years of the existence of the Church, was that of the Son.

Prior to the onset of the third stage, Joachim foretold that the Church would become corrupt and two new religious orders would be founded on principles of poverty. He predicted that members of these orders would inaugurate the era of the Spirit, which would supersede the dispensation of the Son, and in which there would be no need for ecclesial institutions, since people would now live according to the Spirit of God.[63]

The conservative or "spiritual" members of the Franciscan order believed that Francis had been the harbinger of the new age of the Spirit. For this reason, they regarded the literal imitation of his life as the very essence of the spiritual life and were unbending when it came to adhering to his original rule. From their perspective, institutionalizing the order meant directly contradicting Francis' wishes and undermining his whole mission.[64] The common opinion among them, famously voiced by friar Jacopone da Todi, was that "accursed Paris was destroying Assisi."[65]

Naturally, the literati did not feel that they were undercutting Franciscan ideals by their endeavors, but only adapting them to meet the needs of a growing order and, indeed, to further its evangelistic work. As the literati continued to take measures to transform the order into a scholarly one, essentially taking it over from within, the internal factions became increasingly pronounced.

One of these measures involved inventing an intellectual identity for the Franciscans – the followers of a man who had refused to allow his followers to undertake intellectual pursuits. For the most part, this monumental task fell into the able hands of Alexander of Hales, who had held a chair in the university faculty of theology since 1220. Shortly thereafter, he became responsible for the education of the Franciscan friars who attended lectures in theology until their own school was founded. While Alexander certainly influenced the outlook of the first Franciscan students,

[63] Lawrence, *The Friars*, 115.

[64] Ibid., 29.

[65] Bougerol, *Introduction*, 13.

they also evidently left a strong impression on him, to the extent that he eventually became convinced that the Franciscan vision was "not only compatible with his own theological positions but also reinforced them."[66]

When Alexander finally decided to join the order in 1236, he became regent master of the Franciscan school.[67] In the same year, Pope Gregory commissioned him to oversee the composition of a theological *Summa* that would lay down distinctly Franciscan theological and philosophical positions. Although a number of early Franciscan scholars had a part in preparing the *Summa fratris Alexandri*, this work basically ended up being an expansion and reconfiguration of arguments that Alexander had already advanced in his commentary on Lombard's Sentences and in his vast collection of published disputations.[68]

In these works, Alexander made a number of highly innovative intellectual maneuvers. Perhaps the most radical of these was the decision to replace the formerly unrivalled Augustinian doctrine of the Trinity with the Trinitarian doctrine developed in the twelfth century by the mystical mind of Richard of St. Victor.[69] From Richard's doctrine of the Trinity, Alexander derived an account of the image of God or human cognition, which lent itself to a full-scale appropriation of Avicenna's philosophy of knowledge.[70]

Among the philosophical views Alexander borrowed from Avicenna's *De anima* were the doctrine of the two faces of the soul and its attendant dualism. In typical scholastic fashion, Alexander described this doctrine in terms of Augustine's distinction between lower and higher reason.[71] He did something similar with Avicenna's doctrine of the four intellects, interpreting the intuitive knowledge of Being and the three

[66] Kenan Osborne (ed.), "Alexander of Hales: Precursor and Promoter of Franciscan Theology," in *The History of Franciscan Theology* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2007), 12.

[67] Raphael M. Huber, "Alexander of Hales, O.F.M.," *Franciscan Studies* 5 (1945), 353.

[68] Hasse, *Avicenna's De anima*, 51.

[69] Osborne (ed.), "Alexander of Hales: Precursor and Promoter of Franciscan Theology," 28.

[70] Soheil M. Afnan, *Avicenna: His Life and Works* (London: Ruskin House, 1958), 271ff.

[71] J. Rohmer, "Sur la doctrine franciscaine des deux faces de l'âme," in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen age* (Paris: Vrin, 1927), 73–7; see also Scott Matthews, *Reason, Community, and Religious Tradition: Anselm's Argument and the Friars* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 62.

transcendentals – which constitute the image of God – in terms of Augustine's "eternal reasons."[72] Incidentally, Alexander also appealed to these eternal reasons or examplars that subsist in the mind of God when it came to giving a fundamentally Avicennian metaphysical account of the cause of created realities.[73]

The ontological proof for the existence of God that the intuitive knowledge of the eternal reasons, principally Being, affords was something Alexander felt he could legitimately locate in Anselm's *Proslogion*, which had largely been neglected until Alexander took an interest in it. For Alexander, the cognitive connection with God which every mind enjoys is also that through which fully formed or "abstract" ideas about reality are received from God in experiences of illumination such as Augustine supposedly described. Although Alexander clearly adhered to the new Avicennian notion of abstraction, it is not likely that he went so far as to equate God with the agent intellect at the cost of denying the human intellect any autonomy, after the manner of many of his Franciscan contemporaries, including John of La Rochelle, William of Auvergne, Robert Grosseteste, and Roger Marston.[74]

Although Alexander's initial intent was apparently only to "find" Victorine and Avicennian ideas in the writings of spiritual authorities such as Augustine, Anselm, and Pseudo-Dionysius, as part of an effort to embrace all the new ideas that were becoming available at his time, he invented in the process a theological and philosophical system that was

[72] Leonard J. Bowman, "The Development of the Doctrine of the Agent Intellect in the Franciscan School of the Thirteenth Century," *The Modern Schoolman* 50 (1973), 251–79; Margaret M. Curtin, "The Intellectus Agens in the Summa of Alexander of Hales," *Franciscan Studies* 5 (1945), 418–33.

[73] P. Boehner, O.F.M., "The System of Metaphysics of Alexander of Hales," *Franciscan Studies* 5 (1954), 366–414.

[74] According to Hasse, those who espoused this doctrine included William of Auvergne, Roger Bacon, Robert Grosseteste, Roger Marston, and John of La Rochelle (*Avicenna's De anima*, 208). One reason for the decrease in the number of references to Avicenna that can be detected from around the middle of the thirteenth century, incidentally, is that this doctrine was officially condemned in the intervening time. For further details, see Étienne Gilson, "Roger Marston: Un cas d'Augustinisme Avicennisant," in *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age* 8 (Paris: Vrin, 1933), 37–42; Steven P. Marrone, *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste: New Ideas of Truth in the Early Thirteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

uniquely suited to Franciscan purposes.[75] The Victorine doctrine of the Trinity, for example, laid an emphasis on God's dynamic and self-giving nature that was consistent with the Franciscan prioritization of love over knowledge – an active life of sacrificial service over static contemplation.[76]

In addition to this, the theory of the two faces of the soul allowed Franciscans to account for an experience of the soul transcending the body like Francis had at his Alverna vision and ultimately at his death. Together, the account of the intuitive knowledge of Being and the *a priori* proof for God's existence explained the constant and intimate connection with God that Francis enjoyed.[77] That connection is what enabled Francis to obtain such perfect comprehension of the created realities he encountered, or to know things in the abstract manner that Avicenna had described.[78]

By adopting such ideas, Alexander effectively translated Francis' experience of God and reality into theological and philosophical categories, which he grounded through appeals to the most trusted spiritual authorities. Whether unwittingly or deliberately, he formulated a distinctly Franciscan intellectual system, and he did so in a way that could conceivably confirm that a Franciscan intellectual life need not undermine the Franciscan spiritual life, inasmuch as philosophical positions that were consistent with Franciscan principles could be found in the writings of some of the greatest spiritual authorities, above all, Augustine.[79]

Although many scholars have assumed that early Franciscans were pure and simple, if not the most sophisticated proponents of the tradition of Augustine and Anselm, the Avicennian background of Alexander's thought as well as that of his contemporaries did not escape the notice of Étienne

[75] In the *Summa fratris Alexandri* alone there are 4,814 explicit and 1,372 implicit references to Augustine; this amounts to more than one quarter of the texts cited in the body of the *Summa*. Alexander's Sentence Commentary contains 241 quotations from Anselm. See Jacques Guy Bougerol, "The Church Fathers and *Auctoritates* in Scholastic Theology to Bonaventure," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 301; idem., *Introduction*, 15.

[76] Osborne (ed.), *History of Franciscan Theology*, 28.

[77] On Alexander's use of Anselm, see Matthews, *Reason, Community, and Religious Tradition*, 35ff. On the intuitive knowledge of God as an account of Francis' intimate relationship with the divine, see Matthews, 48, 59.

[78] J. Rohmer, "La théorie de l'abstraction dans l'école Franciscaine de Alexandre de Hales à Jean Peckam," in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge* 3 (Paris: Vrin, 1928), 105–84.

[79] Moorman, *History of the Franciscan Order*, 328.

Gilson.[80] In a range of his works, Gilson drew attention to the various ways in which the first Franciscan scholars adopted Avicenna's philosophy, especially his psychology.[81] With the exception of the doctrine of God as agent intellect, however, Gilson contended that Franciscan efforts to interpret Augustine in concordance with Avicenna were perfectly legitimate. By doing this, he stated, Franciscans did nothing but systematize and clarify views that were inchoately present in the thought of Augustine.

While Gilson may be correct about the Avicennian sources of Franciscan thought, his conclusion that Franciscan and implicitly Avicennian thought is completely consistent with Augustine's thought does not seem entirely supportable. For the first Franciscan scholars who espoused what Gilson called an "Avicennizing Augustinianism" appear to have been more interested in introducing an altogether innovative and distinctly Franciscan philosophy on Augustine's authority than in upholding Augustine's own ideals. What made it possible for them to do just this was the scholastic method that allowed scholars to ground their own opinions in the work of authorities that stood for a cause with which they wished to associate themselves. In the case of the first Franciscans, that cause was trustworthy spiritual tradition. In the following chapter on Bonaventure, the celebrated formulator of "classic" Franciscan philosophy, my aim will be to substantiate what I have suggested here concerning the distinctive and even non-Augustinian character of Franciscan thought.

[80] Bougerol, for example, affirms in his *Introduction* (15) that the Franciscan *Summa* contains traditional Augustinian doctrine bolstered with insights from Anselm and the school of St. Victor.

[81] Étienne Gilson, "Pourquoi saint Thomas a critiqué saint Augustin," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du moyen age* 1 (1926–7), 5–127; idem., "Les sources Greco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennisant," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du moyen age* 4 (1929), 5–107.

4

Bonaventure (AD 1221–74)

Introduction

Bonaventure of Bagnoregio is generally regarded as the last and best medieval champion of Augustine's thought.[1] His account of knowledge by divine illumination is often described as the hallmark of his Augustinianism.[2]

[1] Effrem Bettoni O.F.M., *Bonaventure*, trans. Angelus Gambateste (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), 19, 124; Jacques-Guy Bougerol, "The Church Fathers and *Auctoritates* in Scholastic Theology to Bonaventure," in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1997); idem., *Introduction to the Writings of St. Bonaventure*, (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild, 1964), 32; Charles Carpenter O.F.M., *Theology as the Road to Holiness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), v; Ewert H. Cousins O.F.M., *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978), 2; Patrick James Doyle, "The Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory in the Franciscan School" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1984), 4; Étienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, trans. Illtyd Trethowan and Francis Joseph Sheed (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1965), 6, 481ff; Patrick Robert O.F.M., "Le problem de la philosophie bonaventurienne: Aristotelisme Neoplatonisant ou Augustinisme?" *Laval Theologique et Philosophique* 6 (1950), 145–63.

[2] Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 92, 96, 125; Bougerol, *Introduction*, 31–4; Leonard Bowman, "The Development of the Doctrine of the Agent Intellect in the Franciscan School," *The Modern Schoolman* 50 (1973), 251; Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 79–93; F.C. Copleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy* (London: Methuen and Co., 1972), 161; Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 2, 79, 118; Theodore Crowley O.F.M., "Illumination and Certitude," in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274–1974*, vol. 2 (Grottaferrata: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1973); Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 8, 20–2; Maurice De Wulf, *History of Medieval Philosophy*, 3rd edn (London: Longman's, Green, and Co., 1909), 283–9; Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 387; Publio Restrepo Gonzalez O.F.M., "Una fundamentacion Bonaventurianan para la epistemologia de las ciencias: la teoria de la luz o iluminismo," *Franciscanum* 38 (1996), 309–17; Bernard A. Gendreau, "The Quest for Certainty in Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 21 (1961), 104–227; M. Hurley,

Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge,
by Lydia Schumacher

Moreover, his place at the end of a line of medieval Augustinians is usually supposed to be established by his use of Anselm's ontological argument.[3]

"Illumination According to St. Bonaventure," *Gregorianum* 32:3 (1951), 401; Ilia Delio O.S.F., *Simply Bonaventure* (Hyde Park: New City Press, 2001), 103; Zachary Hayes O.F.M., introduction to *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ* by Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005), 55–9; Jay Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*," in Wayne Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2001), 223; David Knowles, *The Evolution of Medieval Thought* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1964), 18; C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society* (London: Longman, 1994), 148; Gordon Leff, *The Dissolution of the Medieval Outlook: An Essay on Intellectual and Spiritual Change in the Fourteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 39; John Lynch, *The Theory of Knowledge of Vital du Four* (St. Bonaventure: The Franciscan Institute, 1972), 152; Steven P. Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and the Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 1, 111–250; Thomas R. Mathias, "Bonaventurian Ways to God through Reason," *Franciscan Studies* 36 (1976), 193; P.J. McAndrew, "The Theory of Divine Illumination in Saint Bonaventura," *The New Scholasticism* 6 (1932), 39; John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 246–7; Timothy B. Noone, "The Franciscans and Epistemology: Reflections on the Roles of Bonaventure and Scotus," in *Medieval Masters*, ed. R.E. Houser (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1999), 63–90; Tony Overton, "St. Bonaventure's Illumination Theory of Knowledge: The Reconciliation of Aristotle, Pseudo-Dionysius and Augustine," *Miscellanea Francescana* 88 (1988), 108–21; Joseph Owens, "Faith, Ideas, Illumination, and Experience," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, 450–1; Philip L. Reynolds, "Threefold Existence and Illumination in St. Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 42 (1982), 190–215; Fritz-Joachim von Rintelen, "Comprension del ser creatural en san Agustin y en san Buenaventura," *Augustinus* 19 (1974), 189–96; John Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 78; Eugene TeSelle, *Augustine the Theologian*, 106; Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 102–36; Allan B. Wolter O.F.M., "The Schoolmen," *The Intellectual Climate of the Early University: Essays in Honor of Otto Grundler*, ed. Nancy Van Deusen (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1997, 207–8; Pelayo Mateos de Zamayon O.F.M., "Teoria del conocimiento segun san Buenaventura: La illuminacion," in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274–1974* (Rome: Collegio S. Bonaventura Grottaferrata, 1974); Grover A. Zinn, "Book and Word: The Victorine Background of Bonaventure's Use of Symbols," in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274–1974*, 144.

[3] Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 37, 42; Bougerol, "The Church Fathers and Auctoritates in Scholastic Theology to Bonaventure," 320; idem., *Introduction*, 35; Copleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy*, 166; Ewert Cousins, "St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, and the Movement of Thought in the Thirteenth Century," in *Bonaventure and Aquinas: Enduring Philosophers* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 9; Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 11; Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 115ff; Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 114; Anton Pegis, "The Bonaventurian Way to God," *Mediaeval Studies* 29 (1967), 206–42; Jean-Robert Pouchet, "Le Proslogion de sainte Anselme et l'espirit de saint Bonaventure," in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274–1974*, vol. 2, 103–24.

In this chapter, my purpose is to show that the Seraphic Doctor did not in fact uphold the views of Augustine, especially on illumination. This argument represents a necessary preliminary step toward explaining why Franciscans in the generation after Bonaventure rejected illumination. While presenting it, moreover, I will question a virtually unquestioned opinion about the Augustinian character of Bonaventure's thought that scholars have upheld at least since the time of the renowned medievalist, Étienne Gilson.[4]

Where some of Gilson's contemporaries described Bonaventure as an "incipient Thomist," who basically held the same views as Thomas Aquinas but never had the chance to develop them into a full-fledged system, Gilson discerned the distinctive spirit of Bonaventure's thought.[5] Although he recognized the uniquely Franciscan features of Bonaventure's philosophy, Gilson believed those features were fundamentally Augustinian. In his view, Augustine had never cohesively presented his philosophical doctrines, such as illumination, although he certainly entertained specific views about such matters.[6] Not until Bonaventure was Augustine's philosophy finally codified; using Augustine's terms, Bonaventure supposedly gave a fuller explanation of the meaning of those terms than Augustine himself had done.[7]

According to Gilson, Bonaventure had a highly conservative motive for championing Augustine, namely, to transform the bishop's philosophical thought into a comprehensive system that could rival that of Aristotle, whose rising popularity was threatening Augustine's longstanding status as the ultimate intellectual authority. Because Bonaventure's intention was to bolster the waning authority of Augustine, Gilson affirmed that Augustine's arguments could be read retrospectively through Bonaventure's lens, which purportedly throws them into clear relief.

At first blush, Gilson's thesis concerning his Augustinianism seems totally tenable. It is admittedly true, as Gilson affirms, that Bonaventure's philosophy can be "found" in Augustine's works, insofar as Bonaventure

[4] Joseph Ratzinger, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971), 123. Ratzinger lists numerous major medieval scholars who accepted Gilson's views on Bonaventure, including Franz Ehrle, E. Longpre, Pierre Mandonnet, F.J. Thonnard, G. Tavard, Patrick Robert, and Leo Veuthy.

[5] For example, De Wulf in his *History of Medieval Philosophy* and Fernand Van Steenberghen in *Aristotle in the West: The Origins of Latin Aristotelianism*, trans. Leonard Johnston (New York: Humanities Press, 1970).

[6] Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. 1, 247.

[7] Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 481–90, *passim*.

phrases his ideas in Augustine's terms, which seem to accommodate the connotations he assigns to them. To assume on those grounds that Bonaventure is an absolutley faithful follower of Augustine, however, is to neglect attending to the theological context of his writings which may indicate otherwise.

In the study of Augustine himself, a preliminary theological inquiry enabled me to identify the function of illumination in his thought and thus to deal with a longstanding debate on the topic. In the case of Bonaventure, I have found that a reading of philosophical arguments in theological context brings certain differences between Bonaventure and Augustine to light. Those differences have largely passed unnoticed by modern readers who are far removed from the intellectual contexts in which both Augustine and Bonaventure worked. Yet the differences become evident when Bonaventure's philosophy is interpreted as a function of his theology, which represents a major departure from Augustine, out of preference for the Trinitarian doctrine of Richard of St. Victor, which first-generation Franciscans like Alexander of Hales had adopted.

In the late nineteenth century, just before Gilson's time, Theodore De Régnon called attention to the fact that two distinct lines of Trinitarian thought began to emerge in the late medieval West.[8] While Anselm, Peter Lombard, Albert the Great, and Thomas Aquinas carried on the original tradition of Augustine, Richard of St. Victor drew inspiration from Pseudo-Dionysius in founding a new tradition that was subsequently furthered by Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure. Although De Régnon's characterization of Eastern and Western Trinitarian doctrines has recently, and rightly, been criticized, his observations about the two distinct traditions that emerged within the Western tradition itself have gained wide recognition in recent years.[9] It has become common for scholars to acknowledge the innovativeness of Franciscan Trinitarian thought as well as its Victorine heritage.[10]

[8] Theodore De Régnon, *Études de théologie positive sur la Sainte Trinité*, 3 vols (Paris: Vrin, 1892–8).

[9] Michel Rene Barnes, "De Régnon Reconsidered," *Augustinian Studies* 26 (1995), 51–79.

[10] See Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2008); Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 51, 100; Cullen, *Bonaventure*, ch. 6 on "The Triune God," 113–27; Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 40; Elizabeth Dreyer, "Bonaventure the Franciscan: An Affective Spirituality," in *Spiritualities of the Heart*, ed. Annice Callahan (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990), 36; Russell L. Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Thought from Aquinas to Ockham*, 5, *passim*; Hayes, introduction to *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity* by Bonaventure, 18.

In spite of the fact that Franciscans diverged widely from Augustine in the area of theological doctrine, scholars continue to assert the Augustinian nature of Bonaventure's philosophical thought and the proto-Bonaventurian character of Augustine's. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Bonaventure's philosophical thought has not yet been fully analyzed as a function of his theological thought and compared to Augustine's thought, assessed in the same way. In this chapter, I will evaluate Bonaventure's philosophy as a derivative of his theology through the same series of steps I took in the chapter on Augustine. I will show how the Seraphic Doctor draws an account of the created order, the image of God, the effects of the fall and redemption on the image, conformity to God's image, and divine illumination from his doctrine of God, giving mature expression to the "classic" Franciscan thought of his "master and father" Alexander in the process.[11] By these means, I aim to establish on theological grounds that Bonaventure does not mean what Augustine meant by Augustine's terms and metaphors, above all, illumination.

Far from being a genuine philosophical Augustinian, I contend that Bonaventure is the classic formulator of a philosophical perspective that is decidedly Franciscan and that has its roots in the work of Avicenna, although Bonaventure hardly acknowledges any debt to Avicenna, given that the trend by his time was to cite Aristotle, even when Avicennian doctrines were being attributed to him.[12] Although I was able to build on recent research in the chapter on Augustine, which lays the foundation for the argument of this chapter, there is very little precedent for the project of differentiating Bonaventure from Augustine which I undertake here. For this reason, I make no claim to give a comprehensive re-reading of Bonaventure's system and its relationship or lack thereof to Augustine. My only goal is to present a new way of thinking about Bonaventure which can be further elaborated at a later time.

While I will challenge Gilson's notion that Bonaventure's doctrines are fundamentally Augustinian, I will not normally question his interpretation of Bonaventure's doctrines themselves. For the most part, it seems to me

[11] Bonaventure, *Comm. in II Libr. Sent.* (Florence: Quaracchi, 1885), *prooemium*.

[12] Dag Nikolaus Hasse, *Avicenna's De anima* (London: Warburg Institute, 2001), 221: although Avicenna's name all but disappears in the *Summa fratris Alexandri* and in the writings of Bonaventure, Hasse argues that there are clear signs of his influence. Incidentally, another probable reason why Bonaventure does not mention Avicenna is that the Arab's doctrine of the separate Active Intellect had recently been condemned, and he may have wished to dissociate himself from any disreputable doctrines.

that Gilson gained an exceptionally strong sense of the spirit of Bonaventure's philosophy. If he erred, it was in assuming that this philosophy was the means through which Bonaventure bolstered a truly Augustinian as opposed to a uniquely Franciscan intellectual tradition.

In his first theological work, a commentary on Lombard's Sentences, Bonaventure confesses that his first priority is to further the vision of St. Francis of Assisi by continuing the thought of Alexander of Hales.[13] In his *Life of Francis* (1261), Bonaventure later explains why his devotion to his order runs so deep. As a child, he had contracted a severe illness, and as he lay on his deathbed, his mother prayed to St. Francis for his survival.[14] From the moment of his miraculous recovery, he devoted himself to the mission of St. Francis. In 1243, possibly earlier, he entered the Franciscan order and began his theological studies under Alexander of Hales, who is on record as affirming that "it seemed as though Adam had never sinned in him."[15]

By 1248, Bonaventure had earned his bachelor's in Scripture. From that point, he proceeded to lecture on the Bible for two years. From 1250 to 1252, he lectured on Lombard's Sentences and composed his commentary to satisfy the requirements for the degree of master in theology, which he earned in 1253, the same year he became regent master of the Franciscan school in Paris. Although Bonaventure and Aquinas, who finished his course at the same time, should have been given positions in the faculty of theology at the University of Paris on completing their degrees, the university masters would not allow them to fill their posts until 1257, when the pope ordered them to do so.

In the meantime, Bonaventure composed his famous sermon *Christus unus omnium Magister* (1253), the *Quaestiones disputatae de perfectione evangelica* (1254), *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi* (1254), and *Quaestiones disputatae de mysterio trinitatis* (1255). In his *Breviloquium* (1257), Bonaventure gave a succinct synthesis of the Franciscan vision he had presented in his Sentence Commentary, which was intended for use in the theological education of Franciscan novices. This brief work was better suited for pedagogical purposes than the "horse-sized" *Summa fratris Alexandri*, which remained nonetheless accessible as a comprehensive theological

[13] See the prefaces in Bonaventure, *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* (1882) and *Comm. in II Libr. Sent.*

[14] Bonaventure, *The Life of St. Francis (Legenda major)*, in *Bonaventure*, ed. Ewert Cousins (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1978), ch. 3.

[15] Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 34.

encyclopedia and reference tool. As such a work, the *Breviloquium* represents Bonaventure's counterpart to Aquinas' voluminous *Summa Theologiae*.

In the same year he composed the *Breviloquium*, Bonaventure was chosen to be the new Minister General of the Franciscan order. His election curtailed his academic career and imposed on him the responsibility for dealing with the problems that threatened the order at the time. The main problem arose from the sector of the spiritual Franciscans, who were by now very loudly protesting against the institutionalization of the order and the compulsory education of its members. To make matters worse, some of the spirituals were becoming zealous exponents of Joachism. In 1254, friar Gerard of Borgo San-Donnino published a book, subsequently condemned, in which he voiced the opinion of many spirituals that Francis was the harbinger of the "age of the Spirit" and that his authority therefore superseded that of the very Son of God.[16]

By this time, the university masters had become so embittered at the privileges the pope was granting the mendicants in the academic context, they had determined to seek out any opportunity to discredit the intellectual integrity of the friars and drive them from the university scene for good. One university master, William of St. Amour, wrote a response to Gerard accusing all Franciscans of Joachism and thus of heresy, and further attacking the whole mendicant way of life.

When Bonaventure assumed leadership of his order, consequently, he immediately inherited the challenge of showing the university masters that there was nothing intellectually questionable about the Franciscan lifestyle and demonstrating to the spiritual Franciscans that there was nothing in the Franciscan calling that precluded intellectual pursuits. In his effort to address this two-fold challenge, Bonaventure composed his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (1259) and Life of Francis or *Legenda major* (1261). The latter replaced the accounts of Francis' life that had been written previously, some of which played up his anti-intellectual tendencies, and all of which were destroyed. In these works as in all his others, Bonaventure followed Alexander in making special appeals to the authority of Augustine, Anselm, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Richard and Hugh of St. Victor, all of whom represented the longstanding tradition of medieval spirituality.

By "finding" a Franciscan intellectual life in that spiritual tradition, Bonaventure illustrated that intellectual pursuits are essential to the fulfilment of Francis' spiritual ideals, and conversely, that Francis' ideals are essential to the success of intellectual pursuits. In typical scholastic fashion,

[16] Robert J. Karris O.F.M., introduction to *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection, by Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2008), 8.

he invoked authoritative sources to advance his own cause, which was to deal with the complaints of the spirituals and masters in a manner that was faithful to the vision of St. Francis. In the process, incidentally, it so happened that he effectively trumped the intellectual authority of the Dominicans and laid the foundation for efforts he undertook in the 1270s to curb the spread of radical Averroist Aristotelianism.

In works like the *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (1273) and *De reductione artium ad theologiam* (c. 1273), Bonaventure undercuts the Averroists' key contention that philosophy can succeed apart from theology – in short, that it is fully autonomous – by reiterating that faith, and specifically Franciscan faith, is the precondition of sound philosophy. When he qualified the Franciscan vision so that it entailed academic endeavors, Bonaventure clearly did not think he betrayed Francis, but adapted the saint's vision so that it could be realized in a new era.[17] Although Bonaventure rejected the heretical Joachite notion that Francis initiated the age of the Spirit and thus superseded the age of the Son of God, he nevertheless affirmed that the Franciscans had a special role to play in salvation history. In his view, the friars minor were helping to usher in the eschaton by counteracting the deficiencies of the Church and reviving true spirituality.[18] Since a life of study was vital to achieving these ends, Bonaventure believed his efforts to turn the Franciscan order into a scholarly one were justified. For those efforts, he has been acclaimed the order's second founder.

The Doctrine of God

Until the twelfth century, Augustine's Trinitarian doctrine basically went unrivalled in the West. Toward the end of that century, Richard of St. Victor formulated a new way of thinking the Triune nature of God, which appealed to Franciscans like Bonaventure because of its voluntarist bent.[19] Like other scholars at the Augustinian abbey of St. Victor, a renowned center of learning in Paris, Richard was well acquainted with the works of Augustine as well as Anselm.

[17] Anton C. Pegis, "St. Bonaventure, St. Francis, and Philosophy," *Medieval Studies* 15 (1953), 1–13.

[18] Moorman, A *History of the Franciscan Order*, 151.

[19] See Zachary Hayes' introduction to *Disputed Questions on the Mystery of the Trinity* by Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2000), ch. 1.

Along with many other members of his school, however, Richard was also an avid reader of the sixth-century mystic Pseudo-Dionysius. Although Richard drew on Augustine's trinity of "lover, beloved, and love" in developing his doctrine of the Trinity, he ultimately took a Dionysian insight as his conceptual point of departure. Dionysius had described God as the supreme Good, and on the grounds that a Good that is contained is not genuinely good, he had argued that God is self-diffusive by definition.[20] The Dionysian argument, in other words, was that God's goodness consists in His active or dynamic nature: His power to reproduce Himself.

On the basis of the contention that the divine goodness is essentially self-giving, Richard concludes that love is the supreme content of the Good.[21] Since love must be shared by at least two parties, Richard argues that there must be a plurality of divine Persons. Unlike Augustine, who affirmed that the third member of the Trinity simply is the love exchanged between the two Persons, Richard insists that the first two Persons direct their love toward one and the same third party.[22] In his view, this is the only way to establish that the nature and measure of the love in question is exactly the same and thus supremely perfect. Where two Persons love a third in harmony, he writes, there is not the *dilectio* of Augustine, but *condilectio*.

In elaborating his doctrine of God along Victorine lines, Bonaventure speaks of the Father as the first principle (*principium primum*)[23] of the Trinity, the fontal source (*plenitudo fontalis*) of divine love from which the others flow.[24] In emphasizing the primacy or innascibility of the Father, he departs from Latin theologians like Augustine to follow the way of the Greek Fathers.[25] Because of His primacy, Bonaventure affirms that the Father is utterly fecund.[26] From this point, he concludes that God's self-communication is perfect and complete.[27] When He gives of

[20] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 639Bff; Richard of St. Victor, *Book Three of The Trinity*, in *Richard of St Victor*, trans. Grover A. Zinn (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), ch. 2.

[21] Richard of St. Victor, *Book Three of The Trinity*, ch. 2.

[22] Ibid., chs 14–15; Bonaventure, *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.*, 2.1.2 and 2.1.4.

[23] *trin. qu.* 2.1.

[24] *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 2.1.2.

[25] *Comm. in II Libr. Sent.* 28: on innascibility.

[26] *trin. qu.* 8: on primacy, fontality, fecundity; cf. *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 2.1.2.

[27] Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 67.

Himself, He holds nothing in reserve.[28] Inasmuch as He is first and owes His existence to none other, moreover, the Father's self-donation is completely non-compulsory; it is a totally gratuitous overflow of divine love.

According to Bonaventure, the Son is the objective expression of the Father's love. He is the perfect image or exemplar of the Father.[29] This relationship of complete correspondence between the Father and the Son is the model for all further relations, in the first place, the relation between the Son and the Spirit.[30] In Bonaventure's account, the Son receives the fountain fullness of the Father's love and passes it on directly as He receives it. The Spirit simply stands as the fullest possible manifestation of the love that proceeds from the Father and the Son: the love those two share in common for the third Person of the Trinity.[31]

Because the Father is the first or efficient cause of divine love, Bonaventure appropriates the trait of unity to Him. Since the Son is the formal or exemplary cause of that love, He is characterized as the truth, while the Spirit, as the final cause, is described in terms of goodness.[32] Summarizing his teaching on the Trinity, Bonaventure describes the Father as the Person of the Trinity who produces but is not produced; the Son as the one who is produced and produces; and the Spirit as the one who is produced but does not produce.[33]

In this account, the first Person is entirely active; the third is completely passive; and the second is both active and passive. Because He has something in common with both the Father and the Spirit, who themselves have nothing in common, Bonaventure affirms that the Son is distinct from the other two Persons and yet uniquely suited to unite them. He is the image of the Trinity because He is capable of causing the irreconcilable opposites of Father and Spirit to coincide so as to sum up in His own Person what the three of them are.[34] This is why Bonaventure speaks of the Son as the very center of Trinitarian life, the midpoint on a circle

[28] Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* (Florence: Quaracchi, 1938), 6.2; cf. *Breviloquium* (Florence: Quaracchi, 1938), 1.2.3, 1.3.2.

[29] *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 6.1.3 and 31.22; cf. *brev.* 1.3.8.

[30] *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 10–14: on the Holy Spirit.

[31] *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 11.1: on double procession; John Francis Quinn, "The Role of the Holy Spirit in St. Bonaventure's Theology," *Franciscan Studies* 33 (1973), 273–84.

[32] *brev.* 1.6.1.

[33] Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaëmeron* (Florence: Quaracchi, 1938), 1.14; cf. *brev.* 1.5.5.

[34] Ewert H. Cousins, "The Coincidence of Opposites in the Christology of Saint Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 28 (1968), 27–45.

that begins and ends with the Father's love.[35] In receiving that love and expressing what He receives, the Son closes the circle in the Spirit.

Although Bonaventure simply follows Alexander of Hales in most matters pertaining to Trinitarian doctrine, his stress on the centrality of Christ had very little precedent, even though it was latent in the Victorine doctrine of the Trinity and indeed in Francis' own cruci-fixation.[36] Early on in Bonaventure's ministerial career, Christocentrism equipped him with the conceptual resources to clear the Franciscans of the charges associated with Joachism. By affirming that Christ is the literal center of the Trinity and thus of human history, such that His gospel is eternal and irreplaceable, Bonaventure successfully dissociated his order from the heretical idea that it was Francis rather than Christ who brought about the culmination of salvation history.[37]

Although Christocentrism helped Bonaventure to temper some more radical Franciscan claims, it also proved useful when it came to demonstrating to the university masters, the Dominicans, and later on, the radical Averroist Aristotelians, that the Franciscan context is the only one in which a life of study can be successfully pursued, as I will suggest in later sections. As Bonaventure brought his Christocentric perspective to bear in addressing the different challenges he faced in the course of his career, he extrapolated the repercussions of assumptions that he held from the beginning, and from which he never deviated.[38]

In the process, he gave mature expression to the theology of his Franciscan predecessors. Indeed it was Bonaventure's version of the Franciscan doctrine of God with all its emphasis on the centrality of Christ that would be handed down to later Franciscans such as John Duns Scotus. For this reason, some scholars have recently qualified De Régnon's account of the history of Trinitarian theology, insisting that Bonaventure

[35] *Comm. in III Libr. Sent.* 1.2.1.2; *trin. qu.* 3.1; cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names* 712D–713D.

[36] Ilia Delio, "Theology, Metaphysics, and the Centrality of Christ," *Theological Studies* 68 (2007), 254ff.; Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 65, 72; Ratzinger, *The Theology of History*, 109.

[37] Cousins, "The Coincidence of Opposites," 63–5; Zachary Hayes, *The Hidden Center, Spirituality and Speculative Christology in St. Bonaventure* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1981), 210ff. Ratzinger's *The Theology of History* is still the definitive work on Bonaventure's theology of history.

[38] Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 32; Cousins, "The Coincidence of Opposites," 49, 59–67.

rather than Richard deserves the credit for articulating an alternative to the Augustinian tradition in Western Trinitarian theology.[39]

Creation in the Image of God

The natural order

When God the Father imparted the knowledge of His infinite Being to the Son, Bonaventure explains, He simultaneously passed on an infinite number of ideas for the creation of the world.[40] Like all things that come from the Father, those ideas are perfect and complete expressions of some aspect of His mind. Employing standard Augustinian terms, Bonaventure refers to the divine ideas or forms as eternal reasons or exemplars.[41] In what he calls his metaphysics of "emanation, exemplarity, and consummation,"[42] the Father stands at the start of a metaphysical circle and emanates His exemplars to the Son in His absolute manner, such that the Son, who is the locus of the divine exemplars, represents all things in the most clear and distinct way.[43]

Although the exemplars in the Son's mind are one with the essence of God and so are essentially one, Bonaventure insists that there is a kind of distinction between them which applies to entities that are inseparable in actuality but which have non-identical definitions: what Scotus would later term the formal distinction and Bonaventure already describes as a *distinctio rationis*.[44] The latter introduces such a distinction in the effort to reinforce the Franciscan belief that every individual being perfectly, if

[39] Olegario Gonzalez, *Misterio Trinitario y existencia humana: estudio historico teologico en torno a san Buenaventura* (Madrid: Ediciones Rialp, 1966), 4–14. Also see Hayes, introduction to *trin. qu.*, 13–24.

[40] Bonaventure, *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi,* ed. Zachary Hayes, in *Disputed Questions on the Knowledge of Christ* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2005), 1; *coll.* 3.3.7: God's knowledge is the sum total of all possibly and really existing things. See Leo Sweeney, "Bonaventure and Aquinas on the Divine Being as Infinite," in *Divine Infinity in Greek and Medieval Thought* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998), 413–38.

[41] *s. C. qu.* 4.

[42] *coll.* 2.17.

[43] *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 6.3; cf. *coll.* 12.3–4.

[44] *s. C. qu.* 3; *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 1.1.2.1, 5.1.1.1, 26.1.2, 45.2.1; cf. *coll.* 12.9; Mechthild Dreyer and Mary Beth Ingham, *The Philosophical Vision of John Duns Scotus* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 35. According to the authors, Bonaventure's *distinctio rationis* anticipates Henry of Ghent's "intentional distinction" and Duns Scotus' "formal distinction."

finitely, reflects God's loving nature and is intimately known to Him. Because God as Bonaventure understands Him possesses an idea of every specific reality, which can be formally distinguished from His ideas of other particular things, it is possible to say that He knows individual things.

By affirming this point, Bonaventure distinguishes his thought on the matter of God's knowledge from that of Augustine and Anselm, not to mention Aquinas. According to these three, God knows but one exemplar, namely, His simplicity. Insofar as things are patterned after divine simplicity or exhibit unity or singularity of essence, God's universal knowledge of Himself pre-contains the knowledge of particulars without being reduced to it. This way of putting things makes it possible to affirm that particular realities are images of a God who is not an image of them; that He, therefore, is wholly other.

On the grounds that God's knowledge is the sum total of all possibly and really existing particulars, Bonaventure affirms what his Augustinian predecessors denied, namely, that there is a reciprocal relationship between created instances of exemplars and the divine exemplars themselves. Creatures resemble ideas as exact copies of them, and the divine ideas resemble creatures in virtue of being their exemplars.[45]

According to Bonaventure, a creature actually comes to exemplify the divine in some limited respect when the Son instantiates a specific exemplar.[46] In doing this, the Son acts as the metaphysical center, uniting the Creator to the created, much as He serves as a theological center, reconciling the extremes of Father and Spirit within the Godhead.[47] By patterning creatures after the exemplars that emanate from the Father, such that they are consummated to their attendant exemplars, the Son completes the circle of creation in the Spirit. He causes things to stand as perfect expressions of divine love. Through Him, the fountain fullness of the Father's love overflows into countless instances of His divine ideas.

Because those ideas are one with the very essence of God, the Seraphic Doctor states that their instantiation by the Son makes the Spirit of God immediately present in all of creation.[48] Following Dionysius, Bonaventure argues that God literally duplicates or diffuses Himself in the natural order,

[45] *s. C. qu.* 2; in contrast to Bonaventure, Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas concluded that creatures resemble a God who does not resemble them, in keeping with the claim that there is but one exemplar with many instantiations, rather than many exemplars that are one in virtue of being contained in one mind.

[46] *coll.* 11.20 and 12.9.14.

[47] *coll.* 1.17: metaphysical center.

[48] *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 37.1.1.1, 37.1.3.1–2; *Comm. in II Libr. Sent.* 1.1.2.2.

as He does within the Godhead, such that all beings become a "theophany" or as Augustine put it, a vestige or "trace" of the divine.[49]

Although this claim could seem to invite the charge of pantheism, Bonaventure evades that accusation by arguing that the Son instantiates only a finite number of the divine ideas, such that God is not completely re-created in the created order, and by constantly "insisting on the contingency of the created order as well as on God's freedom with respect to the created."[50]

When it comes to elaborating on the way God conducted His creative work, Bonaventure starts by speculating about what He did before the dawn of time: presumably, He finitely redoubled His existence by creating something called prime matter out of nothing.[51] Prime matter is basically a large mass of formless existence, as it was for Avicenna. It is privative not in the sense that it is really "nothing" but in the sense that its formlessness gives it the seminal potential to receive the forms that God began to impress on it at the start of time, as Augustine supposedly suggests with his doctrine of "seminal principles" (*rationes seminales)*.[52]

In imposing forms on prime matter, Bonaventure states that God confers the property of real existence to a select number of the infinity of absolute essences in His mind. Although there has never been a time when prime matter has not been subject to form, such that it cannot be examined in its own right, Bonaventure insists that it nonetheless underlies all existing things, binding them all in an interdependent network and joining them all to God.[53]

By contrast to prime matter, which acts as the principle of change in creation in virtue of its potentiality, Bonaventure describes forms as fully actualized entities. In other words, he does not believe that forms are subject to

[49] *coll*. 11.11.15; Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy* 180C; also see Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 63; Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 45; Cullen, *Bonaventure*, ch. 7 on "The Creation of the World," 128–33; Ilia Delio, "Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good," *Theological Studies* 60 (1999), 235–7; Étienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 210–16; idem., *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 450; idem., *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 228, 392; Esther Woo, "Theophanic Cosmic Order in St. Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 32 (1972), 306–30.

[50] Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 14; cf. *coll*. 12.12–13.

[51] *Comm. in II Libr. Sent*. 12.1–2.

[52] *Comm. in II Libr. Sent*. 12.1.3.

[53] While Bonaventure's concern was to delineate the creature–Creator distinction in a way that would highlight the bonds of kinship between the two in a supposedly Augustinian way, Aquinas aimed to preserve the radical separateness of God from creation, according to Gilson in *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 236.

change.[54] From the "essentialist" metaphysical perspective he inherits from Avicenna via Alexander, forms always are what they are; they exist in full correspondence to an essence.[55] This must be the case, Bonaventure affirms, inasmuch as what comes from God must subsist in the same manner as God.

Assuming that creatures do in fact exist in the same mode of being as God, Bonaventure denies that creatures differ from the Creator because there is a composition of essence and existence in them, where that is not the case in God.[56] For Bonaventure, creatures differ from God only in the sense that they are comprised of matter and form, while God is pure form. Put differently, creatures are finite and material instances of what He is infinitely and immaterially.[57] As such, Bonaventure concludes that creatures positively disclose some finite aspect of God's essence in virtue of their own distinct essences.

Although Bonaventure employs the typical terminology of analogy in describing the way creatures reflect their Creator, a number of scholars have noted that he appears to recast the meaning of analogy along the lines of a univocal concept of being, according to which two parties subsist in the same mode of being, such that thoughts and words can be applied to them in exactly the same sense.[58] Bonaventure illustrates the univocal relationship between creatures and Creator in a variety of ways. In addition to exemplarity, he speaks of creatures as mirrors of the divine nature (*speculum intellectuale*) that give direct insight into some aspect of God's love.[59] Following the lead of Hugh of St. Victor, he describes the natural order as a book and creatures as words that testify to His existence.[60]

For Bonaventure, a creature's univocal relation to God is its mode of participation in Him. He thus defines participation as "the reverse of exemplary causality."[61] A creature participates in God when it perfectly

[54] *s. C. qu.* 4.

[55] *coll.* 5.5.1: essence and existence in creatures.

[56] See Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, trans. Peter King (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008).

[57] Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 67.

[58] Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, ch. 7; Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 13–14; Hammond, "Order in the *Itinerarium*," 203; Philip L. Reynolds, "Bonaventure's Theory of Resemblance," *Traditio* 58 (2003), 221ff.; Hayes, *Hidden Center*, 15.

[59] *brev.* 2.11.2; cf. *coll.* 11.20, 12.16.

[60] *brev.* 2.11.2, 2.12.1; cf. *coll.* 12.14–15; Zinn, "Book and Word: The Victorine Background of Bonaventure's Use of Symbols," 143–69.

[61] Leonard Bowman, "The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure," *Journal of Religion* 55:2 (1975), 185.

reflects one of His ideas and positively reveals something of His essence.[62] In this instance, a creature can either participate or fail to participate fully in its essence; participation becomes something substantial, as opposed to an activity. That is to say, it ceases to involve engagement in the mode of existence through which an essence is gradually actualized, such that participating is a matter of greater and lesser degrees. In advocating his new notion of participation, which presupposes a univocal concept of being, Bonaventure established that creatures stand as symbols of the divine in their unique ways.

Though he affirms that created forms exist like God, to wit, in act and thus immutably, he does not deny that creatures change. To account for the possibility of change, Bonaventure introduces a doctrine of the plurality of substantial forms.[63] According to this doctrine, every distinct feature that can be identified in a creature represents a distinct form. Creatures are composites of numerous substantial forms that are joined together without confusion yet without separation, as in a formal distinction (*distinctio rationes)*.

Since creatures are composites of matter and form, each one has at least two substantial forms: a bodily "form of corporeality," in virtue of its impression on prime matter, and the form that is provided by a vegetable, animal, or rational soul. While vegetable and animal souls are inseparable from matter, the rational soul is spiritual. Though it is presently united to matter, it is ultimately separable from the body and capable of union with God (*capax dei*).[64] For this reason, Bonaventure writes that the rational soul is united to the body "not as to a perfectible but as to a prison,"[65] from which it will one day be freed. Whether it is vegetable, animal, or rational, the soul is the highest form a creature has. This form

[62] Reynolds, "Bonaventure's Theory of Resemblance," 252.

[63] *Comm. in II Libr. Sent.* 1.1.1–2; cf. *brev.* 2.3.2, *coll.* 3.3.3. Aquinas strongly objected to this theory, arguing that a plurality of substantial forms would result in a plurality of creatures. See his *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 11, trans. Timothy Suttor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.76.4. Aquinas' own opinion was that each creature has but one substantial form, which gives it the potential to become a certain kind of being. By participating in behaviors dictated by the form, the creature exists, and as it exists, it actualizes its potential or instantiates its essence (1.77.1). In this process, the form develops and changes; yet for Aquinas, those changes are accidental. They occur as a result of increasing participation in the single substantial form. See David Burrell, "Creation and Actualism: The Dialectical Dimension of Philosophical Theology," in *Faith and Freedom,* 76–90.

[64] *brev.* 2.9; *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 3.1.1.1.

[65] *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 1.2.1.2.

predisposes the creature to receive other forms. When a creature changes, it is because it is either gaining or losing a form.

Assuming that God alone is able to impart the property of existence to an essence, Bonaventure contends that the coming and going of forms in creatures is the result of the direct and on-going efficient causal action or concursus of the divine.[66] By defining God's primary causality and the secondary causality of creatures as a cooperative effort, Bonaventure emphasizes the dynamic and on-going nature of God's involvement in the created order. He stresses that every single moment of a creature's existence is a gift, since "it is only by God's concurrence that things are sustained in being."[67] Because God's cooperation "derives not from any obligation but from the liberality of the divine bounty,"[68] Bonaventure insists that creation is radically contingent. All things both depend on and are indicative of the sustaining love of God.

According to Bonaventure, creatures can symbolize the Creator at three levels: at that of a vestige, an image, or a likeness.[69] Every created form is a vestige in virtue of the fact that it emanates from the efficient cause, is patterned after an exemplary cause, and is ordained to a final cause.[70] Put differently, every creature is a vestige because it originates in the Father, is modeled after an idea in the mind of the Son, and reflects that idea in the Spirit, and thus exhibits unity, truth, and goodness, or measure, number, and weight.[71]

Though every being is a vestige, only rational creatures are rightly called images, because they alone are both corporeal and spiritual beings.[72] On account of their spiritual nature or capacity to know God (*capax dei*), rational beings can do more than merely manifest the unity, truth, and goodness of God in the way of a vestige. They can also know those divine

[66] *Comm. in II Libr. Sent.* 1.1.1; Jacob Schmutz contrasts what he calls *influentia* and *concursus* models of divine causality and traces the latter model to the Franciscan tradition in his article, "La doctrine médiévale des causes et la théologie de la nature pure *(13–17 siécles)*," *Revue Thomiste* 101 (2001), 217–64; Leonard Bowman also notes the appearance of a new notion of divine causality in Bonaventure in "The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure," 184.

[67] Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 70.

[68] *brev.* 5.1.3.

[69] *brev.* 2.12.1.

[70] *brev.* 2.1.4; *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 3.1.1.2.

[71] *brev.* 2.1.1–2, *coll.* 2.2.23: on measure, number, and weight.

[72] *Comm. in II Libr. Sent.* 1.2.1.2.

traits as they are manifested in creatures. Likenesses are those that actually do this in the wake of the fall.[73]

In spite of the fact that vestiges are ordered toward and governed by images, Bonaventure affirms that every being is equally close to God since it "has its direct model and foundation in the Word Himself in the eternal reasons."[74] Although the mode of relation to God may differ, the resemblance between creature and divine exemplar is no less exact. For this reason, Bonaventure follows Francis in affirming that even the lowliest of creatures are brothers and sisters of equal stature.[75]

The human being

Because the Son's work is to reconcile the diametric opposites of created beings and their ideal forms in the mind of the Creator, Bonaventure concludes that the work of human beings who are made in His image is to do likewise, that is, to identify the correspondence between created instances and their attendant exemplars.[76] According to Bonaventure, human beings are uniquely suited to perform this work because they have something in common with creatures – a body – as well as with God – a rational soul, which is separable from the body and therefore immortal.[77] Similar to the Son, they are stationed midway between the two extremes and are therefore capable of causing the polar opposites of exemplar and exemplifier to coincide.[78] In doing this, Bonaventure writes, human beings close the "circle of creation" on behalf of vestiges that are unable to do so of their own accord. By assuming their position at the center of creation in this way, they humbly serve creatures by allowing them to achieve the union with God that is the purpose of all beings.[79]

When it comes to explaining what enables human beings to reconcile creatures and their uncreated exemplars, Bonaventure speaks of three distinct sets of faculties: two he describes in terms of Augustine's "lower

[73] *brev*. 2.12.1.

[74] Bowman, "The Cosmic Exemplarism of Bonaventure," 187.

[75] Francis of Assisi, "The Canticle of Brother Sun," in *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 37–9.

[76] *coll*. 3.3.8, 5.5.1: correspondence theory of knowledge.

[77] *brev*. 2.10–11; *Comm. in II Libr. Sent*.1.2.1.2: on the union of body and soul; *Comm. in II Libr. Sent*. 19.1.1: on the immortality of the soul.

[78] *brev*. 2.4.3, 2.11–12; Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 94.

[79] *Comm. in II Libr. Sent*. 1.2.1.2.

reason" allow the mind to apprehend sensible realities, or acquire "scientific" knowledge (*scientia*);[80] and one he refers to as "higher reason" makes it possible to grasp intelligible realities or ideas, or gain wisdom (*sapientia*).[81] The first set of faculties includes the five external senses (sight, taste, touch, smell, and hearing).[82] The second set involves the five internal senses that comprise the imagination. The first of the imaging faculties is the common sense, which initially grasps the objects the external senses perceive. The apprehensive faculty retains the likenesses of the objects the common sense obtains.[83]

The next phase in internal sensation is "pleasure." Here, Bonaventure states that the mind distinguishes the various features of an object, such as its sweetness, beauty, symmetry, or color.[84] After pleasure comes judgment. In judging, the intellect determines "not only whether something is white or black … not only whether it is wholesome or harmful … but also why it is pleasurable."[85] In this mode of cognition, reason dissociates the sensible form from the place, time, and circumstances under which it was originally encountered and lays bare what it really is, albeit as a particular.[86] In this way, the judging faculty produces what Avicenna had called an intention and what Bonaventure refers to as a "created reason" or exact likeness of the sensible form, which is impressed on the memory.

Although the formation of a created reason is a necessary preliminary step toward the acquisition of an abstract concept, Bonaventure denies that the internal senses have the power to perform an act of abstraction themselves. The work of abstracting universal concepts can only be accomplished by the intellect, which needs no help from and is in fact hindered by the senses. When he turns to explain the abstractive work of the intellect, Bonaventure invokes Augustine's psychological analogy of memory, understanding, and will.[87] The memory, he affirms, preserves all

[80] *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 3.2.1.2.

[81] For an overview of Bonaventure's (Avicennian) account of external and internal sensation and abstraction, see *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 3.2.1.1; cf. *brev.* 2.9.4, 2.11.1; concerning the two faces of the soul, see s. *C. qu.* 4; *brev.* 2.9.7; *Comm. in II Libr. Sent.* 24.1.2.2. On the three modes of knowing, *coll.* 3.3.23.

[82] *itin.* 2.3.

[83] *itin.* 2.4.

[84] *itin.* 2.5.

[85] *itin.* 2.6.

[86] *itin.* 2.9.

[87] *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 3.2.1.1; cf. *brev.* 2.6.3.

of the created reasons the judging faculty has produced. In addition to this, it retains a number of "eternal reasons" that the Son has innately impressed on the mind: the concept of Being and its trinity of transcendental properties. Taken together, these concepts constitute the image of God on the mind, the so-called *capax dei*.[88]

Since the reasons that comprise the image of God are one with the very essence of God, they give the mind an immediate or intuitive connection to God, such that His Being rather than His handiwork is the first thing the mind knows – although it would appear to be the other way around.[89] Because the impression is not yet God Himself, however, but only His image, Bonaventure contends that the innate knowledge of the reasons does not reveal God.[90] The reasons are not the direct objects of knowledge, in other words, but what Bonaventure describes as the "moving causes" of knowledge. When the *mind* that is impressed with them pursues *knowledge* out of a *love* for God, Bonaventure affirms with a reference to another one of Augustine's psychological analogies – that is, where the *will* is oriented toward God – the reasons retained in the *memory* regulate efforts to acquire abstract *understanding* of a created reason.[91] They allow the "four intellects" to strip a created reason of all additional attachments and see what its essence really is, which is to see how it corresponds with an eternal reason in the mind of the Son: how it exhibits the unity, truth, and goodness of a Triune God who cannot be seen in Himself.[92]

Although Bonaventure affirms that every person possesses an individual active intellect and denies that God performs the mind's abstractive work on its behalf, per the recently condemned Avicennian doctrine of the separate Active Intellect, he maintains that the Son exerts a direct influence on the human agent intellect through the eternal reasons, which supervise and sustain the work of human reason.[93] Because of those reasons, the active work of the intellect is a cooperative effort or

[88] *itin.* 3.3.

[89] *Comm. in II Libr. Sent.* 16.1.1.

[90] *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 3.1.1.2.

[91] According to Bonaventure, the image is actually to be found in "mind, knowledge, and love," but the reckoning of the image is through the work of memory, understanding, and will; see *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 3.2.2.1.

[92] On the four intellects see *Comm. in II Libr. Sent.*, 24.1.2.4; concerning the idea that the Trinity is not cognizable, but unity, truth, and goodness are, see *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 3.1.1.4; on abstraction, see *s. C. qu.* 4.

[93] *Comm. in II Libr. Sent.* 24.1.2.4; Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 88.

concursus on the part of the human mind and its "inner teacher," Christ.[94] The role of the human mind, therefore, like that of the Son within the Trinity, is part active and part passive.

Without the supernatural support for natural cognition that is received from Christ, human beings would be unable to know reality with complete certainty. For according to Bonaventure, the stipulations for certainty in knowledge are immutability on the part of the object known and infallibility on the part of the knower.[95] Since the eternal reasons in the mind of the Son render forms immutable, the mind that seeks "infallible, indubitable, irrefutable, indisputable"[96] understanding of reality must have access to those rules in which the meaning of all things is found.[97] Only through those rules can a mere matter of science – a created reason – be transformed into an item of wisdom – an eternal reason.

The indispensability of exemplarity, incidentally, is just what Bonaventure believes Aristotle failed to recognize.[98] While he rightly acknowledged that all human knowledge must begin at the level of sense experience, or with a created reason, he denied the regulative role of the eternal reasons that situate knowledge on infallible grounds. Plato, by contrast, perceived the necessary role the exemplars or forms play in cognition, albeit at the cost of denying the importance of empirical knowledge. Augustine, as Bonaventure interprets him, struck the perfect balance between the two positions by recognizing that the created reason is indispensible to knowing, yet that an eternal reason must also inform it if it is to achieve absolute accuracy and certainty. He was the master of both science and wisdom, for he recognized the significance of science and at the same time acknowledged that there is no true science outside the wisdom of God.[99]

Bonaventure refers to the evaluation of a created reason in view of an eternal reason as the "full analysis"[100] (*plena resolutio*) of the former: the "contuition," or coextensive knowledge of a thing and its divine

[94] *coll.* 12.5.

[95] *itin.* 3.2; *s. C. qu.* 4; *Christus unus omnium Magister*, in *Opera omnia S. Bonaventurae*, vol. 5 (Florence: Quaracchi, 1891), 6.

[96] *itin.* 2.9.

[97] *coll.* 1.11.

[98] *C. Mag.* 18; cf. *coll.* 6.6.2, 7, *passim*.

[99] Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 27–37; Gregory LaNave, *Through Holiness to Wisdom*: *The Nature of Theology according to Bonaventure* (Rome: Instituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 2005), 148.

[100] *itin.* 3.4.

exemplar.[101] In his view, only one created reason is needed for contuition, since forms are fixed and are instantiated as such, and the powers of the mind, like the forms it knows, are always fully actualized.[102] The capacity for contuition, he reiterates, is the by-product of intuition, or the primary knowledge of Being and the transcendentals.[103] On the basis of his belief that Being is a concept the mind intuitively knows, Bonaventure asserts that it is possible to establish the self-evidence and thus the indubitableness of God's existence in three ways that correspond to the threefold existence of all things: in the mind, in creation, and in God, or through that which is inferior, exterior, and superior to the self.

The first way to prove God's existence is through what is most readily accessible to the intellect, to wit, the intuitive knowledge of Being and its properties. Since these primary intuitions constitute the very image of God, the rational being simply needs to reflect on itself as an image in order to know that God self-evidently exists.[104] For Bonaventure, not unlike Avicenna, this *a priori* or ontological approach to proving God's existence opens up the second way of doing so cosmologically. Because the contuitive knowledge of all beings presupposes the intuitive knowledge of the Being that is the source of all beings, Bonaventure concludes that God is known as soon as any creature is apprehended.[105]

In the third way, God's existence is shown to be self-evident in itself, or on the basis of the fact that Being is the mind's first thought, and that it is the greatest thing that can be thought, per Anselm's argument.[106] Although Bonaventure, echoing Anselm, establishes that God "cannot be

[101] See J.M. Bissen: "De la contuition," *Etudes Franciscaines* 46 (1934), 559–69. The author argues contra my argument that the sense in which Bonaventure used the term "contuition" is consistent with the meaning of Augustine's claim that human knowledge accords with eternal reasons; that it is therefore natural and at the same time supernatural.

[102] This is the implication of Bonaventure's claim that the soul is united with its powers (see *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 3.2.1.1–3, 45.2.1). That claim amounts to arguing that essence equals existence in human beings, or that the human cognitive power is always fully actualized, which is to say that it is fully prepared to perfectly know particular realities as God knows them. Gilson attributes this view to Augustine in *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 219.

[103] Ilia Delio, *Crucified Love: Bonaventure's Mysticism of the Crucified Christ* (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1999), 80.

[104] *trin. qu.* 1.1. Bonaventure bolsters this contention by invoking Augustine, who taught that it is only by attending to the interior life, or the image of God within, that one can come to know God.

[105] *trin. qu.* 1.1; *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 3.1.1.2; cf. Augustine, *sol.* 1.8.15: God can be cognized through creatures inasmuch as a cause inevitably shines through its effects.

[106] *trin. qu.* 1.1.

thought not to exist"[107] in these three ways, it is important to note that all the ways unfold from the first way, or from the intuitive knowledge of Being. Owing to that intuition, the intellect can turn within itself, outside itself, or above itself and know that God exists with absolute certitude. Since the Being of God manifested in all three instances is the same one, the interior awareness of the cognitive resources the mind possesses in its knowledge of Being – which confirms the status of the human being as the *imago dei* – serves as the subjective foundation for all further knowledge of realities outside the self, that is, for the knowledge of creation and its Creator.

The Fall and Redemption

When the first human beings fell away from God, Bonaventure contends that they did so on account of disordered desires for things they perceived through lower reason.[108] These desires made humanity ignorant of God's image on higher reason, or of the *a priori* awareness of the transcendentals that constitutes the human power to know.[109] Unlike Augustine, Bonaventure does not believe that the fall effaced the image of God on the intellect. For him, instead, the cognitive powers remain fully activated after the fall, such that God's existence never ceases to be self-evident to the intellect, through creatures, and in itself.[110] Since Bonaventure believes the image of God is immediately joined to God – or that the human cognitive powers are always fully actualized – for him to affirm that the fall did in fact ruin the *imago dei* would be tantamount to claiming that there is a defect in God. Such a claim would suggest that God Himself is somehow responsible for the human failure to see Him in the self, in creatures, and in Himself. But that cannot be the case.

Because the fall could not have been brought about by a defective intellect, Bonaventure concludes that it must have been caused by an impaired will.[111] Although the work of the intellect is always a collaborative effort on the part of God and a human being, the will is in the full possession of the human being. For this reason, God cannot be implicated in a fall

[107] Ibid.
[108] *Comm. in II Libr. Sent*, 22.1–2: on original sin.
[109] *Comm. in II Libr. Sent.* 30.2.2; cf. *brev.* 3.5.3, 3.11.3.
[110] *trin. qu.* 1.1.
[111] *brev.* 3.8.2.

of the will. That fall entails a refusal to act as though God is the efficient, exemplary, and final cause of the mind's work. The intellect guided by a faulty will behaves as if it is the source of its own potency; it works according to its own norms and for its own ends.[112] Rather than conforming to the divine rules, it reduces the principles of knowledge to its desires for particular things, preferring temporal goods to the eternal Good.[113]

Although this disorientation of the will does not abolish the intellect's ability to contuit, it renders the intellect ignorant of that ability, which is supposedly the reason why Anselm called the unbeliever a fool.[114] The disordered will restricts access to the *a priori* transcendentals that are impressed on higher reason such that lower reason cannot recognize the unmistakable fact that the whole world bears witness to the manifestly obvious existence of God. Assuming that the power to know is an actualized ability that is switched on or off depending on the disposition of the will, Bonaventure concludes that there are basically two classes of people: those like Francis who live in a state of primeval innocence and therefore have access to the knowledge of Being and implicitly all truth, and those that have been wholly overcome by sin and are not consequently trustworthy sources of knowledge for people of faith.[115]

This conclusion bears heavily on Bonaventure's understanding of the reason for Christ's Incarnation. Because Bonaventure does not believe that the image of God was ever effaced, he does not suppose that the Son of God's main reason for coming to earth was to enable human beings to recover it. Salvation from sin was only an incidental effect of Christ's Incarnation, the primary purpose of which was the completion of creation.[116] In His initial act of creation, Bonaventure recalls, the Son instantiated some of the ideas He received from the Father. By these means, He made the Father immediately present in the created order and destined all created beings for union with God.

According to Bonaventure, however, that destiny could not be completely realized until the Son actually united Himself with creation. Because human beings are the creatures through which God intended to draw all things to Himself, the Son joined His divine nature to a human as opposed to any other nature.[117] By "touching God with one hand and

[112] *brev*. 3.1.3.

[113] *itin*. 1.7.

[114] *Comm. in I Libr. Sent*. 8.1.1.2; *Comm. in II Libr. Sent*. 22.2.1; *brev*. 3.5ff.

[115] *brev*. 4.1.4.

[116] Hayes, "Incarnation and Creation in the Theology of St. Bonaventure," 309–29.

[117] *brev*. 4.1.2: on the hypostatic union.

humanity with the other,"[118] He finally realized the human capacity for union with God.[119]

When He returned to the Father after His life on earth, He brought the act through which He created humanity full circle.[120] In this way, He enabled human beings to complete the circle of creation for all other beings by relating those beings to their attendant exemplars in the mind of the Son.[121] Through His Incarnation, in summary, the Second Person of the Trinity took His place midway between creation and its Creator, reconciling those extremes and making it possible for human beings to do likewise.[122]

For Bonaventure, the most significant event in the earthly life of the Son was His crucifixion.[123] At His crucifixion, Christ made the sacrificial nature of the love of God that is shed abroad in creation most apparent.[124] At the same time, He modeled in the most poignant manner how He intended His followers to live, namely, in the self-abandonment of voluntary poverty and service to other beings. By willingly abandoning His own life, Christ corrected the self-centered tendencies of the fallen human will. That is to say, He affected the forgiveness of sins, albeit incidentally.[125]

According to Bonaventure, those who reorder their wills toward Christ and demonstrate that they have done so by expressing love as Christ did, through poverty, humility, and sacrifice, regain awareness of the *a priori* power of knowing, or the image of God, that allows for true and certain understanding of reality. In other words, they recover the capacity to maintain the proper hierarchical order of lower to higher that was overturned at the fall, or the ability to conduct a "full analysis" of created realities.[126] In the process, they reassume their rightful place at the center

[118] *Comm. in I Libr. Sent.* 37.1.3.1–2.

[119] In this, He realized through human persons the pre-disposition in matter for union with God, as Hellmann writes in *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 76.

[120] *brev.* 5.1.6.

[121] *Comm. in III Libr. Sent.* 1.2.2: Bonaventure concludes that the Incarnation makes for the perfection of the human and consequently for the perfection of the entire universe; cf. Hayes, *Hidden Center*, 18.

[122] *Comm. in III Libr. Sent.* 1.2.1–2; cf. Hellmann, *Divine and Created Order in Bonaventure's Theology*, 74–7.

[123] *brev.* 4.8–10.

[124] Elizabeth Dreyer, "A Condescending God: Bonaventure's Theology of the Cross," in *Cross in the Christian Tradition* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2000), 192–210.

[125] *Comm. in III Libr. Sent.* 1.2.2.

[126] *coll.* 3.12–21, 21.17; *itin.* 4.4; Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy* 164D, 165A.

of creation, setting themselves and all things on a trajectory for union with God.

Conforming to the Image of God

The upshot of the account of the ascent to God which Bonaventure gives in his *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* is precisely this: the greater the love the will has for God, the clearer the mind's vision of the things that manifest the Being of God; the clearer the vision of God, the closer the intellect comes to transcending itself in converging with the God whose nature is fundamentally Love. Bonaventure composed this famous treatise in 1259: two years into his term as Minister General of the Franciscan order and so far enough along in it to realize the challenges inherent in his role as the order's leader. In an effort to find some peace and the wisdom needed to reckon with those challenges, Bonaventure had retreated to Mount Alverna, the site of Francis' famous vision of a fiery six-winged seraph nailed to a cross and of his subsequent stigmatization.[127]

On returning from Alverna, Bonaventure wrote the *Itinerarium*, which is generally supposed to provide the last and best medieval account of conformity to God or the ascent to Him that Augustine outlines in a number of his works, above all *De Trinitate*.[128] In this section, I will argue that Bonaventure actually codifies an altogether innovative idea of Christ-likeness in his treatise. This idea was not only consistent with Francis' personal experience, but it further transformed that experience into a normative standard, trumping the arguments of the spirituals and university masters in opposition to Franciscan intellectual pursuits in the process. My contention, consequently, is that the *Itinerarium* is not the last great text in the Augustinian tradition, but a *locus classicus* of the new Franciscan intellectual tradition.

[127] *itin.* Prologue 1.

[128] Those who argue this include: Stephen Barbone, "St. Bonaventure's Journey into God," *Franciscanum* 38:112 (1996), 57–65; S.F. Brown, "Reflections on the Structural Sources of Bonaventure's *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*," in *Medieval Philosophy and Modern Times* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), 1–16; Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 76; Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 73; Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 87–90; Giulio D'Onofrio, *History of Theology: The Middle Ages* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2008), 330; Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 441; Turner, *The Darkness of God*, 102; Frederick Van Fleteren, "The Ascent of the Soul in the Augustinian Tradition," in *Paradigms in Medieval Thought: Applications in Medieval Disciplines*, ed. Nancy van Deusen (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1990), 93–110.

In its opening, Bonaventure relates that while he was praying on Alverna, he suddenly realized that the seraphic vision Francis had on that mountain illustrated how others could attain a similar vision.[129] In biblical and mystical literature, the seraphim represent the order of angels that is capable of approaching God without intermediaries and of elevating human beings to the same position.[130] In Bonaventure's account, the three pairs of wings affixed to the seraph stand for the three routes through which an ascent to God can be made, namely, through the knowledge of the *exterior* world, signified by the pair of wings pointing downwards; through the image of God that is *interior* to the mind and represented by the wings folded across the chest; and through the contemplation of the *superior* God Himself, which is indicated by a pair of wings pointing upwards.[131]

To Bonaventure, the fiery appearance and cruciform posture of the seraph suggest that a love for Christ that is like Christ's love and therefore sacrificial is what opens up the way to these three forms of knowledge. Borrowing the Dionysian scheme of purgation, illumination, and union, he argues that the heat of love purges the mind of its ignorance of itself as an image of God, transforming it into a true likeness of God.[132] More specifically, the heat of love "cleanses and polishes" the mind, reinstating awareness of the intellect's intuitive knowledge of Being and the transcendentals: the understanding that lays the foundation for all further knowledge of beings, the self as an image of the divine Being, and the Being in its own right. To summarize, the re-orientation of the will by love restores the intellect's primeval holiness and at the same time, its access to the eternal reasons that "are beyond error, doubt, and judgment."[133]

Inasmuch as intellectual holiness reinstates access to the rules that lend meaning to all things and lay the foundation for all true and certain understanding, it is essential to transforming mere "scientific" knowledge into infallible wisdom; in fact, it gives the mind an "immediate disposition

[129] *itin*. Prologue 2.

[130] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy* 200D-208C; 300B-305C; cf. *coll*. 8.12.

[131] *itin*. Prologue 3. Before Bonaventure, both Dionysius and Richard had used the seraph to symbolize the mind's transcendence of the realm of knowledge and attainment of the Love of God. See Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy* 205A-305C; Richard of St. Victor, *The Mystical Ark*, trans. Grover A. Zinn (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1979).

[132] On likeness, see *Comm. in II Libr. Sent*. 16.2.3; on purgation, illumination, and union, see *itin*. 4.3–4, *brev*. 5.1.2; cf. Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names* 696B; *The Celestial Hierarchy* 165C.

[133] *coll*. 2.2.10.

towards wisdom."[134] Since holiness can only be instilled by a love for Christ that is expressed in a distinctly Franciscan way, the implication is that the Franciscan lifestyle is the condition of possibility of any genuine intellectual achievement.[135]

Once the mind has undergone initial purgation through that love, Bonaventure proceeds to affirm that it can be illumined with the knowledge of God in the three ways that unfold from the intuitive knowledge of His Being and can therefore find him wherever it turns to look, namely inside, outside, or above itself.[136] In the first two chapters of the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure discusses the way the pure in heart are illumined with the knowledge of God through vestiges, or through the experience of empirical objects. Because the existence of such finite beings presupposes the existence of an infinite Being, the divine cause cannot help but be known through His effects.[137] On the basis of the contention that this Being is the first object of the intellect, Bonaventure concludes that the mind is bound to see that creatures bear witness to the existence and nature God.[138]

Although Bonaventure treats the "cosmological" way to God first, in keeping with the usual ordering of things from sensible to intellectual, he indicates in the prologue to the *Itinerarium* that an interior realization of the mind's innate powers actually precedes the knowledge of exterior reality. By "turning inwards," he relates, the mind "remembers, understands, and loves" itself in the manner Augustine allegedly encouraged.[139] In doing so, he elaborates in chapters three and four, the mind remembers that it is innately impressed with the knowledge of Being, or the image of God, which makes His existence self-evident to the mind.[140]

Insofar as the discovery of God within reinstates awareness of the *a priori* rules of judgment, it enables the mind to grasp the true meaning of all things. More specifically, the intuitive connection with God makes it possible to succeed in the study of any and all of the branches of knowledge.[141] Since the meaning of the objects studied in

[134] *coll.* 2.2.6, 19; LaNave, *Through Holiness to Wisdom*, 71.

[135] *coll.* 19.3.

[136] Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 115; Hayes, *Hidden Center*, 47: both authors affirm that the three proofs unfold from the first proof, from interiority, and that the three ways to God outlined in the *itin.* correspond to the three proofs discussed in *trin. qu.*

[137] *itin.* 1.3.

[138] *itin.* 2.7–8.

[139] *itin.* 3.1.

[140] *itin.* 3.2.

[141] *itin.* 3.6–7.

those disciplines can only be found in the ideas that are in the mind of Christ, Christ is at the center of each one of those disciplines. In affirming this, Bonaventure makes his first polemically-motivated attempt to bring his Christocentric perspective to bear in his assessment of scholarly pursuits.

Later on in his career, he would extrapolate the implications of his Christocentric outlook even further in the process of mounting an attack on a group of radical Averroist Aristotelians who became influential in the University of Paris in the 1260s.[142] These radicals adhered to a theory of "double truth" according to which there are separate and incommensurable truths of reason and truths of faith. While the radicals believed the truths of reason could be philosophically verified, they denied that this was true in the case of the truths of faith, which they regarded as inherently inferior.

In opposing this line of argument, Bonaventure recalls his belief that the ideal forms and thus the meaning of all things is to be found in Christ. On the basis of his exemplarist outlook, he infers that those who fail to acknowledge Christ are "unable to achieve true understanding."[143] They are hopelessly prone to err.[144] While Aquinas believed that philosophers can come to some valid philosophical conclusions even if they remain unaware of the divine source and end of the objects they evaluate, Bonaventure insists that the ability to gain true and certain understanding of reality is "the privilege of the highest contemplatives, not of natural philosophers."[145] For him, the relationship of philosophy to theology is not autonomous, as it was to a degree for Aquinas, but utterly heteronomous.[146]

When he refused to place confidence in human reason working apart from faith, Bonaventure supposedly contended in continuity with Augustine, who is generally believed to have been the first to insist that science must be validated by the rules of wisdom, that faith must precede

[142] Bonaventure responds to these in *coll.* particularly. This series of lectures he delivered at the university in 1273 has been described as his "summa on Christ the centre" (Delio, *Crucified Love*, 126). In these lectures, he explains most elaborately how Christ can and must be seen as the center of all lines of theological, philosophical, and practical inquiry (*coll.* 1.13; Hayes, "Christ: The Universal Center" in *Hidden Center*, 192–214).

[143] *coll.* 3.2.

[144] *coll.* 7.7.3.

[145] *coll.* 12.15.

[146] Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, ch. 2.

understanding.[147] Long before the controversy with the Averroists had even arisen, however, Bonaventure was already proffering these opinions, especially in the middle chapters of the *Itinerarium*.

In chapters five and six, Bonaventure goes on to account for the knowledge of God that can be achieved simply by analyzing the thought of God Himself. Since God is the Supreme Being, Bonaventure affirms that He is good without qualification: that than which no greater can be thought. Appealing to the "ontological" argument of Anselm's *Proslogion*, Bonaventure bolsters the contention that the existence of this Being is so certain in itself that it cannot be thought not to be, inasmuch as it is implicit in the mind's innate knowledge of Being.[148] Indeed, as the first object of the intellect, God is more intimately known by the mind than the mind is known by itself.[149]

As he draws this section to a close, Bonaventure explains his belief that the divine Being must be Triune, else He would not be able to diffuse Himself in the created order and make all things expressions of His love as He manifestly does. He further notes that the Triune nature of God is summed up in the Person of the Son, who fully revealed the poor, humble, and self-giving nature of God's love on the cross. The more people of faith commit themselves to loving Christ and to expressing love as He Himself did, through a life of poverty, humility, and self-abandonment, Bonaventure elaborates, the more easily they will see God through that which is exterior, interior, and superior to the mind.

Since the Being that is known in all three cases is the same, or univocal, and the Being is a God who is Love, Bonaventure affirms in the seventh and last chapter of his treatise that those who achieve perfection in loving God are eventually bound to be consumed by God's love, as Christ was when He was transported to the Father after His death.[150] Paradoxically, then, those who come to know the world so perfectly as a result of loving God so deeply ultimately abandon the world and knowledge of it altogether, achieving ecstatic union with divine

[147] Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 125; Bougerol, *Introduction*, 31; Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 23; Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 15; Scott Matthews, *Reason, Community, and Religious Tradition: Anselm's Argument and the Friars* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 115; Owens, "Faith, Ideas, Illumination, and Experience," 440–1; Ratzinger, *Theology of History*, 122.

[148] *itin.* 6.2.

[149] *coll.* 12.11.

[150] Hammond, "Order in the Itinerarium," 207: the author argues that the *itin.* presupposes the univocal interconnectedness of all beings.

love.[151] They ascend to God after descending in humility to the point of losing their lives completely in God.

Bonaventure concludes his treatise by noting that St. Francis of Assisi supremely modeled how to make this "ascent by descent."[152] Once the love of God had brought the "little poor man" to the point of achieving unbroken comprehension of and communion with creation, that knowledge of the ways in which God manifests His love brought about union with the Love that supersedes knowledge. It finally caused Francis to be fully conformed to Christ, visibly marked with His wounds, and transported to the Father as Christ was after His crucifixion. When he crossed over into ecstasy, Bonaventure states that the saint "invited all truly spiritual men to this kind of passing over and spiritual ecstasy."[153] In short, he showed the way to conform to God.[154]

In the *Legenda major*, which was written shortly after the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure gives an account of the progression of Francis' ministry that parallels the steps in the ascent to God he outlines in the *Itinerarium*.[155] Through these two texts taken together, he made a brilliant polemical move in terms of justifying the intellectual endeavors of Franciscans in the face of the university academics and conservative Franciscans.[156]

By describing love of a Franciscan sort as the key to obtaining knowledge – as Francis obtained knowledge – Bonaventure implied that the only appropriate context in which to undertake any sort of intellectual activity is the Franciscan one. On his account, knowledge that is not preceded and motivated by Franciscan love amounts to nothing.[157] This is especially true in view of the fact that the acquisition of genuine knowledge leads to the abandonment of knowledge and union with divine love.

Through such arguments, Bonaventure rendered the accusations of the university academics obsolete by implying that their own intellectual endeavours could not succeed apart from the Franciscan perspective. At

[151] *itin*. 7.1; see Ilia Delio,"The Role of the Crucified in Bonaventure's Doctrine of Mystical Union," *Studia Mystica* 19 (1998), 8–20; idem., *Crucified Love*.

[152] *itin*. 7.4–5. Delio, *Simply Bonaventure*, 130–40; also *passim* in *Crucified Love*.

[153] *itin*. 7.3.

[154] *The Life of St. Francis*; see also Ignatius C. Brady, "St. Bonaventure's Theology of the Imitation of Christ," in *Proceedings of the Seventh Centenary Celebration of the Death of St Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1975), 61–72.

[155] Delio, *Crucified Love*, 79.

[156] Cullen, *Bonaventure*, 19: "Bonaventure's work is understood as an attempt to institutionalize the primitive spirit and to preserve the peace of the order in the face of conflicts over learning and poverty."

[157] *itin*. Prologue 4, 7.5–6.

the same time, he demonstrated that studies have a crucial role to play in attaining the Franciscan goal of a spiritual experience like that of St. Francis.[158] By arguing that intellectual illumination is a necessary phase between purgation and union, Bonaventure dealt with the complaints of the conservative members of the Franciscan order. Those who opposed the intellectual life of the friars minor could have no rebuttal to these lines of contention, according to which a Franciscan perspective is required for the success of intellectual pursuits, and intellectual pursuits are required for the fulfillment of the Franciscan vision.

Divine Illumination

Throughout his writings, albeit in some more than others, Bonaventure illustrates cognition as he understands it by appealing to Augustine's account of divine illumination. In the fourth of his *Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi*, one of his key texts on illumination, Bonaventure writes that all human beings possess an innate "cognitive light," which is re-infused in higher reason by Christ when the will is converted to Him.[159]

This light, he states, is the knowledge of Being that "sends out three primary radiations:"[160] unity, truth, and goodness. Those rays shine without fail.[161] Like the ideas of the Son from whom they radiate, the rays or eternal reasons are "beyond error, doubt, and judgment."[162] For this reason, they create "immutability on the part of the object known and infallibility on the part of the knower,"[163] thus satisfying the conditions of possibility for certitude in knowledge. Although the rays of light or eternal reasons are not the objects of knowledge themselves, they do serve as the lights by means of which the intellect evaluates reality (*lumen intelligendi*). That is to say, they help the mind strip created forms of superfluous attributes like time and place so as to uncover a "thing itself" inasmuch as it compares with a form that subsists in the mind of Christ.[164]

[158] *itin.* 4.5.

[159] *s. C. qu.* 4; *coll.* 3.3.14: on the innate and infused cognitive capacity.

[160] *coll.* 4.4.2, 4.4.5.

[161] *coll.* 4.4.1.

[162] *coll.* 2.2.10.

[163] *s. C. qu.* 4.

[164] *coll.* 11.13: God is the light of understanding (*lumen intelligendi*); cf. *C. Mag.*; Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 97.

Because the *a priori* knowledge of the eternal reasons that is given by Christ is necessary to come to the "perfect" understanding of realities that Christ Himself possesses, Bonaventure concludes that the mind must cooperate with its "inner master," Christ, in every one of its acts of knowing.[165] It is His light that supplements or concurs with the human cognitive light so that it can truly illumine reality. On account of the inner light of Christ, the mind can be directly illumined with the knowledge of God in the three main ways, namely, through an exterior light (*lumen exterius*); through an interior light (*lumen interius*); and through the superior light (*lumen superius*).[166]

Because the mind presupposes the divine Light in all its efforts to perceive reality by the light, Bonaventure concludes that "nothing can be understood at all unless God immediately illumines the subject of knowledge by means of the eternal divine truth."[167] Despite the fact that God Himself is beyond reach, Bonaventure indicates that He "is closer to the mind even than the mind is to itself."[168] Whenever the mind reflects on its powers, it cannot help but reflect on God. In the same instance, moreover, it cannot help but know God, for His Light shines forth in the mind "in a manner that cannot be stopped."[169] In shining forth by way of the transcendental concepts, that light renders the human subject the adequate foundation for all knowledge of realities outside, inside, and above itself.

In his *De reductione artium ad theologiam*, Bonaventure further develops this line of argument. There, he states that all illumination received through exterior and interior lights must be traced back or "reduced" to the superior light of sacred Scripture, which communicates the fullness of God's wisdom through the story of Christ's passion and crucifixion.[170] If the sciences through which the external world is studied (weaving, metalworking, architecture, agriculture, hunting, navigation, medicine, and drama)[171] and the philosophical lines of inquiry pursued by the intellect

[165] *C. Mag.* 7.

[166] Bonaventure, *De reductione atrium ad theologiam* (Florence: Quaracchi, 1938), 6. This text represents Bonaventure's mature and concise summary of the modes of illumination he had discussed in his earlier *Itinerarium* as well as in the *coll.*, according to Bougerol in his *Introduction*, 163.

[167] *s. C. qu.* 4.

[168] *coll.* 12.11.

[169] *coll.* 5.5.1; see also 4.4.1, 6.5.31.

[170] *red. art.* 5.

[171] *red. art.* 2.

(natural philosophy, rational philosophy, and moral philosophy)[172] are not evaluated in reference to the superior light, or the attendant forms in the mind of Christ, any inquiry into them will not result in wisdom. It will fail to illumine the true nature of the realities that are under consideration. If Christ is not given His place at the center of all areas of study, in summary, then study has no meaning whatsoever.[173] Those who pursue knowledge without love for Christ, consequently, are bound to do so in vain.

By contrast, those who love Christ and seek to discern how His love is made manifest in the world in undertaking various lines of inquiry are eventually bound to achieve the goal of all knowledge of reality, which is union with divine love. At this stage, Bonaventure writes, the intellect is blinded by the

> supreme illumination that occurs in the loftiest part of the mind, beyond the range of investigation of the human intellect. Here the intellect is in darkness, for it is unable to seek since the matter transcends every power of search. There is inaccessible obscurity which yet enlightens those minds that have rid themselves of idle research.[174]

At this climactic moment, Bonaventure writes, the intellect is finally "carried above every sense and every rational operation"[175] as it enters into "to the super-essential ray of the divine darkness."[176]

Bonaventure the Augustinian?

In this chapter, I set out to challenge the received view that Bonaventure is a genuine Augustinian with respect to the theory of knowledge by divine illumination. I traced the difference between Bonaventure and Augustine on illumination to a difference in their underlying theological assumptions. In this section, I will summarize what I take to be some of the major differences between the two thinkers.

As I have suggested, Bonaventure's first and foremost departure from Augustine concerns his decision to adopt a Victorine account of God's

[172] *red. art.* 4.
[173] *red. art.* 26.
[174] *coll.* 20.11.
[175] *coll.* 2.1.32
[176] *coll.* 20.11; cf. *itin.* 7.5.

Triune nature. This account both motivated and enabled him to explain creation in God's image in a new way. In Bonaventure's "essentialist" metaphysics, created forms are fully actualized; in short, they are immutable, fixed, perfect. For this reason, changes in a creature are said to be the result of changes in substantial form, per the doctrine of the plurality of substantial forms.

Inasmuch as created forms are fully actualized, they exist in the same mode of being as God. They are univocally related to Him; therefore, they are capable of disclosing some positive aspect of His Being. Although modern scholars have long assumed that Bonaventure derived his "metaphysics of exemplarity" from Augustine – and that Augustine, conversely, was also an essentialist metaphysician – the discussion I have undertaken suggests that an essentialist metaphysics did not come into wide circulation until Avicenna introduced it under the guise of an interpretation of Plato, which Franciscans adopted as an interpretation of Platonists more generally, and above all, Augustine.[177] What I have intimated is that Bonaventure's metaphysics differs markedly from that of Augustine, to say nothing of Plato – his use of Augustine's terminology of eternal reasons, vestiges, measure/number/weight, analogy, participation, and so on notwithstanding.[178]

In Augustine's metaphysics of participation, created beings are not instantiated in their fully actualized form as Bonaventure believes. In creatures, in short, essence does not equal existence. Instead, a creature must increasingly participate in the mode of existence or proper behaviors that are determined by its essence in order gradually to achieve the fullness of the essence. As it does this, the creature changes. Yet the changes it undergoes are not due to alterations in its fundamental form but to its

[177] Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 48, 60, 73, 76; Bougerol, *Introduction*, 32–3; Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 61; Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 44; Delio, *Simply Bonaventure* 57; idem., "Bonaventure's Metaphysics of the Good," 231; Jose de Vinck, "Two Aspects of the Rationes Seminales in the Writings of Bonaventure," in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274–1974*, vol. 3, 307–16. Gilson contends that Bonaventure's essentialist metaphysics and the various doctrines it entails, such as the plurality of substantial forms, and the conflation of existence and essence in creatures, precisely formulate Augustinian views; see *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 131 and *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 82 (creatures copies of divine ideas); 199 (essentialism); 207 (the immutability of the eternal reasons).

[178] Other scholars have recently observed that an essentialist reading of Augustine is not accurate: John Rist, "Augustine, Aristotelianism, and Aquinas," in *Aquinas the Augustinian* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 83–8. Luigi Gioia also challenges Gilson's essentialist reading of Augustine's ontology and advocates a participatory reading in *The Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate*, 260–9.

development into a single essential form. The changes, in other words, are not substantial but accidental. Although Bonaventure appears to espouse a very strong – essentialist – form of metaphysical realism in which created forms are fixed and finalized, the same cannot be said for Augustine and Plato, who apparently uphold a more "realistic realism" that allows for development in creaturely forms.

When Augustine speaks of creatures as radically distinct from God, he does so because He affirms that God always is what He is – His essence is His existence – while created forms are becoming what they were made to be. Because creatures exist in potency while God exists in act, there is nothing about His essence they can disclose. They are analogous to God not in the sense that they are positive, if finite, instances of some aspect of God, per Bonaventure, but because they exhibit a singularity of essence, which speaks to God's utter simplicity and thus to His unknowability. By considering creatures in view of the fact that they are "not God," the mind forms a perspective on them that is informed by the knowledge of the unknowable God. This perspective – this knowledge of God by analogy from creatures – teaches the mind to anticipate the positive knowledge of God, which, for Augustine, cannot as yet be obtained.

Since Bonaventure understands all of God's creations as completely actualized, he affirms that the powers of the human mind also exist in a state of full actuality. Because the mind so construed is essentially perfect in its capacity, it is competent to achieve perfection in knowledge, that is, to conceptually remove all determining factors such as place and time from the material instantiation of a form so as to view that form in total abstraction. Inasmuch as abstraction involves the removal of a form from all things material, Bonaventure concludes that the sense faculties are not needed for and in fact hinder abstractive efforts. For him, there is a sharp dichotomy between the senses and the intellect.

When the intellect strips an object of all sensible elements so as to behold the "thing itself," Bonaventure elaborates, it sees the thing as it compares exactly to an idea in the mind of God. It contuits a creature and its uncreated exemplar. On Bonaventure's account, the reason the mind is able to conduct such a "full analysis" of created realities is that God has impressed on it the *a priori* concept of Being. Through that concept, the Son of God cooperates with the human mind to ensure that the ideas that result from its efforts correspond to His. Because of Christ's extrinsic conditioning through the intuitive knowledge of the transcendentals – the image of God – the human mind is adequate to acquire accurate and absolutely certain understanding of all things.

In the relevant scholarship, Bonaventure's insistence on this divine concurrence is generally taken to be a sign of his agreement with Augustine, who often claims that human reason can do nothing without divine help and needs grace to sustain nature.[179] Normally, both Bonaventure and Augustine are believed to maintain a rather pessimistic view of the powers of human reason. For this reason, they are said to define the whole process of human reasoning in much the same way.[180] To support this contention, many point up Bonaventure's appeals to Augustine's psychological analogies, knowledge of the eternal reasons, higher/lower reason, illumination, and so on.[181]

Unlike Bonaventure, however, Augustine does not affirm the possibility of achieving totalized knowledge of realities at the outset of the act of knowing, largely because he does not conceive created forms, including the human mind, as fully actualized. Instead, Augustine envisions cognition as engagement in a unifying mode of thinking. In that mode of thinking, ideas about related realities are formed and re-formed through experience; owing to this on-going interplay of sense experience and intellection, there is no hint of dualism in his account.

For Augustine, moreover, the ability to think in unifying terms is an intrinsic gift from God. It is something that "flows in" from Him and can therefore be described as the by-product of His causal influence (*influencia*), not because He directly intervenes in human cognitive processes as Bonaventure supposes, but because He enables the mind to engage in cognition in the first place. Inasmuch as the mind actualizes the potential or power to know that God has given, it participates in the unifying mode of cognition that is characteristic of God Himself, and that results in the knowledge of God – now indirect, one day direct – such that the success of its efforts become indirectly attributable to Him.

While Augustine affirms that the mind was originally created to think in unifying terms – in ultimate terms of the existence of one God – he

[179] Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, vii–viii, 48, 110; Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 388; cf. Augustine, *De spiritu et littera* 52.30; 53.31, 54 for commentary on the Scriptural passages that state, "apart from Me you can do nothing" and "what have you that you have not received?"

[180] On Bonaventure's pessimism concerning the powers of human reason, see Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 32; Cullen, *Bonaventure*, ch. 2 on "Christian Wisdom," 23–35; Matthews, *Reason, Community, and Religious Tradition*, 115; Owens, "Faith, Ideas, Illumination, and Experience," 440–1; Ratzinger, *Theology of History*, 122.

[181] Gilson, *Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 395, 491; Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 92; Delio, *Crucified Love*, 47; idem., *Simply Bonaventure*, 71, 103.

acknowledges that the ability to do the latter was lost at the fall, when the image of God was effaced. Although he admits that the "pagan" philosophers cannot consequently think of reality in terms of the existence of the one true God, Augustine does not deny that they can still effectively employ the unifying cognitive capacity all human beings have, even if they do not recognize the source and end of the capacity and all the things examined with it. In spite of the fact that the philosophers do not always know *what* they know – the Triune God, or *how* they know it – through the Incarnation of God's Son, Augustine insists that they have the ability to grasp truth, which is ultimately God's Truth.[182]

For this reason, he contends that Christian thinkers can and should appropriate pagan formulations of truth that are conducive to articulating and advancing God's Truth.[183] By doing this, he argues, Christians not only achieve great insight into God's Truth, but they also gain a chance to engage pagan philosophers in conversations that could lead them to understand the sense in which the Triune, Incarnate God is the Truth that enacts all insights into the truth. By embracing the wisdom of the philosophers, which Augustine does not entirely discount as wisdom, or allowing faith in God to inform the appropriation of faithless reasoning, in summary, the bishop believes that the redemptive work of Christ can be carried forward.

Bonaventure's account of the fall led him to assume a rather different posture toward pagan philosophy. In his view, the image of God was not effaced at the fall. After the fall, the Being of God remains the first object of the intellect as ever. For this reason, human beings cannot help but continue to discern the clear evidence for His existence that is everywhere to be found. If philosophers fail to acknowledge the one true God, Bonaventure thinks this can only be because their disordered wills have made them ignorant of the knowledge of God that is impressed on "higher reason." As such ignorant fools, they have lost access to higher reason. In short, they have lost their capacity to know the truth or acquire wisdom. For this reason, their work, while salvageable to an extent, should be regarded with extreme scepticism, for it is hopelessly prone to errors.[184]

[182] Gioia, *Theological Epistemology of Augustine's De Trinitate*, 66; cf. Augustine, *conf.* 7.9.

[183] Augustine, *doct. chr.* 2.40.

[184] There has been a great deal of scholarly debate concerning Bonaventure's relationship to pagan philosophers, particularly Aristotle. Gilson contended that Bonaventure was a harsh critic of Aristotle from the start of his career. Some of Gilson's contemporaries, especially Fernand Van Steenberghen, argued that Bonaventure cited heavily from Aristotle and was fundamentally Aristotelian. Ratzinger tried to provide a more balanced perspective by

Although Augustine would never have denied that God objectively exists and that all things testify to His existence, he believed that the problem was precisely that human beings had lost the subjective awareness of God that makes it possible to discern the evidence for His existence. Only in faith does Augustine think God is restored to his rightful place as the concept that governs the intellect's operations. Even then, however, Augustine insists that the ability to evaluate creatures in the light of the knowledge of God must be practiced until the habit of doing it is reformed. The purpose of the psychological analogies he presented in his *De Trinitate* and the argument Anselm formulated in his *Proslogion* was to retrain readers to think of things in terms of the faith in God that is indicative of a desire to know Him and thus of love for Him.

Although Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* is usually placed at the end of a line of such traditional Augustinian works, which outline the process of conforming to the image of God or ascending to Him, this classification seems inaccurate, insofar as Bonaventure operates on the assumption that the knowledge of God was never lost, such that His image need not be recovered through a gradual process of re-conforming to the image, or Christ.

For Bonaventure, likeness to Christ is not a matter of the cooperation of the intellect and the will, as it was for Augustine, but primarily a matter of the will.[185] A will to love Christ, which is demonstrated through self-abandoning acts of love like Christ's and thus through a life of poverty

distinguishing between the moderate critique of Aristotle Bonaventure presents in his earlier writings – which did not prevent him from invoking Aristotle when doing so did not undermine any principles of faith – and the scathing criticism of the radical Averroist Aristotelians he makes at the end of his career. For details see Ratzinger, *Theology of History*, 119–58; Robert J. Roch, "The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure: A Controversy," *Franciscan Studies* 19 (1959), 209–26; Robert, "Le probleme de la philosophie Bonaventurienne," *Laval Theologique et Philosophique* 6 (1950), 145–63; Hendrikus van der Laan, O.F.M., "The Idea of Christian Philosophy in Bonaventure's *Collationes in Hexaemeron*," in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274–1974*, vol. 3, 39–56. One point that seems to get overlooked by all involved in the discussion is that, in the instances where Bonaventure invokes Aristotle, it is not necessarily the case that he is advocating Aristotle. In fact it is more likely that he is following the scholarly trend of drawing on Aristotle in an effort to bolster his own philosophical perspective, which arguably entails an Avicennian reading of Aristotle.

[185] Many scholars believe Bonaventure's voluntarism is a sign of Augustine's influence on him: Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 41; Ewert H. Cousins O.F.M., "God as Dynamic in Bonaventure and Contemporary Thought," in *American Catholic Philosophical Association* 48 (1974), 136–48; Ilia Delio, "Revisiting the Franciscan Doctrine of Christ," *Theological Studies* 64 (2003), 13; Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 238; Clement O'Donnell O.F.M., "Voluntarism in Franciscan Philosophy," *Franciscan Studies* 23:4 (1942), 397–410.

and humility, reawakens the mind to the image of God that was always there. It raises awareness of the intuitive knowledge of Being, which constitutes its fully actualized power to understand infallibly the divine Being as it is manifested inside, outside, and above the mind itself.[186] When the mind discovers itself as the perfectly adequate foundation for all knowledge – when it "turns inwards" to realize what it is and what it has in its innate knowledge of Being – Bonaventure argues that it immediately gains recourse to an *a priori* proof for the being of God such as Anselm supposedly propounded. It realizes the self-evidence of God's existence.

In affirming that the mind only needs to make a subjective turn in order to find God along with the power to know all things, or in promoting "interiority," Bonaventure is generally believed to continue a spiritual tradition that was founded by Augustine and Anselm, who maintained what Thomas Aquinas purportedly denied, namely, that the existence of God is self-evident.[187] The account of Augustine and Anselm I have given, however, suggests that these two thinkers did not conceive God's existence as self-evident. In point of fact, they affirmed that the constant knowledge of God is just what was lost at the fall and must subsequently be gradually recovered.

If Augustine in particular encouraged interiority, it was part of his effort to promote the recovery of the image, rather than to explain how the mind gains instant access to a fully actualized image or cognitive power. Augustine has often been accused of instigating such a proto-Cartesian "turn to the subject" in which the mind finds itself to be the perfect source of its cognitive powers and norms; in doing this, Augustine supposedly promoted a proto-modern individualism. Although it is true that Bonaventure's *Franciscan* Augustine encouraged his readers to reflect on themselves as images of God, which are instilled with a fully actualized

[186] Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 48, 114; Bonaventure's three ways to God do not represent three levels of ascent. They are all at once accessible on the conversion of the will. They do not provide a demonstration but sum up what is eminently knowable. Cousins says something similar in *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 78–9.

[187] Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 37ff; Bougerol, *Introduction*, 35–6; Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 114; Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 4, 45, 120; Doyle, "The Distintegration of Divine Illumination Theory," 12; Gilson, *Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, 121ff.; idem., *Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine*, 21, 41–2: on the difference between Augustinian and Thomist proofs; Hayes, introduction to *trin. qu.*, 69; R.E. Houser, "Bonaventure's Three-Fold Way to God," 91–145; Mathias, "Bonaventurian Ways to God through Reason," *Franciscan Studies* 36 (1976), 192–232; idem., "Bonaventurian Ways to God through Reason (continued)," *Franciscan Studies* 37 (1977), 153–206; Matthews, *Reason, Community, and Religious Tradition*, ch. 4; Pegis, "The Bonaventurian Way to God."

power to comprehend all things, the arguments I have presented suggest that the beginnings of a subjective turn cannot be identified in the thought of Augustine himself.[188]

For Bonaventure, as I have indicated, such a subjective turn can only by made by those who love as Christ loved, humbly and sacrificially. To the extent that human beings love Christ, they regain their powers to make definitive sense of all things: beings, human beings, and the divine being. Where Augustine and Anselm envisioned the mind's journey toward God as a gradual one, Bonaventure claims that the mind accesses three immediate routes to God as soon as the will is abandoned to Christ.[189] Put differently, the mind achieves its goal as soon as the heart is in the right place.

Since the Being known by the three routes is ultimately the Being of God, which is love, Bonaventure concludes that the one who is truly consumed with love for Christ is bound to transcend the realm of knowable entities in an ultimate experience of self-abandonment that entails ecstatic union with the love of God. To reach this stage is to become a perfect likeness of Christ, who lovingly sacrificed His life on the cross, only to be returned to the loving bosom of the Father.

This conception of the apex of the ascent to God stands in striking contrast to that of Augustine, for whom human "transcendence" in this life does not entail a literal leap beyond the realm of reason, much less the obliteration of the self, but the attainment of an overarching perspective that makes it possible to see the proper place of all things in the created realm. The prerequisite for this achievement is of course the gradual recovery of the self through the restoration of the image of God. In Augustine's thought, in summary, the climax of the ascent does not result in the rejection of the world but the ability to see it clearly for the first time.

Although Bonaventure frequently appeals to Augustine and Anselm in giving his account of how to reach the height of likeness to Christ, his understanding of this issue does not seem consistent with one that is genuinely Augustinian. While conforming to Christ is a gradual process that involves the cooperation of the intellect and the will for truly Augustinian thinkers, it is neither a gradual nor a cooperative effort for Bonaventure. For the love of God that the will initially exhibits at its conversion is not based on reasons nor can it be if it is to be considered

[188] Bonaventure's emphasis on interiority is generally taken as a sign of his indebtedness to Augustine. See Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, 84, 125; Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 45; idem., "St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, and the Movement of Thought in the Thirteenth Century," 6–15; Hayes, *Hidden Center*, 218.

[189] Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites*, 79; Hayes, *Hidden Center*, 47.

genuine. Paradoxically, however, that love opens the door to knowledge of all the things that manifest God's love – knowledge that ironically propels a person beyond the realm of knowledge to a full encounter with the Love that is not a matter of knowledge. For Bonaventure, it seems clear, knowledge and love are not a mutually inclusive pair but something more like preclusive extremes.

The polemical motivation for construing things in this way becomes fairly obvious when the relevant historical factors are taken into consideration. By giving love absolute priority over knowledge – and defining knowledge itself in an absolute or totalized sense – Bonaventure accounted for Francis' experiences of God and reality. Furthermore, he did so in a way that construed the Franciscan outlook as the condition of possibility of all true and certain knowledge, even while establishing the acquisition of knowledge as a catalyst for the attainment of the ultimate Franciscan goal of ecstatic union with the love of God. By this route, he simultaneously silenced the protests of both the spiritual Franciscans and the university masters. Even if his opponents persisted with their complaints concerning the Franciscan involvement in academic life, they could not question the authority of Augustine, Anselm, and Pseudo-Dionysius, all of whom Bonaventure had enlisted in the service of St. Francis for the purpose of perpetuating his vision and putting it in a position to prevail.

Although there are numerous noteworthy differences between Bonaventure and Augustine when it comes to defining what is involved in imitating Christ or knowing like Him, Bonaventure nevertheless appeals to Augustine's theory of illumination to illustrate his overall understanding of knowledge. For Bonaventure, illumination is a metaphor for Christ's gift of the transcendental concepts, which render the human subject fit to represent all realities with perfect accuracy and certitude. Although Bonaventure probably did not entertain any sceptical doubts as to the possibility of obtaining certainty in knowledge, he places a new emphasis on the representational accuracy and certitude of ideas and on the all-sufficiency of the knower, whose sufficiency comes from God, as part of his polemical effort to delineate the conditions of possibility of knowledge in a way that would only allow for obtaining genuine knowledge in a Franciscan context.[190]

[190] See Carpenter, *Theology as the Road to Holiness*, 81; Crowley, "Illumination and Certitude," 431–48; Gendreau, "The Quest for Certainty in Bonaventure," 104–227; Hayes' introduction to *s. C. qu*, 55–9; Hurley, "Illumination According to St. Bonaventure," 389; John F. Quinn, "Certitude of Reason and Faith in St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas," in *Saint Thomas Aquinas 1274–1974* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 105–40.

Inasmuch as human acts of cognition are supervised by the innate concepts through which Christ directly guides the mind to form true and certain ideas about reality, illumination is an extrinsic influence that enters into all human knowing: it imparts the cognitive capacity, which is constituted by the intuition of Being; it supervises the process of cognition and thereby helps to generate the content of cognition, acting as the final guarantor of cognitive certitude. Apart from this all-pervasive superadded grace, the mind would be unable to perform its "natural" operations. For Augustine, by contrast, the gift of the natural cognitive capacity is the sign of divine grace or illumination. Nothing need be super-added to it. Inasmuch as the mind employs its capacity at its own initiative for its originally intended purpose to illumine God, it knows by divine illumination. By this account, that illumination which is the source of the cognitive capacity enters into all the other aspects of cognition as well, not because God intervenes in the use of the capacity per Bonaventure but because He bestows it and enables its proper use in the first place. While Bonaventure's theory of illumination has been projected on to the works of Augustine for quite some time, the analysis of this chapter establishes that the ideas about knowledge by illumination that the two theologians entertain diverge rather widely.

Although Bonaventure's use of so much of Augustine's phraseology has made his intellectual departure from the latter difficult to discern in the past, I have tried to obviate the difference between Augustine and Bonaventure's Franciscan Augustine by tracing that difference to its source in varying presuppositions concerning the nature of God, His image, and conformity to His image after the fall – which is illustrated by illumination. This effort has thrown the disparity into relief on a number of levels. To sum up: it has revealed that Bonaventure preferred an essentialist metaphysics to Augustine's metaphysics of participation; a theory of knowledge by correspondence and the dualism and concern for cognitive certitude that accompany such a theory to Augustine's more discursive explanation of human reasoning (which is indicative of a major shift in the working concept of the nature of knowledge); a *concursus* over an *influentia* model of divine causality (which suggests a shift in the understanding of the conditions that make knowledge possible); a voluntarist notion of conformity to Christ over one in which conforming is a gradual process of recovering the image of God through the cooperation of the intellect and the will.

While I have attempted to distinguish Bonaventure from Augustine in these and other ways, I should note that my intention in doing this has not been to imply that Bonaventure was wrong to invoke Augustine

in bolstering views that were not genuinely Augustinian. Indeed he is not culpable in this, inasmuch as he was simply advancing his own arguments in keeping with the standard practice at his time, namely, by making appeals to authorities associated with a cause with which he wished to align himself, in this case, the longstanding tradition of Christian spirituality.

Aside from this, I do not mean to suggest that there is anything problematic about Bonaventure's tendency to think differently from Augustine on the theological and philosophical levels. Bonaventure had his own intellectual tasks to accomplish: he was constrained to formulate a philosophy that translated Francis of Assisi's experience into conceptual categories and to do so in a way that would establish the intellectual legitimacy of Francis' vision. As Bonaventure attempted to do this, he developed an account of God, reality, and human knowledge that had important, if not entirely Augustinian, emphases.

For example, he called attention with his univocal theory of Being to the significance of every creature, great or small, and to the ability all things have to testify to the truth of God. He stressed how crucial it is to maintain an intimate personal connection with God by positing the intuitive knowledge of Being and developing an ontological proof for God's existence. He rightly noted that knowledge amounts to nothing if it is accumulated in pride rather than in a desire to serve God and others. Actions, after all, speak louder than words, as Francis suggested when he instructed his followers to "preach the gospel at all times, and use words only if necessary."[191]

In ways like these, Bonaventure articulated a philosophy that gave expression to Franciscan values and promoted the distinctly Franciscan style of life and service. Although his emphases were not the same as Augustine's, they allowed him to enable the friars minor to answer Christ's call to love and serve others, as Francis had understood it. By highlighting the non-Augustinian character of Bonaventure's thought, I have aimed to underscore and show appreciation for the uniqueness of the Franciscan vision even while completing the preliminary work involved in identifying the cause of the decline of divine illumination theory in the work of Bonaventure's immediate Franciscan successors.

[191] Hayes, *Hidden Center*, 48.

5

Aquinas (AD 1225–74)

Introduction

If Bonaventure is not *the* late medieval representative of Augustine's tradition, then one may wonder: who is? In this chapter, I submit that the thirteenth-century proponent *par excellence* of Augustine's illumination theory is Bonaventure's Dominican counterpart, Thomas Aquinas. I will argue this on the grounds that Aquinas upholds a fundamentally Augustinian doctrine of God in his many writings, although the present discussion is limited to his *Summa Theologiae*.[1] More specifically, I will demonstrate that

[1] Those who show that Aquinas' doctrine of God is consistent with Augustine's include: Gilles Emery O.P., *The Trinitarian Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Francesca Aran Murphy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Russell L. Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Theology from Aquinas to Ockham* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7; Bruce D. Marshall, "Aquinas the Augustinian? On the Uses of Augustine in Aquinas' Trinitarian Theology," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, ed. Michael Dauphinais, Barry David, and Matthew Levering (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 41–99; Timothy L. Smith, *Thomas Aquinas' Trinitarian Theology: A Study in Theological Method* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003). Scholars who argue that Aquinas' doctrine of the *imago dei* is compatible with Augustine's include: D. Juvenal Merriel, *To the Image of the Trinity: A Study in the Development of Aquinas' Teaching* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990); John P. O'Callaghan, "*Imago Dei*: A Test Case for St. Thomas' Augustinianism," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, 100–44; Jean-Pierre Torrell O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 2: *Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 80–100.

Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge,
by Lydia Schumacher

Aquinas derives from his theological doctrine an account of what is involved in imaging God – or human knowing – and conforming to the image of God after the fall that is compatible with Augustine's, illustrating this account by invoking divine illumination. Although Aquinas draws on the work of Aristotle to say nothing of other authorities in giving an explanation of the process, I will suggest that he does so in the interest of translating Augustine's ideas about knowledge into the terms that would be most likely to capture the imagination of those working in the thirteenth-century intellectual context.[2]

By affirming all this, I implicitly challenge the longstanding assumption that Aquinas' philosophy is essentially Aristotelian, at the expense of being Augustinian. Since the late nineteenth century, scholars have tended to assume that Aquinas rejected Augustine's philosophy in favor of Aristotle's, indeed that those two philosophical systems are mutually exclusive. To bolster this idea, at least as it pertains to the topic of human knowledge, many scholars have highlighted Aquinas' arguments against illumination and *a priori* proofs for God's existence: the twin pillars of Augustine's thought on knowledge that Franciscan thinkers upheld.[3]

Scholars of St. Thomas have had an important polemical reason for pronouncing Aquinas a "pure" Aristotelian. The reason is that the rationalist

[2] Although Aquinas admittedly quotes Avicenna in various places, his thought does not evidence the influence of Avicenna in the same way as Bonaventure's does. As David Burrell notes in *Knowing the Unknowable God* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), Aquinas does not adopt but transforms the meaning of the popular terms and arguments he borrows from Avicenna. Furthermore, he turns increasingly critical of Avicenna's ideas over the course of his career.

[3] Effrem Bettoni, *Bonaventure*, trans. Angelus Gambateste (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), 14; F.C. Copleston, *A History of Medieval Philosophy* (London: Methuen and Co., 1972), 192–3; Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978), 2; Kent Emery, "The Image of God Deep in the Mind: The Continuity of Cognition according to Henry of Ghent," in *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), 59; Étienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L.K. Shook (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1957), 22; Edward P. Mahoney, "Sense, Intellect, and Imagination," *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 610; Gordon Leff, *The Dissolution of the Medieval Outlook: An Essay on Intellectual and Spiritual Change in the Fourteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 39; Timothy B. Noone, "The Franciscans and Epistemology: Reflections on the Roles of Bonaventure and Scotus," in *Medieval Masters*, ed. R.E. Houser (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1999), 63–90; Joseph Owens, "Faith, Ideas, Illumination, and Experience," in *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, 452–4; John Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptized* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 78.

philosophies that came to prevail in the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were posing a threat to the authority of the Catholic Christian faith, and Pope Leo XIII and his contemporaries believed that the resources Catholic theologians needed to defend the rationality of faith on grounds that rationalist philosophers would accept could be found in the writings of Aquinas. In his encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, the pope called Catholic scholars to renew their focus on the work of Aquinas in order to exploit it for contemporary apologetic ends.[4]

As a result of his summons, a body of scholarship soon emerged, which construed Aquinas as the ultimate, albeit Christian, rationalist. According to many Leonine Thomists, Aquinas regarded philosophy as an autonomous discipline with respect to theology.[5] By implication, he affirmed that human reason is fully competent to operate apart from faith – a conclusion Bonaventure would have roundly rejected – and even to demonstrate the existence of God from what is known in the natural order, that is, *a posteriori*.[6]

Since Aquinas supposedly did all this under the inspiration of Aristotle, he was constrained to be an Aristotelian at the cost of having any other intellectual allegiances, if he was to be the thinker certain Neo-Thomists needed him to be in order to ensure the success of their own efforts to squelch modern skepticism and relativism concerning religious faith.[7] Although a wide range of interpretations of Aquinas have been developed within and outside the Catholic tradition since *Aeterni Patris*, most of them have been based on the notion that Aquinas was fundamentally indebted to Aristotle and that this debt renders him something of a rationalist philosopher.

While some Catholic scholars developed interpretations of Aquinas that were exceptions to this general rule, their attempts to present non-standard readings were often frowned on if not condemned by Church

[4] Gerald McCool, *The NeoThomists* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994).

[5] Fergus Kerr, "Before Vatican II," in *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001), 1–16; idem., "Overcoming Epistemology," in *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 17–34; idem., and "A Different World: Neoscholasticism and its Discontents," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 8:2 (2006), 128–48.

[6] Kerr, "Prolegomena to Natural Theology," in *After Aquinas*, 35–51.

[7] Mark Jordan, *Rewritten Theology: Aquinas After His Readers* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 88: "Thomas' Aristotelianism means Thomas' availability for recent ecclesiastical projects of intellectual security. Aristotle means reason and Thomas means the church making use of reason."

authorities, at least until the Second Vatican Council.[8] By that time, however, Neo-Thomist presuppositions had already begun to be taken for granted within the broader academic context, especially amongst the philosophers of religion who make it their business to rationally establish the existence of God.

In recent decades, a number of scholars have called attention to the fact that Catholic theologians and their academic followers have failed to interpret faithfully Aquinas' work, including his *Summa Theologiae*. This voluminous treatise is divided into three major sections; the first includes Aquinas' account of God and creation in His image; the second treats morality and virtue, and the third covers the Incarnation of the Son and the sacraments.

On the mistaken assumption that the *Summa* is an extensive encyclopedia containing Aquinas' Aristotelian philosophical viewpoints together with his theological doctrines, many modern Thomists have supposed that they are justified in extracting the bits that are best suited to advancing their apologetic agenda, such as the section toward the beginning of part one where Aquinas unfurls his famous "five ways" to demonstrate the existence of God. At the cost of neglecting the second and third – moral and theological – parts of the work, many have exhibited a tendency to plunder the more philosophical part one for their own polemical purposes.

In disconnecting the major sections of the *Summa*, some recent writers have argued, numerous Neo-Thomists have overlooked the overall purpose of the work and consequently misconstrued the meaning of the specific passages to which they appealed, to say nothing of Aquinas'

[8] Étienne Gilson, for example, emphasized the Christian character of Aquinas' philosophy and his theistic proofs against those who described it as pre-theological, in his *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*. On this and other topics, he provided an interpretation of the nature of Aquinas' thought that is compatible on many levels with the one I espouse here. As an avid Neo-Thomist himself, however, Gilson continued to depict Aquinas' philosophy as fundamentally Aristotelian and as representative of a radical departure from the longstanding Augustinian intellectual tradition – a portrayal of Aquinas which runs counter to mine. Marie-Dominique Chenu O.P. challenged readings of Aquinas propounded by his Catholic contemporaries in works like *Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, trans. A.-M. Landrey O.P. and D. Hughes O.P. (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1950). On his contention, it is essential to attend to the context and actual content of Aquinas' works, which reveal his Augustinian theological and philosophical allegiances. Henri de Lubac advanced similar arguments, yet both Chenu and de Lubac were chastized, and even condemned, by the institutional Church. On this, see Kerr, "Marie-Dominique Chenu" (17–33), "Henri de Lubac" (67–86), and "After Vatican II" (203–21) in *Twentieth Century Catholic Theologians*.

relationship to authoritative sources. As Mark Jordan has stressed, the *Summa Theologiae* is not the kind of philosophical reference work that can be divided into parts. Rather, it is a single and continuous line of inquiry designed to train the exceptionally erudite Christian reader – the Dominican scholar – to turn every intellectual resource and circumstance into an opportunity to know and make known the greatness of God, that is, to achieve wisdom.[9]

By Aquinas' time, Jordan elaborates, the need for such a work had arisen within the Dominican order, where the treatises on preaching, philosophy, and Scripture that were employed in responding to all the intellectual challenges with which Dominicans were concerned had come to be considered in separation from the manuals they used to cultivate Christian virtues in their personal lives.[10] The idea behind the *Summa* was to give Dominican scholars the resources they needed to transform their ministry into a venue for personal spiritual growth and thereby overcome a growing bifurcation between work and prayer, reason and faith, that was contrary to the Dominican spirit itself.

Although the particulars of the situation in which the Dominicans found themselves differed from the circumstances of the readers of Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Anselm's *Monologion* and *Proslogion*, the nature of their need was more or less the same. While Aquinas' readers were "already familiar with Christian theology, its concepts and principles and the philosophy it presupposes, they stood in need of the intellectual habituation by which the … articles of faith became the foundation and cause of their thinking."[11] Furthermore, they needed to cultivate this habit in conversation with the scholarly issues, debates, and sources that were current at the time. To sum up, they needed to learn how to fully engage themselves – heart, soul, mind, and strength – in the effort to better understand and bear witness to their faith; they needed an outline of the process involved in conforming to the image of God, which involves learning to turn everything to His glory.

[9] Mark Jordan, "The *Summa's* Reform of Moral Teaching – and Its Failures," in *Contemplating Aquinas: On the Varieties of Interpretation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 41–54; idem., *Rewritten Theology*, 120; Matthew Lamb, "Wisdom Eschatology in Augustine and Aquinas," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, 258–76.

[10] Jordan, "The Summa's Reform of Moral Teaching," 43; idem., *Rewritten Theology*, 118; cf. Leonard Boyle, *The Setting of the Summa Theologiae of Saint Thomas* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1982).

[11] John I. Jenkins, *Knowledge and Faith in Thomas Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 5.

When Aquinas gives such an outline over the whole course of the *Summa*, Jordan points out, he does not restrict himself exclusively to Aristotle, but draws on a whole host of authorities, some explicitly, others implicitly, to achieve his intellectual ends – which were not necessarily those of his authorities.[12] As I have already suggested, Aquinas' ends were highly compatible with Augustine's, which should come as no surprise in light of the fact that Aquinas adopted Augustine's doctrine of God and the image of God.

Although the theological affinities between Augustine and Aquinas have long been acknowledged, the idea that those similarities also make for a great deal of philosophical continuity is now gaining recognition.[13] As scholars instigate new efforts to identify the variety of authoritative sources Aquinas relied on and his complex and nuanced ways of using them to give the most apt answers to the questions that confronted him, they are finding more and more that he uses his sources to update ideas which are basically consistent with Augustine's.

In this chapter, I will give an exposition of Aquinas' account of what is involved in reflecting the image of God – or knowing – on the basis of the presupposition that he adopts and elaborates a fundamentally Augustinian account of God's nature, pointing out when he incorporates Aristotle's psychology where relevant. Subsequently, I will explain my understanding of his view of the process of conforming to the image of God after the fall, as it is outlined in the *Summa*. Finally, I will demonstrate that, far from rejecting illumination, much less a traditional Augustinian conception of what is involved in "proving" or knowing God, Aquinas composed his *Summa* with the whole goal of fueling an increase in divine illumination, inasmuch as he wrote it with the intention of leading the reader through the process of conforming to the image of God.

[12] See Jordan, "Thomas' Alleged Aristotelianism," in *Rewritten Theology*, 60–88; idem., *The Alleged Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1992).

[13] For a discussion of some key contemporary scholars who discuss Aquinas' indebtedness to Augustine, see the introduction to *Aquinas the Augustinian*, especially p. xv. One scholar who has taken great care to detail areas of compatibility between the Augustinian, Anselmian, and Thomist systems is Jean-Pierre Torrell O.P. in his *Saint Thomas Aquinas*. Alasdair MacIntyre also presents important arguments in support of the claim that Aquinas used Aristotle for the sake of reformulating Augustine's views, especially on moral matters, in *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry: Encyclopedia, Genealogy, Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991).

Although his explanation of that process admittedly differs from the explanations of Augustine and Anselm in numerous respects, the discrepancies are normally in form and length. As such, they do not undermine Aquinas' intellectual fidelity to the Augustinian tradition but confirm his commitment to translating the basic principles of the tradition into terms that were more comprehensible in his own intellectual situation. By arguing all this, I aim to reinforce my claim as to what it means to work in continuity with Augustine. To do that is not necessarily to do exactly *what* Augustine did but to do *as* Augustine did. In the case of human knowledge, following Augustine means deriving an account of cognition from Augustinian theological assumptions and articulating that account in the current forms of philosophical argument.

As I show how Aquinas did just this, I also reinforce my contention – which runs counter to popular opinion – that Thomas rather than Bonaventure is the main champion of Augustine and his illumination account in the thirteenth century. In this, I achieve the overarching goal of this chapter, which is to throw the non-Augustinian character of Bonaventure's thought into relief, albeit by an indirect route. At the same time, I give a preliminary indication of the central place of illumination in Aquinas' thought and issue an implicit call for further research that does justice to it.

The Image of God

Aquinas is fairly emphatic about affirming that every human being bears the image of God.[14] On his account, the image consists in the mind or cognitive capacity to form ideas, that is, to abstract.[15] In a characteristically Aristotelian way, Aquinas affirms that intellectual abstraction must begin at the level of sense perception: that the "first objects" of the intellect are empirical rather than transcendental.[16] Once the five external senses have obtained their data, the internal sense or imagination forms images or phantasms of the objects under consideration.[17] Those phantasms are

[14] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 13 (1.90–102), trans. Edmund Hill O.P. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 1.93.4.

[15] *ST* 1.93.6.

[16] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 12 (1.84–9), trans. Paul T. Durbin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 1.84.6.

[17] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 11 (1.75–83), trans. Timothy Suttor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 1.78.3–4.

stored in the memory.[18] On the basis of multiple phantasms of similar things, the intellect forms an intelligible species or an idea that conceptually relates and unites those things.[19]

In virtue of this idea, Thomas writes that the objects in question take on an immaterial "existence" within the mind of the knower.[20] As this happens, an objective state of affairs is realized subjectively. By affirming this, incidentally, Aquinas prioritizes the objective world order over the knowing subject, by contrast to Bonaventure, who makes the mind the foundation for all knowledge; like a true pre-modern, he lays an emphasis on metaphysics rather than epistemology, after the manner of a proto-modern thinker.[21]

Once an idea has been formed, such that the objects implicit in it intellectually "exist" in the knower, Aquinas goes on to explain that it is impressed on the memory or "possible intellect," where it remains available to assist in further efforts to render experiences intelligible. Through experiences, the original species is revised and expanded to include more instances of the type of thing that the idea captures. In this way, the mind of the knower comes to encompass cognitively more and more of reality. Its ideas become increasingly precise and clear.[22]

For Aquinas, the gradual development of concepts is possible because the intellectual power is one that the human being *has*, per Aristotle, as opposed to something which the human being *is*, per Avicenna.[23] As a power, the intellect is the source of a potential gradually to actualize the essence of what it is to be human, which is to see different things in terms of one thing, namely, an idea, and ultimately, to form ideas in light of the idea of the existence of one God. To do this, for Aquinas, is to participate in God's unifying way of seeing all things in Himself.[24]

[18] *ST* 1.79.6.

[19] *ST* 1.85.1ff.

[20] Joseph Owens, "Aquinas on Cognition as Existence," in *Thomas and Bonaventure* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 74–85; cf. *ST* 1.84.2.

[21] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 27.

[22] *ST* 1.85.5.

[23] *ST* 1.79.1; implicitly here and explicitly elsewhere, Aquinas challenges the Franciscan notion that existence is a "property" that "happens to" an essence, favoring the view that a mode of existence is something which is dictated by an essence, where operation in that mode is what affects the actualization of the essence.

[24] *ST* 1.85.5. In contrast to Bonaventure, who argued that God has a distinct idea of every particular entity, Aquinas contends that God knows Himself as the one God, such that His "universal" knowledge precontains the knowledge of all particular things that exhibit unity, in the manner and to the degree that they exhibit it.

Inasmuch as Aquinas regards intellectual activity as an issue of progressive participation, abstraction is a matter of degree for him as well. It is not the all-or-nothing, immediate affair it was for Bonaventure, who equated the intellectual capacity with the essence of the human being and concluded on those grounds that the capacity is always actualized or equipped for the perfect and complete comprehension of its objects.[25] Because abstraction is an ongoing activity in which the mind's ideas are always being broadened, the three faculties that enact the possibility of forming ideas – sensation, imagination, and intellection – are in constant communication and cooperation for Aquinas. In this case, there is no hint of dualism, a point which is reinforced by Aquinas' claim that the soul is the form of the body.[26] The upshot of that argument is that human beings have one form or nature as opposed to a plurality of substantial forms.

For Aquinas, like Augustine, that singular nature, which is intellectual in human beings, entails embodiment. The implication here is that it is impossible for human beings to reason about the natural order in the way they were made to do apart from their embodiment; embodiment, conversely, is a permanent feature of human existence. The lives human beings presently lead in their bodies – what they do with their bodies – is what they will always do with them, even when their physical bodies are replaced with spiritual ones.[27] When Thomas affirms that "the soul is the form of the body" and denies the soul is one with its powers, consequently, he is simply using Aristotelian formulae to systematize an Augustinian idea about the nature of knowledge, even while his Franciscan contemporary Bonaventure utilized Augustinian formulae to support arguments to the contrary which were not genuinely Augustinian.

[25] See David Burrell, "Aquinas and Scotus: Contrary Patterns for Philosophical Theology" (91–112) and "Creation, Will, and Knowledge in Aquinas and Duns Scotus" (176–90) in *Faith and Freedom: An Interfaith Perspective* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004). The distinction Burrell draws between Aquinas' and Scotus' accounts of abstraction (and uses of Aristotle, p. 100) can also be applied to Aquinas and Bonaventure. Aquinas construes abstraction as an on-going process of discursive reasoning. In his account, there is room for gradual growth in understanding an object (94, 101). Scotus, by contrast, sees knowing as an act of capturing an essence taken absolutely (93). The mind does this by "universalizing the common nature which it finds in the real singular known by the senses in immediate potency to be universalized" (102). In this way, the mind forms thoughts that correspond exactly to their attendant realities (91, 183). In arguing along these lines, Burrell draws on Bernard Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967).

[26] *ST* 1.76.1–8.

[27] *ST* 1.89.5.

Proceeding past this point, Aquinas insists that the ability to form ideas about the natural order is one God gives to all embodied human beings – that it is natural. Furthermore, he argues that natural reason is capable of drawing conclusions about the principles of order or causes that underlie nature on the basis of knowledge of natural objects. Although such "transcendental" ideas are not intuited at the outset of cognition as Bonaventure supposed, Aquinas argues that human knowers can gradually become more intuitive as they learn to think of natural effects in terms of their higher causes, or as they begin to relate many things under one conceptual category in a more automatic manner.[28] In doing this, Aquinas states that they can go so far as to grasp that the natural order has one divine cause and end.

Undergirding this argument is Aquinas' distinction between truths that natural reason can obtain – such as the truth that there is a God who has ordered nature – and the truths that can only be revealed, for instance that God is Triune and Incarnate.[29] When Aquinas drew this distinction, many Neo-Thomist scholars have argued, he advocated a natural theology in which claims about God can supposedly be substantiated by unaided human reason. This was the sort of natural theology they felt they themselves needed to develop in order to bolster Christian claims in the hostile intellectual climate of modernity.

On closer examination, however, Aquinas clearly espoused no such theology.[30] When he speaks of the truths that natural reason can obtain apart from Christian revelation, for instance, he indicates that the truths he has in mind are truths that all monotheists – including Muslims, Jews, and philosophers like Aristotle who believed in a First Cause – would uphold, as opposed to truths that just anyone without faith would affirm.[31] While Aquinas allowed that all monotheists can conclude that a divine being is the source and end of reality and that the whole human purpose is to attain to that being, without the aid of Christian revelation and

[28] See Jan A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

[29] *ST* 1.1.1.

[30] Karl Barth famously criticized Aquinas for espousing natural theology. However, Eugene Rogers has shown that Barth's criticisms – which admittedly apply to many of the Neo-Thomist interpretations of Aquinas against which Barth was reacting – do not actually apply to Aquinas' own understanding of the way God can be known, which actually bears remarkable resemblance to Barth's understanding. See *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: Sacred Doctrine and the Natural Knowledge of God* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

[31] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 65.

therefore by way of natural reason, he still understood natural reason as operative within the context of some sort of religious faith.

By accepting that reason is competent to draw conclusions about the transcendent conditions of possibility for the way things are within reason's own sphere, Aquinas did not undermine the authority of Christian revelation, as Bonaventure implied that he did.[32] If anything, he created space for inter-religious dialogue and thereby made it possible for Christian thinkers to learn from other monotheistic philosophical accounts of the divine being, His creative work, and the process that is involved in knowing Him.[33] At the same time, he enabled them to show how the Christian doctrines of Trinity and Incarnation, which cannot be deduced by natural reason but only through revelation, are supremely plausible, inasmuch as they have the power to enact all true insights into the nature of God, His creative work, and what is involved in the process of knowing Him.

Although all monotheists would wish to argue that one God exists, for example, only the doctrine of the Trinity allows for a full explanation of the reasons why this is so, inasmuch as the involvement of three enacts the existence of the one. Where all would affirm that creation derives from God and that the purpose of human beings is to obtain Him, moreover, only the doctrine of Incarnation explains how the transcendent actually breaks into the immanent, such that those who inhabit the realm of things immanent can reach up to what is transcendent. By affirming the desire all monotheists have to give an account of God and the human purpose to know Him, in summary, Aquinas put himself in a position to demonstrate the sense in which Christian doctrines fully satisfy that desire.

In light of this, one can conclude that Thomas' theory of double truth, or of the truths accessible to natural reason and those available only through revelation, does not suggest that reason can operate just as well without faith in the Triune, Incarnate God, but acknowledges realistically that it does. At the same time, it makes a way for those that do reason with faith in the God of Christianity to show those who do not how that faith accounts for the possibility of all reasoning. In this, most importantly, Aquinas allows for the apologetic work that was and is the *raison d'etre* of the Dominican order.

[32] See Bonaventure's *coll.*

[33] Kerr, "The Varieties of Interpreting Aquinas," in *Contemplating Aquinas*, 33; Andrew Cunningham and Roger French, *Before Science: The Invention of the Friars' Natural Philosophy* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1996), 189.

Conforming to the Image of God

Although Aquinas affirms that all human beings are made in the image of the Triune God – that they have a natural cognitive capacity to think in unifying terms and that they can even use that capacity to reach the conclusion that there is one God – he readily acknowledges that not all are aware of their creation in God's image as a result of the fall. Furthermore, he recognizes that those who are aware of the image do not necessarily reflect it continually, which is what they were made to do. In other words, they do not always employ the spirit or mind they have been given through the Son in view of the all-surpassing greatness of God the Father, working for His purposes rather than their own.

As I have already suggested, the *Summa Theologiae* is a work which instructs its readers how to recover the image in a thorough and intellectually rigorous – distinctly Dominican – way. In the opening question of the work, Thomas reiterates his belief that reason cannot uncover the true identity of the supernatural source and end of the natural domain; that human beings naturally possess no knowledge of the Triune God.[34] Since they form their ideas or "species" on the basis of corporeal creatures, they have no species that suits them to grasping the divine.[35] Although abstraction stimulates the desire to know the one Being that unites all beings, it simultaneously frustrates the desire, insofar as it is impossible to abstract all the way to a God who is wholly other.

In view of these limitations, Aquinas acknowledges that human beings can only receive the species that reveals the Trinity, allowing for engagement in the "science of God" (*sacra doctrina*), through the revelation of the Incarnate Son.[36] When the intellect becomes receptive to Christ's grace through faith, it obtains the species it needs to know God. It becomes conscious of the fact that its natural desire to know why things are the way they are is a desire to know the God who has empowered all things to be what they are and who therefore implicitly permeates the activities of all created beings. To summarize, the intellect that is converted to Christ realizes that its inborn ability to see things in unifying

[34] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 1 (1.1), trans. Thomas Gilby O.P. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 1.1.1.

[35] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 3 (1.12–13), trans. Herbert McCabe O.P. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 1.12.4.

[36] *ST* 1.12.5

terms is ultimately an ability to see all things in terms of the species that discloses the one God; in brief, it is an ability to reflect the image of God.[37]

Aquinas then carefully distinguishes between two ways of knowing the species, one that is possible in this life, and one that is not. The former involves seeing the species itself and thus gazing upon the very essence of the Triune God.[38] This way of seeing is not open to human beings so long as they inhabit the natural realm, inasmuch as the first objects encountered there are creatures. Since every creature is bound to approximate its essence through participation in its proper mode of existence, that very mode of existence precludes the knowledge of the God whose essence is His existence.[39] According to Aquinas, the face-to-face vision of God is one that only God and the blessed can have.

Although human beings cannot gaze upon the divine species directly, Aquinas affirms that they can know it in still another way. In elucidating this point, he follows Aristotle in differentiating between two kinds of science, namely, the sciences that operate according to their own principles and those that operate in keeping with principles dictated by a higher science, which are therefore described as subalternate sciences.[40]

Aquinas speaks of the science or knowledge of God that can be enjoyed in this life (*sacra doctrina*) as one that is subalternate to the vision of God that God and the blessed possess.[41] Even though human beings cannot enjoy the vision of the Triune God, he states, they can indeed go about knowing all the things they can know on the basis of the belief that God knows Himself fully. Put differently, they may proceed to reason about reality with faith in the Triune God that Christ revealed.[42]

On Aquinas' account, sacred doctrine (*sacra doctrina*) is a two-fold line of inquiry that enables them to do just this. In the first place, sacred doctrine indicates what can and must be known about God's nature, for example that He is one being (simple) which is and knows all that is good (infinite, omnipresent, omniscient) all the time (eternal, immutable). In

[37] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 2 (1.2–11), trans. Timothy McDermott O.P. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2006), 1.8.1–2.

[38] *ST* 1.12.9.

[39] *ST* 1.12.12.

[40] *ST* 1.1.2; Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[41] Richard A. Lee, "Aquinas and Theology as Subalternate Science," in *Science, the Singular, and the Question of Theology* (New York: Palgrave: MacMillan, 2002), 33–58.

[42] *ST* 1.1.7.

giving this description of God, Aquinas' account of sacred doctrine resembles the theological account Augustine had given in the first half of his *De Trinitate* and Anselm in his *Monologion*.

On Aquinas' account, the knowledge of God's "formal features" (His simplicity and so on) is essential to bringing to bear the belief in what He can be affirmed to be, in assessing what He is not, to wit, created reality and all the lines of inquiry into it.[43] The second aspect of *sacra doctrina* involves explaining exactly how to go about this; it shows how to argue from the first principles of faith to explanations of the way things are in reality.[44]

Appropriating yet another distinction from Aristotle, Aquinas indicates that sacred doctrine in the first sense is a purely speculative science, whereas it is practical in the second.[45] So far as it is practical, sacred doctrine entails the same sort of inquiry Augustine undertook in the latter half of his treatise on the Trinity and that Anselm delineated in his *Proslogion*. In such an inquiry, sacred doctrine or the knowledge of God is not a properly constituted body of positive propositions so much as a way of perceiving the body of natural knowledge under a certain formality: the formality of faith in the Trinity.[46]

In giving the speculative account of the nature of the Triune God, Aquinas spells out a number of the formal features that make God "God." Chief amongst these is His simplicity, which entails that His essence is His existence, or that He always completely is the one thing that He is – although as Aquinas further explains, it is His Triune nature that enacts His unity.[47] What He is, Aquinas elaborates, is the ultimate good that embraces and generates and pre-contains all goods unceasingly.[48]

In speaking of God as simple, perfect, infinite, immutable, eternal, and so forth, Aquinas affirms all that can be positively affirmed of God; he

[43] Burrell gives a clear explanation of Aquinas' account of what he calls God's formal features in his chapter titled, "Distinguishing God from the World" in *Faith and Freedom,* 3–19.

[44] *ST* 1.1.2: on arguing from first principles of faith; cf. 1.1.8–9.

[45] *ST* 1.1.4; Rudi te Velde, *Aquinas on God* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006): the author notes on p. 21 that the distinction between speculative and practical is derived from Aristotle.

[46] Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 90; Rudi te Velde, "Understanding the *Scientia* of Faith: Reason and Faith in Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*" in *Contemplating Aquinas*, 68.

[47] *ST* 1.3.3–4, 1.27–43.

[48] *ST* 1.4–6: good and perfect; 1.7–8: infinite and omnipresent; 1.9–10: immutable and eternal.

articulates a cataphatic theology. In the same instance, he underlines the radical distinction between the divine Being and His creatures, which are totally unlike Him in their composite, finite, and temporal mode of existence.[49] By these means, he confirms that there is nothing positive about the essence of God that can be known by natural reason or through natural objects. In thinking and speaking of God, he suggests, human beings are limited to stating that God is characterized by certain features, which render Him wholly other to them.

As God is a "known unknown," Aquinas affirms that there is nothing self-evident about His existence. Although he allows that God's existence is self-evident in itself, such that it is undoubtedly evident to God, he denies that it is self-evident to those who reside in an order of natural objects that preclude the full manifestation of the supernatural God.[50] On the grounds that the knowledge of God is not *a priori*, Thomas rejects the reading of Anselm's argument, obviously Franciscan, according to which it is. In his view, an awareness of God as constant as the awareness of the world is not always maintained, but was lost at the fall and must therefore be regained.

Although initial faith reinstates God as the intellect's first object, that reinstatement is only a potential one that waits to be actualized as reason strives to make faith effective by forming a habit of evaluating reality in the light of belief in God. Only when this habit is formed is God actually restored as the mind's governing idea or first object.[51] Because the intellect does not already have an *a priori* intuition of God as the cause of all created effects, Aquinas concludes that the fact of His existence can only be inferred through efforts to interpret the effects in terms of their cause.[52] In other words, it is only possible to know God by viewing the things that are known, which are not God, in view of the belief in Him who is unknown.

On making this claim, Aquinas proceeds to delineate his famous five ways for demonstrating that God exists "from creatures," most of which are drawn from Aristotle.[53] The first way is the argument from motion, according to which whatever is in motion must have been put in motion by a first mover. The second is from efficient causality, or the idea that

[49] See Burrell, "Distinguishing God from the World" in *Faith and Freedom*, 3–19.

[50] *ST* 1.2.1.

[51] *ST* 1.88.3.

[52] *ST* 1.2.2.

[53] *ST* 1.2.3; see Aristotle, *Physics* 8.10.266a–267b and *Metaphysics* 12.7–8.1071b–1047b in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, as cited by Kerr in *After Aquinas*, 70.

no effect is its own cause. The third way is from possibility and necessity. According to Aquinas, all creatures are contingent. They did not have to exist; rather, they were brought into existence by a Being whose existence is in fact necessary.

The fourth way is found in the gradation of things. Among beings, Aquinas writes, there are greater and lesser goods. Since there are degrees of goodness, these grades must be included in and surpassed by the highest good, which is God. The fifth and final way has to do with final causality. All beings serve some purpose, Aquinas contends, which they do not determine for themselves. Consequently, there must be an intelligent Being by whom all natural things are directed to their end, and this is God.

Like Anselm's argument, Aquinas' five ways have been subjected to countless methods of interpretation.[54] Neo-Thomists of various types have tended to describe them as pre-theological proofs for God's existence, and this sort of interpretation is one many philosophers of religion have advanced.[55] More recently, scholars have started to stress that the purpose of the proofs must be interpreted in the context of the surrounding questions, overall structure, and authorial intent of the *Summa*.[56] These interpreters have come to the general conclusion that the five ways do not argue toward but presuppose God's existence. They are not proofs per se but ways to discover what it means to believe that God exists by considering the world in view of the fact that it depends on God. In sum, they are ways to render the belief that God exists intelligible to reason.[57]

[54] Kerr, "Ways of Reading the Five Ways," in *After Aquinas*, 52–72.

[55] See Kerr, "The Varieties of Interpreting Aquinas," in *Contemplating Aquinas*, 28ff. Kerr mentions a number of contemporary philosophers who espouse such a reading of Aquinas' proofs, including David Braine, *The Reality of Time and the Existence of God: The Project of Proving God's Existence* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988); Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993); Leo Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill, 1990); Anthony Kenny, *The Five Ways: St. Thomas Aquinas' Proofs for God's Existence* (London: Routledge, 2008); Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Theism in Aquinas' 'Summa contra gentiles I'*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2001); Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2005).

[56] Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 154; Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 56; te Velde, "Understanding the Scientia of Faith," 71.

[57] See Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 69; Eric L. Mascall, *He Who Is: A Study in Traditional Theism* (London: Longman Green, 1966), 80–2; te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 39; for related accounts of the five ways, consult Rogers' *Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth: Sacred Doctrine and the Natural Knowledge of God*; Timothy McDermott, *Introduction to the Summa Theologiae, vol. 2: Existence and the Nature of God* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1964); Lubor Velecky, *Aquinas' Five Arguments in the Summa Theologiae* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

In what follows, I want to push such interpretations further. I will do this by suggesting that Aquinas' five ways – like Augustine's psychological analogies and Anselm's argument – are the cognitive resources he prepared to help his readers form a habit of thinking of every single situation in light of the fact that God is ultimate, where thinking along these lines checks the human tendency to assume that circumstances have the power to make or break human happiness. The first way, for example, could conceivably be employed to reflect on how God has orchestrated a course of events in what has retrospectively proven to be for the best. The second might be used to give credit to God for any good one accomplishes, since He gives the ability to do good in the first place; the third could be invoked to thank God for the way the events in one's life have worked themselves out, in view of the fact that it is out of human hands to determine the future. The fourth teaches the mind to marvel at the manner in which God's unchanging goodness appears to increase as it improves at the art of thinking about things in light of His goodness, for this art enables the mind to find the good in all things. Finally, the fifth makes it possible to consider any object or situation in light of the fact that God has ordered it to accomplish something good.

When Aquinas' five ways are understood along these lines, they are far from an "exercise in rationalist apologetics,"[58] and much more like "the first lesson in Thomas' negative theology."[59] In other words, they are part of Aquinas' plan to teach his readers to allow the belief in the unknowable God to impact their outlook on all that that is knowable. Although such acts of knowing concerning things that are "not God" reveal nothing about the essence of God and only disclose the truth about creatures, there is still a sense in which God can be seen through them.[60] For when the intellect evaluates reality under the influence of faith in God's ultimate goodness, it forms a perspective on reality that is affected by faith. From that perspective, temporal objects and circumstances are not regarded as ultimate in the way that God alone is. Rather, they are seen for the finite goods that they are or can accomplish.

This holds true even in the case of difficult circumstances or differences in philosophical perspective. When the mind works in faith, such opposing forces are not thought to have the power to make or break human happiness; instead they are understood as occasions for discovering the

[58] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 58.

[59] Fergus Kerr, "Theology in Philosophy: Revisiting the Five Ways," *Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 50:1/3 (2001), 15–30.

[60] *ST* 1.12.12.

power of God to redeem all things for good. For Aquinas, in fact, there is nothing that cannot be redeemed by the mind. There is no situation where faith cannot be brought to bear on whatever reason assesses. Conversely, there is no way to reconcile reason and faith but to do so in one's own perspective on particular circumstances, so as to identify and testify to the efficacy of God in them.

By identifying the finite good in all that is and occurs – and making the best of challenges – reason allows itself to be affected by the faith in God it professes. As a result, it becomes able to discern the way all things work to the fulfilment of His good purposes – to see those effects in relation to the divine cause. While the knowledge of the effects that is generated by a mind affected by faith in their cause is not knowledge of the cause *per se*, it nonetheless affords an indirect understanding of the nature of the cause inasmuch as it is the by-product of belief in the existence of that cause.

By adhering to that belief and coming to see reality in accordance with it, Aquinas goes on to say that the mind is bound to find reasons through its experiences to describe God as just, wise, merciful, generous, and so on.[61] Like the thoughts that engender them, however, these "names of God" do not express what God is. After all, the only reason they are spoken of God is that things that are not God – natural objects and circumstances – have been evaluated in the light of faith.[62] Because the alleged names of God are not positively applicable to God, whose essence is ineffable, Aquinas affirms that they are better denied of God.[63] Although the so-called names of God are not properly predicated of God, Aquinas affirms that they apply analogously to Him inasmuch as they are used to describe experiences of Him that are obtained through temporal circumstances that have been evaluated under the formality of faith in Him.[64]

When those circumstances are assessed under the influence of the belief that God works all things for good, it becomes possible to see the ways in which goodness is being worked through them under the guise of justice and mercy and so on. Since the ability to discern justice and mercy is enacted by faith in God, justice and mercy are rightly associated with God even if the terms cannot refer directly to Him because the motive for their expression is the knowledge of natural realities. It remains the case that the only words that can be used to describe God positively are

[61] *ST* 1.13.1.
[62] *ST* 1.13.2.
[63] *ST* 1.13.3.
[64] *ST* 1.13.5.

the ones that confirm His complete inaccessibility to composite, finite, temporal creatures – the terms that indicate that He is one thing (simple), which is all that is good (infinite), all the time (eternal); that He so in virtue of the fact that He is Triune; and that this is knowable as a result of the Incarnation of the Son.[65]

The mind that adheres to the tenets of this cataphatic theology gains the tools it needs to engage in the negative or apophatic theological project that is of utmost concern to Aquinas, Anselm, and Augustine. This project involves knowing the unknowable God through what He is not by bringing the belief in His supreme goodness to bear in assessing reality. Through efforts to do this, experiences of reality become indirect experiences of Him; they become reasons to praise Him. So despite the fact that the thoughts that are formed about such experiences offer no full disclosure of God, and the names for Him such experiences evoke do not actually apply to Him but are engendered by a faithful perspective on the experiences, those thoughts and words allow one to see and speak of one's situation in a way that is consistent with the belief that God works all things according to His good purposes and thus to think and speak in real life circumstances in a way that glorifies God, which is what analogical predication, not to mention imaging God, is all about.

If the five ways to demonstrate God's existence are introduced for any one purpose, on my argument, it is to facilitate efforts to interpret temporal circumstances in terms of the divine cause. The objective of the ongoing use of the arguments is to make it a matter of habit for the mind to perceive the cause through the effects – to see the hand of God in everything.[66] While a preliminary notion of the cause is reinstated in faith, the effect of the fall, which was the loss of the continuous knowledge of God, is not overcome in the same instance. Instead, it must be gradually overcome until the divine being is restored to His proper position as the object the mind takes into initial and automatic consideration.

In catalyzing the cultivation of this habit, the five ways allow for the practical implementation of the speculative knowledge of the Triune God. They promote the constant vision of God through experiences in the world, which presupposes the abandonment of the fallen assumption that anything in the world including the self is as important as God. Following the five ways, therefore, trains the intellect to operate in a manner that is consistent with belief in the existence of a God who is infinite, eternal, omnipresent, and so on. By these means, the ways ready the eyes of the

[65] *ST* 1.13.12.
[66] *ST* 1.12.7.

mind to see Him in Himself: to gaze upon the essence. To sum up, the five ways help to bring about greater conformity to or a steadier reflection of the image of God that anticipates the beatific encounter with His Reality.[67] They habituate the human person to glorify God in all things so as to be ready to glorify Him for eternity – and to do so in keeping with the habits of thinking and acting that were formed during life in the natural order.[68]

From the account of imaging God he offers at the end of the first part of his *Summa*, Aquinas turns to the second part, which covers the topics of moral order and Christian virtue. The ordering of these three parts is not inconsequential. By following his treatise on the transformation of the mind with a treatise on virtue, Thomas intimates that the whole goal of conforming to the image of God is a transformed life.[69] Thoughts and words that are consistent with faith in the ultimate Being of God are not enough. If they are genuine, they must be backed up by the appropriate behaviors.

Only when they are so supported is there full conformity to God. For it is only at this stage that the proofs Thomas provides succeed in fulfilling their intended purpose, namely, to turn those who use them into living proof for God's existence: people who are capable of maintaining a sound perspective on all that occurs in the human situation, acting in keeping with this perspective, and explaining the sense in which belief in the Incarnation of the Son that is treated in the third section of Aquinas' *Summa* makes it possible to do all of this.[70]

Divine Illumination

Throughout the *Summa*, Aquinas invokes illumination to illustrate what is involved in reflecting the image of God and re-conforming to it after

[67] *ST* 1.93.4.

[68] *ST* 1.89.5: Aquinas, like Augustine, affirms that the intellectual habits formed in this life will remain in the life to come.

[69] Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 67; Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 136–53. According to Kerr and Jordan, the whole *Summa* and especially its proofs culminate in the second part, particularly, as Kerr notes, in the Aquinas' distinction between believing God and believing *unto* God, which underscores the difference between having faith and having an effective faith; cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 31, trans. O'Brien (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2.2.2.2.

[70] Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 120.

the fall. Although he drew on Aristotle's account of abstraction and theistic proofs to spell out the intricacies of those issues, he clearly did not abandon illumination, as many Neo-Thomists have claimed, in order to bolster the depiction of him as a pure Aristotelian, which lent weight to their own polemically-motivated arguments. Because scholars working under the influence of various Neo-Thomisms have long assumed that Aquinas eliminated illumination, this crucial and all-pervasive aspect of his thought, like many others, has been neglected.

To demonstrate this, a certain Aquinas scholar once asked a graduate assistant to search through every book and journal article on every available bibliography related to the study of St. Thomas for references to illumination. The assistant found only a handful of articles that even touched on the topic.[71] That was almost thirty-five years ago, and scholarly attentions have yet to make a significant turn toward the topic of illumination in Aquinas' thought.

The irony of the situation is that Aquinas' major works, especially his *Summa*, are virtually littered with references to illumination, very few of which are negative. While it is true that Thomas argues against illumination in some passages, I will show that it is only the Franciscan account of illumination that he called into question – although he does not name his opponents, in keeping with the academic custom of the day. When he challenged the Franciscan notion of illumination, moreover, Aquinas did not undermine illumination but clarify and confirm Augustine's original view on the topic, which Franciscans like Bonaventure had seemingly distorted.

Incidentally, the same can be said of Aquinas' alleged rejection of Anselm's argument.[72] By contesting the Franciscan interpretation of Anselm's argument as an *a priori* proof and formulating his own *a posteriori* theistic proofs drawn mainly from Aristotle, Aquinas did not question the traditional Augustinian or better Anselmian idea of what is involved in proving God's existence; he updated it. In the case of theistic proofs as well as illumination, Thomas did not negate the views of his illustrious

[71] James H. Robb, "St. Thomas on Intelligible Light," in *The Tenth Annual Suarez Lecture* (Mobile, AL: Spring Hill College, 10 March 1974), 36. One article on the topic is J. Guillet, "La lumière intellectuelle d'après S. Thomas," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du Moyen Age* 2 (Paris: Vrin, 1927), 79–88.

[72] Scott Matthews discusses the difference between the Franciscan and Dominican uses of Anselm's argument in *Reason, Community, and Religious Tradition: Anselm's Argument and the Friars* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 151–4.

predecessors but attempted to preserve them in the face of contemporaries who were successfully championing misinterpretations of the original views in question.

The scholars who take Aquinas to be objecting to Augustine and Anselm themselves reveal a lack of insight into what it means to uphold and update the Augustinian intellectual tradition in a new era. This same lack accounts for the general failure to see just how far the Franciscans who claimed to uphold Augustine's tradition in the thirteenth century actually departed from it. In order to entertain the idea that Aquinas opposed all things Augustinian, scholars must also overlook the fact that Aquinas' assessment of traditional arguments concerning matters like illumination is not entirely negative, inasmuch as he immediately moves from correcting inaccurate interpretations of Augustinian doctrines to explaining what he believes to be genuine ones.

Not surprisingly, many passages in the *Summa* that deal explicitly with illumination fall within the first part, where Aquinas outlines what is involved in imaging and conforming to the image of God.[73] One of the first points Aquinas makes about divine illumination in this part that it is the source of the "natural light" of reason, that is, the ability to engage in abstraction or to shed light on the significance of the phantasms that are stored in the memory by forming ideas about them.[74]

Aquinas elaborates on the nature of the light's involvement in natural cognitive processes in the course of addressing a question concerning the relationship between the ideas the mind forms in abstraction and the "eternal reasons" that are supposedly received through divine illumination.[75] He starts by distinguishing between two senses in which the reasons can conceivably be known. In the first place, he says that they can be the actual objects of knowledge; in the second, they can serve as the principles of knowing, much like the sun is the principle of vision. In agreement with Bonaventure, Aquinas rejects the notion that the reasons can be seen directly in the present life and affirms that they now act only as the principles that make intellectual vision possible.

When it comes to defining what sort of reasons the principles provide, however, Aquinas parts ways with Bonaventure. The latter believed the

[73] *ST* 1.84.5.

[74] *ST* 1.79.4: on natural reason's capacity to "light up" the phantasms through the formation of universal or abstract concepts.

[75] *ST* 1.84.5.

reasons are the innate transcendental concepts that are impressed on the mind from above through illumination. For Bonaventure, the transcendentals are the principles of cognition inasmuch as they govern acts of abstraction to ensure the truth and certitude of the ideas the intellect produces. Through those concepts, Bonaventure argued that God cooperates with the active intellect in a shared concursus, helping it form ideas that correspond to His.

Since Thomas holds that sensible rather than transcendental objects are the mind's first objects, he denies that illumination affords *a priori* concepts. For Aquinas, who adheres to the traditional Augustinian *influentia* model of causality, the divine light is simply the source from which the innate cognitive capacity "flows in" to human persons.[76] What comes from above, in other words, is not the mind's ideas themselves but the ability to form ideas on the basis of things below. Put differently, the divine light is an intrinsic as opposed to extrinsic force. Because scholars have long construed Augustinian illumination as some sort of extrinsic influence, Thomas' tendency to conflate illumination with the gift of the (Aristotelian) agent intellect has been regarded as a fundamentally anti-Augustinian one.[77]

In a challenge to this received interpretation, I have shown that illumination does not entail extrinsic conditioning in Augustine's thought. Not unlike Aquinas, he held that the mind is illumined *to illumine*; what it passively receives from God is simply the ability to be an active knowing agent. If Augustine's illumination theory has been defined in an extrinsic sense, such that it precludes Aquinas' interpretation, I have suggested that this must have a great deal to do with the fact that Bonaventure formulated an extrinsicist interpretation of illumination and projected it on to the writings of Augustine, leading many to believe that this is a faithful reflection of Augustine's actual view.

Although Augustine and Aquinas, as I read them, both equate illumination with the source of the cognitive capacity, they by no means deny that the divine light is involved in other aspects of cognition as well, including the on-going process of knowing, the generation of cognitive content and certitude, and the knowledge of God. Although Aquinas has been accused of rejecting illumination's role in all these areas, he does in

[76] Jacob Schmutz, "La doctrine médiévale des causes et la théologie de la nature pure (13–17 siècles)," *Revue Thomiste* 101 (2001), 223.

[77] Ronald Nash, *The Light of the Mind: St. Augustine's Theory of Knowledge* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2003), 96ff; C.E. Scheutzinger, *The German Controversy on Augustine's Illumination Theory* (New York: Pageant Press, 1960), 41.

fact maintain that illumination enters into such aspects of cognition, inasmuch as they presuppose the use of the cognitive capacity that has its source in the divine light. By serving as the source of that capacity, the light does not detract from the mind's integrity and ability to perform its proper function on its own initiative and of its own accord, as illumination on Bonaventure's understanding is prone to do. Instead, the grace of illumination empowers the mind to be the direct cause of its own efforts. The success of those efforts is indirectly attributable to God so far as He is the one who gives the power to make them in the first place. Yet the direct cause of all intellectual work remains the human being He has empowered: the mind He has illumined with the ability to illumine Him.[78]

Although Aquinas believes that all human beings have the capacity to "light up" the images of reality that are formed through experience, he readily acknowledges that not all are aware that their power to know is from God and renders them in the image of God. This lack of awareness is of course the consequence of the fall, and it can only be overcome through the "light of grace," which restores the *imago dei*.[79] To the extent that the light of the agent intellect operates on the belief that its natural light is from God and was given for the purpose of illumining God, it subjects itself to the light of grace, such that all that is seen by the natural light of reason is at once perceived in the light of grace. Such a mind is not simply illumined but divinely illumined, for it is conscious that its capacity to illumine comes from God; it knows that the use of the capacity entails participation in the eternal life of the divine which consists in illumining the nature of God.

Inasmuch as the mind employs its capacity in the present life for the purpose of glorifying God in all experiences of the world He made, thereby knowing Him analogously, it comes to see more of reality more regularly under the divine light in which God Himself eternally sees all things. By these means, the intellect conforms to the image of God that is perfectly reflected by God the Son, whose gaze is eternally informed by the knowledge of the Father's unfaltering goodness. In the effort to conform to God's image, the intellect is helped along by the five ways, which turn out to be nothing but tools that affect an increase in the scope

[78] See Burrell, "Aquinas and Scotus: Contrary Patterns for Philosophical Theology," 91–112, esp. 105–11; Kerr, "Quarrels about Grace," in *After Aquinas*, 134–48; Guy Mansini O.S.B., "Without Me You Can Do Nothing: St. Thomas with and without Augustine on John 15:5," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, 159–80; te Velde, "A God of Grace," in *Aquinas on God*, 147–70.

[79] *ST* 1.12.2, 5, 7: on the lights of nature, grace, and glory.

and constancy of the mind's illumined perspective on reality – a perspective which doubles as or mediates the knowledge of the divine Light that can only be glimpsed in the life to come. Through the formation and growth of such an illumined perspective, the eyes of the mind gradually adjust by grace through faith to this "light of glory" in which the intellect will finally bask at the eschatological vision of God.[80]

Aquinas the Augustinian

For quite some time, Thomas Aquinas has been accused of abandoning the Augustinian tradition out of a philosophical preference for Aristotle. Among the traditional Augustinian ideas Aquinas has been charged with rejecting are illumination theory and Anselm's argument concerning the existence of God. In this chapter, I have suggested that such allegations only obtain where Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* is deliberately misinterpreted for the sake of advancing polemical agendas. I have argued that Aquinas is actually a thorough-going Augustinian, not only in the area of theology but also in the field of philosophy.

On my argument, in fact, a theological Augustinian can hardly help but be a philosophical one as well, since philosophical accounts invariably follow from theological assumptions. On the basis of Trinitarian theological assumptions he shares with Augustine, I showed that Aquinas gives an account of what is involved in reflecting the image of God that also resembles Augustine's.[81] Following Augustine, Thomas acknowledges that the image was lost at the fall.[82] Furthermore, he gives a two-fold (speculative and practical) account of how to recover it in his *Summa Theologiae*, much as Augustine had done in the two halves of *De Trinitate*, and Anselm in his *Monologion* and *Proslogion*.

In the speculative part of his account, Aquinas follows his Augustinian forebears in saying what needs be said about the nature of the unknowable God for the sake of bringing belief in His supremacy to bear in reasoning about reality – which is the way in which that belief is "rendered intelligible" to reason. In the "practical" part of his account, where he articulates his famous five ways to demonstrate God's existence, Aquinas

[80] *ST* 1.12.7.

[81] See O'Callaghan, "Imago Dei: A Test Case for Saint Thomas' Augustinianism," 100–44.

[82] Mark Johnson, "Augustine and Aquinas on Original Sin: Doctrine, Authority, and Pedagogy," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, 145–58.

provides conceptual resources for doing just that: for re-conforming to the image of God. He continues the Augustinian tradition of encouraging Christians to engage in the negative theological project of knowing God "through His effects" – as opposed to positively, which is impossible in the present life where there is no access to God as cause. This happens by bringing belief in Him as the ultimate yet unknowable good to bear in reasoning about the things that are not Him, which are the things human beings can know now.

On the assumption that these ways are the pre-theological theistic proofs that many modern thinkers have claimed they are, some recent theologians have attacked Aquinas for engaging in what they deem to be the questionable project of natural theology, where conclusions about God's existence and nature are supposedly reached outside the context of personal faith in Him.[83] As I pointed out in the first chapter, this same accusation has been leveled against Augustine for his psychological analogies, not to mention Anselm for his argument. Ironically, however, the problem that Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas are charged with causing is just the one they remedy, as becomes obvious when their philosophical writings are interpreted with attention to theological context.

Far from segregating the question of God's existence from the personal experience of transformation through faith in Christ, Aquinas' *Summa*, like Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Anselm's twin treatises, inextricably binds those two lines of inquiry together as it provides an account of God and a related account of the process of conforming to the image of God.[84] Following the lead of Augustine and Anselm on yet another level, Aquinas illustrates the gradual conformity to God's image that the use of the five ways brings about by appealing to divine illumination. By elaborating the intricacies of the Augustinian conception of illumined knowing in Aristotelian terms, however, Aquinas translates that concept into the forms of argument that were most appropriate and appealing in his intellectual context, just as Anselm had done in drawing on the resources of dialectic.[85]

[83] See Kerr, "God in the *Summa Theologiae*," in *After Aquinas*, 181–206.

[84] Gilles Emery O.P., "Trinitarian Theology as Spiritual Exercise in Augustine and Aquinas," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, 1–40.

[85] See Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Theology from Aquinas to Ockham*, 77; Harm Goris, "Theology and Theory of the Word in Aquinas: Understanding Augustine by Innovating Aristotle," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, 62–78; Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, vii: "Aquinas was engaged in fitting an original Augustinian creation into an Aristotelian framework;" John Rist, "Augustine, Aristotelianism, and Aquinas: Three Varieties of Philosophical Adaptation," in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, 79–99.

At the same time, Thomas prepared a guide for conforming to God's image that was exceptionally well suited to the needs of his Dominican readers: intellectually gifted believers seeking to bring their faith to bear on all contemporary lines of inquiry and debate and bear witness to the truth of the faith by those means. When he composed his *Summa* for such an audience, Aquinas proved himself an Augustinian in the way Anselm had done: he allowed an Augustinian understanding of the revelation of God in Christ to direct his efforts to appropriate the philosophical resources that were popular at the time for the purpose of affirming in a fresh and relevant way the theologically infused meaning of Augustine's claim that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of all human knowledge.

6

Divine Illumination in Decline (AD 1274–c.1300)

Introduction

When Bonaventure and Aquinas both passed away in 1274, a new phase in the history of divine illumination theory began: the period of its decline. In this chapter, I explain why Franciscan thinkers working in the last quarter of the thirteenth century began to question the viability of the illumination account, eventually abandoning it. While there were many who challenged illumination theory in one way or another over the course of the period in question, I limit the present discussion to three figures with Franciscan sympathies who played very different but key roles in the era of illumination's decline: Peter John Olivi, Henry of Ghent, and John Duns Scotus.

The following treatment of illumination in the work of these three thinkers will bolster my earlier contention that late thirteenth-century Franciscans reacted against Bonaventure's illumination account, not Augustine's. Although late medieval Franciscans questioned the tenability of Bonaventure's illumination theory, I will show that they did not question the legitimacy of his general conception of knowledge at the same time. In fact, their efforts to eliminate illumination can be interpreted as an attempt to remove inconsistencies from his distinctly Franciscan definition of knowledge in order to draw that definition to its logical conclusions.

Toward the end of the chapter, this discussion will put me in a position to reconsider the relationship between Augustinian and Franciscan thought

Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge,
by Lydia Schumacher

and thereby re-define the boundaries between late medieval schools of thought. In turn, that analysis will enable me to conclude the chapter with some observations on the connection between late medieval Franciscan thought and the development of modern philosophy.

Peter John Olivi (1248–98)

Peter John Olivi was probably the first Franciscan to notice the problems inherent in Bonaventure's illumination theory.[1] In the 1260s, Olivi almost certainly came under the influence of Bonaventure's teachings during his studies at the Franciscan school in Paris. From there, he moved to serve as a lector at a Franciscan studium in southern France.[2] During his time as lector, Olivi became notorious for his outspoken stance on a number of issues, above all, Franciscan poverty. As the head of the "spiritual" contingent of the Franciscan order at the time, Olivi greatly opposed the academic mainstream of the order.[3]

Although Franciscan authorities condemned Olivi's works in 1283, there is reason to believe that the condemnation had little to do with any unorthodox leanings in Olivi's intellectual positions and everything to do with the overriding desire of leading Franciscans to discredit the spiritual stance on poverty.[4] If Olivi had not been the champion of the spiritual movement, his "speculative opinions would hardly have attracted much attention."[5] In point of fact, Olivi's arguments disclose nothing but the deepest commitment to orthodox Franciscan ideals.[6] Olivi's stated intention was to promulgate the principles which Bonaventure codified and spell out their logical implications, even if he did this with an exuberance that unsettled colleagues.[7]

[1] Étienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), 344; Patrick James Doyle, "The Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 1984), 63ff.

[2] David Burr, *The Persecution of Peter Olivi* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1967), 6.

[3] See David Burr, *Olivi and Franciscan Poverty: The Origins of the "Usus Pauper" Controversy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

[4] Burr, *Persecution of Peter Olivi*, 40.

[5] Carter Partee, "Peter John Olivi: Historical and Doctrinal Study," *Franciscan Studies* 20 (1960), 218.

[6] Burr, *Persecution of Peter Olivi*, 19.

[7] See Partee, "Peter John Olivi," 220; David Flood, "Recent Study on Peter Olivi," *Franciscan Studies* 58 (2000), 111.

Among the reasons given for Olivi's condemnation was his implicit rejection of illumination theory.[8] While the points he raised about the account were controversial in the moment, many of his Franciscan colleagues, most notably his student Peter of Trabes, his inquisitor Richard of Middleton, and Scotus' teacher William of Ware, quickly came to see that his criticisms were not unfounded.[9] By the time Duns Scotus reached the height of his career approximately fifteen years later, the general consensus amongst Franciscans was that Olivi's criticisms were valid and illumination theory obsolete. Although Scotus is normally credited with the elimination of illumination, it would seem that he merely placed the final stamp of approval on a thesis which Olivi originally advanced.[10]

Olivi presents his arguments against illumination in sections of his Sentence Commentary where he inquires "whether or not the eternal reasons are the principle of understanding all things" and "whether or not God irradiates in the intellect whenever it understands."[11] In the context of addressing these questions, his first course of action is to summarize a theory of illumination that clearly has Bonaventure as its source.[12] According to this theory, whatever is eternal and immutable and infallible comes from God and God alone. Since human beings have the capacity to attain knowledge that perfectly reflects reality and is therefore absolutely certain, it must be the case that they are subject to the illumination through which God imparts His "eternal reasons," which supervise human acts of knowing to ensure that the ideas that result from them are infallibly accurate.[13]

[8] See S. Piron, "La liberté divine et la destruction des idées chez Olivi," in *Pierre de Jean Olivi (1248–1298): Pensée scolastique, dissidence spirituelle et société* (Paris: Vrin, 1998), 71–89.

[9] See Doyle, "Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory;" Antonio di Noto O.F.M., *La Théologie Naturelle de Pierre de Trabibus, O.F.M.* (Padua: CEDAM, 1963); Edgar Hocedez S.J., *Richard de Middleton: sa vie, ses oeuvres, sa doctrine* (Paris: Edouard Champion, 1925).

[10] See C. Berube, "Olivi, critique de Bonaventure et d'Henri de Gand," in *Studies Honoring Ignatius Charles Brady, Friar Minor* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1976), 57–121, esp. 57–8; Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 350; Gordon Leff, *The Dissolution of the Medieval Outlook: An Essay on Intellectual and Spiritual Change in the Fourteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 9.

[11] Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, 3 vols., ed. Bernard Jansen S.J. (Florence: Quaracchi, 1926), vol. 3, 500–13.

[12] Berube, "Olivi, critique de Bonaventure et d'Henri de Gand," 58: Olivi criticized Bonaventure on illumination and anticipated the final critique of Scotus.

[13] Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, 502.

Olivi identifies two major problems with this illumination account. Both are associated with Bonaventure's view that the eternal reasons are innately impressed on the mind through illumination. Since Franciscans understand those reasons to be one with the very essence of God, such that they immediately join the mind to God, Olivi insists that the reasons are bound to give the mind recourse to the direct vision of the thoughts of God and consequently God Himself. For this reason, he concludes that illumination theory is prone to the error of ontologism.[14]

The second problem concerns the role the reasons play in supervising natural acts of knowing in order to confirm their truth and certitude. If this supernatural concursus in the natural cognitive process is allowed, Olivi argues, it is impossible to classify knowledge as either supernatural or natural.[15] Even though Bonaventure denied that the use of the natural capacity gives rise to direct knowledge of the supernatural being, or is wholly enabled by the intervention of that being, he defined the act of cognition as a shared effort on the part of human and divine beings. From Bonaventure's perspective, the grace of illumination is needed to perfect nature, because nature is not adequate to achieve accurate natural knowledge on its own.

While Bonaventure welcomed the concursus of the *a priori* reasons, taking it as a sign of the mind's intimate relationship with its divine Maker, this interference of the supernatural in the natural is precisely what Olivi finds problematic.[16] So long as cognition occupies an ambiguous space between the natural and the supernatural, Olivi insists that it is bound to appear as though God and His creatures are in competition to accomplish one and the same task, where the work one succeeds in

[14] Ibid., 5–507.

[15] Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 343–4; John Edward Lynch, *The Theory of Knowledge of Vital Du Four* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1972), 157–8: "by the time of Peter Olivi the Franciscans were uneasy about the doctrine of divine illumination. The dilemma that confronts the followers of … Bonaventure is this: if the divine illumination is reduced to the general concursus with which God cooperates in all creaturely activity, then the divine illumination is no more than a metaphor, the sense world becomes stable, and man's intellect fundamentally indefectible. … If, on the other hand, God's action is considered special, it takes on a supernatural character. The ultimate foundation of true knowledge will not rest on the plane of philosophy but of theology; philosophy becomes scepticism redeemed by fideism. There cannot be a simple truth that is at once natural and necessary, for all necessity demands a supernatural action of God on the mind."

[16] Jacob Schmutz, "La doctrine médiévale des causes et la théologie de la nature pure (13–17 siècles)," *Revue Thomiste* 101 (2001), 226.

accomplishing subtracts from the work and thus the integrity of the other. If human knowing is such a "zero-sum game"[17] as David Burrell has called it, then the implication is that the mind is incompetent to do what is proper to its very nature.[18] If that is the case, moreover, then Olivi concludes that illumination theory cannot help but produce skepticism, the very terminus it was introduced to help the mind evade.

In order to prevent the grace that was introduced to perfect nature from destroying it, Olivi argues that the role attributed to illumination ought to be eliminated and the power to procure infallible knowledge reallocated to the human mind itself.[19] Although Olivi remains willing to "endorse illumination as a theological doctrine,"[20] that is, as the source of knowledge about God, he communicates his serious reservations about Bonaventure's claim that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of ordinary human knowledge. Notwithstanding his reservations, Olivi states that he continues to give credence to illumination theory on the grounds that wise men like Bonaventure advanced it.[21] By drawing attention to the theory's fatal flaws, he suggests that he merely wishes to urge others to devise ways to rescue the account from its attendant errors. For if the account is left as it stands, it is a very dangerous theory of knowledge indeed.

Despite the fact that he questions the tenability of illumination, Olivi reveals in his writings on natural knowledge that he thinks in continuity with Bonaventure on the nature of knowledge itself. Like his predecessor, Olivi understands knowledge as a one-to-one correspondence between thought and reality, or the "actual, immediate expression of an object."[22] Because God as Franciscans understand Him has a "clear and distinct" idea of every particular entity He has made or could make, Olivi follows Bonaventure in assuming that human beings can and ought to have such ideas, too.

[17] David Burrell, *Faith and Freedom: An Interfaith Perspective* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 171.

[18] Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, 508–9.

[19] Ibid. See also Burrell, *Faith and Freedom*, 115, 281, 485. On the difficulties involved in relating the natural to the supernatural in a concursus model, of which Franciscans became aware around the time of Olivi, see Lynch, *The Theory of Knowledge of Vital du Four*, 153; Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 343–4.

[20] John Marschall, "The Causation of Knowledge in the Philosophy of Peter John Olivi, O.F.M.," *Franciscan Studies* 16 (1956), 314.

[21] Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, 512–13.

[22] Marschall, "Causation of Knowledge in the Philosophy of Peter John Olivi, O.F.M.," 313.

On the basis of that assumption, Olivi radically challenges the notion that a mediating species is necessary at all for knowledge, having already implicitly rejected the idea that the eternal reasons mediate between the mind and reality in questioning illumination. If the nature of knowledge is immediate and the mind requires a species, he argues, then the mind will only ever immediately know the species and will never make contact with reality at all.[23] In denying the existence of intelligible species, Olivi advances an early form of the direct realism that has found many proponents amongst modern epistemologists.[24]

Although Olivi argues that human beings are endowed with all the powers required to perform their perfect acts of knowing, he does not deny that the supernatural grace that is received through faith is relevant to reason. On the contrary, he states that faith – which arises from a will to love God – while it does not interfere with the use of reason, gives access to the infallible powers of human reason. This view grounds his wholesale rejection of the validity of any philosophies formulated without Christian faith, not to mention the *sacra doctrina* of Thomas Aquinas, which allows for the incorporation of such philosophies.[25]

Henry of Ghent (1217–93)

Knowledge and illumination

Olivi's contemporary Henry of Ghent was one of the most influential intellectuals at the University of Paris in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. Although he was not officially associated with a religious order, Henry was one of the foremost spokesmen for the Franciscan cause. When he recast the illumination account in his *Summa quaestionum*

[23] Olivi's critique of species theory can be found in his *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, vol. 2, 467–70 and vol. 3, 123.

[24] So argues Robert Pasnau, who discusses the origins of a direct realist epistemology in the thought of Olivi and later William of Ockham in *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 21–2.

[25] See David Burr, "Petrus Ionnis Olivi and the Philosophers," *Franciscan Studies* 31 (1971), 41–71, esp. 66; cf. François-Xavier Putallaz, "Comment lire les philosophes? (Pierre de Jean Olivi)," in *Figures Franciscaines de Bonaventure à Duns Scot* (Paris: Cerf, 1997), 23–31.

ordinarium, he seemingly sought to clear it of charges such as Olivi had raised.[26]

The first question Henry asks in his *Summa* is whether it is possible to know anything at all. This beginning is noteworthy, inasmuch as it signals a departure from the methods of earlier Summists. While Henry's predecessors had begun their works with questions on God's nature, Henry only turns to pursue this line of inquiry after he has investigated issues pertaining to the possibility and nature of knowledge. As I will soon show, Henry took this approach in an effort to out-maneuver Aquinas intellectually and to discredit the account of knowledge he outlined in his own *Summa*. After Henry, it became common for Franciscans to raise the question concerning the possibility of knowledge at the outset of major theological works.

In addressing this question himself, the "awe-inspiring doctor" (*doctor sollemnis*) considers the closely related and by his time controversial question "whether it is possible for a human being to know something without divine illumination."[27] In answering the question, he makes a pro-Franciscan attempt to confirm that illumination does in fact concur in ordinary cognition, yet in a way that does not cause the account to err in the two ways Olivi mentioned. To accomplish this, Henry introduces a new distinction between what he calls "purely natural" knowledge and supernatural or "special" divine illumination.[28] He notes that some objects of knowledge can never "be apprehended by purely natural means but

[26] Other summaries of Henry's thought on illumination are given by Robert Pasnau, "Henry of Ghent and the Twilight of Divine Illumination," *Review of Metaphysics* 49:1 (1995), 49–75; R. Macken, "La théorie de l'illumination divine dans la philosophie d'Henri de Gand," *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 39 (1972), 82–112; and Stephen Marrone, *Truth and Scientific Knowledge in the Thought of Henry of Ghent* (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academica of America Press, 1985).

[27] Henry of Ghent, *Summa (Quaestiones Ordinariae), art. 1-5*, in *Henrici de Gandavo Opera Omnia*, ed. G.A. Wilson (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001). Article one, questions one and two of Henry's *Summa* have been translated by Robert Pasnau in *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts*, vol. 3: *Mind and Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); all five questions of article one have been translated by Roland J. Teske in *Henry of Ghent's Summa of Ordinary Questions (Article One): The Possibility of Human Knowledge* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2008).

[28] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, trans. Pasnau, 1.2.2.B; Schmutz, "La doctrine médiévale des causes et la théologie de la nature pure (13-17 siécles)," 229–32: the new model of causality was accompanied by the new language of general and special, natural and supernatural.

only by a special divine illumination, for example, those that are essentially and unqualifiedly matters of faith."[29]

By contrast to supernatural objects, Henry insists that natural objects can in fact be known purely naturally. Although Henry is willing to allow that the First Knower exerts a general influence on the human knower by bestowing the natural capacity, he emphatically denies that God concurs with the human mind in the process of cognition. In other words, he concludes that the mind does not need the illumination of the eternal reasons in order to abstract, as Bonaventure had defined abstraction. In affirming this, Henry dispels all hints of ontologism and avoids taking "much away from the dignity and perfection of the created intellect."[30] In short, he puts Olivi's allegations to rest.

Although he denies that illumination enters into the process of cognition, Henry does not reject the influence of the light altogether. He acknowledges that his Franciscan predecessors and Augustine had insisted on the intellectual indispensability of the divine light. To qualify the meaning of their claims to the end of salvaging the illumination account, Henry introduces yet another distinction between two ways of knowing any object. He admits that he borrows much from Avicenna in his treatment of these two ways. Amongst late thirteenth-century Franciscan sympathizers such as Henry, incidentally, there was a great resurgence of interest in Avicenna. The questionable areas of his thought that had come to the fore in Bonaventure's generation had long since been discarded. Once again, the Arab's work was proving useful in efforts to assert the respectable Augustinian character of the Franciscan outlook over and against the Averroist and Aristotelian philosophies that had been condemned in the 1270s.[31]

[29] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, trans. Pasnau, 1.2.2.B.

[30] See Steven Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance: Science and the Knowledge of God in the Thirteenth Century*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2001), vol. 2, 270.

[31] Jules Janssens, "Elements of Avicennian Metaphysics in the *Summa*," in *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2003), 41–60; idem., "Some Elements of Avicennian Influence on Henry of Ghent's Psychology," in *Henry of Ghent: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of His Death (1293)* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 155–67; Jerome V. Brown, "Henry's Theory of Knowledge: Henry of Ghent on Avicenna and Augustine," in *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought*, 19–42; Roland Teske, "Some Aspects of Henry of Ghent's Debt to Avicenna's Metaphysics," *The Modern Schoolman* 85 (2007), 51–70; Étienne Gilson, "Avicenna et le point de départ de Duns Scot," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen-age* 2 (1927), 89–149.

In the first way of cognition Henry mentions, the intellect abstracts a created reason or exemplar.[32] In the process, it grasps the first principle of Being and its transcendental determinations, one, true, and good, as they are manifested in the exemplar.[33] In the second way, the intellect abstracts "backwards" from the exemplar it previously constructed to something in the created order it now seeks to comprehend. The difference between the two ways of knowing is the difference between a cognitive move from a sensible particular to an intelligible universal or from an intelligible universal to a sensible particular.

When the mind works in the first way, Henry states that it knows what is *true* (*verum*) in that object. It simply apprehends the thing as it is and has the thing as the direct object of knowledge (*objectum cognitum*). When the mind works in the second way, employing the exemplar as the basis for cognizing other things (*ratio cognoscendi*), it engages in a complex mode of cognition in which it determines the correspondence between objects and exemplars in the mind, so as to determine the essential *truth* (*veritas*) of objects.[34] In summary, Henry's view is that there is a two-fold knowledge of truth: the true knowledge that comes from simply grasping that a being exists, and the knowledge of truth the mind enjoys when it employs the concept of an object it has grasped in order to understand other things. In emphasizing the indispensability of exemplars for the true and truthful comprehension of the natural order, Henry insists that he perfectly marries the insights of Plato and Aristotle, as Bonaventure following Augustine had done.[35]

Though Henry allows that the knowledge of the true and the truth are attainable by purely natural means, he goes on to argue that the only way to achieve infallible cognitive certitude about the truth or "whatness" (*quidditas*) of a thing is through special divine illumination.[36] This is the case because the purely naturally known exemplar is abstracted on the basis of mutable sense objects, and invoking Plato and Augustine, Henry

[32] See J.V. Brown, "Abstraction and the Object of the Human Intellect according to Henry of Ghent," *Vivarium* 11:1 (1973), 80–104.

[33] Jan A. Aertsen, "Transcendental Thought in Henry of Ghent," in *Henry of Ghent*, 1–18.

[34] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, trans. Pasnau, 1.2.2.E; on Henry's correspondence theory and Avicenna's influence on his thought in this regard, see Katherine H. Tachau, *Vision and Certitude in the Age of Ockham* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 32; and Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. 2, 362.

[35] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, trans. Pasnau, 1.2.2.F.

[36] Ibid., 1.2.2.E.

insists like a typical dualist that "pure truth" (*sincera veritas*) cannot be acquired from the senses.[37] Not only do the objects of knowledge change, Henry insists, but the mind does so as well. For this reason, Henry infers that purely naturally formed ideas are bound to be "incomplete, obscure, and foggy."[38] Because the objects of knowledge and the knower are mutable, Henry concludes with Bonaventure that "certain, infallible, and pure knowledge of the truth,"[39] or wisdom, cannot be achieved on the basis of a human exemplar but only on the grounds of a divine one.[40]

Henry proceeds to differentiate between two kinds of exemplar. The first is the kind the human mind creates on the basis of experience. The second is an uncreated one that subsists in the divine mind. Since the divine exemplars are the ideal patterns after which all things are made, Henry reasons that the truth of anything that has been made in accordance with an exemplar is known most perfectly in its uncreated exemplar. To avoid the ontologist insinuations of this claim, Henry revisits his distinction between the two ways of utilizing any exemplar in cognition, namely, as the object of knowledge (*objectum cognitum*) or as the means of knowing (*ratio cognoscendi*). He argues that the divine exemplars are only understood in the second sense in the present life, even though they will be known in the first way in the state of beatitude. According to Henry, the divine exemplars of Being, unity, truth, and goodness, are imprinted or poured on the mind through special illumination. These uncreated exemplars "check" the truth of the exemplars that have been created by the mind and thus confirm that they are absolutely certain.[41]

Henry's position, in summary, is that the mind can apprehend that an object is true as well as its truth by purely natural means, that is, by abstracting a created exemplar from sense objects, *a posteriori*. To know *pure* truth with infallible certitude, however, the mind must cognize its objects by attending from an *a priori* divine exemplar to an empirical instance of the exemplar, which is something that must be made possible by the special divine illumination of uncreated exemplars.[42] Although knowledge by illumination does not necessarily alter the content of the idea the mind produces of its own accord, it is required to stabilize

[37] See Augustine, *div. qu.* 46.

[38] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, trans. Pasnau, 1.2.2.G.

[39] Ibid., 1.2.2.K.

[40] Andreas Speer, "Certitude and Wisdom in Bonaventure and Henry of Ghent," in *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought*, 75–100.

[41] Henry of Ghent, *Summa*, trans. Pasnau, 1.2.2.L.

[42] Ibid., 1.2.2.F.

the grounds on which the idea rests. By presenting distinctions between purely natural and special knowledge, two kinds of truth, and two kinds of exemplar, Henry found a way to confirm that the illumination that is received through the eternal reasons concurs in the process of cognition as Bonaventure supposed, but not in a manner that undermines the autonomy of the intellect or gives way to ontologism. After he had formulated it, he could honestly say with Bonaventure that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of all *certain* knowledge.

Knowledge of God

When it comes to explaining how God is known purely naturally, that is, without reference to revealed doctrines like the Trinity which are grasped in faith, Henry's views are closely related to the account of natural knowledge by illumination outlined above.[43] As it turns out, such knowledge for Henry is convertible with the natural knowledge of God.[44] On Henry's account, the illumination that pours eternal reasons on to the mind in order to give it absolutely certain knowledge of beings simultaneously affords knowledge of beings inasmuch as they reflect one of God's ideas. Because beings are patterned exactly after divine ideas that *are* God, they directly reveal an aspect of God's Being.[45]

Although Henry admits that the infinite Being is unknowable through creatures in Himself, he holds that they disclose God's nature nonetheless

[43] Relevant articles on Henry's arguments concerning the knowability of God include: Roland J. Teske, "Henry of Ghent's Criticism of the Aristotelian Arguments for God's Existence," *The Modern Schoolman* 82 (2005), 83–99; idem., "Henry of Ghent's Metaphysical Argument for the Existence of God," *Modern Schoolman* 83:1 (2005), 19–38; Anton C. Pegis, "Toward a New Way to God: Henry of Ghent," *Mediaeval Studies* 30 (1968), 226–47; idem., "A New Way to God: Henry of Ghent (II)," *Mediaeval Studies* 31 (1969), 93–116; idem., "Henry of Ghent and the New Way to God (III)," *Mediaeval Studies* 33 (1971), 158–79.

[44] The following exposition of Henry's arguments on the knowability of God's existence is based on articles 21–4 of *Henry of Ghent's Summa: The Questions on God's Existence and Essence*, ed. Jos Decorte and Roland J. Teske (Leuven: Peeters, 2005). The articles on the knowability of God's existence include 22.1–6; the articles on the knowability of God's essence include 23.1–2 and 24.1–9.

[45] On Henry's basically univocal concept of being, see Stephen Dumont, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus," in *Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John Marenbon (London: Routledge, 2003), 297; Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 448; *Henry of Ghent's Summa: The Questions on God's Existence and Essence*, 21.2; Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. 2, 317–19.

directly inasmuch as they are finite instances of what He is infinitely, per the univocal concept of being that is presupposed in Henry's revised account of analogy.[46] In virtue of the univocal relation of beings to Being, or the fact that every being's essence is a direct representation of some finite facet of the divine essence, Henry concludes that anything that is understood about the existence and essence of a creature confirms the same point about the existence and essence of God. According to Henry, moreover, it is the ability to grasp God's existence and essence fully if finitely in the present life that makes it possible to know Him in His infinitude in an ultimate sense.[47]

Though the natural knowledge of God as Henry describes it is occasioned by the knowledge of creatures, Henry stresses that it originates in what is proper to the illumined mind, that is, in the eternal reasons. For Henry as for Bonaventure and Avicenna, the *a posteriori* or cosmological proof for God's existence follows from one that is *a priori* or ontological. Conversely, the plausibility of the cosmological proofs is guaranteed by the ontological one. Because the latter proof does not depend on the senses but on what comes to the intellect from above, Henry claims that it achieves infallible certitude and therefore provides the "most perfect" basis for proving God's existence from creatures.[48]

In the twenty-first article of his *Summa*, Henry indicates that the discussion of God's existence and nature he is about to undertake is the most important part of the whole voluminous work. Even so, he affirms that the preceding articles on the nature and possibility of knowledge lay an essential foundation for the upcoming line of inquiry. In the preliminary questions on knowledge and illumination, Henry had proved the impossibility of attaining certain knowledge of empirical reality without the *a priori* eternal reasons that come from above. Establishing that at the outset allowed him to affirm in his subsequent questions on the knowability of

[46] Franciscans developed a "positive" idea of divine infinity which becomes especially noticeable in the work of Henry of Ghent, according to Gilson in his *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 449; and Roberto Levano, "Divine Ideas and Infinity," in *Henry of Ghent and the Transformation of Scholastic Thought*, 177–97. This idea is to be contrasted with the "negative" concept of infinity that was assumed by ancient and earlier medieval thinkers. See Deirdre Carabine, *The Unknown God: Negative Theology in the Platonic Tradition from Plato to Eriugena* (Louvain: Eerdmans, 1995); and Leo Sweeney, *Divine Infinity in Greek and Medieval Thought* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998).

[47] See *Henry of Ghent's Summa*, 24.3–6.

[48] Ibid., 22.4.

God's existence and essence that the same holds true in the case of the knowledge of God: that it is not possible to know God unless the intuition of Being is assumed to be the precondition of abstraction on the basis of beings.

By structuring his *Summa* as he did and arguing that the preliminary intuition of Being is the precondition of genuine knowledge of created beings or the divine Being, Henry implicitly undermined the plausibility of Aquinas' account of natural human knowledge as well as his five ways to demonstrate the existence of God. Since Aquinas had emphatically denied that the mind enjoys an intuition of Being short of the beatific vision, he forfeited in Henry's view the resources needed to situate human knowledge on certain grounds. This is something Henry thinks he himself accomplishes by giving the definitive Franciscan statement of knowledge and illumination and proofs for God's existence, which, in contrast to Aquinas' account, yet supposedly in keeping with the accounts of Augustine, Anselm, and Avicenna, allows for the attainment of positive if finite knowledge of God.[49]

In challenging Aquinas, Henry was not alone. By Henry's time, an attitude of opposition toward Aquinas had become pervasive amongst Franciscans. Franciscans had already begun to grow uneasy about Aquinas' work toward the end of Bonaventure's life. In particular, they regarded the doctrine of double truth implicit in his *sacra doctrina* as a threat to their outlook and to the Christian faith more generally. From the Franciscan perspective, no truth is attainable outside the context of Christian faith. Pagan philosophy, far from being readily appropriable as it is in the view of Aquinas, is to be regarded with extreme suspicion and drawn on only with great caution.

Because they regarded Aquinas' notion of "all truth as God's Truth" as a threat to the authority of Christianity, Franciscans apparently began an intellectual campaign against him just after his death.[50] Historical records indicate that some important "doctors of Sacred Scripture" in Paris began to complain to the pope that erroneous, faith-threatening ideas were being taught in the university.[51] In response, the pope asked Étienne Tempier, the Bishop of Paris and a great Franciscan sympathizer, to investigate the

[49] Dumont, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus," 303.

[50] Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 410.

[51] This account of the circumstances surrounding the condemnation of 1277 is drawn from John F. Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas and the Condemnation of 1277," *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995), 233–72.

situation. Although the pope had merely requested a preliminary investigation, Tempier almost immediately issued the condemnation of 1277 on his own authority, without consulting the Holy Father, although there is no evidence that the pope frowned on this decision.

It is likely that Tempier and his advisors had already drawn up a list of articles to condemn when the pope sent his request. When he finally reported the condemnation to the pope, Tempier wrote that he had sought the advice of those aforementioned "doctors of Sacred Scripture," most likely Franciscans, and especially Henry of Ghent, when he was drafting the condemnation. Recent research has shown that Aquinas was strongly implicated in some of the 219 articles that were listed in the condemnation.[52] Although Aquinas' reputation would eventually be cleared by papal decree in 1325, Franciscans had the chance in the meantime to make many trend-setting intellectual moves.[53] Because of his implicit and explicit efforts to undermine the authority of Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent deserves a great deal of the credit for creating this opportunity.[54]

John Duns Scotus (1265/6–1308)

Knowledge and divine illumination

John Duns Scotus is the Franciscan master who is generally accredited with eliminating illumination from ordinary cognition once and for all. In what follows, I will outline the arguments against illumination Scotus offers in his mature work, the *Ordinatio*.[55] Like his teacher William of Ware, the Subtle Doctor frames his objections to illumination as a response

[52] Ibid.

[53] Wippel, "Thomas Aquinas and the Condemnation of 1277," 239.

[54] Dumont, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus," 296.

[55] Scotus produced several versions of this text. The earliest is the *Lectura Oxoniensis*, from which he taught at Oxford from around 1297 to 1301. A second, revised draft of his *Lectura* is known as the *Reportata Parisiensa*, which was delivered at Paris. The *Ordinatio* is the final version, which is also known as Scotus' *Opus oxoniense*. His question on illumination in the early *Lectura* can be found in *Lectura in librum primum Sententiarum*, vol. 16 (Vatican, 1960), 1.3.1.3. The *Ordinatio* text can be found in Scotus' *Opera omnia* (Vatican: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950), vol. 3, 1.3.1.4 (pp. 123–72). This section has been translated by Allan Wolter, O.F.M., under the title, "Concerning Human Knowledge," in *Duns Scotus: Philosophical Writings* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987).

to Henry of Ghent.[56] Hence, he begins his article on illumination with a summary of Henry's account.[57] As I have shown, Henry argues that the uncreated exemplars received through special divine illumination are essential for cognitive certitude because the objects that serve as the basis for constructing a created exemplar are changeable, as is the knowing subject in which the exemplar inheres.

Scotus' strategy for invaliding Henry's arguments for illumination involves demonstrating that the objects known and the knower are not in fact mutable as Henry contends. According to Scotus, the objects of knowledge must be inherently intelligible and the mind naturally equipped to perceive intelligibility if certitude is to be obtainable at all. So long as Henry posits the concurrence of the divine light in any aspect of human cognition whatsoever, Scotus concludes, he cannot truly affirm that the mind is competent to know with certainty.[58] For this reason, Scotus accuses Henry of inviting skepticism with respect to the possibility of knowledge.

The arguments Scotus proceeds to present in order to prove the immutability of the objects known and the infallibility of the knower turn on the univocal concept of being he elucidates elsewhere.[59] On this concept, created beings exist finitely and materially in the same way that the divine being exists infinitely and immaterially, that is, immutably.[60]

[56] See Jerome V. Brown, "John Duns Scotus on Henry of Ghent's Arguments for Divine Illumination: The Statement of the Case," *Vivarium* 13:2 (1976), 94-112; idem., "John Duns Scotus on Henry of Ghent's Theory of Knowledge," *The Modern Schoolman* 56 (1978); idem., "Duns Scotus on the Possibility of Knowing Genuine Truth: The Reply to Henry of Ghent in the *Lectura Prima* and in the *Ordinatio*," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 51 (1984), 136–82; Steven P. Marrone, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus on the Knowledge of Being," *Speculum* 63:1 (1988), 22–57.

[57] On William of Ware, see chapter 5 of Doyle's "Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory" and an edition of Ware's question on illumination in Augustinus Daniels, "Wilhelm von Ware über das Menschliche Erkennen," *Zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters Supplementband* 1 and 2 (Muenster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1913), qu. 18.

[58] Scotus, "Concerning Human Knowledge," 104.

[59] See Scotus, *Opera omnia*, vol. 4, *Ordinatio* 1.8.3 (pp. 205–7), translated by Wolter under the title "Concerning Metaphysics" in *Duns Scotus: Philosophical Writings*, 1–12; other sections from Scotus' metaphysical writings are included in William A. Frank and Allan B. Wolter (eds.), *Duns Scotus, Metaphysician* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1995).

[60] Although Scotus upheld the doctrine of the plurality of substantial forms, which allowed for change where forms were defined in a "fixed" sense, it is worth mentioning that the doctrine was declared unsound in 1311, even though the concept of beings as fixed remained. See Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 344.

For this reason, "the difference between God and creatures … is ultimately one of degree. Specifically … [properties] exist in an infinite degree in God, and in a finite degree in creatures."[61] As the sum total of all possibly and actually existing entities and properties, God on Scotus' account has a clear and distinct – or particular – idea of each and every thing.

In affirming all this, Scotus discloses his preference for the "positive" notion of divine infinity that Franciscan predecessors like Bonaventure had espoused – an idea of infinity which does not underline the mystery of God in the way of Aquinas but implies that there is actually a great deal that can be affirmed and known about God – even though the fullness of God can never be grasped by anyone in the realm of finite beings.[62] In point of fact, Scotus held infinity to be the most important divine attribute, by contrast to Aquinas, who deemed this to be simplicity.[63]

In the question on illumination itself, Scotus effectively interprets Augustine's illumination *as* his theory of the univocity of being.[64] On his account, the divine light permeates created reality in a general sense, inasmuch as it causes beings to exist in an immutable mode of being. Through the divine light, creatures become manifestly knowable.[65] What is known of them is known of God. After recasting Augustinian illumination along these lines, he proceeds to argue that the human mind is intrinsically infallible, by appealing to the idea that it maintains an intuitive knowledge of Being – that Being is the first thing the mind knows, and that the knowledge of it is the condition of possibility of all further knowledge of beings.[66] Incidentally, as Gilson has already argued, this idea of Being as the mind's first object signals Scotus' participation in the late thirteenth-century Franciscan "return" to Avicenna, which was really a revelation of a proclivity for Avicenna which Franciscans exhibited from the first.[67]

Where earlier Franciscan thinkers like Bonaventure had believed that the intuitive knowledge of Being and the transcendentals comes through

[61] Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 39.

[62] Ibid., 37.

[63] Ibid., 45.

[64] Scotus, "Concerning Human Knowledge," 115.

[65] Ibid., 123.

[66] See Basil Heiser O.F.M., "The *Primum Cognitum* According to Duns Scotus," *Franciscan Studies* 23:2 (1942), 193–216.

[67] Gilson, "Avicenne et le point de départ de Duns Scotus," 89–149. See also T. Druart, "Avicenna's Influence on Duns Scotus' Proof for the Existence of God in the *Lectura*," in *Avicenna and His Heritage*, ed. J. Janssens (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002), 253–66.

divine illumination, Scotus makes a drastic move here and describes such knowledge as a natural feature of the mind.[68] In this way, he collapses Henry's "supernatural" way of knowing into the natural power to know. He altogether eliminates the divine concursus in ordinary cognition. Though this is the case, it is also true that the primary intuition of being performs much the same function for Scotus it had in the thought of Bonaventure and Henry. Rather than a distinct type of knowledge with its own conceptual content, intuition constitutes an intellectual capacity to "check" the truth and certitude of the ideas the mind gains in abstraction.[69] To put it in Scotus' own words, intuition involves knowing a thing *as* being – or existent – and thus as present before the mind.[70]

It should come as no surprise that Scotus' understanding of abstraction closely resembles the Avicennian understanding of his Franciscan forebears, especially Bonaventure, who described abstraction in terms of "contuition." In abstraction, Scotus affirms that the intellect basically strips a particular of any material determinants so as to view it in a state of complete disembodiment; the species which is the product of abstraction from phantasms therefore divulges the essence or quiddity of a particular entity as it corresponds to an attendant reality.[71] The underlying premise here is that human beings are able to acquire "clear and distinct" concepts of individual realities since this is the kind of knowledge God Himself has. This makes sense if one bears in mind that human beings are stamped with the image of God.

Because the acquisition of knowledge entails a removal of all sensible elements, abstraction for Scotus as for earlier Franciscans, presupposes a dualist separation between the senses and the intellect. For Scotus, the body is not needed to complete the work that is proper to the soul, which is to cognitively "capture" essences on the basis of their instantiations. Although essences are grasped in both abstractive and intuitive cognition, such that there is no difference between *what* is known in the two modes of knowing, Scotus insists that intuitive cognition does not need

[68] Jorge J.E. Gracia, "Scotus' Conception of Metaphysics: The Study of the Transcendentals," *Franciscan Studies* 56 (1998), 153–68.

[69] For Scotus' discussion of and distinction between intuitive and abstractive cognition, see the relevant sections of his *Ordinatio*, translated by Hyman and Walsh in *Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Indiana: Hackett, 1983), 1.1.1.2, 2.3.2.2.

[70] Sebastian Day, *Intuitive Cognition: A Key to the Significance of the Later Scholastics* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1947), 73; cf. *Ordinatio* 2.3.9.6.

[71] On Scotus' understanding of abstraction as correspondence, see Spruit, *Species Intelligibilis*, 262; Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 64.

the species like abstractive cognition. The reason for this is simply that the way in which the essence is apprehended in intuitive cognition involves attention to precisely that which abstractive cognition ignores, namely, the actual existence of the object. Since the object of knowledge is present to the mind in intuitive cognition, no mediating species is needed as is the case in abstractive cognition where ideas can be fabricated about things that do not necessarily exist.[72]

In treating intuition, Scotus distinguishes between intuitions that are perfect and those that are imperfect.[73] "Perfect intuitive cognition is that by which an object is known as existing and actually present."[74] An imperfect intuitive cognition, on the other hand, involves the memory of an intuitive cognition that was obtained in the past. Whether it is perfect or imperfect, Scotus contends that intuitive cognition is the necessary condition of all certain knowledge of realities, inasmuch as it is what ensures that the mind's object is one that actually exists – that it is in fact a being in the real world order.[75] Since human beings have certitude with respect to the observations they make about reality, conversely, there must be a mode of intuitive cognition that makes the subjective verification of true knowledge possible.[76]

Because it guarantees the truth and certitude of human knowledge, intuitive cognition in Scotus' opinion is a "more perfect" form of knowing than abstractive cognition.[77] This is even more true in view of the fact that the capacity for intuitive cognition is what readies the mind to know God. Because the mind can know natural objects intuitively or immediately in this life, Scotus elaborates, it is predisposed to grasp God immediately by intuition in the life to come.[78] Although Scotus affirms that the abstractive faculty is competent to infer an intelligible species from a sense species or phantasm, it is not at once capable of guaranteeing the veracity and certitude of ideas and thus saving knowledge from skepticism.[79]

In his account of illumination, Scotus presupposes his distinction between abstractive and intuitive cognition in stressing that the mind is

[72] Day, *Intuitive Cognition*, 89; cf. *Ordinatio* 4.49.12.6.

[73] *Ordinatio* 3.14.3.4.

[74] Day, *Intuitive Cognition*, 78.

[75] Ibid., 82; cf. *Ordinatio* 4.45.2.12.

[76] Day, *Intuitive Cognition*, 83.

[77] Ibid., 88; cf. *Ordinatio* 1.2.7.42 and 2.9.2.19.

[78] *Ordinatio* 4.10.8.5; Konstantin Koser, O.F.M., "The Basic Significance of Knowledge for Christian Perfection According to Duns Scotus," *Franciscan Studies* 8 (1948), 153–72.

[79] On Scotus' interest in establishing the fact of cognitive certitude, see Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 75–6.

naturally equipped in its primary knowledge of Being to achieve certain knowledge of real beings, and thus to establish that there is no need for divine concurrence in any aspect of human cognition.[80] Because the nature of being is univocal – the Being the mind knows is that which is manifested in really existing beings – those beings are not only intrinsically knowable but the mind is also structured so that it cannot help but grasp that and what those beings are.

Knowledge of God

Scotus' decision to eliminate illumination from ordinary knowledge had immediate repercussions in the account he gave of the knowledge of God. In the first place, it gave rise to the novel idea that it is possible to know things about God, above all, that He exists, by purely natural means. Where his Franciscan predecessors had produced a plurality of proofs for the existence of God, however, Scotus concentrates his efforts on preparing just one proof. Although he drafted this proof numerous times over the course of his career, its basic structures remain constant.[81] Not unlike Henry, Scotus begins his proof by observing that there are many different finite beings. On the assumption that being is univocal and that it is the first thing the mind naturally knows, Scotus concludes that there exists a Being that includes and gives rise to all these beings. Naturally, this infinite Being is God.[82]

On Scotus' claim, this proof is consistent with Anselm's argument, according to which the Being "than which nothing greater can be thought" necessarily exists in reality if it exists in thought.[83] Although this proof admittedly involves a number of sub-proofs which cannot all be

[80] Scotus, "Concerning Human Knowledge," 121–2; Stephen D. Dumont, "Theology as a Science and Duns Scotus' Distinction between Intuitive and Abstractive Cognition," *Speculum* 64:3 (1989), 579–99.

[81] This is according to Allan B. Wolter in "The Existence and Nature of God" in *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1990), 265. A first draft of Scotus' proof appears in the *Lectura;* a second in the *Reportata Parisiensa* (a Latin-English critical edition of this version has been produced by Allan B. Wolter and Marilyn McCord Adams in "Duns Scotus' Parisian Proof for the Existence of God," *Franciscan Studies* 42 (1986), 248–321); a third, in the *Ordinatio*; see "The Existence of God", in *Duns Scotus: Philosophical Writings*; and a final version in the *De Primo Principio*, ed. Evan Roche (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 1949).

[82] Scotus, "The Existence of God," 47.

[83] Robert Prentice, "The *De Primo Principio* of John Duns Scotus as a Thirteenth-Century *Proslogion*," *Antonianum* 39 (1964), 77–109.

treated here, what has been said about it suffices to illustrate Scotus' general understanding of the way to prove the existence of God. While this way is an *a posteriori* one that is based on inferences "from creatures," Scotus insists it is nonetheless incontrovertible, insofar as it relies on the doctrine of the univocity of being, which makes it safe to make claims about the infinite Being on the basis of things known about finite beings.

Like Henry, Scotus adds that finite beings not only make it possible to establish the existence of Being but also reveal aspects of that Being's essence by way of their own essences.[84] Although he admits that the quiddity of God Himself cannot be fully grasped in this life, given the unbreachable gap between the finite and the infinite, he still affirms that God's essence is perceivable in a limited sense through the creatures that reflect it in virtue of their univocal connection to Him. This innovative natural theology is one result of the decision Scotus made to collapse Henry's supernatural way of acquiring infallibly certain knowledge of reality and God into the intrinsic abilities of the mind when he declared that the mind's first object – Being – is not known by special or supernatural illumination but innately or naturally.

Although Scotus became the first Christian scholar to claim that God could be known by natural reason alone, he did not altogether deny the role of what he calls the supernatural knowledge of God, or knowledge by special illumination.[85] In Scotus' view, knowledge that falls within this category includes the knowledge that God is Triune and that He is the source and end of all things. While all human agents act toward certain ends, Scotus notes that most have no idea what the ultimate, supernatural end of their striving is.[86] In fact, they cannot know what that end is, because all that is supernatural is inaccessible to nature, as is the knowledge of what is required in order to reach the supernatural end.[87]

To sum up, human beings have no natural inclination toward the supernatural, because there is absolutely nothing supernatural about nature.[88] If human beings are oriented toward the supernatural, this has nothing to do with them and everything to do with the fact that the one who gives

[84] Scotus, *Ordinatio*, vol. 3, 1.3.1; this text is translated under the title "Man's Natural Knowledge of God," in *Duns Scotus: Philosophical Writings*, 13–33.

[85] This question has been translated by Allan Wolter, O.F.M., in his article, "Duns Scotus on the Necessity of Revealed Knowledge," *Franciscan Studies* (1951), 231–72.

[86] Ibid., 244–5.

[87] Ibid., 244–6.

[88] Allan B. Wolter, "The Natural Desire for the Supernatural," in *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus*, 133.

the natural powers is supernatural.[89] For this reason, Scotus insists that all knowledge of God's nature and His status as the end of human life "must be given in a supernatural manner."[90] That is to say, supernatural knowledge must be bestowed through God's benevolent will to impart it; similarly, it must be received through a spontaneous response to Him on the part of the human will. For Scotus, a personal response to God is emphatically not a rational matter but a matter of the will.[91] To have faith that God is Triune and that He is the goal of human life is to take a leap beyond reason.[92] Although reason is abandoned in the leap which the will makes in faith, Scotus does not think it is denigrated but perfected in this instance, because it thereby attains to the love of God for which it was made.

Augustinian and Franciscan Thought

Although Olivi and Ghent did not espouse the "classic" Augustinianism that has been attributed to Bonaventure, scholars often speak of them as key participants in a "neo-Augustinian" revival that took place in the generation after Bonaventure. They maintain that, to the time of Duns Scotus and his departure from earlier tradition, Franciscans were Augustinians through and through, especially with respect to the theory of knowledge by illumination.[93] In the foregoing, I have challenged these assumptions, first by differentiating between the illumination accounts of Augustine and Bonaventure, and then by showing that, in rejecting illumination, Scotus responded to Henry who responded to Olivi, who critiqued illumination with Bonaventure's account rather than Augustine's in mind.

As I have explained, Bonaventure conceived of divine illumination as the source of eternal reasons – more specifically, the concepts of Being and its three main properties – which supervise human acts of knowing to ensure their truth and certitude. Although he deliberately construed illumination as a supervisory or extrinsic influence in order to give an account of the mind's intimacy with God and absolute dependence on Him that reflected the experience of St. Francis, Bonaventure's successors quickly identified the philosophical problems inherent in that account.

[89] Wolter, "Duns Scotus on the Necessity of Revealed Knowledge," 259.
[90] Ibid., 261.
[91] Ibid., 244.
[92] Ibid., 237.
[93] Raymond Macken O.F.M., "Henry of Ghent and Augustine," in *Ad litteram: Authoritative Texts and their Medieval Readers* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 251–74; Dumont, "Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus," 292, 296.

Chief amongst these, at least in Olivi's mind, was that the concursus of illumination, coupled with the Franciscan standard of immediate knowledge, would give way to the error of ontologism. On top of this, Olivi believed that illumination as Bonaventure defined it reduces cognition to a zero-sum game in which human beings compete with God to perform their own acts of knowing, such that the status of cognition is ambiguously situated somewhere between the natural and the supernatural. Although the critiques Olivi leveled against illumination have generally been considered applicable to Augustine's account as well as Bonaventure's, this opinion only carries weight if the two accounts really are interchangeable – and I have demonstrated that they are not. While Bonaventure adhered to a standard of immediate knowledge and identified illumination as an extrinsic and interfering influence, Augustine saw human knowledge as subject to gradual development through the use of an intellectual capacity that is an intrinsic gift of God. For this reason his account of illumination is not subject to the accusations that the grace of illumination engenders ontologism or undermines the integrity of nature as is normally supposed.[94]

Because Olivi's critiques were in fact legitimate in the case of Bonaventure, however, Franciscans working after him faced the challenge of promulgating the Franciscan intellectual tradition the Seraphic Doctor had founded even while eradicating the inconsistencies in it. Henry of Ghent made an initial attempt to do this by removing the influence of the divine light from the knowing process. In doing this, he avoided ontologism and preserved the integrity of the intellect even while maintaining an essential role for illumination in cognition as the final guarantor of certitude. Yet Henry's attempt to reduce significantly the concurrence of the divine light did not satisfy Scotus, who held that any divine concurrence whatsoever threatens the integrity of the intellect and therefore undermines the possibility of genuine knowledge.

On the basis of this argument, Scotus eliminated illumination and proceeded to explain how human beings are naturally competent to fulfil all the intellectual responsibilities they formerly shared with God, on account of an intuitive knowledge of Being which is not illumined but intrinsic. Ultimately, consequently, Franciscan thinkers obtained an account of the human cognitive power as an intrinsic one such as Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas always maintained. Yet this understanding of the intrinsic power differed significantly from that which the three Augustinians presupposed. For it denied at some level that the divine light is the condition of possibility of the intrinsic power, and it entailed a new notion of the nature of the

[94] Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. 2, 262, 289.

knowledge that the mind is competent to procure by its powers. According to this novel epistemological standard, knowledge involves the actual, immediate expression of its object rather than a gradual process of discovery.

Although Olivi, Ghent, and Scotus reconsidered Bonaventure's views on illumination, that is, on the conditions that make knowledge possible, they did not question his understanding of the nature of knowledge itself. If anything, they sought to spell out the logical implications of that understanding and present it in its most coherent form. So long as "Augustinian" illumination seemed suited to helping them achieve their ends, they invoked it. When illumination began to hinder the accomplishment of Franciscan purposes, however, it was discarded. Thus, although changes and developments in presentation can be traced through the work of Bonaventure, Olivi, Henry, and Scotus, no monumental shift in the fundamental concept of knowledge being espoused can honestly be discerned.

By affirming this, I by no means wish to imply that all Franciscans hold exactly the same views on epistemological matters. This clearly is not the case. Olivi, for instance, rejects the intelligible species, while Scotus insists on its indispensability in abstraction. Bonaventure and Henry argue that the intuitive knowledge of being that makes the mind adequate to know reality comes from God, where Scotus contends that it is built into the very fabric of human nature. Although there are admittedly these sorts of differences in perspective on particulars, the basic structures of Franciscan philosophy seemingly remain constant: the intuitive knowledge of Being is always regarded as fundamental to abstraction, no matter whether it is said to come supernaturally or naturally. Furthermore, abstraction is conceived in an originally Avicennian fashion as the immediate and totalized knowledge of an individual essence, whether or not the intelligible species is said to enter into it.

Such views on human knowledge were originally derived from broader theological and metaphysical assumptions that Franciscans adopted from Richard of St. Victor and Avicenna, respectively, in the attempt to articulate positions that were consistent with Franciscan ideals. Although Franciscan thinkers working over the course of the thirteenth century may have used different forms of argument to articulate these views, they rarely deviated from the underlying theological assumptions that were the hallmark of their school.

If illumination was abandoned, consequently, it was not because the most basic Franciscan assumptions were being abandoned. Rather it was because Franciscans were working out their commitment to carrying those assumptions, especially about the nature of knowledge, to their logical conclusions. As I have already suggested, the Franciscan concept of knowledge has its

origins in the thought of Avicenna, whose philosophy lends itself to derivation from Victorine theological doctrines. The idea that Being is the first object of the intellect, the new notion of abstraction as "correspondence" between thought and reality which entails a dualism of sense and intellect, and the ontological proof for the existence of God, all came from Avicenna.

When the Victorine and Avicennian background of Franciscan thought is taken into consideration, a reason arises to reconsider the normal division of late thirteenth-century thinkers into Augustinian and Aristotelian schools, where Franciscans are classified as Augustinians, at least until Scotus, who turned in new philosophical directions.[95] In contrast to this received view, I have stressed that there is tremendous continuity of thought amongst thirteenth-century Franciscan thinkers. On my reading, Bonaventure and Duns Scotus do not present their readers with mutually exclusive systems. Rather, their work represents different phases in the gradual emergence of a philosophy that is based on Franciscan ideals and purged of internal contradictions.

As I previously suggested, late thirteenth-century Franciscans did not reject the early Franciscan views formulated by Bonaventure so much as they gradually settled on what Franciscans always inchoately thought, adjusting their uses of sources, terms, and arguments in the process. The fact that such adjustments were made should not lead the scholar to conclude that fundamental shifts in underlying meaning were simultaneously taking place. When the relevant texts are examined with a view to the theological source of significance, the varying forms of philosophical argumentation can be traced to shared assumptions; and if there are assumptions that have hardly changed in the whole history of the Franciscan intellectual tradition since Bonaventure, even if they have been more fully elaborated in the course of time, they are assumptions about the structure of Trinitarian theology and the purpose of the Incarnation of Christ.[96]

[95] See Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure and the Coincidence of Opposites* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978), 5; Christopher Cullen, *Bonaventure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 2; Bert Roest, *A History of Franciscan Education* (Boston: Brill, 2000).

[96] See Juan Carlos Flores, *Henry of Ghent: Metaphysics and the Trinity* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2006); Maria Calisi, *Trinitarian Perspectives in the Franciscan Theological Tradition* (St. Bonaventure: Franciscan Institute, 2008); Richard Cross, *Duns Scotus on God* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); idem., *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); idem., "Relations and the Trinity: The Case of Henry of Ghent and John Duns Scotus," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 16 (2005), 1–21; Russell L. Friedman, *Medieval Trinitarian Theology from Aquinas to Ockham* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 5, 18, 46: on Henry; 110: on Scotus.

Like all ideas, the Franciscan idea of knowledge simply took time – at least three generations – to emerge. As it emerged, it simultaneously moved out from under the guise of Augustinian illumination.

These conclusions bear directly on my assessment of the received story of illumination's thirteenth-century decline that is most elaborately recounted by Stephen Marrone in his two-volume book on the topic.[97] Marrone takes the work of Étienne Gilson as the point of departure for his study of illumination in ten thirteenth-century "Augustinians" (i.e. Franciscans). For that reason, he construes the theory of knowledge by illumination which Augustine espoused as an unsystematic and "mystical" one. Although Marrone acknowledges that the "illiterate" people of the early Middle Ages were content with such an account, its inferiority quickly became obvious once Aristotle's works on cognition were introduced.[98]

[97] Aside from Marrone, Patrick James Doyle is the only other author of an extended English-language assessment of the decline of divine illumination in the thirteenth century, namely, his PhD thesis on the "Disintegration of Divine Illumination Theory." Like Marrone, he takes the work of Étienne Gilson as the point of departure for his study of the disintegration of divine illumination theory in the thought of Peter of Trabes, Richard of Middleton, and William of Ware. Gilson had spoken of an Augustinian complex of inseparable doctrines that virtually all Franciscan thinkers espoused in the thirteenth century. Some of these doctrines were the plurality of substantial forms, essentialism, the convertibility of existence and essence in creatures, the formal distinction, and of course, divine illumination. Doyle's project is to determine whether the doctrines were in fact inseparable in the thought of the figures that are the focus of his study. In other words, he set out to see whether the rejection of divine illumination entailed the rejection of the other doctrines in the complex. Doyle found that it did not and confessed that he was surprised by this discovery. Since he supposed that all the doctrines in the complex were truly Augustinian, as Gilson indicated, he thought it odd that one doctrine could so suddenly be eliminated after it had been considered indispensable for centuries. What Doyle apparently does not recognize is that the doctrines in Gilson's "Augustinian" complex are not Augustinian but distinctly Franciscan and originally Avicennian. The research presented here has revealed that illumination remained a feature of Franciscan thought only so long as it helped Franciscans achieve their principal objective of articulating and advancing Franciscan ideals, and no longer. Once it became clear that illumination makes it impossible to affirm the other doctrines in the Franciscan complex in a consistent manner, it had to be abandoned. From this perspective, it comes as no surprise that late thirteenth-century Franciscans such as Peter, Richard, and William, who rejected illumination, also held fast to their other philosophical assumptions, for it was those very assumptions that rendered illumination untenable.

[98] Marrone, *The Light of Thy Countenance*, vol. 1, 11.

In view of the threat Aristotle posed to the authority of Augustine, Marrone explains that "ultra-conservative" Augustinians, most notably Bonaventure, put forth a concerted effort to systematize Augustine's theory of knowledge even while incorporating some Aristotelian elements, such as the recognition of the indispensability of sense knowledge. Other Augustinians, such as Henry of Ghent, realized the inadequacy of Bonaventure's attempt and proposed other possibilities. Eventually, Augustinians acknowledged the futility of their efforts to salvage Augustine's account.[99] In the thought of Duns Scotus, Augustinian illumination was finally abandoned, and the Aristotelian ideal of knowledge came to prevail. This is exactly the ideal that Marrone insists that modern thinkers adopted. Because such different interpretations of illumination were presented by the ten thirteenth-century Augustinians whose thought Marrone examines, the author concludes that there is no continuity of thought in the "Augustinian" school. What bound thirteenth-century Augustinians together, in his opinion, was not shared assumptions concerning the nature of knowledge, but an appreciation for the same metaphors.[100]

Although Marrone's narrative of the thirteenth-century decline of illumination is the generally accepted one, my inquiry into the history of illumination theory would seem to suggest that this narrative entails a number of significant oversights. The first concerns the vast difference between Augustinian and Franciscan thought. Marrone and many others conflate the illumination accounts of Augustine and Bonaventure, and they usually do so without making any attempt to determine what Augustine or any other pre-thirteenth-century thinker actually meant by illumination through a theologically contextualized interpretation of the account.

This oversight makes for a number of other mistakes in the received story of illumination's thirteenth-century demise. In the first place, the conflation of Augustinian and Franciscan thought on illumination causes many interpreters to misconstrue the place of Aristotle in thirteenth-

[99] Ibid., vol. 2, 260–1: "Classic Augustinian doctrines were simply too fragile for the world of late thirteenth-century thought. Bonaventure and his followers had made a heroic effort to translate what they considered the essential core of Christian speculation into the idiom of high medieval scholasticism. Yet vast areas of their thought appeared to possess a unity more contrived than real, unfit to withstand scrutiny in the harsh light of the new Aristotelianiazing world."

[100] Ibid., 16.

century thought. Contrary to what many have supposed, the revolutionary cognitive ideal that eventually brought about the rejection of illumination was not Aristotelian but Avicennian. That ideal did not come from outside the allegedly Augustinian tradition but from within it. It was not a genuinely Augustinian ideal but one that was consistent with Franciscan ideals. Although the vast majority of scholars have depicted the early Franciscans as conservatives, desperate to preserve a longstanding tradition, they were in fact innovators, grounding a novel theory of knowledge on the authority of trusted spiritual leaders. While that theory of knowledge is admittedly incompatible with Aristotle's, the real Augustinian theory itself is not.

For this reason, it seems a mistake to conclude with the consensus opinion that the decline of divine illumination theory was directly proportional to the rise of an Aristotelian cognitive ideal. By the appearnce of it, the question that preoccupied thirteenth-century theologians most did not concern how to accommodate Aristotle, as is generally believed, but how to advance the cause of Francis or that of Dominic. The research I have presented confirms this contention by showing that the demise of illumination was gradually brought about by the emergence of the distinctly Franciscan philosophical ideal from under the guise of Augustinian illumination in the hands of figures like Olivi, Ghent, and Scotus.

The Avicennian and therefore non-Augustinian underpinnings of this ideal escape the notice of many scholars, inasmuch as they fail to investigate what the thought of Augustine on illumination actually entails, and so overlook the difference between Augustinian and Franciscan thought. Such an oversight results from the use of an interpretive approach that is common amongst medieval historians, which involves reading arguments concerning illumination at face value rather than in theological context. The employment of that method is what has led many to misidentify the cause of the decline of divine illumination, to say nothing of the late medieval sources of modern thought, and to misconstrue the boundary lines between late medieval intellectual schools.

On my argument, those schools should not be demarcated according to philosophical allegiances to Aristotle, Augustine, or anyone else, since medieval thinkers mainly invoked philosophical authorities in order to accomplish theological ends. Rather, the lines should be drawn on the basis of the shared theological assumptions that motivate the use of different authorities. If the lines between schools are drawn on theological grounds, then they will not be drawn between thirteenth-century

Augustinians from Aristotelians. Instead, they will distinguish between Dominicans who adhered to Augustine's theological doctrines and updated the theory of knowledge that followed from them by articulating that theory in the popular terms of Aristotle and other philosophers; and Franciscans, who opted for a Victorine theology that lent itself to the appropriation of Avicennian philosophy.

Although early Franciscans formulated their own rendition of this philosophy in Augustinian language for the sake of making their new intellectual tradition look consistent with the longstanding tradition of Augustine, it was actually Dominicans like Aquinas who upheld that tradition by translating its basic tenets into new forms of argument. For this reason, it seems viable to conclude that those typically associated with the "Aristotelian" school of the thirteenth century were the real Augustinians of the era, while the so-called Augustinians were part of an intellectual movement inspired by St. Francis that was altogether innovative. And it is in that innovative intellectual system rather than the longstanding Augustinian or Aristotelian traditions (which I have hinted are more compatible than mutually exclusive) that the sources of modern thought are to be sought.

Franciscan and Modern Thought

In recent years, many scholars have begun to inquire into the late medieval sources of modern thought. Increasingly, they have been finding reasons to locate the origins of modern thought in the Franciscan intellectual tradition; by some accounts, in fact, modernity is merely the extension of a "particular middle ages."[101] Although much of the discussion centres on John Duns Scotus and his successor, William of Ockham, because of their admittedly radical intellectual maneuvers, my argument concerning the continuity of Franciscan thought suggests that the ideals that invited the invention of the modern emerged as early as Bonaventure.

The connections between Franciscan and modern thought can be and have been made on a number of levels. While some make them from a fairly neutral standpoint, others do so on the assumption that the modern developments Franciscan thinkers anticipated were either positive

[101] Catherine Pickstock, "Modernity and Scholasticism: A Critique of Recent Invocations of Univocity," *Antonianum* 78 (2003), 33.

or negative.[102] On the positive side, some have said that the Franciscan idea of the univocity of being, for example, is "true and salutory" because it makes it possible to know a great deal more about God than was previously thought possible by, say, Aquinas.[103] According to others, the direct realism and correspondence theory of knowledge that have roots in Franciscan thought represent beneficial developments in the field of epistemology, which made it possible for modern thinkers to obtain complete certainty and avoid skepticism.[104]

[102] More "neutral" proponents of this view include: Burrell, *Faith and Freedom*, 106: "Such an autonomous movement prepared of course by what understanding delivers to it yet itself moving us beyond proposals to action fairly defines willing for Scotus. It also marks him as a modern man for whom freedom is auto-determination of an indifferent power." In *Être et représentation* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999) and *Duns Scot, la rigueur de la charité* (Paris: Le Cerf, 1998), Olivier Boulnois traces the rise of modern "onto-theology" and voluntarism to Scotus. See also his related article, "Quand commence l'ontothéologie? Aristote, Thomas d'Aquin et Duns Scot," *Revue Thomiste* (1995), 84–108. Next see Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination from the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Michael Allen Gillespie, *The Theological Origins of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Leff, *Dissolution of the Medieval Outlook*, 9: Ockham and Scotus stand at the source of a new way in theology and philosophy; 35: "Scotus in a very real sense stands at the parting of the ways; to him more than anyone may be attributed the beginnings of a systematic rethinking of knowledge and belief in the form in which it was to be both transcended and developed by Ockham and his successors." A number of these authors, including Funkenstein, Gillespie, and Leff, locate the roots of modernity in the nominalism of Ockham. Those that see Franciscan philosophical developments in a more positive light include Marilyn McCord Adams; Richard Cross; Mary Beth Ingham in "Re-situating Scotist Thought," *Modern Theology* 21:4 (2005), 609–18; Robert Pasnau; and Thomas Williams. Proponents of the theological sensibility called "Radical Orthodoxy" hold a more negative view. There has been considerable debate between those who hold positive and negative views of Scotus. Aspects of this debate have been captured in the October 2005 edition of *Modern Theology*, and in articles by scholars like Richard Cross, including ' "Where Angels Fear to Tread: Duns Scotus and Radical Orthodoxy," *Antonianum* 76 (2001), 1–36.

[103] Thomas Williams, "The Doctrine of Univocity of True and Salutory," *Modern Theology* 21:4 (2005), 575–85.

[104] See Pasnau's *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages*. Pasnau discusses what he considers to be the standard scholastic account of knowledge, best formulated by Aquinas, and the critique of this account by the Franciscans Olivi and William of Ockham. According to Pasnau, Olivi and Ockham offer a much more viable account of epistemological representation that was utterly innovative at the time in that it dispensed with the need for the mediation of an intelligible species and gave the mind direct access to reality. By doing this, the Franciscan account anticipated the direct realist account of knowledge which Pasnau favors, and which he thinks saves knowledge from scepticism.

On the negative side, some have observed that Scotus' decision to collapse the supernatural into the natural in virtue of his doctrine of univocity and the related idea that the intuitive knowledge of Being is an intrinsic feature of the mind rather than the product of divine illumination, resulted in a previously unimagined realm of "pure nature." In that realm, the mind can supposedly operate without acknowledging the fact that nature and its attendant capacities are a gift from God in the first place.[105]

For the present purposes, it is relevant to add that human nature as Scotus defined it in keeping with the Franciscan conception of the image of God entails a fully actualized power to cognize particular entities in an immediate manner, or to discern the exact correlation between thought and reality, and to do so with absolute certitude. In order to gain access to those powers, Franciscans like Scotus supposed that the human subject simply needs to make a turn – often mistakenly said to have been instigated by Augustine – to identify the self as the perfectly adequate foundation for all knowledge. Scotus placed so much confidence in the natural powers of human reason that he affirmed the possibility of proving God's existence without recourse to faith in what He revealed through His Incarnate Son. Since he was among the first to affirm this, Scotus can be listed among the founders of the discipline of natural theology.

Although Scotus believed the existence of God could be proved by purely natural means, he argued that Christian faith in the Triune, Incarnate God is not a matter of reason but only a matter of the will working under the impulse of love for God. As such, faith entails a leap over, against, and beyond reason; it is basically irrational. By affirming such things, Scotus has been said to lay the groundwork for new ideas about the nature of human reason and religious faith that came to predominate in modernity. In his proto-rationalist definition of reason, for instance, no element akin to faith is said to enter in. In other words, human knowledge is not subject to development, doubt, and so on. If a thought is to be pronounced a true item of knowledge, it must be a perfectly formed one that corresponds precisely to its attendant reality.

Since reason cannot entail any element akin to uncertainty or faith on this rationalist definition, faith, conversely, has no natural bearing on human reasoning, and there are no obvious reasons for maintaining it. Although Augustinians have long been accused of separating reflections on God's existence from efforts to live by faith in Christ, inventing the

[105] See John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdman's, 2005), 93–6. Schmutz, "La doctrine médiévale des causes et la théologie de la nature pure (13–17 siécles)," 237.

discipline of natural theology in the process, this segregation, which presupposes a dichotomy between reason and faith, seems more properly associated with Scotus and even the earlier Franciscans who innovatively defined the two concepts in mutually exclusive terms.[106]

To confirm that the trends toward rationalism and fideism that late medieval Franciscans apparently set had an impact on later thinkers, one need only look so far as the work of those famous representatives of modernity, René Descartes and Blaise Pascal. The conceptual parallels are striking. Take as an example the characteristically modern epistemological account for which Descartes is famous. When this philosophy of knowledge is examined alongside the theory of knowledge that runs through the thirteenth-century Franciscan intellectual tradition, the similarities come into clear relief.

In his *Meditations*, Descartes states his belief that all knowledge acquired through the senses is changing, uncertain, and deceptive – that any claims made on the basis of it are subject to skepticism.[107] He thus discloses his adherence to the dualism that was arguably introduced in the West by Franciscans. In an effort to overcome skepticism, he determined to withdraw from all that is subject to uncertainty in order to identify what is unquestionably certain. After putting the sensible world aside, Descartes found that he remained certain of just one thing, namely, that he is a thinking thing (*res cogitans*), and if thinking, existing.[108] This idea of himself as a thinking thing was his first and most fundamental "clear and distinct" or certain idea.

On establishing this, Descartes goes on to inquire into the conditions of possibility for his being a thinking thing. He concludes that the existence of God satisfies these conditions. Because nothing in the sensible world is capable of convincing him that he is a thinking thing, he infers that the source of His conviction must be a God who is beyond the world.[109] As the cause of Descartes' ability to be conscious of himself, the idea of God is prior to the idea of the self as a thinking thing. As such, it is the most clear and distinct idea there is. Any time the mind

[106] Catherine Pickstock describes this development as the loss of "an integrally conceptual and mystical path" in "Duns Scotus: His Historical and Contemporary Significance," *Modern Theology*, 21:4 (Oct. 2005), 548.

[107] René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. Donald A. Cress, fourth edition (Indiana: Hackett, 1998), 60.

[108] Ibid., 64.

[109] Ibid., 76–7.

turns within to consider what it is, it is bound to find that there is a God, per Descartes' version of the ontological argument.

Since God is the source of certainty about the existence of the self, Descartes further states that He is at once the source of a human cognitive faculty that cannot make mistakes in its efforts to know beings.[110] In other words, the clear and distinct idea of Him which entails the same sort of idea of the self enables human beings to obtain "clear and distinct" ideas of all entities.[111] In cases of mistaken understanding, Descartes insists that the intellect is not the cause of error but rather the will which fails to fully orientate itself toward God.[112]

Not unlike his Franciscan forebears, in summary, Descartes promotes a subjective turn that results in the realization that the self is stamped with the innate knowledge that it exists, that is, with the innate knowledge of Being that is the foundation for all true and certain or "clear and distinct" knowledge of natural beings. Implicit in that same knowledge of Being is the knowledge of the existence of the divine Being, at least so long as the will is properly ordered toward Him. Although dualism, the subjective turn, the correspondence theory of knowledge, the project of natural theology, and the concern to avoid skepticism and obtain certainty are often described as typically modern ideas which have their beginnings in the thought of Descartes, rationalist philosophical tenets like these can already be detected in the proponents of the medieval Franciscan intellectual tradition.

The same holds true in the case of the fideistic outlook of Descartes' younger contemporary Blaise Pascal, who informed his readers that reason has no power to prove anything about the God of Christian faith, but advised them to wager that the God of this faith exists all the same, for they have nothing to lose and much to gain by making this arbitrary leap of faith.[113] Because faith so construed fails to meet rationalist epistemological standards, religious belief as Pascal and others understood it soon came to be defined as an altogether irrational sentiment. In the work of Kant, for example, even the proofs for God's existence that Descartes had earlier espoused were pronounced untenable. For according to Kant, the *a priori* knowledge of the transcendentals that renders the human subject fit to achieve perfection in cognition only includes the power to make sense of

[110] Ibid., 81–3.

[111] Ibid., 92.

[112] Ibid., 84.

[113] Gilson notes the relation between Franciscan thought and that of Descartes and Pascal in *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 48, 174, 459, 650.

empirical reality. By contrast to Descartes, Kant did not think that transcendental knowledge entails but rather excludes the knowledge of God.

Although Kant and other Enlightenment thinkers would still affirm that human beings should adhere to faith, they dispensed for all practical purposes with any reasons for acknowledging the divine as the condition of possibility of human being and knowing. In point of fact, they imagined a realm of pure nature in which human beings are the fully autonomous masters of themselves and their knowledge, at least as it concerns natural realities. Numerous scholars have highlighted the detrimental consequences of the development of this individualist notion that human beings need answer to no one but themselves, for that is the notion that has wreaked social and political havoc over the course of the modern period.[114] Although I cannot detail those consequences here, what I have said should serve to underline the point that there are in fact affinities between late medieval Franciscan and modern thought.

In light of those affinities, I would like to spend the last pages of this chapter qualifying the sense in which a connection between Franciscan and modern thought can seemingly be made. For it seems to me that thirteenth-century Franciscans, especially Bonaventure, did not use their ideals in the same ways as the modern figures who absorbed those ideals into their own thought through a chain of intellectual events that cannot be traced within the focused scope of this work. Take as an example the Franciscan interest in the possibility of knowledge and the problem of skepticism, which has also greatly preoccupied the minds of modern thinkers. In the case of Bonaventure and even Duns Scotus, it hardly seems like the possibility of obtaining certainty in knowledge was really a live concern. Both of these Franciscans took certitude as a given and simply sought to explain *why* it is a given.[115]

The reason for doing this, of course, was to render the Franciscan outlook the condition of possibility of all certitude in knowledge, in a polemical context where Franciscans faced the strong intellectual competition of the Dominican Thomas Aquinas. When the historical circumstances that engendered the Franciscan interest in certainty are taken into consideration, it becomes clear that Bonaventure, for one, did not feel genuinely threatened by skepticism, but was committed to exonerating his order of accusations that were being leveled against it by those that called the viability of its intellectual life into question.

[114] See works by proponents of Radical Orthodoxy, and Gillespie, *Theological Origins of Modernity*.

[115] Tachau, *Vision and Certitude*, 76.

Apart from this issue, the recognizably proto-modern "subjective turn" that originally takes place in the writings of Bonaventure – and is accompanied by an ontological theistic proof – does not seem commensurate with the characteristically modern turn that Descartes made when he contemplated himself as a "thinking thing." In Bonaventure, the turn is to a source of divine help that lies within, and the account of the turn is given in order to encourage the deep intimacy with God and the sensitivity to His purposes that would enable Franciscans to love and serve others as Francis did. As such, Bonaventure's subjective turn is a far cry from the modern one that leads to the rejection of God and the promotion of human beings as their own rulers.

Although the *a priori* knowledge of Being and the transcendentals that can be identified on making the Franciscan turn to the subject are posited to explain how human beings can achieve virtual perfection in knowing reality, the motivation for the doctrine of the transcendentals was not to engender the rationalism that renders faith irrelevant but to encourage Franciscans to see all the things God has made as He sees them and to treat them accordingly; in sum, to uphold a high standard of intellectual purity and intimacy with God. Here, reason however seemingly rationalistically defined still operates within the context of faith.

While faith for Franciscans is admittedly something that subsists in the absence of reasons and intellectual activity, and it thrives on a will to love God, it is not yet a fideist or utterly irrational faith. For the Franciscan definition of faith was only introduced to underscore the point that knowledge amounts to nothing if it is not motivated by the love that prevents understanding from eliciting pride, which in turn motivates uncharitable behavior toward those who are supposedly less knowledgeable.

Though it is true that Franciscans defined faith, reason, and their interrelationship in new ways that would enable later thinkers to create the extremes of rationalism and fideism, they clearly did not assume the extremes themselves, nor did they worry in the modern way whether faith and reason, defined as extremes, can be reconciled. If they defined faith and reason in innovative ways, it was only for the sake of giving systematic expression to Francis' experience, encouraging a lifestyle like his, and validating that lifestyle in an academic setting – at least in the case of Bonaventure, or making Franciscan thought consistent – in the case of Scotus. Although they brought reason and faith together in their own way, thirteenth-century Franciscans saw reason and faith as reconcilable and as reconciled. As a result, it does not seem fair to affirm that the ideas drawn from the Franciscan tradition that had a detrimental

impact in modernity are problematic in themselves. The ideals clearly are not intrinsically detrimental. By and large, in fact, their purposes and impact are positive, so long as they are utilized in the context of Franciscan faith and life for which they were invented and intended.

If Franciscan ideas became problematic in the modern period, I am arguing that this can only be because they were removed from their proper context and used for purposes that were never foreseen. Inasmuch as the ideals were employed outside of context, they are effectively incommensurable with and unrelated to the ideals maintained in their appropriate context. Since the detrimental ideals are not truly the Franciscan ones, Franciscans are not directly responsible for modern developments, whether they be positive or negative. As Olivier Boulnois has argued, it is essential to differentiate between the project of conducting a genealogy of modern thought – a study of the origins of the ideas modern thinkers invoked – and the project of determining where the responsibility lies for the use of those ideas in distinctly modern ways.[116]

In light of this observation, it would seem that the connection between Franciscan and modern thought is at best an indirect one. To the extent that Franciscans already used their ideas for purposes that were inconsistent with Francis' original intents, one might say that they made their ideas available to those who de-contextualized them in a rigorous and total manner. Bonaventure appears to have done something like this when he transformed Franciscan ideals into a normative cognitive standard, for the sake of legitimizing the Franciscan presence in the academic context.

However he may have attempted to justify this effort as one that was conducive to the fulfillment of Francis' wishes, it patently was not.[117] Francis had called his followers to serve the poor and downtrodden, at the expense of involvement in academic life. In arguing to the contrary and going even further to transform Franciscan principles which were meant to support and motivate a particular sort of active ministerial life into a universally applicable philosophical standard, Bonaventure had

[116] See Olivier Boulnois, "Reading Duns Scotus: From History to Philosophy," trans. F.C. Bauerschmidt, in *Modern Theology* 21:4 (2005), 603–8.

[117] In *A History of the Franciscan Order* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 140–1, John Moorman goes so far as to say that Bonaventure never understood Francis' vision at all; see also E. Randolph Daniel, "St Bonaventure: A Faithful Disciple of St. Francis? A Re-examination of the Question," in *Sanctus Bonaventura 1274–1974*, vol. 2 (1973), 170–87. To this same effect, J. Guy Bougerol quotes friar Jacopone da Todi, who famously proclaimed that "accursed Paris is destroying Assisi," in his *Introduction to the Writings of St. Bonaventure* (Paterston: St. Anthony Guild, 1964), 13.

already begun to de-contextualize the Franciscan vision. Ironically, then, the idolization of Francis' message through efforts to promote him in a context he never wished to enter resulted in the distortion of that message – just as the idolization of Aquinas and the villainization of Duns Scotus have caused some modern readers to produce interpretations of these thinkers that are of questionable integrity.

Although Bonaventure could not have known the future outcome of his efforts, he was not without recourse to an objective perspective. Augustine had long since explained the sense in which objectivity in knowledge is attainable, namely, by refusing to prize anything, even intellectual or spiritual goals, as the all-inclusive goods they cannot be. An orientation toward the objective of knowing the common Good makes it possible to evaluate temporal things from a perspective that is objective, not because it is all-encompassing, but because it precludes attitudes like pride, envy, fear, and malice that inhibit the cultivation of a predisposition to perceive all truth as God's Truth, that is, to find the Good in all things rather than just one particular thing. To maintain an orientation toward the common Good, Augustine affirmed, is to live in imitation of Christ. Since there are as many ways of being oriented to the Father, through the Son in the Spirit, as there are human spirits, his account opens up every conceivable way of imitating Christ.

In equating the imitation of Christ with the literal imitation of Francis, albeit a Francis whose ministerial guidelines had been redefined as philosophical ones, Bonaventure restricted the range of possible ways to imitate Christ. At the same time, he began to remove the Franciscan vision from its original context, making it available for later, larger efforts to do the same. Although Bonaventure and Scotus might be considered indirect contributors to the rise of modernity when their work is regarded in this light, the full responsibility for modern developments cannot be said to rest with them but with subsequent scholars who in their diverse ways de-contextualized the ideals they had inherited from the late medievals, affecting in the process the real and ultimate decline of the account of knowledge by divine illumination.

7

The Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge

Introduction to a Theological Theory of Knowledge

Although it may not be justifiable to hold medieval Franciscans accountable for the later de-contextualization of their views, it would seemingly be equally inadvisable to overlook that this de-contextualization did occur over the course of the modern period and to fail to reckon with its consequences. For the present purposes, the most important of those consequences is the rise of mutually exclusive definitions of reason and faith, according to which reason is not subject to elements like faith (development, doubt) and faith is inherently irrational. As I explain in what follows, such "rationalist" and "fideist" notions of reason and faith have given rise to two questions which have become central concerns for contemporary epistemologists and philosophers of religion. These are questions concerning the very possibility of knowledge and the rationality of faith.

My argument in this chapter turns on the contention that reason and faith as Augustine and his followers defined them mutually include rather than preclude one another. On those grounds, I advance the thesis that contemporary thinkers seeking to address these problems might take a new approach to doing so in future. The approach I have in mind would not involve relying on and reacting against the epistemological presuppositions that have been handed down as a result of the late

Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge,
by Lydia Schumacher

medieval decline of divine illumination theory. Rather, it would entail a recovery of Augustine's understanding of knowledge by illumination which follows the trend set by Anselm and Aquinas in translating that understanding into philosophical terms that are intelligible and relevant today.

This chapter is divided into three main sections. In the first part, I will briefly define reason and faith, as they have often been understood in modern times as opposite extremes. In this context, I make no attempt to trace the development of modern ideas about reason and faith from Franciscan origins; I do not assign responsibility to particular thinkers for modern epistemological developments; nor do I take into consideration the admittedly great variety of ways in which modern thinkers have spoken of reason and faith on the assumption that there is no element of faith in reason or reason in faith. This assumption, I will argue, is the main feature of what I call a "non-theological" theory of knowledge for the obvious reason that knowledge, on this account, does not include any element akin to faith.

Here, I will only briefly make the connection between the rise to predominance of a non-theological notion of knowledge and the genesis of the questions concerning the rationality of faith and the possibility of knowledge. I will mention some of the main approaches that have been taken to these questions. I will argue that the reasons many of the answers that have been given prove inconclusive is that they continue to operate on the non-theological understanding of knowledge that initially generates and subsequently perpetuates the questions.

On those grounds, I will explain why I think those very questions are questionable, such that one need not feel obligated to respond to them on their own terms. In addition, I will submit that the resolution of the questions depends on the retrieval of the "theological" idea of knowledge that Augustine and his faithful interpreters entertained. This idea, which arguably prevailed in pre-modern times, was eclipsed and rendered unintelligible in large part owing to the late medieval decline of illumination. In this idea, reason is defined so that it naturally involves elements resembling faith. Faith, therefore, is implicitly justified in virtue of the role it plays in rendering reason functional and sound.

In the second part of the chapter, I will sketch the basic structure of a concept of reason that entails faith – which will be recognizable from the study of Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas. In doing this, I anticipate future efforts to give a far more elaborate explanation of what I mean by a theological theory of knowledge, which will be formulated in conversation with contemporary epistemological accounts and concerns. In the

third part of the chapter, I will argue that faith, and even specifically Christian faith in the Triune, Incarnate God, most effectively explains the element of faith that enters into reason. Inasmuch as this is true, faith is "justified, not because its objects can be rendered intelligible, but because it makes other things intelligible." In suggesting this, I follow the example of Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas, who enacted the faith-based theories of knowledge they gleaned from the Neo-Platonists, dialecticians, and Aristotelians, respectively, through an appeal to the God of Christian belief.

By defining reason so that it entails faith, and faith so that it naturally bears on human reasoning, I aim to lay the groundwork for future efforts to offer a more fully elaborated theological theory of knowledge. In such an account, the questions concerning the rationality of faith and the possibility of knowledge are overturned and implicitly addressed as reason is shown to require faith, and even specifically Christian faith.

In the non-theological outlook on knowledge that gradually became pervasive in the wake of the late medieval decline of divine illumination, reason and faith are defined so that they mutually exclude rather than entail one another. According to this outlook, human reasoning that is worthy of being pronounced objective results in knowledge claims that are either self-evident or backed by incontrovertible empirical evidence. By this account, moreover, the mind is competent to determine of its own accord that its thoughts are adequately supported by evidence: that they fully correspond to their attendant realities. So construed, human reason is not subject to uncertainty, deficiency, development, dependency – in sum, to any element like faith that entails some intellectual lack.

Since claims to know an immaterial God cannot be validated by such rationalist standards, faith in Him comes to be conceived as belief in the absence of sound reasons. Since faith and reason are by definition irreconcilable, the question concerning whether and how they are reconcilable appears.[1] In the modern period, Christian philosophers of religion have taken two main approaches to responding to this question. Some have attempted to show that there is a sort of reliable evidence for belief in God, often by arguing in support of various theistic proofs for the existence of God, especially cosmological and teleological ones. The

[1] Prominent objectors to the rationality of belief in God include David Hume, Immanuel Kant, and more recently, W. K. Clifford, J. L. Mackie, and Bertrand Russell.

method these have employed – that of the natural theologian – has involved demonstrating that it is possible to provide arguments for the rationality of religious belief that make no appeal to faith and so conform to rationalist standards.[2]

Other proponents of Christian faith have simply embraced the fact that faith is irrational by rationalist standards and have chosen to adhere to it all the same.[3] Since these two approaches render belief in God more or less rational than it seems appropriate for it to be, many have failed to find them fully satisfactory. To be fair, I should note that the situation in the scholarship has taken a different turn in recent years.[4] Many philosophers of religion have recognized the inadequacy of answers to the question of religious belief that tend toward rationalist or fideist extremes. In recent traditions such as Reformed Epistemology, to take one example, scholars have refused to address the question concerning the logic of faith on the basis of prevailing epistemological assumptions. Instead, they have inquired whether it is even valid to apply rationalist standards to faith, endeavoring to show that faith can be proved reasonable on its own terms, inasmuch as it makes the mind reasonable.[5] Because they refuse to comply with rationalist standards, however, Reformed Epistemologists have sometimes been accused of fideism.[6]

There is some weight to that critique. For while Reformed Epistemologists have construed faith so that it naturally relates to reason, they have not given the full-scale re-definition of reason that includes faith. Since they have only completed half of the project that would make

[2] Certain Neo-Thomist Catholic thinkers have been some of the most famous proponents of the natural theological project, against which Protestants like Karl Barth and even some Catholics reacted. Another more recent proponent of the argument that the existence of God can be demonstrated from the cosmos is William Lane Craig, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (London: Macmillan, 1979). The slightly more moderate conclusion of the natural theologian Richard Swinburne is that theistic proofs provide probable as opposed to incontrovertible evidence for God's existence. See *The Existence of God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

[3] Blaise Pascal, Soren Kierkegaard, and Ludwig Wittgenstein are usually cited in discussions of fideism, although it is arguable that those who have labeled these thinkers fideists have misunderstood them.

[4] I am grateful to Sarah Coakley for encouraging me to emphasize this point.

[5] Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Reason Within the Bounds of Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976).

[6] See Richard Swinburne, "Review of Warranted Christian Belief by Alvin Plantinga," *Religious Studies* 37 (2001), 203–14.

their case for faith believable to those who lack faith, they have yet to situate their arguments for the rationality of faith on the firm grounds which could only evidently be created by a preliminary re-definition of reason as entailing faith. Even if Reformed Epistemologists and others working in a similar vein were to give a theological account of knowledge, it would remain for such proponents of theism to demonstrate that the God whose existence is in question is the Triune God of Christian faith as opposed to the object of any other monotheist belief system or simply the "God of the philosophers."

In light of the difficulties associated with addressing the question concerning the logic of faith, at least on the basis of the non-theological assumptions that generate the question in the first place, I would like to present an alternative approach to the question. This approach does not involve imagining new ways to reconcile reason and faith as they have been defined in recent history; nor does it entail a half-hearted effort to challenge those definitions – a challenge in which faith but not yet reason is recast. While most philosophers of religion begin by inquiring into the rationality of faith, the approach I am advocating actually overturns that question in considering whether it is possible to be rational without faith. To sum up, it starts by re-evaluating reason rather than faith.

After re-defining reason so that it cannot do without elements like faith, it becomes possible to make the point that faith is intrinsically rational – not because it is comprehensible in itself, but because it is the force that propels the mind toward comprehension. Where this way forward in arguing for the rationality of faith is taken, questions concerning the knowledge of God cease to be treated separately from questions concerning knowledge more generally, as they often are in contemporary philosophy. Instead, the two questions are answered together.

An added benefit of addressing religious and general epistemological questions together is that it becomes possible to resolve some of the problems pertaining to ordinary knowledge together with those that pertain to religious knowledge. As it concerns ordinary knowledge, the main problem today is that of proving the very possibility of knowledge. Although the project of proving the rationality of faith is one that has been a concern at least since the Enlightenment, this question only recently arose when many so-called post-modern philosophers began to point out that, contrary to the common modern contention, human knowledge is subject to the elements of uncertainty, development, and so on, which supposedly undermine the validity of knowledge claims. On

discovering that the rationalist standard of knowledge is unattainable and thus untenable, many post-moderns concluded that it is impossible to reason objectively at all.

The argument I am making here is that this conclusion need not necessarily follow if reason is explained such that the elements that have been declared detrimental to rationality – those elements that resemble faith – are shown to be vital components of rationality. At this stage, I would be remiss if I failed to mention that something along these lines has been done by representatives of modern philosophical traditions such as phenomenology and pragmatism, and by figures like Michael Polanyi, who combined what he took to be the key aspects of both those traditions.[7] Though Polanyi occasionally refers explicitly to faith, not all do. In spite of this, an examination of the theories of knowledge in question would confirm that the theories do take features of knowledge that could be described in terms of faith into full consideration.

While this is admittedly the case, it remains for religious and even specifically Christian religious faith in a Triune, Incarnate God to be identified with the element of faith that enters into human reasoning. In other words, it remains for those who have redefined reason in terms of faith to relate the element of faith they acknowledge to religious faith, just as it remains for those who have redefined faith in terms of reason to found their arguments fully by redefining reason in terms of faith. To perform those tasks in that order would be to enact faith-based theories of knowledge even while implicitly establishing the rationality of religious faith. It would be to resolve the questions concerning the possibility of knowledge in general and the logic of faith together, as they apparently must be if they are to be conclusively resolved. The formulation of such a theological account of knowledge, however, is a task that seemingly remains to be completed.

As I have already suggested, the first step involved in undertaking it is to define knowledge such that it entails faith. In this regard it both possible and advisable to incorporate the findings of contemporary philosophers who have articulated faith-based accounts of knowledge, as Augustine

[7] Phenomenologists I have in mind include Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty; pragmatists include C.S. Peirce and William James. Michael Polanyi's *magnum opus*, from which I have learned much, is *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974).

did with Neo-Platonism and Aquinas with Aristotelianism, since such scholars often do the job Christians need done better than Christian thinkers have managed. Although an effort to appropriate the contemporary philosophies most conducive to the Christian purpose of articulating a faith-based theory of knowledge that is intelligible and relevant in the current context is not one that can be undertaken now, my intention is to make a full-blown effort to do this in future. For the time being, I simply offer a general explanation of a faith-based concept of knowledge, as I understand it.

Reason in a Theological Theory of Knowledge

The hallmark of a faith-based theory of knowledge, I submit, is its recognition of the fact that any effort to know cannot begin with the full attainment of understanding but only with a goal of attaining it. By setting an intellectual goal, the mind effectively puts its faith in the attainability of the goal. This, incidentally, is the sense in which one can say with Plato in his *Meno* dialogue that the mind may simultaneously know and lack knowledge of whatever it is thinking about. For the mind can know its object potentially, by anticipating knowing it, even when it has yet to encounter that object in reality.

The faith the mind places in the knowability of some reality is what compels it to do whatever is relevant to reaching the goal of knowing that reality. In attempting to do this, the mind must draw on the knowledge it already has so as to make speculations about the nature of the object of knowledge it does not have but wants to have and believes it can have. While existing knowledge makes it possible to meet the goal eventually, it is noteworthy that it also plays a part in determining the goal in the first place, inasmuch as that which the mind knows already indicates what it desires and is able to know.

By placing faith in such pre-existing knowledge and the desires and abilities it entails, the mind becomes capable of working to obtain new knowledge. For that knowledge enables the intellect to form a provisional picture of the object that is still unknown; it thus informs the faith in that object and attunes the mind to recognize the object of faith when it is finally encountered, sustaining its efforts until a flash of insight engenders the realization that this encounter has occurred. In this effort to meet an intellectual objective – to find a suitable solution to a question or substantiate an intuition – it is often necessary to go out in search of new information, to form hypothetical solutions on the basis of that

information and subsequently test those solutions and revise or even reject them. To get things right, in other words, it is often necessary to get things wrong, or at least less right. Unknowing, or faith, in sum, is a key component in the process of coming to know.

While this inevitable feature of human inquiry might be regarded as a hindrance to objectivity by some modern accounts, according to which objectivity entails the totalized knowledge of any object under consideration, knowledge as I have been describing it can be considered objective if objectivity is said to exist wherever a human subject has set a cognitive objective toward which it is actively working. To the degree that the mind is oriented toward that objective – and puts its faith in the attainability of the objective – which gives it a sense of direction and a rationale behind its actions, one can say that the mind *is* objective and that the knowledge claims the subject makes are justified, even if they have yet to be fully substantiated.

On this definition, objectivity, like knowledge itself, is not an all–or-nothing affair but a matter of degrees, insofar as all objects of knowledge must be objects of faith first. That is to say, they must be unfulfilled cognitive goals before they can become cognitive achievements. The paradoxical point that comes into relief here is that the only way for a human subject to be objective is to set and work toward an objective that is compatible with their subjective interests and abilities.

Whenever the mind meets an objective it has set for itself, the understanding that results becomes a permanent extension of its cognitive equipment. The mind relies on or has faith in that understanding in future efforts to make sense of the world. Furthermore, that understanding inspires a growth in faith inasmuch as it instills confidence that other goals can be met and then enables the mind to meet them in cognitive acts that result in further understanding.

The more habitually the mind brings understanding it already has to bear in its efforts to acquire new knowledge, the more one might say that it lives by faith in that understanding and grows certain as to its truth. Certitude, it turns out, is acquired by degrees, just like objectivity in knowledge. It exists to the extent that the mind uses its understanding in further acts of knowing. By putting it to use, the mind does not regard that understanding as an end but as a means – not as an object of understanding but as something on which it relies subconsciously or in faith. To dwell on the understanding itself would be to cease to employ it in the effort to understand something else. Even after faith makes it possible to acquire understanding, consequently, the understanding that has been acquired becomes again a matter of faith, albeit a more informed faith.

This ongoing interplay of faith with understanding is what allows for growth in understanding. Apart from the faith through which intellectual objectives are set and met, there would seem to be no way to span the distance between not knowing and knowing, and as a result, there would be no knowledge at all.

So far, I have been listing the positive ways in which faith makes it possible to progress toward cognitive objectives. In what follows, I want to mention a few of the ways faith helps the mind overcome hindrances to intellectual progress. As I have already intimated, the very possibility of progress is contingent on the willingness of the knowing agent to relinquish ideas whenever new evidence renders them outdated – to acknowledge ideas as provisional as opposed to absolute. In this instance, what is needed is an attitude of open-mindedness or faith, which checks the mind's natural tendency to cling to the belief that it has already captured the truth and has nothing more to learn. Such a prideful outlook ironically inhibits the mind's ability to overcome the less than totally true notions it inevitably entertains and therefore grow in understanding. To sum up, pride undermines the human ability to work toward an objective and thus to reason objectively.

As pride causes those that exhibit it to regard their own ideas and causes as the be-all and end-all of human existence, narrowing their perspective on what is right and good in a way that excludes the ideas of others, it also tends to foster animosity between those who entertain and cling to their different opinions; it renders people willing to undermine the good of others in the effort to promote their own. As such, it is the source of the many destructive and therefore irrational behaviors that wrath engenders.

By contrast to this, faith promotes peace so far as it predisposes those who live by it to accept the fact that they are finite and that they can profit from attending to the ideas of others, which may help them expand and clarify their own. Although faith instills intellectual purpose, it simultaneously keeps the mind from holding so tightly to that purpose as to defeat the purpose by sacrificing the well-being of others for the sake of fulfilling it, and thus from abandoning the integrity that is the source of the stability of the individual as well as the collective mind.

In addition to restraining pride and wrath, faith saves those who adhere to it from the apathy that often arises as a result of realizing the immensity of a cognitive objective or the risks and unknowns involved in straining toward it. Such fears in the face of obstacles can lead the mind to give up on its objective altogether and in this way abandon its objectivity. In this case, faith has the power to make the mind reasonable because it

keeps those that have it steadily fixed on a goal so that when challenges arise, they can overcome rather than be deterred by them.

The upshot of the discussion thus far is that faith is reasonable not because its objects are fully comprehensible but because it gives human beings cognitive objectives and makes it possible to meet those objectives as well as to overcome obstacles to doing so and thus to being rational. Much more could be said about how faith accomplishes all this. Moreover, more could be done to put a faith-based description of human knowing into contemporary philosophical terms, addressing contemporary epistemological problems and positions in the process. Like many other topics of discussion, however, all of that lies outside the compass of this chapter and waits to be treated in a book-length work on the topic.

Faith in a Theological Theory of Knowledge

A lingering question that falls within the scope of the present inquiry concerns the reasons for identifying the faith component that seems so essential to human reasoning with faith in a transcendent or divine being. The first observation I would make in response to this question is that belief in the divine seems to entail faith in the most "objective" objective imaginable. Although an objective is the necessary condition for human rationality, it is not at once the sufficient condition, insofar as it is entirely possible to set irrational objectives.

A variety of examples of such objectives could be enumerated here. One irrational objective would be that of obtaining something one cannot possibly have or should not have. Others would involve organizing all of life around the attainment of temporal things like power, fame, fortune, physical satisfaction, or an excess of any of these things. Insofar as those who exhibit envy, greed, lust, or gluttony stake all their hopes for happiness on things that are fleeting or hard to find in the human situation, they make themselves slaves to desires, the constant satisfaction of which cannot be guaranteed. They put their sanity at the mercy of transient circumstances.

Faith in a transcendent being, by contrast, instructs that nothing in this world can offer lasting fulfillment, whether it be material attainments, physical pleasures, even ideals and causes. This is true so far as there is nothing in the world that is not without certain limitations; nothing that is the all-inclusive, unending good that the divine is said to be. By adopting the objective of knowing God or at least transcending the self, the mind sets the most "objective" objective it possibly could because this

objective does not come from within the self but from beyond human beings and the transient world in which they live.[8]

When the intellect sets a transcendent objective, it acquires the resources it needs in order to pursue its immediate goals in view of the overarching goal of grasping something that surpasses all immediate things and that cannot be reduced to any one of them. By these means, it is kept from the seven sins – if I may be so bold as to say the word – of pride, anger, apathy, envy, greed, lust, and gluttony that cause the mind in different ways to work from the assumption that its happiness depends on temporal things, skewing its priorities and perspective on those things in ways that ultimately prove fatal to its ability to think and act rationally in the circumstances that arise.[9]

Although it is true that operating on the assumption that happiness consists in immediate attainments can serve to secure happiness in certain situations, this approach makes it impossible to find the good in or make the best of all the circumstances that are likely to present themselves at some point to those who live in the human situation. For this reason, the seven ways in which many work to secure immediate personal happiness turn out to be ways in which they ensure that their default state will be one of discontentment. By checking the notion that happiness consists in specific temporal attainments, faith allows those that have it to maintain a positive outlook, no matter how things may change. By preserving the mind's stability in this manner, faith has a rationalizing effect, which is evidenced by the unbroken spirit of contentment that is the hallmark of the sound mind.

While the points made previously serve to confirm that faith in a transcendent being is indispensible to human rationality, they do not disclose why Christian faith might be seen as exceptionally well suited to rendering reason sound. What has been said thus far, in other words, fails to expound the reasons for believing in the Triune, Incarnate God as opposed to the object of any other monotheist religious or philosophical system.

Ostensibly, all such systems entail belief in one God as well as an overarching goal of knowing Him; furthermore, all offer some account of how to meet that goal. For this reason, there is much that members of one religious tradition can learn from those working within another about how to work toward the goal of knowing God. Although

[8] See Fergus Kerr, *Immortal Longings: Versions of Transcending Humanity* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997).

[9] Proverbs 6:16–19.

all systems of faith share that goal in common, Christianity is unique in that it offers a concrete account of what makes it possible for that goal to actually be attained: an account of how God entered into the realm of human beings so that they might approach Him in His.

By way of the doctrine of Incarnation, the Christian system grounds the affirmation of the possibility of spanning the gap between the immanent and the transcendent that all monotheists make. At His Incarnation, the Son of God revealed what human beings had forgotten at the fall, namely, that there is a God who made the world and that the chief end of humankind is to know Him and to make Him known. In His life on earth, Christ revealed God as He carried on doing what He does eternally, which is to express the Spirit of God that glorifies God the Father.[10]

In thus reflecting the nature of God, Christ made it known that God's nature is Triune. He disclosed that the one God who knows Himself and makes Himself known does so because there are three elements in His singular act of knowing, namely, the knower, the known, and their act of knowing. In affirming the Triune nature of God and His Incarnation, it would appear that the Christian faith enacts the possibility of providing the account of one God and His knowability by human beings that all monotheists seek to give. In light of this, one might say that Christian belief is supremely rational, not because members of other traditions are less capable of being rational, but because Christianity seems to offer the best rationale for the ability to be rational that all faithful people have. This ability is one that people with faith of a non-Christian kind can and in many cases do put to better use than the Christians who can give a reason for it, which is why it is vital for Christians to regard other religious faiths with an entirely open mind.

The Christian teaching is that Christ's coming accounts for this ability to be rational. For as Christ imaged the Triune nature of God in the form of a human person by expressing His Spirit or mind in view of the Father's glory, He simultaneously established that all human persons are made in God's image to do the same. That is to say, He revealed that they are designed to express the unique spirit or mind the Son gives them at their creation for the glory of none but God the Father; that this, in fact, is their way of reaching the objective of knowing the Father.[11]

Although those who put faith in Christ commit to working toward this end, it is important to note that they do not fully recover the capacity to reason with faith in God's ultimate goodness in the same instance. Instead,

[10] John 3:19–20, 5:20: "I seek not to please myself but Him who sent me."
[11] John 14:6.

it waits for them to make their faith completely effective by cultivating the habit of reasoning under the influence of faith until they memorize how to do so.[12] Every time a mind that functions in faith allows the overarching objective of knowing God to inform its efforts to meet its immediate goals, it cultivates this habit. It allows the belief that God is ultimate to govern its evaluation of its objects. As a result, it is kept from considering the circumstances that come under its purview as the be-all and end-all of human existence that only God is – a perspective that produces the attitudes like pride and envy that prove so detrimental to rationality.

While it keeps the mind from considering the things that come to its attention as ultimate ends, faith also makes it possible to perceive temporal experiences as a means to the end of knowing God. It renders perceptible the good that God is able to bring from those experiences. Inasmuch as faith in God is what allows reason to identify the goodness of the circumstances, the knowledge of those circumstances mediates or doubles as the knowledge of God that is attainable in this life, which is knowledge of Him through things that are other than Him.

By way of knowing those things in faith, the mind begins to develop a sense of what it would be like to know the unknowable God. The more it works in faith, the stronger its sense of what is involved in knowing God – and the faith that compels it to know God – is bound to become. If the mind can form a habit of reasoning in faith – a habit of evaluating reality in the spirit or mind of the Son who regards all things with a view to the Father's goodness, which is a habit of praying without ceasing – then it becomes predisposed to recognize the God of faith who is addressed in prayer working good in all things. This predisposition, in turn, readies the eyes of the mind to gaze upon God Himself at the point when He is revealed.[13] By performing acts of knowing as the Father performs His, namely, through the Son and in His Spirit, consequently, the mind's acts of knowing in this life become the means through which it begins to participate already in God's eternal life, which simply consists in knowing God.[14]

When it is construed along these lines, the process of coming to know God comes into relief as a process analogous to the one that is involved in coming to know any object whatsoever, that is, a process of "faith seeking understanding." In such a process, the mind allows its faith in the attainability of an as yet unmet objective to guide all its rational endeavors.

[12] John 15:1–8: abide in me; 15:9–17: remain in my love.

[13] 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

[14] John 17:3.

Those endeavors convey the hope the mind has to attain its object – a hope that increases the more automatically faith is brought to bear. To the extent that faith works in hope, it fosters a perspective that cannot help but work itself out in human actions which are the expression of the love the mind has for its object.[15]

The difference between the process of faith seeking understanding that is involved in knowing natural objects and knowing God comes down to this: He cannot be reduced to any ordinary object that is encountered in this life and for that reason can never be grasped in this life. The fact that He is currently inaccessible, however, is precisely the reason why the objective of knowing Him is the ultimate cognitive objective; why faith in Him is the paradigmatic instance of the faith that enters into all acts of reasoning; why those acts can and must be regarded as the venue in which God is indirectly known and made known in the present life. The transcendence of the God whose existence is accounted for by His Triune nature and whose knowability is explained by His Incarnation, in summary, is the reason why the most sensible course of action for human beings is to allow belief in Him to impact efforts to know the things that are not God until doing so is second nature.

While the Christian calling to cultivate a habit of reasoning in faith may seem laborious, one ought to bear in mind that Christ promised His followers an easy yoke.[16] To live by faith, after all, is simply to take advantage of the grace God gives in abundance. The only "work" human beings have to do is to realize in increasing measure what Christ has already accomplished on their behalf. This is something they do by opening their hands in faith in all circumstances, so as to receive through those circumstances the grace that is the knowledge of the goodness of God.[17]

Although this "work" may initially prove difficult, inasmuch as it requires the mind to let go of all the things it has come to regard as essential to happiness, the sacrifice of the self and its desires is ultimately bound to bring a life of unparalleled freedom and joy.[18] For as followers of Christ allow themselves to be reformed by the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, pride is counteracted with humility, wrath with peace, apathy with diligence, envy with kindness, greed with generosity,

[15] 1 Corinthians 13:13: faith working in love.

[16] Matthew 11:30.

[17] John 6:29, "Jesus answered, the work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent."

[18] John 8:34–6, "I tell you the truth: everyone who sins is a slave to sin … if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

lust with integrity, and gluttony with self-control.[19] To sum up, the sins that ensured that the default state of the mind would be one of discontentment are substituted for the virtues that make it possible to thrive in all things.

Since those who lose their lives for Christ's sake only forfeit the mind-narrowing attitudes that prevent them from identifying the good or God in all the events of their lives and thus from finding happiness in those events, one might say that they do not truly lose their lives, their interests, and their abilities in laying them at the feet of the Savior. What they lose is what prevented them from living freely in keeping with their interests and abilities. What they forfeit, in summary, is what hindered them from being themselves by working toward the objectives they were uniquely designed by God to fulfill, and thus from being objective or rational.[20]

Although the message many modern philosophers propounded was that human knowledge and happiness are best served when the subject turns to itself to find the norms by which to judge reality, I have been suggesting that just the opposite is true. For to the extent that the mind serves itself instead of God, seeing itself rather than Him as the ultimate end in itself, it is bound to stake its hopes for happiness on the fulfillment of personal desires for things that must fade. In doing this, as I have argued, the mind undermines its ability to secure ongoing happiness. Such behavior can hardly be called rational. Yet the irrationality of it, as G.K. Chesterton has written, is not proved by any error in philosophical argument but by the manifest mistake of human lives and whole societies that are rent apart by the effects of sin.[21]

Chesterton goes on to affirm that the most effective way for philosophers to promote human rationality is not through the characteristically modern doctrine of human perfectibility, but through the old doctrine of original sin. Giving credence to this doctrine, Chesterton contends, entails a realistic and therefore rational recognition of what it takes to be a sane human being, namely, an acknowledgment of the fallen conditions of human existence and the need for gradual redemption through faith in Christ. The alternative to recognizing that faith is required to be reasonable is the discontentment and discord that can be witnessed everywhere

[19] Galatians 5:22–3.

[20] John 11:25: "I am the resurrection and the life;" 12:25: "The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." As St. Augustine wrote in his sermon on 1 John 4:4–12, "love God and do what you will."

[21] G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), 148.

today; the choice, as Dorothy Sayers describes it, is between "creed or chaos," "dogma or disaster."[22]

In affirming such things, I have been trying to gesture toward the sense in which faith, specifically Christian faith in a Triune, Incarnate God, is rational. Although the divine object of faith may not be fully comprehensible, it would seem that belief in Him is nonetheless rational, inasmuch as it bears the burden of rendering reason functional and sound.[23] Faith does this by forcing the mind to acknowledge simultaneously that it does not yet know a certain object of knowledge and that it desires to know that object. In this way, faith puts reason in the right position to attain to the desired knowledge, whether it is of something ordinary or of God. To argue along these lines, I indicated that the philosopher or theologian ought not begin by addressing the question concerning the rationality of faith, but by re-defining reason so that it presupposes faith. To do this is to overturn the very question concerning the logic of faith and shift the onus of proof off of those who believe and on to those who doubt.

From that point, it becomes possible to identify faith in the Triune, Incarnate God as the paradigmatic instance of the faith-component that is involved in all reasoning. On those grounds, moreover, one can finally conclude that Christian belief is rational, inasmuch as it enables those who

[22] Dorothy Sayers, *Creed or Chaos: Why Christians Must Choose Either Dogma or Disaster* (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 1999).

[23] Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* 23: "mysticism keeps men sane … the whole secret of mysticism is this: that man can understand everything by the help of what he does not understanding;" 29: "it is idle to talk always of the alternative of reason and faith. Reason itself is a matter of faith;" 104: "some faith in life is required even to improve it … some dissatisfaction with things as they are is necessary even in order to be satisfied." Terry Eagleton argues along similar lines in his witty *Reason, Faith, and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate* (New Haven: Yale, 2009), which is primarily a response to the militant atheism of the likes of Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. According to Eagleton, the problem with the perspective of "Ditchkins," as he dubs the two atheists, is that they assume that faith is something that subsists in the absence of reasons, that it is blind. On Eagleton's contention, however, that is not at all what faith is. For as the author points out, all reasoning requires faith; faith, in fact, is the condition of possibility of reason. In his chapter on "faith and reason" (109–39), Eagleton gives some reasons in support of this claim. He notes some of the detrimental practical consequences of reason's failure to operate in an attitude of faith, showing these up for what they are: irrational. In the end he concludes that, "reason alone can face down a barbarous irrationalism, but that to do so it must draw upon forces and sources of faith which run deeper than itself and which can therefore bear an unsettling resemblance to the very irrationalism one is seeking to repel" (161).

adhere to it to be rational and to explain fully why they are able to be rational. To articulate an account of reason that entails elements akin to faith and invoke Christian faith to account for those elements would be to articulate a theological theory of knowledge in which questions concerning reason and faith are addressed together, such that the problems that result from addressing those questions apart are implicitly resolved.

In establishing the logic of faith on the basis of the claim that it is impossible to give an account of how to reason soundly without appealing to faith, such an theological theory would reconfigure the nature of the work required of those who make it their work to prove the rationality of faith in the face of objectors who demand a "sign" to validate belief. For on a theological account, the project of proving the logic of faith is not, or at least not merely, a matter of producing proofs on paper. Rather it involves the decidedly spiritual labor of surrendering the self to the transforming power of a faith that fosters soundness of mind as well as fellowship with others, while remaining ready on demand to explain why the Triune, Incarnate God is the reason for the joy this sacrifice readily, if paradoxically, affords.[24] In this instance, the sought-for proof shines through those who do not need to see in order to believe, because they have confidence that a walk in the darkness of faith is at once a journey toward the light of the knowledge of God.

[24] 1 Peter 3:15.

Conclusion

In this work, I set out to delineate the history and future of Augustine's theory of knowledge by divine illumination. In order to do this, I argued that it is essential in all cases to interpret *divine* illumination theory with reference to its *theological* context. By theological context, I had in mind the underlying doctrine of God and His image, which determines the nature of the mind's work, the impact of the fall and redemption on the image, and the intricacies of the process of re-conforming to the lost image, which is illustrated by illumination. This interpretive approach, which has not previously been taken by scholars, who tend to turn immediately to texts where Augustine and his medieval readers explicitly handle the topic of illumination, led me to three main discoveries concerning the history of the illumination account.

The first discovery had to do with Augustine's own understanding of illumination. Normally, Augustinian illumination is interpreted as some sort of extrinsic intellectual influence. For this reason, it is opposed t o Aquinas' idea of the divine light as the source of an intrinsic power to abstract, or to think in unifying terms. The success of extrinsic interpretations of Augustine on illumination, I have suggested, has much to do with the scholarly tendency to project a modern concept of revelation back on to Augustine – a tendency that is checked when "face value" readings of Augustine are set aside in favor of a reading that is attentive to theological context.

In the effort to offer such a reading, I conducted an extended inquiry into some of Augustine's mature theological treatises, above all, *De*

Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge,
by Lydia Schumacher

Trinitate. This work is divided into two main parts. In the first, Augustine details the doctrine of the Triune God as he understands it through the revelation of Christ. The Person of Christ revealed God by manifesting the Spirit of God, who brings glory to the Father. As He did this, the Son simultaneously revealed that all human persons are made to reflect God's image by expressing the spirit or mind that is given by the Son in view of the ultimate goodness of God. To be the *imago dei,* in summary, is to possess an intrinsic intellectual gift to think in unifying or abstract terms, in terms of the existence of one God.

Because the ability to bring the knowledge of God to bear in ordinary knowing was forfeited at the fall, Augustine turns in the second half of his treatise to teach his readers how to re-learn to reflect constantly the image of God and thereby imitate Christ, who glorified the Father in all He did. The seven psychological analogies Augustine introduces over the course of that section are designed to facilitate readers' efforts to form a habit of reasoning in faith and thus undergo the gradual restoration of the image of God that anticipates the ultimate vision of God.

In this process, thoughts and actions are rendered consistent with the professed belief in God as the Highest Good. That process, to summarize, is one that is made possible by the two halves of *De Trinitate*, which form a progressive and interdependent line of inquiry. Where the first half explains what needs to be known of the Triune God in order to reason in the light of faith in Him, the second half actually instructs how to retrain reason to regard all realities in the light of faith in God – even while gesturing toward the Trinity and Incarnation as the Christian doctrines that enact the possibility of doing so – in preparation for the vision of the Light itself.

In view of this, it became clear that Augustine regarded divine illumination as the source of an intrinsic intellectual ability, which is gradually salvaged from the effects of the fall as the mind re-learns to think in unifying terms in view of the existence of one God. Far from the sort of extrinsic or interfering influence scholars normally conceive it to be, illumination is what empowers human beings to harness all of their God-given abilities in and for the purposes of faith, in the process making good of every situation that arises.

This theologically contextualized reading of Augustine led me to a further, connected conclusion concerning what is involved in "updating" Augustine's understanding of knowledge by illumination in a new intellectual context. To do this, I argued, is to operate on the Augustinian theological assumptions that generate a certain concept of the nature of knowledge, articulating that concept in forms of argument that render it

intelligible and relevant in a new context. More specifically, modernizing Augustine's intellectual tradition involves the composition of a two-fold work like his *De Trinitate*, in which an Augustinian doctrine of God and instructions for applying the knowledge of God in the process of conforming to His image – illustrated by illumination – are delineated.

This is the sort of project Anselm of Canterbury undertook when he drew on the resources of dialectic in preparing his *Monologion* and *Prologion*. Furthermore, it is what Aquinas did in appropriating Aristotle and many other authorities in his *Summa Theologiae*. Like Augustine, Anselm and Aquinas sought to offer their intellectually gifted readers all the resources they would need to transform every encounter and experience into a venue for knowing God and making Him known. One important point that came into relief in the course of bolstering this argument is that the theistic demonstrations Anselm and Aquinas include in their works – far from the sort of pre-theological proofs for God's existence that modern thinkers have supposed them to be – are actually formulae for conforming to the image of God, or for increasing the mind's illumination, such as Augustine offered with his psychological analogies.

While the use of a theological method of interpretation allowed me to discern continuity of thought between Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas, it also led me to a second key discovery concerning the history of illumination theory, which was that the thirteenth-century Franciscan Bonaventure, who is commonly regarded as the last and best champion of Augustinian illumination and the Augustinian tradition more generally, did not in fact work in complete conceptual continuity with Augustine. I supported this argument on the grounds that Bonaventure adopted the altogether innovative theological assumptions of the twelfth-century mystic Richard of St. Victor, which generated a new doctrine of the image of God and its cognitive operations.

As I explained, Bonaventure and his Franciscan colleagues formulated their new concept of cognition with the help of philosophical resources they found in the writings of the eleventh-century Arab philosopher Avicenna, which were well suited to their purpose of presenting a philosophical account that was consistent with Franciscan ideals. If they articulated originally Avicennian ideas in the terms of Augustine – especially illumination – I showed that this was mainly for the polemical reasons associated with their efforts to establish the intellectual legitimacy of the friars minor in the Parisian university context.

Notwithstanding his invocation of Augustine, I demonstrated that Bonaventure did not in fact mean what Augustine meant by knowledge and illumination. In his theory, knowledge is not described as subject to

gradual growth through ongoing participation in a unifying mode of thinking. Instead, it is a matter of mentally representing observed realities with perfect precision. According to Bonaventure, this cognitive capacity was not lost at the fall and for that reason does not need to be recovered; this, incidentally, is why I argued that the account of conformity to Christ which Bonaventure gives in his *Itinerarium* – normally described as the last in a line of traditional Augustinian texts on the "ascent" to God – cannot be compared with the one Augustine gives in *De Trinitate* and elsewhere.

Bonaventure insists that this infallible cognitive capacity is instilled by an *a priori* knowledge of Being, which concurs in acts of knowing to ensure their perfection. Bonaventure accounted for this supernatural supervision through an appeal to divine illumination and thus defined illumination as an extrinsic force. Since the intuitive knowledge of Being is ultimately intuitive knowledge of the divine Being, Bonaventure concluded that the existence of God could be proved *a priori*. Although Avicenna had been the first to make such a claim, Bonaventure insisted that his idea of theistic demonstration could be found in Anselm's *Proslogion*. In this way, he transformed Anselm's argument from a tool for conforming to God's image into the ontological proof it has been generally assumed to be ever since.

Although Bonaventure undeniably said what Augustine and Anselm said in a great number of cases, he seemingly did not think as they thought in terms of his theological and philosophical positions. If anyone was the foremost representative of Augustine of the thirteenth century, it was not Bonaventure but his Dominican contemporary Aquinas, who has ironically been accused of abandoning the traditional Augustinian path, inasmuch as he challenged a version of illumination and Anselm's argument and drew on the Aristotelian account of cognition. Although Thomas admittedly did all this, my research led me to conclude that he only questioned the Franciscan interpretations of the traditional Augustinian doctrines in question, even while he translated genuine Augustinian views into the Aristotelian *lingua franca* of the day.

Contrary to what many scholars have supposed in the past, consequently, Aquinas was a whole-hearted advocate of Augustine where Bonaventure became one of the first and foremost proponents of the utterly distinctive Franciscan intellectual tradition, which deserves to be appreciated in its own right. One implication of this discovery – made possible by the theologically contextualized reading of the medieval philosophies in question – was that it called for the re-evaluation of the lines that distinguish late medieval schools of thought.

Although late medieval thinkers have normally been classified according to philosophical preferences for Augustine or Aristotle, I argued that they ought to be categorized in keeping with a theological preference for Augustine or Richard of St. Victor. While the thirteenth-century Dominicans exhibited the former proclivity, which led them to appropriate Aristotelian and many other philosophical resources, Franciscans where characterized by the latter, which lent itself to the incorporation of Avicenna's philosophy. In light of this, it seems clear that the merely philosophical, face value, classification of late medieval thinkers fails to capture the reality of the late medieval intellectual situation, where scholars were not normally philosophers first and foremost but theologians using philosophical resources to accomplish specific religious tasks.

By identifying this, and clearly distinguishing between Bonaventure and Augustine in the process, I came to my third major discovery concerning the reason for the late medieval Franciscan rejection of illumination. In this regard, my main argument was that Franciscans like Duns Scotus did not abandon Augustine's account in favor of an Aristotelian one as is commonly supposed. Rather, they reacted against Bonaventure's extrinsic interpretation of illumination. Though they questioned his understanding of the conditions that make knowledge possible, I showed that they did not in fact challenge the theory of the nature of knowledge which Bonaventure codified. In eliminating illumination, the purpose of Scotus and others was simply to eliminate perceived inconsistencies from what had become the distinctly Franciscan concept of knowledge.

On my argument, that was the concept of knowledge that became prevalent in the modern period, albeit only after it had been rent from the context of Franciscan faith and life for which it was originally designed. Thus distorted, originally Franciscan philosophy engendered what I have called a "non-theological" understanding of knowledge. On this understanding, reason and faith are mutually exclusive extremes, such that reason entails no element of the unknown, and faith is fundamentally irrational. Such rationalist and fideist definitions of reason and faith, respectively, have given rise to the two epistemological questions that have most preoccupied modern minds, namely, the question concerning the rationality of faith – which was raised early in the history of modern philosophy – and the question concerning the very possibility of obtaining objectivity in knowledge, which has only recently been formulated, in the wake of the post-modern critique of the modern standard of knowledge.

Insofar as philosophers and philosophers of religion continue to presuppose or react against the rationalist and fideist ideas that generate these questions in the first place, the solutions they have proposed to the ques-

tions seem inconclusive. For this reason, I argued that future efforts to address contemporary epistemological concerns might entail the introduction of non-mutually exclusive concepts of reason and faith, which do not generate those concerns in the first place. In my study, I showed that Augustine's account of knowledge presupposes such concepts of reason and faith. To introduce non-mutually exclusive concepts of faith and reason in the current context, consequently, would seem to involve the recovery of Augustine's theory of knowledge by illumination.

Those who might make such a recovery in future have the benefit of the precedent Anselm and Aquinas set when they themselves updated Augustine's claim that divine illumination is the condition of possibility of all human knowledge, by translating his notion of knowledge into forms of philosophical argumentation that were intelligible in their own intellectual situations. This book lays the historical groundwork for the project of articulating a "theological" account of knowledge that resembles Augustine's in spirit, if not in form, inasmuch as it identifies what such an account entails and how it was obscured through certain late medieval developments, above all, the elimination of illumination.

That theological theory of knowledge as I envision it will explain what can and must be known about the unknowable God in order to bring belief in Him to bear in knowing reality, and it will provide resources for doing so. The motivation for offering some formulae for conforming to God's image would be to encourage readers to cultivate the habit of reasoning in the light of faith in God's ultimate goodness that makes it possible to make the best of all human experiences. To do that would be to carry on and imitate the redemptive work of God the Son – to refer every thought to the Father, through the Son, in His Spirit – until all that pours forth from the human mind or spirit is a prayer: an experience of divine illumination.

Amen.

Index

Abelard, Peter 86–8
ability (*ingenium*) 48–9
abstraction 8–9, 12, 15, 22, 36–7, 43, 92–4, 97–100, 107–8, 128–9, 145, 160, 162, 165, 174–6, 188–90, 197–8, 203–4, 233, 235
accident 91, 96, 145
active intellect 93, 97–8, 129, 176
Aeterni Patris 14, 156
Albert the Great 15, 90, 113
Alexander of Hales 87, 105–8, 113–16, 120, 124
amor: *see* love (*amor*)
analogy 34, 50, 124, 144–5, 192
anger 225, 227, 230
animal soul 91–2, 125
Anselm of Canterbury 3, 19–20, 66–84, 107–8, 113, 116–17, 131
  as Augustinian 83–4
  conforming to image of God 76–82
  divine illumination 82–3
  image of God 74–6
  introduction 66–74
  Monologion 19, 22, 71–8, 158, 167, 236
  Proslogion 19, 22, 71–82, 107, 139, 148, 158, 167, 236–7
apathy 45, 225, 227, 230
apologetics 156–7, 164, 170
apophatic theology 172
  see also negative theology
a posteriori theistic proof: *see* cosmological argument
a priori theistic proof: *see* ontological argument
Aquinas, Thomas 3, 12–15, 21–2, 67, 90, 108, 112–15, 154–80
  as Augustinian 178–80
  conforming to the image of God 164–73
  divine illumination 173–8
  image of God 160–4
  introduction 154–60
  Summa Theologiae 22, 106, 116, 154, 157–9, 165–70, 173–80
Arab scholarship 88–91, 100

Divine Illumination: The History and Future of Augustine's Theory of Knowledge, by Lydia Schumacher

Aristotle 8, 12, 14–16, 20, 24, 69, 86–90, 99–100
De anima 88–90
Metaphysics 88–9
Organon 69
ascent (to God) 21, 55, 135–6, 140, 150, 237
Augustine on divine illumination 4–7, 58–65
cognitive capacity 4
cognitive certitude 6
cognitive content 4–5
cognitive process 5–6
defining Augustinian illumination 62–5
De magistro 58–60
knowledge of God 7
Soliloquia 60–2
Augustine of Hippo 4–7, 18–19, 25–65
conforming to the image of God 42–57
creation in the image of God 30–9
De Trinitate 18–22, 25–8, 40, 52–8, 71–2, 77, 135, 148, 167, 234–7
divine illumination 4–7, 58–65
doctrine of God 29–30
fall and redemption 39–42
introduction 25–9
Augustinians
Anselm of Canterbury 83–4
Bonaventure 143–53
Franciscans 201–8
Thomas Aquinas 178–80
authority 51–2, 70–1
autonomy 65, 107, 191
Averroes 90, 94
Avicenna 10, 20–1, 24, 85, 88–100, 106–9, 114, 124, 144, 203–4
De anima 88–92, 98, 106
essence vs. existence 95
Metaphysics 89, 94, 107
philosophy of 90–100
"Avicennizing Augustinianism" 109
Ayres, Lewis 26, 28 n.11, 56 n.147

Bacon, Roger 10
Barnes, Michel René 26, 113 n.9
Barth, Karl 74 n.22, 163 n.30, 169 n.57, 220 n.2
Bede the Venerable 69
Being 33, 76, 93–5, 97, 106–7
belief: *see* faith
Benedictine order 68, 70
Bernard of Clairvaux 86, 88
Bible 87
blind(ness) 82, 143
Boethius 68–9, 86
Bonaventure 1–3, 10, 14–16, 20–3, 67, 85, 109–53, 213–16, 236–7
as Augustinian 143–53
Breviloquium 115–16
Collationes in Hexaemeron 117
conforming to the image of God 135–41
creation in the image of God 121–32
De reductione artium ad theologiam 117, 142
divine illumination 141–3
doctrine of God 117–21
fall and redemption 132–5
introduction 110–17
Itinerarium mentis in Deum 21, 116, 135–40, 237
Life of Francis 115–16, 140
Boulnois, Olivier 99 n.47, 209 n.102, 215
Breviloquium 115–16
Brown, Peter 27
Bubacz, Bruce 11
Burrell, David 185, *passim* in notes

capax Dei 125–6, 129
Carolingian renaissance 69–70
Cassiodorus 68

cataphatic theology 168, 172
see also positive theology
Cathar (heresy) 101–2
Catholicism 14, 29, 101, 156–7
certitude/certainty 6, 8, 10, 11–13, 46–7, 64–5, 79, 130, 141, 151–2, 176,189–99, 210, 212–13, 224
Charlemagne 69
"checking" the truth 11, 81, 190, 197
Chesterton, G.K. 231–2
Christendom 68
Christocentrism 120, 138
Cicero 69
circle (of creation) 122, 127
"city of God" 67–8
see also De civitate dei
"clear and distinct" ideas 121, 186, 196–7, 211–12
cogito ergo sum 92
cognitive capacity 4, 34–6, 45, 147, 152, 160
cognitive certitude 6, 64
cognitive content 4–5
cognitive light 141–2
cognitive process 5–6
Collationes in Hexaemeron 117
concursus 10, 97, 126, 129–30, 146, 152, 176, 184, 197, 202
see also influentia
condemnation of 1277 193–4
Confessiones 18, 27
conforming to image of God 42–57, 76–82, 135–41, 165–73
in Anselm 76–82
in Aquinas 165–73
in Augustine 42–57
in Bonaventure 135–41
contingency 123, 126, 169
contuition 130–3, 197
conversion 25–8, 60–1, 151
corporeal analogies 49–53
corporeal vision (*ratio*) 35, 49
correspondence theory of knowledge 127, 152, 185, 189, 204, 209, 212
cosmological argument (*a posteriori* theistic proof) 22, 94, 131, 137, 156, 174, 192, 200, 219
Couvent des Cordeliers 104
created reason 128–31, 189
creation in the image of God 30–9, 121–32
human being 34–9, 127–32
natural order 30–4, 121–7
creator/creation distinction 31, 74, 95, 124, 168, 196
criticisms of psychological analogies 56–7
cross 62, 104, 135, 139, 150
cruci-fixation 120

dark(ness) 60–1, 64–5, 68, 82–3, 143, 233
De anima 88–90, 92, 98, 106
see also Aristotle; Avicenna
De beata vita 50
De civitate dei 67–8
De genesi ad litteram 18, 30–6, 58
De magistro 18, 58–60
De ordine 50
De reductione artium ad theologiam 117, 142
De Trinitate 18–22, 25–8, 40, 52–8, 71–2, 77, 135, 148, 167, 234–7
death 93
decline of divine illumination 22–4, 181–216
Augustinian and Franciscan thought 201–8
Franciscan and modern thought 208–16
Henry of Ghent 186–94
introduction 181–2
Olivi, Peter John 182–6
Scotus, John Duns 193–201

decline of the Roman Empire 67–8
Descartes, René 57, 92, 211–14
  Meditations 211
dialectic(ians) 70, 83, 179, 219, 236
dialogue (inter-faith) 164, 227–8
diligit se: *see* love of self (*diligit se*)
disembodiment 94, 97, 99, 197
distinctio rationis 121
divine illumination
  Anselm 82–3
  Aquinas 173–8
  Augustine 58–65
  Bonaventure 141–3
  Henry of Ghent 186–91
  Olivi, Peter John 182–6
  Scotus, John Duns 194–9
divine knowledge 37, 74, 121–2, 166
divine love 118–19, 122, 140, 143
divine perspective 38, 79
"doctors of Sacred Scripture" 193–4
doctrina: *see* learning (*doctrina*)
doctrine of God 29–30, 117–21
  Augustine 29–30
  Bonaventure 117–21
Dominican order 15, 20, 85, 101–6, 120, 154, 158, 164–5, 208
double truth 138, 164, 193
dualism 92, 99, 106, 146, 152, 162, 197, 204, 211–12

ecstatic union (with God) 139–40, 150–1
effective intellect 97
efficient causality 96, 119, 126, 133, 168
Elements of Theology 89
embodiment 162
empirical sources of knowledge 11, 13, 35–6, 91, 98, 130, 137, 160, 190, 213
Enlightenment 213, 221
envy 40, 54, 79, 216, 226–7, 229–30
Eriugena, John Scotus 69
error 45, 61–2, 89, 136, 138, 147–8, 184
esse ipsum 33
essence vs. existence 95–7, 124–6, 144–5
essentialism 95–6, 124, 144–5, 152
eternal life 39–40, 63, 177, 229
eternal reasons 107, 121, 127, 129–30, 136, 141–2, 175–6, 183–4, 186, 188, 191–2, 201
eternal (God) 29–30, 33, 49, 74, 77, 80, 172
evil 40, 51, 214
exemplarity 121, 128–31, 144, 189–90
exemplar causality 119, 122–7
ex nihilo 31
experience 8, 36–7, 43–4, 57, 80–1, 98–9, 146, 161, 171–2, 190, 229, 239
external senses 91–2, 128, 137, 160
extrinsic influence 8, 12–14, 36, 62, 145, 176,
eyes of the mind 60–2, 173, 178

faith
  dead 76
  in God 3, 19–20, 43, 47–51, 54
  seeking understanding 45, 48, 229–30
  in a theological theory of knowledge 226–33
  see also rationality of faith in God
fall 39–42, 66–7, 78, 82, 115, 127, 132–5
Father (God) 29–30, 40–2, 118–19
Ficino, Marsilio 9
fideism 70, 211–14, 217, 220, 238
First Cause 163
First Knower 188

"five ways" to demonstrate God's existence 22, 157, 168–70, 172–3, 177–9, 193
five-fold function of illumination 4
flying man 92–3
forgiveness 134
form of corporeality 125
formal distinction 121, 125
formal features of God 167
formalism 11
Fourth Lateran Council 101–3
Francis of Assisi 21, 102–5, 108, 115–17, 120, 127, 133, 135–6, 140–1, 151, 153, 202, 208, 215–16
Franciscan thought 67, 73, 90–1, 201–16
  and Augustinian thought 201–8
  and modern thought 208–16
Franciscanism 1–3, 10–15, 20–4, 85, 101–9
free(dom) 40
fulfillment 40
full analysis 130–1, 134, 145
future of Augustine's theory of knowledge 24, 217–33
  faith in a theological theory of knowledge 226–33
  introduction to a theological theory of knowledge 217–19
  reason in a theological theory of knowledge 223–6

Garden of Milan 28
Genesis 30–2
Gerard of Cremona 88–9
Gethsemane 54
gift 53–4, 80, 84, 126, 146, 151–2
Gilson, Étienne 11, 14, 108–9, 112–15, 205
Giver of Forms 97
Glossa ordinaria 87
gluttony 226–7, 231
God of the philosophers 221
God's Truth 63, 74–5, 215–16
Golgotha 54
Good-in-Itself 77, 80
Goodness of God 37–43, 47, 51, 54, 63–4, 71, 118–19
grace 41–2, 51, 65, 146, 152, 165, 177, 185–6, 230
greed 226–7
Greek scholarship 88–91, 100
Gregory the Great 68
Grosseteste, Robert 107
Gundissalinus, Dominicus 88
Guzman, Dominic 102

habit 42–56, 76–82, 165–73
habitual intellect 93–4
happiness 38–40, 43, 47, 51, 64, 170
Harrison, Carol 26–9
Henry of Ghent 23, 186–94, 202–6
  knowledge of God 191–4
  knowledge and divine illumination 186–91
  Summa quaestionum ordinarium 186–7, 192–3
heresy 101, 116
hierarchy 34, 134
higher reason 128, 147
Highest Good 39–40, 43, 48, 51, 71, 74, 78, 169, 235
history of Augustine's theory of knowledge: introduction 1–24
  Augustine on divine illumination 4–7
  interpretations of divine illumination in Augustine's thought 7–13
  interpretations of divine illumination in medieval thought 14–16
  re-interpreting history of Augustine's theory of knowledge 16–24

holiness 136–7
Holy Roman Empire 69
Holy See 104
Holy Spirit (of God) 30, 33, 40–2, 52, 62–3, 81, 105, 119–22, 228, 235, 239
hope 230
Hugh of St. Victor 87, 107–8, 113, 116, 124, 143–4
human being 34–9, 127–32

idealism 11
Illuminator (Christ) 65
image of God 26, 30–9, 42–57, 74–82, 121–32, 160–73
  in Anselm 74–82
  in Aquinas 160–4
  in Augustine 30–9, 42–57
  in Bonaventure 121–32
  conforming to 42–57, 76–82, 165–74
  creation in the 30–9, 121–32
imagination 35, 49, 91, 98–9, 128, 160, 162
imago Dei 131–2, 177, 235
immanence 77–8, 164, 228
immortality 93, 127
immutability 31, 130, 141, 166–7, 195
Incarnation 28, 47–8, 50, 52, 59, 63–4, 71, 133–4, 147, 157, 164, 172–3, 204, 228–30
individualism 56, 149–50
ineffability 171
infallibility 130, 136, 141, 149, 183, 186, 189–90, 195–6
infinite Being 199–200
influentia 126 n.66, 152, 176
  see also concursus
ingenium: *see* ability (*ingenium*)
innatism 9–10
Inner Teacher (Christ) 59, 130, 142
instantiation 32, 92, 96–7
integrity (of the intellect) 177, 185, 202
intellect (*mens*) 42–3
intellection 146
intellectual traditions (Dominican and Franciscan) 103–9
intellectual vision (*intelligentia)* 36, 43, 175
  see also understanding (*intelligentia*)
intelligible species 98, 161, 165–6, 186, 197–8, 203
intelligit se: *see* understanding (*intelligentia*)
intention 91–2, 94
interference 15, 22, 92, 184
interiority 137 n.136, 149, 150 n.188
  see also inward turn
interior eyes 60–2, 149
internal sense 91–2, 128, 137, 160
interpretations of divine illumination in Augustine 7–13
  formalism 11
  Franciscanism 10
  idealism 11
  innatism 9–10
  ontologism 9
  problems in interpretation 12–13
  Thomism 8
intrinsic cognitive capacity 8, 19, 23, 37, 59, 62–3, 146, 176, 200, 202–3, 210, 234–5
intuitive cognition (of Being) 93–5, 106–8, 129, 131–2, 136–7, 145, 149, 152–3, 163, 168, 193, 196–8, 202–3, 210, 223, 237
inward turn 57, 132, 137, 142, 149, 150, 161, 210, 212, 214, 231
Isidore of Seville 69
Islam 88, 163
Itinerarium mentis in Deum 21, 116, 135–40, 237

Jacopone da Todi 105
James of Venice 88
Joachim of Fiore 105, 116–17, 120
John of La Rochelle 107
Jordan, Mark D. 158, *passim* in ch. 5 notes

Kant, Immanuel 57, 149, 212–13
Kerr, Fergus 156 n.5–6, 157 n.8, 161 n.21, 163 n.31, 164 n.33, 167 n.53, 169 n.54–7, 170 n.58–9, 173 n.69, 177 n.78, 179 n.83
knowledge of God 7, 191–4, 199–201
knowledge (*notitia*) 42–3, 186–91, 194–9
"known unknown" 168, 172

Lanfranc 70
Latin scholarship 88–90
learning (*doctrina*) 48–9
Legenda major: *see Life of Francis*
Liber de causis 89–90
liberal arts 50, 69–70, 86
Life of Francis 115–16, 140
light of grace 177–8, 184
likeness (to God) 33, 126–7, 135–6, 148, 150
living proof 19, 81, 84, 173
Lombard, Peter 87–8, 106, 113, 115
lost image 42, 76
Louis IX, King of France 104
love (*amor*) 42–3
love of self (*diligit se*) 53–6
lower reason 37, 127–8
lumen intelligendi 141–2
lust 226–7, 231

Malebranche, Nicholas 9
Marrone, Steven P. 205–6
Marston, Roger 10, 107
material intellect 93
measure (*mensura*) 32–3, 126
Meditations 211
memoria: *see* memory (*memoria*)
memory (*memoria*) 43–8, 53–6, 128–9
mendicancy 102, 116
Meno dialogue 223
mens: *see* intellect (*mens*)
mercy (of God) 80, 171
Metaphysics 88–9, 94–6, 107, 144
  see also Aristotle; Avicenna
metaphysics
  essentialist 95, 144, 152
  of exemplarity 121
  of participation 162
method of inquiry, theological 2, 17, 236
Middle Ages 16–18, 24, 68–9, 72–3, 88, 90–1, 99–100, 113
modern thought 208–16
Monologion 19, 22, 71–8, 158, 167, 236
monotheism 164, 227–8
Mount Alverna (La Verna) 104, 135–6
moving causes 129
mutability 31, 130

names of God 171–2
natural causes 96
natural light of reason 175
natural order 30–4, 121–7
natural theology 57, 73, 81, 163, 179, 200, 210–12, 220
negation (way of) 45
negative theology 47, 52, 170, 172, 179
  see also apophatic theology
neo-Augustinian revival 201
Neo-Platonism 27–8, 53, 89, 219, 223
Neo-Thomism 156–7, 163, 169, 174
nothingness 31, 123

notitia: *see* knowledge (*notitia*)
number (*numerus*) 32–3, 126

objectiv(ity) 45–6, 48, 52, 216, 219, 222–31, 238
Olivi, Peter John 22–3, 182–6, 201–3
ontological argument (*a priori* theistic proof) 19, 21–2, 73, 81, 83, 94, 107–8, 111, 131–4, 137, 139, 142, 149, 153, 155, 168, 174, 192, 204, 212, 214
ontologism 9–10, 184
Ordinatio 194–5
Organon 69
Oxford 103

paganism 53, 147, 193
pantheism 123
Paris 86, 103–5, 115, 117, 182, 193
participation 5, 29, 57, 63, 95–6, 124–5, 144, 152, 162, 166, 177, 237
particular 92, 122, 128, 185, 189, 196–7
Pascal, Blaise 211–12
passion of Christ 142
passive intellect 97–8
peace 64, 135, 225, 230
Pentecost 41
Peter of Trabes 183
phantasm 35, 98, 160–1, 175–6, 197
phenomenology 222
philosophy of Avicenna 90–100
philosophy of religion 157, 169, 217, 219–21, 238
Plato(nism) 1, 9–10, 12, 50–1, 59, 64, 69, 89, 99–100, 144
  Meno dialogue 223
Platonic paradox of inquiry 46
pleasure 128
Polanyi, Michael 222
Pope Gregory IX 104, 106
Pope Leo XIII 14, 156
positive theology 47, 52, 167–8, 171, 179, 193
  see also cataphatic theology
potential intellect 93–4, 97, 123–4, 161
poverty 102–5, 134, 139, 148–9, 182
pragmatism 222
prayer 68, 104, 229, 239
preaching 101–4, 153, 158
pride 40, 54, 153, 216, 225, 227, 229–30
primary intelligibles 93–4, 97–8
prime matter 95, 123, 125
privation 40, 95, 123, 214
problems in interpreting illumination 12–13
Proclus 89–90
proof for God's existence 64, 72–3, 81–2, 168–73, 199–201, 212, 219
  see also cosmological argument; ontological argument
Proslogion 19, 22, 71–82, 107, 139, 148, 158, 167, 236–7
Pseudo-Dionysus 69, 86, 107, 113, 116, 118, 122, 136, 151
psychological analogies 18–19, 26, 42–57, 73, 84, 235–6
  ability, learning, use 48–9
  in Bonaventure 128–9, 146, 148
  corporeal analogies 49–53
  criticisms of psychological analogies 56–7
  intellect, knowledge, love 42–3
  memory, understanding, love of self 53–6
  memory, understanding, will 43–8
  spiritual analogies 49–53
  in Thomas Aquinas 170, 179
  see also conforming to image of God
purgation 136–7, 141

quadrivium 50
Quaestiones disputatae de scientia Christi 141
Quo elongati (papal bull) 104

ratio cognoscendi 189–90
rationalism 70, 155–6, 170, 210–12, 214, 217, 219–20, 222, 238
rational soul 92–3
rationality of faith in God 3, 24, 84, 156, 217–22, 232–3, 238
rationes seminales 32, 123
realism 145, 186, 209
reason
  in a theological theory of knowledge 223–6
  see also intellect (*mens*); knowledge (*notitia*)
re-interpreting history of Augustine's theory of knowledge 16–24
  Anselm 19–20
  Aquinas 21–2
  Augustine 18–19
  Bonaventure 20–1
  divine illumination in decline 22–4
  divine illumination in transition 20
  future of Augustine's theory of knowledge 24
re-orientation of will 134, 136
recollection (of Platonic forms) 10, 12, 100
recovery
  of Augustine's theory of knowledge 3, 218, 239
  of God's image 60, 67, 81, 149–50, 165, 228
rectitude 74
redemption 39–42, 62, 64, 87, 132–5, 147
Reformed Epistemology 220–1
Régnon, Theodore de 113, 120–1
relativism 156
religious orders 101–3
Renaissance 9
repentance 76, 78, 102
representation 121, 151, 192, 237
revelation 57, 73, 81, 83, 163–5, 234
Richard of Middleton 183
Richard of St. Victor 20–1, 106, 113, 116–18, 120–1, 203–4, 236–8
Roman Empire 67–9
Rule (of St. Francis) 104–5
rules of judgment 11, 36, 130, 133, 136–8

sacra doctrina 165–7, 186, 193
sacred intellect 97
sacrifice 54, 108, 134, 150, 230
secondary intelligibles 94, 97–8
sensation 35, 49, 91–2, 98–9, 128–30, 145–6, 160
St. Anselm of Canterbury: *see* Anselm of Canterbury
St. Augustine of Hippo: *see* Augustine of Hippo
St. Benedict 68
St. Bonaventure of Bagnoregio: *see* Bonaventure
St. Francis of Assisi: *see* Francis of Assisi
St. Thomas Aquinas: *see* Aquinas, Thomas
San Damiano 102
Sayers, Dorothy L. 232
scholastic method 2, 17, 86–8, 109
school of thought (late medieval) 14–16, 23–4, 201–8
science (*scientia*) 49–53, 70–1, 130, 138, 142, 165
Scot, Michael 90

Scotus, John Duns 15, 22–4, 120, 194–203, 213–15, 238
  knowledge and divine illumination 194–9
  knowledge of God 199–201
  Ordinatio 194–5
Second Vatican Council 157
self-abandonment 134, 139, 148–50
self-communication 118–19
self-evidence of God 131–2, 137, 149, 168, 200, 219
seminal principles 32, 123
Sentence Commentary 87, 115, 183
Sentences (Lombard) 87–8, 106, 115
sententiae 87
Seraphic Doctor 2, 112, 114, 122, 135–6
seven deadly sins 226–7
Sic et non 86–7
sin 40, 54, 115, 134, 226–7
single formula: *see unum argumentum*
skepticism 10, 156, 185, 195, 198, 209, 211–13
Soliloquia 18, 58–62
Son (of God) 40, 75, 116–17, 133, 145, 228
speculum intellectuale 124
spiritual analogies 49–53
spiritual Franciscans 105, 116–17, 135, 151, 182
spiritual vision (*intellectus*) 35, 49
stigmata 104
subalternate science 166
substantial form 96, 125, 144–5, 162
Summa fratris Alexandri 106, 115
Summa quaestionum ordinarium 186–7, 192–3
Summa Theologiae 22, 106, 116, 154, 157–9, 165–70, 173–80, 236
supernatural 79, 130, 165, 184, 186–8, 197, 200–3, 210, 237
Supreme Being 76–8, 81–2, 121, 139

Tempier, Étienne 193–4
theological theory of knowledge 223–33
  faith in 226–33
  reason in 223–6
theological virtues 230–1
theophany 123
"thing in itself" 96, 98–9
Thomism 8, 112, 156–7
Toledo 88, 90
transcend(ence) 28, 77–8, 106–7, 131–2, 139, 142, 150, 160, 230
transcendental (concepts) 10, 94, 107, 129, 131–3, 136, 142, 145, 151, 160, 163, 176, 189, 196, 212–14
transition of divine illumination 20, 85–109
  introduction 85
  new intellectual tradition 103–9
  new religious challenges 100–1
  new religious orders 101–3
  new schools 85–8
  new translations 88–100
translations (of Greek and Arabic works) 88–100
trinity of understanding 46
Triune nature of God 21, 28–30, 33, 43, 47–51, 59, 64, 71–2, 76, 117, 147, 163–7
trivium 50
truth 45–6, 63, 74–5, 83, 163, 224
turn to the subject: *see* inward turn

Ugolino 104
  see also Pope Gregory IX
understanding (*intelligentia*) 36, 43–8, 53–6
unifying mode of cognition 34, 37, 47, 63, 98–9, 146–7, 161, 165, 234

union with God 125–6, 136, 139–41, 151
see also capax Dei
universal (concepts) 36, 92–4, 97–8, 122, 128, 161–2, 189
University of Paris 20, 87, 115, 138, 186, 193
univocity of being 124–5, 139, 144, 153, 192, 195–6, 199–200, 209–10
unum argumentum 72, 78
use (*usus*) 48–9

vestige of divine 123, 126–7, 137, 144
vision of God 40, 82, 87, 166, 172, 178, 235
voluntas: *see* will (*voluntas*)
voluntarism 117, 148 n.185, 152, 209 n.102

weight (*pondus*) 32–4, 36, 42, 126
"whatness" (quidditas) 189
will (*voluntas*) 43–8, 128–9, 133–6, 141, 147–8, 150
William of Auvergne 10, 107
William of Moerbeke 90
William of Ockham 208
William of St. Amour 116
William of Ware 183, 194
Williams, Rowan 26, 56 n.147
wisdom (*sapientia*) 6, 38, 49–53, 55, 61, 70–1, 128, 130, 135–8, 142–3, 147, 158, 190
work 230
wrath: *see* anger

zero-sum game 13, 185, 202