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Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, a controversy has arisen among Thomists concerning the theological anthropology of the French Jesuit, Henri Cardinal de Lubac (1896-1991). Following de Lubac, many scholars continue to maintain that human nature has a “natural desire for a supernatural end,” and that the denial of this desire among scholastic Thomists contributed to the rise of modern secularism. Others allege the opposite: de Lubac’s anthropology contributes to secularism by making it impossible to show by natural reason that the knowledge of God is the end of human nature.

This dissertation contributes towards the reconciliation of the present controversy through studies of the doctrine of natural desire in the works of Thomas Aquinas, scholastic Thomists, early twentieth century Thomists, and the writings of de Lubac prior to and including Surnaturel: Études historiques (Paris: Aubier, 1946). The dissertation begins by suggesting that Aquinas developed his doctrine of natural desire in response to a debate among Richard Rufus, Roger Bacon, and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio about matter’s desire for form. Unique among these figures, Aquinas held that matter desires form without any exigence for it, yet is purely passive in the reception of form; likewise, human nature desires the vision of God without any exigence for it, yet is purely passive in the reception of that vision. The dissertation continues by tracing the reception of Aquinas’s doctrine of natural desire in the originators of the four main scholastic traditions: Giles of Rome (the Aegidian tradition), John Duns Scotus (the Scotist tradition),
Tommaso de Vio Cajetan (the Cajetanian tradition), and Francisco Suárez (the Suarezian tradition). Finally, this dissertation establishes a new context for the reception of de Lubac’s anthropology: an ongoing revival of the Aegidian tradition among European Thomists in the fifty years preceding the publication of *Surnaturel*. Inspired by the Aegidian tradition, de Lubac rightly perceived in Aquinas a doctrine of a natural desire for the vision of God. However, the Aegidian tradition’s insistence that nature cannot be purely passive in the reception of grace prevented de Lubac from seeing how nature’s passivity towards grace is essential for Aquinas’s account of nature’s receptivity to grace. The dissertation concludes by suggesting three ways in which contrasting views of de Lubac’s work might be brought closer to reconciliation without either abandoning a natural desire for the vision of God or making the teleology of human nature inaccessible to natural reason: interpreting Aquinas’s doctrine of natural desire in the context of matter’s desire for form; deepening de Lubac’s revival of the Aegidian tradition in that tradition’s most prominent form; developing de Lubac’s particular reception of the Aegidian tradition.
This dissertation by Jacob W. Wood fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Systematic Theology, approved by Chad Pecknold, Ph.D., as Director, and by John Ford, C.S.C., S.T.D., Nicholas Lombardo, O.P., Ph.D., and Michael Root, Ph.D., as Readers.

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To Mary, Mother of the Church
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INTRODUCTION

Henri Cardinal de Lubac, S.J. (1896-1991), was born in Cambrai, France, on February 20, 1896.1 He entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus on October 9, 1913, at the age of 17. After serving for the French in World War I, he returned to the Jesuits to follow the customary course of formation. He studied humanities at Canterbury from 1919-20, philosophy at Jersey from 1920-23, theology at Hastings from 1924-26 and finished his theological studies at Fourvière outside Lyons, France, from 1926-28. After the completion of a tertianship at Paray-le-Monial from 1928-29, he took up the chair in fundamental theology at the Catholic Faculty of Lyons. It was while occupying that chair that he published in 1946 his most significant work on natural desire, *Surnaturel: Études historiques.*

Although it met with an initial firestorm of resistance,3 Henri de Lubac’s theological thesis in *Surnaturel* that man has a, “natural desire for a supernatural end,” together with his historical thesis that the denial of such a desire, together with hypothesis of the possibility of a state of “pure nature,” in which man’s natural desire only concerns a naturally achievable end, lies at the heart of modern secularism, became the generally accepted Thomist consensus until

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1 For a basic outline of de Lubac’s life and work, see Georges Chantraine, *Henri de Lubac, t. 1: De la naissance à la démobilisation (1896-1919)* (Paris: Cerf, 2007), 9-14. This is the first in what was planned as a four volume biography of de Lubac’s entire life. Unfortunately, Chantraine died unexpectedly after the completion of the second volume, and so was only able to publish material covering the period up to 1929.


the close of the twentieth century. Recently, however, that consensus has begun to wane in some scholarly circles. Few disagree that de Lubac’s thought on the natural desire for God remains significant for contemporary theology; after all, it bears a striking similarity to, if not influence on, the thought of Joseph Ratzinger, as found throughout curial documents published under Ratzinger’s tenure as prefect for the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and then as Pope Benedict XVI. The question posed to contemporary theology is whether, in saying with de Lubac that the final end of human nature is the vision of God in all hypotheses, it becomes impossible to give an adequately teleological account of human nature and the natural law in philosophy, as well as a sufficient account of the gratuity of the gifts of grace and glory in theology, such as the Thomistic commentators of the fifteenth-seventeenth centuries were able to do.7

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6 See *Spe salvi* 12. I am also grateful to Matthew Gonzalez, who made me aware of an important discrepancy between the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and its *Compendium*. While the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, published under John Paul II, describes only a, “desire for God” (CCC 27), and thus prescinds from debates in the schools over whether the formal terminus of this desire is the natural knowledge of God, the vision of God as first cause, or the beatific vision, the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, published under Benedict XVI speaks of a “desire to see God.” (CCCC 2, 533; emphasis added)

7 This objection was raised by Lawrence Feingold in *The Natural Desire to See God according to Thomas Aquinas and his Interpreters* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2010), 394. Feingold’s work is a revision of his dissertation which initially appeared in 2001. The criticism was again voiced in stronger terms by Steven Long in *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010): 10-51.
A. The Status quaestionis

Many theologians continue to maintain that, at least in its particular form, de Lubac’s fundamental thesis of a natural desire for a supernatural end is irreconcilable with the Thomistic commentarial tradition. Michel Sales, for example, maintains that de Lubac’s thesis saved theology from the commentators “extrinsicist” account of grace, which so separated man from God that it “risked leading nature and grace, human and divine life, the temporal and the spiritual, from separation to confusion.”⁸ Lawrence Feingold, though he is as committed to the commentators as Sales is to de Lubac, is equally certain of their irreconcilability. It is simply “impossible,” he explains to reconcile de Lubac’s innate, unconditional desire to see God with the commentators’ elicited, conditional desire to see God; the two are diametrically opposed: innate is the opposite of elicited, and unconditional is the opposite of conditional.⁹ But where Sales, with de Lubac, sees the commentators’ doctrine of a naturally achievable terminus of our natural desire for God as responsible for the rise of modern secularism, Feingold argues the reverse: it was the very denial of such a connatural end for man that allowed modern atheism to challenge the normativity of any sort of theistic end for human nature.¹⁰ The consequences of this question, therefore, are dear. Each side accuses the other of being responsible for the rise of modern secularism on account of a fundamental failure in theological anthropology.

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⁸ Michel Sales, “Préface,” to Henri de Lubac, Surnaturel: Etudes historiques (Paris: Lethielleux, 2010) xii. “Le point de doctrine que touchait le Père de Lubac... était bien à meme de... montrer les conséquences ruineuses d’une théorie risquant de conduire de la separation à la confusion de la nature et de la grace, de la vie humaine et de la vie chrétienne, du temporal et du spiritual.”

⁹ Lawrence Feingold, The Natural Desire to See God according to Thomas Aquinas and his Interpreters 428. A similar viewpoint is evident in Bernard Mulcahy, Aquinas’s Notion of Pure Nature and the Christian Integralism of Henri de Lubac: Not Everything is Grace (New York: Peter Lang, 2011).

¹⁰ Ibid. 395.
Some scholars, however, have proposed that a more nuanced reception of de Lubac’s work, which takes into account some of the criticisms of the commentators, while preserving de Lubac’s commitment to a single, ultimate end for man, is possible. Reinhard Hütter has argued, for example, that de Lubac’s theology rightly insists on man’s active capacity for the beatific vision. While he continues to reject, with Feingold, the idea of an innate, unconditional desire for the vision of God, still, Hütter does advance a step closer to the Lubacian thesis by grounding man’s capacity for the beatific vision in the activity of the powers of intellect and will, thus suggesting that our receptivity for the beatific vision is not purely passive. While insisting still on the necessity of a finality proportioned to the natural powers of the soul, he avoids using the language of “ultimate end” with respect to this natural finality. Nicholas Healy has taken an even more conciliatory tone, though from a pro-Lubacian perspective, suggesting that perhaps allowing for a penultimate end to human nature would preserve de Lubac’s fundamental anthropological commitment to a single, ultimate end for man, while supplying what is necessary to meet the criticisms of his detractors.

With Hütter and Healy, contemporary critics and supporters of de Lubac have advanced fairly close to one another. But Hütter’s intellect still has a complete natural finality, and can be explained without reference to Revelation; Healy’s penultimate end is still not enough to satisfy

12 Ibid. “Without a proportionate proximate finality of human nature toward which humans are able to move on the basis of their nature, there would exist no active potency for sanctifying grace to presuppose and to perfect.”
13 Ibid. 589.
human nature left to its own devices, and can only be explained with reference to Revelation. We are, it would seem, at an impasse: either human nature, qua nature, can be explained without reference to Revelation and the vision of God, or it cannot be explained without reference to Revelation and the vision of God. Perhaps, then, a short detour is in order so as to find a way around this impasse. I would suggest that such a detour is not only advantageous; it is necessary. Indeed, there are several important historical details missing from contemporary interactions with de Lubac’s anthropology, which, once uncoverd, promise to light the way towards new and hitherto unexplored ways of reconciling contemporary scholars as well as the traditions of thought that they represent.

B. Purpose and Scope of this Work

The aim of this work is to form a supplementary historical and theoretical basis from which to consider Henri de Lubac’s doctrine of natural desire in Surnaturel, and so to advance the reception of de Lubac’s theological anthropology beyond the impasse at which it has presently arrived. It will do this by contributing several historical studies to the doctrine of natural desire in Thomas Aquinas (1224/5-74), the scholastic tradition, the early twentieth century, and in the work of de Lubac himself.

Owing to the breadth of historical research required to accomplish the proposed task, this work will refrain from commenting on works of de Lubac after Surnaturel. In light of the historical studies conducted here, further consideration of the development of de Lubac’s thought in those works will remain a scholarly desideratum, but it would represent a task which would be
impossible to fulfill in the space allotted for the present undertaking. Apart from de Lubac’s work up to and including *Surnaturel*, authors have been chosen for consideration here chiefly insofar as de Lubac would have known them, or insofar as they would have influenced or contributed to debates of which de Lubac was aware or in which he took part.

C. Plan of this Work

This work will undertake a chronological reading of and commentary on texts from four historical periods in order to show how the doctrine of natural desire developed in the writings of Thomas Aquinas, the originators of the four main scholastic traditions, European Thomists of the early twentieth century, and Henri de Lubac himself. The goal will be to understand three things: first, to know what each one of the thinkers under consideration thought about natural desire in the context of his own day; second, to know how each successive thinker received the thinkers that came before him, insofar as he considered them; third, to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the doctrine of natural desire in Henri de Lubac and in his early twentieth century predecessors, by understanding how and in what way they received the doctrine of Thomas and his scholastic interpreters.

Chapter one seeks the immediate context of Thomas Aquinas’s doctrine of natural desire. To be sure, scholars have recently devoted studies to the meaning of “natural” in Thomas Aquinas,¹⁵ and a number of works specifically on Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire have

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recently appeared, in addition to those cited above. However, while recent studies have been able to identify some of the broad thirteenth century themes which may have influenced Thomas’s treatment of natural desire, contemporary scholarship has yet to identify any immediate, mid-thirteenth century theological conversation on the subject in which Thomas may have been engaged. One of the main reasons for this difficulty is that Thomas follows the thirteenth century custom of not citing his contemporary sources, preferring rather to allude to them with the vague but customary phrase, “some people …” (quidam).

In chapter one, I will identify by name Thomas’s interlocutors in Thomas’s discussion of what “natural” means in his commentary on Book 2, Distinction 18, of Peter the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum, and insofar as possible, I will indentify the specific sections of specific works wherein the arguments that Thomas references are to be found. This will establish the immediate context for Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire in an ongoing debate about the matter’s desire for form among Richard Rufus (d. 1256), Roger Bacon (1214-92), and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1221-74). Following the authority of Augustine, Rufus, Bacon, and Bonaventure all held that there is a “germinatory property” (ratio seminalis) in matter for form, which enables matter to receive form naturally, and that matter has of itself both positive existence as well as some active tendency towards form on account of this ratio seminalis. Thomas criticized Rufus, Bacon, and Bonaventure, because he thought that their understanding

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17 That “positive existence” is usually described as a “forma corporeitatis,” however I will suggest in chapter one that this term is not universally and univocally applicable to Rufus, Bacon, and Bonaventure.
of a *ratio seminalis* would lead to a plurality of substantial forms in the same substance: one substantial form communicating positive existence and inclination to matter, and another communicating further form to the already-existing matter. Thomas thought that this would prevent the substance from being “one thing,” which was how Aristotle had described a substance in the first place. Instead, Thomas supplemented contemporary accounts of nature with one inspired by Averroes (1126-1198). Natural change, for Thomas, happens not only when there is an active inclination in something towards acquiring a form, as is the case for Rufus, Bacon, and Bonaventure, but also when there is a purely passive receptivity in something towards a form, as is the case for Averroes. Likewise, Thomas argues, natural desire happens not only when there is an objective, active inclination in something towards acquiring a form, but also when there is a subjective, passive receptivity in something towards the fulfillment of its own potency.

Thomas’s rejection of a plurality of substantial forms in a single substance has been recognized as a hallmark of “Thomistic” doctrine almost since Thomas’s death in 1274.18 However, identifying the specific context in which Thomas brought this doctrine to bear on the question of nature makes two contributions to contemporary Thomistic scholarship. First, it reveals the extent to which the theological and Augustinian concept of *rationes seminales* influenced philosophical considerations of matter and form. Second, and more importantly for the present purposes, it reveals how these same theological considerations also influenced Thomas’s understanding of natural desire.

For Thomas, the human intellect is like formed matter; it has a complement of active potencies, which are analogous to form, and passive potencies, which are analogous to matter.

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Like substantial form, which communicates existence to matter, the active potencies of the human intellect communicate a range of active abilities to the human intellect. Yet like matter, which receives a substantial form, the intellect’s passive potentiality is never fully exhausted by the forms that the intellect can acquire with its active abilities. Whatever accidental forms the human soul may have acquired (be they knowledge in the intellect or virtues in the will), it will always maintain receptivity to an unlimited range of other forms.

In the case of formed matter, a “natural desire” is among the activities communicated to matter by form, along with existence. This natural desire is a tendency in matter not towards form as an object, but rather towards the subjective fulfillment of its own passive potency, which takes place in the reception of form as an object. This distinction is significant, because it means that matter’s natural desire is never at any time completely satisfied in the reception of a substantial form. Since no one substantial form can completely actualize matter’s passive potentiality, matter must acquire and abandon forms successively over time so that, in the course of its existence, it will at one time or another have actualized all of its potency, though never at the same time.

The human soul, for Thomas, is similar to formed matter in one respect and different from it in two respects. It is similar to matter, because it possesses a natural desire for the fulfillment of its passive potency, a natural desire which it can never completely satisfy of its own accord through acquiring some form. It differs from matter first because it is a substantial form, and so the subsequent forms it acquires (in this case knowledge and virtue) are accidental forms. Second, it differs from matter because there does exist a form which can completely
actualize all of its passive potency at one time and in one act: the divine essence, received into the intellect as its intelligible species in the act of the beatific vision.

For Thomas, then, the human soul, like formed matter, tends actively and in general towards the actualization of its passive potency. On this basis, it can be said to have a natural desire for beatitude in general. Since, however, it is possible for the soul to receive the complete fulfillment of its intellectual potency passively and in specific in the beatific vision, the soul’s natural desire for beatitude in general can fittingly be said to include a natural desire for the vision of God in specific. However, since the soul’s active ability is incapable of causing the complete actualization of its potency without the intervention of another agent (i.e. God), Thomas also acknowledges that the soul might come to rest in an end other than the complete actualization of its potency if God chose not to offer it the complete actualization of its potency in the vision of himself. In such a state, which children who die in original sin only experience as limbo, the soul does not suffer from the frustration of its natural desire, because, while it knows that the complete actualization of its passive potency is possible in the vision of God, it does not know whether, in fact, God has freely chosen to grant it. In this manner, identifying the immediate context of Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire leads to the harmonization of two ideas thought antithetical by most contemporary Thomists: a natural desire for the vision of God, and human nature’s complete passivity in the reception of the vision of God.

Chapter two explores the reception of Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire in the originators of the four main scholastic traditions. These will be treated in chronological order: Giles of Rome (1246-1318), the originator of what we call the “Aegidian” tradition;¹⁹ John Duns

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¹⁹ This tradition was variously known as the “Augustinian” tradition, since it was the scholastic tradition of the hermits of St. Augustine, or the “Aegidian” tradition, since its figurehead was Giles of Rome (Latin: Aegidius
Scotus (c. 1266-1308), the originator of what we will call the “Scotist” tradition; Tommaso de Vio “Cajetan” (1469-1534), the originator of what we will call the “Cajetanian” tradition; and Francisco Suárez (1548-1617), the originator of what we will call the “Suarezian” tradition. As with Thomas Aquinas, there has recently been some scholarly research into the question of natural desire in some of these authors. Most of this concerns Cajetan and Suárez. In contrast to these two authors, the last major study of the question in Scotus dates from 1949, and that last major treatment of it in Giles was actually *Surnaturel* itself. None of these studies, however, take into account the perspective on Thomas’s doctrine that will be advanced in chapter one.

Chapter two will therefore have two purposes. The first will be to confirm the interpretation of Thomas given in chapter one. This will be done by showing that this interpretation of Thomas concurs with the interpretations of Thomas given by Giles, one of Thomas’s students, and Scotus, Thomas’s near contemporary. The second task of chapter two will be to highlight the manner in which the originators of the four aforementioned scholastic traditions received Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire. Giles and Scotus, while agreeing with the interpretation of Thomas given in chapter one, each thought Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire in some manner deficient. For Giles, Thomas’s account of matter’s desire for form and nature’s

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20 The most comprehensive work on Cajetan and Suárez in the contemporary period is that of Feingold, mentioned above (note 7). Other, more recent treatments of Cajetan, such as that of Ralph McInerny, *Praeambula fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2006), 83-85, rely on Feingold’s work. Likewise, the work of Christine Wood, cited above, makes substantial use of Feingold. Before Feingold, the most comprehensive work on Cajetan was Barbara Hallensleben, *Communicatio: Anthropologie und Gnadenlehre bei Thomas de Vio Cajetan* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1985). I am not aware of any major treatments of Suárez in recent times before that of Feingold.

desire for the vision of God is too passive; Giles emends Thomas’s doctrine so as to posit an active disposition in matter for form, and likewise an active disposition in human nature for the vision of God. For Scotus, Thomas’s account of matter’s desire for form and nature’s desire for the vision of God is too active; Scotus emends Thomas’s doctrine so as to posit only a passive inclination in matter for form, as well as a passive inclination in human nature for the vision of God. Cajetan and Suárez likewise emend Thomas’s doctrine in their own ways, though less explicitly, seeking to restrict natural desires to naturally achievable ends, while utilizing diverse elements of Scotus’s thought in order to do so. The chapter will conclude by investigating representatives of developments in the four main thinkers of the Aegidian tradition, since it was this tradition of thought that most influenced de Lubac. Those figures are Michael Paludanus (1593-1653), Fulgence Lafosse (c. 1640–post 1684), Giovanni Lorenzo Berti (1696–1766) and Michelangelo Marcelli, OESA (d. 1804).

Chapters three and four concern the reception of Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire, as well those of the Aegidian, Scotist, Cajetanian, and Suarezian traditions, among early twentieth century European Thomists. Chapter three explores contributions to the question from the publication of Maurice Blondel’s *L’Action* in 1893, until the outbreak of the First World War. Chapter four explores contributions to the question from the close of the First World War until the outbreak of the Second World War. The common contemporary assumption about this period is that European Thomists, with very few exceptions, took either a Cajetanian or a Suarezian position on natural desire, and thus that there was very little variety among the Thomists of this period.

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On the contrary, chapters three and four will show that there was a fiercely contested and multifaceted debate on natural desire from 1893-1939, and that scholarly voices from this period represented all four of the aforementioned scholastic traditions, as well as several more eclectic theories. Furthermore, these chapters will show that among these various voices there were several scholars, who progressively advocated a return to some form of the Aegidian tradition and its doctrine of a natural desire for a supernatural end. However, these “neo-Aegidians” generally preferred the moderate Aegidianism of Michael Paludanus, which made room for a natural, penultimate end for man, not that of other Aegidian thinkers, who maintained the tradition’s commitment to the unicity of man’s final end in the vision of God more radically.

Chapter five treats the reception of Thomas Aquinas, the scholastic traditions, and early twentieth century Thomists in Henri de Lubac’s writings on natural desire from the beginning of his formation until the publication of *Surnaturel*. It will be greatly aided by the second volume of Georges Chantraine’s biography of de Lubac, which makes available extracts and summaries of many previously unpublished works of de Lubac on the question of natural desire. Beginning from those texts, and continuing into de Lubac’s published work, it will undertake a chronological reading of all of de Lubac’s work on the question of natural desire from the beginning of his formation until the publication of *Surnaturel*. Beginning with an initial orientation on natural desire inspired by Maurice Blondel, in which man has a natural desire for a supernatural end, but cannot know by natural reason the end desired, de Lubac gradually over the

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23 Christine Wood’s work is a rare exception to this opinion of early twentieth century Thomism, but it only covers the work of Pedro Descoqs, leaving the material from this time period untouched. Feingold interacts with a number of contributions from this time period, but mainly insofar as a given thinker has something to contribute to his observations on a given medieval or scholastic thinker, not insofar as that thinker contributed to an ongoing debate in his own right.

course of his early career aligned himself with the neo-Aegidian movement of the early twentieth century, which similarly embraced a doctrine of a natural desire for a supernatural end. However, de Lubac rejected the moderate Aegidianism of his twentieth century predecessors as an unnecessary compromise of the unicity of man’s final end, and proposed a return specifically to Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition, in which the end of human nature is in all hypotheses the vision of God. De Lubac saw this return to Bertian Aegidianism as the best means of recovering an authentically Thomist approach to natural desire. The only exception to de Lubac’s Aegidianism was his denial that the end of man could be known by natural reason, which he continued to borrow from Blondel, in spite of the fact that the Aegidian tradition had affirmed that possibility since its founding. Such an approach to natural desire, de Lubac suggested, would save modern man from the illusion of a human nature that could be imagined as complete without God, and so give the Church the best means of reproposing the Christian faith to an increasingly secular world.

Lastly, and having established de Lubac’s continuity with the scholastic Aegidian tradition as well as with the neo-Aegidian movement of the early twentieth century, I will conclude by suggesting three different ways in which the present impasse in Lubacian studies may potentially be surmounted: 1) a return to the interpretation of Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire in its immediate thirteenth century context developed in chapter one of this work; 2) a return to a purer form of Aegidianism, in which not only does man have a natural desire for a supernatural end, but this end may also be known from natural reason; 3) a further development of de Lubac’s own Aegidianism. In each case, I will suggest that an adequate account of nature and the natural law is possible, and consequently that de Lubac’s position can be reconciled to a
certain extent with that of other scholastic commentators, although some questions about the
gratuity of grace may nevertheless remain for de Lubac’s position in light of the fact that this had
always been a contentious point among members of the Aegidian tradition.

D. Conventions of this Work

When referring to works whose original composition predates the nineteenth century, I
will make use of the best edition available. For these works, page, folio, and/or column numbers
will be given alongside the citations of the customary section divisions of a given work.
Preference will be shown for modern critical editions where these are available. Where a critical
edition is lacking, reference will be made to the editions from the fifteenth-nineteenth centuries
customarily cited by scholars of a given thinker. In either case, the edition will be identified by
the editor(s) or publisher in each citation.

Quotations accompanying citations will be given in footnotes where a text cited is rare
and difficult for other scholars to consult, where it sheds some light on the argument being made,
and/or where the text itself is quoted in translation in the body of this work. Unless otherwise
noted, all translations are my own. Where possible, the orthographic conventions of the editions
used have been preserved in quotations of Latin texts, and so medieval orthography has been
maintained for medieval authors where it is available, in preference to classicized orthography.
As an exception to this rule, punctuation and spelling have been emended and corrected freely
from sixteenth century editions without indication, since orthography and punctuation are often
not consistent within a given work from this period, and since these texts commonly suffer from
a number of spelling and grammatical errors. In all Latin texts, abbreviations have also been expanded as necessary without indication.
On the question of natural desire, most contemporary Thomists agree that Thomas held a consistent doctrine throughout his life. The difficulty is that there is vast disagreement as to what precisely that doctrine was. Among authors who devote their attention specifically to exegeting Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire, in contrast to those who take one or another position on the idea itself, authors such as Lawrence Feingold, Steven Long, and Bernard Mulcahy, argue that Thomas consistently held throughout his career a doctrine of a natural, elicited desire for a natural end, while scholars such as Dennis Bradley, John Milbank, and Stephen Wang, suggest to the contrary that Thomas consistently held throughout his career a doctrine of a natural, innate desire for a supernatural end. Still others, such as Reinhard Hütter, posit various positions somewhere in between those poles.

1 Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God according to St. Thomas Aquinas and his Interpreters* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press, 2010), 11-45.


In this chapter, I will propose that the majority of contemporary treatments of Thomas’s writings fail to take into account the immediate historical context in which Thomas developed his doctrine of natural desire. As Thomas began his career, questions of natural desire were customarily thought of on analogy with matter’s desire to form. Considerations of matter’s desire for form, in turn, were governed by the binarium famosissimum (“the most famous pair”), the doctrines of universal hylomorphism (attributing to all creatures, including angels, a composition of matter and form), and a plurality of substantial forms (attributing to one substance multiple substantial forms). In our own day, I would suggest, Henri de Lubac’s Surnaturel has created in Thomism a new binarium famosissimum: a nature which is actively oriented towards grace (not merely passively receptive to it), and consequently a natural desire which has as its object the vision of God (as opposed to a natural desire for a connatural end). Ironically, if one situates Thomas’s writings in the context of discussions more closely related to the original binarium, then it becomes clear that Thomas straddled the fence of our own contemporary binarium, affirming at the same time human nature’s absolute passivity with respect to grace, as well as—and even consequently—the fact that it has a natural desire for a supernatural end, that is, for the vision of God. Within this general framework, which remains unchanged throughout Thomas’s career, there is a small development. Thomas begins his career speaking almost exclusively about a natural desire in the will for beatitude; over the course of his career he gradually applies his argument about a natural desire for beatitude in the will to a natural inclination of the intellect towards the vision of God.

In order to describe how Thomas arrived at such a unique position, I shall do three things in this chapter. First, I will situate Thomas’s writings on nature and natural desire in the context
of discussions of matter and form in the late 1230’s-early 1250’s. To do this, I will document how Thomas’s doctrine of nature and natural desire in his Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum* applies his doctrine of matter and its desire for form to the question of human nature and its relationship to grace. Specifically, Thomas suggests that nature is “purely passive” with respect to grace like matter is purely passive with respect to form, but nevertheless that, like matter, nature contains within it a subjective desire for its own actualization. Since human nature contains an intellectual faculty with a passive potentiality that cannot be completely actualized other than in the vision of God, nature’s desire for its own actualization proves that only the vision of God can be man’s final end. Second, I will note changes and developments in this doctrine. Specifically, I will show that Thomas advances through his career towards an ever more rigorous parallel between nature’s relationship to grace and matter’s relationship to form, which strengthens and streamlines the substance of his argument.

A. Bonaventure’s Doctrine of Natural Desire

When Thomas Aquinas began his own Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum* in Paris in 1252,8 Bonaventure of Bagnoregio had just finished his own commentary on the same.9 Bonaventure’s doctrine of natural desire evinces two tendencies: the first is that it is current—Bonaventure goes at great lengths to understand and to interpret a vast

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array of opinions, especially those being advocated in the 1230s-40s by masters at the Universities of Paris and Oxford, as well as the newest texts from Greek and Arabic philosophers available at the beginning of the 1250s. The second is that it is conservative—in questions of nature and natural desire, Bonaventure strives throughout his encounter with the latest trends in Parisian thinking to stay as close as possible to Augustine and Peter the Lombard.

In his consideration of nature, Bonaventure follows the custom, established by Peter Lombard in the twelfth century, of determining what is natural in connection with the concept of “germinatory properties” (*rationes seminales*), which had been drawn from Augustine’s *De genesi ad litteram*.\(^{10}\) However, by 1250, Bonaventure noticed a difficulty of proceeding along the path that the Lombard had trod. Sounding very much like a *ressourcement* theologian, Bonaventure shows a keen interest in understanding Augustine’s *ipsissima verba*. Yet, Bonaventure notes, this is a difficult task because Augustine’s *ipsissima verba* were somewhat ambiguous, and so it is not at all easy to see what Augustine even meant by the term *rationes seminales*, let alone the various related terms that theologians had either drawn from Augustine or crafted to complement Augustine’s terms.\(^{11}\)

What seems to have troubled Bonaventure is the fact that, although the concept of *rationes seminales* was a properly theological subject, the ends towards which the concept had been put had come to be dominated by the philosophical speculation of *magistri* in the arts

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10 For Augustine, see *Gn. litt.* 5-6 [CSEL 28.1:137-200]. For Peter, see 2 Sent., d. 18, cap. 6. The critical edition of this text is available in Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, vol. 1 (Rome: College of St. Bonaventure, 1971), 419-20.

11 Bonaventure, *In II Sent.*, d. 18, a. 1, q. 1. The critical edition of Bonaventure’s commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum* can be found in Bonaventure, *Opera Omnia*, vols. 1-4 (Rome: Quaracchi, 1885-89). This text may be found in vol. 2, p. 436. “…Notandum, quod cum de his rationibus seminalibus egregius doctor Augustinus in quinto et sexto super Genesim ad litteram ambigue loquitur, et ab ipso potissime habeamus horum nominum usum; non est facile inter huiusmodi vocabula recte distinguere.”
faculty at Paris. The philosophical question most responsible for influencing the consideration of *rationes seminales* was that of the relationship between matter and form, and even more specifically the question of individuation. In *Metaphysics* 7.8, Aristotle claimed that matter was the principle of individuation in things.\(^{12}\) But this observation left open the question of how matter functions as this principle, since in *Metaphysics* 7.3, Aristotle also claimed that the *substratum* in changes of one substance into another, if stripped of all form, is matter, “which in itself is neither a particular thing nor of a certain quantity nor assigned to any other of the categories by which being is determined.”\(^{13}\) How, then, can that which is undetermined in itself be the principle of individual determination in things?

The medievals of the thirteenth century inherited two main approaches to question raised by Aristotle’s teaching on matter: that of Avicenna and that of Averroes. Avicenna had proposed that matter, insofar as it constitutes the principle of individuation in things, must have at least a *forma corporeitatis* (a form of corporeity), which adds three dimensional existence of an undetermined quantity and quality to completely undetermined matter.\(^{14}\) Matter informed by corporeity can then be determined more definitely through information by subsequent, more

\(^{12}\) Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 7.8 (1034a5-8). For all translations of Aristotle's Greek, I will rely on *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Modern Library, 2001). This text may be found on p. 795. “When we have the whole, such and such a form in this flesh and in these bones, this is Callias or Socrates; and they are different in virtue of their matter (for that is different), but the same in form; for their form is indivisible.”

\(^{13}\) Ibid. 7.3 (1029a20-22) [McKeon 785].

\(^{14}\) Avicenna, *Prima Philosophia* 2.2. The critical edition of this text can be found in Avicenna, *Prima Philosophia*, ed. S. Van Riet, 2 vols. (Louvain: Peeters, 1971-80). This text may be found in vol. 1, p. 73. “Corporeitas igitur vera est forma continuitatis recipientis id quod diximus de positione trium dimensionum, et haec intentio est extra mensuram et extra corporeitatem disciplinalem. Hoc enim corpus secundum hanc formam non differt ab alio corpore, sive sit maius sive minus, nec comparatur ei, sive sit aequale sive numeratum per illud sive communicans ei sive incommunicans; hoc enim non est ei nisi inquantum est mensuratum et inquantum aliqua pars eius numerat illud.” Cf. ibid. (Van Riet 1:82). “Forma vero corporeitatis, inquantum est corporeitas, est una natura simplex acquisita non habens in se diversitatem.”
specific forms,\(^\text{15}\) which are received extrinsically from the first cause, considered as a “giver of forms” (\textit{dator formarum}).\(^\text{16}\) Avicenna unfortunately left a note of ambiguity here as to whether he conceived the \textit{forma corporeitatis} as a substance or an accident, and consequently as to how the \textit{forma corporeitatis} interacts with the form(s) that matter receives when it is further determined.

Averroes, however, responding to Avicenna, criticizes both possibilities in Avicenna’s doctrine of individuation.\(^\text{17}\) If the \textit{forma corporeitatis} is a substance, then Avicenna begs the question, because he has assumed a substantial form in matter in order to show how substantial

\(^\text{15}\) On this question, see Allan Bäck, “The Islamic Background: Avicenna (b. 980; d. 1037) and Averroes (b. 1126; d. 1198),” in \textit{Individuation in Scholasticism: The Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation 1150-1650}, ed. Jorge Gracia (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 47.


\(^\text{17}\) Averroes’ explicit treatment of Avicenna’s ambiguity can be found in his \textit{Epitome of the Metaphysics}. This text, however, was only available in the thirteenth century in two Hebrew translations. It was not translated into Latin until the sixteenth century, and then only from one of the Hebrew versions. On the transmission of the text in the middle ages and early modern period, see the introductory remarks by Rüdiger Arnzen to \textit{On Aristotle’s “Metaphysics”: An Annotated Translation of the So-called “Epitome,”}, ed. Rüdiger Arnzen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 8-9. Averroes’s critique of Avicenna runs from pp. 89-93. I will refer to this work hereafter simply as the “Epitome.”

Even if, the medievals lacked Averroes’s explicit critique of Avicenna, they nevertheless possessed a critique of Avicenna’s position in Averroes’s commentary on Aristotle’s \textit{Metaphysics}. Cf. Averroes, \textit{Metaphysics} 7.2, com. 5. This text may be found in Averroes, \textit{Opera Omnia}, vol. 8 (Venice: Giunti, 1562), 156vk-l. “Et dixit [Aristotèles], ‘solidum et corpus,’ quoniam isti habent duas opiniones in corpore. Quidam enim dicunt quod tres dimensiones sunt forma substantialis corporis, et isti dicunt corpus. Qui autem dicunt, quod corpus sit ad conjiunctionem superficierum ad invicem, dignius est dicit ab eis corporeum. Et secundum utrunque sermonem sequitur, ut superficies, et lineae, et puncta sint substantiae magis quam corpora, et priora eis: aut secundum quod forma est prior composito ex materia et forma secundum priorem sermonem: aut secundum quod partes compositi sunt priores composito secundum secundum sermonem.”

Also see Averroes, \textit{Metaphysics} 7.2, com. 8 (Giunti 8:158vm-159ra). “Deinde ‘et longitudo, et latitudo, et profundum, etc.’ idest et etiam longitudo, et latitudo, et profundum quae existimantur esse substantiae corporis, videntur esse quantum, et non substantia: quoniam quantum non est substantia. Et intendebat quod, eum concesserimus corpora esse substantias, et quod longitudo et latitudo et profundum, per quae definimus corpus, sit quantum, et non substantia, non remanebit in corpore alius, quod dicatur substantia, nisi materia…”

Although contemporary scholars attribute both possibilities to Avicenna (whether the \textit{forma corporeitatis} is a substance or an accident), Averroes only attributes to him specifically the view that the \textit{forma corporeitatis} is a substance. However, Averroes recognizes both possibilities, even if he does not attribute both to Avicenna.
form comes to be in matter. 18 If the *forma corporeitatis* is an accident (a view which Averroes does not attribute to Avicenna, even if modern scholars recognize it as a legitimate interpretation of Avicenna), 19 then still one must postulate a substantial form in matter, because accidents, of their nature, can only inhere in substance. 20 Instead, Averroes suggests, one should see corporeity as “the most general genus” (the *genus generalissma*, as the Latin scholastics would call it), which mediates a kind of incomplete existence to prime matter “between potentiality and actuality,” and enables it to desire form naturally, without yet being completely informed. 21

Individuation occurs through the formation of matter by form, which communicates both substantiality and individuality to matter, by actualizing the potentiality of matter for definite determination. 22 On this view, substantial form is not given extrinsically from a *dator formarum*, but rather is educed out of the matter itself (*ex materia*), in which it pre-exists potentially. 23

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18 I infer this from Averroes’s comment in the *Epitome*, 92. Averroes argues that, if Avicenna is correct, then the coming to be of simple corporeal bodies (the elements) constitutes an instance of alteration. Averroes calls this “proposterous,” because that would make the elements no longer elemental if they were made from some more elemental substance.


21 Ibid., 92.

22 On matter’s possessing determination in potency, see Averroes, *Metaphysics* 7.2, com. 8 (Giunti 8:159rd). “Deinde incoepit declarare qualis materia est ista, et dixit: ‘Et dico materiam,’ etc. Idest et intelligo per materiam illud, quod est existens per se, quod est nec quale, nec quantum, nec aliquod aliorum praedicamentorum: quoniam est in potentia omnia ista, scilicet decem praedicamentorum, ut declaratum est in Physicis.” On matter’s requiring form to actualize its potency for determination, see Averroes, *Metaphysics* 7.2, com. 8 (Giunti 8:159rf-159vg). “Sed impossibile est ut materia sola sit substantia, cum opinatur quod intentiones separabiles in intellectu, scilicet quae non intelliguntur in respectu aliorum, sicut est in materia, sed quae intelliguntur per se, sunt magis substantiae. Et ideo existimatur, quod forma sit etiam substantia, cum sit quiditas [sic!], quam significat definitio, et congregatum etiam ex forma et materia est substantia, et quod haec duo magis sunt substantia quam materia.”

23 On the relationship between potency and act, see Averroes, *Metaphysics* 12.3, com. 18 (Giunti 8:305vh-i). “Omnis potentia non exit in actum, nisi propter extrahens, quod est in actu. Si igitur potentia non esset ens, non esset agens omnino. Et si agens non esset, nihil esset hic omnino in actu. Et ideo dicitur, quod omnes proportiones, et formae sunt in potentia in prima materia, et in actu in primo motore: et assimilatur aliquod modo esse eius, quod sit in anima artificis.” On the eduction of forms, see ibid. (Giunti 8:304vh-i). “…Opinio Aristotelis… est, quod
Both Arabic theories of individuation were called into question at Paris in the 1230s after Richard Rufus, a then-secular master lecturing in the arts faculty, wrote a treatise *Contra Averroem*, the second part of which was intended to oppose Averroes’s doctrine of individuation. Rufus raises eleven objections against the position that matter is the principle of individuation. Of these, Rufus’s strongest metaphysical argument is that expressed in his eighth and tenth objections, where Rufus returns to the same basic question that Avicenna and Averroes faced in light of the text of Aristotle: if individuation supposedly comes from matter, how does that which is in itself pure potentiality to everything become determined to one particular

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\text{agens non facit nisi compositum ex materia et forma. Et hoc fit movendo materiam, et transmutando eam, donec exeat de ea illud, quod est de potentia in ea, ad illam formam in actu... Agens apud Aristotelem non est congregans inter duo in rei veritate, sed extrahens illud, quod est in potentia ad actum, et quasi congregate inter potentiam et actum, scilicet inter materiam et formam, secundum quod extrahit potentiam ad actum, non destruendo subjectum recipiens potentiam: et tunc efficiuntur in composito duo, scilicet materia et forma.} \]

In Book 12.3, com. 18, Averroes twice criticizes Avicenna explicitly on the question of the *dator formarum*. See 304ra-b, where the doctrine of a *dator formarum* is attributed to “some people” (*quidam*), and 304vg, which it is attributed explicitly to Avicenna.


I am grateful to Rega Wood for permitting me to consult her unpublished transcription of this text. Since the work remains unpublished, however I will cite it in substance without any arguments that depend upon technical textual questions, which might be subject to future revision.

The objections mentioned in the body of this chapter begin at line 125 of Wood’s transcription. Rufus’s eleven objections proceed as follows: The first two (ln. 125 and 130 respectively) hinge more on the question hylomorphism than individuation, arguing that immaterial being cannot be individuated if matter is the cause of individuation, since immaterial being lacks matter. Rufus dismisses the first of these, since he assents to universal hylomorphism. The third (ln. 133) begs the question, arguing that individuation by matter alone would deny any individual character to form. The fourth through seventh (ln. 139, 142, 147, 158), as well as the ninth (ln. 169), all hinge on some form of the argument that since even designated matter can received a variety of forms, it must be form that communicates individuality. The eighth and tenth (ln. 162, 175) make the argument that since matter, taken in itself, is pure potency, it requires some level of actuality for designation, which it can only receive from form. The eleventh (ln. 180) argues that since corporeity, according to Averroes, is the *genus generalissima*, all that could individuate something further would be form.
individual? Since matter, even already determined matter, can of itself receive a variety of forms, Rufus argues that individuation must arise from an individual form. This form, imparted to the composite by its efficient cause, adds the potential that simultaneously designates the matter and contracts the form to the point of individuality.26

Rufus wrote *Contra Averroem* while he was lecturing in the arts faculty at Paris and consequently he did not comment in it about the implications of his theory of individuation for the doctrine of *rationes seminales*. However, Rufus left the arts faculty in 1238 to become a Franciscan and was sent for studies in theology.27 At Oxford around 1250,28 he lectured on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum* and applied his theory of individuation to the question of *rationes seminales*.29 Since the point of the doctrine of *rationes seminales* in the theological tradition was to account for the multifaceted potentiality of created existence, Rufus suggests that *rationes seminales* cannot be associated with the forms of things, since the forms of things are determined all the way to the point of individuality.30 That being the case, *rationes seminales* must be associated with the *genus generalissima* of matter, its corporeity, since this leaves matter open to formation by a variety of specific and individual forms.31

26 Rufus, *Contra Averroem* II, 224-33, and again at 239-44.


28 Ibid.

29 I am grateful to Rega Wood for providing for permitting me to consult her unpublished transcription of this text as well.

30 Richard Rufus, *In II Sent.*, d. 18 [Wood 1711-12].

31 Ibid [Wood 1712]. My claim that Rufus’s thoughts on *rationes seminales* in the 1250s are consistent with his views on individuation in the 1230s should not be interpreted as precluding the observation by R. James Long that Rufus’s Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum* is also much indebted to that of Richard Fishacre. Cf. R. James Long, “Adam’s Rib: A Test Case for Natural Philosophy,” in *Robert Grosseteste and his Intellectual"
Roger Bacon, who like Rufus began his career in the arts faculty of Paris before entering the Franciscan Order, took Rufus’s thought into account when dealing with the question of individuation, but sought to defend Averroism where Rufus had sought to critique it. In Bacon’s *Quaestiones secundae supra undecime prime philosophie Aristotelis* (hereafter referred to as “*Quaestiones secundae*”), he discusses the same sets of questions that Averroes had addressed concerning the relationship between matter and form. Granting that forms exist in things, and not apart from things or in the mind only, the question concerning the manner of matter’s formation and individuation arises. Here, Bacon begins by criticizing Avicenna: there are those who say that since matter is infinitely potential, it requires extrinsic information by a *dator formarum* of infinite potency, since otherwise there is no way to determine which form it would receive out of the infinite number of forms it could receive. Bacon replies:

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*Milieu: New Editions and Studies* (Toronto: PIMS, 2013), 160. Fishacre’s influence was negative; Rufus mostly clarified his own views by contrasting them with those of Fishacre (161).


33 Roger Bacon, *Quaestiones secundae supra undecime prime philosophie Aristotelis*, in *Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconis*, ed. Robert Steele with Ferdinand M. Delorme, fasc. 7 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926), 125-51. Steele notes that since at the time when Bacon was commenting on the *Metaphysics*, Book 11 was not known, Bacon treats our Book 12 as his Book 11.

34 On the Platonic position that forms exist apart from things, see ibid., 128:8. On the nominalist position that forms exist in the mind only, see ibid., 128:12.


36 The objections run from ibid., 128:26-129:2.
Although [the first cause’s] power or potency is infinite in itself and for its part, nevertheless, it is not received insofar as it is infinite in the production of natural things, but rather according to the requirements of what receives it. And since nature is a finite power, therefore [the first cause’s power] is received in a finite manner.37

For Bacon, the fact that the first cause is omnipotent does not mean that there must exist a correspondingly omni-potential entity in nature. All created nature is finite, and so the infinite power of God is received into nature in a finite manner.

The principle that matter receives power and form according to its own manner offered Bacon the possibility of developing an alternative solution to the problem posed by Rufus in Contra Averroem II. Rufus pointed to the fact that matter, insofar as it is in potential to a variety of forms, lacks within it a cause of its own determination. Hence, Rufus had argued, the cause of matter’s ultimate determination must be an individual form. In order to respond to Rufus while maintaining that matter is the cause of individuation in things, Bacon had to give an account of formation that allowed for matter to be the cause of individuation. Here, Bacon notes three possibilities: either forms are completely extrinsic to matter, or they are completely intrinsic to matter, or they are somewhere in between.38 He dismisses the first possibility outright, because it would be to re-propose Avicenna’s dator formarum.39 As concerns the second, Bacon notes that this is the doctrine of “the hiddenness of forms [in matter]” (latitatio formarum), which he

37 Ibid., 129:8-13. “Licet sua [i.e. causae primae] virtus vel potentia sit infinita secundum se et a parte sua, non tamen in productione rerum naturalium secundum quod infinita, set secundum exigentiam ipsius recipientis, et quia natura est virtus finita, ideo recipitur modo finito.”

38 Ibid., 131:6-8. “Consequenter queritur utrum forme rerum naturalium producantur penitus ab intrinseco, vel ab extrinseco omnino, vel modo medio.”

39 Ibid., 131:8-10.
attributes to the ancient Greek philosopher Anaxagoras. \(^{40}\) The *latitatio formarum*, Bacon notes, can be distinguished into two further possibilities: either the forms could be present in the matter actually or potentially. \(^{41}\) If they are present in the matter actually, they could either inform some part of the matter, in which case some part of the matter would have contrary forms, or the plethora of forms could inform different respective parts of the matter, which would destroy the matter’s substantial unity. Neither of these possibilities is metaphysically acceptable. On the other hand, if the forms are present in the matter potentially, they can be present according to an active potency, which would make the matter the efficient cause of its own information, or according to a receptive potency, which would require the existence of a *dator formarum*. Neither of these possibilities is metaphysically acceptable either.

In order to overcome the impasse at which Bacon seemed to have arrived, he developed a novel doctrine of how form comes to be in matter, which he attributes to Aristotle, but which owes more to Averroes than to the Aristotle himself. Bacon suggests that forms are indeed present in matter in an active potency, which arises from the presence of a form, but that their presence in this active potency is *incomplete*, because the form communicating actuality to the matter is incomplete. \(^{42}\) Borrowing an idea from Rufus’s account of individuation, Bacon avoids


\(^{41}\) These distinctions are found in ibid., 131:11-35.

the criticism that he had raised previously against the idea that there is an active potency in matter for form (that such a potency would make something’s material cause its efficient cause), arguing instead that an *incomplete* active potency still requires the power of an extrinsic, efficient cause in order to turn it into a complete form. In the process of individuation, then, matter is able to serve as the principle of individuation through the incomplete determination that it possesses in virtue of its incomplete active potency. \[43\]

Unlike Rufus, who explicitly made the connection between his theory of individuation and *rationes seminales* in time for Bonaventure to discuss it in his Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*, Bacon did not draw the connections between his theory of individuation and *rationes seminales* until much later, towards the end of the 1260s in his

\[43\] Ibid., 134:2-17.
Communia naturalia. Also in contrast with Rufus, who went on to study theology as a Franciscan, Bacon taught in arts faculties the rest of his life, and so his treatment of rationes seminales comes in an offhand remark, acknowledging that he is treating material outside the purview of his discipline. Discussing his understanding of the relationship between matter and form, which had not changed substantially since the Quaestiones secundae, Bacon notes that, “deep down, a ratio seminalis is the same as a potency, wherefore a ratio seminalis is the very incomplete essence of matter which can be advanced into completion, like a seed into a tree.”

Bacon thus serves as a counterpoint to Rufus, both in questions of individuation, as well as in questions of rationes seminales. In terms of individuation, Bacon provides one possible response to Rufus’s critique of Averroes’s doctrine of individuation: since whatever is received is received according to the mode of the receiver, there is no need to posit an individual form in order to account for individuation, since a specific form is contracted sufficiently by being received into matter, which has a limited potential for information. This limited potential is grounded in the matter’s incomplete active potency, communicated to it by an incomplete form, which confers on the matter a tendency towards complete form.

Bacon’s solution to the problem of the relationship of form to matter, while it was certainly creative, was subject to one major ambiguity that would mark it for criticism by Bonaventure: Bacon seems to waver as to whether the incomplete active potency in matter is

44 For the dating of the Communia naturalia, see David Lindberg, Roger Bacon’s Philosophy of Nature, xxv-xxvi. Some of the outlines of these conclusions, without the explicit reference to rationes seminales, are discussed in Bacon’s second commentary on Aristotle’s Physics. Cf. Roger Bacon, Questiones supra libros octo Physicorum Aristotelis, ed. Ferdinand Delorme with Robert Steele, in Opera hactenus inedita, fasc. 13, 56-69.

45 Cf. Roger Bacon, Communia naturalia, pars 2, d. 2, cap. 4, in Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconis, fasc. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), 84-85. “Hii visis, facile est assignare raciones seminales in materia de quibus loquuntur theologi, quia racio seminalis et potencia idem est penitus, unde racio seminalis est ipsa essencia materie incompleta que potest promoveri in complementum, sicut semen in arborem.”
something that belongs to matter per se, or to form. Earlier in the Quaestiones secundae, Bacon had argued that since potency comes from matter, and actuality from form, matter does not differ from its potency. Yet as he would subsequently note, matter has a twofold potency: receptive and active. No problem arises in the present context with saying that matter is identical with its receptive potency, but to say that it is identical with its active potency is to make either one of two problematic claims: first, that matter possesses in itself some degree of actuality apart from form—Bacon had explicitly denied this; second, that something in matter is identical with form—Bacon seems to inclined to this view, noting that how you associate the active potency in matter with matter or form depends on how you look at it.

In Bacon’s treatment of rationes seminales, one encounters the same problem as in his treatment of individuation. For Rufus, a ratio seminalis is the genus generalissima in matter, having no particular activity of its own, but open to information by a variety of specific and individual forms. For Bacon, on the other hand, while a ratio seminalis is the genus generalissima in matter, it possesses an incomplete existence of its own, which confers on it a certain actuality and activity as it advances towards the completion it seeks in a specific form.

46 Bacon, Quaestiones secundae, in Opera hactenus inedita, fasc. 7, 8. “Materia et forma differunt penes primas differentias entis, que sunt actus et potentia; set forma est actus, ergo materia erit potentia, ergo, cum sit potentia, non differt a potentia. Set etiam scribitur in secundo Physicorum, ubi dicitur quod materia est que tantum est ens in potentia, ergo non est aliud quam potentia, ergo non differt a potentia.”

47 Ibid., 9. “Potentia in materia contingit loqui dupliciter; primo modo quantum de potentia ejus passiva et recipiente tantum, et hoc utatur, et per hanc se habet materia ad omnes formas per indeterminationem, et hec eadem est cum ipsa in essentia, et per hanc nullam formam actu suscipit; alia est potentia materie que dicitur conferens, obediens, vel bene passiva; et hoc quedam modo agit et ad productionem formarum disponit. Et de hac contingit loqui uno modo per relationem ad id cujus est, scilicet ad materiam, et sic iterum eadem est cum materia et una; alio modo per relationem ad quem conferit, et sic differens est et plures, et hoc modo diversificatur secundum numerum generabilium et corruptibilium ad que, quorum productione disponit et conferit.” Compare this with Bacon’s later comment that, “Non tamen intelligendum quod illa potentia activa sit accidens respectu materie, imo forma substantialis, licet incompleta, differens a materia per essentiam sicut et forma completa, quoniam ejusdem est essentie cum forma completa...” (135). Thus it would seem that, compared with matter, the active potency is supposed to be identical with the essence of matter; compared with form, it is supposed to be an incomplete substantial form and not identical with matter.
we compare Rufus and Bacon using Bacon’s terminology, one might say that for Rufus, a *ratio seminalis* is a receptive potency in matter, where for Bacon it is an active potency in matter. Rufus’s position poses no special difficulty here, but Bacon’s is subject to two criticisms, arising from the question of whether an active potency should be identified with matter or form. If it should be identified with matter, then has not Bacon begged the question concerning matter’s determination, like Avicenna, by assuming that it is already pre-determined (though in this case incompletely) through an active potency? It may well be that what is received is received according to the mode of the receiver, but when the limited mode of the receiver is what remains to be proved, it is inadequate to assume that Rufus’s criticism can be avoided by assuming the limitation of matter. If, on the contrary, Bacon’s active potency should be identified with form, then is not Bacon subject to his own criticism, that any amount of actuality arising from form exhausts and fulfills the desire of matter for form?

When Bonaventure set about the composition of his own Commentary on the *Liber sententiarum*, he did not have access to Bacon’s later writings on *rationes seminales*, since Bonaventure’s work pre-dates Bacon’s *Communia naturalis* by over a decade. At Paris in the early 1250’s, however, he would at least have had access to Rufus’s *Contra Averroem*, as well as to Bacon’s *Quaestiones secundae*, along with several other of Bacon’s works. On the question of individuation, Bonaventure shows himself familiar with the full range of positions outlined above. Noting, then, that “there was a dispute among philosophical men about individuation,”

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(and here I take this to mean magistri in the arts faculty at the University of Paris),\textsuperscript{49} he proceeds to summarize both Averroes’s and Rufus’s views. However, Bonaventure criticizes them both harshly, suggesting that, “either one of these positions [Averroes’s and Rufus’s] has something [in it] which could seem reasonably improbable to a man of not much intelligence.”\textsuperscript{50} Matter, pace Averroes, “is common for all things,” while form, pace Rufus, “is made to have another like it,” and is not reintroduced anew in all cases of individuality.\textsuperscript{51} Instead, Bonaventure proposes a middle way: matter and form mutually individuate one another under the influence of an efficient cause.\textsuperscript{52} Matter makes a thing to be this (hoc), while form makes it to be something (aliquid). Together, they make it to be this thing (hoc aliquid).\textsuperscript{53}

Having moved quickly through Averroes and Rufus, Bonaventure then begins his discussion of Bacon’s \textit{Quaestiones secundae}.\textsuperscript{54} Like Bacon, Bonaventure adds that there are

\textsuperscript{49} It may, however, simply be a paraphrase of a comment that appears in Rufus’s \textit{Contra Averroem}. This is suggested in Rega Wood, “Richard Rufus and English Scholastic Discussion of Individuation,” 127.

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., “Quaelibet istarum positionum aliquid habet, quod homini non multum intelligenti rationabili ter videri poterit improbabile.”

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid. “Quomodo enim materia, quae omnibus est communis, erit principale principium et causa distinctionis, valde difficile est videre. Rursus, quomodo forma sit tota et praeipua causa numeralis distinctionis, valde difficile est capere, cum omnis forma creata, quantum est de sui natura, nata sit habere aliam similem, sicut et ipse Philosophus dicit etiam in sole et luna esse. Vel quomodo dicemus, duos ignes differre formaliter, vel etiam alia, quae plurificarunt et numero distinguuntur ex sola divisione continui, ubi nullius est novae formae inductio?”

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid. “Individuatio consurgit ex actuali coniunctione materiae cum forma, ex qua coniunctione unum sibi appropriet alterum; sicut patet, cum impressio vel expressio fit multorum sigillorum in cera, quae prius erat una, nec sigilla plurificari possunt sine cera, nec cera numeratur, nisi quia fiunt in ea diversa sigilla.”

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid [Quaracchi 2:109-10]. “Quod sit hoc, principalius habet a materia, ratione cuius forma habet positionem in loco et tempore. Quod sit aliquid, habet a forma. Individuum enim habet esse, habet etiam existere. Existere dat materia formae, sed essendi actu dat forma materiae.---Individuatio igitur in creaturis consurgit ex duplici principio.” Cf. Averroes, \textit{Metaphysics} 7.7, com. 27 [Giunti 8:177rd]. “Deinde dicit ‘congregatio vero,’ etc. idest et manifestum est, quod congregatum, quod fit ex forma et materia, est illud, per quod dicitur in quolibet est ipsum generari. Deinde dicit et ‘quod in omni, quod generatur, est materia,’ etc. Idest, et manifestum est, quod omne generatum, quoddam est materia, et quoddam forma: et est illud, quod demonstratur per hoc pronomen hoc.”

\textsuperscript{54} The relevant passage is Bonaventure, \textit{In II Sent.}, d. 7, p. 2, a. 2, q. 1, co [Quaracchi 2:197-98].
really two ways of understanding the \textit{latitatio formarum}: either forms are hiding in matter \textit{actually}, which is what Anaxagoras had held, or they are hiding in matter \textit{potentially}, in which case the opinion is acceptable.\footnote{Ibid. “Quidam enim posuerunt latitationem formarum, sicut imponitur Anaxagorae. Et illud potest dupliciter intelligi: aut quod ipse poneret, formas actualiter existere in materia, sed non apparere extrinsecus, sicut pictura operta panno; et iste modus impossibilis est omnino, quia tunca contraria simul ponerentur in eodem. Alio modo potest intelligi sic, ut essentiae formarum sint in materia in potentia non solum latentes, sed entes in potentia, ut materia habeat in se seminales omnium formarum rationes, sibi a primaria conditione inditas—et illud concordat et philosophiae et sacrae Scripturae—et per actionem agentis educerentur in actum. Sed hic intellectus non fuit hius positionis, sed primus, secundum quod expositores dicunt. Haec enim positio fuit, quod agens particular nihil agat, sed tantum detegat.”} Like Bacon, Bonaventure also discusses Avicenna’s \textit{dator formarum} as a counterpoint to Anaxagoras. Here, Bonaventure adds a distinction: if one really means that God is the sole cause of every instance of form coming to be in matter—and Bonaventure acknowledges this to have been Avicenna’s position—then one would have to say that created agents do absolutely nothing in the manner of efficient causes, which is false. Still, Bonaventure suggests, nothing prevents us from saying that God is the \textit{principal} agent in any instance of efficient causality.\footnote{Ibid. “Alia fuit positio philosophorum magis modernorum, quod omnes formae sunt a Creatore. Et haec positio potest dupliciter intelligi: uno modo, quod Deus sit principaliter agens et producens in omnis rei eductione, et sic habet veritatem; vel ita, quod Deus sit tota causa efficiens, et agens particulare non faciat nisi materiam adaptare, ut, sicut producit animam rationalem, ita et alias formas; et iste intellectus videtur fuisse illorum philosophorum.--- Et iste intellectus est impossibilis, quia agens particulare aut inducit aliquid, aut nihil. Et si nihil: ergo nihil agit. Si aliquid inducit: ergo videtur, quod aliquid efficiat dispositionem: sed qua ratione potest in unam, et it aliarn. Quare ista positio non est rationabilis?”}

When Bonaventure arrives at Bacon’s conclusion, he attempts to distance himself from Bacon by a further distinction.\footnote{Ibid. “Nam quidam dicunt, quod huiusmodi formae sunt in materia in potentia receptiva et quodam modo activa sive cooperativa; quoniam materia et habet possibilitatem ad recipientum, et etiam inclinationem ad cooperandum, et in agente est huiusmodi forma producenda sicut in principio effectivo et originali, quia omnis forma per naturam suae speciei recipit virtutem multiplicandi se; unde inductio formae est ab agente formam suam multiplicante. Et ponunt exemplum in candela, quo modo una inflammatur multas, et ab uno objecto relucet multae} Bacon had solved the problem of form’s relationship to matter
by proposing an incomplete active potency in matter. However, Bacon had been somewhat ambiguous as to whether this potency were identical with matter or with form. Yet for Bonaventure, to say that something is present in an active potency is nothing other than to say that it is present actually in virtue of a form. If Bacon were correct, and forms were in matter as in an active potency, then forms would be received in the receptive potency of matter, and they would be caused by the active potency in matter, but in no sense could they be drawn out of or educed from the matter by an efficient cause, as Bacon had supposed. In short, Bonaventure claims that Bacon’s doctrine of incomplete active potency is really a combination of the two doctrines that Bacon rejects. Insofar as his active potency is complete, it is simply the actuality

imagines in pluribus speculis. Et huiusmodi formae, ut dicunt, non habent, ex quo sint materialiter, sed ex quo originaliter; et ideo non dicuntur creari nec dicuntur esse ex nihilo. Illud enim creatur, quod nullo modo est; sed talis forma sic producta aliquo modo est, tum ratione agentis tum ratione materiae.”

Here, a question arises concerning the identity of Bonaventure’s interlocutor. As mentioned above, the idea of forms existing in an active, but incomplete potency in matter was defended by Bacon in his Second Questions on Book 12 of the Metaphysics. Bonaventure is also at the point in his discussion of Bacon’s work that one would expect him naturally to treat Bacon’s thought next. However, the question of the interlocutor’s identity arises because Bonaventure makes it clear that he has a very specific text in mind when he references the example of the candle, which is nowhere to be found in the Questiones secundae. It appears that Bonaventure changed tack here, and in the complete discussion of Bacon’s views decided to expand what Bacon says in the Questiones secundae with some very early recension of Bacon’s De multiplicatione specierum, or at the least some other work which stood as a precursor to that one.

Scholars of Bacon might object to this hypothesis that De multiplicatione specierum, although it did go through several editions, was not begun until the late 1250s or early 1260s, well after the composition of the second book of Bonaventure’s commentary on the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum. These are the dates assigned for the work’s composition in David Lindberg’s introduction to Roger Bacon’s Philosophy of Nature, xxxiii. Lindberg may be correct about the dating of the formal undertaking which is now known as De multiplicatione specierum. However, the text of Bonaventure which appears here, exactly where one would expect him to discuss Bacon’s position, is a direct summary of the most important points and distinctions of De multiplicatione specierum, p. 1, ch. 3. That chapter makes all of the claims that Bonaventure attributes to his interlocutor, and defends them finally with the example of the candle.

58 Bonaventure, In II Sent., d. 7, p. 2, a. 2, q. 1, co. [Quaracchi 2:198]. “Alia via est, quod formae sunt in potentia materiae, non solum in qua et a qua aliquo modo, sed etiam ex qua.” In qua refers to the reception of form in a receptive potency, a qua refers to the causing of form by an active potency.

59 Roger Bacon, De multiplicatione specierum 1.3 [Lindberg 46:50-53]. “Cum igitur nullo predictorum modorum fiat generatio speciei, manifestum est quod quinto modo oportet fieri, scilicet per veram immutatiam et eductionem de potentia activa materie patientis, non enim est alius modus excogitabilis preter dictos…”
communicated to matter by form. Insofar as it is incomplete, it is simply matter’s receptive potency.

In response to Bacon, Bonaventure does not deny that there is something intrinsic in matter from which forms are *educed*. His disagreement is more whether that from which form is educed can be said to be “incomplete” form.

…There is something cocreated (*concretatum*) with matter out of which an agent, when it acts upon it, educes a form. I do not say “out of which” as though out of something that is like some part of the form that is going to be produced, but rather since [that something] can be form and becomes form, just as a rosebud becomes a rose. [My] position posits that the truths of all forms that are going to be produced are in matter naturally, and that when a form is produced, no quiddity, no truth of essence is induced anew, but rather a new disposition is given to it, so that what was in potency may be in act.\footnote{Bonaventure, *In II Sent.*, d. 7, p. 2, a. 2, q. 1, co. [Quaracchi 2:198]. “...In ipsa materia aliquid est concretatum, ex quo agens, dum agit in ipsam, edicit formam; non inquam ex illo tanquam ex aliquo, quod sit tanquam aliqua pars formae productae, sed quia illud potest esse forma et fit forma, sicut globus rosae fit rosa. Et ista positio ponit, quod in materia sint veritates omnium formarum productarum naturaliter; et cum productur, nulla quidditas, nulla veritas essentiae inducitur de novo, sed datur ei nova dispositio, ut quod erat in potentia fiat in actu.”}

For Bonaventure, then, Bacon was on to something when he asserted that forms must be educed from matter, but he did not go far enough. Taken to its logical conclusion, Bacon’s doctrine results in a form which is partially hiding (*latens*) and partially given (*data*), but in no sense educed (*educta*).
At this point, one might ask why Bonaventure went to such great lengths to involve himself in the philosophical disputations of the arts faculty concerning the question of individuation and the information of matter. Insofar as Bonaventure should be classed in some sense as theologically “conservative” with respect to the new questions being raised in the thirteenth century at the University of Paris, one might have expected Bonaventure to shy away from such intricate philosophical questions and to insist on the study of more properly theological topics. As if anticipating this objection, Bonaventure replies: the most important reason to get involved in the questions of individuation and formation, he suggests, is because they have immediate theological consequences, particularly with regard to the doctrine of Creation.61

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61 Ibid. “Hanc positionem credo esse tendendam, non solum quia eam suadeat ratio, sed etiam quia confirmat auctoritas Augustini super Genesim ad litteram, quam Magister allegat: quod ‘quae producuntur a natura secundum rationes seminales producuntur.’”
For Bonaventure, if one considers matter as it was first created in history, one is considering matter in its concrete existence (*secundum esse*); if one considers it abstracted from history and of itself, one is considering it in its abstract nature (*secundum essentiam*). The distinction between these two ways of viewing matter arises out of a seeming discrepancy in the texts of Augustine. In the *Confessions*, Augustine had argued that matter was created at first without form, and only subsequently received form. Subsequently, in *De genesi ad litteram*, Augustine maintained that form is “something created together” (*aliquid concreatum*) with matter. By the time of the composition of Peter the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*, both these

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62 Bonaventure, *In II Sent.*, d. 12, a. 1, q. 1, co [Quaracchi 2:294]. “…dupliciter est loqui de materia: aut secundum quod existit in natura, aut secundum quod consideratur ab anima.”

63 Augustine outlines this position beginning at *Conf.* 12.3.3, and summarizes it at *Conf.* 12.13.16. “hoc interim sentio, deus meus, cum audio loquentem scripturam tuam: in principio fecit deus caelum et terram: terra autem erat inuisibilis et incomposita et tenebrae erant super abyssum, neque commemorantem, quoto die feceris haec. sic interim sentio propter illud caelum caeli, caelum intellectuale, ubi est intellectus nosse simul, non ex parte, non in aenigmate, non per speculum, sed ex toto, in manifestatione, facie ad faciem; non modo hoc, modo illud, sed, quod dictum est, Nosse simul sine uilla uiicissitudine temporum, et propter inuisibilem atque incompositam terram sine uilla uiicissitudine temporum, quae solet habere modo hoc et modo illud, quia ubi nulla species, nusquam est hoc et illud: propter duo haec, primitus formatum et penitus informe, illud caelum, sed caelum caeli, hoc uero terram, sed terram inuisibilem et incompositam, propter duo haec interim sentio sine commemoratione dierum dicere scripturam tuam: in principio fecit deus caelum et terram. statim quippe subiecit, quam terram dixerit, et quod secundo die commemoratur factum firmamentum et uocatum caelum, insinuat, de quo caelo prius sine diebus sermo locutus sit.” The critical text is from Augustine, *Confessionum libri tredecim*, ed. Luc Verheijen, *CSEL* 27 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), 223-24. On the dating of this text, which Augustine composed from 397-401, see Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 178.

Technically, Augustine never said that there was a period in time in which matter existed without form, because, he notes, form is required in order that something be subject to time. For that reason, he thinks that when matter was created without form it participated eternity, and only later became subject to time with its reception of form. Cf. *Conf.* 12.9.9. “ista uero informitas terrae inuisibilis et incomposita, nec ipsa in diebus numerata est. ubi enim nulla species, nullus ordo, nec uenit quidquam nec praeterit, et ubi hoc non fit, non sunt utique dies nec uiicissitudo spatorium temporalium.”

64 Augustine, *De gen. ad lit.* 1.15. “Non quia informis materia formatis rebus tempore prior est, cum sit utrumque simul concreatum, et unde factus est, et quod factum est—sicut enim uox materia uerborum est, uerba uery formatam uocem indicant, non autem qui loquitur prius emittit informem uocem, quam possit postea configere atque in uerba formare: ita et deus creator non priore tempore fecit informem materiam et eam postea per ordinem quamque naturarum quasi secunda consideratione formauit; formatam quippe creauit materiam—sed quia illud, unde fit aliquid, etsi non tempore, tamen quadam origine prius est, quam illud, unde fit aliquid, etsi non tempore, tamen quadam origine prius est, quam illud, quod inde fit, potuit duidere scriptura logquendi temporibus, quod deus faciendi temporibus non diuisit.” The critical text is from Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram*, ed. Josef Zycha, *CSEL*
views had their adherents, with some espousing that matter was created before form, and others espousing that they were created simultaneously.\(^{65}\)

In both the doctrine of matter \textit{secundum esse} (in the concrete) as well as his doctrine of matter \textit{secundum essentiam} (in the abstract) Bonaventure faced implicit criticism from Bacon. As to matter taken \textit{secundum esse}, in two of Bacon’s works that predated Bonaventure,\(^{66}\) Bacon had argued that matter was created at first without form, and that this unformed matter could rightly be called “confusion” or “chaos.” In the earlier of the two works, his \textit{Questiones supra libros quatuor Physicorum Aristotelis}, Bacon had defended the view,\(^{67}\) arguing that since matter of itself desires greater perfection, it was fitting for it to be created in a confused state without form, since otherwise, as it already possessed form, it would have no further perfection to desire. In the later of the two works, Bacon’s \textit{Questiones altere supra libros prime philosophie} (hereafter “\textit{Questiones altere}’’), he had opposed the position, arguing that such a sort of confused matter would be impossible on account of the mutually opposed motions of the potencies in it. Bonaventure, having evidently read both works, repeats Bacon’s philosophical criticism of the idea that Creation began with a metaphysical \textit{chaos}, but develops his own critique along the lines of his previous critiques of Bacon’s thought. Just as Bonaventure had earlier denied that Bacon’s incomplete active potency was anything more than actuality, and had argued that matter with an

\(^{65}\) Cf. Peter the Lombard, \textit{Liber sententiarum}, lib. 2, d. 12, cap. 2. The Lombard mentions that, while Augustine was generally ascribed the view expressed only in \textit{De gen. ad lit.}, there were others expounding the view that matter was created at first without any form.


\(^{67}\) \textit{Questiones supra libros quatuor Physicorum Aristotelis}, in \textit{Opera hactenus inedita}, fasc. 8, 19-20.
incomplete active potency is really part of matter awaiting the other part, so here Bonaventure suggests that the incomplete, active potencies of chaos would have to constitute actualized “parts” of it. The problem with the hypothesis of chaos, for Bonaventure, is not that there would be a multitude of opposed potencies in one body, but rather that there would be a multitude of opposed parts in it. Moreover, and this is the more important criticism for Bonaventure, these parts would have to pre-exist the chaos into which they were integrated, and such pre-existent, confused elements are nowhere to be found in Scripture.68

Instead, Bonaventure affirms this view when discussing the relationship between form and matter: there is something cocreated (concreatum) in matter which communicates actual existence to it, even while it allows for further potentiality towards subsequent and more specific forms. Yet this would leave Bonaventure open to the criticism from Bacon’s earlier work that if matter were created with any sort of form, its appetite for subsequent form would be exhausted. In Bonaventure’s response to this criticism, he takes Bacon’s idea of an incomplete form with an incomplete active potency in matter and reworks it so as to develop the idea of an incomplete form without an incomplete active potency in matter:

There is another way of speaking, which is more reasonable, that the matter [at Creation] was produced under some form, but that it was not a complete form, nor did it give matter complete being. Wherefore matter was not informed in such a way that it could not be said to be “unformed,” nor was the desire of matter

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68 Bonaventure, In II Sent., a. 1, q. 3, co. [Quaracchi 2:300]. “Quidam namque voluerunt dicere, quod materia illa dicetur chaos propter formarum multitudinem et contrarietatem, quae erat in partibus materiae, ita quod illae partes non distinguiebantur ad invicem secundum loca determinata, nec ita proportionaliter invicem iungebantur, ut ex eis resultaret aliquod mixtum completum... Sed iste modus ponendi potius est poeticus quam philosphicus, quia magis sequitur imaginationis fictionem quam rationem, cum secundum istam positionem ponantur elementa illam materiamm sic productam naturaliter praecedere; quod nec rationi consonat nec sacrae Scripturae.”
Bonaventure’s incomplete form, as distinguished from Bacon’s incomplete active potency, does two things for Bonaventure which an incomplete active potency could not do for Bacon. First, since Bonaventure’s incomplete form allows for the pure passivity of matter taken of itself \((secundum essentiam)\), it clears up any ambiguity about the origin of the actuality in matter; any and all actuality must come from form, and be fundamentally distinct from matter. Second, since the actuality that the form confers upon the matter in actual existence \((secundum esse)\) remains completely distinct from the potentiality of the matter, the incompleteness of the form allows for the incompletely formed matter to retain its pluripotentiality towards other forms. This suggests, for Bonaventure, a way around Bacon’s argument that any form would exhaust the potentiality of matter for subsequent form.

Bonaventure’s innovative approach to the question of how form comes to be in matter afforded him the possibility of explaining \textit{rationes seminales} in a way that was manifestly different than the approaches taken by either Rufus or Bacon.\(^7\) Both Rufus and Bacon had likened \textit{rationes seminales} to a potency in matter. For Rufus, since form is determinative of a thing to the point of individuality, a \textit{ratio seminalis} could not be a form; it was rather the \textit{genus generalissima}, the broadest instance of matter, which allows for the broadest possible range of

\[\text{fulfilled to such an extent that the matter could not still desire other forms. And therefore there was a disposition towards further forms, not complete perfection.}\(^6\)

\[\text{Ibid. “Et ideo est alius modus dicendi rationabilior, quod materia illa producta est subaliqua forma, sed illa non erat forma completa nec dans materiae esse completum; et ideo non sic formabat, quin adhuc materia diceretur informis, nec appetitum materiae adeo finiebat, quin materia adhuc alias formas appeteret; et ideo dispositio erat ad formas ulteriores, non completa perfectio.”}\]

\[\text{Cf. Bonaventure, \textit{In II Sent.}, d. 18, a. 1, q. 3, co. [Quaracchi 2:440-42]. Bonaventure does not discuss Rufus specifically, but I have included him here because he serves as important background for understanding Bacon, whose views Bonaventure does discuss here.}\]
individual actualities. Bacon had acceded to a similar argument, at least in his *Questiones altere*: form satisfies the appetite of matter; drawing forth the logical conclusions of the doctrine he expresses, one might say that a *ratio seminalis* cannot satisfy the appetite of matter, otherwise it could not account of the diversity of created existence; therefore a *ratio seminalis* cannot be a form. But neither could a *ratio seminalis* be a mere receptive potency in Bacon like it was for Rufus, since this would imply in Bacon the need for a *dator formarum*. All that remains for Bacon is that a *ratio seminalis* is the active potency in matter for form, which determines matter enough that a subsequent composite may be individuated. In Bonaventure, by contrast, since matter is purely potential and undetermined in itself, as in Rufus, but is partially and incompletely determined in virtue of its incomplete form, similar to Bacon, it is the form, not the matter, which serves as the principle according to which actual matter is enabled to be formed by any number of subsequent substantial forms, since it is the form which communicates existence and partial determination to it.

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71 In the text of *In II Sent.*, d. 18, a. 1, q. 3, Bonaventure summarizes Bacon’s position and critiques it at length, but he seems to have the text of Bacon’s *Questiones supra libros prime philosophie Aristotelis* in front of him, rather than the *Questiones secundae* or the *Questiones altere*, since he paraphrases several sections from the *Questiones supra libros prime philosophie Aristotelis*. Here is the text of Bonaventure’s summary. The numbers in parentheses, which I have added, refer to the source text for Bonaventure’s understanding of Bacon, as printed in Roger Bacon, *Questiones supra libros prime philosophie Aristotelis*, in *Opera hactenus inedita*, fasc. 10 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1930). “Quidam enim dicere voluerunt, quod cum universalia non sint fictiones, realiter et secundum veritatem non solum sunt in anima, sed etiam in natura; et quia omne quod est in natura, habet fundari in materia, tam formae universales quam singulares in materia habent esse (241-42). Et ita non differunt forma universalis et singularis per abstractionem a materia, et concretionem in materia, sed differunt per additionem unius ad alteram (253), et per magis completum et minus completum (256). Cuius signum est, quia in coordinacione generum et specierum forma speciei est complettissima et compositissima. Forma vero generis respectu illius est ens in potentia, et fit magis in actu per differentiam sibi superadditam (232, 284). Et ita, cum ratio seminalis dicit formam ratione incompleta, dixerunt, nihil alium esse rationem seminalem quam formam universalis.” The last line does not come from Bacon’s *Questiones supra libros prime philosophie Aristotelis*. Bonaventure seems either to have referenced some writing of Bacon’s that I have not found or that we do not possess, to have referenced some thought that Bacon conveyed to him personally, or to have simply drawn what he considered the logical conclusions of Bacon’s thought.

72 Bonaventure, *In II Sent.*, d. 18, a. 1, q. 3. [Quaracchi 2:440]. “…Est notandum, quod cum satis constet, rationem seminalem esse potentiam activam, inditam materiae; et illam potentiam activam constet esse essentiam
The doctrine of incomplete forms, which Bonaventure developed in the context of discussions of individuation on the relationship between form and matter, and which subsequently influenced his thought on *rationes seminales*, ultimately led to an important advance in his understanding of nature and natural desire. Having sifted through questions of individuation and formation, Bonaventure goes on to explain that there are three terms in Augustine’s text: *ratio causalis*, *ratio seminalis*, and *causa primordialis*. Although both God and creatures can be called, “causes,” we call the rule according to which God acts a *ratio causalis*.73

The uncreated *ratio causalis* is the divine idea that serves as a creatures’ formal exemplar cause; this corresponds in a creature with its natural form (*forma naturalis*). But a creature’s natural form can be considered in two ways. As it causes something to be done by the creature (*ab illo*) the creature is said to act according to a *ratio naturalis*; as it causes something to be done from within the creature (*ex illo*) it is said to act according to a *ratio seminalis*.74

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73 Bonaventure, *In II Sent.*, d. 18, a. 1, q. 2 [Quaracchi 2:436]. “Causa enim communis est ad principium intrinsecum et extrinsecum, similiter et ratio causalis, quantum est de vi nominis; semen vero dicit principium intrinsecum. Et ita ratio causalis se extendit ad rationes creatas et increatas; ratio vero seminalis solum ad rationes creatas. Quantum ergo est de vi nominis, unum est commune respecu alterius; in quantum autem ad invicem distinguentur et connumerantur, sic causa et causalis ratio accipitur quantum ad principium increatum, semen vero et seminalis ratio spectat ad principium creatum. --- Differunt autem causa et ratio causalis, quia causa dicit principium productivum, ratio vero causalis dicit regulam dirigentem illud principium in sua operatione. Similiter per hunc modum differt semen et ratio seminalis. Regula autem agentis increati est forma exemplaris sive idealis, regula agentis creati est forma naturalis: et ita rationes causales sunt formae ideales sive exemplares, rationes vero seminales sunt formae naturales.” (ibid. [Quaracchi 2:442])

74 Ibid. “…Naturales rationes et seminales re idem sunt, ratione vero differunt. Quia enim semen dicit ut ex quo, et natura dicit ut a quo, ratio seminalis attenditur, in quantum dirigit potentiam naturae, ut ex aliquo fiat aliqoud; naturalis vero, ut ab aliquo fiat aliqoud.--- Vel ratio seminalis respicit inchoationem et intrinsecam virtutem, quae movet et operatur ad effectus productionem; naturalis vero concernit producentis ad productum assimilationem et modi agendi assuetudinem.”
As was the case with matter, so also for the rest of Creation: having a substantial form—and therefore having a *ratio seminalis*—does not exhaust a creature’s potential for subsequent forms, or even its desire for them, because the receptive potency of matter is not exhausted by the actuality communicated to it by the form. This opens, for Bonaventure, various possibilities for interaction among the various kinds of *rationes* that Augustine had enumerated. As Bonaventure describes it, there are three basic ways in which the various *rationes* enumerated above can interact. In the first way, God acts according to a *ratio causalis*, to which nothing in a creature corresponds (i.e. God actualizes a receptive potency in the creature, to which no active tendency in its form corresponds). In that case, the creature is said to respond according to a potency for obedience (*potentia obedientiae*) for something to happen in it by divine action; acts of this kind include Creation and the multiplication of one thing from another. In the second kind, God acts according to a *ratio causalis*, to which a *ratio seminalis* corresponds in the creature (i.e. God communicates actuality to the creature’s receptive potency through the mediation of its form). In that case, a creature is said to act as one might ordinarily expect; acts of this kind, for example, include ordinary generation of like from like. In the third kind, God acts according to a *ratio causalis*, to which a whole series or chain of *rationes seminales* correspond, but God skips the ordinary chain of events and causes the thing to happen immediately; here again, creature’s possess only a potency for obedience in respect of God’s action.

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75 In translating “potentia obedientiae” as a “potency for obedience,” I am taking *obedientiae* as a dative of purpose.
On the question concerning which of the above three patterns of interaction can be said to be “natural,” Bonaventure makes a distinction which parallels the one he had made in the case of the creation of matter.

Nature can be said in two ways. In one way, nature means “everything that befits something from its natural origin”; and in this way it befits a creature that everything that God wants should be produced from it (ex ea). For a work has in itself a potency for perfect obedience (potentia perfectae obedientiae) with respect to its maker, since it is subject to his will in all things… God does nothing against this [sort of] nature; much rather, whatever he does with a creature, he does according to this nature (secundum hanc naturam)… In another way, nature means “the power instilled properly into things, according to which natural things pursue their courses and their customary motions.” And if we understand nature in this way, sometimes God acts against nature (contra naturam), sometimes above nature (supra naturam). He acts against nature, when he does something, to which something similar can be produced in nature and by nature, but in an altogether different way… and then it is called a miracle. But when God produces an effect to which nature can do nothing similar, and towards which nature has no order of its own power, like when God was made man, or when a mortal body is made glorious; then God acts above nature (supra naturam), and that work is properly called “marvelous” (mirabile) not a “miracle” (miraculum).76

If we compare the three kinds of actions described here to the three categories of interaction among the rationes described above, then one could say that when God actualizes a receptive potency in a creature for which there does not correspond any active potency in the creature’s form, then God acts supra naturam; when God actualizes a receptive potency through the

76 Ibid., ad 5 [Quaracchi 2:437-38]. “…Dupliciter dicitur natura. Uno modo dicitur natura omne illud quod competit rei a sua naturali origine; et sic competit creaturae, ut ex ea producatur omne quod Deus vult. Opus enim respectu sui artificis habet in se potentiam perfectae obedientiae, cum per omnia subiaceat eius voluntati… et contra hanc naturam Deus nunquam facit, immo quidquid facit de creatura, secundum hanc naturam facit. Alio modo dicitur natura proprie vis insita rebus, secundum quam res naturales peragunt cursus suos et motus solitos; et hoc modo accipiendo naturam, aliquando Deus facit contra naturam, aliquando supra naturam.—Tunc facit contra naturam, quando facit aliquid, cuius simile in natura et a natura produci habet, tamen alio modo omnino diverso… et tunc dicitur miraculum. Quando vero Deus facit aliquid, cuius simile natura facere non potest, et ad quod natura non habet ordinem secundum proprium virtutem, sicut quando Deus factus est homo, vel quando corpus mortale fit gloriosum; tunc facit supra naturam, et illud opus proprie dicitur mirabile, non miraculum.”
mediation of a creature’s form, then God acts *secundum naturam*; when God actualizes a receptive potency in a creature to which some remote form in nature corresponds, but he does so immediately, then God acts *contra naturam*.

Bonaventure’s deference to the senses of the word, “natural,” has important consequences when it comes to his explanation of natural desire. Just as, for Bonaventure, matter’s incomplete information does not exhaust, but rather enable’s matter’s desire for subsequent formation, so neither does nature’s complete formation exhaust its desire for subsequent formation. The only difference is that, in the case of an incomplete substantial form, matter continues to desire complete substantial form. In the case of complete substantial form, matter only continues to desire accidental form.

Seeing that matter, informed by a complete substantial form, can desire the further actuality of its receptive potency according to an accidental form, Bonaventure reasons that since the perfection whereby we are joined with God is accidental, not substantial, there is no reason we cannot say that the soul, informed by its own substantial form, desires a union with God which it can nowise achieve of its own accord.77 “Since… the rational soul is created after the image and likeness of God, it is also made capable of the most fulfilling good; and [beatitude] is not enough for [a rational soul], when it is vain and defective; therefore I say that [a rational

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77 Bonaventure, *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, p. 1, a. un., q. 1, ad 4 [Quaracchi 4:1001]. “Ad illud quod obiicitur, quod nobilior est perfectio substantialis; dicendum, quod istud est verum quantum ad primum esse, non tamen quantum ad esse secundum sive bene esse, immo accidentalis forma est perfectio ipsius compositi quantum ad bene esse, sicut patet de colore et odore in rose. – Aliter potest dici, quod accidens est duplex. Quoddam namque est, quod causatur ex principiis subjecti, et tale nobilissimus est substantialis forma, pro eo quo et ipsa habet originem; quoddam, quod causatur a superiori, et tale potest esse nobilissimus, pro eo quod diriget et coniungit. Et quia beatitudo iungit animam summo Deo, ubi est terminatio omnis appetitus; et orte habet a Deo, non ab anima...”
soul] desires true beatitude naturally.” 78 Since the soul is created for God, therefore it is natural that the soul desire God. It is not that the soul desires God, however, because it can achieve God according to the active potential of its substantial form secundum naturam—that would capitulate too much to the opposite sense of nature, in which nature is bound by the ends it can achieve by its active potency. Rather, the soul desires to be united with God as by an accidental form above its own principles. 79 The desire is natural in one sense because it flows from God’s intention for us at Creation; it can proceed from our soul in the other sense because it is a desire not for subsequent substantial formation, but rather the fulfillment, according to a potency for obedience, of an unactualized receptive potency for subsequent accidental formation. Finally, this doctrine avoids the theological consequence of saying that what the soul receives according to the actualization of a potency for obedience is natural because it decouples the desire that results from unfulfilled potency from the power to actualize it.

In elaborating his position on natural desire, Bonaventure makes a threefold observation concerning its term in human beatitude: “all believe that beatitude is good, that it satisfies [us], and everyone desires this.” 80 In short, for Bonaventure, we have a natural desire for a most satisfying good, and the natural knowledge that the most satisfying good exists. As for what the most satisfying good is, Bonaventure confesses that many people seek it in less satisfying goods, since one only seeks beatitude in a particular object following an act of deliberation. But our

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78 Bonaventure, In IV Sent., d. 49, p. 1, a. un., q. 2, co [Quaracchi 4:1003]. “Quoniam igitur anima rationalis creata est ad Dei imaginem et similitudinem et facta est capax boni sufficientissimi; et ipsa [beatitudo] non sufficit sibi, cum sit vana et deficiens: ideo dico, quod veram beatitudinem appetit naturaliter.”

79 Bonaventure, In IV Sent., d. 49, p. 1, a. un, q. 5, ad 4 [Quaracchi 4:1009].

natural desire is not for that reason purely subjective in such a way that it is not also objective. For Bonaventure, there is only one good that is “the most satisfying.” Our natural desire for the most subjectively satisfying good is at once a natural desire for beatitude and a natural desire for God.

B. Thomas Aquinas’s Doctrine of Natural Desire

1. The Commentary on Book II of Peter the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum

As with Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas’s views on nature and the natural can be found in his discussion of rations seminales in Book 2, Distinction 18 of his Commentary the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum. Like Bonaventure, Thomas observes that the correspondence between creature and Creator is found primarily through formal exemplar causality. When God makes a creature, the creature is made according to a divine idea or “primordial form” (forma primordialis), a limited similarity of which is received in the creature as its own natural form (forma naturalis). This reception of a limited similarity of a divine idea imparts to the creature

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81 The parts of this distinction that concern nature can be found in Thomas Aquinas, Scriptum super sententiis, 4 vols., ed. Pierre Mandonnet and Marie-Fabien Moos (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929-47), 2:446-57. The part concerning rations seminales in particular is In II Sent., d. 18, q. 1, aa. 2-3 [Mandonnet 2:450-57].


83 Thomas Aquinas, In II Sent., d. 18, q. 1, a. 2. co [Mandonnet 2:451]. “…Emanatio creaturarum a Deo est sicut exitus artifactorum ab artifice; unde sicut ab arte artificis effluunt formae artificiales in materia, ita etiam ab ideis in mente divina existentibus fluunt omnes formae et virtutes naturales. Sed quia, ut Dionysius dicit in II cap. De div. nom., col. 635, t. I, ‘ea quae sunt causatorum abundanter praesunt causis,’ formae receptae in materia non
two sets of powers. The first is the power to produce an effect like itself; this occurs according to a germinatory form (forma seminalis). The second is the power to receive what further effects God would choose to cause in it; this occurs according to obediential properties (rationes obedientiales).  

However, if Thomas follows Bonaventure in the broad outline of his approach to nature and the natural, that is not to say that he follows them in every particular. As is known from the short treatise, De principiis nature, which was composed about the same time as Thomas’s Commentary on the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum, or possibly earlier, Thomas agreed with Bonaventure on much concerning matter, but had already developed a different position on one very fundamental point. Like Bonaventure, Thomas acknowledges two ways of considering matter: one in which matter is considered in its abstract essence, and one in which matter is considered in its concrete existence in Genesis 1. Matter in its abstract essence, for Thomas, is completely devoid of form, while in its concrete existence, matter is never without form, since it requires form to mediate actuality to it. When substantial form comes to be in matter, it does so adequant virtutem vel artem inrecreatam a qua procedunt; unde apud artificem remanet ex arte sua virtus aliquid aliter operandi circa ipsa artificiata, quibus virtus artis alligata non est…”  

Ibid. “Formae autem rerum secundum quod in arte divina existunt primordiales esse dicuntur, eo quod ipsae sunt prima principia simpliciter rerum producendarum: potentia autem quae rebus indita est ad susci piendum illud in se quod voluntas Dei disponit, rationes obedientiales a quibusdam dicuntur, secundum quae inest materiae ut fieri possit ex ea quod Deus vult. Ipsae autem virtutes in materia positae, per quae naturales effectus consequuntur, rationes seminales dicuntur.”  


Thomas Aquinas, De principiis nature, §2, in Opera Omnia, Vol. 43 (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1976), 41. “…Licet materia non habeat in sua natura aliquam formam uel priuationem, sicut in ratione eris neque est figuratum neque infiguratum, tamen numquam denudatur a forma et priuatione: quandoque enim est sub una forma, quandoque sub alia. Sed per se numquam potest esse, quia, cum in ratione sua non habeat aliquam formam, non habet esse in actu, cum esse in actu non sit nisi a forma, sed est solum in potentia; et ideo quicquid est actu non potest dici materia prima.” References to the Leonine editions of the works of Aquinas will hereafter be indicated by the abbreviation, “Leon.,” followed by volume and by page number.
by actualizing the receptive potency in matter such that the matter can be said to be that out of which (ex qua) form arises. However, as noted above, Bonaventure thought at this point in his own reasoning that formation by a complete substantial form would exhaust the appetite of matter for form, and consequently matter’s pluripotentiality with respect to other substantial forms. Thus, Bonaventure had posited an incomplete substantial form in matter at Creation in order to safeguard its pluripotentiality. Thomas, however, disagrees with Bonaventure that the reception of a complete substantial form exhausts the potentiality of matter for substantial form. Matter, for Thomas, is never without some privation whereby it might receive a substantial form other than it has (and thereby undergo substantial change), or subsequent accidental forms consequent to its substantial form (and thereby undergo accidental change). Otherwise, as Thomas explains, ordinary generation would be impossible, since it involves a transformation of

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87 Thomas Aquinas, *De principiis nature*, §1 [Leon. 43:39]. “…Materia que est in potentia ad esse substantiale dicitur materia ex qua, que autem est in potentia ad esse accidentale dicitur materia in qua.”

88 Ibid [Leon. 43:40]. “…Licet priuatio sit principium per accidens, non sequitur quod non sit necessarium ad generationem, quia materia a priuacione non denudator; in quantum enim est sub una forma, habet priuacionem alterius et e converso, sicut in igne est priuatio aeris et in aere priuatio ignis.” Cf. *In II Sent.*, d. 12, q. 1, a. 1, s.c. 2 [Mandonnet 2:302]. “Praeterea, in quocumque inventitur alicquid, oportet invenire illud a quo nunquam separatur. Sed materia prima quae est in inferioribus, nunquam separat a privazione formae: quia quandocumque est sub forma una, adjungitur sibi privatio formae alterius…” Thomas continues in the *corpus* of that article even more explicitly: “…non enim terminatur potentia nisi per ademptionem formae, ad quam erat in potentia; unde, cum materia prima secundum se considerata sit in potentia ad omnes formas naturales, non poterit tota ejus potentia terminari nisi per ademptionem omnium formarum.” Cf. John Wippel, *The Metaphysical thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2000), 298.

matter with one substantial form into matter with another. Since for Thomas matter retains its pluripotentiality towards other forms even after formation by a complete substantial form, there is no need for Thomas to hypothesize an incomplete active potency in matter with Bacon, nor an incomplete substantial form in matter, with Bonaventure, in order to secure the pluripotentiality of created existence in Genesis 1. Instead, Thomas argues that matter’s pluripotentiality arises from the manner in which God’s power exceeds the power of the forms that he instills in the matter, rather than the manner in which matter’s potentiality exceeds the power of the forms which it receives.89

Thomas’s doctrine of matter and form, while philosophically consistent, did raise at least one theological question in light of what Bonaventure had said about Creation. Bonaventure’s philosophical doctrine was intended to guarantee the literal truth of Genesis 1, by explaining how Creation could occur over a six day period. Bonaventure had acknowledged that his own doctrine of successive Creation was difficult to comprehend by reason, but had asserted that in this case reason must submit to Scripture. Thomas is aware of this objection. But Thomas, in a subtle article on Scriptural hermeneutics, suggests that successive Creation is not among the truths revealed definitively by Genesis 1. The six days of Creation, for Thomas, can instead be understood according to the order of nature (that is, they recount the hierarchy of being from bottom to top), or in the order of instruction (that is, they break up simultaneous Creation into

89 *In II Sent.*, d. 18, q. 1, a. 2. co [Mandonnet 2:451]. “Sed quia, ut Dionysius dicit in II cap. De div. nom., col. 635, t. I, *‘ea quae sunt causatorum abundanter praeinsunt causis,’ formae receptae in materia non adaequant virtutem vel artem increatam a qua procedunt; unde apud artificem remanet ex arte sua virtus aliquid aliter operandi circa ipsa artificiata…”
parts so that it is easier to understand), without necessarily being understood in the order of time over six literal days.⁹⁰

Thomas’s alternative account of Creation, in which creatures receive complete substantial forms, but in which these complete substantial forms do not actualize the entire potency of their matter, laid the foundation for his broader critique of Bonaventure’s and Bacon’s respective understandings of *rationes seminales*, and consequently of their respective understandings of nature and the natural.⁹¹ Thomas discusses Bonaventure first, highlighting two problems with the latter’s doctrine of incomplete forms. The first is an argument from the nature of substance. In *De anima* 2.1, Aristotle says that a thing’s substantial form gives it the specific character of its existence. Aristotle uses the example of an axe: an axe’s substantial form makes it to be an axe;

⁹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, d. 12, q. 1, a. 2, co. [Mandonnet 2:305-06]. “…Quae ad fidem pertinent, dupliciter distinguuntur. Quaedam enim sunt per se substantia fidei, ut Deum esse trinum et unum, et hujusmodi : in quibus nulli licet alter opinari… Quaedam vero per accidens tantum, inquantum scilicet in scriptura traduntur, quam fides supponit Spiritu sancto dictante promulgatam esse… et in his etiam sancti diversa senserunt Scripturam divinam diversmode exponentes. Sic ergo circa mundi principium aliquid est quod ad substantiam fidei pertinet, scilicet mundum incepisse creatum, et hoc omnes sancti concorditer dicitur. Quo autem modo et ordine factus sit, non pertinet ad fidem nisi per accidens, inquantum in Scriptura traditur, cujus veritatem diversa expositione sancti salvantes, diversa tradiderunt. Augustinus enim vult… [non] in distinctione rerum attendendum esse ordinem temporis, sed naturae et doctrinae. Naturae, sicut sonus praecedit cantum natura, sed non tempore; et ita quae naturaliter priora sunt, prius facta memorantur… Doctrinae vero ordine, sicut patet in docentibus geometrias: quamvis enim partes figuraa sine ordine temporis figuras constituant, tamen geometria docet constitutionem fieri prostrahendo lineam post lineam…in distinctione rerum attendendum esse ordinem temporis… [Haec opinio] est rationabilior, et magis ab irissione infidelium sacram Scripturam defendens… et haec opinio plus mihi placet…” Nevertheless, Thomas grants explicitly that one could hold Bonaventure’s opinion, and is willing to defend both opinions for the sake of argument. In addition, Thomas goes on to devote an entire article to defending Augustine against Bonaventure’s criticism. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, d. 12, q. 1, a. 3 [Mandonnet 2:307-12]. Also see Norman Kretzmann, *The Metaphysics of Creation: Aquinas’s Natural Theology in Summa Contra Gentiles II* (New York: Oxford, 1999), 191.

⁹¹ Thomas begins his discussion of the topic with a note similar to that of Bonaventure, highlighting the diversity of opinions on the subject: “Sed quid sint secundum rem seminales rationes, a diversis diversimode assignatur.” The “various people” Thomas intends to discuss here are really only two: Bonaventure and Bacon. In fact, the remainder of the article is a summary and critique of Bonaventure’s and Bacon’s respective positions, which very closely parallels Bonaventure’s own commentary on this distinction.
without the substantial form of an axe, you may have a body, but you do not have an axe. As Thomas understands it, Bonaventure’s theory of incomplete forms would communicate substantial existence to something without any specific character; that is, it would allow for an individual in the genus of substance, without any particular species. Thomas argues that this is contrary to what it means to be a substance in the first place. As a consequence, Thomas suggests that any substantial form is really complete substantial form—Bonaventure’s category of incomplete substantial forms is a contradiction in terms. For Thomas, since all form only partially actualizes the potency of matter, it does nothing to say that a given form incompletely actualizes the potency of matter—that merely makes it the same as every other form. Subsequent forms consequent upon the first substantial form, therefore, can really only be accidental forms, not more complete substantial forms as Bonaventure had supposed.

On the basis that Bonaventure’s incomplete form is really just a complete substantial form by another name, Thomas advances to his second criticism of Bonaventure. Even if it were granted that matter, formed by an incomplete substantial form, could receive a more complete substantial form, then the same composite would have two substantial forms, communicating

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92 Aristotle, *De anima* 2.1 (412b10) [McKeon 555-56]. “We have now given an answer to the question, What is soul?—an answer which applies to it in its full extent. It is substance in the sense which corresponds to the definitive formula of a thing’s essence. That means that it is ‘the essential whatness’ of a body of the character just assigned. Suppose that what is literally an ‘organ’, like an axe, were a natural body, its ‘essential whatness’, would have been its essence, and so its soul; if this disappeared from it, it would have ceased to be an axe, except in name.”

93 Writing at Oxford at the same time that Thomas was writing in Paris, Robert Kilwardby allowed for the possibility of an individual *secundum universalem* in his Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*, but he denied that such an individual could ever be actualized without a species. Cf. McAleer, “The Presence of Averroes in the Natural Philosophy of Robert Kilwardby,” 50.

94 Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, d. 18, q. 1, a. 2, co. [Mandonnet 2:452] “…Omnis forma quae advenit post aliquid esse substantiale est forma accidentalis. Si enim post esse in genere substantiae constitutum advenit, ergo, ea recedente, adhuc remanet individuum in genere substantiae; quod est contra rationem formae substantialis, sicut dicitur in II De anima…”
two acts of existence to the same thing, which is impossible. Rather than citing Bonaventure directly here, Thomas critiques Avicenna in his place, noting that Avicenna’s doctrine of the *forma corporeitatis*—which Thomas clearly thinks that Bonaventure’s position implies—posits a plurality of substantial forms, and hence a plurality of acts of existence in creatures.

Having criticized Bonaventure’s doctrine of incomplete forms, Thomas then proceeds to criticize Bacon’s doctrine of an incomplete active potency. He begins by reaffirming, with Bonaventure, the pure potentiality of matter in itself. Yet Thomas’s critique of Bacon proceeds

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95 Ibid. “Et praeterea, cum omnis forma det aliquod esse, et impossibile sit unam rem habere duplex esse substantiale, oportet, si prima forma substantialis adveniens materiae det sibi esse substantiale, quod secunda supervenientis det esse accidentale…”


The other hypothesis is typified by Gerald McAleer, "Who were the Averroists of the Thirteenth Century?: A Study of Siger of Brabant and Neo-Augustinians in respect of the Plurality Controversy," *The Modern Schoolman* 76, no. 4 (May 1999): 273-92, especially p. 281: “Classic studies of the plurality of forms thesis have identified Neo-Platonic thinkers [including Avicebron] as the source of Latin pluralism... A certain reserve is necessary in relation to these studies... because pluralism had a source indigenous to the Latin tradition. Augustinian Platonism had long articulated plurality theses which received further confirmation from the recently translated Arabic and Jewish sources.”

What is at issue here is whether the plurality of forms thesis is intrinsic to the Christian tradition via Augustine, or extrinsic to it via Avicebron. I do not intend to solve this question here. What I will say is that, although Thomists—and on my reading, Thomas himself—attribute the plurality of substantial forms thesis to Bonaventure, a closer look at Bonaventure’s doctrine mitigates against that claim. For Bonaventure, as noted above, the incomplete form of a body becomes a complete form under the power of an external agent. There are never two substantial forms in the same composite co-existing at the same time. For an overview of the problem and a defense of the unicity of substantial form in Bonaventure, see John Francis Quinn, *The Historical Constitution of St. Bonaventure’s Philosophy* (Toronto: PIMS, 1973), 219-319.

97 Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, d. 18, q. 1, a. 2, co [Mandonnet 2:452]. “…Quamvis formae educantur de potentia materia, illa tamen potentia materiae non est activa, sed passiva tantum...”
along a much different line than that of Bonaventure. For Bonaventure, whose main concern was ensuring formed matter’s continued pluripotentiality, the danger of Bacon’s position was that Bacon’s active potency would constitute some level of actuality that would exhaust matter’s potentiality. That is not a concern for Thomas, since since he does not think that substantial form exhausts the potentiality of the matter it informs. But Bacon’s position raises another, much more serious objection for Thomas than it had for Bonaventure. In Bacon’s *Questiones supra libros prime philosophie*, the same text that Bonaventure had used to summarize Bacon’s position at this point in his own Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*, Bacon had argued that the active potency in matter is that according to which like generates like in natural generation, and that generation which does not proceed in accordance with the active potency in matter is violent.\textsuperscript{98} Standing in the background of Bacon’s argument is Aristotle’s *dictum* in *Physics* 5.6 that motion and rest are opposed,\textsuperscript{99} and another in *Physics* 8.4 that a motion received contrary to a thing’s natural tendency is an unnatural or violent motion.\textsuperscript{100} For Bacon, by denying an active potency in matter, any introduction of motion into it (such as that proposed by generation) would be contrary to its natural state. If matter is purely passive, as Thomas had argued, then Bacon’s thought would suggest that no natural motion or change is possible in matter at all.

In order to overcome the objection raised by Bacon’s *Questiones supra libros prime philosophie*, Thomas adds a distinction to the doctrine of natural motion, which he borrows from

\textsuperscript{98} Roger Bacon, *Questiones supra libros prime philosophie*, in *Opera hactenus inedita*, fasc. 5, 216-19.

\textsuperscript{99} Aristotle, *Physics* 5.6 (229b22).

\textsuperscript{100} Aristotle, *Physics* 8.4 (255a28) [McKeon 365]. “…What is potentially of a certain quality or of a certain quantity or in a certain place is naturally movable when it contains the corresponding principle in itself and not accidentally (for the same thing may be both of a certain quality and of a certain quantity, but the one is an accidental, not an essential property of the other). So when fire or earth is moved by something the motion is violent when it is unnatural, and natural when I brings to actuality the proper activities that they potentially possess.”
Averroes: creatures do not always achieve all the perfection that pertains to their nature by an activity originating within themselves. Rather, sometimes they receive something that pertains to their nature by an activity originating completely in another.

Not all motions are called natural in the same way, as the Commentator says in *Physics* 2, and *De caelo et mundo* 1…, rather some motions are called natural on account of an active principle which exists interiorly, like changes of place in heavy and light [bodies], and some are called natural on account of a passive principle, which exists according to a potency made to be educed into act by a natural agent, as in the generation and alteration of simple bodies: accordingly, nature is also divided into matter and form. 101

According to Thomas, just because a creature receives some perfection from another, even though there is no active tendency in the creature towards that perfection, does not mean that the perfection is received violently, “since matter assists generation not by acting, but rather insofar as it is able to receive such an action. This ability is also called the ‘appetite of matter’ and the ‘inchoation of form.’”102 The ability to receive natural motion from another, although it is called and “appetite” or “inchoation,” does not posit any active motion towards what is received in the receiver. It is nevertheless is sufficient for Thomas to render the received motion non-violent, and even natural, since it is of the receiver’s nature to receive such a kind of motion.

101 Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*., d. 18, q. 1, a. 2, co [Mandonnet 2:453]. “Non enim eodem modo omnes motus naturales dicuntur, ut in II Physic. Et I Caei et mundi, com. III, Commentator dicit; sed quidam propter principium activum intus existens, ut motus localis gravium et levium; et quidam propter principium passivum quod est secundum potentiam ab agente naturali natam in actum educi, ut in generatione et alteratione simplicium corporum: unde et natura dividitur in materiam et formam.” The reference to comment 3 in Averroes, which I have omitted in the translation, is both ambiguous and incorrect. Mandonnet takes it directly from the text of the Parma edition without comment. However, not only is it unclear to which Aristotelian text the citation of comment 3 refers (the *Physics* or the *De caelo*), but the actual content under discussion is found in Averroes, *In II Physic.*, com. 1, and is scattered about in *In I De coelo et mundo*, from comments 5-21.

102 Ibid. “Nec tamen sequitur, si in materia est potentia passiva tantum, quod non sit generatio naturalis : quia materia coadjuvat ad generationem non agendo, sed inquantum est habilis ad recipiendum talem actionem, quae etiam habilitas appetitus materiae dicitur et inchoatio formae.”
As the source of the idea that a creature might receive some of the perfection of its nature from a source other than its own form or God, Thomas cites Averroes’s commentaries on Aristotle’s *Physics* and the *De coelo*. The context of Averroes’s distinction is a seemingly esoteric question concerning the possibility of change in simple bodies. According to Aristotle, the simplest kinds of bodies in the universe are divided according to the simplest kinds of motion in the universe, namely, straight and circular, because, as Aristotle notes, “nature is the principle of movement or rest” in a thing. Straight motion comes from a simple, earthly body, which moves up or down according as it is heavy or light. The simple, earthly bodies are fire, air, water, and earth; the former two move upwards by nature, while the latter two move downwards. Circular motion comes from the nature of a simple, heavenly body, which circles the heavens. In either case, the movement of the body is called “natural” because it proceeds from a principle of movement intrinsic to the thing.

When Averroes commented upon the text of Aristotle, he highlighted the difficulty in accounting for the principle of some natural motions of simple bodies, namely, changes of substance (generation and corruption) and quantity (augmentation and diminution) in simple, earthly bodies, as well as changes of place (locomotion) in simple, heavenly bodies. The reason

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103 Aquinas references the work of Averroes as a commentary on the *Caeili et mundi*, not as commentary on the *De coelo* properly speaking. In the middle ages, there was a work called the *Liber celi et mundi*, which was distinct from the *De coelo*. The *Liber celi et mundi* was the work of several medieval Arabic scholars, who edited certain questions on Themistius’s paraphrase of Aristotle’s *De caelo*. Cf. Oliver Gutman, “Introduction,” in *Pseudo-Avicenna, Liber celi et mundi: A Critical Edition with Introduction* (Boston: Brill, 2013), xiii-xvii. It was then translated into Latin c. 1150-1175 by Dominicus Gundissalinus and Johannes Hispanus (ibid. x-xiii). Averroes’s commentary, however, although it shares a name with the *Liber celi et mundi*, is actually a commentary on the whole of the *De caelo*, not the *Liber celi et mundi*. Cf. Gerhard Endress, “Praefatio,” in *Averroes, Commentaria Magna in Aristotelem de Celo et Mundo*, ed. Francis J. Carmody (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 12*. Averroes’s commentary was translated into Latin by Michael Scot some time after 1217 (ibid. 19*).

104 Ibid (269a).

105 Ibid. (269b).
for this difficulty was Aristotle’s observation that nothing moves itself; what is moved is moved by another.\textsuperscript{106} That being the case, it would seem that in order to account for the aforesaid kinds of motion, one would have to posit composition of matter and form in simple bodies, be they earthly or heavenly, so that what was moved (the matter) might be moved by another (the form). But to do so would be to say that they were not simple.\textsuperscript{107}

In order to account for changes of substance and quantity in simple, earthly bodies, as well as changes of place in simple, heavenly bodies, Averroes suggests that one may consider their ability to receive what is caused in them by another as a separate principle of motion or rest in them (i.e. as a second “nature”), in addition to the active principle, which would ordinarily be considered their “nature.” When one does this, however, there are two possible ways of accounting for the bounds of this second nature. The first is that this second nature is actually the subject of that other nature, which causes the change. This, however, would be an equivocal use of the term “nature,” since it would denote a principle in the other thing for moving something outside itself, not a principle in the mover for moving itself. This might lead people to the mistaken assumption that the other nature was actually the form of the simple body undergoing the change. The second, more consistent possibility, would be to say that it is of the nature of the mover that, when it moves itself, it causes the aforesaid changes. The matter of the simple body

\textsuperscript{106} The observation is made in Physics 7.1. (241b). For a detailed study of this text, see Ruth Glasner, \textit{Averroes’ Physics: A Turning Point in Medieval Philosophy} (New York: Oxford, 2012), 141-171.

\textsuperscript{107} The substance of the argument comes from Averroes’s comments about the simple, heavenly bodies in \textit{In I De Coelo}, no. 5 [Giunti 5:3vd]. It is applied to the simple earthly bodies in \textit{In II Physicorum}, no. 1 (Giunti, 4:23rc-d).
could then be called its “nature” in an analogical sense, insofar as it is the principle by which it
receives motion or rest from the natural motion of another mover.\footnote{108}

When Thomas applies Averroes’s comments on Aristotle to the question of nature and
the natural, he takes Averroes’s comments about the simple bodies and applies them to an
account of the general structure of all of creation, not just simple bodies:

And therefore I concede that there is no active potency in matter, but rather a
purely passive one; and that active powers (\textit{virtutes activae}), complemented in
nature by their passive counterparts, are called \textit{rationes seminales}… and they are
called “germinatory” not on account of any imperfect being that they have, like
the formative power in a seed, but because powers of this sort were bestowed
throughout the six days upon the first created individuals of things, so that from
them natural things might be produced and multiplied as though from certain
seeds.\footnote{109}

In Thomas, no longer are nature and the natural confined to what a given creature can achieve
from its own formal principle, as Bonaventure had suggested, or from any active potency in its
material principle, as Bacon had suggested. Rather, they are expanded to include what a creature
can receive from the formal principle of another creature as well as what it can achieve from its
own formal principle.\footnote{110}


\footnote{109} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{In II Sent.}, d. 18, q. 1, a. 2, co [Mandonnet 2:453]. “Et ideo concedo quod in materia
nulla potentia activa est, sed pure passiva; et quod rationes seminales dicuntur virtutes activae completae in natura
cum propriis passivis, ut calor et frigus, et forma ignis, et virtus solis, et hujusmodi; et dicuntur seminales non
propter esse imperfectum quod habeant, sicut virtus formativa in semine, sed quia rerum individuis primo creatis
hujusmodi virtutes collatae sunt per opera sex dierum, ut ex eis quasi ex quibusdam seminiis producerentur et
multiplicarentur res naturales.”

\footnote{110} Cf. ibid., ad 4 [Mandonnet 2:454]. “…Sub rationibus seminalibus comprehenduntur tam virtues activae
quam etiam passivae, quae perfici possunt per agentia naturalia…”
Thomas’s doctrine of the complementarity of natural active and passive potencies had an important effect on how he received the doctrine of a potency for obedience (potentia obedientiae). Thomas certainly pays deference to this idea: “the potency instilled in things for receiving into themselves what the will of God determines is called by some people ‘obediential properties’ (rationes obedientiales), according to which there is in matter the possibility that God can do what he wills.”  

Yet Thomas here places a certain distance between himself and the doctrine. Rather than claiming it for his own, he attributes to others. A reason for this may be that Bacon and Bonaventure were looking within nature for a separate potency by which it might be open to the influence of grace, since they granted that a complete substantial form exhausts the potential and desire of matter. Yet Thomas denied that any substantial form could ever completely fulfill the potential of matter. For that reason, there was no necessity for Thomas to propose a separate potency in nature—human or otherwise—for openness to divine action. All created natures, because they fail to adequate the potentiality of Creation as such, lay open to the continued influence of God, without having to posit in them a separate potency for this obedience.

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111 Ibid [Mandonnet 2:451]. “…Potentia… quae rebus indita est ad suscipiendum illud in se quod voluntas Dei disponit, rationes obedientiales a quibusdam dicuntur, secundum quas inest materiae ut fieri possit ex ea quod Deus vult.”


113 Thomas will very occasionally make use of this term or its cognate, potentia obedientialis, in the way in which previous generations had used it, but almost always for the kind of substantial change that a miracle presupposes. The only exceptions I have found to this are De veritate, q. 8 a. 4 ad 13 [Leon. 22:233-34]; q. 8 a. 12 ad 4 [Leon. 22:260]; q. 12 a. 3 ad 18 [Leon. 22:380], where Thomas uses the term to describe human receptivity to prophetic revelation, Quaestiones disputatae de potentia, q. 6, a. 1, ad 18, ed. Paul Pession, in Quaestiones disputatae, vol. 2 (Rome: Marietti, 1965), 161, where Thomas speaks in a general sense, and De virtutibus in communi, q. un, a. 10, ad 13, ed. P. Odetto, in Quaestiones disputatae, vol. 2, 737, where it is used analogously with what Thomas elsewhere calls a creature’s material potency. The text from De virtutibus has often been used in the
For confirmation of the idea that Thomas replaces what Bonaventure had called a potency for obedience with a “material” potency, broadly conceived, one needs look no further than Thomas’s own comments on the relationship between acts of nature and acts of grace, and particularly the grace of justification. Like Bonaventure, Thomas classifies actions that occur in nature but do not result from nature according to whether they are above nature (supra naturam), beyond nature (praeter naturam), or against nature (contra naturam).\textsuperscript{114} For Thomas, something is above nature (supra naturam) if God does that which no active power in nature could ever cause; something is beyond nature (praeter naturam) if an active power of nature could cause a given effect, but God causes it in a manner that nature cannot; something is against nature (contra naturam), when it is, as for Aristotle, done opposite to the natural motion of a thing.\textsuperscript{115}

Unlike other medievals, Thomas refuses to place the reception of grace and glory in any one of the three aforementioned categories. His reason for this is that the justification of sinners, while it is in a certain sense beyond rationes seminales (praeter rationes seminales), is only so as regards the actual performance of the act, not as regards dispositions towards the act.\textsuperscript{116} Man can prepare himself for grace, and so justification is not miraculous.\textsuperscript{117} Thomas confirms this history of Thomism to justify the attribution to Thomas of the doctrine of an obediential potency completely distinct from natural potency. On the development of this position in subsequent Thomists, see above, chapter two, sections A and C. For the return to an association of obediential and natural potency in the early twentieth century, see my comments on Jorge Laporta above in chapter four, section A.

\textsuperscript{114} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{In II Sent.}, d. 18, q. 1, a. 3 [Mandonnet 2:454-57].

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid [Mandonnet 2:456]. On what is contra naturam with respect to the natural desire of the will, see Thomas Aquinas, \textit{In IV Sent.}, d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qe. 2, ad 2 [Parma 7.2:1192B].

\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., ad 2. “…Nec etiam creatio animarum vel justificatio impiorum proprie miracula debent dici : quia quamvis sint praeter rationes seminales agentes ad perfectionem effectus, non tamen sunt praeter eas disponentes : dispositio enim corporis ad receptionem [animae], et praeparatio voluntatis ad suceptionem gratiae, est per virtutem creaturae collatam.”

\textsuperscript{117} Cf. Thomas Aquinas, \textit{In II Sent.}, d. 28, q. 1, a. 4, co [Mandonnet 2:728].
thinking by considering the fate of children who die unbaptized and so in original sin only.  

Thomas does grant that these souls can know that the end of man is the vision of God. But they do not suffer over having not achieved it, he suggests, because they never had the material principle by which they might have received the light of glory (the use of their free will), and whereby they might be prepared for grace. Consequently, since they lacked the material principle necessary for the reception of glory, they do not despair at having not received a gift that they are were unable to receive.

One should not be surprised if Thomas treats grace differently than his predecessors did. All of them, whether they assigned *rationes seminales* to matter, as did Rufus and Bacon, or to form, as Bonaventure did, assigned them to one or the other of the two principles of nature, not both. Thomas was unique in this regard. But this had an important effect on his doctrine of grace, because it meant that since the natural actions that serve as dispositions for grace are, quite literally, the matter out of which an act under the influence of grace is performed, that an act under the influence of grace proceeds partly from nature, and partly from grace.

Since God considers all things equally, it is necessary that the diversity of gifts received from him be considered according to the diversity of recipients. But the diversity of recipients is considered according as something is more apt and prepared for receiving [what God offers]. For, just as one sees in natural forms, like hot and cold and things of this sort, that matter is made more or less disposed to receive a form by accidental dispositions, so also in perfections of the soul which arise from the soul’s actions, the soul is made more or less able to achieve its perfection. And yet, the soul is ordered differently towards infused and acquired perfections. For acquired perfections are in the nature of the soul in a potency that is not purely material, but also active, according to which something

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is in germinatory causes (causae seminales). Just as it happens that all acquired knowledge is in the knowledge of the first principles, which are naturally known, as in active principles from which conclusions can be drawn. And likewise moral virtues are in the rectitude and order of reason itself, as in a certain germinatory principle (principium seminale)... And therefore the operations of the soul are oriented towards acquired perfections not only by way of a disposition, but also as active principles. However, infused perfections are in the nature of the soul itself as in a potency which is material and in no way active, since they elevate the soul above all of its natural action (supra omne... actionem naturalem). Accordingly, the operations of the soul are ordered towards infused perfections only as dispositions.¹¹⁹

Here, instead of describing the relationship of natural actions to the influence of grace as according to a potency for obedience, as had Bonaventure, Thomas simply describes the relationship on analogy with matter’s relationship to form. Just like matter is completely passive with respect to form, yet forms are not violently educed from matter on account of matter’s passive potency for form, so also do natural acts in no way advance us towards grace. If they did, that would be Pelagianism in theology,¹²⁰ not to mention Baconism in philosophy. Rather, nature

¹¹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, In I Sent., d. 17, q. 1, a. 3, co. [Mandonnet 1:400-01] “…Cum Deus habeat se aequaliter ad omnia, oportet quod diversitas donorum receptorum ab ipso, attendatur secundum diversitatem recipientium. Diversitas autem recipientium attenditur, secundum quod aliquid est magis aptum et paratum ad recipiendum. Sicut autem videmus in formis naturalibus, quod per dispositiones accidentales, sicut calorem et frigus et hujusmodi, materia efficitur magis vel minus disposita ad suscipiendum formam; ita etiam in perfectionibus animae ex ipsis operibus anima efficitur habilior vel minus habilis ad consequendum perfectionem suam. Sed tamen differenter se habent operationes animae ad perfectiones infusas vel acquisitas. Acquisitae enim perfectiones sunt in natura ipsius animae in potentia, non pure materiali, sed etiam activa, secundum quod aliquid est in causis seminalibus. Sicut patet quod omnis scientia acquisita est in cognitione primorum principiorum, quae naturaliter nota sunt, sicut in principiis activis ex quibus concludi potest. Et similiter virtutes morales sunt in ipsa rectitudine rationis et ordine, sicut in quodam principio seminali…. Et ideo operationes animae se habent ad perfectiones acquisitas, non solum per modum dispositionis, sed sicut principia activa. Perfectiones autem infusae sunt in natura ipsius animae sicut in potentia materiali et nullo modo activa, cum eleventh animam supra omne suam actionem naturalam. Unde operationes animae se habent ad perfectiones infusas solum sicut dispositiones.”

¹²⁰ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, In II Sent., d. 28, q. 1, a. 1, co [Mandonnet 2:719].
receives grace like matter receives form: it has a capacity for grace, it can be well disposed
towards grace, but it has no active tendency towards grace (as the analogy would suggest if
Bacon had applied it), nor does it have some sort of antecedent, incomplete possession of grace
(as the analogy would suggest if Bonaventure had applied it).

Precisely because nature relates to grace as matter relates to form, several consequences
follow for Thomas. The first is that, since rationes seminales are in nature as a combination of
material and formal principles, acts performed under the influence of grace are partly according
to nature in their material principle, and partly above nature in their formal principle. They are
according to nature in the sense that they presuppose an active power for operation in the natural
order; they are above nature insofar as they take that action as a material principle, and formally
elevate it towards an end which it could not achieve of its own power. Second, since for Thomas
there is only one substantial form in a creature, grace can only constitute the formal element of
an action by inhering in the soul as an accident.

Thomas’s unique position on rationes seminales and consequently on the manner in
which grace is partly secundum naturam and partly supra naturam gives him a correspondingly

121 Cf. ibid. “…Secundum fidem catholicam, in medio contrariarum haeresum incedendum est, ut scilicet
dicamus hominem per liberum arbitrium et bona et mala facere posse; non tamen in actum meritorium exire sine
habitum gratiae: sicut etiam non potest homo sine habitu virtutis acquisitae talem actum facere qualem facit virtuosus
quod modum agendi, licet ossit tale facere quantum ad genus operis: ut ly ‘per se’ non excludat divinam
causalitatem, secundum quod ipse Deus in omnibus operatur ut universalis causa boni, ut dicitur Isa., XXVI, 13 :
‘Omnia opera nostra operatus es in nobis Domine’; sed excludit habitum aliquem creatum naturalibus
superadditum.” Notwithstanding subsequent controversies over the use of the word “superadditum” with respect to
grace in the thomistic corpus, the fact that Thomas had earlier described infused virtue as “supra omnem… actionem
naturalem,” makes his use of the word “superadditum” a confirmation of the fact that the formal element of an act
undertaken with the aid of grace, is supra naturam.

Also, cf. In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 1, a. 4, qe. 4, ad 1 [Parma 7.2:1196A]. “Virtus ibi non solum accipitur pro
naturali capacitate, sed pro naturali capacitate simul cum conatu ad habendam gratiam; et tunc virtus hoc modo
accepta erit quasi materialis dispositio ad mensuram gratiae et gloriae percipiendae: sed caritas est formaliter
compons meritum ad gloriam; et ideo distinctio gradus in gloria accipitur penes gradus caritatis potius quam penes
gradus virtutis praedictae.”

122 Thomas Aquinas, In II Sent., d. 26, q. 1, a. 2 [Mandonnet 2:671].
unique position on what is natural, as well as on natural desire. For Thomas, wherever there is to be natural change in nature, there must be a *ratio seminalis* with a formal, active principle, which communicates act to the thing which is to undergo natural change, and a material, passive principle, whose passive potency exceeds the actuality communicated to it by the formal, active principle, and which receives the act communicated by the formal principle. This is particularly the case, as noted in the passage quoted above, with the intellectual powers of the soul, the intellect and will. Throughout the course of one’s life, the intellect can grow in knowledge and the will can grow in virtue. Therefore there must be a germinatory principle—with a formal, active principle, and a material, passive principle—in each.

In the intellect, as noted in the passage above, the formal, active principle of our *ratio seminalis* for knowledge is the natural possession of the first principles of knowledge. Thomas calls the natural knowledge of the first principles of speculative knowledge a “spark” of reason (*scintilla rationis*), and he calls the natural knowledge of the first principles of practical reason *synderesis*. In this affirmation of natural knowledge, Thomas follows Avicenna. For Avicenna, there cannot be a *reductio ad absurdum* in the principles of knowledge; something must be naturally known in order for our reasoning to have an appropriate starting point. Yet Thomas notes a difficulty here. In a power of the soul, which undergoes only accidental change by growing in knowledge or virtue, the material principle lays open to subsequent formation only

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123 Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, co [Mandonnet 2:996]. “Opertet... quod in anima rationali... sit aliqua participatio intellectualis virtutis, secundum quam aliquam veritatem sine inquisitione apprehendat, sicut apprehenduntur prima principia naturaliter cognita tam in speculativis quam etiam in operativis; unde et talis virtus intellectus vocatur, secundum quod est in speculativis, quae etiam secundum quod in operativis est synderesis dicitur; et haec virtus scintilla convenienter dicitur, quod sicut scintilla est modicum ex igne evolans...”

124 Avicenna, *Prima philosophia*, 1.5 [Van Riet 1:31-42].
within the bounds of how it has already been determined by the formal principle. That being the case, if we were to have a specific, natural knowledge of God impressed upon the intellect, we could never err concerning his existence; our speculation would always proceed from our natural knowledge of God’s existence. Our intellect, having been determined actively by a natural knowledge of God, would only be open to subsequent development of the knowledge already possessed. Hence, Thomas will argue, it must be the case that the first principles of the reason are undetermined, so as to account for the possibility of error.\(^{125}\)

Thomas’s treatment of natural knowledge in the intellect gives rise to a similar treatment of natural desire in the will:

The will as deliberate (\textit{voluntas ut deliberata}) and the will as nature (\textit{voluntas ut natura}) do not differ according to the essence of a potency, since “being natural” and “being what deliberates” are not differences of the will in itself, but rather insofar as it follows a judgment of reason. The reason for this is that there is something naturally known in reason as an indemonstrable principle among matters pertaining to activity, which is oriented by way of an end, because in matters pertaining to activity the end takes the place of a principle, as is stated in \textit{Ethics} 6.2. Accordingly that which is man’s end is naturally known in his reason to be good and to be desirable, and the will is called “will as nature” when it follows this knowledge. On the other hand, both in matters pertaining to activity as well as to speculation, something is known in reason by investigation. And it happens in both cases (namely, in matters pertaining to speculation and activity), that reason can err in its investigation. Accordingly, the will, which follows reason’s knowledge of this sort, is called “deliberate” (\textit{deliberata}), and can tend towards good and evil, but not from the same inclination, as was said.\(^{126}\)

\(^{125}\) Thomas Aquinas, \textit{In II Sent.}, d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, co [Mandonnet 2:997]. “Sicut autem non contingit in speculativis intellectum errare circa cognitionem primorum, quin semper repugnet ei omni quod contra principia dicitur, ita etiam non contingit errare in practicis in principiis primis; et propter hoc dicitur quod haec superior rationis scintilla, quae synderesis est, exinguui non potest, sed semper repugnat omni ei quod contra principia naturaliter sibi indita est.”

\(^{126}\) In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2 [Mandonnet 2:994]. “Voluntas ut deliberata et ut natura non differunt secundum essentiam potentiae: quia naturale et deliberatorium non sunt differentiae voluntatis secundum se, sed secundum quod sequitur judicium rationis: quia in ratione est aliquid naturaliter cognitum quasi principium indemonstrabile in operabilibus, quod se habet per modum finis, quia in operabilia finis habet locum principii, ut
For Thomas, in both the intellect and the will, the active principle of the *ratio seminalis* is undetermined and natural; the material principle of the *ratio seminalis* is receptive to subsequent deliberate and free determination according to the potential of the active principle. Applied to the will, this means that there is in the human person a certain range of activity that the person can perform of his own accord (“natural” in Bonaventure’s sense), and within the scope of that activity, there is some activity which is inborn and non-free, while there is other activity which is deliberate and free, proceeding within the bounds determined by that activity which is inborn and non-free.

The manner in which Thomas explains the *rationes seminales* of the intellect and will directly affects the way in which he discusses the *terminus* of our natural desire. As indicated in the passage just quoted, Thomas affirms that the motion of the will follows the knowledge of the

in VI Ethicorum, cap. ii, dicitur. Unde illud quod finis est hominis est naturaliter in ratione cognitum esse bonum et appetendum, et voluntas consequens istam cognitionem dicitur voluntas ut natura. A liquid vero est cognitum in ratione per inquisitionem ita in operativis sicut in speculativis; et utroque, scilicet tam in speculativis quam in operativis, contingit inquiri rationem errare; unde voluntas quae e cognitionem rationis sequitur, deliberata dicitur, et in bonum et malum tendere potest, sed non ab eodem inclinante, ut dictum est.”

cf. In II Sent., d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, co [Mandonnet 2:991]. “…Illud dicitur esse naturale alicui rei quod convenit sibi secundum conditionem suae formae, per quam in tali natura constituitur, sicut ignis naturaliter tendit sursum. Forma autem per quam homo est homo, est ipsa ratio et intellectus. Unde in illud quod est conveniens sibi secundum rationem et intellectum, naturaliter tendit. Bonum autem cujuslibet virtutis est conveniens homini secundum rationem: quia talis bonitas est ex quadem commensuratione actus ad circumstantias et finem, quam ratio facit. Unde quaedam inclinationes virtutum sive aptitudines praeexistunt naturaliter in ipso natura rationali, quae virtutes naturales dicuntur, et etiam per exercitium et deliberationem complentur, ut in VI Ethicorum, cap. IX, dicitur: ideo homo naturaliter in bonum tendit. Sed motus naturalis a forma progredeat secundum conditionem formae. Voluntas autem et ratio, talis conditionis est, ut non sint determinata ad unum, quin in aliud fleti possit s; et ideo, quamvis velle bonum homini sit naturale, nihilominus tamen potest malum velle, non inquantum est malum, sed inquantum existimatur bonum.”

Also, cf. In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 2, co [Parma 7.2:1192A-B]. “…Operatio causae secundae semper fundatur super operatione cause primae, et praesupponit eam; et ideo oportet quod omnis operatio animae procedat ex suppositione ejus quod inditum est animae ex impressione primum agentis, Dei scilicet; et ideo videmus ex parte intellectus, quod ad nihil intelligendum anima potest procedere nisi ex suppositione illorum quorum cognitio est ei innata; et propter hoc non potest assentire aliqui quod sit contrarium his principiis quae naturaliter cognoscit; et similiter oportet esse ex parte voluntatis. Unde cum ex impressione primae causae, scilicet Dei, hoc animae insit ut bonum velit; et perfectum bonum tamquam finem ultimum appetat; impossibile est quod contrarium ejus in appetitu illus cadat…”
intellect, and consequently that the natural motion of the will follows the natural knowledge of
the intellect. However, Thomas’s argument that free operations in the intellect and the will
cannot be less determined than natural operation, together with the principle that the will follows
the intellect, provides a twofold reason why Thomas cannot affirm that there is a definite
terminus of our natural desire. As we saw above, free action cannot be less determined than
natural action, otherwise the very freedom of the will is lost.127

Although the will may be borne from a natural inclination unto beatitude according to a common understanding of it, nevertheless, the fact that it is borne unto this or that beatitude does not come from the inclination of nature, but rather
trough the discretion of reason, which devises that the highest good of man
consists in this or in that. Therefore whenever someone desires beatitude, his
natural appetite and his rational appetite are joined together in act. On the part of
the natural appetite there is always rectitude in that act, but on the part of the
rational appetite sometimes there is rectitude in that act, when, for instance,
beatitude is desired where it truly is; sometimes, however, there is perversity,
when it is desired where it is not in actual fact.128

Thomas seems here inspired by the spirit, if not the letter, of Bonaventure, who had attempted to
give an objective account of natural desire through a subjective one: we seek, according to
Bonaventure, the perfect satisfaction of the potency of our nature, which is a subjective desire,
but since only God can fulfill that potency, our desire is for God, which is objective. Thomas, of

127 Ibid., q. 2, a. 1, ad 1 [Parma 7.2:1192B]. “…Ista naturalis inclinatio in bonum inventur in hominibus omnibus, sed quia… voluntas non est necessario determinata ad unum, non oportet quod omnes actu bonum velint.”

128 Thomas Aquinas, In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 3, co [Parma 7.2:1193A]. “Quamvis autem ex naturali inclinatione voluntas habeat ut in beatitudinem feratur secundum communem rationem, tamen quod feratur in beatitudinem talem vel talem, hoc non est ex inclinatione naturae, sed per discretionem rationis, quae adinvenit in hoc vel in illo summum bonum hominis constare; et ideo quandocumque aliquis beatitudinem appetit, actualiter conjungitur ibi appetitus naturalis, et appetitus rationalis; et ex parte appetitus naturalis semper est ibi rectitudo; sed ex parte appetitus rationalis quandoque est ibi rectitudo, quando scilicet appetiturb ibi beatitudo ubi vere est; quandoque autem perversitas, quando appetitur ubi vere non est; et sic in appetitu beatitudinis potest aliquis vel mereri adjuncta gratia, vel demereri, secundum quod ejus appetitus est rectus vel perversus.”
course, does not disagree with the fact that human nature is satisfied by God. But his doctrine of nature and the natural does lead him to disagree very sharply that our natural desire leads to this end as a terminus. For Thomas, “the per se object of the will is the good; but per accidens it is this or that good;”\(^{129}\) consequently, “although the vision of God is beatitude itself, it does not therefore follow that whoever desires beatitude desires the vision of God, since beatitude… implies the per se object of the will, but the vision of God does not.”\(^{130}\) The reason that Thomas opposes a direct association between the per se object of the will and the vision of God is that such an association hinges on a Bonaventurean understanding of rationes seminales. In a Bonaventurean understanding of rationes seminales, a substance informed by an incomplete substantial form desires to receive a more complete substantial form, and a substance informed by a complete substantial form desires a more complete fulfillment of its potency for obedience. But since Thomas had identified what previous generations of theologians had called a potency for obedience with material potency more simply speaking, if Thomas had said that we have a desire for a more complete fulfillment of our material potency without some further form of qualification, it would be akin to saying that we have a desire for anything that could be desired at all!

In order to avert the consequences of affirming a Bonaventurean doctrine of rationes seminales and natural desire, Thomas developed an alternative, subjective approach to nature and natural desire. In order to do this, he relied upon the definition of beatitude taken from a text in

\(^{129}\) Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 1, ad 1 [Parma 7.2:1192A]. “Per se objectum voluntatis est bonum; sed per accidens est hoc vel illud bonum.”

\(^{130}\) Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 4, ad 2 [Parma 7.2:1192A]. “...Quamvis divina visio sit ipsa beatitudo, non tamen sequitur quod quicumque appetit beatitudinem, appetat divinam visionem: quia beatitudo, inquantum hujusmodi, importat per se objectum voluntatis, non autem ipsa divina visio.”
Aristotle which had only recently become available. In *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.4, which was only translated into Latin between 1246-48, Aristotle observes that beatitude is “for each thing, the best activity of the most well-disposed [power] towards the most powerful of those [objects] which fall under it.” Based on this text, Thomas explained our desire for beatitude in subjective terms as the perfection of our highest faculty by the highest act, like Bonaventure, but to added an objective element to such a subjective perspective on perfection:

Enjoyment [*fruitio*] consists in man’s best activity, since enjoyment is man’s ultimate happiness [*felicitas*]. Yet happiness is not in a habit, but rather in an action according to the Philosopher… However, the best activity of man is the activity belonging to his highest potency, namely, the intellect, towards its highest object, which is God: wherefore the vision itself of divinity is posited as the whole substance of our beatitude [*beatitudo*].

By this argument, Thomas achieves a very similar result to that which Bonaventure had achieved: he grounds the argument that God is the object of our beatitude in an argument taken

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132 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.4 (1174b15). My translation is from the Latin text, to which Thomas would have had access: “secundum unumquodque optima est operacio optime dispositi ad potentissimum eorum que sub ipsam. Hec autem utique perfectissima erit et delectabilissima.” For the critical edition of this text, see Aristoteles Latinus 26.3, 352.

133 Thomas Aquinas, *In I Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 1, co. [Mandonnet 1:33]. “…Fruitio consistit in optima operatione hominis, cum fruitio sit ultima felicitas hominis. Felicitas autem non est in habitu, sed in operatione, secundum Philosophum… Optima autem operatio hominis est operatio alitissimae potentiae, scilicet intellectus, ad nobilissimum objectum, quod est Deus: unde ipsa visio divinitatis ponitur tota substantia nostrae beatitudinis.”

Thomas will repeat nearly the same argument in *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 2, co. [Parma 7.2:1195B] “…Cum beatitudo in operatione consistat, gradus beatitudinis est attendendus secundum gradum perfectionis in operando. Perfectio autem operationis in qua felicitas consistit, ex duobus pensatur: scilicet ex parte operantis, et ex parte objecti. Unde Philosophus dicit in 10 Ethic., quod perfectissima operati est quae est altissimae potentiae nobilissimo habitu perfectae (quod est ex parte operantis) et respectu nobilissimi objecti…” Again, the same comment appears in *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, a. 2, a. 7, co. [Parma 7.2:1210B] “Operatio autem delectabilissima, in qua beatitudo consistit, oportet quod sit potentiae dispositae et perfectae ad dignissimum objectum, ut patet per Philosophum in 10 Ethic…”

The linguistic difference between *beatitudo* and *felicitas* does not appear to represent any conceptual distinction. Rather, Thomas occasionally uses *felicitas* out of deference to Aristotle, because Grosseteste had translated εὐδαιμονία as *felicitas*.
from a subjective account of natural desire. However, where Bonaventure’s argument proceeds from the fulfillment of our unfulfilled potency simply speaking (as was appropriate in light of how Bonaventure understood *rationes seminales*), Thomas’s argument proceeds not from a desire for the fulfillment of potency in general, but from a desire for the fulfillment of a specific power of the soul in which there exists a *ratio seminalis*, and in which the activity which that *ratio seminalis* posits serves as the material principle that can be perfected formally by grace in the beatific vision.

2. Commentary on Book IV of Peter the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*

There is, however, one major difference between what Thomas’s argument was intended to achieve and what Bonaventure’s argument was intended to achieve. As noted above, Bonaventure’s argument was intended to prove that man’s natural desire has the vision of God as its *terminus*. Thomas, as already noted, has to deny such a specific term to natural desire; it is only free desire, for Thomas, which is determined, and free desire can only be determined meritoriously towards the vision of God under the influence of grace.\(^{134}\) That does not mean, however, that Thomas thinks that natural desire is useless in theological speculation. It has one very important use, and that is in proving—in support of the Christian faith—that our final beatitude is after this life.

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\(^{134}\) Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 3, ad 3 [Parma 7.2:1193A]. “…Ad appetendum beatiudinem perfecto appetitu, qui sufficiat ad merendum, homo ex propriis viribus non est sufficiens; sed habet hoc ex munere divinae gratiae, ut patet 2 Corinth. 5, 5: Qui efficit nos in hoc ipsum Deus, idest, qui facit nos veram gloriam appetere, secundum Glossam.” For Thomas, a meritorious desire for the vision of God includes two elements: desiring the right end, and desiring the right means to that end. Man requires grace for each of these. Cf. *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 4, ad 5 [Parma 7.2:1193B].
In Book 4, Distinction 49, of his Commentary on Peter the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum, Thomas argues from the fact that beatitude occurs in our highest power that human beatitude is among spiritual goods, not corporeal goods. Yet this raises the question of to what extent a rational creature with a body can partake of spiritual goods, for to partake of them fully would require “immobility… and perpetuity,” neither of which the vicissitudes of this life afford. Thomas’s response is to suggest that while we cannot see a place in this life where man can partake of spiritual goods with immobility and perpetuity, our natural desire for beatitude proves that it must be possible at some point to do so. Otherwise, Thomas reasons, our natural desire would be vain.

…Since reason and intellect are in man… essentially [per essentiam], it would be necessary to posit that man can arrive at true beatitude at some point, and not only to some participation of beatitude; otherwise the natural appetite of the intellectual nature, which is in man, would be frustrated. But true beatitude cannot be posited in this life on account of the various changes to which man is subject; accordingly it is necessary that the beatitude which is the end of human life be after this life.

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135 Thomas Aquinas, In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 1, a. 1, qc. 1, ad 2. [Parma 7.2:1183B] “Priora autem in nostra cognitione sunt sensibilia; unde in principio aestimamus quasi summa bona, sensibilia bona; sed in fine quando cognitio nostra perficitur, habemus distinctam cognitionem de hominis fide, discernendo ipsum ab alis; et tunc appetimus summum bonum ut est, scilicet in spiritualibus.”

136 Thomas Aquinas, In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 1, a. 1, qc. 4, co. [Parma 7.2:1185A-B] “Beatitudo ergo cum sit finis ad quem referuntur omnia desideria, oportet quod sit tale aliquid, quo habito nihil ulterius desiderandum restet. Quilibet autem naturaliter esse desiderat, et permanere in bono quo ipse habet; et ideo ab omnibus beatitudo tale aliquid esse ponitur quod immobilitatem habeat et perpetuitatem.”

137 Thomas Aquinas, In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 1, a. 1, qc. 4, co. [Parma 7.2:1185B-86A] “…Cum in homine… est… ratio et intellectus per essentiam; oportet ponere quod ad veram beatitudinem quandoque pervenire possit, et non tantum ad aliquam beatitudinem participationem; alias appetitus naturalis intellectualis naturae quae est in homine frustraretur. Beatitudo autem vera non potest poni in hac vita propter mutabilitates varias quibus homo subjacet; unde necesse est beatitudinem quae est finis hominum vitae, esse post hanc vitam.”
The principle here undergirding Thomas’s argument is taken from Aristotle’s *De anima* 3.9: “…nature does nothing in vain, neither does it fail in necessary matters, except among those things which are incomplete and imperfect…” For Thomas, the application of this principle to the present argument does not infringe upon natural desire’s indetermination, because noting where perfect beatitude can be possessed is not the same as saying what it is. Thomas will go on to say *something* about the object of the act which is our final beatitude, but here he is more reserved. Relying on the neo-Platonic principle that everything desires union with its cause, Thomas argues that since every creature desires to return to God insofar as it is able, and since a rational creature is able to “reach God” (*pertingere Deum*), while other creatures can only “become like God” (*assimilare Deo*), it must be that in that final act, after this life, whereby a human person reaches ultimate beatitude, he must in some way reach God by knowledge and love.

Having argued from philosophical principles, first from our spiritual nature that human beatitude is to be found in what is spiritual, second from our natural desire that human beatitude is to be found in something spiritual after this life, third from our spiritual nature that the spiritual thing after this life in which human beatitude is to be found is God, Thomas abruptly changes the

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138 Aristotle, *De anima* 3.9 (432b1). The Latin text reads, “natura neque facit frustra nichil neque deficit necessariis nisi in non completis et imperfectis.” It can be found in *Aristoteles Latinus* 12.1.

139 Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 2, qc. 2, co. [Parma 7.2:1188B] “…Ultimus finis rei in ipsa re acceptus, est id per quod conjungitur res suo fini exteriori, qui est principium suae perfectionis. Deo autem, qui est ultimus finis rerum, res dupliciter conjungi possunt. Uno modo per modum assimilationis, ut sic dicatur illa res esse deo conjunctissima quae est Deo simillima; et secundum hoc optet illud in unaquaque re esse ultimum ejus finem, secundum quod maxime Deo assimilatur. Unumquodque autem secundum hoc ad Dei similitudinem accedit quod est actu, recedit vero secundum quod est in potentia; et illud per quod res maxime est in actu, est ejus ultimus finis. Alio modo pertingendo ad ipsum Deum: quae quidem conjunctio soli creaturae rationali est possibilis, quae potest ipsi Deo conjungi per cognitionem et amorem, eo quod Deus est objectum operationis ejus, non autem operationis alicujus creaturae.” Thomas goes on to note: “…Haec secunda consideratio propinquius, inducit in considerationem beatitudinem quam prima, quia beatitudo non est nisi rationlis creaturae.”
manner of his argumentation. He does not suggest that anything about our nature will tell us that its *terminus* is in the vision of God. Instead, he shifts directly to arguments that describe the possibility or fittingness of the vision of God from a philosophical perspective. For example, in the remainder of the second article he explains *how* it would be possible for us to see God in eternity, not that we *will* see God in eternity,140 or that, negatively, we have a natural desire not to suffer anything that would hamper our pursuit of beatitude.141

When, in his treatment of beatitude, Thomas then comes formally to the question of natural desire, he drives a sharp wedge between the *terminus* of our natural desire and the vision of God.

A potency and its proper act are always taken in the same genus; wherefore a potency and its act divide any and all genera of being, as is clear in *Physics* 3. And therefore a faculty or potency of a creature does not extend to anything beyond the form of its genus. And in this way the divine essence, which is outside every genus, exceeds the natural faculty of any created intellect. And therefore the final disposition which is for union of the intellect with such an essence exceeds every faculty of nature. For this reason, it cannot be natural; but rather it is above nature (*supra naturam*). This disposition is the light of glory, about which it is written in Psalm 35:10: “In your light we shall see light.” However, a created intellect can, by its natural faculty, come to the knowledge of God by created forms instilled in or acquired by it. But this knowledge is not the vision of God’s essence, as is clear from what was said, nor is what he is known by it, but only that he is, and what he is not.142

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141 Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 1, a. 2, q. 4, co [Parma 7.2:1189B].

142 Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 6, co. [Parma 7.2:1208B] “Potentia enim et proprius ejus actus semper accipiantur in eodem genere; unde potentia et actus dividunt quodlibet genus entis, ut patet in
As Thomas makes clear here, because the vision of God is something which is above nature (supra naturam), it is not something that created nature can arrive at by a development arising from within its own form. This confirms what Thomas had said previously, that the natural activity of a creature serves as the material principle in an act undertaken with the aid of grace, and consequently that no purely natural action can advance as far as a meritorious act. In this case, since all there is a ratio seminalis for in the intellect is knowledge abstracted from creatures and represented by a similitude taken from them, at best our unassisted intellect can reach an analogical knowledge of God, which begins from creatures.\(^\text{143}\)

Even if Thomas thinks that we can arrive at an analogical knowledge of God, which begins from creatures, he is very clear to distinguish the desire that follows upon that knowledge from natural desire, because he continues to distinguish between the will as nature (voluntas ut

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\(^{143}\) Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 7, co. [Parma 7.2:1210B] "...Nulla pura creatura in statu viae existens videre potest Deum per essentiam; homo enim per dispositiones omnes quas in statu viae habet, non potest in aliquid amplius, nisi ut intelligat quidquid intelligit per species a sensu abstractas: quia phantasmata sunt intellectui nostro ut sensibilium sensui, ut patet per Philosophum in 3 De anima... Deus autem in essentia sua videri non potest nec per aliquam formam a sensu abstractam, nec per aliquam formam creatam, ut ex dictis patet. Unde patet quod nullus intellectus purae creaturae in statu viae existentis potest in visionem Dei per essentiam per aliam dispositionem sibi inhaerentem.” Cf. *In IV Sent.*, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, ad 3 [Parma 7.2:1199B] “...Sicut dicit Augustinus, Deus omnis formam intellectus nostri subterfugit: quia quacumque formam intellectus nostri concipiatur, illa forma non pertingit ad rationem divinae essentiae; et ideo ipse non potest esse pervius intellectui nostro; sed in hoc eum perfectissime cognoscamus in statu viae quod scimus eum esse super omne id quod intellectus nostri concipere potest; et sic e quia ignoto conjungimus. Sed in patria id ipsum per formam quae est essentia sua, videbimus, et conjungemur ei quasi noto.”
natura) and the will as deliberate (voluntas ut deliberata). The desire of the will as nature, as in Book 2 of Thomas’s Commentary on the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum, is always general; every creature desires in general to be joined with God, “if it were possible.” What marks off rational creatures from other creatures is that it is possible for them, since they can perform an act in which God is their object. Consequently, while a rational creature has a natural desire which can only be satisfied by the vision of God, that natural desire in no way constitutes any positive motion towards the vision of God any more than matter’s potency for form posits in matter the existence of any actual form.

3. The Summa contra Gentiles

It is well documented and undisputed that many of the basic philosophical positions that Thomas expressed in his Commentary on the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum remained substantially the same for the rest of his career, informing and influencing how he treated other

144 Thomas Aquinas, In IV Sent., d. 49, q. 1, a. 3 [Parma 7.2:1190B-1196A].


Hütter, Dust Bound for Heaven, 227-28, suggests that Thomas’s desire to demonstrate the possibility of the vision of God by natural reason likely arose in opposition to theologians such as Scotus Eriugena as well as the Arabic neo-Platonists, who had denied that possibility. However, opposition to the possibility of the vision of God was much closer to Thomas that Hütter suggests. Two of the earliest Dominican masters of theology at Paris, Hugh of St. Cher and Guerric of St. Quentin, had denied it at some point in their respective careers. Cf. H.-F. Dondaine, “Hugues de Saint-Cher et la condamnation de 1241,” Recherches des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques 33 (1949): 170-74; H.-F. Dondaine and B.-G. Guyot, “Guerric de Saint-Quentin et la condamnation de 1241,” Recherches des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques 44 (1960): 225-42. Both of these sources, as well as others, are cited in Walter Principe, Hugh of Saint-Cher’s Theology of the Hypostatic Union (Toronto: PIMS, 1970), 19n25. The position of Hugh and Guerric was condemned by William of Auvergne, Bishop of Paris, in 1241.
philosophical and theological questions. That is not to deny any development in Thomas on these or related points whatsoever, only to note that very early in his career Thomas made up his mind on several fundamental points, and that he became well known for them both in the thirteenth and subsequent centuries. For the rest of his life, Thomas would maintain that matter, in itself, is pure potency, with no admixture of act.\footnote{For an overview of the texts on this subject and discussion of their development, see John Wippel, \textit{The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas}, 295-327.} In Creation, matter was created with substantial forms,\footnote{Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Quaestiones disputatae de potentia}, q. 4, a. 1 [Pession 102-10]. See also, Thomas Aquinas, \textit{S.T.}, Ia, q. 66, a. 1 [Leon. 5:154-55]. In his subsequent exegeses of Genesis 1, Thomas is friendlier to the view of successive Creation. See Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Quaestiones disputatae de potentia}, q. 4, a. 2 [Pession 110-29]. See also, Thomas Aquinas, \textit{S.T.}, Ia, q. 74, a. 2 [Leon. 5:190-91].} which did not exhaust its potency for subsequent formation because they did not exhaust the potency of matter simply speaking.\footnote{Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra Gentiles} 2.30. The best edition of this text is Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra Gentiles: Editio Leonina Manualis} (Rome: Commissio Leonina, 1934), 116-19. Also see \textit{De potentia} q. 5, a. 8, co. [Passion 151]; \textit{S.T.}, Ia, q. 66, a. 2, co. [Leon. 5:157] One distinction that Thomas will add to subsequent accounts is that in heavenly bodies, the potential of the form is completely exhausted with respect to other forms. But Thomas’s primary analogate for nature and natural desire remains sublunary bodies, whose forms do not exhaust the potential of their matter for subsequent formation.} Each creature, moreover, can have only one substantial form at a time, otherwise the creature would be subject to two acts of existence.\footnote{See John Wippel, \textit{The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas}, 327-51.} That single substantial form communicates to the creature a limited reflection of the divine idea of that creature.\footnote{See the resources mentioned above, n82.}

Owing to the fact that Thomas’s basic positions on the aforementioned questions are not the subject of any significant contemporary scholarly debate, what remains to be shown is whether or to what extent those basic positions continued to influence Thomas’s treatments of nature and natural desire in subsequent writings, since the connection between those questions
and Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire has not thus far been the subject of a detailed inquiry. In order to show how and in what manner this influence did in fact continue, we will turn now to the *Summa contra Gentiles*.\(^{151}\)

In *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.97-102,\(^{152}\) Thomas discusses nature and the natural in a way very similar to his treatment of those questions in Book 2 of his Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*. At Creation, Thomas suggests, God communicates to a creature a form, which constitutes that creature’s limited participation in a divine idea.\(^{153}\) On account of that form, a creature possesses actuality, as well as a limited range of activity flowing from the active powers communicated to the creature by its form.\(^{154}\) In addition to the limited range of activity conferred on the creature by the form, the creature remains susceptible to accidental change through acquiring or receiving accidental forms within the limits of the actuality conferred on it by its substantial form.\(^{155}\)

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\(^{151}\) Thomas also gives an explicit treatment of natural desire in the *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*, q. 22 [Leon. 22:611-49]. However, he does not change his doctrine substantially there. He adds one consideration, however, which is worth noting, for the source of natural motion in the will, noting that it is God as the first mover. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 22, a. 1, co [Leon. 22:613]. As he also treats this consideration in his subsequent work, I will discuss it further in relation to the *Summa contra Gentiles* and the *Summa theologiae*.


\(^{153}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.97 [Leon. Man. 343-44]. “Ostensum enim est quod Deus per suam providentiam omnia ordinat in divinam bonitatem sicut in finem: non autem hoc modo quod suae bonitatis aliquid per ea quae fiunt accrescat, sed ut similitudo suae bonitatis, quantum possibile est, imprimatur in rebus. Quia vero omnem creatam substantiam a perfectione divinae bonitatis deficere necesse est, ut perfectius divinae bonitatis similitudo rebus communicaretur, oportuit esse diversitatem in rebus, ut quod perfecte ab uno aliquo repraesentari non potest, per diversa diversimodi perfectioni modo repraesentaretur…”

\(^{154}\) Ibid [Leon. Man. 344]. “Ex diversitate autem formarum, secundum quas rerum species diversificantur, sequitur et operationum differentia. Cum enim unumquodque agat secundum quod est actu, quae enim sunt in potentia, secundum quod huissmodi, inveniuntur actionis expertia; est autem unumquodque ens actu per formam: oportet quod operatio rei sequatur formam ipsius. Oportet ergo, si sint diversae formae, quod habeant diversas operationes.”

\(^{155}\) Ibid [Leon. Man. 346-47]. “Ex diversa autem habitudine ad materiam sequitur diversitas agentium et patientium. Cum enim agat unumquodque ratione formae, patiatur vero et moveatur ratione materiae, oportet quod
As Thomas explains, the limited range of activity that the creature possesses in virtue of its form is like a seed, from which all its other activity develops. It possesses this seed of activity from God. Yet just because God has placed a seed of activity in the creature does not mean that God is bound always and everywhere to act through that seed. Sometimes God acts through it and the creature constitutes an active participant in God’s activity, while sometimes God acts directly on creatures and they become merely passive recipients of his actions. The latter happens especially when a creature receives an accidental change directly from God. As in the Commentary on the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum, such passive susceptibility is analogous to the way in which the elements undergo changes of quality and quantity. As with the elements, although creation remains completely passive with respect to the activity it receives from God...
above its natural activity, the activity it receives from God is not therefore violent.\textsuperscript{159} Since all created nature is in potency to God’s action, nothing that God does in it is against nature (\textit{contra naturam}). Here, Thomas speaks even more strongly than before: even if God’s action results in the corruption of a form already in a creature, this would still be “natural corruption,” since the creature was in potency to undergo said corruption.\textsuperscript{160}

Since what God does immediately in nature is not against nature, Thomas suggests that one can distinguish three ways in which God acts in nature but yet beyond nature (\textit{praeter naturam}) when he performs a miracle. Sometimes he acts completely above the natural active and passive potential of nature, as when he makes two bodies exist in the same place, or makes the sun stop in its place; sometimes he achieves an end which nature could achieve but causes it immediately by circumventing the natural means to that end, like when he makes the blind see or the lame walk; sometimes he achieves an end which nature \textit{could} achieve by the means that nature would employ, but does so when nature happens not to be achieving that effect on its

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid [Leon. Man. 349] “In agentibus etiam corporalibus hoc videtur, quod motus qui sunt in inferioribus corporibus ex impressione superiorum, non sunt violenti neque contra naturam, quamvis non videantur convenientes motui naturali quem corpus inferius habet secundum proprietatem suae formae: non enim dicimus quod fluxus et refluxus maris sit motus violentus, cum sit ex impressione caelestis corporis, licet naturalis motu aquae sit solum ad unam partem, scilicet ad medium. Multo igitur magis quicquid a Deo fit in qualibet creatura, non potest dici violentum neque contra naturam.”

\textsuperscript{160} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra Gentiles} 3.100. [Leon. Man. 349] “Quod… est in potenti secundum ordinem naturalem in respectu aliquis agentis, si aliquid imprimitur in ipsum ab alio agente, non est contra naturam simpliciter, etsi sit aliquando contrarium particulari formae quae corrumpitur per huiusmodi actionem: cum enim generatur ignis et corruptitur aer igne agente, est generatio et corruptio naturalis. Quicquid igitur a Deo fit in rebus creatis, non est contra naturam, etsi videatur esse contra ordinem proprium aliquid naturae.”
own, as when he heals the sick. In all of these cases, even the last one, only God can work a miracle because if a creature were to do so, the so-called miracle would fall within the range of that creature’s natural activity, and would by definition constitute a natural action for that creature.

As in the Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*, however, the reception of grace, which Thomas discusses in *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.147-58, is not a miracle, even if it is in some way beyond the power of nature to achieve of its own accord. Rather, it involves the reception of an accidental form which exceeds the active potential of nature, but not its passive, or “material” potential.

Now, from what has been said it is clear that man cannot merit the help of God. For everything is oriented materially towards that which is above it (*supra ipsam*). But matter cannot move itself to its own perfection; rather it is necessary that it be moved by another. Man, therefore, does move himself to acquire the help of God, which is above him (*supra ipsum*), but rather he is moved by God to acquire this.

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162 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.102 [Leon. Man. 350-51]. “Quando aliqua virtus finita proprium effectum operatur ad quem determinatur, non est miraculum: licet possit esse mirum alicui qui illum virtutem non comprehendit; sicut mirum videtur ignaris quod magnes trahit ferrum, vel quod aliquis parvus piscis sit retinens navem. Omnis autem creaturae potestia est limitata ad aliquem determinatum effectum, vel ad aliquos. Quicquid igitur virtute cuiuscumque creaturae fiat, non potest dici miraculum proprium, etsi sit mirum virtutem illius creaturae non comprehendenti. Quod autem fit virtute divina, quae, cum sit infinita, de se incomprehensibilis est, vere miraculum est.”


164 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.149 [Leon. Man. 407]. “Ex dictis autem manifeste ostenditur quod auxilium divinum homo promereri non potest. Quaelibet enim res ad id quod supra ipsam est, materialiter se habet. Materia autem non movet seipsam ad suam perfectionem, sed oportet quod ab alio moveatur. Homo igitur non movet seipsum ad hoc quod adipiscatur divinum auxilium, quod supra ipsum est, sed potius ad hoc adipiscendum a Deo movetur.”
As Thomas’s doctrine of matter has not changed, so neither has his doctrine of material potency and its role in the reception of grace. But if man has no active potential to acquire grace, that does not mean that grace is violent (similar to what Thomas had Bacon objecting in the Commentary on the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum). It belongs to human nature to receive grace, just as it belongs to an element’s nature to receive change. We receive grace in accordance with our nature, not against it. But because the form we receive by which grace is conferred upon us orients us towards an end that is above the natural activity of our nature, that form can be said to be a “supernatural form” which is “superadded” to man.

Everything is ordered towards an end that befits it according to the manner (ratio) of its form. For different ends belong to different species. But the end towards which man is directed by the aid of divine grace is above human nature (supra naturam humanam). Therefore it is necessary that there be some supernatural (supernaturalis) form and perfection superadded to man, by which he may be suitably ordered to the aforesaid end.


167 Ibid. “Unumquodque ordinatur in finem sibi convenientem secundum rationem suae formae: diversarum enim specierum diversi sunt fines. Sed finis in quem homo dirigitur per auxilium divinæ gratiae, est supra naturam humanam. Ergo oportet quod homini superaddatur aliqua supernaturalis forma et perfectio, per quam convenienter ordinetur in finem praedictum.”
The reception of the supernatural form of grace, moreover, enables us to achieve an end which is completely above the natural activity of our souls, conferring perfections which are “above our natural potencies” (super naturales potentias).\textsuperscript{168}

In the \textit{Summa contra Gentiles}, one may safely conclude that Thomas follows the doctrine of nature and the natural that he set forth in his Commentary on the Lombard’s \textit{Liber sententiarum}. If he does not use the term \textit{rationes seminales}, which framed his treatment of the subject in the Commentary on the Lombard’s \textit{Liber sententiarum}, he nevertheless uses the language of seeds in discussing the purview and limits of a creature’s active and passive potencies, as well as the manner in which it stands materially towards grace in light of them. Likewise, Thomas’s treatment of natural desire follows from his treatment of nature and the natural. For Thomas, just as all creatures have a certain range of natural activity on account of their form, so also they possess a certain natural activity by which they always tend towards the good. This tendency, Thomas suggests, which is evident in nature,\textsuperscript{169} even among those things which receive the perfection of their nature from another, can be accounted for insofar as all creatures are subject to the influence of God, and since God is an agent who acts for end, the tendency of all things in nature towards their good is the effect of God’s directing them towards himself as their end.\textsuperscript{170} Since God’s direction of all things towards himself occurs through their

\textsuperscript{168} Ibid. “Divina providentia omnibus providet secundum modum suae naturae, ut ex supra dictis patet. Est autem hic modus proprius hominum, quod ad perfectionem suarum operationum oportet eis inesse, super naturales potentias, quasdam perfectiones et habitus, quibus quasi connaturaliter et faciliter et delectabiliter bonum et bene operentur. Igitur auxilium gratiae, quod homo a Deo consequitur ad perveniendum in ultimum finem, aliquam formam et perfectionem homini inesse designat.”

\textsuperscript{169} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra Gentiles} 3.3 [Leon. Man. 228-29].

form, each creature seeks God naturally in accordance with the potential conferred upon it by its form. In an intellectual creature, this means, as it did in the Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*, that since, according to *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.4, its end occurs in the highest act of its highest potency (intellectual understanding) ordered towards the highest object (God, as “the most perfect of intelligibles”), the ultimate end naturally desired by an intellectual creature is to know God.

Until this point, there has not been anything substantially different than what was encountered in the Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*. However, at this point, one begins to see Thomas diverging from his previous work and developing his thought on natural desire. The shift comes in regard to one of the arguments Thomas uses in support of the fact that our natural desire is only fulfillable by God. One encounters this argument for the first time:}

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171 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.25 [Leon. Man. 261]. “Cum autem omnes creaturae, etiam intellectu carentes, ordinentur in Deum sicut in finem ultimum; ad hunc autem finem pertingunt omnia inquantum de similitudine eius aliquid participant…”

time in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, and it will become central for Thomas’s subsequent expositions of natural desire:

In all men, there is naturally a desire of knowing the causes of things which are seen; wherefore on account of their wonder at those things which are seen, whose causes remain hidden, men first began to philosophize, while they rested when they discovered the cause. But this investigation did not stop until it arrived at the *first cause*: and “we considered ourselves to know perfectly when we arrived at the *first cause*.” [*Metaphysics* 1.3 (983a24-26)]. Therefore, man naturally desires to know the first cause as his ultimate end. But the first cause of all things is God. Therefore the ultimate end of man is to know God.\(^{173}\)

In formulating this new argument for his understanding of natural desire, Thomas is starting from the first line of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, “All men by nature desire to know.”\(^{174}\) At first glance, one might not perhaps be surprised to see Thomas utilizing Aristotle in this way. After all, Aristotle’s expression from the *Metaphysics* seems to summarize succinctly what Thomas had consistently gathered from *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.4. But the way in which Thomas adopts the *Metaphysics* here has one substantial difference from the manner in which he had adopted the argument from the *Ethics*. In Thomas’s treatment of the *Ethics* in his Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*, the “desire” of which Thomas spoke was located in the will, even

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if the perfection desired by it was in the intellect. Here, however, it is otherwise: the desire is rooted in the intellect itself, not the will.  

In every ordered agent and mover it is necessary that the end of the first agent and mover be the ultimate end of all. Just as the end of the leader of an army is the end of all those fighting under him. But among all the parts of man, the intellect is found to be the superior mover: for the intellect moves the appetite, by proposing its object to it. But the intellectual appetite, which is the will, moves the sensitive appetites… Therefore the end of the intellect is the end of every human action… And by consequence the first truth is our ultimate end. Therefore, the ultimate end of the whole man, and of all his activities and desires, is to know the first truth, which is God.

The adoption of the desire to know as another basis for discussing natural desire was not without difficulty for Thomas. Aristotle, he acknowledges, took this to mean that man’s desire is satisfied in this life by the knowledge of the first cause which can be had through the study of Metaphysics. Thomas had already rejected this conclusion in Book IV of his Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*, because he thought it confused the *terminus* of the will as nature with the *terminus* of the will as deliberate, and so placed the end of human nature in this life, rather than in the next. Nevertheless, as Thomas reconsiders the question in the *Summa*...

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177 Cf. Te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 159.

contra Gentiles, he expands his consideration of it to include a much larger breadth of thinkers who had proposed that the end of human nature is in this life. Thomas’s expanded treatment of the question now takes into account a much broader range of Greek and Arabic commentators on Aristotle, all of whom had posited various ways in which our natural desire could be satisfied in this life by some knowledge of the separate substances, whether as the term of speculative knowledge (as in Avempace),\textsuperscript{179} as the perfection of generation (as in Alexander of Aphrodisias),\textsuperscript{180} as a separate intellect (as in Averroes),\textsuperscript{181} or directly (as in Themistius),\textsuperscript{182} or, adding a Latin theologian to the list of Greek and Arabic philosophers, through an intuition of the soul (as Thomas reports that some reputed to have gathered from the words of Augustine).\textsuperscript{183}

In general, Thomas draws a sharp division between Aristotle and his Greek and Arabic commentators. Whatever the individual merits of the commentators’ arguments may be (and Thomas goes at great length to discuss them), the commentators, by positing that the end of human knowledge was in some knowledge in this life of a separate substance, all erred antecedently. In this life, where all our knowledge is drawn from our understanding of material

\textsuperscript{179} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra Gentiles} 3.41 [Leon. Man. 265-67].

\textsuperscript{180} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra Gentiles} 3.42 [Leon. Man. 267-69].

\textsuperscript{181} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra Gentiles} 3.43 [Leon. Man. 269-71].

\textsuperscript{182} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra Gentiles} 3.45 [Leon. Man. 273-74].

\textsuperscript{183} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra Gentiles} 3.46 [Leon. Man. 274-75].
things, we cannot understand separate substances directly because material things do not represent them adequately,\(^ {184}\) nor for the same reason can we see God in this life.\(^ {185}\) We can have a certain knowledge of immaterial substance through analogy,\(^ {186}\) but this analogy has to proceed chiefly by the *via negationis*, and so the object of the knowledge remains for us unknown to some extent.\(^ {187}\)

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\(^ {184}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.45 [Leon. Man. 273]. “…Non sequitur, si substantiae separatae sint in seipsis magis intelligibiles, quod propter hoc sint magis intelligibiles intellectui nostro. Et hoc demonstrant verba Aristotelis in II Metaphysicae. Dicit enim ibidem quod difficultas intelligendi res illas ‘accidit ex nobis, non ex illis: nam intellectus noster se habet ad manifestissima rerum sicut se habet oculus vespertilionis ad lucem solis.’ Unde, cum per materialia intellecta non possint intelligi substantiae separatae, ut supra ostensum est, sequetur quod intellectus possibilis noster nullo modo possit intelligere substantias separatas.” As for the possibility of knowing separate substances though an intuition of the human soul, in *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.46 [Leon. Man. 274], Thomas dismisses the argument because it would mean that we had natural, determined knowledge of the soul, and consequently that no one could deny the existence of the soul with a deliberate judgment. He then raises the possibility of knowing the soul in some way through the study of the speculative sciences. This would not be possible because, “non… oportet quod, si per scientias speculativas possimus pervenire ad sciem undum de anima quid est, quod possimus ad sciem undum quod quid est de substantiis separatis per huiusmodi scientias pervenire: nam intelligere nostrum, per quod pervenimus ad sciem undum de anima nostra quid est, multum est remotum ab intelligentia substantiae separatae. Potest tamen per hoc quod scitur de anima nostra quid est, pervenire ad sciem undum aliquid genus remotum substantiarum separatarum: quod non est earum substantias intelligere.” (ibid [Leon Man. 275]).

\(^ {185}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.47 [Leon. Man. 275]. “Si autem alias substantias separatas in hac vita intelligere non possimus, propter connaturalitatem intellectus nostri ad phantasmata, multo minus in hac vita divinam essentialiam videre possimus, quae transcendit omnes substantias separatas.”

\(^ {186}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.36 [Leon. Man. 34].

\(^ {187}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.39 [Leon. Man. 263]. “Ostendit enim demonstratio Deum esse immobilem, aeternum, incorporeum, omnino simplicem, unum, et alia huiusmodi, quae in libro primo de Deo ostendimus. Ad proprium autem aliquius rei cognitionem pervenitur non solum per affirmationes, sed etiam per negationes: sicut enim proprium hominis est esse animal rationale, ita proprium eius est non esse inanimatum neque irrationale. Sed hoc interest inter utrumque cognitionis propriae modum, quod, per affirmationes propria cognitione de re habita, scitur quid est res, et quomodo ab aliis separatur: per negationes autem habita propria cognitione de re, scitur quod est ab aliis discreta, tamen quid sit remanet ignotum. Talis autem est propria cognitio quae de Deo habetur per demonstrationes. Non est autem nec ista ad ultimam hominis felicitatem sufficiens.”

Studies of Thomas’s doctrine of analogy abound, and it would be impossible to give a complete account of them here. In general contemporary scholars tend to disagree as whether Thomas can best be understood through the lens of Pseudo-Dionysius as teaching a radical apophaticism, through the lens of Cajetan as teaching an analogy of proportionality, or through the lens of Aristotle and Averroes as teaching an analogy of one to another. For the first view, one of the most important works are David Burrell, *Aquinas: God and Action*, 2nd ed. (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2008); John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, *Truth in Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2001); Denys Turner, *Faith, Reason and the Existence of God* (New York: Cambridge, 2004). For the second, the most important work is Joshua Hochschild, *The Semantics of Analogy: Rereading Cajetan’s De nominum analogia* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010). For the third, some of the most important works are Ralph McInerny, *Aquinas and Analogy* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1996); Bernard Montagnes, *The Doctrine of the*
However, Thomas could not discount Aristotle so easily. Since Thomas granted that, whatever its limitations, the act posited by Aristotle as the end of man was possible in this life, it remained to be shown that such an end would not be ultimately sufficient as man’s final end. In his Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*, Thomas accomplished this task with an argument from desire. In the *Summa contra Gentiles*, he takes the same approach. Besides any reservations that Thomas expresses about the knowledge of God in this life by demonstration, which do not really address the question of whether such an imperfect knowledge could serve as man’s final end, he offers three versions of a single argument based on the desire of potency for act to show why the knowledge had of God in this life by demonstration cannot be our final end. The general contour of the argument in all its three forms is this: our natural desire is not sated until our highest potency is completely actualized; but the knowledge of God by demonstration in this life leaves the potency of our intellect in some manner unactualized; consequently it leaves our desire unsatisfied; therefore, it cannot be our final end.\textsuperscript{189}


For some of the early thirteenth century background to Thomas’s doctrine of analogy, see my “Kataphasis and Apophasis in Thirteenth Century Theology: The Anthropological Context of the Triplex Via in the \textit{Summa fratris Alexandri} and Albert the Great,” \textit{Heythrop Journal} (forthcoming).

\textsuperscript{188} In addition to the argument about the \textit{terminus} of the \textit{via negationis}, Thomas also argues in this chapter that few people ever come to such knowledge, that it is often mixed with error, and that it lacks certainty.

\textsuperscript{189} Thomas Aquinas, \emph{Summa contra Gentiles} 3.39 [Leon. Man. 263-64]. The first argument runs thus: “…Esse in actu est finis existentis in potentia, ut ex praemissis patet. Felicitas igitur, quae est ultimus finis, est actus cui non adiungitur potentia ad ulteriorem actum. Talis autem cognitio per viam demonstrationis de Deo habita remanet adhuc in potentia ad aliquod ulterius de Deo cognoscendum, vel eadem nobiliori modo: potestiores enim conati sunt aliquid ad divinam cognitionem pertinens adiungere his quae a prioribus invenerunt tradita. Non est igitur talis cognitio ultima humana felicitas.”

The second argument runs thus: “Voluntas cum consecuta fuerit ultimum finem, quietatur eius desiderium. Ultimus autem finis omnis cognitionis humanae est felicitas. Illa igitur cognitio Dei essentialiter est ipsa felicitas, qua habita non restabit alicius scibilis desideranda cognition. Talis autem non est cognitio quam philosophi per
After suggesting that none of the acts posited by the philosophers as the final end of man in this life could in fact serve as man’s final end, Thomas considers whether the final end of man is in this life at all. After summarizing his reservations about the nature of our demonstrative knowledge of God in this life, Thomas deploys the same argument as he had against Aristotle to show that our final happiness cannot be in this life at all, and adds to it the arguments he had employed in the Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*, namely, that we desire a beatitude which is immobile, and that since our beatitude cannot be found in this life, our natural desire would be frustrated if it could not be fulfilled in the next life. Thomas concludes

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190 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.48 [Leon. Man. 277]. The first and fourth arguments of this chapter fall under this category.

191 Ibid. “Ultimus finis hominis terminat eius appetitum naturalem, ita quod, eo habito, nihil aliud quaeritur: si enim adhuc movetur ad aliud, nondum habet finem in quo quiescat. Hoc autem in hac vita non est possibile accidere. Quanto enim plus aliquid intelligit, tanto magis in eo desiderium intelligendi augetur, quod est hominibus naturale: nisi forte aliquis sit qui omnia intelligat. Quod in hac vita nulli unquam accidit qui esset solum homo, nec est possibile accidere: cum in hac vita substantias separatas, quae sunt maxime intelligibilia, cognoscere non possimus, ut ostensum est. Non est igitur possibile ultimam hominis felicitatem in hac vita esse.” Different versions of this argument follow in the tenth, twelfth, and thirteenth paragraphs of this chapter.

192 Ibid [Leon. Man. 277-78]. Arguments related to this follow in the fifth through eighth paragraphs of this chapter.

on the basis of his arguments from natural desire, that “the final happiness of man will be in the knowledge of God which the human mind has after this life, in the manner in which the separate substances know God.”

Unlike in his Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*, however, Thomas does not stop in the *Summa contra Gentiles* at proving that the fulfillment of man’s natural desire must occur after this life. He also proceeds a step further than he had previously, and inquires into the natural desire of the angels, so as to show by analogy that the complete fulfillment of the soul’s natural desire after this life can only occur in the vision of God. Thomas draws two main conclusions in this regard. First, although the angels know God in a different manner than us, because they can have intuitive self-knowledge, nevertheless, without grace they still only know God analogically as the cause of their existence.

Hence, although their natural knowledge of God is better than ours, since it begins from an effect closer to God than corporeal creatures, it still it does not fulfill their capacity for knowing God any more than man’s knowledge of God by demonstration fulfills his own capacity for knowing God. Therefore, the natural knowledge of God that angels have does not satisfy their natural desire any more than the natural knowledge of God that man has satisfies his natural desire. In fact, Thomas applies the same arguments to the angels in this regard as he had previously applied to man: since they have a natural desire to


195 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.49 [Leon. Man. 280]. “Cognoscit tamen substantia separata per suam substantiam de Deo quia est; et quod est omnium causa; et eminentem omnibus; et remotum ab omnibus, non solum quae sunt, sed etiam quae mente creatae concipi possunt. Ad quam etiam cognitionem de Deo nos utcumque pertingere possimus: per effectus enim de Deo cognoscimus quia est, quod causa aliorum est, alis supereminens, et ab omnibus remotus. Et hoc est ultimum et perfectissimum nostrae cognitionis in hac vita, ut Dionysius dicit…” He continues: “Quia vero natura inferior in sui summo non nisi ad infimum superioris naturae attingit, oportet quod haec ipsa cognition sit eminenter in substantiis separatis quam in nobis.”

know the cause of things, their intellectual desire is not satisfied until they know the cause of
t heir own being in its essence;\textsuperscript{197} anything less than essential knowledge of God only increases
their desire to know him better.\textsuperscript{198}

On the basis that man has a natural desire to know God completely, and that nothing that
man can achieve in this life or the next of his own accord can fulfill that desire, Thomas
concludes at length that it must be possible for us to see God.

Since… it is impossible that a natural desire be in vain, which it would indeed be
if it were not possible to arrive at an understanding of the divine essence, which
all minds naturally desire, it is necessary to say that it is possible that the
substance of God be seen by both the intellect of the separate substances and the
intellect of our souls.\textsuperscript{199}

As in the Commentary on the Lombard’s \textit{Liber sententiarum}, the language here suggests that it is
\textit{possible} for us to see God. That is not the same as the conclusion that we will \textit{actually} see God,
however.\textsuperscript{200} Since the vision of God could only occur through God’s becoming the form of our

\textsuperscript{197} Ibid. “Ex cognitione effectuum incitatur desiderium ad cognoscendum causam: unde homines
philosophari incoeperunt causas rerum inquirentes. Non quiescit igitur sciendi desiderium, naturaliter omnibus
substantiis intellectualibus inditum, nisi, cognitis substanciis effectuum, etiam substantiis causae cognoscant. Per
hoc igitur quod substantiae separatae cognoscunt omnium rerum quorum substantias vident, esse Deum causam, non
quiescit desiderium naturale in ipsis, nisi etiam ipsius Dei substantiam videant.” Throughout the chapter, Thomas
gives variations of this same argument.

\textsuperscript{198} Ibid [Leon. Man. 281-82]. “Quanto aliquid est fini propinquius, tanto maiori desiderio tendit ad finem:
unde videmus quod motus naturalis corporum in fine intenditur. Intellectus autem substantiarum separatarum
propinquiores sunt divinae cognitioni quam noster intellectus. Intensius igitur desiderant Dei cognitionem quam
nos. Nos autem, quantumcumque sciamus Deum esse, et alia quae supra dicta sunt, non quiescimus desiderio, sed
adhuc desideramus eum per essentiam suam cognoscere. Multo igitur magis substantiae separatae hoc naturaliter
desiderant. Non igitur in cognitione Dei praedicta earum desiderium quietatur.”

\textsuperscript{199} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Summa contra Gentiles} 3.51 [Leon. Man. 282]. “Cum… impossible sit naturale
desiderium esse inane, quod quidem esset si non esset possibile pervenire ad divinam substantiam intelligendam,
quod naturaliter omnes mentes desiderant; necesse est dicere quod possibile sit substantiam Dei videri per
intellectum, et a substantiis intellectualibus separatis, et ab animabus nostris.”

\textsuperscript{200} Cf. Hütter, \textit{Dust Bound for Heaven}, 236.
intellect in the act of understanding, and since man, as a material principle, is passive in the reception of that form, Thomas adds that man cannot advance at all towards the vision of God without the movement of grace, which strengthens his intellect so that it may receive God as its form. Anything else would be Pelagianism.

Thomas’s treatment of natural desire in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, repeats and expands some of what he says in the Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*. Specifically, it repeats the argument that since our natural desire cannot be satisfied in this life, it must be able to be satisfied in the next. It expands that argument by suggesting that the same applies to the angels, to whose knowledge our own knowledge will be similar to the knowledge that the human soul has after this life, such that for both angels and separated souls, the natural desire of an intellectual creature can only be completely satisfied by the vision of God. However, there remains one point of ambiguity concerning Thomas’s treatment of natural desire in the *Summa contra Gentiles*.

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202 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.52 [Leon. Man. 283]. “Si aliqua duo debeant ad invicem copulari quorum unum sit formale et alius materiale, oportet quod copulatio eorum compleatur per actionem quae est ex parte eius quod est formale, non autem per actionem eius quod est materiale: forma enim est principium agendi, materia vero principium patiendi. Ad hoc autem quod intellectus creatus videat Dei substantiam, oportet quod ipsa divina essentia copuletur intellectui ut forma intelligibilis, sicut probatum est. Non est igitur possibile ad hanc visionem perveniri ab aliquo intellectu creato nisi per actionem divinam.”

203 Ibid [Leon. Man. 283-84]. “Quicquid excedit limites alios naturae, non potest sibi advenire nisi per actionem alterius: sicut aqua non tendit sursum nisi ab aliquo alio mota. Videre autem Dei substantiam transcendit limites omnis naturae creatae: nam cuilibet naturae intellectuali creatae proprium est ut intelligat secundum modum suae substantiae; substantia autem divina non potest sic intelligi, ut supra ostensum est. Impossibile est ergo perveniri ab aliquo intellectu creato ad visionem divinae substantiae nisi per actionem Dei qui omnem creaturam transcendit.”

204 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.53 [Leon. Man. 284]. Thomas argues here that since it is impossible for God’s essence to change, our being joined to it in vision must result from a change in us, which is the reception of the light of glory (*lumen gloriae*).

205 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 3.147 [Leon. Man. 406]. “Per hoc [i.e. positing the necessity of the light of glory] excluditur error Pelagianorum qui dixerunt quod per solum liberum arbitrium homo poterat Dei gloriam promereri.”
contra Gentiles. By adopting a doctrine of natural desire adopted from Aristotle’s Metaphysics 1.1, in which the natural desire is conceived of as existing in the intellect as well as the will, and in which the only possible resting place of our natural desire is the vision of God, does Thomas abandon the basis of the doctrine of natural desire that he had so emphatically defended in his Commentary on the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum, in which natural desire must be undetermined?

There is good reason for positing that Thomas might have adopted some sort of naturally achievable terminus for our natural desire in the Summa contra Gentiles. The main argument against this possibility in the Commentary on the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum was from the relationship of the active part of man’s ratio seminalis for understanding and acting (natural knowledge and natural desire respectively), and his potential for development from it (in subsequent knowledge and virtue respectively). If, Thomas had argued, man’s natural knowledge were determined, he would be unable to err concerning that which we knew naturally. Likewise, if man’s natural desire were determined (in this case to God), he would be unable to sin.

Thomas thus seems to have omitted these arguments from the Summa contra Gentiles, at least in discussions of natural desire. However, if one looks elsewhere in the Summa contra Gentiles outside discussions specifically of natural desire, one sees that Thomas continued to maintain something analogous to the doctrine of the Commentary on the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum on the lack of a naturally achievable terminus of our natural desire, both with respect to the intellect as well as the will.
For the intellect, one may look to Thomas’s discussion of whether the knowledge of God is intrinsically known to us (*per se notum*).\(^\text{206}\) There, Thomas considers the following objection:

> Things which are naturally known are known *per se*. For we do not come to know them by the labor of inquiry. But that God exists is naturally known, since man’s desire tends naturally unto God as unto man’s ultimate end, as will be made clear below. Therefore, that God exists is known *per se*.\(^\text{207}\)

Against this objection, Thomas replies:

> Man naturally knows God like he naturally desires God. But man naturally desires God inasmuch as he naturally desires beatitude, which is a certain similitude of divine goodness. For this reason, therefore, it is not necessary that God himself, considered in himself, be naturally known to man, rather [only] a similitude of him. Wherefore it is necessary that by similitudes of him found in his effects man arrives at the knowledge of him by reasoning.\(^\text{208}\)

Thomas here affirms the correlation between natural desire and natural knowledge, but dismisses the conclusion about natural knowledge by denying the premise about natural desire. The *terminus* of our desire is *beatitude*, not God. Consequently, since our natural knowledge corresponds with our natural desire, we only need postulate a natural knowledge in the intellect.

\(^\text{206}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.11 [Leon. Man. 9].

\(^\text{207}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.10 [Leon. Man. 8]. “Quae naturaliter sunt nota, per se cognoscuntur: non enim ad ea cognoscenda inquisitionis studio pervenitur. At Deum esse naturaliter notum est: cum in Deum naturaliter desiderium hominis tendat sicut in ultimum finem, ut infra patebit. Est igitur per se notum Deum esse.”

\(^\text{208}\) Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 1.11 [Leon. Man. 9]. “Sic enim homo naturaliter Deum cognoscit sicut naturaliter ipsum desiderat. Desiderat autem ipsum homo naturaliter inquantum desiderat naturaliter beatitudinem, quae est quaedam similitudo divinae bonitatis. Sic igitur non oportet quod Deus ipse in se consideratus sit naturaliter notus homini, sed similitudo ipsius. Unde oportet quod per eius similitudines in effectibus repertas in cognitionem ipsius homo ratiocinando perveniat.”
sufficient to ground a desire for beatitude, not God. It is not the case, therefore, that our natural desire is determined by some fixed knowledge of God.

Thomas speaks similarly when considering the question of determination in the will in his discussion of the Sacrament of Penance. Considering the text of 1 John 3:9: “he, who is born of God, cannot sin,” Thomas asks whether a person who has received grace can sin afterwards. Rather than accounting for the possibility of something which is known to be the case, as in the Commentary on the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum, here he has to show that it is necessarily and antecedently the case that man can sin, even after having received grace. For that reason, Thomas abandons the argument from the relationship between natural and free desires, and adopts the argument from an analogy with matter. The former had to assume as a premise that we do, in fact, sin. The latter does not.

Among the arguments that Thomas proposes in favor of our peccability is an argument from the indetermination of the will insofar as it remains in potency:

There can be no impeccability in man without immutability of the will. But man cannot have immutability of the will unless he has reached his ultimate end. For the will is rendered immutable from the fact that it is completely fulfilled so that it does not have the wherewithal to turn away from that in which it is fixed. But the fulfillment of the will does not accrue to man unless he reaches his ultimate end: for as long as there remains something to desire, the will has not been fulfilled. Hence, therefore, impeccability does not accrue to man before he arrives at his final end.

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209 Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra Gentiles 4.70 [Leon. Man. 533]. Thomas quotes the text as follows: “Qui natus est ex Deo, non potest peccare.”

210 Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra Gentiles 4.70. “Impeccabilitas in homine esse non potest sine immutabilitate voluntatis. Immutabilitas autem voluntatis non potest homini competere nisi secundum quod attingit ultimum finem. Ex hoc enim voluntas immutabilis redditur quod totaliter impletur, ita quod non habet quo divertat ab eo in quo est firmata. Impletio autem voluntatis non competit homini nisi ut finem ultimum attingentis: quondiu enim restat aliquid ad desiderandum, voluntas impleta non est. Sic igitur homini impeccabilitas non competit antequam ad ultimum finem perveniat.”
Here, perhaps more than anywhere else, one sees Thomas’s doctrine of matter and its relationship to form continuing to influence how he treats the question of natural desire. As long as the will has not been completely actualized by any form in the intellect directing it to an end, it remains in potential to actualization by a different form directing it to a different end, much the same as matter, which is incompletely actualized by form, remains in potency to other forms. As Thomas had argued previously, however, only God could completely actualize the will, because only God can complete fulfill the intellect’s desire for knowledge by becoming the form informing the intellect.\(^{211}\)

The argument that Thomas gives in response to the question of peccability, however, points to a much broader tendency in the *Summa contra Gentiles* towards radicalizing the parallel between the way in which nature relates to God, and matter relates to form. A closer look at each of Thomas’s arguments in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, as presented above, suggests that all of them proceed in a manner similar to the argument for peccability. Just as matter does not advance in any positive way towards form, yet is nevertheless said analogously to “desire” form on account of its potency for form, and just as that potency for form, although it posits no actual inclination for form in matter, nevertheless makes the reception of form not unnatural for matter, but part according to its nature and part above its nature, so also does our natural desire for beatitude not advance us in any positive way towards the beatific vision, although it is nevertheless called a “desire” for the beatific vision on account of our potency for this vision. The only difference between matter and human nature, as Thomas himself notes, is that matter’s

desire for form is actualized successively by different forms, since no one form could inform all of matter at once, while our desire for the beatific vision is actualized all at once, because the divine essence can actualize our intellect all at once.²¹²

In the *Summa contra Gentiles*, Thomas does not change his fundamental doctrine that our natural desire is for a subjective state of beatitude. Nor does he change his fundamental doctrine that our natural desire must of necessity be undetermined, since otherwise we would be unable to err or to sin. But he does deepen the analogy between matter’s desire for form and our desire for beatitude, with the result that he affirms more strongly in the *Summa contra Gentiles* that only the vision of God could satisfy our natural desire, since even the natural knowledge privy to a soul after death is not enough to actualize the fullness of our potential. Nevertheless, Thomas does not think that the fact that man has a natural desire that can only be satisfied by the vision of God means that God is constrained actually to grant this vision to the human species in general, nor to any individual member of the species. What it does mean is that the vision of God must be possible, which is to say there must be at least some way in which created intellect is capable of seeing God. But it is one thing to say that something is fulfillable, and another to say that it will or will not be fulfilled. Thomas says explicitly that our natural desire for the vision of God proves the former, while he carefully avoids drawing any definitive conclusion about the latter.

4. The Summa theologiae

In the *Summa theologiae*, as in Thomas’s previous works, one encounters his doctrine of nature explained in reference to his treatment of *rationes seminales*.213 Here, Thomas repeats the doctrine of *rationes seminales* consisting in complementary material, passive, and formal, active principles that one has come to expect from his previous work, although he gives a somewhat different stated basis for same doctrine. Rather than anything from Augustine, Thomas here supports his doctrine with the account of nature given by Aristotle in *Metaphysics* 5.4,214 where Aristotle suggests by etymology that nature is linked to generation.215 Thomas agrees, but since—according to Aristotelian biology—in all generation there is an active principle (the father) and a passive principle (the mother),216 “Augustine fittingly calls all active and passive powers which are principles of acts of generation and of natural motions, ‘rationes

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213 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia, q. 115, a. 2 [Leon. 5:540-41].


215 Ibid. (1014b19-21) [McKeon 755]. “‘Nature’ means (1) the genesis of growing things—the meaning which would be suggested if one were to pronounce the *v* in *φύσις* long. (2) That immanent part of a growing thing, from which its growth proceeds. (3) The source from which the primary movement in each natural object is present in it in virtue of its own essence.”

These active and passive principles arise in creatures through their limited participation of a divine idea, which they receive in virtue of their form.

As in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, so also in the *Summa theologiae* does Thomas argue that God never does anything against nature (*contra naturam*) in a strict sense, since, according to Augustine, God remains free to act in nature since he is the author of nature. However, God can—and often does—act contrary to the ordinary course of nature. This occurs when God acts beyond the active power in nature, and actualizes some passive power in nature which either nature cannot actualize on its own at all, nature cannot actualize in the way that God actualizes it, or it so happened that nature was not going to actualize. As in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the

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218 Ibid. “Huiusmodi autem virtutes activae et passivae in multiplici ordine considerari possunt. Nam primo quidem, ut Augustinus dicit VI super Gen. ad litt., sunt principaliter et originaliter in ipso Verbo Dei, secundum rationes ideales. Secundo vero, sunt in elementis mundi, ubi simul a principio productae sunt, sicut in universalibus causis. Tertio vero modo, sunt in is quae ex universalibus causis secundum successiones temporum producuntur, sicut in hac planta et in hoc animali, tanquam in particularibus causis. Quarto modo sunt in seminibus quae ex animalibus et plantis producuntur. Quae iterum comparantur ad alios effectus particulares, sicut primordiales causae universales ad primos effectus productos.”

219 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia, q. 105, a. 6, co [Leon. 5:477]. “Si… ordo rerum consideretur prout dependet a prima causa, sic contra rerum ordinem Deus facere non potest: sic enim si faceret, faceret contra suam praescientiam aut voluntatem aut bonitatem.”

220 Ibid. “Si vero consideretur rerum ordo prout dependet a qualibet secundarum causarum, sic Deus potest facere praeter odinem rerum. Quia ordini secundarum causarum ipse non est subjectus, sed talis ordo ei subjicitur… Unde et potest praeter hunc ordinem institutum agere, cum voluerit; puta agendo effectus secundarum causarum sine ipsis, vel producendo alios effectus ad quos causae secundae non se extendunt.”

221 On God’s activity in nature being beyond its active principles, but never its passive principles, see Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia, q. 115, a. 2, ad 4 [Leon. 5:541]. “…Rationes ideales possunt dici causales, non autem proprie loquendo seminales, quia semem non est principium separatum: et praeter huiusmodi rationes non fiunt miracula. Similiter etiam neque praeter virtutes passivae creaturae inditas, ut ex ea fieri possit quidquid Deus mandaverit. Sed praeter virtutes activas naturales, et potentias passivas quae ordinanter ad huiusmodi virtutes activas, dicuntur fieri miracula, dum dicitur quod fiunt praeter rationes seminales.” On the three grades of miracles that God performs beyond the active principles in a nature, see *S.T.*, Ia, q. 105, a. 8, co. [Leon. 5:480] The three grades parallel those expressed earlier in the *Summa contra Gentiles*. 
first of these is said to be “above nature” (*supra naturam*), while all of them are said to be in some way “beyond nature” (*praeter naturam*).222

As in both Thomas’s previous works already considered, but especially the Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum*, both the intellect and the will have within themselves a *ratio seminalis*, which combines a material, passive principle, with a formal, active one.223 In the intellect, the active principle is the natural knowledge of first principles.224 These differ according to whether they are the first principles of speculative knowledge or practical knowledge; in the former case the knowledge of them is described no longer as a *scintilla rationis* but rather as the natural knowledge of the first principles of demonstration, to which we are said to adhere by our “superior reason” (*ratio superior*),225 while in the latter case the knowledge of them is still described as *synderesis*.226 These principles are by nature general; if they were specific, then no one could err concerning that which these principles proposed to the

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222 On the first class of miracles above nature, see Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia, q. 105, a. 7, ad 2 [Leon. 5:479]. “Super facultatem autem naturae dicitur aliquid, non solum propter substantiam facti; sed etiam propter modum et ordinem faciendi…” On all three classes being above nature, see ibid., a. 6, ad 1 [Leon. 5:477].

223 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 73, a. 1, co. [Leon. 6:406-07]. This article is a dense repetition of Thomas’s treatment of *rationes seminales* in *In II Sent.*, d. 18. He rehearses the history of opinions on form’s relationship to matter, including the *latitatio formarum*, the *dator formarum*, and eduction, and, as previously, correlates his own opinion with the germinatory presence of knowledge in the intellect and virtue in the will.

224 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 1, a. 4, ad 2. “...In quae sunt per se, ratio incipit a principiis naturaliter notis, et ad aliquem terminum progreditur. Unde Philosophus probat, in I Poster., quod in demonstrationibus non est processus in infinitum, quia in demonstrationibus attenditur ordo aliquorum per se ad invicem connecorum, et non per accidens.”

225 Thomas describes these principles at various points, but never devotes a whole article to them. He references them, however, at *S.T.*, Ia, q. 64, a. 2, co. [Leon. 5:141]; q. 79, a. 8, co. [Leon. 5:274]; q. 79, a. 9, co. [Leon. 5:276]. See also Ia-IIae, q. 17 a. 6 co. [Leon. 6:122]; q. 62 a. 3 co. [Leon. 6:403]. See also Ila-IIae, q. 49 a. 2 co. [Leon. 8:368]; q. 171 a. 2 co. [Leon. 10:367].

226 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia, q. 79, a. 12, co [Leon. 5:279-80].
This is particularly true in the case of God; God’s existence is not naturally known to us, otherwise there could be no such thing as an atheist. The intellect’s passive principle, meanwhile, is its potential to receive knowledge.

Also as in Thomas’s previous works, the will’s active principle is its natural inclination towards the good. More explicitly than in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, Thomas clarifies here that since the will desires beatitude like the intellect knows the first principles of demonstration, the will is only inclined to its end “in common,” because the inclination of the will depends upon the end proposed to it by the intellect, and consequently our natural inclination cannot be any more specific than our natural knowledge. In addition, it is necessary that our desire be for some common goal because our will would not incline to anything if it did not remain in further potency for obtaining its object.

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227 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia, q. 84, a. 3, co [Leon. 5:318]. “...Nullus enim homo obliviscit ea quae naturaliter cognoscit, sicut quod omne totum sit maius sua parte, et alia huiusmodi.”

228 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia, q. 2, a. 1, co [Leon. 5:27]; q. 83, a. 3, co [Leon. 5:368]. The text of Ia, 1. 2, a. 1 posits as the first objection the very text from Damascene upon which the *Summa fratis* bases its argument for natural knowledge of God. The corresponding treatment of this topic in the *Lectura Romana*, which Thomas would have written beginning the *Prima Pars*, also begins with this text from Damascene. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Lectura romana in primum Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, 3.1.1, ed. Leonard Boyle and John Boyle (Toronto: PIMS, 2006), 106.

229 Ibid., s.c.

230 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia, q. 79, a. 2, co [Leon. 5:259-60]; Ia-IIae, q. 1, a. 1, co [Leon. 6:6]; q. 2, a. 6, co [Leon. 6:22].

231 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 1, a. 3, co [Leon. 6:10]; q. 8, a. 1, co [Leon. 6:68]; q. 10, a. 2, co [Leon. 6:86]. The good “in common” should not be confused with the “common good.” For Thomas, the former denotes the good without any specific character, while the latter denotes the specific good towards which a group of individuals are ordered.

There is presently a disagreement among contemporary Thomists as to whether the common good is a useful good, or whether it transcends the collection of certain goods that are useful to limited groups of individuals. For a brief bibliography on this question, see John Goyette, “On the Transcendence of the Political Common Good,” *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 13 (2013): 133n1.

232 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia, q. 82, a. 4, co [Leon. 5:303].

233 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 9, a. 1, co [Leon. 6:74]. Cf. Ia-IIae, q. 2, a. 7, co [Leon. 6:23].
Also as previously, the will’s natural inclination towards good is the basis of our natural desire for our ultimate end. Thomas’s principal argument in support of this claim adopts the reasoning from the *Summa contra Gentiles*: the natural desire of the will is not sated until it has nothing further to desire; but if there were more than one definite end, the will would have something further to desire when it possessed one of these ends; therefore the will must not a *terminus* in some definite, ultimate end.\(^{234}\) The reason that the natural desire of the will cannot be sated until having reached its ultimate end is twofold: first, on the part of the subject, because any inchoative motion, such as we find in the will in its natural inclination towards its ultimate end, tends towards perfection;\(^{235}\) second, on the part of the object, because, since the end is the first cause of a thing’s motion, there would not even *be* an inchoative motion in the will if it were not for the existence of a primary, ultimate end.\(^{236}\)

Insofar man has a natural inclination towards the good in common, and as that inclination posits in man one, definite, ultimate end, man is similar to all other creatures, since all things desire to return to God, the principle of their being, insofar as it is possible for them. But moreso than in his previous works, Thomas distinguishes man, as a rational creature, from the irrational creatures, because while they reach their end as completely directed by God, man reaches his end

\(^{234}\) Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 1, a. 5, co [Leon. 6:13]. “...Cum unumquodque appetat suam perfectionem, illud appetit aliquis ut ultimum finem, quod appetit ut bonum perfectum et completivum sui ipsius. Unde Augustinus dicit, XIX de Civ. Dei: ‘Finem boni nunc dicimus, non quod consumatur ut non sit, sed quod perficiatur ut plenum sit.’ Oportet igitur quod ultimus finis ita imples totum hominis appetitum, quod nihil extra ipsum appetendum relinquat. Quod esse non potest, si aliquid extraneum ad ipsius perfectionem requiratur. Unde non potest esse quod in duo sic tendat appetitus, ac si utrumque sit bonum perfectus ipsius.”

\(^{235}\) Thomas uses the same argument as the basis for his reasoning that all men have the same end in *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 1, a. 7, co [Leon. 6:15].

\(^{236}\) Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 1, a. 6, co [Leon. 6:14].
freely, by knowing and loving God. Consequently, Thomas draws a sharper terminological
distinction between the motion of irrational creatures and that of rational ones. For Thomas, the
irrational creatures have a “natural appetite” because they are directed by God towards a definite
end in which they have no say; man has a “rational appetite” because he is directed by God
towards only a general end, and must determine for himself to which definite end he will order
his actions. The difference, however, is not between motion which is natural and motion
which is unnatural or completely deliberate, but rather motion which reaches its definite *terminus*
involuntarily, and motion which reaches its definite *terminus* voluntarily. The will’s initial
motion, by which it tends towards the good in common, remains non-voluntary in the sense that
it is impressed upon it directly by God, analogous to the way in which simple bodies receive
their natural motion. However, this initial motion towards the good in general still requires
voluntary completion.

On the basis that man has a natural inclination to know and love God insofar as is
possible, Thomas sets about showing, as he had in his previous works, that the manner in which
man reaches his final end by knowing and loving God is as the most perfect act of man’s highest

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237 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 1, a. 7, co. [Leon. 6:16]. “Si ergo loquamur de ultimo fine hominis
quantum ad ipsum rem quae est finis, sic in ultimo fine hominis omnia alia conveniunt: quia Deus est ultimus finis
hominis et omnium aliarum rerum. –Si autem loquamur de ultimo fine hominis quantum ad consecucionem finis, sic
in hoc fine hominis non communicant creaturae irrationales. Nam homo et aliae rationales creaturae consequuntur
ultimum finem cognoscendo et amando Deum: Quod non competit aliis creaturis, quae adipiscunt ultimum finem
inquantum participant aliquam similitudinem Dei, secundum quod sunt, vel vivunt, vel etiam cognoscunt.” Cf. ibid.,
q. 3, a. 1 [Leon. 6:26]; q. 5, a. 1, co [Leon. 6:47].

238 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia, q. 82, a. 1, co. [Leon. 5:293]. “…Necesse est quod, sicut intellectus ex
necessitate inhaeret primis principiis, ita voluntas ex necessitate inhaereat ultimo fini, qui est beatitudo: finis enim se
habet in operativis sicut principiium in speculativis, ut dicitur in II Physic. Oportet enim illud quod naturaliter
alicui convenit et immobilem, sit fundamentum et principium omnium aliorum: quia natura rei est primum in
unoquaque, et omnis motus procedit ab aliquo immobile.” Cf. Ia-IIae, q. 10, a. 1, co [Leon. 6:83].

239 This is described in Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 1, a. 2, co. [Leon. 6:9]; q. 114, a. 1, co [Leon.
7:344-45].
faculty. In support of this, Thomas argues first that man’s final end must consist, generally speaking, in an activity, because the perfection of any creature is insofar as it is in act, not insofar as it is in potency. 240 Second, man’s final end must consist in an act of the intellectual, not the sensitive powers, since only intellectual powers are capable of being joined to God in the manner required for man’s ultimate beatitude. 241 Third, he argues that it must consist in the intellect, rather than in the will, since it belongs to the intellect to determine the end for the will. 242 Fourth and finally, he determines that it must be in the speculative rather than the practical intellect, because, and here he uses the text from Nicomachean Ethics 10.4 explicitly:

…If the beatitude of man is an activity, it is necessary that it be the best activity. But the best activity of man is that which belongs to the best power in respect of its best object. Yet man’s best power is the intellect, whose best object is the divine good, which indeed is not the object of the practical intellect, but of the speculative. Wherefore beatitude chiefly consists in such an activity, namely in the contemplation of God. 243


241 Thomas Aquinas, S.T., Ia-IIae, q. 3, a. 3, co [Leon. 6:28].

242 Thomas Aquinas, S.T., Ia-IIae, q. 3, a. 4, co. [Leon. 6:29] The point is summarized very succinctly in the response to the fourth objection: “…Dilectio praeeminet cognitioni in movendo, sed cognitione praevia est dilectioni in attingendo: ‘non enim diligitur nisi cognitum,’ ut dicit Augustinus in X de Trin. Et ideo intelligibilem finem primo attingimus per actionem intellectus; sicut et finem sensibilem primo attingimus per actionem sensus.”

243 Thomas Aquinas, S.T., Ia-IIae, q. 3, a. 5, co. [Leon. 6:31]. “…Si beatitudo hominis est operatio, oportet quod sit optima operatio hominis. Optima autem operatio hominis est quae est optimae potentiae respectu optimi objecti. Optima autem potentia est intellectus, cuius optimum objectum est bonum divinum, quod quidem non est objectum practici intellectus, sed speculativi. Unde in tali operatione, scilicet in contemplatione divinorum, maxime consistit beatitudo.”
The use of Aristotle’s description of happiness from *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.4, as it had previously, marks a turning point in Thomas’s reasoning. It settles the question of in what sort of activity man’s beatitude consists, and allows Thomas to continue onward towards the consideration of the object of that activity.

As in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, Thomas then proceeds to consider possible objects of the activity which constitutes man’s beatitude. As he had already determined that our beatitude must consist in activity of the speculative intellect, there remains three possible objects for him to consider: the knowledge of the speculative sciences, the knowledge of separate substances, and the knowledge of God. In the *Summa contra Gentiles*, Thomas had acknowledged the first to be Aristotle’s position, the second to be the position of the Greek and Arabic Aristotelian commentators, and the third to be correct. In the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas does not name names explicitly, rather he treats the substance of the opinions that he had before. As for Aristotle, Thomas notes, as he had previously, that since all man’s knowledge of the speculative sciences in this life is taken from an encounter with material creatures, and since material creatures cannot lead to a direct knowledge of immaterial being, man’s final beatitude cannot consist in the knowledge of the speculative sciences.244 As for the opinions of the Greek and Arabic commentators, however, Thomas takes a different approach, inspired by the more radical parallel he had embraced in the *Summa contra Gentiles* between matter and form with the soul and its perfection. Instead of using an argument from natural desire to show that the final beatitude of man must be after this life, Thomas suggests that since the intellect is oriented

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244 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 3, a. 6, co. [Leon. 6:33]. Thomas takes it as a given here that material creatures cannot lead us to a direct knowledge of immaterial being. His demonstration of that can be found in *S.T.*, Ia, q. 88, a. 2 [Leon. 5:367-68]. Similar arguments can be found in *S.T.*, Ia, q. 12, a. 2 [Leon. 4:117], and *S.T.*, Ia, q. 12, a. 4, co. [Leon. 4:121], in which Thomas denies that a created intellect can see God through a similitude drawn from creatures.
towards truth as its object, and since an angel has limited and participated truth on account of its limited and participated being, angels cannot reduce the intellect completely to act. Since, therefore, angels cannot reduce the intellect completely to act, they cannot constitute its highest object. Thomas thus deploys the argument that he had developed in the *Summa contra Gentiles* with respect to the will, in which the peccability of the will was proven, not assumed, and applies it to the intellect. In the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the will could not be said to have reached its final object while there yet remained unfulfilled potency in it; in the *Summa theologiae*, neither can the intellect be said to have reached its final object until it is completely actualized.

At this point, Thomas is ready to consider the question of the vision of God. But his reasoning is a good deal more succinct than in previous works. By rigorously applying the parallel between matter and form and the soul and its fulfillment, Thomas no longer has to proceed from an argument showing that the final beatitude of man is after this life to an argument showing that it must be in the vision of God, as he had in both the Commentary on the Lombard’s *Liber sententiarum* as well as the *Summa contra Gentiles*. Instead, it is enough to argue from the fact that since only the vision of God could afford the intellect and will the sort of actualization required for ultimate beatitude, only the vision of God could serve as man’s ultimate beatitude. Only later will Thomas address the question of whether beatitude can be had in this life, since it is no longer central to his argument.

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245 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 3, a. 7, co [Leon. 6:34-35].

246 Ibid [Leon. 6:35-36]. *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 3, a. 8, co. [Leon. 6:35-36] “…Uniuscuiusque potentiae perfectio attenditur secundum rationem sui objecti. Obiectum autem intellectus est quod quid est, idest essentia rei, ut dicitur in III de Anima. Unde intantum procedit perfectio intellectus, inquantum cognoscit essentiam alcuuius rei. Si ergo intellectus alquis cognoscat essentiam alcuuius effectus, per quam non possit cognosci essentia causae, ut scilicet sciatur de causa quid est; non dicitur intellectus attingere ad causam simpliciter, quamvis per effectum cognoscere
As in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the fact that man’s perfect beatitude is only in the vision of God raises two important questions. First, there is the question of what can be known from the fact that man’s ultimate beatitude consists in the vision of God. Second, there is the question of how this desire relates to grace.

Thomas treats the first question much the same as he had in the *Summa contra Gentiles*:

Since man’s final beatitude consists in his highest activity, which is the activity of the intellect, if a created intellect can never see the essence of God, either it will never obtain beatitude, or its beatitude will consist in something other than God. This is alien from faith. For the final perfection of a rational creature is in that which is its principle of being: something is made perfect insofar as it reaches its principle.—Likewise also it is beyond reason. For there is in man a natural desire of knowing the cause when he looks upon an effect; and from this wonder arises among men. If, therefore, the intellect of a rational creature could not reach the first cause of things, the desire of its nature will remain in vain. Accordingly it must be conceded simply that the blessed see the essence of God.248

Here we see Thomas employing the argument from the frustration of a natural desire in the same way as he had employed it in the *Summa contra Gentiles*. There, it was employed to show that it...
must be *possible* for created intellect to see God, not that any created intellect *actually* sees God. Thomas had avoided concluding on the basis of this argument that any intellect actually sees God out of concern for avoiding Pelagianism. Since nature stands before grace as matter to form, our natural desire does not advance us towards the vision of God, even if it cannot be satisfied without it. Here, the context and the argumentation is the same as in the *Summa contra Gentiles*. The objections propose that the vision of God is antecedently impossible; they do not touch on whether there is or will be anyone in existence who actually sees God. Thomas’s response proceeds along these lines as well. The first argument suggests that, on God’s part, God is maximally knowable, and so it is antecedently possible for him to be known. The second argument adds that God is knowable *by the created intellect*. But one should note that the second argument proceeds in two parts: one theological, and one philosophical. Any question of what *actually* happens, whether someone actually arrives at beatitude, or whether someone’s actual beatitude might be in some other object, is considered by Thomas in the theological part of the argument, not the philosophical part. The two consequences for *theology* of saying that the created intellect cannot see God would be that no one actually sees God, or that human beatitude was in something other than God. As in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, the only thing treated by natural reason is the question of *possibility*.

Thus, in the *Summa theologiae* as in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, philosophy can know that if the vision of God *could* not happen, then our natural desire would be in vain, but says nothing about whether anyone actually *does* see God, or whether people *actually* obtain some other object. The conclusion of the aforementioned argument, that the blessed see the essence of God, is not the conclusion of the philosophical argument alone. That would be to mix the
theological question of *actuality* with the philosophical question of *possibility*. It is a joint conclusion of both arguments. The philosophical argument proves that it is *possible* to see God; the theological argument shows that people *do* actually reach beatitude, and that the beatitude, which they actually do reach, must be found in God. The conclusion of both arguments together, then, is that in actual fact, people who can reach God, as we know from philosophical reasoning, do actually reach God, as we know from theological reasoning.

As in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, so also in the *Summa theologiae* one can look to Thomas’s treatment of grace for confirmation of the interpretation of Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire proposed here. As previously, Thomas does not say that the reception of grace is a miracle. But in the *Summa theologiae*, it is also not said to be beyond nature (*praeter naturam*), since it is outside the “order of nature” (*ordo naturae*), which consists in the complements of active and passive principles instilled into nature as *rationes seminales*.

In the *Summa theologiae*, grace is not properly “beyond nature” because to be “beyond nature,” means to be achievable by nature, at least in the substance of the act. Ordinarily, acts which are not achievable in their substance by nature are said to be above nature (* supra naturam*). But even this does not describe grace accurately, because, as Thomas notes:

> In some miraculous works one finds that a form is induced above the natural potency (* supra naturalem potentiam*) of such matter, as in the resurrection of the dead, life is above the natural potency of such a body. And in this respect, the justification of the impious is not miraculous, because the soul naturally has a

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249 Thomas Aquinas, *S.T.*, Ia, q. 105, a. 7, ad 1 [Leon. 5:479]. “…Creatio, et iustifiatio impii, etsi a solo Deo fiant, non tamen, proprie loquendo, miracula dicuntur. Quia non sunt nata fieri per alias causas, et ita non contingunt praeter ordinem naturae: cum haec ad ordinem naturae non pertinent.”
capacity for grace; for by the very fact that the soul was made in the image of God, it has a capacity for God by grace, as Augustine says.  

Here, as previously, man’s receptivity to grace is compared to matter’s receptivity to form. There is, however, a subtle difference here in the way that the analogy is presented. Thomas is trying to make the point that our receptivity to grace, which is to say the material principle in us by which we are open to grace, is in our nature in a passive potency, so that it is not above nature (supra naturam) for us to be able to receive grace. The contrast between a corpse receiving life and us receiving grace is not a contrast between something that is passive and something that is active; it is a contrast between one thing receiving a substantial form, and another which already has a substantial form and in which there is a receptive, material potency for accidental change by the infusion of an accidental form. As in the Summa contra Gentiles, this form is called “superadded” or even “supernatural” because while it is natural for the soul, as a receptive

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250 Thomas Aquinas, S.T., Ia-IIae, q. 113, a. 10, co. [Leon. 7:342] “…In quibusdam miraculosis operibus inventur quod forma induta est supra naturalem potentiam talis materiae: sicut in suscitatione mortui vita est supra naturalem potentiam talis corporis. Et quantum ad hoc, iustificatio impii non est miraculosa: quia naturaliter anima est gratiae capax; eo enim ipso quod facta est ad imaginem Dei, capax est Dei per gratiam, ut Augustinus dicit.”

251 Consequently, Thomas keeps the same distance as in the Commentary on the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum from the term, “potency for obedience.” Cf. S.T., IIIa, q. 11 a. 1 co [Leon. 11:157]. “Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut prius dictum est, conveniens fuit ut anima Christi per omnia esset perfecta, per hoc quod omnis eius potentialitas sit reducta ad actum. Est autem considerandum quod in anima humana, sicut in qualibet creatura, consideratur duplex potentia passiva, una quidem per comparationem ad agens naturale; alia vero per comparationem ad agens primum, qui potest quamlibet creaturam reducere in actum aliquem altiorem, in quem non reductur per agens naturale; et haec consuevit vocari potentia obedientiae in creatura.”

252 This is clear from the sed contra of the same article. “…Opera miraculosa sunt supra potentiam naturalem. Sed iustificatio impii non est supra potentiam naturalem: dicit enim Augustinus, in libro de Praedest. Sanct., quod posse habere fidem, sicut posse habere caritatem, naturae est hominum: habere autem gratiae est fidelium.”
principle, to receive it, the power to actualize this potency is properly above nature (supra naturam).\textsuperscript{253}

Since man is only in a receptive potency for grace, even if his natural desire for beatitude can tell us that the vision of God could be the beatitude of man, that tells us nothing about whether it is actually the beatitude of man in the present state. The reason for this is that, although man’s natural desire, insofar as it tends towards God at all, can still be considered a certain “preparation” for grace, it only prepares for grace in the sense that it gives man a general motion in the will which is able to be determined, under the influence of grace, towards the vision of God.\textsuperscript{254} Actually advancing towards the vision of God would require that there be some form in man, in virtue of which he possessed an active power in some way proportioned the vision of God, which no creature possesses by nature.\textsuperscript{255} However, since the vision of God is above the nature (supra naturam) of the active principle of the created intellect,\textsuperscript{256} no one can know in this life “what it is or what it is like.”\textsuperscript{257} For this reason, although man has a natural

\textsuperscript{253} That grace is “superadded” to nature, see Thomas Aquinas, S.T, Ia-IIae, q. 109, a. 1 co. [Leon. 7:290]; q. 109, a. 2, co. [Leon. 7:291]. That grace is “supernatural,” see ibid., q. 110, a. 1, co. [Leon. 7:311]; q. 110, a. 2, co [Leon. 7:312].

\textsuperscript{254} Thomas Aquinas, S.T., Ia-IIae, q. 109, a. 6, co [Leon. 7:299-300]; q. 112, a. 3, co [Leon. 7:325].

\textsuperscript{255} Thomas Aquinas, S.T., Ia-IIae, q. 109, a. 5, co. [Leon. 7:298]. “Actus perducientes ad finem oportet esse fini proportionatos. Nullus autem actus excedit proportionem principii activi. Et ideo videmus in rebus naturalibus quod nulla res potest perficere effectum per suam operationem qui excedat virtutem activam, sed solum potest producere per operationem suam effectum suae virtuti proportionatum. Vita autem aeterna est finis excedens proportionem naturae humanae, ut ex supradictis patet. Et ideo homo per sua naturalia non potest producere opera meritoria proportionata vitae aeternae, sed ad hoc exigitur altior virtus, quae est virtus gratiae. Et sine gratia homo non potest mereri vitam aeternam.”

\textsuperscript{256} Thomas Aquinas, S.T., Ia, q. 12, a. 4, co [Leon. 6:120]. “…Cuiuslibet cognoscentis cognitio est secundum modum suae naturae. Si igitur modus essendi alicuius rei cognitae excedat modum naturae cognoscentis, oportet quod cognitio illius rei sit supra naturam illius cognoscentis.”

\textsuperscript{257} Thomas Aquinas, S.T., Ia-IIae, q. 17, a. 2, ad 1 [Leon. 8:125]. “…Beatitudo aeterna perfecte quidem in cor hominis non ascendit, ut scilicet cognosci possit ab homine viatore quae et qualis sit: sed secundum communem rationem, scilicet boni perfecti, cadere potest in apprehensione hominis.” On faith, cf. S.T., Ia-IIae, q. 113, a. 4, ad 2 [Leon. 7:333-34].
desire for receiving the vision of God, many people do not, in fact, desire the vision of God explicitly. In fact, Thomas suggests, it is so far beyond human knowing that not even faith gives us the knowledge of what our final beatitude is or what it is like. Instead, faith simply tells us that our final beatitude exists in actual fact, and hope subsequently moves us towards this goal as to something unknown in itself.\textsuperscript{258}

In light of Thomas’s more rigorous parallel between the knowledge of the possibility of the vision of God, which can be had from natural reason, and the knowledge of the actuality of the vision of God, which can be had from faith, Thomas emends his thinking on the fate of children who die in original sin only.\textsuperscript{259} Where in the Commentary on the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum Thomas had suggested that these children lacked the material principle necessary for receiving the light of glory, here Thomas suggests that, while they are aware of their capacity for the vision of God, they are unaware of whether man has actually been ordered to it. Consequently, where he had previously suggested that they do not suffer because they know that they lacked the capacity to make an act of faith whereby they might be raised to that vision, he now suggests more simply and consistently that they do not suffer because, although they know that they have the capacity for the vision of God, they do not know whether or not God has in fact chosen to offer its complete fulfillment to humankind. Thus, their desire rests in the highest activity which the active potential in man can achieve of its own accord, without suffering over


\textsuperscript{259} Cf. \textit{Quaestiones disputatae de malo}, q. 5, a. 3 [Pession 549-50].
the fact that it has not received the highest activity which the passive potential in man is capable of receiving.

C. Conclusion

Situating Thomas’s writings on nature and natural desire in the context of debates in the late 1230s to early 1250s on the relationship between matter and form has shown how Thomas held together two claims that, to many modern scholars, seem mutually opposed: that man has a natural desire for the vision of God, but that man is completely passive with respect to the grace that brings us to this desire’s fulfillment. Nothing I have said about matter and its relationship to form in this regard is controversial. As I have mentioned, Thomas was well known for the uniqueness of his positions on questions of matter’s relationship to form, and his consistency on these positions over the course of his career is well documented. What is new about what I have suggested is that Thomas’s thought on matter’s relationship to form was heavily influenced by his consideration of the Augustinian doctrine of rationes seminales, and that matter’s relationship to form was the model upon which Thomas understood nature’s relationship to grace.

For Thomas, unlike Rufus, Bacon, and Bonaventure, since matter receives all its actuality from form, there is no need to suggest that a ratio seminalis exists in matter as an active potency for form, as for Bacon, or as an incomplete form, as for Bonaventure. Rather, it is enough to note that no created form could ever actualize all the potential in matter; a completely formed substance always remains in potentiality to subsequent formation. Consequently, for Thomas, a
ratio seminalis is not some incomplete active potency or incomplete form; it is a combination of a formal, active, and a material, passive principle. These combinations of material, passive with formal, active principles make up the order of nature. More specifically, man’s natural desire proceeds from the ratio seminalis in the intellect, in which the active principle is man’s natural knowledge of the first principles of demonstration and the passive principle is man’s openness to growth in knowledge, as well as the ratio seminalis in the will, in which the active principle is man’s natural inclination towards the good in general and the passive principle is man’s openness to growth in virtue.

Of himself, for Thomas, man can only develop as far as the active principle in the rationes seminales in the intellect and will can lead. But, just as matter has a potency for form, which a created form does not exhaust, so also does the human soul have a potency for knowledge and virtue which the active principles in the intellect and will do not exhaust. Thus, since only the vision of God could ever completely fulfill the material, passive potency for knowledge and virtue in the human soul, only the vision of God could ever satisfy man’s natural desire. But that does not mean that there is in man any positive motion towards the vision of God—that would be Pelagianism. Rather, the human soul stands before grace as matter before form, and in the reception of grace, the soul is the material principle, while grace is the formal principle.

By conceiving nature’s relationship to grace like matter’s relationship to form, Thomas was able to develop an objective account of natural desire through a subjective account of natural desire, similar to Bonaventure. This led Thomas to posit in both the intellect and the will a natural desire for the complete actualization of a given faculty’s material potency, which for
Thomas meant that our natural desire, though in itself a general motion, could only be brought to ultimate fulfillment in the vision of God. However, like his doctrine of matter and form, which occasioned significant controversy after his death, Thomas’s doctrine of nature and grace was difficult for people to accept even in his own day. Both ran contrary to the current of what was customary at the University of Paris, and consequently both met with substantial criticism in the decades and centuries that immediately followed after his death in 1274.
In the previous chapter, I situated Thomas Aquinas’s doctrine of nature and natural desire in the context of thirteenth century discussions of how our thinking about matter’s relationship to form informs our understanding of how human nature relates to grace. Before proceeding to discuss how Thomas’s doctrine was received in the early twentieth century, it is necessary to see how it was received in the centuries between Thomas’s death in 1274 and the turn of the twentieth century. For the manner in which early twentieth century Thomists, including Henri de Lubac, read Thomas, was very much influenced by how the scholastics and scholastic commentators from previous centuries had read him.

In this chapter, I will examine three categories of people who read Thomas in the time between his death and the turn of the twentieth century. The first category are those who wrote around the beginning of the fourteenth century, particularly Giles of Rome and John Duns Scotus. Giles of Rome was a student of Thomas, who gave rise to a kind of Thomism that would enjoy a gradual resurgence in the early twentieth century (see chapters three and four), as well as influence Henri de Lubac (see chapter five). John Duns Scotus, while generally considered the originator of the most popular alternative to Thomism, nevertheless developed important criticisms of Thomas that were adopted by influential Thomists in the sixteenth century. From the sixteenth century, I will consider Tommaso de Vio “Cajetan,” and Francisco Suárez. These theologians represent the most influential Thomistic commentators in the Dominican and Jesuit traditions respectively. As Thomists of the early twentieth century generally looked to these two
figures as the best guides for interpreting Thomas, I will examine in what respects their own thought was similar to that of Thomas, as well as in what respects it differed. Finally, from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, I will briefly consider four figures from the theological tradition inspired by Giles of Rome: Michael Paludanus, Giovanni Berti, Fulgence Lafosse, and Michelangelo Marcelli. These theologians are important for how they developed the tradition inspired by Giles, as well as how Henri de Lubac engaged them as he was attempting to retrieve the tradition inspired by Giles.

All of the aforementioned theologians have one thing in common: dissatisfaction and disagreement with Thomas’s teaching on natural desire as it was explained in the previous chapter. In the fourteenth century this disagreement was explicit; Giles and Scotus interpreted Thomas similarly, but found fault with Thomas’s doctrine and proposed emendations and alternatives. In subsequent centuries, criticism of Thomas was only implicit, as the teaching of Thomas on the generic nature of the active component of man’s natural desire was gradually lost. Consequently, the scholastic Thomists bequeathed to their early twentieth century successors a variety of Thomisms, all of which, while preserving the substance of particular conclusions that Thomas had reached at one point or another, in some way or other altered the letter, and at times the spirit, of the Angelic Doctor’s thought.
A. The Birth of a Different Thomism: Natural Desire in Giles of Rome

A fact well known to theologians of the early twentieth century, but now largely forgotten, is that alongside the Dominican, Franciscan, and Jesuit Orders, the Order of the Hermits of St. Augustine (OESA) developed and maintained its own theological tradition. The “founder” of the tradition, if one may so call him, was Giles of Rome, OESA (1246-1318), who was a student of Thomas Aquinas from 1269-72, during Thomas’s second Paris regency. In 1287, the Augustinian Order adopted Giles as its official doctor, together with Thomas Aquinas where there was any ambiguity in the text of Giles’s writing. Giles thus stands at the fount of a theological tradition that might reasonably be called “Thomist” by intent, even if it gave rise to a somewhat different sort of Thomism than the Dominicans or the Jesuits would develop.

There are two principal places in which Giles treats nature and natural desire in his mature work. The first is the edited copy (Ordinatio) of his Commentary on Book 2 of the Lombard’s Liber sententiarum, which was completed between 1309 and the end of his life in 1313; the second is his Tractatus de divina influentia in beatos, composed around the same

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3 Ibid. This decree remained in effect until 1885. The only change was that for thirty years beginning in 1551, Aquinas was replaced with Thomas of Strasbourg (“Thomas de Argentina”). cf. David Gutiérrez, The Augustinians from the Protestant Reformation to the Peace of Westphalia, 1518-1648 (Villanova, PA: Augustinian Historical Institute, 1979), 145.

4 On the dating of the works of Giles of Rome, I follow the exhaustive list provided in F. del Punta, S. Donati, and C. Luna, “Egidio Romano,” in Dizionario biografico degli italiani, (Rome: Società Grafica Romana, 1993), 42:330-35. Giles’s Sentences commentary has come down to us in two forms. First, there is a reportatio, known only in a few manuscripts, which gives us a shorter list of questions. This has recently been edited by Concetta Luna in Aegidius Romanus, Opera Omnia, Vol. 3, no. 2 (Florence: Edizioni del Galuzzo, 2003). An
time.\textsuperscript{5} In Book 2, Distinction 18 of the \textit{Ordinatio}, Giles follows the well-established custom of treating questions of nature and the natural in relationship to \textit{rationes seminales}.\textsuperscript{6} At the point where Giles explains what he thinks about \textit{rationes seminales}, he shows deep indebtedness to Thomas’s treatment of the topic; Giles considers the very same opinions as had Thomas considered in Book 2, Distinction 18, and does so in the same order in which Thomas had considered them. Like Thomas, Giles begins by summarizing and critiquing Bonaventure’s position.\textsuperscript{7} Deploying one of the same arguments as Thomas had used against Bonaventure, Giles notes that Bonaventure’s incomplete forms are impossible, because there cannot be an individual in the genus of substance without a species.\textsuperscript{8}

Also like Thomas, Giles next summarizes and critiques Bacon’s position. Like Thomas, Giles argues that Bacon’s position is similar to Bonaventure’s.\textsuperscript{9} However, rather than taking up the problem of natural generation, like Thomas does, Giles simply notes that Bacon’s position can be subject to a similar criticism as Bonaventure’s, because it would make the form of a

\textsuperscript{5} Giles of Rome, \textit{Tractatus de divina influentia in beatos}, in \textit{Tractatus} (Rome: Antonius Bladus, 1555).

\textsuperscript{6} Giles of Rome, \textit{Ordinatio} 2, d. 18, q. 2 [Venice 2:73-96]. There are also related \textit{dubia} on pp. 101-02.

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., a. 2, co [Venice 2:80Ac]. “Dixerunt enim quidam, quod forma generis est prius introducta in materia, et est ratio seminalis, quia est quaedam forma incompleta apta nata suscipere formam speciei.” Bonaventure’s and Bacon’s respective positions have been outlined above in chapter one.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid [Venice 2:80Ad]. “Sed illud stare non potest… Formae generis non respondet aliqua hypostasis una, idest aliquod fundamentum unum. Quia non est una forma, sed est plures formae: quot enim species habet sub se genus, tot est formae. Ideo Themistius dat ibi differentiam inter genus, et speciem. Quia generi non respondet hypostasis, quia una forma non respondet ei, sed species forma quaedam supple[t] una, et natura vult esse.”

\textsuperscript{9} Ibid [Venice 2:80Bd] “Fuerunt ergo ali, dicentes, quod forma generis est ratio seminalis, et per eam tanquam per rationem seminallem introductur forma speciei. Non quod illa forma generis fiat forma speciei, sed quia ei tanquam quaedam perfectio superadditur forma speciei: sed sic dicentes non evitant inconveniens primum.”
species completely separate from the form of a genus, such that there would be no essential connection between the two.10 It is true that one can conceive of the form of a genus and the form of a species differently, but what is signified by them in our mind corresponds with a single, substantial form in reality.11

Next, Giles discusses the position attributed by Bonaventure to Anaxagoras, of the \textit{latitatio formarum}. But this is no mere foray into antiquity for Giles:

We heard some people with our own ears teaching at Paris in [the Faculty of] Theology, saying that those specific forms are in matter essentially, and that only being is acquired in generation. For this reason, according to them, if fire were to be made from air, the essence of the form of fire would be in air before the generation of fire, and subsequently that form would acquire the being of fire through generation.12

This position is problematic for Giles. Since any substantial form in a thing communicates being to that thing, and since a hidden form would have to communicate being to the thing in which it was hiding, the hidden form would conflict with the substantial form that the thing in which it was hiding already possessed.13

\hspace{1cm} 10 \textit{Ibid} [2:80Bd-81Aa]. “…Hac hypothesi stante, genus non praedicaretur de specie essentialiter, sed denominative, quod est secundum Philosophum contra rationem generis. Nunquam enim pars praedicatur de toto, nisi denominative, ut homo non est manus, sed manuatus. Si ergo forma speciei loquendo de formis eductis de potentia materiae, esset res alia a forma generis; species se haberet realiter, ut quoddam totum ad suum genus. Et adderet rem aliquam ultra res generis, ut genus de ea essentialiter praedicari non posset.”

\hspace{1cm} 11 \textit{Ibid} [Venice 2:81Aa-d].

\hspace{1cm} 12 \textit{Ibid} [Venice 2:82Ac-d]. “…Audivimus aliquos nostris auribus legentes Parisiis in Theologia dicentes, quod illae formae specificae secundum essentiam erant in materia, et quod per generationem non acquirebatur nisi esse: propter quod secundum eos, si ex aere fiebat ignis, essentia formae ignis erat in aere ante generationem ignis, et postea per generationem illa forma acquirebat esse ignis…”

\hspace{1cm} 13 \textit{Ibid}.
Lastly, Giles briefly dispenses with the opinion of Henry of Ghent that matter has some degree of actuality in it, and that pure potentiality is somehow distinct from and below matter. According to Giles, the only thing below matter is nothingness at all.

Finally, Giles arrives at Thomas’s position. He begins by accurately summarizing the text of Thomas’s commentary on Book 2, Distinction 18. “Therefore, there are others saying, and coming closer to the truth, that rationes seminales are the active and passive powers in things, by which natural effects are produced.” Giles may perhaps have given his former magister a kind introduction, saying that he came nearer to the truth, but Giles continues by forcefully rejecting Thomas’s opinion. For Giles, “it is necessary that what desires has some similarity with what it desires.” Thus, if matter stands in privation to some form, it must be the case that matter has in it some similarity to what is desired. Accordingly, one can distinguish two desires in matter. The first is completely unspecific. In virtue of the fact that matter with one form is partially actualized, it possesses a similarity with the form that could completely actualize it. For this reason, matter in one sense desires in general a form that would completely actualize it. This confers on matter only a general desire for the complete actualization of unactualized potency.

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15 Giles of Rome, Ordinatio 2, d. 18, q. 2, a. 2, co [Venice 2:82Ba-b].

16 Ibid. “Sunt ergo alii dicentes, et magis veritati appropinquantes, quod rationes seminales sunt virtutes activae, et passivae in rebus, per quas producuntur naturales effectus.”

17 Giles of Rome, Ordinatio 2, d. 12, q. 3, dub. 2 lat [Venice 1:549Ac]. “…Oportet, quod appetens habeat aliquam similitudinem cum eo, quod appetit.”

18 Ibid [Venice 1:549Ad]. “Dicendum, quod in materia est duplex appetitus formae: unus ad plenitudinem formae, ut sit plena forma: alius ad hanc formam, ut perificiatur per ipsam. Utroque ergo modo habet aliquid de eo, ad quod movetur, et habet aliquam similitudinem cum eo, ad quod movetur.”

19 Ibid [Venice 1:549Ad-Ba].
without any specific orientation towards this or that specific actualization.\textsuperscript{20} The second, which differs radically from that of Thomas, is specific. In virtue of the fact that opposites are in the same genus, as Aristotle notes, matter with one form has in it a generic similarity with matter informed by the opposite form. For this reason, matter can be said to desire not only complete actualization in general, but also actualization by a form opposite to the one it presently possesses in specific.\textsuperscript{21}

In each of these categories of desire, one can distinguish two elements. There is the element of negation, which implies a lack of form and actuality, and a positive disposition towards subsequent formation, which Giles calls the principle of “transmutation” \textit{(transmutatio)}.\textsuperscript{22} Both are necessary, because without the active disposition for form conferred upon matter by \textit{transmutatio}, the passive receptivity conferred upon it by negation would be pointless, since any subsequent formation would be completely contrary to the form already possessed. In short, natural change would be impossible without \textit{transmutatio}.\textsuperscript{23} This explains why, although Giles adopted Thomas’s critique of Bonaventure, he did not adopt Thomas’s critique of Bacon. Giles’s own account of nature and natural change, while not identical to that of Bacon, relies on a similar principle: there must be in matter some positive principle towards a form in order for that form to be nature. For Bacon, it was an incomplete active potency. For Giles, it is the positive disposition indicated by \textit{transmutatio}.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid [Venice 1:549Ba].

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid [Venice 1:549Bb-550Aa].

\textsuperscript{22} Giles of Rome, \textit{Ordinatio} 2, d. 12, q. 3, a. 2 [Venice 1:548Aa-c].

\textsuperscript{23} Giles of Rome, \textit{Ordinatio} 2, d. 18, q. 2, a. 2, dub. 1 lat. [Venice 2:83Bd]. “Immo si consideremus ipsum appetitum materiae ratione, qua caret forma: non appeteret eam, nisi haberet aptitudinem ad ipsam. Quia si appeteret materia formam propter carentiam sine aptitudine, esset eius appetitus ociosus. Quod omnino negatur a tota natura, ubi nihil ociosum esse potest.” Cf. \textit{Ordinatio} 2, d. 18, q. 2, a. 2, dub. 3. lat. [Venice 2:85Ad-a].
Distinguishing between negation and *transmutatio* enabled Giles to develop what he considered to be a reading of Genesis 1 which was at once more faithful to the literal sense of the text of Scripture, as well as to Augustine’s *De genesi ad litteram*. According to Giles, the creation of the elements in Genesis preceded the creation of the plants and animals. That means that there were already active and passive powers present in nature prior to the creation of plants and animals, since elements have active and passive powers. But elements do not undergo all of their change of their own accord. Hence, Giles argues, Thomas cannot be correct that the active and passive powers in nature are *rationes seminales*, because otherwise the “seeds” of all things would be in the elements, while the elements are in fact powerless of themselves to bring forth the variety of Creation on their own. Rather, on the third day of creation, when, by “a certain blessing,” God put seeds in the earth and the earth began to give forth plants and trees, God added *rationes seminales* to the elements. Thus they received the negations and *transmutationes* necessary to bring forth the variety of created things that we know today. For this reason, although Creation happened in an instant, it was nevertheless brought to gradual levels of distinction throughout the various days recounted in Genesis.

On the basis of his account of the relationship between matter and form, as well as his account of Creation, Giles then proceeds to a detailed criticism of Thomas’s understanding of *rationes seminales*. The critique of Thomas is masked as a critique of Aristotle’s concept of

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24 What follows here is a summary of Giles of Rome, *Ordinatio* 2, d. 18, q. 2, a. 2, co [Venice 1:82Bb-83Ba].

25 Cf. Giles of Rome, *Ordinatio* 2, d. 18, q. 2, a. 2, dub. 5 lat [Venice 2:88Ac-d].

26 Cf. Giles of Rome, *Ordinatio* 2, d. 18, q. 2, a. 2, dub. 6 lat [Venice 2:91Bc].

27 Cf. Giles of Rome, *Ordinatio* 2, d. 18, q. 2, a. 2, dub. 4 lat [Venice 2:87Ac].

28 Giles of Rome, *Ordinatio* 2, d. 18, q. 2, a. 2, dub. 6 lat [Venice 2:90Bd].
privation, which, as was shown in chapter one, Thomas relied upon as early as the treatise, *De principiis naturae*. As Giles summarizes the position he intends to critique, matter still remains in potency to the reception of new forms after it has received a form because it stands in privation to the forms which it has not received. Yet privation, Giles argues, means first of all a lacking of something before it means any openness to what is lacking. Insofar as privation is a principle at all, it can only be associated with matter as passive, not form as active. Privation’s association with passivity makes it therefore an incomplete principle. *Rationes seminales*, on the other hand, conceived as the combination of passive negations and active *transmutationes*, can serve as a better principle of nature than privation because they posit first and foremost an “aptitude towards form.” This makes *rationes seminales* a more potent principle of nature than privation, as well as a more complete one.

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29 Immediately after his initial critique of Thomas and rendering an opinion on *rationes seminales*, Giles proceeds to devote several *dubia lateralia* to issues stemming from the question of privation, and setting out his own doctrine in response to that of Thomas. The particular *dubium* concerning privation is the first [Venice 2:83Bb].


31 Ibid [Venice 2:84Ab].


33 Ibid [Venice 2:84Ab-c]. “…Privatio, quam posuit esse principium, se tenet ex parte potentiae passivae, ut dicebatur, idest ex parte materiae; sed ratio seminalis, idest aptitudo, quae importatur per eam, se tenet etiam ex parte potentiae activae: immo semen, a quo sumitur ratio seminalis, principaliter videtur importare virtutem activam. Verum est enim, quod nomine seminalis comprehenditur aliquo modo activum, et passivum, ut in sequenti dubio apparebit, sed principalius importat virtutem activam, quam passivam.”
Affirming that *rationes seminales*, rather than privation, constitute the principle according to which the distinction of natures occurred in Genesis 1 raised a particular difficulty as concerns nature’s relationship to grace. Since Thomas affirmed that one and the same privation accounted both for a creature’s openness to natural change as well as its openness to grace, Thomas had no need to adopt a doctrine of a potency for obedience, since Thomas’s doctrine of material potency already included the openness to divine action which previous generations of theologians had tried to account for with a potency for obedience. Giles, on the other hand, by criticizing Thomas’s use of privation and positing active dispositions in creatures for specific forms alongside privation, in a sense closed off the openness to grace latent in Thomas’s understanding of privation. Giles even affirms explicitly that *rationes seminales*, as he understands them, can only account for what is done in creatures and by creatures.\(^{35}\) For that reason, Giles re-adopts a doctrine of “obediential properties” (*rationes obedientiales*), distinct from *rationes seminales*, in order to account for how a creature, endowed with *rationes seminales*, remains open to the continual influence of God.\(^{36}\)

As with Thomas, Giles’s discussion of nature and the natural flows from his discussion of *rationes seminales*. Concerning miracles, Giles notes that when something occurs above what nature can achieve as concerns the substance of the act, it is above nature (*supra naturam*). When it occurs above what nature can achieve as concerns the mode of action, it is beyond nature.

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\(^{34}\) Ibid [Venice 2:84Aa-b]. “Sed rationes seminales, de quibus locutus est Augustinus, quae sunt quaedam habitudines ad formas, et ad effectus naturales, se tenent cum principiis activis, et passivis. Nam ex utrisque principiis habent esse rationes seminales, quae sunt quaedam aptitudines ad educendum naturales effectus et formas.”

\(^{35}\) Giles of Rome, *Ordinatio* 2, d. 18, q. 2, a. 3, co [Venice 96Ad].

\(^{36}\) Giles of Rome, *Ordinatio* 2, d. 18, q. 2, a. 2, co [Venice 2:83Aa]. “Remanebunt [post resurrectionem] autem rationes obedientiales, secundum quas creaturae sunt subiectae Deo, quia semper fiet de eis quod volet Deus.” Cf. *Ordinatio* 2, d. 18, q. 2, a. 3, co [Venice 2:92Ba, 95Ab, 96Ad].
(praeter naturam). When it is contrary to the dispositions in nature it is said to be against nature (contra naturam). Here one sees the consequence of Giles’s doctrine of transmutationes. For Thomas, nothing God does can be said to be against nature, because nature is always open to divine action in virtue of its privation to complete formation. For Giles, on the other hand, God can act against the transmutationes in nature, and so act against it properly speaking, even if God is not acting contrary to a form.

Giles’s explanation of the way in which nature prepares man for grace, while very close to that of Thomas, differs from that of Thomas on account of the doctrine of transmutationes. For both theologians, man’s natural desire is one of the things that prepares him for grace, because it is the means by which human nature, like all natures, desires to be united to God. But since Thomas had held that form does not exhaust the desire of matter and that this desire does not constitute any positive ordering towards form, Thomas also held that the human intellect and will incline towards complete formation, but that this inclination does not constitute any positive ordering towards the vision of God. On the other hand, since Giles disagrees with the role which Thomas affords to privation in his account of matter’s relationship to form and substitutes a combination of negations and transmutationes for privation, he makes a corresponding revision to this doctrine of natural desire. Like Thomas, Giles distinguishes between the natural and the deliberative will. Also like Thomas, Giles suggests that the will follows the judgment of reason, and consequently that the natural motion of the will follows the natural knowledge of the

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37 Giles of Rome, Ordinatio 2, d. 18, q. 2, dub. 13 lit [Vence 2:101Aa—Bc].

38 Even so, for Giles as for Thomas, the reception of grace does not fit into any of these categories, because nature can prepare for grace. Cf. Giles of Rome, Ordinatio 2, d. 18, q. 2, dub. 15 lit [Venice 2:102Ad-Ba].

39 Giles of Rome, Ordinatio 2, d. 41, q. 2, a. 3, s.c. 1 [Venice 2:632Ba].
intellect, which is general and not particular. However, for Thomas this natural motion of the will did not suppose any positive ordering towards a particular end. It could be known by natural reason that the natural desire of the will for complete formation could only be satisfied by the vision of God, but any question of actual, positive ordering towards the vision of God was a theological, not a philosophical question. For Giles it is not quite so; for change to occur in nature which is not against nature requires that there be some positive disposition for the form to be acquired in the one undergoing the change. This applies in the case of natural desire as well. Natural desire, for Giles, possesses “in hope” (in spe) an end towards which deliberation chooses the means “in actual fact” (in re). If Giles refers to the end possessed by the natural will in spe as the good in “general” or in “common,” the sense is more that the will is disposed positively towards a specific end that its subject does not know specifically, and hence cannot desire specifically, not that the will is ordered negatively towards any number of goods, of which only the best and most perfect would completely satisfy it.

On account of his doctrine of transmutationes, Giles effectively returns to the earlier doctrine, expressed by Bonaventure, of an active, determinate, natural desire, which has the vision of God as its specific end. Thomas had opposed this doctrine, arguing that deliberate desires are restricted within the bounds of natural desires, and consequently, if our natural desire had a fixed end, we could not sin, since our will would be fixed in the good. Giles is aware of

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40 Giles of Rome, Ordinatio 2, d. 41, q. 2, dub. lat [Venice 2:634Ad-635Ab].


42 Thus Giles of Rome, Ordinatio 2, d. 41, q. 2, a. 3, co. [Venice 2:633Ab-d]. cf. Giles of Rome, Ordinatio 2, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1 [Venice 2:587Ab].
this objection. Consequently, he gives an alternative account of the possibility of sin. We can sin, he proposes, not because of the indeterminacy of our will simply speaking, but because of the weakness with which it pursues its end. Since, therefore, our natural desire is “imperfect,” it is still possible for us to make a deliberate choice which is contrary to it.  

Confirmation of the subtle distinction between Thomas’s and Giles’s respective doctrines can be seen in Giles’s *Tractatus de divina influentia in beatos*, where Giles discusses the terminus of man’s natural desire in a question on whether the beatific vision in angels is mediated through a celestial hierarchy or whether they are beatified immediately by God. Giles, following his magister, answers that the angels are beatified immediately by God. But Giles explicitly broadens his response to include human beings as well, even though he acknowledges that the question was not supposed to concern them. Evoking the famous proofs

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43 Giles of Rome, *Ordinatio* 2, d. 39, q. 2, a. 1, ad 3 [Venice 2:587Ad]. “Ut tactum est in his, quae sunt determinata ad unum, semper sequitur actus nisi impediantur, et impedimentum est in minori parte. Sed voluntas loquendo simpliciter non est sic determinata ad unum: sed homines habent quandam generalem inclinationem ad bonum, sed ista inclination non est perfecta, ut homines bene faciant in maiori parte, sed perficitur per assuetudinem, quantum ad virtutes acquisitas, vel per gratiam quantum ad infusas.”

44 Giles of Rome, *De divina influentia in beatos*, cap. 1 [Bladus f°21ra]. The question arises from Pseudo-Dionysius, *Celestial Hierarchy* 13 (301C), where Pseudo-Dionysius claims that higher angels mediate beatitude to lower angels: “The beings who are first to know God and who, more than others, desire the divine virtue have been deemed worthy to become the prime workers of the power and activity which imitate God, as far as possible. In their goodness they raise their inferiors to become, so far as possible, their rivals. They ungrudgingly impart to them the glorious ray which has visited them so that their inferiors may pass this on to those yet farther below them. Hence, on each level, predecessor hands on to successor whatever of the divine light he has received and this, in providential proportion, is spread out to every being.” This translation is from Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luibheid and Paul Rorem (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 178. Cf. *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 2 (445A), 5 (504C-D).

45 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, 3.49-52 [Leon. Man. 279-84]. cf. *In IV Sent.*, d. 45, q. 3, a. 1, co. [Parma 7.2:1150], where Aquinas argues that inferior angels receive some knowledge from superior ones in the beatific vision, but only such knowledge as does not pertain to the essence of beatitude. Aquinas is following the opinion of his own magister, Albert the Great, who had expressed the same opinion in his own *In II Sent.*, d. 10, a. 3, ad 2 [Bourgnet 27:214]. One may also consult Aquinas’s *In II Sent.*, d. 9, q. un., a. 2, co. [Mandonnet 2:229-30], and *In II Sent.*, d. 26, q. un., a. 2, co. [Mandonnet 2:671-72], which touch on the same question, as well as *In III Sent.*, d. 19, a. 5, qc. 3, ad 4 [Moos 3:605], where, on a related question, Aquinas distinguishes angels as ministri mediatoris (ministers of the mediator) rather than mediators simply speaking.
for the existence of God from natural reason in his magister’s *Summa theologiae*, Giles gratuitously offers “five ways” (*quinque viae*) from natural reason why only the vision of God can satisfy the human person’s desire for God.\(^46\)

Of most interest for the present purpose are the first and fifth arguments that Giles offers in support of his conclusion. The first proceeds thus:

> It is self-evident (*per se notum*) that if a vessel can hold so much wine, less wine than that cannot fill the vessel. For example, if a vessel can hold a bottle’s worth of wine, or a couple of gallons, or however much wine, less wine than that cannot fill that vessel. Since, therefore, the soul and an angel can hold as much good as God himself is, less good than God himself can fill neither the soul, nor an angel, and according to Augustine in Confessions 10, “we are not happy until we say ‘it is enough,’” i.e. until we are filled with the joy and the goodness of God. Therefore, since we can hold as much good as God is, less good than God cannot make us happy and fulfill us. Moreover, the fact that we can hold as much good as God is, is clear from the fact that we are in the image and likeness of God. For according to Augustine, the soul is the image God because it is capable of and can be a participant of him.\(^47\)

Initially, one sees nothing very different here from what Thomas had argued. The soul has a capacity for God; therefore less than the possession of God will not completely satisfy the soul. Thomas employed this argument with respect to the intellect in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, and with respect to both the intellect and the will in the *Summa theologiae*. Yet one can note a certain

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\(^46\) Giles of Rome, *De divina influentia in beatos*, cap. 1 [Bladus f°21ra-21vb]. Thomas’s *quinque viae* can be found in *S.T.*, Ia, q. 2, a. 3, co [Leon. 4:31-32].

\(^47\) Giles of Rome, *De divina influentia in beatos*, cap. 1 [Bladus f°21rb]. “…Est enim per se notum, quod si aliquod vas potest capere tantum vinum, minus vinum quam illud, non potest illud vas replere: ut si potest capere vas aliquod quintam vini, vel medium, vel quantamcunque vinum, minus vinum quam illud non potest vas illud replere. Cum ergo anima et angelus possit capere tantum bonum quantum est ipse Deus, minus bonum quam ipse Deus non potest nec animam nec angelum replere: et secundum Augustinum 10 Confessionum non sumus beati donec dicamus satis est, idest donec sumus gaudio et bonitate Dei impleti: ideo potentes capere tantum bonum quantum est Deus, minus bonum quam Deus nos beatificare et replere non potest. Quod autem nos possimus tantum bonum capere quantum est Deus, patet ex hoc quod sumus ad imaginem et similitudinem Dei. Nam secundum Augustinum anima est imago Dei ex eo quod eius capax et particeps esse potest.”
shift in tone here. Even if Thomas did not think that anything less than the vision of God could completely satisfy us, he did not hesitate to say that there were many, lesser participations of that beatitude.\footnote{Thus, for example, S.T., Ia-IIae, q. 3, a. 6, co. [Leon. 7:33]; a. 7, co [Leon. 7:33].} Giles is somewhat more radical than this in his insistence that \emph{only} the complete possession of God can make us happy, and that nothing short of it can satisfy us in any meaningful respect.

The shift in Giles’s tone indicated by the first argument foreshadows a mode of argumentation in Giles’s fifth argument that parts company with Thomas more radically:

The fifth way… is taken from God’s rest and fulfillment. For, as long as something is in motion, it is not resting. Since, therefore, we tend towards our end itself by way of those things which are [ordered] towards our end, we are in motion and not resting as long as we remain among those things which are [ordered] towards our end. Since, therefore, all creatures are ordered towards God as towards their end, there cannot be rest, simply speaking, in any creature, since no creature is an end, simply speaking, or the end of all things. Rather, God alone is the end of all things, since, as the Commentator says concerning \textit{Metaphysics} 1, God alone exists in a threefold genus of cause with respect to all things, since God is the efficient cause of all, the formal exemplar cause of all, and God alone is the final cause, or end of all. Therefore, our rest and beatitude can be in God alone. For, since every creature is something liable to slip away, and something mobile, our rest cannot be in any creature simply speaking, because whoever tries to lean on something slipping away, necessarily slips away with it.\footnote{Giles of Rome, \textit{De divina influentialia in beatos}, cap. 1 [Bladus f°21vb]. “Quinta via… sumitur ex divina quietatione et satietate: nam quandiu aliquid est in motu non quiescit: cum ergo per ea quae sunt ad finem tendimus in ipsum finem, quandiu sistimus in his quae sunt ad finem, tantiu sumus in motu et non quiescimus. Cum ergo omnes creaturae ordinentur ad Deum tanquam ad finem, in nulla creatura simpliciter loquendo potest esse quies: quia nulla creatura est finis simpliciter vel finis omnium: solus autem Deus est finis omnium, quia solus ipse, ut vult Comment. In primo Metaphy. Se habet in triplex genere causee respectu omnium, quia ipse est omnium causa efficients, omnia creaturae formalis exemplaris, et ipse solus est causa finalis vel finis omnium. In ipso ergo solo potest esse quies et beatitudo nostra: nam cum omnis creatura sit quid labile, et quid mobile, in nulla creatura potest simpliciter esse quies: quia qui labenti innitur, oportet quod cum labente labatur.”}
Instead of arguing from the will’s desire for the complete fulfillment of its potency, which allowed Thomas to maintain the generic nature of our natural desire more strictly, Giles here emphasizes the specific nature of our natural desire towards a single object in order to show that our beatitude can only be in God. This is consistent with his doctrine of *transmutationes* in matter for form, and continues his embrace of Bonaventure’s doctrine of the determined nature of natural desire.\(^{50}\)

In order to confirm Giles’s understanding of natural desire, one needs look no further than Giles’s discussion of the hypothetical state of “pure nature” in his *Ordinatio*, where Giles explicitly imagines man, “if God had created him in a purely natural state...” (…*si Deus fecisset hominem in puris naturalibus...*), without grace.\(^{51}\) For Giles, such a situation would be unthinkable for two reasons. First, a man would not be able to attain his end *a priori* because,...
“the end of a rational creature is the vision of God, which is above nature.” Moreover, and lest the reader have any doubt that Giles excludes any possibility of a lesser end for man, Giles adds: “And I do not say that our beatitude is *chiefly* in the vision of God, but rather I say that without the vision of God there can be no beatitude for us.” Pure nature is not possible, for Giles, because man would be condemned to a perpetual state of unhappiness on account of his inability to reach his only end.

Second, Giles notes, a state of pure nature would be unthinkable *a posteriori* because man, without the gift of original justice, would be subject to the natural antipathy of the flesh and the spirit. Such a man would not be able to persevere in moral goodness of his own accord. Indeed, Giles holds that our natural desire for the good is too weak and too imperfect for that. For this reason, Giles argues that man would be created “not only avertible, but already averse from God,” if he were created without the gift of original justice. That is, not only would man be unhappy for not having reached his end, but he would also be, in a certain sense, unable not to sin on account of the natural antipathy of the flesh and the spirit. The unfortunate result would be that man, already deprived of his only possible beatitude, would certainly be condemned to a worse fate for his inability to persevere in moral goodness.

52 Ibid [Venice 442Bd]. “…Finis creaturae rationalis est divina visio, quae est supra naturam.”

53 Cf. Ordinatio 2, d. 33, q. 2, a. 2, co. [Venice 2:490Aa]. “Nec dicimus, quod in visione divina sit principaliter beatitudo nostra, sed dicimus, quod sine visione divina non potest esse beatitudo nostra.”

54 Ibid [Venice 2:443Ad-Ba]. “…si fuisset creatus in puris naturalibus, quia haberet necessitatem se avertendi, deberet dici creatus non solum avertibilis, sed aversus.”
Although Giles’s picture of pure nature may be closer to Aquinas’s understanding of wounded nature than as human nature as such, what is most important in Giles’s thought is not what he says, but rather how he defends it. Since humanity, in a state of pure nature, would neither be able to persevere in moral goodness, nor reach his beatitude, Giles argues that the gifts of original justice can be said to be “due” (debitum) to human nature, lest it be deprived of the possibility of reaching its end.

55 Thomas thought that man could avoid sin in a state of integral nature even without grace. See S.T., Ia-IIae, q. 109, a. 8, co [Leon. 7:303]. “Secundum statum… naturae integrae, etiam sine gratia habituali, poterat homo non peccare nec mortaliter nec venialiter: quia peccare nihil aliud est quam recedere ab eo quod est secundum naturam, quod vitare homo poterat in integritate naturae.”

cf. In II Sent., d. 24, q. 1, a. 4, co [Mandonnet 2:599]. “…Hoc quod aliquis non possit vitare peccatum, potest intelligi dupliciter. Uno modo ita quod ad peccatum per violentiam impellatur: et hoc omnino libertati arbitrii repugnat, quae coactionem non patitur. Alio modo quia liberum arbitrium ad malum inclinatur vel per habitum aliquem, vel per passionem, cui liberum arbitrium succumbit. Neutro autem modo potest dici de primo homine, quod peccato resistere non posset; quia et verum liberum arbitrium habebat, et integrum; unde nec passiones inerant quae ad malum impellerent, nec habitus perversus naturam corruppens; quae omnia ex peccato consecuta sunt; et ideo non solum habuit quod peccato resistere posset, sed quod etiam illud facile potuerit; quod etiam peccatum ejus aggravavit, ut supra dictum est.” cf. In II Sent., d. 20, q. 2, a. 3, ad 5 [Mandonnet 2:517], where Thomas acknowledges the possibility of Adam’s resisting temptation without grace, as well as In II Sent., d. 28, q. 1, a. 2, co. [Mandonnet 2:722]; De veritate, q. 26, a. 6, ad 12 [Leon. 22:770]; Summa contra Gentiles 3.160 [Leon. Man. 420].

Although Thomas thought that man could avoid sin in a state of integral nature, that does not mean that he denied all natural concupiscence of the flesh against the spirit. Cf. In II Sent., d. 31, q. 2, a. 1, ad 3 [Mandonnet 2:810]; De malo, q. 5, a. 1 [Leon. 23:131]; S.T., Ia, q. 95, a. 1 [Leon. 5:420]. Also see Hütter, Dust Bound for Heaven, 146; Nicholas Lombardo, The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2011), 122. The main difference between Thomas and Giles is that Thomas thought that man in integral nature but without grace could withstand natural concupiscence, while Giles did not.

The question of the possibility of the formation of virtue in a hypothetical state of pure nature is different than the possibility of the formation of virtue in fallen nature without grace, because in the latter state human nature has to contend with the wounds of sin, particularly concupiscence, which makes the formation of virtue without grace more difficult, and perseverance in virtue impossible without grace. As to the formation of virtue in fallen nature without grace, a helpful review of the relevant passages in Aquinas can be found in Angela McKay Knobel, “Aquinas and the Pagan Virtues,” International Philosophical Quarterly 51, no. 3 (Sept 2011): 339-54. As to the latter, cf. S.T., Ia-IIae, q. 109 a. 2 [Leon. 7:291-92]. Apart from the question of the wounds of sin, Aquinas acknowledges a certain natural rebellion of the sensitive appetites against reason, irrespective of the Fall, but he does not present the formation of stable virtue in nature as something impossible when he is not discussing the question in light of the wounds of sin specifically. Cf. De virtutibus in communi, q. un. a. 4 ad 7 [Odetto 2:718]. “Tota rebellio irascibilis et concupiscibilis ad rationem tolli non potest per virtutem; cum ex ipsa sui natura irascibilis et concupiscibilis in id quod est bonum secundum sensum, quandoque ratione repugnet; licet hoc possit fieri divina virtute, quae potens est etiam naturas immutare. Nihilominus tamen per virtutem minuitur illa rebellio, in quantum praedictae vires assueficient ut ratione substantur; ut sic ex extrinseco habeant id quod ad virtutem pertinet, scilicet ex dominio rationis super eas; ex seipsis autem retineant aliquid de motibus propriis, qui quandoque sunt contrarii rationi.”
Let us conclude, therefore, and say... that human nature was made at its institution with a debt of original justice (this is a debt, and we call this a debt, because someone ought (debet) to have it). For original justice was due to human nature at its institution, even if not absolutely and simply, yet according to a certain fittingness of God’s goodness and justice, lest man were created averse from God without fault..."56

In applying the word *debitum* in such a strong sense to any grace, even the grace of original justice, Giles clearly develops, if not supersedes the thought of his *magister*, who was very cautious to avoid the word *debitum* with respect to grace.57 Yet such was the delicate balance that Giles struck in the light of his commitment to the unicity of man’s final end, and his rejection of any possible resting place for our heart’s desire short of the vision of God.

Although the thought of Giles of Rome on nature and natural desire is very similar to that of Thomas, there are some subtle but important differences. By denying that privation alone could account for nature’s potential for change, and instead positing *transmutationes* as a positive principle of nature’s potential for change, Giles suggested that our natural desire for God is more radically determined than Thomas had suggested. Instead of speaking of various participations of our final beatitude, Giles emphasizes the singular manner in which our nature can only be fulfilled by the vision of God. That being the case, two consequences follow. The

56 Ibid [Venice 2 :444Bc]. “Concludamus ergo, et dicamus... quod natura humana in sui institutione producta est cum debito originalis iustitiae, hoc est enim debitum, et hoc vocamus debitum, quod quis debet habere. Debebatur enim naturae humanae in sui institutione originalis iustitia, etsi non absolute et simpliciter, tamen secundum quandam decentiam divinae bonitatis, et iustitiae, ne homo sine culpa producetur a Deo averse...”

57 When Aquinas use the word “*debitum*” in relation to original justice, he is discussing a *debitum ex parte subiecti*, viz., the debt on our part of keeping our souls in order, not any debt on God’s part of giving us that right ordering. While examples of this usage abound, we may note in particular *In II Sent.*, d. 20 q. 2 a. 3 co. [Mandonnet 2:516-17]; *De malo*, q. 5 a. 4 ad 7 [Leon. 23:139]; *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 89 a. 5 ad 3 [Leon. 7:146]. In one text, namely, *Quodlibet IV*, q. 11 a. 2 ad 2 [Leon. 25.2:344], Aquinas does use the phrase, “*debitum originalis iusticie,*,” but his language is rather more reserved than that of Giles. The question to which Aquinas is responding is whether the first motion of the soul in unbelievers is a mortal sin. In the *corpus* of the article, Aquinas argues emphatically in the negative. This suggests a more positive view of human nature without grace than Giles would allow, since Giles thinks that man without original justice would be created averse from God.
first is that sin is caused not through the indeterminacy of our natural desire, but rather through its weakness. The second is that it would be unthinkable for God to create man without the gift of original justice. Owing to the weakness of our desire for good, if man were created in a state without original justice, we inevitably sin against the moral law, turning ourselves from God.

The scholastic tradition within the Augustinian Order was alternatively known as “Aegidian,” after Giles (“Aegidius” in Latin) or “Augustinian,” after the name of the Order. I will refer to it as “Aegidian,” since, “Augustinian,” can be used as a generic term for any number of other scholastic groups. The Aegidian tradition enjoyed anything but an easy history. It suffered severe academic decline in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and was yet more severely wounded when entire provinces of the Order were lost at the Protestant Reformation. Consequently, it did not exercise the same influence on the theology of the middle ages as did that of other religious orders. It would see a resurgence in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries in the controversies surrounding Baius and Jansenius. However, as it was the theology of a Franciscan, John Duns Scotus, that was to have the most influence on the reception of Thomas’s doctrine of nature and natural desire in the interim period, I will turn now to consider Scotus and the effects he had on the reception of Thomas.

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B. Natural Desire in John Duns Scotus

As Bonaventure was the backdrop against which Thomas formulated his doctrine of natural desire, John Duns Scotus can be said to have been the backdrop against which many Thomists formulated their own doctrines of natural desire. The reason for this is that Scotus changed the tenor of debates on nature and natural desire drastically in two ways. The first was with respect to *rationes seminales*. Scotus discusses these at three points during his career, marking roughly the beginning, the middle, and the end of his career respectively: the *Lectura Oxoniensis*, the *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, and the *Reportatio Parisiensis*. In all three works, Scotus maintains consistently two opinions. First, it is unnecessary to posit some active element in matter in order to account for natural change, be it an incomplete potency, as for Bacon, an incomplete form, as for Bonaventure, or any number of other variations that other scholastics had proposed in the interim. Change, for Scotus, is natural only on account of the passive principle receiving it, not any active principle expecting

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64 For a list of these positions, see the editors’ notes to Scotus, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis* lib., 7, q. 12, nn. 12-22 [Franciscan Institute 197-201].
It is useless to posit a separate active principle in things in order to account for the possibility of natural change in them, since that would multiply causes without necessity.

Rejecting the necessity of any active principle in order to account for natural motion, and positing that it can be accounted for sufficiently by the passive principle in things, brought Scotus very close to Richard Rufus and Thomas Aquinas. However, Scotus saw a textual problem with these two views of *rationes seminales*: Augustine plainly did not intend a passive principle by the term, such as Rufus and Thomas interpret it. Consequently, since Scotus had already denied the usefulness of the term as concerns active principles, he does not suggest any reason to retain it for the purpose it had served in previous generations.

If Scotus seems conceptually closer to Rufus and Thomas on the question of matter’s passive receptivity towards substantial form, he is closer to Rufus than to Thomas on the details...
of how precisely matter relates to form. For both Rufus and Scotus, only matter’s receptive potency explains its pluripotentiality towards substantial forms, because substances are individuated by individual forms. For Scotus, there cannot be substantial change in a creature without either adding and/or destroying some individual form in the thing. Consequently, matter must be the principle undergirding the addition and destruction of forms in order to account for the continuity of created existence. This gives matter a degree of separability from form that it could not have in Thomas. Scotus thinks that matter, absent any form, could exist on its own, and so has positive, entitative content apart from form.

Scotus defends his view that matter could exist apart from form by distinguishing between two kinds of potentiality: subjective and objective. Subjective potentiality describes the potency of things that exist, while objective potentiality describes the potentiality of things that do not exist, but could. Since matter exists, it must have subjective potentiality, not objective potentiality, and consequently some nature of its own without form. Hence, Scotus holds together two views on matter that in previous thinkers would have considered

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70 Cross, The Physics of Duns Scotus, 44. Cross provides a detailed engagement with the primary texts in Scotus, and so serves as a valuable topical index to Scotus on this question.

71 Ibid., 22.

72 Ibid., 23-26.


74 Ibid., 17-18.

75 Ibid.
irreconcilable: (1) matter is pure potentiality; (2) matter, while remaining pure potentiality, has some level of actuality to itself apart from that which is communicated to it by form, and that in virtue of its nature.

For Scotus, the will is a nature, and like matter, which is also a nature, it has an inclination towards its perfection. Like Thomas, Scotus also assents to the Aristotelian argument that a thing’s natural inclination is not just for any perfection, but for its highest or most perfect perfection. Also like Thomas, this is the case even if, like matter, it stands in a relationship of purely passive potentiality to the reception of its perfection. However, Scotus parts company with Thomas on the nature of the specificity of our will’s natural desire. For Thomas, since matter only has actuality insofar as it receives it from form, it follows that the actuality communicated by form to matter fulfills some portion of matter’s potentiality, while leaving the remainder unfulfilled. This privation with respect to matter’s unactualized potency for forms was the basis upon which Thomas constructed his account of our natural desire for the vision of God. Applying this thinking to the will, our natural desire has to be generic so as not to determine the will to one object, but nevertheless the generic desire could not be satisfied

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76 Scotus, *Reportatio Parisiensis*, lib. 4, d. 49, q. 9, co. [Vivès 24:659B]. “Potest enim voluntas considerari, ut est quaedam natura, et inquantum habet inclinationem, et appetitum naturalem ad suam propriam perfectionem, sicut quaequecumque alia natura.” *Cf. Ordinatio*, lib. 4. d. 49, q. 10 [Vivès 21:318A-B]. “Sic etiam natura intellectualis, scilicet voluntas, habet naturalem inclinationem ad suam perfectionem; alius est appetitus liber, qui est velle librum. De primo appetitu dico, quod non est actus aliuis elicitus a voluntate, sed tantum inclinatio quaedam… Est inclinatio ad propriam perfectionem suam… sicut in alii non habentibus appetitum liberum; et de illo appetitu loquitur Philosophus 1. Physicorum, quod materia appetit formam, et universaliter imperfectum suam perfectionem.”


Scotus argues that everything desires its highest perfection: “Quod summe appetit, probatur, quia summa inclinatio naturae est ad summam perfectionem. Si ergo natura appetat suam perfectionem, summe appetit summam perfectionem. Sic arguit Philosophus primo Metaphysicæ in prooemio: ‘Si omnes homines naturaliter scire desiderant, igitur maximam scientiam summe desiderabunt.’ Cum igitur summa perfectio voluntatis sit beatitudo, sequitur quod voluntas natura summe appetit.” *Cf. Ordinatio*, d. 1, p.1, q. 1, n. 10 [Vat. 2:5].
without the removal of privation in the intellect through the vision of God. For Scotus, on the other hand, since matter does not receive all of its actuality from form, there is no danger in positing that matter’s desire is specific, or that our natural desire is specific. As Scotus argues, every nature has a specific perfection; therefore every nature must have a natural desire for its specific perfection. Yet if the will seeks its end in a particular perfection, that does not mean that every act of the will necessarily seeks the one, particular perfection, which is the will’s ultimate end. Rather, for Scotus, the natural will influences the free will in the sense that whenever one decides to elicit an act concerning our beatitude, one cannot help but will that beatitude, and not to will its opposite. But one always remains free to suspend judgment altogether and not to will anything at all, or to choose that which has nothing to do with human beatitude—or is even objectively not ordered to it—if one wills not to think about beatitude when doing it. Where for Thomas the natural desire of the will exercises a positive influence

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78 Ibid [Vivès 24:660B]. “Quod in particulari sic naturaliter appetit beatitudinem, patet, quia ille appetitus est ad perfectionem, in qua voluntas realiter perfectur; sed perfectio realis non est aliquid universale, sed singulare; igitur appetit beatitudinem in particulari.” Cf. ibid [Vivès 24:661B]. “…Si voluntas necessario appeteret beatitudinem in universali, ista necessitas in volendo debet ponui propter inclinationem naturalem voluntatis ad beatitudinem. Sed inclinatio naturalis est ad aliquid particulare, et non ad universale, ut prius patuit; igitur multo magis ponetur necessitas in voluntate in appetendo ultimum finem in particulari.” Cf. Ordinatio lib. 4, d. 49, q. 10 [Vivès 21:319B]. “Et quod in particulari, patet, quia ille appetitus est ad perfectionem intrinsecam realem, qua voluntas perfectur; sed perfectio realis non est alquid universal, qua voluntas perfectur, sed particulare; ergo, etc.” Scotus lists several more objections to Thomas’s opinion further on [Vivès 21:330B-331A].

79 Ibid [Vivès 24:664A]. “…Voluntas sic determinatur ad volendum beatitudinem, et nolendum miseriam, quod si eliciat aliquem actum circa objecta ista, necessario et determinate elicit actum nolendi circa miseriam, et volendi circa beatitudinem, non tamen absolute determinatur ad unum actum eliciendum, nec ad alium.”

80 Ibid [Vivès 24:664B]. “…Quodlibet objectum potest voluntas non velle, nec nolle, et quodlibet actu in particulari potest se suspendere ab hoc vel illo, et hoc potest experiri quilibet in se ipso, cum quis offert sibi bonum, etiam si ostenderet sibi bonum, ut bonum considerandum et volendum, potest se ab hoc avertere, et nullum actum voluntatis circa illud elicere.” Cf. Ord., lib. 4, d. 49, q. 10 [Vivès 21:332B-333A].

81 On choosing an object that seems contrary to our natural inclination, see ibid. [Vivès 24:662B]: “Quod autem ut in pluribus voluntas velit beatitudinem, hoc ideo est, quia voluntas, ut in pluribus, sequitur inclinationem appetitus naturalis; impossible enim est quod voluntas per aliquem habitum habilitetur, sive inclinetur ad volendum aliquid, nisi per inclinationem appetitus naturalis. Cum igitur per habitum potest voluntas tantum habilitari, quod ut
upon a person’s willing (causing a person to seek actively its object to the level of specificity of that object), for Scotus, the natural will exercises a partially negative influence (causing a person to seek actively an object, if and when a person decides to consider something related to its object). The consequence of this is that, for Thomas, we must always seek the real or apparent good in what we do; for Scotus, on the other hand, there is a good deal of neutral ground between the two extremes.

Unlike Thomas, whose conception of nature and the natural influenced his conception of natural desire, for Scotus, it is the other way around. Since, for Scotus, our intellect and our will are in receptive potencies to their objects just like matter is in a receptive potency for form, yet nevertheless they have an inclination towards their nature’s perfection, whether an act is according to nature or against nature depends not so much on the active power of our souls to produce it, as whether or not it is in accord with the natural inclination of our passive potency to receive it. In this respect, even the vision of God can be said to be in some way “natural,” since nothing, for Scotus (not even the *lumen fidei*, as Thomas had argued), is necessary in order to enable us to be capable of receiving the vision of God, as it is entirely in accord with our natural

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inclination to be perfected by God as the highest possible object. What makes the vision of God supernatural for Scotus is not that it is above the active power of our nature to produce such an act, as for Thomas, but that the agent which produces this act in us does so not as a consequence of its own natural action. The vision of God is not supernatural because it is above our nature to receive it, but rather because it is above what follows of necessity from God’s nature to cause it.

Saying that we have a natural inclination towards our supernatural beatitude raised for Scotus, as it had for Thomas, the question of the applicability of Aristotle’s *dictum*: “nature does nothing in vain,” and the question of Pelagianism. Scotus avoids answering the question from a purely philosophical point of view. Since we know by Revelation that some people do enjoy the vision of God, it is not a problem if some individuals in the species lack the vision of God. That is enough to show that the desire is not in vain.

Yet, one might ask, does Scotus’s treatment of Aristotle’s *dictum* perhaps mean that Scotus has confused the philosophical question of possibility and the theological question of actuality? That would be the case if Scotus thought that he was responding to a philosophical question. But he does not; he thinks it is a theological question, because he does not think that by

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83 Scotus, *Reportatio Parisiensis*, lib. 4, d. 49, q. 10 [Vivès 24:674A-B]. “Si autem intellectus sit mere passivus, se habens ad actum visionis solum in ratione receptivi, tunc propter receptionem non requiritur aliqua forma ex parte intellectus… et tunc lumen gloriae non requiritur.” Scotus will argue as a corollary that, according to this logic, charity is not required in the will either. He thinks instead that the only reason we posit charity in the will as the necessary condition to receiving the vision of God is because it is revealed in Scripture as necessary.


85 Scotus, *Ordinatio*, lib. 4, d. 49, q. 10 [Vivès 21:379A-B]: “…Licet illud sit frustra quod caret perfectione sua, et frustratur ea secundum totam speciem, non tamen est frustra, si caret illa in aliquo individuo, ut patet in orbatis et non monstruosis; sic autem non est in proposito, quia aliqui sunt beati, qui perficiuntur secundum appetitum eorum naturalem, alii autem non, et ideo non frustratur secundum totam speciem.”
natural reason we can demonstrate what the specific terminus of our natural desire is. While Scotus, like Thomas, recognizes that the possibility of the vision of God can be known structurally from an account of the soul as an immaterial substance, all things being equal, he also argues that we can know from experience that all things are not equal: in this state (pro statu isto), we experience the limitation of our knowledge by our encounter with the material world. For this reason, we cannot know by natural reason whether the state in which we are has the vision of God as its terminus or whether God has ordained some other end for this state (indeed, natural reason would seem to suggest the latter). Moreover, even if we were able to overcome that difficulty, another would arise: the soul, because it is an intellectual nature, is capable of receiving intuitive knowledge. But that knowledge, for Scotus, has to be caused in the soul by its object, and we can never know by natural reason whether God would choose to cause in us the vision of himself.

Confirmation of the fact that Scotus considers the question of the frustration of our natural desire as a theological and not as a philosophical question can be seen in his treatment of the necessity of supernatural knowledge in the Prologue to his Ordinatio. There, among the objections that Scotus raises against his position is the following:

86 Wolter, “Duns Scotus on the Natural Desire for the Supernatural,” 308, notes that many generations of theologians were misled about Scotus on this point on account of an error in the manuscripts.

87 Ibid., 292-94.


Some active natural potency corresponds to every natural passive potency, otherwise it would seem a passive potency were vain in nature if it could not be reduced to act by something in nature; but the possible intellect is a passive potency with respect to whatever is intelligible; therefore some active, natural potency corresponds with it... The minor is clear, because the possible intellect naturally desires the knowledge of whatever is knowable; it is also naturally perfected by whatever is knowable; therefore it is naturally receptive of whatever sort of understanding.\[90\]

Scotus gives three arguments in response to this objection. The first suggests that Aristotle’s \textit{dictum} only applies when there is a positive ordering in nature towards a given end; since there is no positive ordering in nature towards the vision of God, the argument does not apply.\[91\] The second suggests that Aristotle’s \textit{dictum} only applies to potencies that are called “natural” with respect to an act caused, not an act received. Since there is no positive ordering of our powers towards this act, the principle does not apply.\[92\] The third contends that the principle does not apply in this state (\textit{pro statu isto}), in which our mind has been restricted to knowledge drawn

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\[90\] Scotus, Ord. prol., p. 1, q. un., n. 7 [Vat. 1:5-6]. “...Omni potentiae naturali passivae correspondet aliquid activum naturale, alioquin videretur potentia passiva esse frustra in natura si per nihil in natura posset reduci ad actum; sed intellectus possibilis est potentia passiva respectu quorumcumque intelligibilium; ergo correspondet sibi aliqua potentia activa naturalis... Minor patet, quia intellectus possibilis naturaliter appetit cognitionem cuiuscumque cognoscibilis; naturaliter etiam perficitur per quamcumque cognitionem; igitur est naturaliter receptivus cuiuscumque intellecctionis.”

\[91\] Scotus, Ord. prol., p. 1, q. un., n. 76 [Vat. 1:46-47]. “Illud quod adducitur de II Caeli et mundi non est ad propositum, quia Philosophus loquitur ibi de organis correspondentibus potentiae motivae si ipsa inesset stellis. Et concedo quod univerasliter cui datur potentia quae nata est esse organica, et datur a natura organum, in non-orbatis dico. Sed in proposito data est potentia, sed non organica; non tamen data sunt naturaliter omnia alia praeter potentiam concurrentiam ad actum. A Philosopho igitur ibi haberi potest quod natura ordinabilis ad aliquem actum vel obiectum naturaliter habet potentiam ad illud, et organum si potentia est organica; sed non sic de posterioribus requisitis ad actum.”

\[92\] Ibid., n. 77 [Vat. 1:47]. “Aliter posset dici ad maiorem quod ipsa est vera loquendo de potentia passiva naturali ut passiva comparatur ad activam, non autem ut passiva comparatur ad actum receptum.”
from the material world.\textsuperscript{93} Apart from the language of states, which is particular to Scotus, there is nothing in the first two arguments which is substantially different from Thomas.

In summary, while Scotus and Thomas differ on much concerning natural desire, they are not entirely different from one another on some fundamental questions. We may summarizes their differences thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thomas</th>
<th>Scotus</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form is educed from matter.</td>
<td>Form is placed in matter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matter cannot exist apart from form.</td>
<td>Matter can exist apart from form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The natural is measured by active and passive potencies</td>
<td>The natural is measured by passive potencies only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural desire exercises a positive influence on the activity of the will.</td>
<td>Natural desire exercises a negative influence on the activity of the will.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every action has positive moral content.</td>
<td>Only some actions have positive moral content.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, for all that separates Thomas and Scotus, there are several very important positions that they share. First, both think that grace is received according to a passive potency, and consequently that there is not much reason to posit an obediential potency in man in order to account for our receptivity to grace; in the context of the thirteenth and early fourteenth century theological tradition, this is perhaps the most significant agreement of all, and relativizes—even if it does not trivialize—their disagreements on related matters. Thomas may have drawn a sharper distinction between what is according to nature and what is above nature, owing to his inclusion of active potencies in the determination of the natural, but that distinction is not absent in Scotus, even if it is not at the forefront. For both thinkers, grace is partly natural and partly supernatural, because it is received in nature according to a passive potency, but caused directly

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., n. 78 [Vat. 1:47]. “Posset etiam tertio modo faciliter dici ad minorem, negando, quia licet absolute intellectus possibilis sit naturaliter receptivus talis intellctionis, non tamen pro statu isto.”
by God (even if for Thomas the supernaturality comes from its enabling us to achieve an act above our nature, while for Scotus it comes from God’s doing something above the necessity of his own nature). Second, both follow Aristotle in affirming that the highest perfection of man must be according to the highest act of our highest potency oriented towards its highest object. Here they may disagree, with Thomas thinking the highest potency is the intellect and Scotus the will, but they do not disagree that, whichever faculty is first, that act is the immediate vision of God. They differ concerning the use to which this argument can be put in philosophical reasoning in light of Aristotle’s affirmation that nature does not do anything in vain. For Thomas, we can know by natural reason that our intellectual nature could only be completely fulfilled by the vision of God, and hence that we are capable of it, but since we cannot reach that vision of our own accord, we cannot know by natural reason whether or not God has chosen actually to grant us this free gift; for Scotus, we could know by natural reason that our intellectual nature could only be completely fulfilled by the vision of God, if we could figure out that our knowledge were subject to certain imposed restrictions in this state (pro statu isto), but we could never know by natural reason whether God would choose to grant the vision of himself to us.

In light of the commonalities between Thomas and Scotus, it is worthwhile to conclude this brief overview of Scotus with an observation of how radically different Thomas’s and Scotus’s respective doctrines of natural desire are from that of Giles. Since for Thomas and Scotus our capacity for the vision of God is passive, neither thinker has any particular theological difficulty with regard to the gratuity of that vision. Giles is unique among this trio for his doctrine of transmutatio and a positive aptitude for the vision of God. Such a doctrine was to cause a number of theological difficulties in subsequent centuries for his followers.
C. Natural Desire in Tommaso de Vio Cajetan

Tommaso de Vio “Cajetan” (1469-1534)\textsuperscript{94} was born Giacomo de Vio,\textsuperscript{95} but took the name “Thomas” when he entered the Dominican Order in 1484, and received the nickname “Gaetano” (“the man from Gaetà”) when he went for studies at the University of Padua in 1491, since he had come to the university from the Dominican convent at Gaetà.\textsuperscript{96} At Padua, he took the Dominican chair as a master of theology in 1494, though he would not remain in the post for long. Cajetan continued to publish throughout his life, in spite of his absence from a regular university chair, and his \textit{opus magnum} was a commentary on the entire \textit{Summa theologiae}, the first of its kind, published successively: \textit{In Primam Partem} (1507), \textit{In Primam Secundae} (1511), \textit{In Secundam Secundae} (1511), \textit{In Tertiam Partem} (1520). This commentary was influential on its own merits for its content and its scope. However, it gained additional notariety when Pius V had it printed alongside the post-Tridentine Roman edition of the \textit{Summa theologiae},\textsuperscript{97} and Leo XIII had it printed alongside the Leonine critical edition of the \textit{Summa theologiae} just prior to and at the start of the twentieth century.\textsuperscript{98}


\textsuperscript{95} Stöve, “De Vio, Tommaso,” 268.

\textsuperscript{96} Wicks, “Thomas de Vio Cajetan (1469-1534),” 269-70.

\textsuperscript{97} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Opera omnia}, vols. 9-11 (Rome, 1569-70). This edition is the so-called “Editio Piana,” after Pius V, who ordered it printed. It omitted Cajetan’s commentary on the \textit{Tertia Pars}.

\textsuperscript{98} Thomas Aquinas, \textit{Opera omnia}, vols. 4-12 (Rome, 1888-1906).
The desire for God was a central question for Cajetan, which he discusses in his commentary on the very first article of the *Summa theologiae*. There, he draws a stark contrast between himself and Scotus.

We say that that end [i.e. the vision of God] is naturally hidden from us, because it is the supernatural end of our soul… But [Scotus] holds that that end is the natural end of our soul, although it is supernaturally reached. And nevertheless it is naturally unknown, since our soul is not naturally known to us, at least in this state, under the proper and special *ratio* by which it is ordered to that end.99

Here, the sharp contrast that Cajetan draws between himself and Scotus forces the question of natural desire into a framework that omits some of the subtlety both of Thomas’s and of Scotus’s treatments of the question. For Thomas, the vision of God is “above nature” or “supernatural” in the sense that nature cannot produce the act from its active powers, and nevertheless it is natural for the soul to receive the *lumen gloriae* in accordance with its passive potency. What is unknown about the vision of God is not that it is possible (Thomas thinks we can know that it is possible by natural reason), but whether it is actual. For Scotus, the argument that Cajetan references here about not having intuitive knowledge in this state is a secondary, theological confirmation of a more basic philosophical argument. Even if we came to the knowledge of the soul as it is in itself, Scotus still suggests that this would only allow us to know the possibility and not the actuality of the vision of God by natural reason.

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99 Tommaso de Vio Cajetan, *In Iam*, q. 1, a. 1, n. 7 [Leon. 4:7]. “Nos enim dicimus quod ideo finis ille est nobis naturaliter occultus, quia est supernaturalis finis animae nostae… Ipse vero tenet illum finem esse naturalem nostrae anime, quamvis superanturaliter adipiscendum. Et tamen esse naturaliter incognitum: quia anima nostra non nobis naturaliter est nota, saltem pro statu isto, sub illa propria et speciali ratione, qua ordinatur ad illum finem.”
In lieu of a complete explanation of his thought on the natural desire and his critique of Scotus here in his commentary on the *Prima Pars*, Cajetan refers the reader to a short *Quaestio de potentia neutra*, which he intended to be read alongside this article. That question explains Cajetan’s position on Scotus’s idea of a neutral potency. It is paired with another, a *Quaestio de natura receptivae potentiae*, which explains Cajetan’s position on the manner in which receptive potency relates to supernatural actions. In the first *quaestio*, Cajetan opposes the Scotistic idea that a passive potency could be indifferent to the forms received in it. Lurking in the background is the question of matter’s relationship to form, which Cajetan treats by analogy with a blank surface. Scotus, says Cajetan, thinks that a blank surface is in a neutral potency towards color, because it is open to accidental formation by this or that color. Cajetan responds that Scotus has failed to distinguish between acts which are *per se primo* (in a genus) and acts which are *per se secundo* (in a species). A blank surface desires to be informed with color *per se primo* and to be informed with this or that color *per se secundo*. We cannot say that the surface’s potency is neutral, therefore, because of its generic desire for color. Likewise with prime matter: prime matter is not neutral with respect to form. It has a desire to be formed *per se primo*, and a desire to be formed by this or that form *per se secundo*. On this basis,

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100 It was most recently reprinted in Tommaso de Vio Cajetan, *Opuscula Omnia* (Lyons, 1587; repr. New York: Olms, 1995), 206-07.

101 Tommaso de Vio Cajetan, *In Iam*, n. 10 [Leon. 4:8].


103 Cajetan, *Quaestio de potentia neutra*, p. 1 [Lyons 206b3]. “…Si poneremus aliquam superficiem receptivam albi et nigri, et tamen ad neutrum inclinatam… proprie vocatur potentia neutra.”

104 Ibid., p. 4 [Lyons 206b79].

105 Ibid [Lyons 207a1]. Cajetan later makes the same argument in *In Iam*, q. 82, a. 1, n. 9 [Leon. 5:295]. “…Materia enim prima appetit formam et informari universaliter, et non solum hanc vel illam; et visus naturaliter appetit videre, et non solum hoc vel illud videre; et sic de aliis. Unde appetitus naturalis voluntatis primo est ad
Cajetan concludes, there is no such thing as a neutral potency. Every potency is inclined towards some act, but some potencies are inclined towards a genus of act before they are inclined to any species of act within that genus.\(^{106}\)

Of itself, the *Quaestio de potentia neutra* seems at first glance to say nothing controversial, at least as concerns Thomistic metaphysics. After all, Thomas had said that matter has a desire for form on account of its capacity for form, and had based his account of our natural desire on this account of matter’s desire for form. Thomas’s account of our natural desire seems to align very closely with Cajetan’s account of matter’s desire for form. For Thomas, we have a natural desire for beatitude in general, which is made specific by a deliberate act of the will towards this or that desire. Yet in this question one begins to sense some of the tension with Thomas’s thought that appears in the aforementioned passage from Cajetan’s commentary on the *Prima Pars*. For Thomas, as we saw in the previous chapter, prime matter does not have a generic desire for form, which is indifferent to a given species of form. For Thomas, prime matter has a single desire for the actualization of all of its potency. That means that it has a specific desire for the actualization of its potency for two contrary forms at the same time, because it is in potency and privation to both. But since it is impossible for prime matter to receive contrary forms at the same time on account of their contrariety, it reaches its perfection gradually: at one time it actualizes its potency for one thing; at another time it actualizes its potency for the opposite. To use Cajetan’s surface analogy, while it is white, it desires to be black

\[^{106}\text{Cf. ibid [Lyons 207a4].}\]
in virtue of its privation with respect to being black; while it is black, it desires to be white in
virtue of its privation with respect to being white.

Cajetan’s misstep about matter in the *Quaestio de potentia neutra* paves the way for a
larger misstep with respect to natural desire in the *Quaestio de natura receptivae potentiae*.
There, Cajetan inquires about the receptive potency in us for supernatural acts. First he describes
as a “supernatural act” that, “which cannot be achieved according to the course of nature.”
In this, he follows Thomas, who had described such acts as above nature (*supra naturam*) or
supernatural (*supernaturalis*). But Cajetan then parts with Thomas when he touches on natural
inclination. “‘Natural potency,’” he notes, “is not said subjectively, i.e., as a potency of nature,
but formally, i.e., as a potency naturally inclined,” that is, for Cajetan, natural inclination is not
ascribed to nature’s passive, receptive potency, but rather of its formal, active potency. By
defining his terms in this way, Cajetan confuses two senses of the term, “natural inclination,”
which were clearly distinguished in Thomas. For Thomas, we have a positive, natural inclination
towards a general object in both the intellect and the will, which arises from the formal, active
potencies in these powers. In addition, we have a negative, but specific natural inclination in both
powers for the complete actualization of their passive potencies, insofar as neither active, general
inclination can be satisfied without the complete and specific actualization of the corresponding
passive potency, which exceeds the potentiality of the active potency. Combined, the two
principles create a natural desire for the vision of God, because the beatitude which we actively
desire in general can only be received passively and specifically in the vision of God. To state the

107 Cajetan, *Quaestio de natura receptivae potentiae*, p. 1 [Lyons 207a38]. “Actus supernaturalis dicitur,
quem non potest secundum naturae cursum adipisci.”

108 Ibid [Lyons 207a40]. “Potentia naturalis vocatur non subiective, id est, potentia naturae, sed formaliter,
id est, potentia naturaliter inclinata.”
case more plainly, Cajetan gets it backwards. He thinks we have a natural inclination in general arising from the passive principle in nature, which simply expects fulfillment *per se primo* in a general sense, and a specific natural desire arising from the active principle in nature, which seeks fulfillment *per se secundo*. Thomas, on the other hand, thinks that we have a natural inclination in specific arising from the passive principle in nature, and a natural desire in general arising from the active principle in nature.

Since Cajetan excludes general, passive inclination from consideration, the result is that he only considers specific, active inclination in his argument. This would have been impossible for Thomas, since it would have destroyed both the possibility of error in the intellect as well as freedom in the will. The result of Cajetan’s confusion over the two kinds of natural inclination in Thomas is that Cajetan causes radical confusion over what exactly Aristotle’s *dictum* that nature does nothing in vain proves:

Quidditative knowledge of something is a sufficient *ratio* of all its properties, and every question concerning a thing is resolved by [this knowledge], as is said in *Physics* 4. Consequently, when something is known quidditatively, all of its natural potencies can be known from it. And since the knowledge of a potency depends on its act, as is said in *Metaphysics* 9, consequently, the acts to which its potencies correspond are known. And since these sorts of acts are supernatural, according to Scotus, it follows from first to last that from the quidditative knowledge of something natural, supernatural things are known. This is obviously false. And this is confirmed, because we certainly know this major premise: that

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109 *Cf. In Iam*, q. 82, a. 1, n. 7 [Leon. 5:294]. “Cum enim natura ad unum determinata sit, appetere tantum habet naturalitatis, quantum determinationis ad unum.” It is hard to imagine a clearer contrast with Thomas’s doctrine of undetermined natural desire.

110 Cajetan salvages the freedom of the will by adopting Scotus’s approach to the freedom of the will: when we think about happiness, it is necessary that we desire it; but we always remain free not to think about it. *Cf. In Iam*, q. 82, a. 1, n. 7 [Leon. 5:294]. As Cajetan describes it, natural desire makes particular desires necessary with respect to specification [*quoad specificationem*] but not with respect to exercise [*quoad exercitium*]. *Cf. In Iam*, q. 82, a. 2, n. 2 [Leon. 5:297].
no natural potency is in vain. Therefore, if we know this minor premise: that there is a natural potency for a supernatural act in matter, or the soul, or whatever else; we have to grant that we know that those supernatural things must exist. And thus we would know the future resurrection of the dead, and the grace that justifies the impious, etc. This is ridiculous!111

According to the logic of Cajetan’s second argument, understood in light of his doctrine of natural inclination, a potency is “vain” if a creature has an active inclination towards its specific act, but lacks the proportionate active power to achieve that act.112 That makes sense if one accepts the premise upon which Cajetan bases his argument, namely, that a natural desire for a specific act arises from the formal, active principle in nature. What would be the point of a nature actively inclined to one specific act, which could not achieve that act? That was the problem that Giles had faced. He had affirmed that nature is positively inclined to the vision of God as

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111 Ibid., p. 4 [Lyons 270b42]. “…Quidditativa cognitio alicuius [est] sufficiens ratio omnium proprietatum eius, et ex ea solvantur omnes difficultates contingentes rei, ut in quarto Phys. dicitur. Consequens est, quod cognita quidditativa re aliqua, cognosco ex ea possint omnes eius naturales potentiae: et quum potentiae cognitio ex actu pendeat, ut dicitur 9. Meta. consequens est, quod actus, ad quos sunt naturales potentiae, cognoscantur, et cum huiusmodi actus sint supernaturales apud Scotum, sequitur de primo ad ultimum, quod ex cognitione quidditativa alicuius naturalis cognoscuntur supernaturalia: quod est manifeste falsum. Et confirmatur: quia certe scimus hanc maiorem, quod nulla naturalis potentia est frustra: ergo si scimus hanc minorem quod in materia vel anima, vel quacunque alia re est naturalis potentia ad actum supernaturalem, oportet concede quod scimus supernaturalia illa debere esse: et sic sciemus resurrectionem mortuorum futuram, et gratiam iustificantem impium, etc. quod est ridiculum.”

112 Cf. ibid., p. 3 [Lyons 207b2], where Cajetan uses the word “proportion” apposite to “inclination.” For Cajetan, the one implies the other. Cf. In Iam, q. 82, a. 1, n. 12 [Leon. 5:295]. “…Nos appelamus naturalem appetitum, non solum inclinationem voluntatis in objectum etc., sed illum actum elicitem determinatum quoad specificationem: ipse [Scotus] vero non vult vocare illum appetitum naturalem, propter libertatem quae est in exercitio eius; ex qua parte nec nos dicimus naturalem.”

Here, one should compare the doctrine of Cajetan to the doctrine of Francis de Sylvestris Ferrariensis. As Feingold notes, Francis published his commentary on Thomas’s Summa contra Gentiles shortly after Cajetan’s commentary on the Summa theologicae. Cf. Feingold, The Natural Desire to See God, 183n1. In Francis, we see the same use of Aristotle’s dictum as in Cajetan. Cf. Francis de Sylvestris Ferrariensis, In Summam contra Gentiles, 3.51 [Leon. 14:141]. “Si enim in individuis non esset talis potencia, nunquam naturae desiderium adimpletur: sed si in illis sit capacitatis rei desideratae, naturae desiderium quandoque in aliquod individuo adimpletur; et hoc sufficient ad hoc ut non sit inane et frustra.” Francis goes on to develop a novel position, that we have an active, specific desire for the vision of God as first cause.

Feingold appears to suggest that Francis’s solution is to be preferred (196). However, he does not treat Suárez’s criticism of the view in De fine hominis, disp. 5, §3, nn. 7-14 [Vivès 4:52-55], and again at disp. 15, §145, n. 4 [Vivès 4:145].
towards one, specific act, and consequently could not see any way in which a providential God
could create man without the possibility of achieving that end. Yet neither Thomas nor Scotus
understood Aristotle’s dictum in the manner that Cajetan suggests. For Thomas and Scotus, since
the specificity of our natural desire arises from the passive principle in our nature, not the active
one, for a potency to be vain means that it is necessarily unable to be fulfilled (in the passive
voice), not that a creature is unable to fulfill it (in the active voice). But Thomas never said that
we would know by natural reason that someone actually ever obtained the vision of God.
Questions of actuality were always a theological for him, because the active power by which we
achieve the fulfillment of our passive potency is given to us by a free gift of grace. All the more
was this the case for Scotus, for whom we cannot even know by natural reason pro statu isto that
our intellect is capable of the vision of God, and for whom, even if we could, this would only
prove what it does for Thomas: that we could receive the vision, if God chose to grant it, not that
anyone ever would actually receive it.

Cajetan’s doctrine of a specific, active, natural desire had two further consequences for
his thought about how nature relates to grace: the adoption of a specific natural end for man apart
from the vision of God, and the re-adoption of a doctrine of obediential potency. Of these, only
the second is dealt with in any detail in the Quaestio de natura receptivae potentiae. There, since
Cajetan had suggested that our natural inclination is restricted only to those specific acts which
nature can achieve on its own, he has to add that our active, specific inclination only tends
towards the fulfillment of passive potencies to which active powers in our nature correspond.\textsuperscript{113}

Consequently, in order to account for our openness to grace, there must be some other potency in

\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., p. 4 [Lyons 207b30].
the soul, towards whose specific actualization none of our natural, active inclination tends, and for whose actualization we stand in complete passivity and openness to the will of God. Cajetan thus arrives at half of Thomas’s understanding of nature’s relationship to grace, even if in a circuitous way. He preserves Thomas’s firm commitment to nature’s material passivity with respect to grace, but he does so in the context of dismantling Thomas’s doctrine of a generic, active desire, which can only be fulfilled by the passive, specific reception of the vision of God.

In light of Cajetan’s doctrine of specific, active desire, the exegesis of those passages in the *Summa theologiae* where Thomas says that we have a natural desire for the vision of God forced Cajetan to construe Thomas’s thought in such a way as to suggest that there is a naturally achievable end for our specific, active desire. One such example is *Prima Pars*, q. 12, a. 1, where Thomas argues from the impossibility that a natural desire be in vain that it must be granted that the vision of God is possible. Cajetan comments on this article, “It does not seem true that a created intellect naturally desires to see God, because nature is not endowed with an inclination for that which the whole power of nature cannot produce.” Continuing, he argues that this is so because, “…according to St. Thomas’s doctrine, as was said in the first article of this work, man is ordered not naturally but obedientially to that happiness.” Cajetan’s subsequent solution is

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114 Ibid., p. 4 [Lyons 207b13]. One should note that Cajetan speaks customarily of a *potentia obedientialis* rather than a *potentia obedientiae*, where the medieval authors at times used one or the other of the two terms. There seems to have been a gradual shift in preference over several centuries from one to the other. Recognition of this development, I will refer henceforth to an “obediential potency” rather than a “potency for obedience.” A detailed study of the history of this term remains a desideratum. As a preliminary contribution to that scholarly need, see my “Recasting Augustine to Look like Aristotle: Philip the Chancellor, Natural Desire, and the Advent of *potentia obedientiae*,” *Nova et Vetera* (English Edition) (forthcoming).

115 Cajetan, *In Iam*, q. 12, a. 1, n. 9 [Leon. 4:116]. “Non enim videtur verum quod intellectus creatus naturaliter desideret videre Deum: quoniam natura non largitur inclinationem ad aliquid, ad quod tota vis naturae perduere nequit.”

116 Ibid. “Apud s. Thomae… doctrinam, ut dictum est in primo articulo huius operis, homo non naturaliter, sed obedientialiter ordinatur in felicitatem illam.”
creative. It is not the case, he suggests, that from any natural knowledge we could know about the possibility of the vision of God. However, if we were to encounter some effect of grace or glory, we could naturally desire to know the specific cause of this effect. That being the case, Cajetan concludes that our natural desire would be vain if the created intellect “could not” see God.\footnote{Ibid., no. 10. “...Creatura rationalis potest dupliciter considerari: uno modo absolute, alio modo ut ordinata est ad felicitatem. Si primo modo consideretur, sic naturale eius desiderium non se extendit ultra naturae facultatem: et sic concedo quod non naturaliter desiderat visionem Dei in se absolute. Si vero secundo modo consideretur, sic naturaliter desiderat visionem Dei: quia, ut sic, novit quosdam effectus, puta gratiae et gloriae, quorum causa est Deus, ut Deus est in se absolute, non ut universale agens. Notis autem effectibus, naturale est cuilibet intellectualis desiderare notitiam causae. Et propter desiderium visionis divinae, etsi non sit naturale intellectui creato absolute, est tamen naturale ei, supposita revelatione talium effectuum. Et sic tam ratio hic allegata, quam reliquae rationes ad idem collectae in cap. L. Tertii Contra Gentes, concludunt inane fore desiderium intellectualis naturae creatae, si Deum videre non possit.”}

Cajetan’s argument, which clearly circumvents the one expressed in Thomas’s text, curiously combines elements of Cajetan’s own synthesis with elements of Thomas’s. In denying natural knowledge of the possibility of the vision of God as a premise, Cajetan is closer to Scotus than Thomas. From there, however, Cajetan simply transposes Thomas’s argument from the \textit{Summa contra Gentiles} and from the \textit{Summa theologiae} about our natural desire for the complete fulfillment of our potency for knowledge from the realm of the natural to the realm of the supernatural. Since, for Cajetan, our natural desire does not concern the fulfillment of our obediential potency, the existence of our obediential potency first has to be revealed to us, and only then can we can desire its fulfillment. But when Cajetan argues on the basis that we can form such a desire once the existence of our obediential potency is revealed to us, and then that we can know that the vision of God is possible, he is inconsistent. Such a conclusion would indeed follow from Thomas’s principles of natural desire, but not from Cajetan’s. For
consistency’s sake, Cajetan would have to say that our subsequent natural desire for vision of God would make the vision due nature in actual fact.\footnote{118}

In his commentary on *Prima Secundae*, q. 3, a. 8, Cajetan issues a similar note of caution:

> And note in the eighth article that those words of the text, that the human intellect, having known nothing but whether the first cause is, has a natural desire to know what the first cause is, do not lack ambiguity. The reason for this is that a natural desire does not exceed the power of nature, nor is there a natural desire of human nature’s or any created nature’s intellect for a supernatural operation.\footnote{119}

Cajetan’s response is surprising. Having declined to consider natural potency subjectively and passively in the *Quaestio de natura receptivae potentiae*, here he uses that manner of considering natural potency as the solution to the argument. If we consider our nature insofar as it is has been ordered by divine providence to the vision of God, then we can say that we “naturally” desire the vision of God, so long as the adverb “naturally” does not apply to the mode of that desire, since this would mean we had an active, specific desire for the vision of God arising from our nature.\footnote{120} For Cajetan, we can desire the vision of God for our nature by grace, but there is no sense in which we can desire it with a desire that arises at first from within our nature.

\footnote{118} Cf. Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God*, 171.

\footnote{119} Cajetan, *In Iam-IIae*, q. 3, a. 8, n. 1 [Leon. 6:36]. “Et averte in octavo articulo quod illa verba litterae, quod intellectus humanus, non cognita prima causa nisi an est, habet naturale desiderium ad cognoscendam primam causam quid est, etc., non carent ambiguitate; propterea quia naturale desiderium non excedit vir naturae, nec est ad supernaturalem operationem, non solum ipsius, sed omnis intellectus creati.”

\footnote{120} Ibid. “Sed haec citius solvuntur, si desiderium naturale distinguitur iuxta praedicta in I Libro, in principio. Desiderium namque potest dici naturale a natura ut subiecto tantum: et sic naturaliter desideramus visionem Dei. Et a natura ut subiecto et modo: et sic procedunt objectiones.” Cajetan goes on to add, “Posset quoque dici quod Auctor tractat de homine ut theologus… Et sic, licet homini absolute non insit naturale huiusmodi desiderium, est tamen naturale homini ordinato a divina providentia in illam patriam, etc.”
If Cajetan’s view of natural desire is radically divergent from that of Thomas, it does not mean that is divergent in every respect. Cajetan’s adoption of a doctrine of obediential potency preserved in his teaching one of Thomas’s most fundamental insights: man is absolutely passive with respect to grace.

The soul’s potency for grace is in a certain manner natural, insofar as the act of the free will, by which we are prepared for grace, is educed from the natural potency of the free will. Moreover, it is supernatural insofar as that act, as a disposition for grace, can only occur solely from the gratuitous motion of God. And this form, namely grace, is of the highest order, above every order of nature…

Cajetan here preserves Thomas’s fundamental insight concerning the relationship between nature and grace, even if the means by which he preserves this is the adoption of a doctrine of obediential potency that is somewhat extraneous to Thomas’s thought.

Accordingly, Cajetan left Thomism with a mixed legacy. In one sense, he can be said to have radically altered Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire, by confusing the role played in natural desire by the active and passive principles in the soul. Where Thomas thought that generality in our natural desire should be attributed to the active principle and specificity to the passive

121 Cajetan, *In Iam-IIae*, q. 103, a. 10, n. 5 [Leon. 7:343]. “…Potentia animae ad gratiam est quodammodo naturalis, pro quanto actus liberi arbitrii quo praeparatur ad gratiam, educitur de potentia naturali liberi arbitrii. Est autem supernaturalis, pro quanto actus ille, ut dispositio ad gratiam, a sola gratuita Dei motione esse potest; et forma ipsa, scilicet gratia, supræmi ordinis est, super totum naturæ ordinem…” Cf. Ralph McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2006), 80-81.

122 Even here one sees a further confirmation of the difference between Thomas and Cajetan on the question of natural desire. For Thomas, as we saw in the previous chapter, the natural desire of the will prepares us for grace, because it has only a general terminus in its active principle, and stands open to the vision of God in its passive principle. For Cajetan, on the other hand, it is only the free desire of the will which prepares us for grace. Since the natural desire of the will has a specific terminus, it is only in the free desire of the will that man is open to the influence of grace, whereby the will might be ordered to a higher object. Cf. *In Iam*, q. 82, a. 1, no. 7 [Leon. 5:294].
principle, Cajetan thought that generality in our natural desire should be attributed to the passive principle and specificity to the active principle. For this reason, rather than suggesting that our natural desire proves the possibility of the vision of God, since our passive potency for receiving it can be known naturally, Cajetan argues that if we had a natural desire for the vision of God, it would prove the actuality of the vision of God and make it due nature, because it would have to correspond with a specific, active desire. However, Cajetan did not diverge from Thomas in all respects. By positing a doctrine of obediential potency to account for nature’s receptivity to grace, Cajetan saved Thomas’s insight into nature’s passivity with respect to grace, even if he did not preserve that passivity in the same way that Thomas had.

D. Natural Desire in Francisco Suárez

However much influence Cajetan may have had on the Thomism of the early twentieth century, Jesuits in the early twentieth century, including de Lubac, were taught Thomism through the lens of Francisco Suárez. For that reason, one should observe the basic features of Suárez’s doctrine, so that one may also see how it exercises both positive and negative influences on de Lubac. Suárez’s doctrine is also important in itself, because, as Lawrence Feingold notes, most scholastics after him would follow in broad terms his position on the terminus of our natural desire, whether in the Jesuit tradition they read Suárez directly, or in the Dominican tradition.

\footnote{For an introduction to the life and works of Suárez, see John P. Doyle, “Francisco Suárez, his Life, his Works, his Doctrine,” in \textit{Collected Studies on Francisco Suárez, S.J. (1548-1617)}, ed. Victor M. Salas (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2010), 1-20.}
they read this doctrine mediately through John of St. Thomas, who subsequently adopted the doctrine for his own.\textsuperscript{124}

In addition to his conceptual influence on the twentieth century, Suárez is also important for his terminological influence on it. Just as Scotus set the terms for late medieval scholasticism by his critique of the term, \textit{ratio seminalis}, so Suárez set the terms for early modern and early twentieth century scholasticism by another terminological shift. Where late thirteenth century theologians, following Bonaventure and Thomas, had discussed natural and deliberate desires, and fourteenth to mid-sixteenth century theologians, following Scotus and Cajetan, had discussed natural and elicited desires, Suárez, following his confrère and predecessor, Gabriel Vasquez, speaks more often of innate and elicited desires.\textsuperscript{125} Yet unlike Scotus, for whom the terminological shift was coupled with a substantial revision to the doctrine associated with the traditional terms, Suárez’s use of the term, “innate desire,” is a bit more pragmatic, in view of the fact that “natural” is susceptible to many different possible meanings and could be easily misunderstood.\textsuperscript{126}

Suárez describes an innate appetite thus: “…Properly, it is nothing other than the natural propensity, which each and every thing has towards some good. In passive potencies, this inclination is nothing other than a natural capacity, and a proportion with its perfection, but in

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{124} Feingold, \textit{The Natural Desire to See God}, 267.
\item \textsuperscript{125} On this terminological shift, see Feingold, \textit{The Natural Desire to See God}, 218-21.
\item \textsuperscript{126} Francisco Suárez, \textit{Disputationes Metaphysicae}, disp. 1, §6, n. 4, in \textit{Opera Omnia}, vol. 25 (Paris: Vivès, 1856-66), 54. “Alter igitur teminus exponendus, erat naturaliter; appetitus enim naturalis multipliciter dicitur; interdum enim naturale dicitur, quod ab ipsa natura datum est, neque est effectum per proporiam ipsius hominis, verbi gratia, actionem, seu effectionem. Et hoc modo omnis appetitus innatus, naturalis est, et ipse etiam appetitus elicivitius; non tamen appetitus seu actus elicivus, ut ex data terminorum expositione satis constat.” Suárez goes on to note that several other senses of the term, including as it is distinguished from free, supernatural, violent, and preternatural.
active potencies, it is the natural ability to act itself.”\textsuperscript{127} As with all the other authors considered, Suárez suggests that we see an innate appetite both in matter’s desire for form, as well as the desire of the intellectual faculties of the soul for their respective \textit{termini}.\textsuperscript{128} Since Suárez follows Scotus in attributing positive, entitative content to matter apart from form,\textsuperscript{129} Suárez, like Scotus, circumvents the problem of the determinacy that form communicates to matter by suggesting that matter’s desire for form arises independently of form’s communicating anything to matter.

In Suárez’s description of innate appetite, one sees a certain similarity with Cajetan’s doctrine of natural desire. For both Suárez and Cajetan, innate desires (to use Suárez’s terminology), while they arise from the powers of nature, cannot exceed the faculties of nature. In Suárez, this is evident from the use of the word “proportion” to describe the relationship between a passive potency and its act, and from his description of an active potency as being equivalent to the natural ability to act. Here also, therefore, one sees the very possibility of Thomas’s synthesis excluded by definition. The inclination of any passive potency towards the

\textsuperscript{127} Suárez, \textit{Disputationes Metaphysicae}, disp. 1, §6, n. 3 [Vivès 25:53]. “...Proprie... nihil aliud est quam naturalis propensio, quam unaquaque res habet in aliquod bonum, quae inclinatio in potentiiis passivis nihil aliud est quam naturalis capacitas, et proportio cum sua perfectione, in activis vero est ipsa naturalis facultas agendi.”

Cf. Suárez, \textit{Disputationes Metaphysicae}, disp. 15, §6, n. 3 [Vivès 25:519]. “...[Appetitus innatus] improprie ac metaphorice dictus est appetitus; propri vero nihil aliud est quam naturalis propensio, quam unaquaque res habet in aliquod bonum, quae inclinatio in potentiiis passivis nihil aliud est quam naturalis capacitas, et proportio cum sua perfectione, in activis vero est ipsa naturalis facultas agendi.” Also cf. Suárez, \textit{De fine hominis}, disp. 16, §1, n. 1 [Vivès 4:149]. “...Omnis... potencia naturaliter inclinatur ad actum sibi connaturalum, praesertim ad perfectissimum : omne enim perfectibile appetit suam perfectionem...”

\textsuperscript{128} Suárez, \textit{Disputationes Metaphysicae}, disp. 1, §6, n. 14 [Vivès 25:57]. “...[Pondus naturae]... non est aliud quam intellectus ipse et capacitas ejus, qua scientiam resipicit, ut propriam perfectionem... sicut enim in materia prima appetitus ad formam non est aliud ab ipsa materia, et naturali ejus capacitate, et similiter in omni alia potencia appetitus ad suum actum non est aliud additum ipsi potentiae, sed naturalis constitutio et aptitudo, ita in intellectu se habet appetitus ad scientiam.” Cf. Disputationes Metaphysicae, disp. 13, §11, n. 14 [Vivès 25:444]; \textit{De fine hominis}, disp. 16, §1, n. 3 [Vivès 4:150].

\textsuperscript{129} Suárez, \textit{Disputationes Metaphysicae}, disp. 13, §4, nn. 8-9 [Vivès 25:411-12]. In n. 10 [Vivès 25:412], he goes on to support this doctrine with the same argument that Scotus had used.
vision of God is excluded, because the vision of God is not proportioned to any passive potency in nature. The inclination of any active potency towards the complete fulfillment of such a passive potency is excluded, because there is no such thing as a natural, active power to see God.

If Suárez follows Cajetan in restricting innate desires by naturally achievable ends, Suárez’s and Cajetan’s respective accounts of innate desire are not alike in all respects. Suárez criticizes the manner in which Cajetan conceived of the innate desire of the will. As Suárez explains, when Cajetan says that an innate desire posits no antecedent inclination of the will, but only a necessity with respect to specification (necessitas quoad specificationem), there are two ways that this could be understood. In the first way, the intellect presents an end to the will, which necessarily prompts the will to act of its own accord; in the second way, the object presented to the will acts as a partial efficient cause of the will’s action. The first, Suárez notes, is impossible, because it would destroy the freedom of the will if the will could be moved of necessity by an extrinsic object. The second, which Suárez takes to have been Cajetan’s position, suggests that the will requires the intellect in order to be constituted in its first act. Suárez criticizes this position, too, suggesting that the will, like every other power, is sufficient to constitute itself in its first act. It does not require the intellect in order simply to exist.

Suárez’s criticism highlights an important discrepancy in Cajetan’s work. In attempting to avoid one kind of neutrality through his critique of neutral potency, Cajetan embraced another. By denying the will any sort of intrinsic, natural act of its own, Cajetan made the will in itself an effectively neutral potency, which depended on the intellect for its determination. In other words,

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130 For what follows, see Suárez, *Tractatus de Anima*, lib. 5, cap. 3, nn. 3-8 [Vivès 3:758-61]. Suárez provides several other arguments against Cajetan than the ones I will list here. For reasons of space, I will discuss the ones most pertinent to the question of nature desire.
where Thomas had posited in both the intellect and the will a *ratio seminalis*, consisting of an active and passive principle, Cajetan partially removes the active principle from the will, and substitutes the intellect’s active principle for it.

Suárez thus came a step closer to Thomas on the question of the innate desire of the will by preserving the active principle within the will intact. Yet ironically, he only did so by embracing another doctrine of Scotus. In Scotus, matter’s entitative existence had been the conceptual basis of the independence of the will’s natural desire from natural knowledge. In Suárez’s critique of Cajetan, this same Scotistic doctrine serves as a basis from which to suggest that the will’s active inclination in first act is completely independent from that of the intellect. The result is that in order to avoid attributing *efficient* causality to the intellect with respect to the will, Suárez denies *formal* causality to the intellect with respect to the first act of the will.\(^\text{131}\)

Accordingly, Suárez also departs from Thomas, for whom the bounds of natural desire in the will follow formally from the bounds of the first principles of practical knowledge in the intellect.

By freeing the innate desire of the will from any formal restriction, Suárez, like Scotus, was then able to posit freely a specific *terminus* for the innate desire of the will. But Suárez parts from Scotus on the particular term that he assigns the innate desire of the will. Scotus, suggests Suárez, held that it could be proved from natural reason that we are capable of the vision of God.\(^\text{132}\) However, this is not entirely accurate. Scotus actually held the opposite, since he requires Revelation to tell us whether the restriction of our intellectual faculties to knowledge drawn from our encounter with the material world in this state would ever be removed in some

\(^{131}\) Cf. Suárez, *De fine hominis*, disp. 1, § 1, nn. 7-8 [Vivès 4:3].

\(^{132}\) Suárez begins to reference Scotus’s position at ibid., disp. 4, §2, n. 2 [Vivès 4:41].
other state. For Scotus, even if we did come to know by natural reason that we are capable of the vision of God, that would never tell us for Scotus—any more than it would for Thomas—whether that vision would at any point be actual. For Scotus, as for Thomas, our capacity for the vision of God proves that it is possible, not that it is actual. But this is not so for Suárez. Following Cajetan, Suárez interprets Aristotle’s dictum that nature does nothing in vain to mean not only that our desire for beatitude makes it possible for us to achieve said beatitude, but also that some members of our species actually will achieve it. The reason for this is that:

...What never happens among any individuals of some species, no matter how much the species is multiplied, is rightly said to be impossible, if not physically or metaphysically, at least morally and in a human manner of speaking. Moreover, it pertains to the Author of Nature’s Providence, and is in a certain manner due (debitum) to human nature itself that it be so guided towards its end, that it can reach it.

Here, as in Giles, one encounters the language of “debt” applied to God with respect to creatures. Giles used it in a qualified sense to describe a necessity of fittingness for God to make man with the gifts of original justice, lest man be created in such a way that he could not reach his final end. In Suárez, it appears at first to be used in a more demonstrative and less qualified manner. However, Suárez issues the same sort of qualifier: “…I did not say that the arguments just made were demonstrations, but rather extremely compelling moral arguments, which show the manner

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133 Suárez, De fine hominis, disp. 4, §3, n. 4 [Vivès 4:42].

134 Ibid., n. 6 [Vivès 4:42].

135 Ibid. “…Quod nunquam accidit in omnibus individuis alicujus speciei etiamsi quam plurima multiplicentur, merito dici potest impossibile, si non omnino physice, seu metaphysice, saltem moraliter, et humano modo loquendo: pertinet autem ad providentiam auctoris naturae, et quodammodo debitum est ipsi humanae naturae ita dirigi in suum finem, ut possit illum consequi.” Cf. Suárez, De fine hominis, disp. 1, §4, n. 2 [Vivès 4:7].
of providence most befitting God’s wisdom and goodness.”¹³⁶ Suárez, like Giles, wants to avoid any hint of Pelagianism.

Still, if Suárez thinks that his argument concerning the actuality of beatitude is only an argument from fittingness, that does not stop him from employing it in subsequent discussion. Describing the supernatural character of the vision of God, Suárez notes:

…If that beatitude is supernatural, then God could, without a miracle, make man without ordering him to that beatitude, nor providing him the mode or means by which he could reach it. [God] would do nothing against or beyond that which is due (debitum) to such a nature, but man, created thus, would necessarily have some natural beatitude (beatitudo naturalis), to which he could arrive if he wished. Therefore it is necessary that some natural beatitude in human nature be granted beyond its supernatural beatitude.¹³⁷

Suárez’s statement here seems to be at odds with the qualifier he had just issued about the language of debt. If God is in no debt to creatures, then the argument advanced by Suárez can only be construed as an argument of fittingness, not a demonstration. Nevertheless, Suárez says that the conclusion is “necessary,” and explains the minor term in this argument by arguing from the fact that human nature is “capable of some proportionate beatitude that is connatural with it,” to conclude, “that therefore some natural beatitude must be granted above supernatural beatitude.

¹³⁶ Ibid., n. 7 [Vivès 4:43]. “…Non dixi rationes factas esse demonstrationes, sed morales rationes multum suadentes et ostendentes modum providentiae maxime consentaneum divinae sapientiae et bonitati.”

¹³⁷ Suárez, De fine hominis, disp. 4, §3, n. 3 [Vivès 4:44]. “…Si beatitudo illa supernaturalis est, potuit ergo Deus absque miraculo condere hominem non ordinando illum ad illam beatitudinem, nec providendo illi modum, aut media, quibus illam consequi possit, in quo nihil ageret contra, vel praeter id, quod debitum est tali naturae; sed homo sic conditus necessario habiturus esset aliquam beatitudinem naturalemad quam, si velit, possit pervenire: ergo necesse est praeter supernaturalem beatitudinem dari in humana natura aliquam beatitudinem naturalem.”
in human nature.” Either Suárez has spoken imprecisely, or there is some further layer of subtlety to his argument.

If one considers again that Suárez thinks that innate desires are always proportionate to natural powers, the missing term in the above argument emerges more clearly. Suárez fills it in later on:

It is possible for man to reach... natural beatitude by means which are proportionate and suitable to nature. This conclusion can be proved first by common arguments: that the means must be proportionate to the end, hence we gather that supernatural means must be necessary in order to reach supernatural beatitude; likewise, since nature does not incline towards an end except by sufficient means, and the Author of Nature does not institute or order the one [i.e. nature] except by the other [i.e. proportionate means to its end], since Providence would be very diminished [otherwise]. Likewise, since every other created nature can reach its natural end by means befitting the nature—why therefore would human nature be in a worse condition?

According to Suárez, since innate desires are proportionate to naturally achievable ends, if man has an innate desire for beatitude, it must be the case that man has the natural means of obtaining the goal of its desire. Consequently, if God established man in a state without the call or the means to the vision of God, it must be the case that man would be able to use the means provided

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138 Ibid., n. 4 [Vivès 4:44]. “…Homo sic creatus haberet aliquem finem ultimum, et illum posset suis actionibus aliquo modo attingere cognoscendo et amando illum: ergo esseet capax alicujus beatitudinis proportionatae et connaturalis sibi: ergo in humana natura datur aliqua beatitudo proportionatae praeter superanturalem.”

139 Suárez, De fine hominis, disp. 15, §2, n. 6 [Vivès 4:147-48]. “Possibile est hominem consequi hanc beatitudinem naturalem per media naturae proportinatae et consentanea. Haece conclusio probari potest primo rationibus communibus, quod media esse debent proportionata fini, hinc enim colligimus ad superanturalem beatitudinem assequendam necessaria esse superanturali media. Item, quia natura non inclinat ad finem nisi per sufficientia media: neque auctor naturae unum instituit, seu ordinat nisi per alium, quia esset valde diminuata providentia. Item quia omnes aliae naturae creatae possunt assequi suas fines naturales per media consentanea naturae; cur ergo natura humana erit in hoc pejoris conditionis?”
by nature to achieve the beatitude to which they are proportioned. Suárez seems to think that this argument is demonstrative.\footnote{140}{It is in this vein that one can understand Suárez’s comment in De fine hominis, disp. 16, §1, n. 10 [Vivès 4:153]. “Unde revera fit ordinationem ad hunc [naturalem] finem esse intrinsecce debitam naturae humanae, quia nihil est magis debitum, quam ordinatio ad ultimum finem…”}

However, saying that human nature has the proportionate means to reach a proportionate end, and that human nature could choose to apply these proportionate means to that proportionate end, is not the same as saying that human nature would, if established without any grace, actually reach a proportionate natural beatitude. Suárez recognizes that any number of impediments could, in fact, prevent human nature from successfully achieving that proportionate beatitude towards which its innate desire and its natural faculties are oriented.\footnote{141}{Suárez, Tractatus de fine hominis, disp. 15, §2, n. 9 [Vivès 4:148].} Consequently, God would not be bound in a strict sense to govern human affairs so as to remove these impediments and to ensure that man \textit{actually} reached the beatitude which he otherwise \textit{could} reach.

This providence would not be due to man, properly speaking, but would come from a certain liberality of God, which, if I may so speak, God would owe to himself, i.e., to his providence, his wisdom, and his goodness. But it would differ from the providence of grace in this: man would not be elevated to a supernatural end or to supernatural means by it, but only impediments would be removed, so that man could carry out his natural activity well. But God would provide better for man, and take away every difficulty, by conferring grace and supernatural gifts upon him.\footnote{142}{Ibid., n. 11. “…Haec autem providentia non esset debita homini, proprio loquendo, sed esset ex quadam liberalitate Dei, quam, ut ita dicam, Deus sibi ipsi deberet, id est, suae providentiae et sapientiae, ac bonitati. Differret autem a providentia gratiae in hoc, quod per eam non elevaretur homo ad finem, vel media supernaturalia, sed tantum tollerentur impedimenta, ut posset bene naturaliter operari: melius autem Deus homini providit, et omnes difficultates abstulit, gratiam et supernaturalia dona illi conferendo.”}
Suárez’s argument is very subtle. Like Thomas, Suárez holds that our capacity for beatitude proves only the possibility, not the actuality, of achieving it. However, unlike Thomas, Suárez holds that our capacity for beatitude is restricted to a naturally achievable beatitude. Thus, while for Suárez it can be demonstrated that man could be created without grace with a natural end and a natural means to that end (which would otherwise seem the same as saying that he would actually achieve that end), it cannot demonstrated whether man would actually achieve his natural end in such a state because of impediments that could prevent him from doing so.

If we did have an innate desire for any effect that could not be achieved naturally, Suárez thinks that we would have, by consequence, an indistinct desire for any sort of supernatural fulfillment whatsoever, rather than some particular end, and that our desire could never be truly fulfilled, since however intensely we enjoyed the vision of God there would already remain in us an unfulfilled potency for a greater participation in that vision. Suárez only attributes this consequence to Scotus, though one could say that the argument would apply equally to Thomas. Thomas and Scotus both agree that man’s receptive potency includes what Cajetan and Suárez would refer to as natural passive potency and obediential potency.

Given his insistence that man’s natural desire must have a naturally achievable end, Suárez then encounters the difficulty, as had Cajetan, of explaining what Thomas was supposed to have meant when he describes man as having a natural (or in Suárez’s terminology, innate)

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143 Ibid., n. 8 [Vivès 4:153].
144 Ibid., n. 7 [Vivès 4:152].

Here, however, Suárez again departs from Thomas, for whom it is one thing for the intellect to be formed by the vision of God, and another for it to receive a more intense participation in that vision in virtue of having been disposed by charity to a greater reception of the lumen gloriae. As noted in the previous chapter, being formed by the vision of God fulfills all of the intellect’s potency at once, whatever degree of participation in vision a given intellect receives.
desire for the vision of God. Here, Suárez makes his own the common insistence: “Thomas’s discussion here is very difficult…” Suárez’s solution is to put aside the question of innate desire and to focus only on elicited desires. By his own power man can elicit a conditional desire for the vision of God, “if it were possible”. This desire can proceed from two sources. If it proceeds from a judgment of natural reason, then not achieving it is not troubling, since natural reason does not know that God has chosen to provide the means to this vision, and so it appears as something impossible. If it proceeds from an encounter with Revelation, which reveals to us the existence of our obediential potency for the vision of God as well as the existence of grace, then, as for Cajetan, the desire becomes in some way insatiable without the possession of that vision. But here Suárez distinguishes himself from Cajetan. The insatiability of the desire does not proceed principally from the Revelation of the existence of our obediential potency. To say so would be the equivalent of admitting an innate desire for the fulfillment of an obediential potency. Rather, it comes principally from the revelation of the existence of the end, together with the offer of the means. Man’s natural, elicited desire for the vision of God, according to Suárez, always contains the condition, “if it were possible.” But revelation tells man that it is possible, thus changing the character of the desire.

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146 Suárez, De divina substantia ejusque attributis, lib. 2, cap. 9 [Vivès 1:66]. “…Hic discursus D. Thomae est valde difficilis…” Suárez makes this comment when discussing the text of S.T., Ia, q. 12, a. 1. Ironically, when he later returns to the matter in discussing the Prima Secundae, he distances himself from other scholastics who proclaim, “D. Thomas autem non videtur satis clare in hac materia locutus.” Cf. De fine hominis, disp. 16, §1, n. 6 [Vivès 4:152].

147 Suárez, De fine hominis, disp. 16, §2, n. 7 [Vivès 4:155].

148 Suárez, De fine hominis, disp. 16, §2, n. 8 [Vivès 4:156].

149 Suárez, De fine hominis, disp. 16, §2, n. 4 [Vivès 4:155].

150 It is worth considering, however, whether Suárez may ultimately have fallen into the same difficulty as Cajetan. An encounter with Revelation only leads to an elicited appetite to the extent that one firmly believes that
Like Cajetan, Suárez leaves Thomism with something of a mixed legacy. On the question of the will’s active principle, Suárez corrected Cajetan’s Scotistic misreading of Thomas, but he only did so by appealing to two other Scotistic principles: prime matter’s entitative existence apart from form, and related to that, the will’s constitution in first act completely apart from the intellect. Such a position, however, allowed Suárez the freedom to adopt another Scotistic position: a determinate natural desire, which does not constrain the freedom of the will in any way. Adopting such a position, however, raised the question of the terminus of our determined desire. Accepting Cajetan’s premise that natural desires must be able to be fulfilled by natural active powers, Suárez argued that it is demonstrable that man could be created in a state without grace, called “pure nature,” in which he were left to seek the end of his natural inclination with his natural powers for doing so. In that state, as well as our present state, man’s “natural” desire for the vision of God could only be a conditional, elicited desire, which sought the vision of God “if it were possible.” But man could never form an unconditional desire for that vision; such would require the grace of faith, whereby we hold with absolute certainty that God’s offer of grace as a means to the vision of himself is real.

what is contained in Revelation is true. Otherwise, one is left with the following condition: “If what Christian Revelation says is true, then I desire to see God with the grace he provides to do so.” But this reduces more simply to saying, “If it is possible, then…” since what is at issue is whether what Christian Revelation proposes is actually the case. In order to say that an encounter with Christian Revelation, absent the working of grace, changes the character of natural desire, one would have to suggest, with Scotus, that man generally cannot even conceive of the possibility of the vision of God without it being suggested by Revelation. Yet even here, the difference created by the encounter with Revelation would not be the difference between a conditional desire and an unconditional desire; it would be a difference between no desire (i.e. not knowing about the vision of God) or a purely subjective desire (desiring one’s highest perfection, whatever that might be), and an explicitly conditional desire for what Revelation proposes, on the condition that what it proposes is true.
E. Developments in the Aegidian Tradition

The single most influential position of Suárez’s with respect to natural desire was the hypothesis of a state of pure nature. The importance of this hypothesis came to the fore, when two theologians, Michael de Bay (“Baius”) (1513-89), and Cornelius Jansen (1585-1638), upset the delicate balance that Giles had originally struck concerning the qualified “debt” of grace and the gratuity of the beatific vision. Both Baius and Jansen followed Giles broadly on two important theses. First, the beatific vision is the only possible end for human nature. Second, human nature is subject to a certain natural rebellion of the body against the soul, such that the human person is not able to persevere in the good on his/her own, even if such a person were created in a hypothetical state of pure nature. Unlike Giles, however, who taught that God could justly withhold original justice, even if this would seem contrary to his Providence, both Baius and Jansen alleged that if humanity were created in state of pure nature without even original justice, then the blame for our failure to persevere in the good and to reach our final end would redound onto God for not having made us aright. Their respective resolutions of this quandary, though different, have a similar effect. For Baius, God would therefore not only be

151 The works of Baius relevant to this controversy are collected in Michael Baius, *Opuscula theologica* (Louvain: Joannes Bogard, 1566). The propositions of his censured by Pius V can be found in *DS* 1901-80.

152 The main work of Jansen relevant to this controversy is the posthumously published *Augustinus*, 3 vols. (Louvain: Jacobus Zegers, 1640).

153 For Baius, see *De meritis operum*, lib. 1, cap. 2-3, in *Opuscula theologica*, 3-7. For Jansen, see *De statu purae naturae*, lib. 2, cap. 2-3, in *Augustinus*, vol. 2, col. 681-92.

154 For Baius, see *De prima hominis iustitia*, lib. 1, cap. 4, in *Opuscula theologica*, 52. For Jansen, see *De statu purae naturae*, lib. 2, cap. 20-21, in *Augustinus*, vol. 2, col. 867-76.

155 Ibid.
constrained to grant us original justice in a state of pure nature, but also to grant the vision of himself as a reward to our nature if we kept the natural law.\textsuperscript{156} For Jansen, God would at least not be constrained to grant the beatific vision to purely natural acts, but, in order for us to have the opportunity of reaching our final end, God would be constrained in strict justice to create us in original grace.\textsuperscript{157} In either case, what were for Giles and the other scholastics God’s gifts become his debts to nature: glory for Baius,\textsuperscript{158} and grace for Jansen.\textsuperscript{159}

After Suárez, theologians in the Dominican and Jesuit traditions did not face any great difficulty in repelling the Bainist and Jansenis challenges. By recourse to the hypothesis of a state of pure nature, members of each tradition could easily establish the gratuity of the vision of God by showing how it would possible for God to withhold it.\textsuperscript{160} The same was not true, however, for members of the Aegidian tradition: Giles had denied the fittingness of a state of pure nature, and so they were forced to seek some sort of alternative solution.

In response to the Bainist and Jansenis challenges to the gratuity of grace and glory, one begins to see a divergence within the Aegidian tradition on how best to continue to defend the gratuity of grace. One approach is typified by the work of Michael Paludanus, OESA (1593-1653). In his \textit{Tractatus de fine et beatitudine},\textsuperscript{161} Paludanus borrows elements from supporters of pure nature. Following Suárez, he affirms the idea that man has an innate desire, which

\textsuperscript{156} Baius, \textit{De meritis operum}, lib. 1, cap. 2, in \textit{Opuscula theologica}, 5-7.

\textsuperscript{157} Jansen, \textit{De statu purae naturae}, lib. 1, cap. 2, in \textit{Augustinus}, vol. 2, col. 685.

\textsuperscript{158} Baius, \textit{De prima hominis iustitia}, lib. 1, cap. 9-11, in \textit{Opuscula theologica}, 61-66.

\textsuperscript{159} Jansen, \textit{De statu purae naturae}, lib. 1., cap. 15, in \textit{Augustinus}, vol. 2, col. 745-52.

\textsuperscript{160} De Lubac, \textit{Surnaturel}, 150, 162, 173-75.

\textsuperscript{161} Michael Paludanus, \textit{Tractatus de fine et beatitudine} (Louvain: Andrea Bouvetius, 1664).
terminates in naturally achievable knowledge of God. But he does not accept the premise undergirding Suárez’s reasoning that we must limit innate desires to what is naturally achievable; for an Aegidian, whatever desire we have for God can only terminate in the beatific vision. According to Paludanus, our natural end could nowise be suitably called our “final end,” nor could it be called a “different” end. It is, rather, an imperfect participation of our final end, which, though it does not satisfy all of our capacity for God, is nevertheless the possible terminus of our natural powers.

Paludanus’s position had the advantage of satisfying the objections of those who thought that the gratuity of grace could not be salvaged without at least some affirmation of a naturally achievable end for humanity, while attempting to preserve the Aegidian denial that this end was in any sense a “natural beatitude.” Yet Paludanus’s conciliatory approach hardly satisfied fellow Aegidians. The problem was that the distinction between Paludanus’s imperfect beatitude and the natural beatitude proposed by supporters of pure nature seemed to be in name only. Either human nature’s natural end is completely satisfying, and then it is a different beatitude from the beatific vision proposed by Christian Revelation, or it is not completely satisfying, and then it is no sort of beatitude at all. For that reason, two other groups of Aegidians developed positions in response to Jansenism which tenaciously maintained Giles’s delicate balancing act about the debitum of grace.

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162 Ibid., disp. 13, p. 2 [Bouvetius 254B-55A]. On Suárez, see Francisco Suárez, De fine hominis, disp. 4 § 2, no. 3 [Vivès 4:41-42]. As for the nature of that beatitude, see ibid., disp. 15, § 1, n. 3 [Vivès 4:145]. “Dicendum est consequenter, hanc beatitudinem [naturalem] consistere in perfectissima naturali conjunctione cum Deo per intellectum et voluntatem, quantum ex creaturis naturali lumine intellectus cognoscì potest.”

163 Ibid., disp. 13, p. 3 [Bouvetius 256B-57A]. “In beatitudine naturali Deum se non habere sicut formam aut actum beatificantem, qui immediate sic nobis coniungatur ut eum possideamus. Nosque se ipso perficiat (quo modo se habet in beatitudine supernaturali). Nullum enim donum ordinis naturalis eo modo Deum homini potest coniungere; sed habet se solummodo tamquam obiectum alicuius nostri actus, illius scilicet cognitionis abstractivae, quae ad naturalem beatitudinem requiritur. . .”
The three main proponents of the first alternative to Paludanus were Enrico Noris, OESA (1631-1704), Fulgenzio Bellelli, OESA (1675–1742), and Giovanni Lorenzo Berti, OESA (1696–1766). Of the three, Berti gives the most complete systematic exposition of their doctrine in his *De theologicis disciplinis*.\(^{164}\) He begins first by distancing himself from Paludanus’s position. The abstractive knowledge of God cannot constitute a natural beatitude, because from mediate knowledge arises a desire for immediate vision; hence mediate knowledge cannot form the basis of a natural beatitude because it is inherently unsatisfying.\(^{165}\) Berti supports this argument on the basis of his understanding of what it means for man to be in the *imago dei*. The *imago dei*, he argues, is something natural in man.\(^{166}\) On account of this image, man is naturally capable of seeing God, and desires to do so.\(^{167}\) At this point, rather than capitulate to critics of the Aegidian tradition, Berti criticizes their fundamental principle that natural desires should be restricted to goals which are naturally achievable. He denies that principle’s applicability to the present question. Under no circumstances can we be said to have a right to grace and glory,

\(^{164}\) Giovanni Berti, *De theologicis disciplinis*, 10 vols. (Naples: Gaetano Migliaccio, 1776-84). This work is a careful, deliberate, and sustained explication of this branch of the Aegidian tradition. The main works of Noris and Bellelli, while still of intellectual value, were composed more as polemical defenses than as positive theological syntheses. For Noris, see Enrico Noris, *Vindiciae Augustinianae* (Brussels: Lambert Marchant, 1675). For Bellelli, see Fulgenzio Bellelli, *Mens Augustini de creaturae rationalis ante peccatum* (Lucerne: Anna Felicitas Hauttin, 1711) and *Mens Augustini de modo reparationis humanae naturae post lapsum adversus Baium et Jansenium*, 2 Vols. (Rome: Bernabò, 1737). For a thorough bibliography of primary sources for this period, including unpublished works, see Winfried Bocxe, *Introduction to the Teaching of the Italian Augustinians of the 18th Century on the Nature of Actual Grace* (Louvain: Augustinian Historical Institute, 1958), 6-10. Bocxe also contains transcriptions of extracts from a number of manuscripts on pp. 55-99.

\(^{165}\) Berti, *De theologicis disciplinis*, lib. 3, cap. 1, prop. 1-2 [Naples 1:66-68].

\(^{166}\) Berti, *De theologicis disciplinis*, lib. 12, cap. 7, prop. 2 [Naples 3:31B].

\(^{167}\) Ibid., *Additamentum* lib. 12, cap. 2 [Naples 3:78A].
because they lay outside our natural faculties. Hence, there is no antecedent theological need to postulate the possibility of their being withheld in order to safeguard their gratuity.

Of course, saying that there is no need to postulate a hypothetical state of pure nature in order to safeguard the gratuity of grace is not the same as denying the possibility of such a state. Berti does suggest that God could, de potentia absoluta, create man in a state in which our only final end, the beatific vision, were outside our reach. But in view of God’s Providence, by which he arranges all things for the good, one can hardly imagine a state in which God would create a creature without the means to its only end. In short, Berti takes Giles’s argument about the relative “debt” of original justice, and applies it now to the economy of grace more broadly speaking: for Giles, man is due original justice in a relative sense, because we could not persevere in moral uprightness without it; for Berti, man is due grace in the same relative sense, because we could not reach our only end without it.

The main proponent of the second alternative to Paludanus was Fulgence Lafosse, OESA (c. 1640 – post 1684). Lafosse, like Berti, employs the distinction between what God can do absolutely and what he would do in view of his Providence. In order to describe the extent and limits of God’s omnipotence, he distinguishes three kinds of power in God. First, there is what God can do absolutely, which includes anything that God can do without contradiction. Included

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168 His response to this principle begins at ibid., Additamentum lib. 12, cap. 2 [Naples 3:79B].


170 Berti, De theologicis disciplinis., lib. 13, cap. 3 [Naples: 3:101B-02A].


172 Lafosse, Augustinus theologus, 3:45-46. What follows is a summary of this passage.
in this power is the power to condemn the blessed, bless the damned, and raise the dead. Second, there is what God can do without injustice. This is divided first into what God can do *sine iniustititia condignitatis*, which includes anything that God can do without violating the strict and necessary demands of justice, which excludes the possibility of condemning the blessed or blessing the damned, but includes raising the dead. It is divided into what God can do *sine iniustititia congruitatis*, which includes anything that God can do without violating what it would be fitting for a just, provident God to do.

Like Berti, Lafosse considered the relationship between God’s power and human nature to man insofar as man is created in the *imago dei*. On the surface, Lafosse and Berti seem to agree: God could create man and not order him to the beatific vision; this would not be contrary to God’s justice absolutely, but it would be contrary to his Providence. Then Lafosse employs three subtle distinctions that Berti does not. First, there is the distinction between what God can do absolutely and what he can do *sine iniustititia condignitatis*; Berti had not made the first distinction, because for him, what God can do *de potentia absoluta* is synonymous with what God can do *sine iniustititia condignitatis*—God’s absolute power does not transcend the demands of justice. Second, there is a distinction between man created in the *imago dei* and called to the vision of God, and man created in the *imago dei* and not called to the vision of God. For Berti, man cannot be made in the *imago dei* yet not be called to the vision of God, because being made in the *imago dei* necessarily implies being called to the vision of God. For Lafosse, however, this call is contingent. Third, since the call of man to the beatific vision is contingent, Lafosse adds that our natural desire for the vision of God is the result of our actually having been called to the

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173 Ibid., 3:52.
vision of God in the present order of Providence. Consequently, for Lafosse, the desire for the vision of God is not constitutive of human nature as such, as it is for Berti; it is as contingent as our call to it. However, in the present providential economy, where we have been called to the vision of God and we do desire it, Lafosse affirms with Berti that having a natural desire for the vision of God does not make the vision due human nature.

Aegidian responses to Baianism and Jansenism thus proceeded in three directions. The first, exemplified by Michael Paludanus, attempts to include a naturally achievable beatitude within the scope of the beatific vision as an imperfect participation thereof, so as not to compromise the Aegidian commitment to the singularity of man’s final end, and argues that this natural beatitude could be the final act of man in a state of pure nature. The second, typified by Noris, Bellelli, and Berti, denied that natural desires must be naturally fulfillable. It maintained that the beatific vision is the necessary end of a rational creature, and that a desire for that vision is equally necessary in a rational creature. Yet this branch of the Aegidian tradition acknowledged the absolute possibility of a state of pure nature, even if such a possibility were unfitting for Providence. In such a state, man would still be called to the vision of God, but would not be ordered to it by grace; man would be a creature without the ability to reach its end. The third, put forth by Fulgence Lafosse, attempts to chart a middle course. Lafosse argues that the beatific vision is the contingent end of a rational creature, not its necessary end, and that the desire for that vision is equally contingent, since such a desire arises from the call of human nature to a particular end.

174 Ibid., 3:169.

175 Ibid., 3:174, 182-83.
Owing to the fact that Paludanus compromised the Aegidian commitment to the unicity of man’s final end, his thought did not receive much subsequent attention. Noris, Bellelli, Berti, and Lafosse, however, received significant criticism from those alleging their thought to be another form of Jansenism.\(^{176}\) Notwithstanding this criticism, their thought was never the subject of any formal theological censure. By admitting the absolute possibility of a state of pure nature, however remote, they avoided lapsing into Jansenism by denying that grace is due nature in a strict sense. Pope Benedict XIV went out of the way to assert, in the debates *De auxiliis*, that “since their opinion has never to this day been condemned by the Holy See,… no one can assert that they should withdraw from their opinion.”\(^{177}\) Their position thus continued throughout the eighteenth century as one among many acceptable theological opinions on the gratuity of grace.

In 1794, however, the situation changed, when Pope Pius VI condemned the Jansenist Synod of Pistoia in the constitution *Auctorem fidei*\(^ {178}\). Even though he did not condemn the Aegidian tradition, he did censure something fairly close to their position:

> When the Synod [of Pistoia] teaches, “that after the fall of Adam, God announced the promise of a future liberator, and wanted the human race to be consoled by the hope of the salvation, which Jesus Christ was going to bring about”; nevertheless “God willed the human race to pass through various states before the fullness of time came”; and first, that in the state of nature “man, left to his own light, would learn to despair of his blind reason, and would move himself from its aberrations to desire the help of a superior light”; the teaching, as it stands, is dangerous [*captiosa*], and, understood about the desire of a superior light ordered to the

\(^{176}\) E. Portalié, “Augustinianisme,” col. 2486, 2500.


\(^{178}\) Pius VI, Const. *Auctorem fidei* (DS 2600-2700).
salvation promised through Christ, to conceive of which man, left to his own light, is supposed to have been able to move himself: -- suspect [suspecta], favorable to the Semipelagian heresy.\footnote{ibid., 18 (DS 2618). “Doctrina Synodi enuntians, ‘post lapsum Adami Deum annuntiasset promissionem futuri liberatoris, et voluisset consolari genus humanum per spem salutis, quam Jesus Christus allaturus erat’; tamen ‘Deum voluisse, ut genus humanum transiret per varios status, antequam veniret plenitudo temporum’; ac primum, ut in statu naturae ‘homo relictus propriis luminibus disceret de sua caeca ratione diffidere, et ex suis aberrationibus moveret se ad desiderandum auxilium superioris luminis’; doctrina, ut iacet, captiosa, atque intellecta de desiderio adiutorii superioris luminis in ordine ad salutem promissam per Christum, ad quod concipiendum homo relictis suis propriis luminibus supponatur se sese potuisse movere: -- suspecta, favens haeresi Semipelagianae.”}

The second part of this censure is the more significant, where, although not precisely, Pius VI comes close to censuring a “natural desire for the supernatural.”\footnote{We should avert here that the position actually branded as “suspect” is technically one in which man elicits a desire for the supernatural based upon natural knowledge of its possibility, not one in which man has an innate desire for the supernatural, which precedes knowledge of its possibility.} However, the text does not condemn the position. “Suspect,” is not the same as, “false,” or, “erroneous,” which the text does elsewhere call the Jansenist teaching on the absolute debt of original justice.\footnote{Ibid. 16 (DS 2616).} Still, even branding the doctrine as “suspect” was enough to keep most theologians from defending anything close to it for nearly a century.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the Aegidian tradition continued in the posthumous publication of the *Institutiones Theologicae* of Michelangelo Marcelli, OESA, who had died in 1804.\footnote{Michelangelo Marcelli, *Institutiones theologicae*, 7 Vols. (Foligno: Francesco Xavier Tomassino, 1847-51).} Marcelli had been a defender of his fellow Augustinians in polemics of the eighteenth century, and his work stands at the height of the school’s development in many respects. In a century during which the school lay under a cloud of suspicion, Marcelli’s work stood as its greatest exposition and defense. The significance of Marcelli’s work lies in how he attempts to chart a middle course between Berti and Lafosse. Like Berti, Marcelli sees a
necessary connection between being made in the *imago dei* and being a rational creature with a natural desire for the vision of God. But, like Lafosse, Marcelli tries to affirm that our call to the vision of God and our desire for it are contingent. In order to preserve both these claims, Marcelli suggests that, while God can, *de potentia absoluta*, create man and not call him to the vision of God, for God to do so would entail having *not* to create man in the *imago dei*. Since for Marcelli, being made in the *imago dei* is synonymous with having a reason and free will, for God to make man in a state of pure nature would require that God, *de potentia absoluta*, perform the impossible by an extraordinary act of divine power, viz., to make an irrational rational creature. To use Lafosse’s categories, Marcelli makes a state of pure nature possible according to God’s power to act absolutely but with *iniustitia condignitatis*, while Lafosse makes a state of pure nature possible according to God’s power to act absolutely and *sine iniustitia condignitatis*, but with *iniustitia congruitatis*. In other words, while Berti distances himself from Jansenism by admitting that pure nature is possible in view of God’s freedom to withhold the gratuitous, Marcelli does so by allowing God’s omnipotence to impose the impossible. Still, he stops short of formal Jansenism. A *realizable* impossibility, however metaphysically absurd, is still not an *unrealizable* impossibility; theologically, at least, God is not constrained to grant us the beatific vision for Marcelli, even if the philosophical means of protecting that vision’s gratuity are dubious.


184 Ibid., 3:344-45. “Quod antequam argumentis confirmare incipiamus, animadvertimus non loqui nos de potentia Dei absoluta. Si namque Deus alterius ordinis hominem produceret, non dubitamus quin posset illi suae gratiae donum denegare. Sed loquimur de potentia, ut iniquint, ordinaria. Supposito nempe quod hominem ad imaginem ac similitudinem suam condiderit, quum ratio imaginis ordinationem importet ad Deum ipsum intuitivum videndum tamquam ad ultimum finem, quem absque gratiae auxilio assequi non valet, tenebatur Deus aliquo titulo supernaturalis gratiae ornamento illum fulcire. Dixi, aliquo titulo: hoc est, non propter exigentiam rei creatae, sed propter decentiam Creatoris, ut verbis utar Eminentissimi Norisii.”
This chapter considered how eight theologians interacted with and understood Thomas’s teaching on natural desire. In the early fourteenth century, there was general agreement about what Thomas taught. At this time, both Giles of Rome and John Duns Scotus recognized Thomas to have taught that we have a natural desire for beatitude in general, which can only be satisfied by the reception of the vision of God, and that our natural desire proves the possibility, not the actuality of the vision of God. Giles criticized Thomas because Giles thought that natural change required a positive aptitude, or *transmutatio*, as he called it, and that in man there was a *transmutatio* in us for the vision of God. Yet, since our aptitude for the vision of God is primarily something positive, not negative, Giles resurrected the doctrine of obediential potency, so as to account for our receptivity to God’s grace.

Even if we have a positive aptitude for the vision of God, Giles did not think that this posits in us a determination of the will with respect to that desire. Our natural desire, Giles suggests, is weak, and we are able to choose what is contrary to it. Consequently, Giles denied the fittingness of a state of so-called “pure nature,” in which man was created without grace, because Giles thought that man, in a state of pure nature, would be unable to avoid sinning against nature. Original justice, he argued, is therefore “due” man in a relative sense, because it would be unfitting of a good, just God to create man without any possibility of persevering in moral rectitude.
John Duns Scotus agreed with Giles’s reading of Thomas, but criticized Thomas because he thought that there was no reason to posit an active principle in man’s natural desire. For Scotus, it is enough that we have a receptive potency for the vision of God, together with a corresponding passive inclination towards its specific fulfillment in the vision of God. Scotus avoided the criticism that a specific natural desire would constrain the freedom of the will by arguing that the intellect does not change the will’s natural desire any more than form changes the nature of matter. Since, for Scotus, matter is constituted in a nature with a natural desire apart from form, so also is the will constituted in a nature with a natural desire apart from the intellect. Necessity in natural desire is only exercised when we choose to think about something related to our beatitude. But we remain free to choose not to think about our beatitude at all, or not to think about the relationship that our acts have (or do not have) to beatitude when we perform them.

In the sixteenth century, theologians such as Tommaso de Vio “Cajetan” and Francisco Suárez began to suggest that Thomas taught that we have a natural desire for beatitude in specific, and a natural desire proves not only the possible, but also the actual ability to achieve its term. Consequently, they suggested that the term of our natural desire is not the vision of God (as that would be Pelagianism), but rather a beatitude proportionate to our natural faculties. Given the proportionate nature of our desire with respect to its end, both Cajetan and Suárez, like Giles, resurrected the doctrine an obediential potency in order to account for our susceptibility to grace and glory.

Moreover, given the specificity of our natural desire, Cajetan defended the freedom of the will by adopting Scotus’s understanding of that freedom. Necessity in the will only arises when we choose to consider an object related to our beatitude. Suárez recognized, however, that such a
defense of the will’s freedom was unfaithful to Thomas’s teaching on the first act of the will. Yet instead of returning to Thomas’s doctrine of an undetermined natural desire, Suárez followed Scotus and argued that the will is constituted in first act completely apart from the intellect. On this basis, Suárez suggested that we have a natural desire for a specific, naturally achievable beatitude which proceeds from the will exclusively, but that we can elicit a conditional desire for the vision of God. The naturally achievable beatitude posited by our natural desire proves the possibility of a hypothetical state of “pure nature,” in which man was thought of as created without any of the gifts of grace. For Suárez, such a man would have a naturally achievable beatitude as his end, but God could not be said to “owe” it to him in a strict sense, because God would not owe him the providential removal of impediments that might obstruct him from reaching that beatitude.

Thomists who followed Cajetan and Suarez had no great difficulty in responding to the challenges to the gratuity of glory and grace presented by Baius and Jansen respectively in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. By affirming the possibility of a natural beatitude for man, and consequently the possibility of a hypothetical state of pure nature, they could safeguard the gratuity of grace and glory by affirming God’s freedom to withhold them. Such a solution was not as readily available to Thomists in the Aegidian tradition, since Giles of Rome had denied the fittingness of a state of pure nature. Aegidians therefore had to devise a number of creative solutions to the theological problem. Michael Paludanus broke with the Aegidian tradition and posited a variation of the pure nature hypothesis: man is always ordered to the vision of God, but can be satisfied to a certain extent by natural knowledge of God. Giovanni Berti denied the contingency of our ordering to the vision of God, but instead adopted Giles’s
argument about God’s relative “debt” of original justice to the economy of grace more broadly speaking. In these hypotheses, for Berti, man is ordered to the vision of God, and it would be nearly unthinkable for God to deny us his grace so that we might arrive at that vision. Nevertheless, *de potentia absoluta*, God could deny us that grace. Fulgence Lafosse argued that, while our desire for the vision of God results necessarily from our having been called to it, that call is contingent. Still, in this order of providence, where God has chosen to call us to the vision of God, Lafosse affirms Berti’s argument concerning the relative debt of grace. Michelangelo Marcelli, the most radical Aegidian of all, suggested that in all hypotheses in which man is created with the *imago dei*, God cannot deny us grace. However, grace is still a free gift, because God could, *de potentia absoluta*, create a human being not in the *imago dei*.

What is most noteworthy about the theologians reviewed in this chapter is that, while they would exercise considerable influence on Thomists of the early twentieth century, not a single one agrees with Thomas in all respects. Everyone except Scotus, who consciously parted ways with Thomas, was led to re-adopt the hypothesis of a passive, obediential potency in man for grace and glory on account of postulating a natural, active desire with a specific *terminus*, whether that specific *terminus* was the vision of God, as for Giles and the Aegidian tradition, or a naturally achievable end, as for Cajetan and Suárez. Consequently, when a majority of Thomists in the early twentieth century looked to Cajetan and Suárez for guidance on the teaching of Thomas, the doctrine of obediential potency, while not completely unfaithful to Thomas, received undue emphasis as the only means of safeguarding nature’s passivity with respect to grace. As a reaction against this, some Thomists would look to the tradition inspired by Giles.
But here, too, they would encounter a doctrine of natural desire inspired partly by a criticism, not an affirmation, of Thomas’s thought.
Catholic theology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was dominated by the publication of Leo XIII’s encyclical letter, *Aeterni Patris*, in 1879.\(^1\) Relying on the teaching of *Dei Filius* at Vatican I, that, “…although faith is above reason (*supra rationem*), nevertheless there can never be any true disagreement between faith and reason, since the same God, who reveals mysteries and infuses faith, placed within the human mind the light of natural reason,”\(^2\) Leo XIII suggests in the encyclical that “if philosophy is utilized correctly by the wise, it can in a certain manner smooth and secure the path to the true faith, and suitably prepare the minds of its disciples to receive revelation.”\(^3\) Accordingly, in order to remedy the spiritual ills of the age, Leo XIII recommends a renewal of the study of the writings of Thomas Aquinas,\(^4\) and commends the work already done in this regard.\(^5\)


\(^4\) Ibid. 24 (ASS 12:111).

\(^5\) Ibid. 26 (ASS 12:112).
In noting that some work had already been done to promote the study of St. Thomas, Leo XIII alludes to a Thomist movement already well underway in Rome, which sought to improve theology through the use of Thomistic philosophy. As Gerald McCool notes, the pope had his own intellectual formation within this movement, and the encyclical helped him to ensure its spread both through appointments of its adherents at the Dominican College in Rome (the “Angelicum”) as well as the Jesuit College in Rome (the “Gregorianum”). According to McCool, the result was anything but salutary for philosophy, as the newly installed Thomist professors tended to lack the creativity of their non-Thomist predecessors. Specifically, McCool suggests that a lack of historical awareness led these “neo-Thomists” to an uncritical and ahistorical use of the Thomistic commentators in such a way as to confuse the commentators’ personal thought with that of Thomas himself, even when the two differed. It was not until subsequent generations of Thomists, particularly those who combined an appreciation for history with an engagement with German idealism, that scholastic philosophy would regain its creative edge.

However, even in McCool’s account of the so-called “neo-Thomist” movement, there is good reason to suppose that the movement may not have been as unitary as he suggests: for

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8 Ibid., 236.

9 Ibid., 238.


example, the Dominican, Alberto Lepidi (1838-1925). McCool observes that Lepidi was a well-renowned Thomist in his own right and had gained a reputation in the mid-nineteenth century for his creative opposition to Ontologism at the University of Louvain. McCool does not note, however, that this same theologian, whom he praises as “one of the most erudite among the early Dominican neo-Thomists,” was also one of the three theologians who was moved in the aftermath of Aeterni Patris to take up a position at the Angelicum, nor does McCool note that Lepidi remained at the Angelicum until 1897.

In his refutation of Ontologism, Lepidi showcased a synthetic mode of thinking, closer to that which contemporary scholars often associate with Henri de Lubac, which weaves the masters of different theological traditions into a unified front against a common error, rather than polarizing them by descending into technical minutiae or by repeating a commonly received interpretation of them. Lepidi’s specific goal was to show how respect for the spiritual aspects of human cognition did not mean having to posit the vision of God in the intellect. In particular, Lepidi attempted to harmonize Augustinian illumination with Thomist abstraction in order to explain the possibility of intuitive knowledge in human beings, while simultaneously emphasizing the corporeal nature of Augustinian epistemology and the spiritual aspects of

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12 McCool, Nineteenth-Century Scholasticism, 227. McCool notes of Lepidi’s work that it, “...was one of the most complete... critiques of ontologism to be published in the nineteenth century. Living in the same town as the ontologist professors of the University of Louvain... and, as one of the most erudite among the early Dominican neo-Thomists, he was well equipped to criticize it from the viewpoint of St. Thomas’ epistemology and metaphysics.”; The work to which McCool refers is Alberto Lepidi, Examen philosophico-theologicum de ontologismo (Louvain: Fonteyn, 1874). Cf. Georges van Riet, Thomistic Epistemology, trans. Gabriel Franks, vol. 1 (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1963), 97n3.

Cf. Boersma, Nouvelle Théologie, 40. One may contrast McCool’s view of Lepidi with that of Boersma. If McCool recognizes the creativity in Lepidi’s thought but does not associate him with the post-Leonine appointments to the Angelicum, Boersma associates Lepidi with those appointments but omits any reference to his creativity.

13 McCool, From Unity to Pluralism, 227.

Thomist epistemology. With respect to Augustine, Lepidi argued that “illumination,” was not the manner by which the divine essence made present the divine ideas within the created intellect, as the ontologists thought, but the process whereby God impressed created similitudes of the divine ideas into the human intellect through the mediation of a created light within the intellect when the intellect encountered corporeal bodies.  

With respect to Thomas, Lepidi argued that the abstracted intelligible species from corporeal bodies are the beginning, not the end of human cognition. Since the human person stands on the “boundary” between corporeal and spiritual creatures, he can either apprehend intelligible species as they are present in the mind through phantasms, or turn away from the phantasms towards the created forms themselves, observing them directly.

In Lepidi, one finds no mere repetition of Thomistic commentators or even of Thomas; rather, one finds a creative participant in a living tradition, working within that tradition to meet the theological exigencies of the day. However, what is most important about Lepidi for the present purpose is not his own doctrine so much as the manner in which his academic influence led directly to the formation of the two Thomists most involved with questions of natural desire towards the beginning of twentieth century: Gioacchino Sestili (1862-1939) and Ambroise


16. Ibid., 197.

17. Ibid., 247n1. “Anima humana est in confinio creaturarum corporalium et spiritualium; est enim forma substantialis corporis humani, et habet intellegere commune cum angelis. Quatenus est forma corporis et in confinio corporalium, proprium objectum ejus est contemplari Deum per considerationem hujus mundi corporis, hauriendo cognitionem ejus a sensibus, per conversionem scilicet ad phantasmata; quatenus autem anima hominis est in confinio spiritualium, sic anima ad pure intelligibilia se convertit, quorum similitudines penes se habet naturaliter insitas.” Thomas acknowledges this tension in S.T., 1a, q. 94 a. 1, but argues that man has lost the ability to apprehend intelligible forms apart from the phantasms on account of original sin. Nevertheless, Lepidi maintains a strong doctrine of “natural habitual assimilation,” which he takes to be the “image and similitude of uncreated truth, impressed on us by the author of nature, and [which] is his intellectual light...” cf. *Examen*, 246.
Gardeil (1859-1931). Sestili, a layman, wrote his doctoral dissertation under Lepidi at the Angelicum. Gardeil, a Dominican, studied under another Dominican, Réginald Beaudoin (1842-1907), who was also a student of Lepidi. Neither of these two thinkers fits the mold of McCool’s uncreative neo-Thomist, who blindly repeats the phrases of the Thomistic commentators. Both follow Lepidi’s spirit of creative engagement with the theological tradition, even if they would eventually come to oppose one another. Moreover, this creativity paved the way for a generation of Thomists in the early twentieth century who, far from following in McCool’s unitary neo-Thomist mold, proposed a wide variety of opinions about nature and natural desire, without any one opinion become dominant in the period before World War I.

A. Stage 1: Gioacchino Sestili and his Italian Critics

In 1887, Gioacchino Sestili undertook a doctoral dissertation on the natural desire for God, which he published in 1896. The dissertation, which was directed and inspired by Lepidi, embraces Lepidi’s epistemology and draws its anthropological consequences. For

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19 Guy Mansini, What is a Dogma?: The Meaning and Truth of Dogma in Edouard Le Roy and his Scholastic Opponents, Analecta Gregoriana 239 (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1985), 238n12. On this influence, see also van Riet, Thomistic Epistemology, 1:220n8. Lepidi was the first organizer of the house of studies where Gardeil was sent for his formation.


Sestili, when an object is presented to the senses, the sensory perception of it is received into the possible intellect in the form of a phantasm. Since for Sestili the active intellect is insufficient of itself to recognize and abstract intelligible content from a phantasm, the active intellect depends directly on the immediate influence of God, which impresses created similitudes of divine perfections on it. These created similitudes, which God impresses upon the intellect, correspond with the created similitudes of divine perfections which the intellect first encountered in the creature. This process allows the intellect to recognize the creature’s perfections from their correspondence with the created similitudes of divine perfections impressed upon it, and then to abstract the intelligible species of the creature’s perfections following their recognition by this process.

By making the intellect directly dependent upon the influence of God in the act of abstraction, Sestili’s epistemology makes the act of understanding less immediately dependent on a phantasm. Consequently, Sestili’s epistemology makes it possible for the human soul, once it has received a phantasm of an external object, to turn intellectually towards the similitudes of perfections impressed upon it, observing them directly by an act of intellectual apprehension. Such apprehension is a direct, intuitive vision of created similitudes of divine perfections impressed upon the intellect; it is not a direct, intuitive vision of the divine perfections. Consequently, while such impressed similitudes provide a clearer knowledge of divine

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23 For what follows, see Sestili, *De naturali intelligentis animae capacitate atque appetitu*, 124–127.

24 Ibid., 124.
perfections than does an intelligible species, they are still ontologically distinct from that which they represent.25

Sestili’s understanding of a second, more immediate knowledge of God than that which is available through the process of abstraction, while it may not yet be an intuitive vision of God, does at least tend in that direction. Sestili justified this conclusion by alleging that other neo-Thomists were commonly guilty of two errors. First, they ignored the full implications of the fact that the soul, as Aristotle had said in the De anima, is quodammodo omnia on account of its immateriality.26 To be quodammodo omnia is, Sestili argues, to have an “infinite object,” to be ordered towards truth and being “in all their latitude.”27 However, truth and being are grounded in God.28 Therefore, both natural and supernatural being,29 even God himself,30 come under the proper object of the intellect. Second, other neo-Thomists failed to consider that God can cause anything immediately that he can cause through a secondary cause; but the knowledge of himself in creatures is something that God causes in them through a secondary cause; ergo, if the intellect can know anything about God through creatures, it is capable of an intuitive knowledge of God.31 Sestili concludes that since the intellect’s highest act is intuitive knowledge, since its highest object is God, and since Thomas says that man has an active motion in the soul towards

25 Ibid., 136-37.

26 Aristotle, De anima 3.8 (431b21), in Aristoteles Latinus 12.2. “Nunc autem de anima dicta recapitulantes dicamus iterum quod omnia ea que sunt quodam modo est anima: aut enim sensibilia que sunt aut intelligibilia, est autem sciencia quidem scibilia quodam modo, sensus autem sensibilia."

27 Sestili, De naturali intelligentis animae capacitate atque appetitu, 67.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid., 76.

30 Ibid., 67.

31 Ibid., 69.
the highest act of the highest power ordered towards its highest object, man has a natural desire for the intuitive vision of God.32

By positing in man a natural desire for the intuitive vision of God Sestili raised the same question encountered by the Aegidian tradition: how can such a vision be gratuitous? Retrieving the theological resources of this tradition, Sestili noticed two possible solutions.33 The first was that of a so-called “earlier” Aegidian school, from Giles of Rome to Michael Paludanus, which admitted that a less satisfying end for human nature, proportioned to man’s natural powers, would be possible if God chose to withhold the beatific vision. This less satisfying end would consist in the separated soul’s contemplation of God through created similitudes of divine perfections impressed upon it, such as the soul now receives just prior to the act of abstraction. The second solution, the path of a so-called “later school,” including Fulgenzio Bellelli, Giovanni Berti, and Enrico Noris, proposed that, although it is possible for God to withhold the vision of himself in an absolute sense, it is unthinkable that he would do so in the actual order of Providence. This distinction between God’s absolute power (potentia absoluta) and his power ordered by providence (potentia ordinata), steered them through the Scylla of compromising the gratuity of grace with Baius, and the Charybdis of comprising the Aegidian tradition’s commitment to a single terminus for man’s natural desire.34

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32 Sestili, De naturali intelligentis animae capacitate atque appetitu, 140.

33 For what follows on the distinction between the schools, see Sestili, De naturali intelligentis animae capacitate atque appetitu, 149.

34 In dividing the Aegidians into “early” and “late,” Sestili was not historically accurate. As seen in chapter two, questions concerning the gratuity of grace and glory, in contrast to questions concerning the gratuity of original justice, did not come to the fore within the Aegidian tradition until its response to Baianism and Jansenism.
Sestili sides with the so-called “earlier” school.\textsuperscript{35} Against the so-called “later” school, Sestili argues that the distinction between what God can do absolutely (\textit{de potentia absoluta}) and what he can do in view of Providence (\textit{de potentia ordinata}) is unfounded. \textit{A priori}, the distinction between God’s absolute and ordered power is impossible on account of the divine simplicity; what is possible for God’s justice is possible for his wisdom and his reason.\textsuperscript{36} Moreover, even if the distinction were to be admitted, it would have one of four consequences: (1) it would only apply to a person who had not been created (an unnuanced rendering of Lafosse’s solution); (2) there could exist an irrational rational creature (Marcelli’s solution); (3) there could be a rational creature not subject to the laws of Divine Providence;\textsuperscript{37} (4) God could act contrary to his Providence (an unnuanced rendering of Berti’s solution). Sestili finds none of these possibilities acceptable.\textsuperscript{38}

However, without the distinction between God’s absolute and ordered power, two difficulties remained for Sestili: (1) how to reconcile a natural desire for an intuitive vision of God with the Aristotelian axiom, “nature is not in vain,” and (2) how therefore not to compromise the gratuity and/or unity of man’s final end. As to the first, Sestili suggests that the axiom holds in every situation that Aristotle was aware of, but that Aristotle was not aware of the fact of our elevation to the beatific vision; such an elevation can be known only by faith.\textsuperscript{39} With the aid of Revelation, one can make a distinction within the axiom itself. Instead of “vanity”

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 156–57.
\textsuperscript{37} I am not aware of any member of the Aegidian tradition who makes this argument.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 150.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 168.
consisting in an individual nature’s inability to achieve the fulfillment of its desire, as Cajetan and Suárez had proposed, vanity for Sestili consists in the impossibility that a natural desire be fulfilled simply speaking, whether by the creature’s own activity or by the activity of another. Quoting the Jesuit, Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621), Sestili concludes that man’s desire for God is, “natural with respect to desire and supernatural with respect to attainment”.40 It is natural with respect to desire in that man has an active desire for the vision of God as a terminus; it is supernatural with respect to attainment because man can only reach that terminus with the aid of grace.

While Sestili rightly questioned Cajetan’s and Suárez’s association of vanity with the actual achievement of an end, and while he did so in the context of affirming the Aegidian tradition’s doctrine of an active, positive, specific natural desire, he denied the legitimacy of the distinction between God’s absolute and ordered power, by which Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition defended the gratuity of grace. Instead, he turned to Paludanus, and established a relationship between the terminus of natural desire simply speaking (simpliciter), and its terminus in a certain respect (secundum quid).41 An end simpliciter is related to an end secundum quid not as one end to another, but as a perfect end to an imperfect end, a posterior end to a prior end. But, as Thomas notes, “what is prior is always preserved in what is posterior.”42 Even though man can be said to have a naturally achievable end short of the beatific vision, there are

40 Ibid., 27.
41 Ibid., 174.
not therefore two different ends for human nature. There is but one end for human nature, enjoyed to varying degrees of perfection.

Sestili’s Aegidianism occasioned both positive and negative reactions. It elicited vigorous criticism from several Dominican and Jesuit neo-Thomists. Its main Jesuit critic was Salvatore Brandi (1852-1915), the editor of the Italian journal, Civiltà Cattolica. In May 1897, Brandi published a review in which he lodged three criticisms against Sestili’s doctrine of natural desire. First, Brandi criticizes Sestili on the meaning of “vanity”. Vanity occurs when a natural desire remains unfulfilled in actual fact, not when the possibility of its fulfillment is lacking. If one adopts a natural, active, and specific desire for the vision of God, then man created in state of pure nature would be a frustrated and vain creature, because he would not actually be able to achieve the terminus of his natural desire. Second, man does not have the capacity for intuitive vision according to Thomas; human nature stands only in an obediential potency for the vision of God, and there is no natural desire for an end that cannot be naturally known. Third, Brandi


44 Ibid., 324. “Ora, nella supposizione dell’Autore, mentre l’uomo dall’un canto potrebbe naturalmente conoscere possibile codesta intuizione, ed avrebbe per esse una vera capacità, dall’altro canto, non solo gli mancherebbe la virtù sufficiente ad arrivarvi, ma altresì l’esigenza di riceverla da dio. Donde conseguirebbe che avremmo nella condizione dell’uomo un relativo senza la debita relazione, una tendenza senza la possibilità di toccare il suo termine. Ci sembra, che cotale uomo sia una specie del Tantalo della favola, in cui vi è capacità e vi è appetitus, motus, o tendenza a bere, e contuttociò [sic] non può gustare mai gocciola dell’acqua desiderata. Il disordine in tale uomo ci sembra enorme.” Brandi supports this criticism with the text of Summa contra Gentiles 3.44, which says that man would be made in vain if he were not able to achieve his end. The problem with Brandi’s reasoning is that the Latin verb, posse, is ambiguous. It can mean either an active or a passive ability, and Brandi assumes that it means an active ability, while in context, as shown in chapter one, it means a passive ability.

45 Ibid., 325. “…Non potendo l’uomo, in quanto semplice uomo, conoscere Dio altitori modo, ossia per modo soprannaturale, ne consegue che sia impossibile in lui la conoscenza della visione intuitiva di Dio: la quale è tutta di ordine soprannaturale.” Essa in modo assoluto va fuori della cerchia del mezzo della sua conoscenza, e quindi mancando la capacità di conoscere l’essenza divina comececessa [sic], manca pure necessariamente l’appetito quale che sia di vederla per intuizione, perché ignoti nulla cupido.”
criticizes Sestili’s affirmation of the possibility of knowing by natural reason that the end of man is the vision of God. Here, Brandi educes the two texts in the Thomistic corpus on the fate of unbaptized infants, and, while acknowledging that Thomas affirms in the earlier text that man can know by natural reason the possibility of the vision of God, argues that Thomas denies that man can know that possibility by natural reason in the later text.46

Brandi’s response to Sestili assumes a reading of Thomas mediated by two central, but mistaken assumptions by the Thomistic commentators.47 First, there is the misapplication of Aristotle’s dictum to the proof of the actuality of the terminus of a natural desire. Second, there is the idea that man’s capacity for the vision of God cannot be known by natural reason. Brandi rightly sensed that something about Sestili’s epistemology was not entirely Thomistic, but he threw out the baby with the bathwater when he said that man cannot know his capacity for the vision of God by natural reason. This led Brandi to a mistaken interpretation of Thomas’s position on the fate of children who die in original sin only. Thomas’s final position was that such children do not suffer because, while they do know from natural reason of the possibility of the vision of God, they do not know (because Aristotle’s dictum cannot reveal it to them) about the actuality of that vision.48

Sestili responded to Brandi later the same year in a pamphlet, which received the imprimatur from none other than Alberto Lepidi.49 The main deficiency in Brandi’s first

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46 Ibid., 325-26.
47 See above in chapter two, sections C and D.
48 See above in chapter one, section B, part 4.
49 Gioacchino Sestili, Il desiderio naturale d’intuire la divina essenza, in risposta ad una critica della Civiltà Cattolica (Rome: F. Setth, 1897).
criticism, Sestili suggests, is a misunderstanding of man’s capacity for God. The adequate object of the intellect, Sestili argues, is universal truth, and the adequate object of the will is universal goodness. That being the case, God is in some measure “not entirely outside the intellect. Rather, he is situated within the breadth of its adequate object, inasmuch as the intellect, as an immaterial power, is made for the intelligible.” In other words, God falls analogically under the adequate object of the intellect.

As a consequence of the analogical relation between the intellect and God, Sestili distinguishes a twofold appetite in man. One appetite is innate and common, by which man “implicitly and in a confused way” desires the vision of God, the most perfect object that could satisfy his natural desire; the other appetite is elicited and explicit, by which man desires to know the first cause insofar as this is possible. Part of the problem with Brandi’s argument is that Brandi, like Suárez, thinks of innate desire like a pondus naturae, such that it would have to have a definite and naturally achievable terminus. In fact, this unnecessarily limits man’s openness to the vision of God.

Second, Sestili criticizes Brandi’s understanding of what it means for a potency to be vain. Sestili correctly notes that in the context of the Summa contra Gentiles, from which Brandi

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50 Ibid., 5. “…Iddio, come primo intelligibile in sè stesso, non è un che del tutto estraneo all’intelletto, ma trovasi nella latitudine dell’oggetto adeguato di esso, in quanto l’intelletto, facoltà immateriale, è fatto per l’intelligibile.”

51 Ibid., 7-8. Here, if one interprets Sestili consistently with his dissertation, Sestili intends an analogy taken from the direct impression on the intellect of a created similitude of a divine perfection.

52 Ibid., 6. “…quella desidera, o implicitamente ed in confuso, se per appetito innato, sotto la ratione formale di bene perfetto in comune; o esplicitamente ed in certo modo distinto, sotto la ragione formale di prima causa, di atto creativo, se per appetito elicitо; e desidera vederla intuitivamente, tale essendo la natura dell’intelletto fatto per la realtà.” Cf. ibid., 17-18.

53 Ibid., 7.
had drawn his definition of vanity, Thomas uses Aristotle’s *dictum* to prove the necessary occasion for the fulfillment of man’s natural desire (after this life), as well as the possibility that it *could* be fulfilled after this life in the vision of God, without thereby suggesting that man’s natural desire *must* be fulfilled after this life in the vision of God, as though the vision of God were the intellect’s *object*. Sestili also adds to Thomas’s argument, suggesting that not only can man know by natural reason that the vision of God is possible for him to *receive*, but also that it is something which it is possible for God to *give*. Man can know by natural reason that God is omnipotent and that he can do anything that does not imply a contradiction. Consequently, since man can know by natural reason that it does not imply a contradiction for him to receive the vision of God, man can know that God is capable of granting that same vision to us, if God so chooses.

Third, Sestili criticizes Brandi’s interpretation of Sestili’s doctrine of obediential potency. Sestili maintains that he had not said that man has an *innate* desire for the fulfillment of an obediential potency. Rather, he had said that man has an *elicited* desire which includes within its scope the fulfillment of an obediential potency insofar as God wishes to grant that fulfillment. However, natural reason can never know whether God has actually chosen to do so. Consequently, an infant who dies in original sin does not suffer, since although the child enjoys

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54 Ibid. “Quel principio assunto da S. Tommaso a provare la tesi affermativa della possibilità della divina visione è, diremo così, in ordine ascendente: partendo da un desiderio vero e reale il quale è impossibile sia vano, argomenta e risale alla possibilità della divina visione…”

55 Ibid., 9. “L’argomento del S. Dottore non è per negare che la felicità ultima dell’uomo consista nella cognizione delle sostanze separate senz’altro; ma che non consiste nella cognizione delle sostanze separate, in questa vita, e come la pensavano Avempace, Alessandro, ed Averroe…” Also see above, chapter one, section B, part 3.

56 Ibid., 10.

57 Ibid., 11-12.
only an analogical, intuitive knowledge of God, it knows that it is not possible for it to achieve anything further of its own accord.58

In Sestili’s response to Brandi, he makes two important clarifications of his previous work. First, he correctly suggests that for Thomas the active motion of natural desire is for the good in common, not a specific good.59 However, since Sestili conceives of the distinction between natural and free desire in Suárez’s terms as a distinction between innate and elicited desires, and since these terms were inspired by Scotus, for whom “innate” desire has only a single, passive component, there is no room in Sestili’s thought for the active motion of natural desire to seek an end which can only be passively received by grace. Consequently, Sestili is unable to articulate the dialectic in Thomas’s thought between an undetermined active component and a determined passive component in man’s natural desire. Second, like the members of the Aegidian tradition who had affirmed an active and determined orientation of human nature towards the vision of God, Sestili adopts a doctrine of obediential potency in order to describe human nature’s susceptibility to that vision. However, since Sestili places man’s receptivity to the beatific vision outside the bounds of natural potency, and consequently outside the bounds of innate desire, there was need for Sestili to provide some other argumentation in support of the idea that man could have a natural desire for the fulfillment of such a potency. Hence, Sestili suggests that man can have a natural, elicited desire for the vision of God based upon two sources of knowledge: 1) the natural knowledge that there is a capacity in man to

58 Ibid., 18.

59 On Thomas’s position, see above in chapter one, section B.
receive the vision of God, and 2) the natural knowledge that it is within the sphere of divine omnipotence to grant the fulfillment of this capacity to man.60

Although Sestili’s response to Brandi was thorough, it did not abate the criticism of his doctrine of natural desire. Throughout the publication year 1897, as Sestili was responding to Brandi, Carlo Ramellini (1842-1900) had been serially publishing a five-part response to Sestili’s dissertation in the Italian Dominican journal, Divus Thomas.61 The first four parts of Ramellini’s response contain a long summary of Sestili’s work. Only the fifth, whose content seems to presuppose a knowledge of Sestili’s response to Brandi and so to have been composed after it, contains Ramellini’s critique.

Unlike Brandi, who focused mostly on theoretical questions, Ramellini’s critique begins with an exegetical consideration. Ramellini suggests, with Cajetan, that when Thomas speaks in the Summa theologiae of man’s desire for the vision of God, Thomas speaks from the standpoint of a theologian, and under the supposition that the vision of God has been revealed as man’s final end.62 Sestili’s claim that Thomas speaks as a philosopher, rather than a theologian, depends upon a non-Thomistic epistemology.63 For Thomas, being as such is the adequate object of the

60 Sestili also reaffirms his commitment to the fact that Aristotle’s dictum proves only the possibility of the vision of God, not that God has offered it in actual fact. However, he applies it to the case of children who die in original sin only from a subtly different point of view than that which Thomas had proposed. For Sestili, these children do not suffer because, while they know by natural reason of their potency for receiving the vision of God, as well as God’s ability to fulfill that potency, and while therefore they do know that God has not chosen to grant it to them, they rest secure in the knowledge that their nature has reached its terminus. This argument is not all that dissimilar from that of Giles of Rome, as seen above in chapter two, section B.


62 Ibid., 516A.

63 Here Ramellini seems to be responding directly to the first point in Sestili’s response to Brandi.
human intellect. From the knowledge of man’s capacity to know finite being, one does not come
to a knowledge of the possibility of the intuitive knowledge of God. All that results is the
knowledge of the possibility of knowing God in general. It remains to Sestili to show by natural
reason that man has a capacity for the intuitive knowledge of God in specific, if he wishes to
make the claim that Thomas is speaking as a philosopher and intending to demonstrate the
possibility of the vision of God by natural reason.64

It is not that Ramellini thinks, with Brandi, that man cannot know by natural reason of his
capacity for the vision of God. Ramellini agrees with Sestili that it can be demonstrated from
natural reason that man has a capacity for the vision of God. However, Ramellini also thinks that
one cannot form such a demonstration without the idea of such a capacity having first been
revealed, since man has an obediential potency for the vision of God, but does not have natural
knowledge of this potency.65

If Ramellini had left his response to Sestili at what has been reviewed so far, there would
be nothing surprising; it closely parallels Cajetan’s interpretation of Thomas. However,
Ramellini adds one more argument which came to be widely attributed to Cajetan among early
twentieth century Thomists before World War I, but which is closer to the spirit than to the letter
of Cajetan’s text. In the interpretation of S.T., Ia, q. 12, a. 1, Ramellini reiterates his argument

64 Ibid., 516B.

65 Ibid., 517A. “Et quamvis forte posset intellectus excogitare hunc modum cognoscendi Deum, qui foret
per essentiam, tamen haec excogitatio nondum haberet vim determinandi appetitum in hujusmodi cognitionem Dei
per essentiam, nisi pro quanto manifestaret hanc cognitionem sibi esse possibilem: inclinatio siquidem electiva non
est in rem, quae nondum cognoscatur sibi possibilis: ac proinde hujusmodi desiderium, videndi Deum intuitive, non
possimus certo reprehendere in rationali creatura, nisi pro quanto prius reprehendamus ipsi possibilem visionem
beatificam, et sic hujusmodi desiderium non erit nobis argumentum ad probandam visionis intuitivae
possibilitatem.” When Ramellini speaks about the “possibility” of the vision of God, the context of his
argumentation suggests that he actually means, with Brandi, what has heretofore been described as knowledge of its
“actuality,” that is, knowledge of the concrete possibility of the beatific vision through the knowledge of the
existence of the means for achieving it.
that Thomas speaks as a theologian in view of what God has revealed as the end of man in this order of Providence. This call to the beatific vision, Ramellini suggests, so alters human nature that its natural desire can no longer rest in the abstract knowledge of God which it can achieve of its own accord. In arguing thus, Ramellini seems to have unknowingly stumbled upon Ladosse’s Aegidian argument that man’s contingent call to the vision of God creates a natural desire for this vision which cannot be satisfied by any lesser participation of this end. Thus Ramellini, while responding to Sestili’s moderate Aegidianism from the standpoint of the Dominican commentarial tradition, embraces a more radical Aegidianism than the one he sought to oppose.

Sestili’s response to Ramellini was twofold. The first was textual; he published an edition of the commentary of Francis de Sylvestris Ferrariensis on the *Summa contra Gentiles*, presumably in the hope of making Francis’s argument about a natural desire for the vision of God as first cause more widely known.66 The second was theoretical; he published a pamphlet, which he also annexed to the third book of his edition of Francis’s commentary, defending his doctrine of natural desire against both Ramellini and Brandi.67

Sestili’s pamphlet takes the form of responses to seven objections. Of these, all but the fourth and fifth are important for the present discussion. The first objection is that the vision of God, being completely above nature, cannot be known or desired by nature.68 Against this, Sestili notes that man’s innate desire is only confused or in common, while man’s elicited desire

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67 Gioacchino Sestili, *De possibilitate desiderioque primae caussae [sic!] substantiam videndi a criticis animadversionibus vidiciae* (Rome: Orphanage of St. Jerome Emiliani, 1900). This pamphlet also received the *imprimatur* from Alberto Lepidi.

68 Ibid., 10.
only proceeds as far as the vision of God as first cause, as Francis suggests.\textsuperscript{69} This argument grounds Sestili’s response to the seventh objection, which proposes that Thomas’s arguments presuppose the fact of Revelation and that Thomas is therefore speaking as a theologian.\textsuperscript{70} Textually, Sestili notes that in the consideration of children who die in original sin only, Thomas speaks in terms knowable by natural reason. However, where previously Sestili had placed these children’s comfort in the fact that they know by natural reason that God could grant them the vision of himself but had chosen not to do so, here Sestili emphasizes with Thomas that they are subjectively aware that they cannot reach any further end by their own powers. In addition, he grants with Thomas that they are not necessarily aware of the fact that God must have chosen not to give them any further end.\textsuperscript{71}

The second objection is that it cannot be demonstrated by natural reason that man has a capacity for the vision of God.\textsuperscript{72} Sestili responds by distinguishing abstract and concrete senses of the word “nature.” Human concepts of nature only correspond with the abstract, Aristotelian sense of nature--they tell us about what is possible; they do not tell us what is actually the case.\textsuperscript{73} The third objection is that a demonstration by natural reason of man’s capacity for the vision of God would suppose the actual possibility of achieving that vision.\textsuperscript{74} In response, Sestili distinguishes between the manner in which man’s nature is determined by its active powers, and

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid., 16-17
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid., 54.
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 59.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid., 20.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 28.
the manner in which it is undetermined by its passive powers. What is “due” nature is that to which it is actually determined by its own active powers, namely, abstract knowledge of God through creatures.\textsuperscript{75} However, in virtue of an unlimited ability to receive knowledge by its passive powers, man’s intellectual potency is virtually determined to the vision of God. Virtual determination towards an object, however, only posits an obediential potency for that objection; it does not entail any exigency for it.\textsuperscript{76} Since, moreover, man’s intellect has being in all its latitude as its adequate object, and since God has the ratio of being, man can be said to have a capacity for the intellect’s being actualized by the vision of God, even if this posits in us only an obediential potency for that vision.\textsuperscript{77}

The sixth objection is that a man with a natural desire for an end that was not naturally achievable would be a disordered creature, since his natural desire would be vain.\textsuperscript{78} Sestili responds that there is a distinction between God as the object known, and the form under which God is known. Human nature has God as its object, and so if it reaches that object under the form of abstraction, it can be said to have reached its object in a certain respect. Nevertheless human nature remains susceptive of a higher form, when it receives the vision of God as he is in himself under the influence of the light of glory.\textsuperscript{79} “Disorder” only arises in human nature if one considers man’s natural desire like a pondus naturae, such that it posits both a natural inclination towards the vision of God in specific as its end, as well as the active power to reach that end.

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 31.
\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 24.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 26-27.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid., 46.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 49.
However, this would constitute a confusion between natural being and God, since God is entirely above nature.\textsuperscript{80}

In this final response to his critics, the specific disagreements between Sestili and his critics emerge clearly:

First, there is the question of whether or not man can know of his capacity for the vision of God by natural reason. Sestili answers affirmatively;\textsuperscript{81} his opponents answers negatively.\textsuperscript{82}

Second, in regard to the question of whether that capacity is grounded in an obediential potency, Sestili and his opponents agree in a manner not entirely consistent with Thomas that it is, but they disagree as to the precise character of this potency’s relationship to human nature. For Sestili, an obediential potency can be known from natural reason because human nature can be known as immediately susceptible to intuitive knowledge from natural reason. In the material conclusion that an obediential potency can be known from natural reason, Sestili is close to Thomas, though he departs from Thomas concerning the form of that intuitive knowledge. Sestili’s opponents, while maintaining an epistemology closer to that of Thomas, deny that the human intellect’s susceptibility to the vision of God can be known by natural reason because they do not recognize the association in Thomas between obediential potency and natural passive potency under the category of material potency.

Third, in regard to the question of whether, granting that there is in man an obediential potency for the vision of God, there is a natural desire for the fulfillment of that potency, Sestili holds that there is an innate desire in common for this fulfillment, and that man can elicit a desire

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 51-52.

\textsuperscript{81} This aligns him with Thomas and Suárez, as interpreted above in chapters one and two.

\textsuperscript{82} This aligns them with Scotus and Cajetan, as interpreted above in chapter two.
for the vision of God as first cause, but not as triune, since humanity can know of its capacity for
the vision of God by natural reason. Sestili’s opponents hold that man has an innate desire in
specific for abstract knowledge of God, yet can elicit a conditional desire for the vision of God
insofar as the idea of a such a vision has been suggested by Revelation.

Fourth, in regard to the question of whether an innate desire for the vision of God would
make that vision due nature, Sestili argues that it does not because Aristotle’s *dictum* proves the
possibility, not the actuality of the vision of God.83 His opponents argue that it does, accepting
the argument that a desire which is never fulfilled in some individual is in fact vain.84

Finally, in regard to the exegetical question of whether, when Thomas speaks of a natural
desire for the vision of God, he is speaking as a philosopher, as a theologian, or both, Sestili
thinks that Thomas is speaking as a philosopher, and hence that Thomas’s arguments are
demonstrable simply speaking; Sestili’s opponents think that Thomas is speaking as a
theologian, and so the arguments presuppose Revelation. Sestili’s opponents, however, differ as
to the precise consequences of Thomas’s theological presuppositions. For Ramellini, the vision
of God is not the end of human nature as such; it is the end of human nature in this order of
Providence. Consequently, man has a natural desire for the vision of God in this order of
Providence, but the *terminus* of that desire must be revealed.85 Brandi agreed that man’s capacity

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83 This aligns him with Thomas and Scotus, as interpreted in chapter one, section B and chapter two,
section B respectively.

84 This aligns them with Cajetan and Suárez, as interpreted in chapter two, sections C and D respectively.

85 This aligns him with Lafosse, as interpreted in chapter two, section E.
for the vision of God must be revealed, but denied that it posits in man any natural desire for the vision of God.86

As a consequence of these disagreements between Sestili and his critics, an ironic dichotomy emerges at the turn of the twentieth century. Since both Sestili and his critics recognize a clear distinction between obediential potency and natural passive potency, those who affirmed that human nature is naturally receptive to grace and glory had to emend Thomas’s epistemology to order the intellect’s active powers towards intuitive knowledge, since they thought that the intellect can only have a single, innate inclination towards its perfection. Those who affirmed that the primary orientation of the intellect is towards created being had to emend Thomas’s anthropology, and deny either human nature’s natural receptivity to grace and glory, or at least the natural knowability of such a receptivity, since the soul’s singular, innate inclination is towards the knowledge of being, not of God. In this way, the Scotistic and Suarezian language of “innate” desire forced Thomists into a corner: one could affirm either nature’s natural receptivity to grace and glory or the intellect’s orientation towards created being, but not both. If the former, then one had to affirm nature’s active desire for grace and glory with the Aegidian tradition; if the latter, then one had to deny nature’s natural receptivity to grace and glory with Cajetan and/or Suárez.

86 This aligns him with Cajetan, as interpreted in chapter two, section C.
B. Stage 2: Ambroise Gardeil’s Initial Reception of Gioacchino Sestili

If Sestili’s work met with a fiery reception in Italy, it was better received elsewhere. In Germany, for example, it was given a favorable review by Joseph a Leonissa, a Capuchin Franciscan, who noted the similarity between Sestili’s reading of Thomas and the doctrine of Bonaventure on the natural desire for God. It also received a favorable reception by a Redemptorist, Heinrich Kirfel (1881-1947), who, while not agreeing with Sestili in all respects, took Sestili’s side against that of his Italian critics. The most significant, positive reception of Sestili’s work came from the French Dominican, Ambroise Gardeil. In his article on *appétit* for the influential *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, Gardeil approvingly concluded, “one will find as complete a documentation as possible on the question in the citations, footnotes, and comments of the work by Dr. Sestili: *De naturali intelligentis animae appetitu intuendi divinam essentiam*, Rome, 1896. We have used it at several points for this work.” However, in order to appreciate the context for Gardeil’s reception of Sestili, which differed so widely from that of his confrère in Italy, it is important to consider the fact that Gardeil had already been involved in ongoing debates about natural desire arising from a different provenance: the work of the French lay Catholic philosopher, Maurice Blondel (1861-1949).

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87 Joseph a Leonissa. Review of *De possibilitate desiderioque primae caussae [sic!] substantiam videndi*, by Gioacchino Sestili, *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Spekulative Theologie* 16 (1902): 161. I have been unable to locate any biographical details about this reviewer.


The academic year before Sestili began his dissertation, Maurice Blondel had received approval from the faculty at the École Normale Supérieure to begin work on his re-envisioning of the relationship between human and divine action in what was to become his doctoral thesis, *L’Action*. Blondel’s goal was to respond to the philosophy of immanentism in the way that Lepidi and Sestili had responded to ontologism.

In order to avoid the pitfalls of immanentism, Blondel distinguished sharply between a *doctrine* of immanentism strictly speaking, which excludes all possibility of transcendence, and a philosophical *method* of immanentism, which examines human action from within, but is willing to admit the existence of the transcendent should an immanent reason be found for doing so. Using this method, Blondel argued that the doctrine of immanentism was inconsistent with its own tenets. While it maintained that nothing could enter the human intellect from outside, it admitted several *a priori* methodological claims, which could not be reconciled with the data of immanent experience. First, immanentists permit Descartes’ method of doubt. But, Blondel argues, there is no immanent reason why one ought to doubt the data of one’s own immanent experience. Second, immanentists assume Kant’s critique of pure reason, and consequently an incompatibility between the immanent and the transcendent. However, Blondel argues, such an assumption is not compatible with the undeniable fact of action, in which the two are brought

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Finally, Blondel also rejects a third assumption: Pascal’s wager. As beneficial as it might be to the Christian faith, one cannot assume that it would be better to believe or not to believe, unless there is some immanent reason for belief or non-belief. Blondel’s goal, in *L’Action*, was then to isolate the reason for belief within a metaphysics of transcendent action.

According to Blondel, a rigorously immanent evaluation of action yields two important data. First, our thoughts and actions are ordered towards an infinite goal. Beyond every thought there lies a more comprehensive grasp of the truth, and, beyond every action, a yet more perfect attaining of the good. Second, man’s thoughts are radically distinct from his actions for two reasons: human beings routinely intend more than they do, and they routinely do other than they intend. The infinite nature of intellectual acts, together with man’s inability to reconcile intellectual thought with intellectual desire, sits at the surface of a deeper, more immanent problem. At the core of man’s very being there lies an exigency: in spite of man’s inability to achieve the infinite by making his thoughts and actions equal to one another, he must nonetheless act. Man’s being is, as it were, set in motion by a hand other than his own. That hand propels him towards the complete reconciliation of infinite thought and infinite action, even though he is incapable of achieving it of his own accord. Moreover, whether one chooses to embrace that motion without knowing how it might lead to a seemingly unachievable end, or to rebel against it by choosing a substitute, naturally achievable end, man must choose; and to choose is to act.

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93 Ibid.

94 Ibid., xxi.

95 Ibid., 352.

96 One cannot but see Blondel grappling philosophically with the problem expressed by Paul in Romans 7:15.

97 Ibid., 355-56.
The fundamental necessity of choosing raised an important ethical question for Blondel: is man really free in the choice to act? In one sense he is, because one can choose whether or not to embrace the transcendent motion at the heart of action. In another sense he is not, because if one chooses to reject this transcendent motion and to fashion an end for human nature that is within man’s grasp, then the decision makes man a metaphysical contradiction. To choose is to act, and to act is to embrace the transcendent motion at the heart of human action, together with its source. To reject that source is to embrace it in rejecting it, and thereby to lapse into an idolatry that condemns itself by its own hypocrisy.98

For Blondel, if one does embrace the transcendent nature of human action, this does not immediately reconcile the ontological condition of human nature, for man remains a being incapable of realizing his given end. The true embrace of transcendence is a negative choice, a refusal to fashion for oneself a naturally achievable end as a substitute for one’s given end, even in the face of one’s inability to reach his given end. Such a struggle requires heroic courage in the midst of deep existential uncertainty. But such courage is also a preparation for grace; the humble interior sacrifice it entails gradually removes the barriers to the reception of faith, which gives man an immanent, experiential confirmation of his decision to embrace transcendence, while at the same time granting him the ability to achieve his end through a participation in the action of God himself, who alone can fully adequate his thoughts to his actions and his actions to his thoughts.99

98 Ibid., 359ff.
99 Ibid., 402.
In a non-scholastic context, Blondel tried to come to terms with some of the same fundamental questions that the scholastics had asked concerning natural desire. The first and most fundamental question that Blondel raised concerned the limitation of the motion in the soul’s faculties by its power to reach their terminus of its own accord. Blondel denied this limitation not so much on textual grounds, since it was not his concern to expound the thought of Thomas (he had not even read much Thomas at this point in his career), but rather on philosophical grounds, since he did not think that it was self-evident or axiomatic. The second question concerned the distinction between the intellect and the will. On the basis of experience, Blondel came to the Scotistic and Suarezian conclusion that the will is radically distinct from the intellect in deliberate action, rather than the conclusion of Thomas and Cajetan that there is an intrinsic relationship between the two in every act. The third question concerned whether the initial motion of the will has a definite terminus (as Thomas and Suárez both held), or whether it is the limiting factor of free desire (as Scotus and Cajetan both held). Blondel’s embrace of what is materially Suárez’s position on the will’s independence from the intellect, together with his experience of a kind of metaphysical askesis, led him to embrace a denial of the possibility of “refusing to act,” akin to that of Thomas and Suárez.

Finally, given a natural motion in the will whose end exceeds the soul’s natural faculties, Blondel faced the question of what precisely the terminus of such a motion is supposed to be. Suárez had arrived at this point, but since he had assumed that natural desires are limited to naturally achievable ends, he had concluded that such a motion has a naturally achievable

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beatitude as its *terminus*. Blondel, on the other hand, by denying such a restriction on natural desire, came to a doctrine much closer to that of the Aegidian tradition: a natural, active, specific desire for an end that exceeds the faculties of human nature. Unlike the Aegidian tradition, however, Blondel did not proceed down the difficult theological road that lay ahead of this conception of natural desire. He was a philosopher, not a theologian. Having taken his readers to the doorstep of grace through a natural desire with a supernatural end, he offered no further argumentation. Instead, he bade the reader trust him and walk with him across the threshold of faith.

Five years after the publication of *L’Action*, and five years before Gardeil’s article on *Appétit* for the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, Gardeil reviewed Blondel’s thought in a long series of articles about the exigencies of human action. Gardeil’s articles attempt to imitate Blondel’s method and style, but do so partly in the form of a commentary on Thomas’s *Treatise on Beatitude* in *S.T.*, Ia-IIae, q. 1-5, and partly as a comparison of Blondel’s doctrine with Thomism, which Gardeil understands to differ significantly from the doctrine espoused by Blondel.

The first principle that Gardeil criticizes in Blondel’s work is the radical distinction between the intellect and the will. Whatever Blondel’s understanding of his personal experience may have been, one cannot separate the powers of the soul as radically as Blondel proposes in

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101 See above, chapter two.


the experience of action. The intellect and the will are therefore not independent of one another; the will is the instrument of the intellect and exercises its freedom within the bounds of what the intellect presents to it as an end.

A second principle that Gardeil criticizes is Blondel’s argument that the intellect and the will have an infinite object, which Blondel supported with the argument that man can always think beyond what he knows and will beyond what he has. Likening this argument to the scholastic position of Jean of Ripa (fl. 1354), a fourteenth century disciple of Scotus, Gardeil argues that Blondel’s Scotistic position encounters a fundamental problem. If man’s thoughts take place on the level of the finite, then however long the series of finite thoughts is extended, it never reaches the infinite; two parallel series of trees may seem to converge in the distance, but if they are truly parallel then their convergence is an illusion, and they are as far apart in actual fact at the horizon as they are at the start. Instead, the adequate object of the human intellect is universal being, not infinite being. Experience confirms this because, while man always desires something in the concrete, no concrete thing ever fully satisfies his desire. In fact, man desires that some concrete thing satisfy him more completely than any concrete, created thing

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105 Ibid., 131-32.
106 Ibid., 136, 269-72.
110 Ibid., 281.
ever could. In this way, the motion of the human will is undetermined at first, seeking a universal good amongst particular goods. Yet in actual fact, the only object that could ever satisfy such a desire is God, because God is the only being that combines universality of good in a concrete existence.

For Gardeil, having a desire for God as a concrete instance of the universal good is not the same as Blondel’s doctrine of a desire for God as infinite goodness. To be consistent with Thomas’s philosophical psychology, Blondel’s doctrine of desire has to presuppose that man already possesses the knowledge of God as he is in himself so that God may be desired in himself. Gardeil’s doctrine, on the other hand, only has to presuppose a knowledge of God insofar as his existence is mediated through the adequate objects of man’s limited faculties. Hence, according to Gardeil, since God is known by the intellect analogically as the cause of being, man’s natural desire reaches God objectively, but does not penetrate his interior essence.

In the article for the *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique*, Gardeil develops the doctrine of natural desire that he crafted in response to Blondel, but does so in a more overtly scholastic tone and in dialogue with Sestili. This context is important not just because it gives us insight into a more positive reception of Sestili than occurred in Italy, but also because Gardeil follows Sestili’s lead in subtly correcting some misinterpretations of Thomas in commentators such as

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111 Ibid., 275.
112 Ibid., 285.
113 Ibid., 290.
114 Ibid., 291.
Cajetan and Suárez. Specifically, Gardeil affirms that natural appetite is not just the potential for elicited appetite; it constitutes an act independent of elicited appetite. Nevertheless, natural appetite depends on knowledge. The knowledge, upon which natural appetite depends is the knowledge of the good in common, which is impressed upon the mind directly by God. Consequently, the adequate object of the will is beatitude in common, which corresponds with the possession of the good in common.

Having given, amidst the maze of the Thomistic tradition, a nuanced doctrine of natural desire, there still remained for Gardeil, as there had for Sestili, the limitation imposed by the distinction between innate and elicited desire. This language did not hinder Gardeil as much as it had Sestili, however. Within man’s natural desire for beatitude in common, Gardeil proposes that one can distinguish an appetite of exigence and an appetite of capacity. An appetite of exigence posits in the subject the power of achieving its end; an appetite of mere capacity does not. Either appetite can be implicit or explicit, depending on whether it follows general or determined knowledge. According to Gardeil, Thomas proposes that man has an innate, implicit, appetite of capacity for the vision of God. Thomas’s doctrine can be distinguished from the doctrine of Scotus, whom Gardeil summarizes as positing an innate, explicit appetite of capacity for the vision of God; Thomas’s doctrine can also be distinguished from the Aegidians, Bellelli, Berti, and Noris, whom Gardeil summarizes as positing an innate and explicit appetite of exigence for the vision of God, but only for nature considered as ordered to that vision.117

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116 What follows is a summary of the relevant portions of the fourth and fifth sections of Gardeil’s article (col. 1696-99).

117 Gardeil is actually describing a position more like that of Lafosse, although he does not reference Lafosse explicitly.
Gardeil’s distinction between appetites of exigence and appetites of capacity overcame the limits imposed by the distinction between innate and elicited desire, but Gardeil remained, like Sestili, bound by the idea that each of the desires he distinguished had to operate separately from the other. He thus did not posit any intrinsic relationship between an innate, explicit desire of exigence for beatitude in common and an innate, explicit, desire of capacity for the vision of God, whose fulfillment the former seeks, insofar as it is possible. Instead, Gardeil only associates an innate, explicit, desire of capacity for the vision of God with Scotus. Thus, one witnesses the same dichotomy between Blondel and Gardeil as was previously seen between Sestili and his critics. Those who affirm man’s natural receptivity for grace and glory have to emend Thomistic epistemology in order to orient the intellect actively towards the vision of God, and so turn towards the Aegidian tradition; those who affirm the orientation of man’s intellect towards created being have to deny its natural receptivity to grace and glory, and so turn towards the Cajetanian and Suarezian traditions.

C. Stage 3: Scholastic Developments until the First World War

After Gardeil’s response to Blondel, there continued a lively discussion of natural desire among theologians representing a wide variety of views. Some Dominicans continued to maintain the views of the scholastic commentators. For example, Norberto del Prado (1852-1918) restated Cajetan’s position in such a way that the reader of del Prado’s work could be
excused for not realizing that there ever was such a position as immanentism. Other Dominicans such as Alexandre Mercier and Étienne Hugueny (1868-1942) explicitly took up the question of immanentism. Mercier, following Ramellini, argues that since man has been called to a supernatural end in this order of Providence, man has a natural desire for that supernatural end. Such a natural desire does not compromise the gratuity of grace, because God’s call is in some sense a supernatural act. For Hugueny, man has a desire for the vision of God which is natural in the sense that it is placed in nature by God at Creation. Like Ramellini, both Mercier and Hugueny assume that the doctrine that human nature was altered by God’s call to the beatific vision is that of Cajetan, even though it is actually that of the Aegidian, Lafosse.


In a similar vein to that of Dubois, see A. Holder, “Le désir naturel de la vision béatifique,” *Revue Augustinienne* 16 (1910): 5–26.

120 Ibid., 181-83.

121 Hugueny, “A quel bonheur sommes-nous destinés?,” 43.

122 One should note here the work of the Dominican, Thomas Pègues (1866-1936), who did not contribute much to the debate in terms of quantity, but he did have occasion to critique the limitation of natural desires by naturally achievable ends, and to propose, rightly, that in *S.T.*, Ia, q. 12, a. 1, Thomas demonstrates from natural reason the possibility, not the actuality of the vision of God. Cf. Thomas Pègues, *Commentaire français littéral de la Somme Théologique de Saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Toulouse: E. Privat, 1907), 317-19. Pègues’s position is similar to that of Sestili, in that he postulates not only the natural knowability of man’s capacity for the vision of God, but also the natural knowability of God’s ability to actualize that capacity.
Among the Jesuits, there was an even wider divergence of opinion. Some, such as Louis Billot (1846-1931), followed in the commentarial tradition of Suárez. Others were more receptive to Blondel, such as Jean Vincent Bainvel (1858-1937), Hippolyte Ligeard (1878-1916), and Pierre Rousselot (1878-1915). Bainvel followed the scholastic commentators on the correlation between natural desire and exigence, but argued that nature’s exigence, according to Thomas, is not absolute. For this reason, Bainvel maintains, immanentism and scholasticism are not necessarily incompatible.

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128 Ibid., 199.

129 Ibid., 199-200.
Ligeard, although claiming a Suarezian inspiration, argues that the actual text of Thomas clearly suggests the existence in man of a natural desire for a supernatural end. However, Ligeard argues, this doctrine had “embarrassed” the scholastic commentators. Reiterating Ramellini’s pseudo-Cajetanian position about the call of man to the beatific vision, Ligeard laments that others had not adopted the distinction between “natural nature” and “supernaturalized nature,” in spite of what he claims is Suárez’s(!) authority.

By insisting on the restriction of natural desires to naturally achievable ends, Ligeard argues, the scholastic commentators had effectively closed nature from the supernatural. As a result, the commentators furnished rigorous immanentists with a doctrine of nature that could be conceived completely apart from God. The way to overcome this sort of immanentism, Ligeard suggests, is to reject the limits imposed on human nature by the commentators. This can be done in two ways. The first is to recover Thomas’s doctrine of a natural desire for a supernatural end. This ensures that human nature cannot be conceptualized without

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131 Ibid., 629. “Il y a donc naturellement, dans la nature même, un désir qui ne peut être satisfait que par la vision directe et surnaturelle de Dieu. C’est elle seule qui est le terme de l’activité de notre esprit, c’est à l’obtenir que se réalise notre béatitude, c’est vers elle que se portent le désir et la tendance naturelle de notre esprit.”

132 Ibid., 631.

133 Ibid., 632.

134 Ibid., 863-64, 867.

135 Ibid., 864.

136 Ibid., 866-67.
transcendence. The second is to pair the doctrine of a natural desire for a supernatural end with the Suarezian doctrine of obediential potency. This ensures that human nature is transcendent in its receptivity as well as its activity.

Although Ligeard had already implicitly embraced an Aegidian position when he affirmed what he thought was Cajetan’s position on the “supernaturalization” of nature by God’s call to the beatific vision, Ligeard subsequently turns explicitly to the Aegidian tradition in support of his position. The doctrine of Bellelli, Berti, and Noris of a moral necessity for grace carefully avoids the Jansenist teaching of a strict necessity for grace, and has never been condemned by the Church. By adopting this doctrine, which is “the authentic doctrine of the School,” Ligeard argues that theologians can overcome immanentism through a return to a more authentic scholasticism.

If Ligeard sought to defend Blondel from the standpoint of the will, Pierre Rousselot sought to defend Blondel from the standpoint of the intellect. In 1908, the same year as Ligeard’s work appeared, Rousselot attempted to rework the spirit of Blondel’s *L’Action*, while taking into account Gardeil’s criticisms. The result was his doctoral thesis, *L’Intellectualisme de Saint Thomas*. In the first pages of that thesis, Rousselot explains that his goal is to correct mistaken forms of immanentism. On the one hand, against a more materialist immanentism, which labels

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137 Ibid.
138 Ibid., 868.
139 Ibid., 621-26, 868-69.
140 Ibid., 782-83.
141 Ibid., 778.
142 Ibid., 866.
the intellect no more than an *epiphenomenon*, he wants to show that the intellect is the very source of the body’s life, rather than an uninfluential appendage to the human body. On the other hand, against a more voluntarist form of immanentism, i.e. that of Blondel, he wants to show, like Gardeil, that the intellect is the most immanent faculty of the soul, because man not only comes to know others through it, man even becomes them in a certain manner.

If Rousselot follows Gardeil’s intellectualism, that does not mean that he agrees with it in all respects. In defining the intellect, Rousselot indicates that the primary mistake one can make—and here he seems to have Gardeil in mind—is to determine the nature of intellect *in general* by the nature of the human intellect. Intellect, as a faculty, is present in God, angels, and humans. Each of these three exists in a manner analogical to the others, and consequently each of the three understands in a manner analogical to the others. First, there is God, who exists outside of time and knows the individual being of all things in a simultaneous present. Second are the angels, who, while they exist in time, have a clear knowledge of intelligible realities through the intuition that they have of themselves. Humans are the lowest form of intellectual creatures. Having neither the vision of being, nor the intuition of themselves, they are forced to seek the means of their understanding (even of their *self*-understanding), by turning to the material world and using whatever intelligible content it makes available.

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145 Ibid., 7.
146 Ibid., 11-12.
147 Ibid., 14-18.
148 Ibid., 18.
If intellection is measured by its highest form in God, rather than by its lowest form in humans, then the defining characteristic of intellection is not the ability to reason, since the need for rationcination arises from a defect in the human intellect, so much as openness to an understanding of all things. Moreover, owing to the infinity of the intellect’s openness to an understanding of all things, it follows that only an infinite object (i.e., God) could ever fully actualize it. That being the case, the intellect is first and foremost a “faculté du divin,” a potency for the direct, unmediated vision of God, not a “faculté de l’être,” a potency for the knowledge of universal being mediated by concepts drawn from an encounter with material objects.

Since Rousselot viewed the intellect primarily as a faculté du divin, and not a faculté de l’être, he challenged the Cajetanian restriction of natural desires by naturally achievable ends. Not only does Thomas say that man has a natural desire for the vision of God, but Thomas’s support of this doctrine, Rousselot rightly observes, is based on the very structure of the intellect itself. Pace Ramellini, Mercier, and Hugueny, it is not based on some contingent feature of human nature arising from the call to the beatific vision. Neither, therefore, is man’s receptivity to the beatific vision grounded in an obediential potency which is distinct from human nature itself, as all of the aforementioned authors had held.

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149 Ibid., 19.
150 Ibid., 62, 63, 228.
151 Ibid., 182-83.
152 Ibid., 183-84.
153 Ligeard makes the same claim, but one cannot be certain whether Rousselot read Ligeard’s work before the publication of L’intellectualisme de Saint Thomas.
154 Ibid., 188.
Since a description of the consequences of man’s natural desire was not among the main points of Rousselot’s dissertation, those consequences must be inferred from a short comment, in which Rousselot expresses an unusual mix of Scotism, Suarezianism, Cajetanianism, and Aegidianism:

For St. Thomas, obediential potency is not independent from natural potency; it is nature itself. One can therefore, at least after the fact, recognize traces of it in the awareness that being has of itself, in certain weighty calls of its nature. And, in the absence of God’s offer, this [calling] was not translated into anything except desire, can, in an indecipherable obscurity, be articulated in a clear series of syllogisms thanks to the lights of faith.155

If Rousselot was faithful to Thomas in his proposal that obediential potency is not distinct from natural potency, he is not faithful to Thomas in his suggestion that “obediential potency... is nature itself.” If Thomas equated what subsequent theologians called “obediential potency” with that portion of material potency in virtue of which a creature stands open to the immediate influence of God, it was Scotus who identified nature with such a passive potency; it was Suarez who translated Scotus’s passive inclination into a “weight of nature”; it was Cajetan (or more properly Ramellini, interpreting Cajetan in response to Sestili) who thought that man could only know his capacity for the vision of God by natural reason after it had been revealed; it was Giles who thought that the active component of natural desire (which Rousselot described as a “weighty call of nature”) had the vision of God as its specific end.

155 Ibid. “La ‘puissance obédientielle’ n’est pas, pour S. Thomas, indépendante de la puissance naturelle: elle est la nature même. On pourra donc, au moins post factum, en reconnaître les traces dans la conscience que l’être a de soi, dans certains appels sourds de sa nature. Et ce qui, en l’absence de l’offre divine, ne se fût traduit qu’en appétitif, dans une obscurité indéchiffrable, pourra, grâce aux lumières de la foi, se formuler en une claire série de syllogismes.”
Rousselot, like Sestili, thus rightly saw that some aspects of the Thomism of his day were inspired by interpretations of Thomas which were not always faithful to the letter of Thomas’s text. For Rousselot, one such misinterpretation was the doctrine of obediential potency, which he correctly observed to have been postulated on account of a mistaken interpretation of Thomas’s understanding of man’s receptivity to grace and glory. Another misinterpretation was the idea of a natural desire for the vision of God that was based on God’s call to the vision of himself. Rousselot correctly notes these two problems with the doctrine of his contemporary Thomists. However, he also encountered two difficulties, which were to hamper the reception of his thought among them. The first was his eclectic doctrine of natural desire, which, combined elements of Scotus, Suarez, Cajetan, and Giles, without quite arriving at the synthesis of Thomas himself. The second was his epistemology. Rousselot was restricted by the language of innate desire like Sestili, and so he accounted for man’s natural receptivity to the vision of God in an active, specific orientation towards for that vision. This required him, like Sestili, to reenvision Thomistic epistemology.

In 1910, Gardeil sensed the epistemological weakness in Rousselot’s dissertation and briefly criticized it in a footnote in a book on apologetics and dogma. Gardeil argued that Rousselot had erred in his epistemology because he had failed to appreciate how intellect is said analogous of God and creatures. By taking God’s understanding as the primary analogate for our understanding, Rousselot mistakenly posits that man’s intellect is oriented immediately towards the intuitive vision of God, rather than mediately through concepts drawn from phantasms abstracted from creatures.

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In response, Rousselot pushed his epistemology even further by linking the affirmation of God’s existence necessarily with the affirmation of any creature’s existence. 157 His argument hinged on the meaning of the French, “c’est,” with which Blondel had dramatically ended L’Action in an invitation to trust him in the affirmation of the transcendent origin of the first motion in the human will. 158 Rousselot analyzed the phrase’s constituent parts: ce (this) is the affirmation of a particular suppositum, and est (is) is the affirmation of being. To say, “c’est,” for Rousselot, is to synthesize nature and suppositum in an act of judgment. But, as like knows like, for the intellect to affirm the synthesis of nature and suppositum supposes that it acts from the standpoint of the very same unity. Therefore, in the affirmation of another thing’s being the soul affirms its own being. 159 Moreover, since the affirmation of another being’s existence includes implicitly the affirmation of the existence of being in general, to say of being, “c’est,” is to distinguish essence (which in a particular case would correspond with ce) from existence (which in a particular case would correspond with est), and to synthesize them in judgment. Yet the affirmation that essence in general has existence (i.e. that “being is”), like the affirmation that a particular essence has a particular existence, entails the affirmation that there is some being in whom these two are united. Hence, Rousselot argues, the affirmation of any being at all entails the affirmation that God exists. 160 In short, to be a faculté de l’être is to be of necessity a faculté du divin.


158 Ibid., 495.

159 Ibid., 497.

160 Ibid., 498-99.
Gardeil responded by defending the orientation of the intellect towards being in common by means of a concept as he had in response to Blondel. Specifically, Gardeil accuses Rousselot of misunderstanding Thomas’s doctrine of analogy, and consequently of misunderstanding how to form a definition from an analogous term. As in the footnote that occasioned Rousselot’s response, Gardeil reaffirms that “intellect” is said analogously of God, angels, and human beings. Specifically, there is no such thing as intellect in itself that one predicates separately of God, angels, and human beings; there is only intellect actually existing in each of these beings. Consequently, man’s understanding of intellect in God, angels, and humanity has to follow man’s understanding of being in each of these three. One does not predicate being univocally of them; therefore intellect is not predicated univocally either. For this reason, while it is correct to say that there is a capacity in man, in virtue of his intellect, to be elevated to the vision of God, there is no immediate orientation of man towards the vision of God. Such a capacity posits neither an active orientation towards the vision of God, nor an exigence for it.

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162 Ibid., 92.
163 Ibid., 96.
164 Ibid.
165 Ibid., 97.
166 Ibid.
D. Conclusion

One can observe a certain resurgence of the Aegidian tradition among Thomists, whether intended or unintended, in the period before World War I. The first participant in this resurgence was Gioacchino Sestili, who questioned the limitation of natural desires by naturally achievable ends. Sestili postulated instead an innate desire in common for a beatitude that could only be had in the vision of God, and an elicited desire for the vision of God as first cause. In order to maintain the gratuity of grace, he adopted the doctrine of a natural end for man similar to that proposed by the Aegidian, Michael Paludanus.

The second participant in this resurgence was the Dominican, Carlo Ramellini. Ramellini clearly did not intend to participate in any Aegidian resurgence. However, he proposed a doctrine of the Aegidian, Fulgence Lafosse, which he thought came from Cajetan: man in a state of pure nature would have a natural desire for a naturally achievable end, but man in a state in which he has been called to the vision of God has a natural desire for that vision. Since Ramellini was unaware of the Aegidian provenance of this opinion, he did not engage any of the material from the Aegidian tradition on how to preserve the gratuity of grace. Consequently, he did not pursue the consequences of his position any further.

Maurice Blondel also seems to have unintentionally contributed towards a resurgence of the Aegidian tradition. Although he worked from outside of a scholastic context, and although his doctrine of desire contained a potpourri of positions ordinarily associated with different scholastic traditions, he questioned the limitation of natural desire by a naturally achievable end, and so posited a natural desire in human nature for an end that cannot be reached by nature. Blondel’s purpose was to find within human nature something that would necessitate the
existence of transcendent reality, even God, and such a doctrine of natural desire enabled him to do so. However, like Ramellini, Blondel did not explore his quasi-Aegidianism any further. As a philosopher, Blondel prescinded from the question of the relationship between the desire described by him and theological questions of grace and its gratuity.

In the years after Blondel, several scholastic theologians engaged this Aegidian resurgence with varying levels of intentionality. The Dominicans, Mercier and Hugueny, followed Ramellini in the adoption of Lafosse’s position on natural desire. The Jesuit, Ligeard, explicitly connected this position with the Aegidian tradition, suggesting that it would provide an immanent, but active way of associating human nature with a transcendent end. Ligeard also publicly advocated a return to Berti’s defense of the gratuity of grace in virtue of a moral, but not strict necessity of God’s granting the means to our only end. Ligeard further advocated a strong insistence on Suárez’s doctrine of obediential potency in order to account for man’s immanent receptivity to transcendence.

Rousselot sought to ground a natural desire for the vision of God in a reworking of Thomistic epistemology. He criticized the pseudo-Cajetanian yet truly Aegidian position, common since Ramellini, that nature has been “supernaturalized” by God’s call to the vision of himself, and argued rightly that, for Thomas, man’s receptivity to the vision of God is grounded in human nature simply speaking. Rousselot also rightly noted that, for Thomas, obediential potency is not particularly necessary for accounting for man’s receptivity to grace and glory, since human nature is, of itself, capable of receiving these gifts. However, the epistemological grounds upon which Rousselot based his defense of a natural desire for a supernatural end were
subject to harsh criticism from Gardeil, who rightly noted that Thomas had not understood the intellect in the way in which Rousselot described.

Accordingly, in the first decades of the twentieth century, a certain type of theological argument repeated itself three times: first, among Sestili and his critics at the turn of the twentieth century; second, between Blondel and Gardeil from the turn of the twentieth century into its first decade; third, among the various figures who continued to respond to Blondel, particularly Rousselot and Gardeil. Those who affirmed man’s natural receptivity to grace and glory, such as Sestili, Blondel, and Rousselot, sought differing ways of positing an inclination in nature towards these gifts, but they did so by means of an epistemology not entirely consistent with the text of Thomas. Those who affirmed the human intellect’s orientation towards created being, such as Sestili’s critics and Gardeil, denied man’s natural receptivity towards grace and glory and/or the natural knowability of it. In each iteration of the argument, those who affirmed man’s natural receptivity to grace and glory turned intentionally or unintentionally towards the Aegidian tradition, while those who affirmed the human intellect’s orientation towards created being turned intentionally towards the Cajetanian or Suarezian traditions. The exception was Ramellini, one of Sestili’s critics, who, in thinking he was turning towards Cajetan, adopted Lafosse’s Aegidianism instead.
CHAPTER 4
Natural Desire in the Early Twentieth Century, Part 2 (1924-1939)

The discussion of natural desire between the First and Second World Wars proceeded in four stages. In the first stage (1924-28), questions about natural desire and the Aegidian tradition were raised by Pierre Rousselot’s successor and Jesuit confrère, Guy de Broglie. This stage of scholarly discussion culminated in the work of the Benedictine, Jorge Laporta from Louvain, who blended the implicit neo-Aegidianism of the first decades of the twentieth century with Scotism, and whose work encouraged a confusion between the Aegidian and Scotist traditions among several of Laporta’s interlocutors. In the second stage (1928-32), a variety of scholars from differing perspectives responded to the work of Laporta, while some Jesuit scholars began to adopt the aforementioned confusion between Aegidianism and Scotism. In the third stage, which overlapped somewhat with the second (1931-37), the Dominican, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, solidified the tendency of the Jesuits, seeking an a priori argument that would apply equally to Scotists and Aegidians and thereby exclude the possibility of a natural desire for a supernatural end in any form. In the fourth stage (1937-39), disputes between Garrigou-Lagrange and his interlocutors centered again within the Jesuit order. Pedro Descoqs took Garrigou-Lagrange’s side and Guy de Broglie returned to the discussion to defend the possibility of a natural desire for the vision of God. Even though a variety of creative solutions to questions of natural desire continued to be proposed throughout the period in question, the result of these debates was the crystallization of what had until this point been scholastic variety into two sides:
those who supported a natural desire for the vision of God, following Guy de Broglie, and those who opposed it.

A. Stage 1: Guy de Broglie and his Interlocutors (1924-28)

The cause of the resurgence of scholarly discussion about natural desire was the work of a Jesuit, Guy de Broglie (1889-1983).1 In 1919, De Broglie assumed Rousselot’s chair in dogmatic theology at the Institut Catholique de Paris after Rousselot met an untimely death in the First World War.2 De Broglie had studied theology at the Jesuit theologate in Hastings, England from 1915-18,3 while Joseph Huby was teaching apologetics there.4 Huby was a fellow student of Rousselot’s as well as his friend,5 colleague,6 and ardent supporter.7 De Broglie, then, can rightly be said to have been formed in the spirit of Rousselot, and the beginning of de Broglie’s publishing career bears witness to this fact.

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1 For a brief overview of de Broglie’s life, see Michel Riquet, “Guy de Broglie,” Compagnie (July 1983): 152-53.


De Broglie’s first article on natural desire, published in 1924, announces a programmatic defense of Rousselot. However, de Broglie’s defense of Rousselot is not framed as a defense of any implicit or explicit Aegidianism. By this time, to label someone as a member of the Aegidian tradition was akin to labeling them a Pelagian, as indicated in the following text of de Broglie, in which he refers to members of the Aegidian tradition as “Augustinians”:

Various critics have accused Fr. Rousselot’s *The Intellectualism of Saint Thomas* of confusing the natural order and the supernatural order, as well as with the Augustinians of practically eliminating the possibility of pure nature. We hope that this article will help to dissipate the misunderstandings which have happened to arise on this matter. However, it will be interesting to cite a fragment of Fr. Rousselot here, from which we have borrowed a phrase, a fragment destined for an article that he did not have the time to complete. One will see in it what he thought of the tendency for which people have criticized him. “That human nature,” he writes, “could be considered without any gift of supernatural being, that God was able, if it pleased him, to approve it as such, that [thesis] can no longer constitute the object of the slightest doubt for a Catholic. Pius X explicitly censured the error of those who would admit ‘not only a capacity and a fittingness... but a real and rigorous exigence in human nature with regard to the supernatural order’ (Encyclical *Pascendi*, D. 2103). I recently heard it said to a theologian of the first rank that this pontifical text appeared to decide definitively what could remain of the controversy between the Augustinians and the rest of the School. To tell the truth, the opinion called, ‘Augustinian,’ even before this final blow, was but a dialectical ghost without consistency. We will not take any notice of it in this article, and we will suppose that the common thesis: ‘God could have created man in a state of pure nature’ is not only a scholastic opinion, but is so immediately tied to the Catholic conception of the supernatural that one could call it implicitly revealed with it, and that the Church could define it as dogma if she judged it appropriate.”

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8 Guy de Broglie, “De la place du surnaturel dans la philosophie de saint Thomas,” *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 14 (1924): 201n11. “Divers critiques ont reproché à l’*Intellectualisme de saint Thomas* du P. Rousselot de confondre l’ordre naturel et l’ordre surnaturel, et d’éliminer pratiquement avec les Augustiniens la possibilité de la nature pure. Nous espérons que cet article aidera à dissiper les malentendus qui ont pu se produire à ce sujet. Mais il sera intéressant de citer ici le fragment du P. Rousselot auquel nous avons emprunté une formule, fragment destiné à un article qu’il n’eut pas le temps d’achever; on y verra ce qu’il pensait de la tendance qu’on lui a reprochée: ‘Que la nature humaine,’ écrit-il, ‘puisse être considérée sans aucun don de l’être surnaturel, que Dieu eût pu, s’il Lui eût plu, l’agréer telle, cela ne peut plus faire pour un catholique l’objet du doute le plus léger. Pie X a expressément réprouvé l’erreur de ceux qui admettraient ‘dans la nature humaine, au regard de l’ordre surnaturel, non pas seulement une capacité et une convenance... mais une vraie et rigoureuse exigence’ (Enc. *Pascendi*. D. 2103). J’entendais
Notwithstanding the comment Rousselot overheard, the Aegidian tradition had more than one branch, each of which maintained in some way that the vision of God is not due human nature absolutely. *De potentia absoluta* God could create man without giving him the means of achieving that vision, even if such a decision would be unthinkable in view of God’s Providence. If things were really as Rousselot had described them, it would be hard to imagine Hippolyte Ligeard’s Aegidian engagement with Blondel ever being allowed publication, since it appeared after the publication of the encyclical *Pascendi* and enthusiastically endorsed that branch of the Aegidian tradition most associated with the view that Rousselot criticizes.

Moreover, in light of Rousselot’s epistemology and his doctrine of man’s intellect’s *terminus* in the vision of God, it would be hard to imagine Rousselot’s own writing not falling under the condemnation he pronounces against the Aegidian tradition, except insofar as Rousselot were willing to associate himself with something like the position of Paludanus, as Sestili before him had done. Yet neither Rousselot nor de Broglie make any mention of Paludanus. Instead, they group the whole Aegidian tradition under the heading of something most like Berti, and thereby obscure (I think unintentionally), the affinity between the implicit Aegianism of their respective positions and the explicit Aegianism of his.

Thus, in the spirit of Rousselot, de Broglie notes:

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récemment dire à un théologien du premier mérite, que ce texte pontifical paraissait trancher définitivement ce qui pouvait rester de la controverse entre les Augustinens et le reste de l'École. A vrai dire, l'opinion dite augustinienne, même avant ce dernier coup, n'était guère qu'un spectre dialectique sans consistance. Nous n'en tiendrons aucun compte dans cet article, et nous supposerons que la thèse commune: ‘Dieu eût pu créer l'homme dans l'état de nature pure,’ n'est pas seulement une opinion scolastique, mais est si immédiatement liée avec la conception catholique du surnaturel qu'on peut la dire implicitement révélée avec elle, et que l'Église en pourrait faire un dogme défini si elle le jugeait à propos.” On this unpublished fragment of Rousselot, see also Zieliński, *Se gagner soi-même et gagner Dieu*, 144-51, especially pp. 150-51. I have identified Rousselot’s “Augustinians” with “Aegidians” because de Broglie makes the association clear in the context of the quotation.
These people [the Augustinians], as is known, think that they put everything in order by speaking of a half-exigence of the supernatural, in virtue of which the beatific vision, without being properly due to us, is nevertheless posited for us by the wisdom and goodness of the Creator. This solution is the most pathetic of all; Fr. Rousselot rightly noted that it had never been anything but “a dialectical ghost without substance.” For, however little one pushes it, this conception shows itself to be either entirely hollow, patently absurd, or theologically untenable. It is entirely hollow if, avoiding every absolute assertion, we say, “Pure nature is a hypothesis which is almost incompatible with God's goodness” [Giles and Berti]; for it is clear enough that saying almost or nearly or other expressions of this kind, which are borrowed from the order of quantity, express absolutely nothing except a sad poverty of thought when transported to the world of metaphysics. The solution becomes patently absurd if one says, “Pure nature is a hypothesis altogether contrary to God's goodness, and which nevertheless could truly be realized.” [Lafosse] Finally, it appears theologically untenable if one agrees that pure nature is nothing but a logical chimera, unrealizable in actual fact [Marcelli].

Basically, have the Augustinians ever been able to defend their positions in any other way than denying that they themselves understand them?... This is all the more so, because you cannot cite one single line of the holy doctor [St. Thomas] in favor of these obscure concepts of half-exigence, of pseudo-necessity, of quasi-gratuity, which is at the very heart of the Augustinian system, since his assertions in these matters are, on the contrary, always neat, categorical and absolute, seeming to us as difficult as possible to reconcile [with those of the Aegidians].

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9 Ibid., 201-03. “Ceux-ci [les Augustiniens], comme on sait, pensent tout arranger en parlant d'une demi-exigence du surnaturel, en vertu de laquelle la vision béatifique, sans nous être proprement due, est cependant postulée pour nous par la sagesse et la bonté du Créateur. Solution misérable entre toutes et dont le P. Rousselot notait justement qu'elle n'a jamais été qu'un ‘spectre dialectique sans consistance.’ Car pour peu qu'on la pousse, cette conception se révèle ou bien entièrement creuse, ou bien évidemment absurde, ou bien théologiquement intenable. Elles est entièrement creuse, si l'on dit, en fuyant toute assertion absolue: ‘La nature pure est une hypothèse presque incompatible avec la bonté divine’; car il est bien clair que les presque, les peu s'en faut et autres expressions empruntées à l'ordre de la quantité, dès qu'on les transporte au monde métaphysique, n'expriment plus absolument rien sinon une triste indigence de pensée. La solution devient évidemment absurde si l'on dit: ‘La nature pure est une hypothèse tout à fait contraire à la bonté divine, et qui néanmoins pourrait vraiment être réalisée.’ Enfin elle apparaît théologiquement intenable si on accorde que la nature pure n'est qu'une chimère logique, irréalisable en fait. Au fond, les Augustiniens ont-ils jamais pu défendre leurs positions autrement qu'en renonçant à les comprendre eux-mêmes?... Et d'autant plus qu'en faveur de ces concepts obscurs de demi-exigence, de pseudo-nécessité, de quasi-gratuité, qui sont l'âme même du système augustinien, on ne peut citer une seule ligne du saint Docteur, ses assertions en ces matières étant au contraire toujours nettes, catégoriques et absolues, si difficiles à concilier qu'elles puissent nous apparaître.” (emphasis in original)
De Broglie may have had harsh criticism for the Aegidian tradition, but here he at least recognizes more branches of the tradition than had Rousselot. As indicated in this quotation, he cites three different kinds of Aegidianism. Ironically, however, it is only the third position, one which is not represented by any major thinker within the tradition, that he brands as theologically untenable.

Moreover, de Broglie is subject to the same ignorance of Paludanus and his branch of the Aegidian tradition as was Rousse lot. This led to a further irony. In a subsequent article, de Broglie relates that he had not had Sestili’s work at his disposal in writing this first article, but that he is in complete agreement with what he reads in Sestili.\footnote{Guy de Broglie, “Sur la place du surnaturel dans la philosophie de saint Thomas: Lettre à M. l'abbé Blanche,” Recherches de Science Religieuse 15 (1925): 52.} However, the work of Sestili’s that de Broglie subsequently encountered was not Sestili’s dissertation, where he makes his own reliance on Paludanus clear, but rather his second defense of his dissertation, which assumes but does not restate his dependence on Paludanus. In short, while one sees de Broglie developing something very close to the Aegidianism of Paludanus through the inspiration of Rousselot, and affirming the affinity between his own doctrine and that of Sestili, which was inspired by Paludanus’s Aegidianism, de Broglie will remain unaware of the branch of the tradition with which he is associating himself, and consequently criticize the other branches of the Aegidian tradition as though they comprised the whole tradition.

Specifically, de Broglie argues that when Thomas speaks of a natural desire for the vision of God, such as in the Treatise on Beatitude from the Summa theologiae and the pertinent sections of Book 3 of the Summa contra Gentiles, Thomas is always speaking as a philosopher.
and not as a theologian. Consequently, Thomas intends his arguments to be—and they are—
demonstrative from natural reason. Following Francis de Sylvestris Ferrariensis’s interpretation
of Thomas, de Broglie suggests that Thomas demonstrates that there is a natural, elicited, and
specific desire in man for the vision of God.

If natural reason can demonstrate rigorously that man has a natural desire for the vision
of God, this raises the question of the gratuity of that vision in light of Aristotle’s dictum that a
natural desire cannot be vain. Ferrariensis, whom de Broglie otherwise follows, had avoided such
a critique by distinguishing between the vision of God as first cause and the vision of God as
triune. Notably, however, while de Broglie follows Ferrariensis in the affirmation of an elicited,
specific desire for the vision of God, he does not follow Ferrariensis on the protection of the
gratuity of that vision. Instead of distinguishing the two ends for man’s desire, de Broglie
distinguishes two kinds of demonstration: those which proceed a priori from the nature of the
intellect, and conclude via a deductive proof what is possible; and those which proceed a
posteriori from the experience of desire, and conclude via an inductive proof what is likely, but
not necessarily the case. St. Thomas, according to de Broglie, proceeds deductively from the
nature of the intellect to conclude that there is an antecedent possibility in man to see God, not
inductively from the experience of man’s desire to conclude that there is a consequent
probability that man actually does see God. In support of this, de Broglie makes a somewhat
weak argument. Those who say that a natural desire must be fulfilled face a contradiction: in

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11 De Broglie, “De la place du surnaturel,” 204-06.
12 Ibid., 197.
13 Ibid., 211-12.
saying that it must be fulfilled at some point, they deny that it must be fulfilled here and now; thus they admit the possibility of its being unfulfilled even while they argue the opposite.\textsuperscript{14}

As concerns the deductive proof of possibility, de Broglie follows in the tradition of Sestili, Blondel, and Rousselot. The intellect has an orientation not just towards this or that being, but towards unlimited being.\textsuperscript{15} For this reason, its primary and final end, the terminus of its natural desire, is the vision of God.\textsuperscript{16} Moreover, if man has a natural desire of this sort, it must be the case that a) the desire is capable of being fulfilled, and b) there is an agent capable of fulfilling it.\textsuperscript{17} Since only an unlimited being could fulfill such a desire, and only God is such an unlimited being, only God could completely fulfill man’s natural desire.\textsuperscript{18} Man’s receptivity to the vision of God can therefore rightly be called an “obediential potency,” because it is actualized not by a connatural agent, but rather by an agent which is above us in the order of being.\textsuperscript{19}

Even if de Broglie sidesteps the question of the gratuity of the vision of God by applying Aristotle’s\textit{dictum} only to the question of the possibility of the vision of God and not its actuality, he still considers it necessary to affirm the real possibility of a state of pure nature. Here, then, there arises a tension between his commitment to the vision of God as man’s final end and his commitment to the possibility of pure nature. Following Rousselot, de Broglie suggests that the

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 223.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 230.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 240.
\textsuperscript{17} The second part of de Broglie’s article (pp. 481-96) is entirely devoted to showing that Thomas only intends to prove the possibility and not the actuality of the vision of God from Aristotle’s\textit{dictum}.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., 225, 231.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., 228.
primary end of man is the vision of God. Indeed, de Broglie argues that man’s desire for the vision of God is such that without it, man can never be truly happy. Those who, following Suárez, suggest the possibility of a purely natural beatitude for human nature “evacuate” the meaning of grace, because they allow pure nature to close in upon itself in a completely satisfying circle.\(^{20}\) The only way, therefore, to maintain human nature’s orientation towards the vision of God while simultaneously allowing for a state of pure nature is to suggest that human nature’s desire for the vision of God is the desire for that vision \textit{as a gift}; that is, there is a condition built into man’s natural desire to receive the vision of God gratuitously. If God chooses not to fulfill man’s desire, human nature contents itself with what it can achieve by its own powers. Even though it is not \textit{completely} content in that act, it does not suffer because it has no control over God’s choice to fulfill its greatest desire.\(^{21}\)

De Broglie’s proposal is very similar to that of Paludanus: human nature has a natural, elicited, specific desire for the vision of God; God remains free to deny that vision and so to create man in a state of pure nature; human nature, denied the vision of God, will reach a secondary beatitude, which is not completely satisfying, but is nevertheless satisfying in a certain respect. However, de Broglie adds one nuance, which will feature prominently in de Lubac’s doctrine of natural desire: the notion of gift. De Broglie rejects, with Suárez, Ferrariensis’s distinction between the vision of God as first cause and the vision of God as triune, and defends the gratuity of grace instead by suggesting that human nature desires the vision of God only \textit{insofar as} it is given gratuitously. This introduces into man’s natural desire, which previous

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 244. “Il reste du moins qu’une fois nié tout désir qui porterait la nature vers le surnaturel, une fois affirmée la possibilité d’une bénédiction naturelle pleine, la notion même de grâce voit tout son sens propre s’évanouir.”

\(^{21}\) Ibid., 237-39.
generations had considered mostly in terms of objective exigence, a subjective disposition that de Broglie describes as “peaceable” (*paisible*). De Broglie describes as “peaceable” (*paisible*). Man’s desire is such that it will not torment us if it is not completely fulfilled in a state of pure nature, not because some natural beatitude will completely satisfy human nature, but rather because man’s desire will not be indignant at God’s use of his freedom to withhold the gift desired.

De Broglie’s quasi-Aegidian account of natural desire met with harsh criticism from those who read Thomas through the lens of Cajetan and/or Suárez. One critic was a diocesan priest, M. Blanche, who responded almost immediately to Broglie in a brief “note.” Grounding himself in the tradition of del Prado, Blanche argues that de Broglie was mistaken in his philosophical characterization of those passages where Thomas speaks of a natural desire for the vision of God. The *Summa contra Gentiles*, in particular, is not philosophical; it is apologetic. This distinction between philosophy and apologetics relies on the Cajetanian thesis that the fulfillment of an obediential potency for grace and glory can be naturally desired once the existence of that potency is revealed to us. Thus, philosophy proceeds from what can be known by natural reason, while apologetics investigates by natural reason things that are only knowable through Revelation. Blanche goes even a step further than Cajetan. For Blanche, even after the

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22 Ibid., 237.
24 On del Prado, see above, chapter 3, section C.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., 445.
revelation of man’s obediential potency for the vision of God, the proof that man’s end is in the vision of God is only probable, not definitive.27

Another response to de Broglie came from a Dominican, Raymond Mulard. In a brief response, Mulard noted that for Thomas natural desire is always general. Any particular application of natural desire by an elicited desire is a personal choice, which implies moral culpability.28 That personal choice is the act whereby a person selects one particular good from among all goods as his personal good.29 A longer article, which Mulard published the following year but which was written before de Broglie’s subsequent response to Blanche, makes the same point,30 and adds support for Blanche’s argument that the Summa contra Gentiles has an apologetic character.31 Even in the Summa theologiae, when Thomas speaks of a natural desire for the vision of God, he is speaking as a theologian from the standpoint of naturally investigable but revealed knowledge.32

De Broglie quickly published a response to Blanche, which takes into account Mulard’s criticism as well.33 First, de Broglie develops his notion of a natural desire conditioned by the

27 Ibid., 448.

28 R. Mulard, Review of “De la place du surnaturel dans la philosophie de S. Thomas,” by G. de Broglie, “[Note concernant l’étude de M. G. de Broglie],” by A. Blanche, and “De potentia passiva hominis ad gratiam et de potentia oboedientiali,” Bulletin Thomiste 1 (1924): 194. I have been unable to find any further biographical details about Mulard.

29 Ibid.

30 R. Mulard, “Désir naturel de connaître et vision béatifique,” Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques 14 (1925): 5–19. The restatement of his other position is on pp. 12-15. The more precise dating of the article’s composition is suggested by the fact that it only references the first part of de Broglie’s first article (5n1).

31 Ibid., 7-8.

32 Ibid., 18.

gratuity of its fulfillment. There is in us a desire know the essence of subsistent being, and to love that subsistent being insofar as it is known, because subsistent being is the adequate object of man’s intellect.  

However, since man lacks the power to come to a knowledge of subsistent being on his own, one can make a distinction between the adequate object of the intellect, which is the highest object of which it is capable, and the proportionate object of the intellect, which is the highest object it is able to achieve of its own accord.  

Based on this distinction of objects, one can distinguish two kinds of natural desire. There is a perfect natural desire for whatever knowledge of subsistent being man can achieve of his own accord, and a “velleity” or “imperfect desire” for receiving a more perfect knowledge of it.  

That velleity, however, reaches all the way to the vision of God as triune.

Given a natural, elicited desire for the vision of God as triune, de Broglie carefully distinguishes between a natural desire for the vision of God and hope. Man can come by natural reason to some knowledge of the materially supernatural, as for example when man reasons from the adequate object of the intellect to the fact that the vision of God is possible.  

However, since man’s natural knowledge of supernatural things, and consequently his desire for them, is always proportioned to the forces of human nature, any conclusion deduced from them

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34 Ibid., 11, 32.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 11, 20.
37 Ibid., 34.
38 Ibid., 24-25.
39 Cf. ibid., 30.
will only converge on their possibility, not their actuality.\textsuperscript{40} By contrast, any time that man forms a perfect desire for the vision of God as something concretely and actually available in the present, that is the theological virtue of hope.\textsuperscript{41} Finally, de Broglie concludes by referring to Sestili’s treatment of the question in Sestili’s second response to his critics, declaring Sestili’s work to be “magisterial”:

I have found in it, moreover, a very valuable confirmation of the conclusions towards which I have seen myself led. I have been inspired by them more than once in the present letter, and I would like to recommend a careful study [of it] to all those who are interested in this difficult question.\textsuperscript{42}

De Broglie added to his response to Blanche and Mulard a second article in 1925, confirming much of what he had already said,\textsuperscript{43} while developing his own notion of velleity so as to distinguish it from Suárez’s doctrine of a conditional desire for the vision of God. De Broglie argues that a conditional desire assumes the possibility of and the means for achieving something, but desires it in other circumstances (i.e. I can receive the vision of God; grace for that purpose is available; the condition is whether God chooses at some future point to give me that grace so that I can see him); a velleity assumes the possibility of something in the abstract but not the means of accomplishing it here and now (i.e. I can receive the vision of God; I have no idea whether the means for making that happen exist; the condition is whether here and now

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 31.

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 26-27.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 52. “J’y ai trouvé ensuite une très précieuse confirmation des conclusions auxquelles je m’étais vu conduit; je m’en suis inspiré plus d’une fois dans la présente lettre; et je me permets d’en recommander l’étude attentive à tous ceux qu’intéresse cette difficile question.”

\textsuperscript{43} Guy de Broglie, “Autour de la notion thomiste de la béatitude,” \textit{Archives de Philosophie} 3, no. 2 (1925): 55–96.
the means exist). A conditional desire, therefore, does not constitute a desire here and now properly speaking, while a velleity does. Yet a velleity, while it is a good basis for metaphysical reflection, will only reveal the capabilities of the subject desiring, not the existence of the object desired. Consequently one can only prove from a velleity the possibility of the vision of God, not whether God has chosen to grant that vision to man.

De Broglie thus formulated an eclectic doctrine of natural desire. He followed Ferrariensis in affirming that man’s desire for God is elicited and not innate, and that it terminates in the vision of God. He followed Suárez in affirming that the end of man’s natural, elicited desire is God as triune, not God as first cause. Combining the thought of these two thinkers, he followed the Aegidian tradition in affirming that man has a natural desire for the vision of God, which is active, by affirming the intrinsic link between human nature and this active desire, by affirming the absolute character of this desire irrespective of the offer of the means to its fulfillment, and consequently by affirming the inability of human nature to be completely happy absent the desire’s fulfillment. De Broglie’s position is most like that of the Aegidian, Paludanus, whose doctrine posited an innate desire for the vision of God, not an elicited one; thus, the consequences and subsequent distinctions in the thought of both authors are nearly identical.

After de Broglie’s third article, the reception of his work was linked to the reception of *Le point du départ de la métaphysique, Cahier V*, by the Jesuit, Joseph Maréchal (1878-1944).  

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44 Ibid., 89-90.
45 Ibid., 91.
This work had been in preparation before the debates about de Broglie’s work got underway, but appeared alongside it because of a delay with the Jesuit censors. In this work, Maréchal developed Rousselot’s thought in philosophy like de Broglie had in theology. Specifically, Maréchal developed the epistemological foundations upon which the supporters of Rousselot’s (and a fortiori de Broglie’s) quasi-Aegidianism could ground their theology.

For Maréchal, as for Blondel and Rousselot, immanentism raises an important question: how does one affirm the existence of a transcendent God from the observation of some immanent reality? Blondel and Rousselot had done so by affirming an immediate orientation in the intellect towards the vision of God. This required, at least in Rousselot, the explicit affirmation of intuitive knowledge in human beings, something which was not easy to reconcile with Thomas. Maréchal, however, denies that human beings are capable of intuitive knowledge in this life. Rather, according to Maréchal, all intellectual creatures have a passive potency for knowledge, together with a tendency to try to actualize that potency. Since human beings, unlike angels, do not experience intuition in this life, man actualizes his passive potency for knowledge in acts of judgment. However, each judgment only partially actualizes this potency, and so man is propelled towards a further judgment in the hope of actualizing it more completely. One can observe, therefore, an immanent motion in the intellect. However, every motion has a definite

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Georges Chantraine, Henri de Lubac, 2:349-50. Maréchal’s work was going to press by August 1924, although it was not released until 1926.

Maréchal, Cahier V, 360.
end. The immanently observable motion in the human intellect must therefore have a definite end. 49

Having affirmed the existence of a definite end for man’s natural desire, Maréchal encountered a difficulty. In order for the human intellect to reach a definite end which fulfilled its complete potential for knowledge, it would have to come to know universal and unlimited being in an act of judgment. 50 However, of itself the intellect can only make judgments that partially actualize its potential. 51 Thus, the human intellect has a natural motion towards an end which it cannot fulfill. The only way to achieve such an end would be through the intuitive knowledge of subsistent being, that is, the vision of God. 52 However, God is a free agent, and need not grant man the intuitive vision of himself. 53 Thus, from an analysis of the dynamism of the human intellect, one can conclude that it is possible for man to see God, but not that God has chosen or will choose to grant man that vision. Ths Maréchal developed something very close to de Broglie’s Aegidianism, but did so in a manner that attempted to preserve its underlying epistemology from some of the inconsistencies that critics of Rousselot, like Gardeil, had observed.

While Maréchal’s thought was similar to that of de Broglie in its affirmation of a natural desire for a specific end beyond the natural faculties of the human intellect, Maréchal did not explicitly associate himself with any member of the Aegidian tradition any more than de Broglie

50 Ibid., 374-75.
51 Ibid., 378.
52 Ibid., 414.
53 Ibid., 419, 421.
did. Nevertheless, since they agreed that there is in man a natural, active desire for a specific end, that this end is the vision of God, and that the natural, active desire of man for the vision of God does not impinge upon God’s freedom to grant the vision of himself to man, one might speak of an implicit, post-World War I “neo-Aegidian” revival among some Jesuits. For, even if these two thinkers did not think of themselves as Aegidian, their thought led them to the same or similar positions about natural desire and the gratuity of grace that had long been associated with that tradition.

In subsequent theological literature, some responses to this nascent neo-Aegidianism took into account only de Broglie, while others included Maréchal as well. The first response came from the Dominican, Marie-Joseph Bliguet (1885-1963), writing from Le Saulchoir in Belgium, who briefly responded to de Broglie.54 Theologically, Bliguet argues, de Broglie compromises the gratuity of grace by his natural desire for a supernatural end; metaphysically, he supports this with an incoherent doctrine of a conditioned natural desire; historically, he misattributes the foregoing to Thomas.55

An intervention by Bliguet’s Dominican confrère, Ambroise Gardeil, by this time a veteran of debates on natural desire, contained a much more detailed criticism, which could be applied equally to de Broglie and Maréchal.56 First, Gardeil argues, there is a question of the relationship between innate and elicited desires in the will. For Thomas, elicited desires specify

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54 For a brief biography of Bliguet, see Marie-France James, Esotérisme et christianisme, autour de René Guénon; [Suivi de] Ésotérisme, occultisme, franc-maçonnerie et christianisme aux XIXe et XXe siècles: explorations bio-bibliographiques (Paris : F. Lanore, 2008), 40-41.


innate desires; consequently, no elicited desire can surpass the innate desire upon which it is established. If man’s innate desire were determined to one end, i.e. the vision of God, this would make sin impossible, since it would fix the will invariably upon the end desired naturally. Second, since the will follows the intellect, if man had a natural desire for the vision of God as triune in the will, then God as triune would have to be the adequate object of the human intellect; however, the adequate object of the human intellect is being, not the Trinity. Consequently, for a Thomist, man’s natural desire does not extend to the vision of God; it only extends to God insofar as he can be known analogically through creatures. Otherwise, man would have the natural knowledge of the vision of God impressed upon the intellect (thereby lapsing into Ontologism). Missing the affinity between de Broglie and the Aegidian tradition, as well as the difference between Aegidianism’s active desire and Scotism’s passive desire, Gardeil concludes that to posit any active inclination of nature towards the vision of God whatsoever is to embrace Scotism, because it was Scotus who afforded the will an existence and a desire independent of the limits of the intellect.

One of de Broglie’s Jesuit confrères, the Roman theologian Edmond Elter, received de Broglie’s work somewhat more positively. According to Elter, there was a fundamental shift in

57 Ibid., 399. For the texts from the Thomistic corpus relative to this observation, see above, chapter 1, section B.
58 Ibid., 402.
59 Ibid., 394-95.
60 Ibid., 389.
61 Ibid., 394.
62 Ibid., 398. Of de Broglie’s position, Gardeil notes, “C’est l’appétit inné de Scot, tout simplement.”
63 Edmond Elter, “De naturali hominis beatitudine ad mentem scholae antiquioris,” Gregorianum 9 (1928): 269–306. Elter is applying to de Broglie a criticism of Maréchal that had appeared the previous year. See Blaise
the manner in which scholastic theologians considered the possibility of natural beatitude. In order to combat Jansenism, from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, theologians began to posit the possibility of a natural beatitude that could fulfill human nature perfectly. In this affirmation, they differed from previous generations of theologians, who had held that since man has a capacity for the infinite, his natural desire could not be completely satisfied by anything less than the vision of God himself. The real question among the late medieval scholastics was not so much whether there was a completely satisfying natural beatitude (as they all denied this), nor even whether there was any sort of natural beatitude at all (as they all admitted this), but whether man’s natural appetite tends beyond his natural beatitude to an end that is beyond human nature. Here, Elter personally supports de Broglie’s denial of a completely satisfying natural beatitude.

In spite of the initial agreement with de Broglie concerning man’s capacity for God and its end, Elter differs from de Broglie concerning man’s desire for that end. Assuming much of what Gardeil had written, Elter considers natural desire from the standpoint of innate desire. First, an innate desire implies some sort of motion and proportion towards a definite end. An innate appetite for the vision of God would imply a definite motion and proportion towards the vision of God, which cannot be admitted. Second, Elter notes with Gardeil that since desire follows knowledge, for man to have an innate desire for the vision of God would imply that he had the

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64 Ibid., 269.

65 Ibid., 270, 273-75. Elter suggests that the first to make the shift was Sylvester Maurus (1619-87).

66 Ibid., 271-72.

67 Ibid., 280-81.
knowledge of this vision naturally impressed upon the intellect. This, suggests Elter, “savors of ontologism.”68 Rather, while God has given man a natural desire for the good only in general, he is not obliged to fulfill man’s desire for each and every particular good, because man is not proportioned for every particular good. Thus, one cannot prove that every particular good is, in fact, destined for humanity.69

Two of Maréchal’s colleagues at Louvain gave de Broglie a more positive reception. The first was the Jesuit Edmond Brisbois, who supported de Broglie through a consideration of Thomas’s later position on the fate of children who die in original sin only.70 Even if they do not suffer, according to Brisbois, the children in limbo have nevertheless received a penalty insofar as they are not admitted to the vision of God. But, according to Thomas, for something to be a penalty, it must be contrary to an actual, an habitual, or a natural inclination.71 The deprivation of the vision of God cannot be against an actual or habitual inclination because either of these would require knowledge of the actual fact of the vision of God in these children, which Thomas denies. Therefore, the deprivation of the vision of God must be against a natural inclination. Therefore, these children must have a natural inclination towards the vision of God.72

68 Ibid., 283.
69 Ibid., 284.
70 Edmond Brisbois, “Désir naturel et vision de dieu,” Nouvelle revue théologique 54 (1927): 81–96. I have been unable to locate any biographical information about Brisbois.
71 Ibid., 96.
72 Ibid., 92. Cf. ibid., 96, where Brisbois defines this inclination: “...c’est donc un désir naturel de la vision divine, c’est-à-dire une inclination de la volonté, qui n’est pas un acte volontaire déterminé par une connaissance préalable dans le sujet voulant, mais qui est reçue à la façon d’une motion nécessaire imprimée à la volonté et l’oriente vers le Bien parfait pris en lui-même, dans sa réalité concrète.”
The spirit, if not the letter of de Broglie’s work also received a positive reception from a
the Benedictine at Louvain, Jorge Laporta.\textsuperscript{73} Laporta’s objective was not to respond to de Broglie
so much as it was to criticize Gardeil’s criticism of de Broglie and Maréchal.\textsuperscript{74} Laporta suggests
that Gardeil, along with others, erred in two ways. First, they misunderstood what a natural
appetite is when they distinguished it from a supernatural appetite. Natural appetites were always
distinguished from free appetites in Thomas’s writings, not from supernatural ones.\textsuperscript{75} Second,
since they misunderstood what a natural appetite is, they proposed that a natural appetite must
have a naturally achievable end. Consequently, they circumscribed the limits of nature and
closed it off to the influence of grace. By the fact that they adopt a concept of obediential
potency, these theologians, including Sestili, show that they fundamentally misunderstand nature
itself.\textsuperscript{76}

If one returns to the former practice of distinguishing natural appetites from free appetites
rather than supernatural ones, Laporta observes, the result will be that, rather than thinking of
natural appetites as something circumscribed by natural powers, one will see them simply as a
weight of a thing’s nature for its highest perfection (a \textit{pondus naturae}).\textsuperscript{77} A \textit{pondus naturae} can

\textsuperscript{73} Jorge Laporta, “Natuur En Genade,” \textit{Ons Geloof} 12 (1926): 433–452; “Les notions d’appétit naturel et de
will refer to the latter article, as he describes in it his prior article only as a “sketch.” It is worth noting, however, that
the prior article was known to Laporta’s colleague, Brisbois, who cites it. Cf. Brisbois, “Désir naturel et vision de
Dieu,” 82n5. For Laporta’s later thought on natural desire, see Jorge Laporta, \textit{La destinée de la nature humaine
selon Thomas d’Aquin} (Paris: J. Vrin, 1965). I have not been able to find any biographical information on Laporta.

\textsuperscript{74} Laporta is explicit about this in “Les notions d’appétit naturel et de puissance obédientielle,” 257. When
Laporta finishes the explication of his doctrine and wants to treat objections to it, he takes every objection from
Gardeil (274–77).

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid., 258, 262, 264.

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 258, 260, 276.

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 257.
be distinguished from a free appetite, because free appetites presuppose knowledge, while
natural appetites do not; natural appetites simply follow from a being’s form, even in the case of
inanimate objects.\footnote{Ibid., 262-64.} Consequently, there are two different kinds of acts of the will. Constituted in
its natural act, the will has its own form, whereby it tends towards its highest perfection.
Constituted in an elicited act, the will receives a form from the intellect, directing it towards
some or other end. An elicited desire must follow a free desire, since nothing can be desired
freely that is not desired naturally.\footnote{Ibid., 272.} Three consequences follow from this. First, man must have a
natural desire for the vision of God; otherwise, he could not desire it freely.\footnote{Ibid.} Second, a free act
of the will is not determined to anything in particular; in spite of the determination of man’s
natural desire, it is free with respect to exercise.\footnote{Ibid., 271.} Third, because man’s will is completely free
with respect to its exercise, man’s desire for the good in common must be a free, not a natural
desire, since it presupposes knowledge of the good in common.\footnote{Ibid., 269-70.}

In a final intervention before departing the debate for a decade, Guy de Broglie responded to his critics, particularly Elter, in a brief note in the same journal, \textit{Gregorianum}, in which Elter had published his article.\footnote{Guy de Broglie, “De ultimo fine humanae vitae asserta quaedam,” \textit{Gregorianum} 9 (1928): 628–630.} The note contained a list of twelve assertions, which can be paraphrased: 1) the human will is naturally inclined towards the vision of God; 2) this
inclination is elicited rather than innate, because an innate desire does not presuppose any
knowledge; 3) this inclination is necessary; 4) it is given to us by the Creator; 5) it is not absolute or efficacious; 6) it is an implicit velleity, not distinct or explicit; 7) it proves only the possibility of the vision of God; 8) in its powerlessness to achieve its end, it shows that man has only a passive, obediential potency to receive that end; 9) obediential potencies do not entail an exigence of being actualized; 10) the vision of God is naturally desired, but is in itself supernatural; 11) the vision of God is not the only end that man could reach, but the only one that will completely satisfy man’s desire; 12) one should reject both the doctrine of Baius, who maintains an absolute necessity of innocent man for the vision of God, as well as the Aegidian doctrine of a quasi-necessity for it.

As a preliminary conclusion, one may make the following observations about the status quaestionis after de Broglie’s final intervention. First, de Broglie began the second part of the early twentieth century debate with an innovative idea: an elicited, natural desire for the vision of God (à la Ferrariensis), which nevertheless terminates at the vision of God as triune, not as the first cause of things (à la Suárez), and which does not require its terminus because it desires it as a gift. Second, de Broglie’s doctrine of natural desire was supported by the 1926 publication of Maréchal’s Cahier V, which reworked some of the epistemological foundations upon which de Broglie’s thesis relied. Third, de Broglie’s doctrine of velleity came under criticism from Gardeil, Elter, and Laporta. Gardeil and Elter criticized it because it posited an elicited desire that was broader than an innate desire, while Laporta thought he did not go far enough towards recovering a doctrine of an innate desire for the vision of God.

Of all of de Broglie’s initial respondents, Laporta would have the most influence. Although a newcomer to the debate, he introduced three important ideas. He rightly reminded his
interlocutors first that, in the thirteenth century, natural desires were distinguished from free ones, not supernatural ones; second, that for Thomas, obediential potency is not a central concept, because human nature as such is receptive to what God wills to do in it, and has a natural desire which can only be completely satisfied by the vision of God; third, that the passive component of man’s desire is fulfilled specifically by the vision of God. What would cause no little confusion in the ensuing debate over this question, however, was the fact that Laporta did not perceive the subtle differences between Thomas and Scotus on those points in which they otherwise agreed. 84 Thus, Laporta attributed to Thomas such ideas as the will’s independence from the intellect in first act, the will’s antecedent indetermination even towards a general object, as well as the possibility of the will being directed in its action in second act both by its own form as well as by the form given it by the intellect—all of these positions are proper to Scotus, but not to Thomas. While Laporta thus introduced some groundbreaking insights into the debate, his Scotism with was destined to make the impact of his otherwise Thomist conclusions less forcefully felt.

Moreover, Laporta’s Scotism would contribute to a general tendency, the beginnings of which have already been seen Gardeil, of confusing a Scotistic doctrine of natural desire with an Aegidian one. For Aegidians, man has an active and specific tendency towards the vision of God, which arises from human nature’s immediate orientation towards that vision. Laporta, however, adheres more faithfully to Scotism, in which there is a passive and specific tendency towards the vision of God. This passive tendency occurs in a will that is constituted in a desire that surpasses the natural motion of the intellect. Only the Aegidian active tendency raises the problem of the

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84 On the precise nature of these differences, see above in chapter two, section B.
gratuity of grace that Berti solved with a qualified debt of grace. Scotistic passive tendency, since it posits no active disposition towards the vision of God, should not be subject to this criticism.

B. Stage 2: Responding to Laporta (1928-32)

The second phase of the debate about natural desire in the 1920s-1930s began after de Broglie’s 1928 intervention. At this point, the debate exploded to the point that the Dominican, Antonin Motte (1902-1989), could describe it in term of its “exceptional liveliness.” Indeed, this stage of the debate was by far the richest in terms of the variety of opinions expressed, although the obfuscation of the difference between Aegidianism and Scotism continued throughout. One of the first developments in the second stage of the debate was a short note by the Dominican, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1964). Garrigou-Lagrange was a former student of Gardeil, who by this point had become a well-known Thomist in his own right. Writing from Rome, where he was a professor at the Angelicum, Garrigou-Lagrange responded directly to Laporta in an appendix to an article that appeared in the French Dominican journal, Revue Thomiste.

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87 Nichols, Reason with Piety, 9; Peddicord, The Sacred Monster of Thomism, 11, 16.

Garrigou-Lagrange’s initial note is significant because of an objection that Garrigou-Lagrange lodges against Laporta in the form of an argument that Gardeil had used against Rousselot: by saying that the human intellect is ordered directly to the vision of God, Laporta errs by misunderstanding how intellect is possessed analogously by God and human beings. Consequently, Laporta mistakenly posits God’s goodness rather than created goodness as the terminus of the will. In restating Gardeil’s argument (for which he gives Gardeil due credit), Garrigou-Lagrange implicitly associates Laporta with the whole, nascent neo-Aegidian tradition, even though Laporta’s doctrine is entirely Scotist, not Aegidian. Garrigou-Lagrange states explicitly that Laporta’s doctrine of a natural desire whose terminus is supernaturally achieved is a revival of Berti’s Aegidianism.

At the conclusion of his note, Garrigou-Lagrange promises that one of his colleagues at the Angelicum, Pio Balzaretti, will follow with a series of articles against Laporta’s position. Balzaretti followed in due course with a two-part article directed against Laporta, in which he follows the same tradition of confusing Aegidianism and Scotism as was seen in the work of Gardeil and Garrigou-Lagrange. For this reason, while he directs his critique at Laporta, he intends it to cover de Broglie, Brisbois, and anyone else who had written similarly. The main

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89 Ibid., 475.
90 Ibid., 476.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 Pio Balzaretti, “De natura appetitus naturalis,” Angelicum 6 (1929): 352–386, 519–544. On p. 353, Balzaretti notes that he has chosen Laporta as an interlocutor because he finds in Laporta the most accurate summary of the doctrine of de Broglie, of Brisbois, and of others who have written in a similar manner.
94 Ibid., 353.
problem with Laporta’s doctrine, for Balzaretti, is that Laporta distinguishes a third kind of appetite from natural and free appetites, which he calls an “ontological appetite” for the vision of God.95 Balzaretti suggests that such an appetite is impossible. He articulates this objection in four points: first, as Thomas notes, an appetite of nature is distinct from a being’s essence;96 second, and consequently, the only appetites of a rational creature are its natural and free appetites, which it has apart from its essence;97 third, in those appetites which a being has apart from its essence, each must have determination to a connatural object;98 fourth, a given being tends towards its connatural object with an active inclination.99 Like Garrigou-Lagrange, Balzaretti finds in Laporta’s ontological desire for the vision of God a return to the Aegidianism of Berti, and opposes it with the doctrine of Cajetan.100

Garrigou-Lagrange’s and Balzaretti’s conflation of Aegidianism with Scotism was not universally followed within the Dominicans. At the same time that Balzaretti was critiquing Laporta’s understanding of desire, another Dominican writing from Malta, Angelo Pirotta (1894-1956), published a series of articles in the Italian Dominican journal, *Divus Thomas*, attacking Laporta’s understanding of obediential potency.101 Pirotta does not mention the Aegidian

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95 Ibid., 355. Laporta’s “ontological” appetite is really just an innate appetite by another name, as distinguished from an elicited appetite which is necessary with respect to specification, and an elicited appetite which is free.

96 Ibid., 364.

97 Ibid., 372.

98 Ibid., 521.

99 Ibid., 534.

100 Ibid., 519-20.

tradition in his article. Instead, he rightly notes that Laporta’s doctrine of an ontological desire was inspired by Scotus.\textsuperscript{102} Taking up the Scotistic doctrine of nature’s receptivity to grace, Pirotta argues on the basis that a natural potency must have a naturally achievable end that a sharp distinction between obediential and natural potency is necessary in order to distinguish nature and grace properly.\textsuperscript{103} Since obediential potency is completely distinct from natural passive potency, Pirotta asserts that man requires Revelation in order to be made aware of an obediential potency.\textsuperscript{104}

A second development in this stage of the debate occurred among the Jesuits in response to Elter. Although Elter was not as approving of de Broglie as was Brisbois, Elter had at least shared in de Broglie’s denial of a completely satisfying natural end for man. Elter’s work thus

\begin{thebibliography}{10}
  \bibitem{} see Mark Montebello, \textit{Angelo Pirotta: A Maltese Philosopher of the First Water} (Malta: Maltese Dominican Province, 2006).
  \bibitem{} Ibiv., 377n154.
  \bibitem{} Ibiv., 143.
  \bibitem{} Pirotta argues that Laporta’s support for a natural potency for grace and glory rests on a corrupted text of Thomas. However, while he rightly notes that Laporta had used a corrupted text, he omits the fact that even the context of the corrected text is supportive of Laporta’s view. See Pirotta, “Disputatio de ‘potentia obedientiali’ iuxta thomisticam doctrinam,” 573. Laporta had cited Thomas as saying, “\textit{In natura recipiente est ordo naturalis ad gratiae et gloriae susceptionem et non solum potentia obedientiae,}” (In IV Sent., d. 17, q. 1, a. 5, q. c. 1, co., qtd. in Laporta, “Les notions d’appétit naturel et de puissance obédientielle,” 259n7) However, the best available text reads, “\textit{In natura recipiente non sit ordo naturalis ad illius [i.e. miraculi] susceptionem, sed solum potentia obedientiae...}” [Moos 4:850]. The Parma [7.2:780A] and the Vivès [10:481A] editions both concur with Moos’s reading, so it is unclear from where Laporta may have gotten his reading. It is worth noting, however, that Thomas goes on to say that there is in man a natural order for receiving grace and glory, and consequently, the justification of the impious is not miraculous [Moos 4:851], something which would seem to support Laporta more than Pirotta suggests.
  \bibitem{} Pirotta’s work is also significant because it returns to the text of Book 2, Distinction 18, of Thomas’s commentary on the Lombard’s \textit{Liber sententiarum} in order to understand the foundation of Thomas’s thinking on nature. However, Pirotta overlooks the significance of the distance that Thomas places between himself and those who refer to \textit{rationes obedientiales} in nature. Cf. Pirotta, “Disputatio de ‘potentia obedientiali’ iuxta thomisticam doctrinam,” 143-44.
\end{thebibliography}
occasioned two responses, which could apply equally to de Broglie, seeking to show that a
perfect natural beatitude for man is possible.\footnote{Motte, “Désir Naturel et Béatitude Surnaturelle,” 657.} Both were inspired by Suárez. The first of these
260.} Pelster rightly notes
that, for Thomas, the first principles of the human intellect are in potency to all the things that it
can know by natural reason; likewise the first principle of the will is in potency to all the goods
that man can possess of his natural faculties.\footnote{Ibid., 259.} For Pelster, perfect beatitude does not include, as
it does for Elter, the satisfaction of all of man’s potential for beatitude; it only includes the
fulfillment of the exigencies of nature.\footnote{Ibid., 258.}

The second response to Elter came from another Jesuit, Victor Cathrein (1845-1931),
life and work, see Anton Rauscher, “Viktor Cathrein (1845-1931),” in Zeitgeschichte in Lebensbildern, ed. Jurgen
Aretz, Rudolf Morsey, and Anton Rauscher (Münster: Aschendorff, 1980), 4:103-13, ctd. in Felix Dirsch,
Solidarismus und Sozialethik: Ansätze zur Neuinterpretation einer modernen Strömung der katholischen
Sozialphilosophie (Münster: LIT, 2006), 287. Dirsch also gives a bibliography of recent studies of Cathrein’s work
on p. 287, notes 1140-41.} Cathrein argues that,
since man can only have one end, his ultimate end in a state of pure nature would have to be
different than his ultimate end in the present order of Providence, in which man has been
elevated to the vision of God.\footnote{Ibid., 399-400.} In a state of pure nature, the natural, final end of man would
have to be proportioned to man’s natural powers,\footnote{Ibid., 400.} and would have to fulfill man’s natural

\footnote{Ibid., 259.}
desire completely,\textsuperscript{112} since if it could not satisfy man’s desires it would be no end at all.\textsuperscript{113} Moreover, such a natural end is necessary in order for man to ground an understanding of the natural law and to develop a complete moral philosophy.\textsuperscript{114}

Cathrein’s thought has two shortcomings. First, he says that natural desire tends towards man’s final end, but he also says that man’s final end in the present order of Providence is the vision of God. However, he does not want to say that man has a natural desire in the present order of Providence for the vision of God. Thus, he argues that man’s natural desire in \textit{this} order of Providence terminates at a naturally achievable perfect beatitude.\textsuperscript{115} This, however, is hard to reconcile with the premise that there is only a single end for man in a given order of Providence, which was the basis upon which Cathrein established the possibility of a natural end for man. Second, like the Dominicans at the Angelicum, Cathrein does not distinguish between the Scotistic and the Aegidian traditions. The Dominicans were treating a Scotist like an Aegidian. Here it is the reverse, as Cathrein applies anti-Scotistic arguments to someone who is effectively following in an Aegidian tradition similar to that of Paludanus.

A third development at this stage of the debate came from two theologians in Belgium reviving the pseudo-Cajetanian thesis that man cannot know of or desire the fulfillment of an obediential potency without Revelation. First, Joseph van der Meersch (1868-1952), at the

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 400-01.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 404-05.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 409.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 404-05.
seminary in Bruges, argued that it is theologically necessary to distinguish sharply between the natural and supernatural orders. On account of this distinction there can be no sort of ontological desire as Laporta proposes, nor can the vision of God be known to be possible from man’s natural desire, as de Broglie proposes. To admit these theses would be to make the vision of God proportioned to nature, and therefore due it.

Second, the French Jesuit, Paul Dumont, at the French Province’s house of studies in Enghien, Belgium, clearly distinguished Scotism from Aegidianism, where so many others had failed to do so. The first part of his intervention clarifies what Scotus thought about man’s receptivity to grace, and corrects the errors of the Dominicans about Scotism. He then turns his attention towards Thomas. Given the principle that natural desires must be proportioned to naturally knowable and achievable ends, when Thomas says that man has a natural desire for the vision of God, he can only mean one of two things: either, with the Aegidians, he means that God could justly deny man his only end but would never do so out of Providence, or, with Cajetan, he is presupposing Revelation. Dumont argues for the latter because Thomas, unlike Scotus, says that desire must follow knowledge. Consequently Thomas cannot say that man has a natural desire for the vision of God.

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116 Joseph van der Meersch, “De notione entis supernaturalis. III. De intuitiva dei visione,” Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses 7 (1930): 238–251. I have not been able to locate any further biographical details about van der Meersch.

117 Ibid., 241n49.

118 Ibid., 240n44.

119 Ibid., 242-43.

120 Paul Dumont, “L’appétit inné de la béatitude surnaturelle chez les auteurs scholastiques,” Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses 8 (1931): 205–224; 571–591; Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses 9 (1932): 5–27. I have not been able to locate any biographical details about Dumont.

121 See especially ibid., 215-216.

122 Ibid., 14-19.
desire for the vision of God without its being naturally known.\textsuperscript{123} Dumont thus comes to the same conclusion as Van der Meersch, but from the standpoint of a much more accurate representation of the Thomistic and Scotistic positions.

In general, then, critics of Laporta’s work and of what is similar to Laporta in Elter’s work tended to do two things. First, they tended to conflate Laporta’s Scotism with de Broglie’s neo-Aegidianism, and so to criticize everyone who said that man has a natural desire for a supernatural end as though they meant the same thing in the same way, and were working out of the same tradition. Second, they tended to argue, following Cajetan and Suárez, that natural desires must be proportioned to a natural end, and hence that any sort of natural desire for a supernatural end, be it Scotist or Aegidian, compromises the distinction between what is natural and due, and what is supernatural and gratuitous.

If Laporta received significant criticism, he also received much support. One of the chief sources of support for Laporta was the publication in 1928 at Louvain of a book-length work on natural desire in Thomas from an Irish Capuchin Franciscan, James O’Mahony (1897-1962).\textsuperscript{124} Mahony did not respond to Laporta, \textit{per se}, because he finished his work only shortly after Laporta’s had been published. Nevertheless they were both at Louvain, and Mahony expressly affirms that, in most matters, they came to the same conclusions.\textsuperscript{125}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[123] Ibid., 20-21.
\item[124] James O’Mahony, \textit{The Desire of God in the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas} (Dublin: Cork University Press, 1929). In his published work, Mahony is sometimes referred to by his middle name, Edward. I have not been able to find any biographical details about O’Mahony.
\item[125] O’Mahony, \textit{The Desire of God in the Philosophy of St. Thomas}, xxiiiin1. The introduction to the book was inscribed on May 18, 1928.
\end{footnotes}
Mahony begins by following Maréchal’s epistemology. On the basis of Maréchal’s understanding of Thomas, Mahony endorses the Aegidian views that “according to St. Thomas, there is but one really final end, which consists in the immediate possession of God; that the conception of a natural end is something relatively final; and that as it is only the absolutely final end can [sic!] impart to man all the perfection of which he is ‘capable,’ there is in man a natural desire of God’s vision…,” Since man’s only final end in the vision of God, Mahony argues that a completely satisfying natural beatitude is impossible; such a natural beatitude is proper only to God. Nevertheless, that does not make the vision of God due nature. For, while man’s desire for the vision of God shows that such a vision is objectively possible, it does not show whether God has, in fact, offered that vision to man. To argue that man’s natural desire proves the actuality of something supernatural is to confuse the natural and supernatural orders. God could really come to true happiness (200), and places a distinction between finality and realization which deprives the final cause of its proper eminence among the causes (201). The final cause of the universe is its efficient cause, and so, from the standpoint of efficient causality, God is the only one proportioned to attain God in his essence, even though intellectual creatures may be drawn to that essence in virtue of their receptivity to it (202).

Notwithstanding its individual merits, the critique of Mahony is somewhat inconsistent, since Roland-Gosselin had expressed a similar position in his 1929 article, which will be reviewed below. Cf. Roland-Gosselin, “Béatitude et désir naturel d’après S. Thomas d’Aquino,” Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques 18 (1929): 195. “...Saint Thomas conçoit le bonheur comme le bien propre de l’être intelligent; c’est-à-dire en premier lieu comme le bien propre de Dieu lui-même. Dieu, par nature, possède le bonheur; il est le bonheur. Il n’a donc pas à le désirer.”

126 Ibid., 34-42. He applies a Maréchalian interpretation to Thomas on pp. 148-54, and again on p. 256, highlighting obediential potency as the lynchpin that joins man’s desires for an end beyond his reach with man’s receptivity to that end from God. Also see pp. 161-64, 220-24.

127 Ibid., 155.

128 Ibid., 168.

129 Ibid., 174.

130 Ibid., 231.

131 Ibid., 232.

132 Ibid., 232, 238.
remains free to give or not to give the gift of the vision of himself. Consequently, as de Broglie had argued, the vision of God can only be desired from God as a gift.\textsuperscript{133}

The Parisian Dominican, Marie-Dominique Roland-Gosselin (1883-1934), wrote a study of natural desire similar to that of Mahony,\textsuperscript{134} but Roland-Gosselin was able to take cognizance of Laporta’s contribution, even if he was only aware of Mahony’s own work through a review of it by the faculty member at Louvain who had written its introduction.\textsuperscript{135} Perhaps owing to the influence of Laporta, Roland-Gosselin presents a doctrine of natural desire which is akin to Laporta’s so-called “ontological” desire. However, Roland-Gosselin subtly distinguishes himself from Maréchal, unlike Laporta and Mahony. According to Roland-Gosselin, one must carefully distinguish between desire spoken of in a psychological, experiential sense, and desire spoken of in a metaphysical sense. When one speaks of desire in an experiential sense, one is always speaking of elicited desire. Metaphysical, or “innate” desire, is not experienced; rather, it has to be demonstrated from elicited desire, which is experienced.\textsuperscript{136} When Thomas argues on the basis of man’s natural desire to know the causes of things that man has a natural desire to see God, Thomas is moving in a process of demonstration from an experienced, psychological, and elicited desire, to an unexperienced, metaphysical, and innate desire.\textsuperscript{137} The importance of this

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 257.


\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 194.

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 203-04.
distinction lies in the fact a psychological desire never implies exigency; someone could always senselessly elicit a desire for the impossible and it would not therefore be due him.  

Roland-Gosselin’s metaphysical desire, however, cannot be considered as simply as a psychological one; it has two components. One is an active principle from which flows man’s natural activity. As concerns the will, this active principle is ordered towards beatitude in general, and has a naturally achievable beatitude as its terminus. This natural beatitude is the knowledge of God through creatures. Hence, Roland-Gosselin notes, Rousselot was wrong to call the intellect a faculté du divin, since the human soul is not immediately ordered to the vision of God with any activity. The second component of metaphysical desire, a passive principle, is open to the fullness of being and consequently to the vision of God. Unlike the active principle, the passive principle does not impose any necessity on God, although it does limit the fulfillment that man can receive from a beatitude outside the vision of God.

Although Roland-Gosselin articulated a distinction between active and passive components in man’s natural desire, he vacillates about whether the terminus of the active component of man’s natural desire can be called “beatitude” in a proper sense. A priori, it would not be inconsistent for him to say that it was or was not. However, he seems at times to reach a positive conclusion, and at other times to reach a negative conclusion. This hesitation over

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138 Ibid., 198.
139 Ibid., 217.
140 On the bipartite desire, see ibid., 213-14; on the terminus of the passive component, see ibid., 210; on the terminus of the active component, see ibid., 217, 221.
141 This brings him close to the interpretation of Thomas set for above in chapter 1, section B.
142 Ibid., 221.
143 Ibid., 206.
the possibility of a natural beatitude for man is evident towards the conclusion of his article, when he notes that man’s natural desire “virtually” contains a supernatural desire (i.e. the theological virtue of hope), and that as a result of this natural desire man can, by natural reason, “under certain conditions, conjecture that this perfect beatitude [in seeing God] will without a doubt be offered to him by God.” Here Roland-Gosselin elides the distinction between proving the possibility of the vision of God and its actuality, which he had otherwise maintained. One wonders what he intends as the “certain conditions” under which the vision of God is due man.

Louis Charlier (1898-1981), a Dominican theologian at Louvain, was an equally enthusiastic, but more explicit supporter of Laporta and Mahony. Charlier contributed to the debate on natural desire two years after Laporta’s article and Mahony’s book appeared. Taking for granted the epistemology of his colleague, Maréchal, Charlier inquires first into the nature of man’s capacity for receiving the vision of God, and asks second how man’s desire for that vision is related to his capacity for it. As to the first, Charlier follows Laporta and denies that man has an obediential potency for grace and glory. *Pace* Laporta, Charlier does grant that there

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144 Ibid., 219.

145 Ibid., 220. “…Elle [la créature intelligente] peut encore, dans certaines conditions, conjecturer que ce bonheur parfait lui sera sans doute offert par Dieu…”

146 Ibid., 205.

147 They could be read in line with Berti’s Aegidianism. However, a more critical reading might suggest that Roland-Gosselin comes close to Jansenism.


150 Ibid., 14.
is such a thing as obediential potency, but he argues that it concerns extraordinary gifts like prophecy and miracles, not the ordinary economy of grace.\textsuperscript{151} Otherwise, Charlier agrees with Laporta that man has a \textit{natural} passive potency for grace and glory on account because he has an intellectual nature.\textsuperscript{152} As to the second, Charlier acknowledges that there is a natural desire for the vision of God grounded in man’s natural potency for it.\textsuperscript{153} However, this cannot be an “active” tendency. If it were, then its \textit{terminus} would have to be proportioned to man’s active powers.\textsuperscript{154} Rather, the desire postulated by man’s natural passive potential for the vision of God is an innate, general tendency towards beatitude, from which a desire can be elicited by man’s active potency to see God as the first cause.\textsuperscript{155} In this way, Charlier also articulates a distinction between active and passive components of natural desire, but does so by following Laporta more directly. Thus he avoids some of the inconveniences of Roland-Gosselin’s conclusions, even as he tempers Laporta’s Scotism with Ferrariensis’s distinction between the vision of God as first cause and the vision of God as triune.

Additional support for Laporta’s work came from the Franciscan Scotist, Victorin Doucet (1899-1961).\textsuperscript{156} Writing from the College of St. Bonaventure at Quaracchi in the Italian Franciscan Journal, \textit{Antonianum},\textsuperscript{157} Doucet voiced his complete agreement with Laporta’s

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid., 21.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 23-24.
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 644-46.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 646-47.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 648, 650.
\textsuperscript{156} For discussions of Doucet’s life and works, see \textit{Mémorial Doucet-Longpré: Hommage de la Province franciscaine Saint-Joseph du Canada} (Québec: La Revue Culture, 1966).
doctrine of the identity of innate desire with a being’s nature.\textsuperscript{158} Unlike Laporta’s critics, who conflated Aegidianism and Scotism, Doucet recognizes that Laporta’s Scotism is diametrically opposed to the Aegidianism of Sestili and de Broglie (even if he does not call it “Aegidianism”).\textsuperscript{159} For Doucet, as for Laporta and Scotus, the will is constituted in its first act apart from the intellect,\textsuperscript{160} and gives rise to some elicited desires that are necessary with respect to specification, and others that are free.\textsuperscript{161} Those authors who speak of a necessary elicited appetite presuppose an innate one, while those who speak only of a free elicited appetite, like Gardeil, are completely beyond the pale of reasonableness.\textsuperscript{162}

Granting with Elter that scholastics until the seventeenth century had always spoken of an innate desire for the vision of God,\textsuperscript{163} Doucet follows Sestili in blaming Cajetan for breaking with the scholastic tradition, though he adds Ferrariensis to the list of guilty parties.\textsuperscript{164} After Cajetan, according to Doucet, there arose two branches of Thomism. Those who followed Cajetan denied that man’s desire was truly natural, while those who followed Ferrariensis argued that it had a natural object.\textsuperscript{165} Nevertheless, there were many who continued to defend the idea

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 171.  \\
\textsuperscript{159} Ibid., 171-72.  \\
\textsuperscript{160} Ibid., 174.  \\
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 175.  \\
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 176.  \\
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 177-78.  \\
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 193.  \\
\textsuperscript{165} Doucet is not entirely accurate here. Most Thomists who affirmed the connaturality of the end of man’s natural desire were following Suárez, not Ferrariensis, as mentioned above in chapter two.
\end{flushright}
that there is an innate desire in man for the vision of God, and a direct line of academic succession within this group led to the work of Maurice Blondel. After Blondel, there was a steady line of scholars who advocated a return to the older tradition, including Sestili, Rousselot, Ligeard, de Broglie, Maréchal, Laporta, and Mahony. Doucet’s concludes that Cajetan’s corruption of Thomas was insignificant in the history of Thomism, and is being overwhelmed by a return to the authentic doctrine of innate natural desire. It is time, then, for scholars to cease identifying the idea of an innate desire for the vision of God with Scotus only, since it is the proper patrimony of Thomism as well.

Like Laporta, Doucet rightly noted that, for Thomas, man’s passive potential for the vision of God gives man a natural desire for that vision. However, Doucet’s thought was nevertheless subject to two difficulties. Being influenced by Scotus, as well as the Thomistic commentarial tradition, which had followed Cajetan in adopting a Scotistic epistemology, Doucet wrongly thought that the purification of Thomas’s doctrine would lead to an ontological desire independent of the intellect, such as Laporta, following Rousselet, had proposed. Even more significantly, if Doucet sharply distinguished in theory between Scotism and Aegidianism, he was nevertheless guilty of nearly as much conflation of the two as Laporta’s critics. Doucet includes both Aegidians and Scotists in the genealogy with which he represents the tradition of a natural desire for a supernatural end. However, inasmuch as the Aegidians have a different

166 Ibid., 195-202.
167 Ibid., 202.
168 Ibid., 204-08.
169 Ibid., 208.
understanding of natural desire from Scotists, it is not entirely appropriate to include them within a genealogy that is supposed to transmit a common doctrine of natural desire.

The second stage of the debate on natural desire in the 1920s-1930s can be characterized by three general tendencies. The first is the growth of the practice, already witnessed at the end of the first stage of the debate, of conflating Aegidianism and Scotism. To many of Laporta’s critics, any affirmation of a natural desire for a supernatural end, be it Aegidian or Scotist, should be treated in the same manner, because both Aegidianism and Scotism deny that a natural desire must have a naturally achievable end. Consequently, Laporta’s critics tended to criticize the Scotistic position, in which man’s desire for the vision of God is passive, which traditionally had been leveled against the Aegidian position, in which man’s desire for the vision of God is active.

There was a second general tendency, on the part of some Scotistic and Jesuit supporters of Laporta, towards conflating Thomas’s and Scotus’s doctrine of natural desire. According to these supporters, both Thomas and Scotus taught that there is a natural desire for the vision of God, grounded in human nature and independent of knowledge, which stands in passive receptivity to the vision of God, and so implies no exigence for that vision. This confusion between Thomas and Scotus only fanned the flames of the first confusion between the Aegidian and Scotist traditions, as it gave conflators of Aegidianism and Scotism good reason to believe that their allegedly Thomist interlocutors were really Scotists.

The third tendency was towards a hardening of these two positions. From the perspective of the first group, the whole debate seemed to hinge upon criticizing neo-Scotists in an effort to preserve the gratuity of grace. From the perspective of the second group, the debate seemed to hinge upon criticizing neo-Cajetanians and neo-Suarezians in an effort to protect the authentic
doctrine of Thomas. Neither side realized that each had preserved one facet of Thomas’s doctrine intact. The first emphasized the active component in Thomas’s doctrine of natural desire; the second the passive. But, conditioned as they were by the terminological distinction between innate and elicited desires, each thought they had to choose one or the other, and so reject its opposite.

C. Stage 3: The Intervention of Garrigou-Lagrange (1931-37)

Starting in 1931, the character of the debate on natural desire underwent a further change, which was nearly the sole effort of Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange. Garrigou-Lagrange had stayed out of the second stage of the debate, preferring to cede his place to Pio Balzaretti. From 1931, however, Garrigou entered into the debate, to the extent that barely a single branch of the conversation passed without receiving at least one, and sometimes two direct replies from him. The result was the further crystallization of the Cajetanian position advocated by several Italian Dominicans, who saw all doctrines of a natural desire for the supernatural—whether Aegidian or Scotist—as implying an exigency for that vision.

The first branch of the third stage of the debate had actually begun in 1930 with the intervention of the Spanish Dominican, Antonio Fernández (d. 1934).170 Fernández was replying

170 Antonio Fernández, “Naturale desiderium videndi divinam essentiam apud D. Thomam eiusque scholam,” Divus Thomas 33 (1930): 5–28, 503–527. I am grateful to Innocent Smith, OP, who was kind enough to establish Fernández’s identity for me in the Catalogus S.O.P. (1931), and therefore to distinguish him from Aniceto Fernández, later Master General of the order.
to the Cajetanianism of another Spanish Dominican, Manuel Cuervo, who was in turn critiquing de Broglie and those who followed in his wake. However, neither the Italians or the French responded to much that was written in Spanish, and so only those interventions from the Spaniards that were published in Latin had a significant impact beyond Spain. Only Fernández, writing in Latin in the Italian Dominican journal, *Divus Thomas*, drew significant attention.

Fernández developed an account of natural desire similar to that of Roland-Gosselin, a similarity which he explicitly acknowledges. Fernández argues that one can distinguish a twofold appetite in man. One, a “natural” or “innate” appetite, is grounded in man’s passive receptivity to the vision of God. It terminates in the complete actualization of man’s passive receptivity in that vision. The other, an elicited appetite, is grounded in man’s active power. It terminates, as Ferrariensis suggests, in the vision of God as first cause. Man’s innate appetite is absolute; it abstracts from the question of whether its end can be reached. Man’s elicited appetite, on the other hand, tends only conditionally towards an end for which he lacks the

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172 Ibid., 299ff. Besides Fernández, the only person to reply directly to Cuervo was Antonio Trancho in “Fundamento, naturaleza y valor apologetico del deseo natural de ver a Dios,” *La Ciencia Tomista* 44 (1931): 447–468. Trancho, however, did not add anything further to the discussion before he was killed in the Spanish Civil War in 1936. Fernández died in Louisiana in 1934. Generally speaking, the Spaniards’ interventions had limited impact outside of Spain at the time at which they were written, which is why they were not discussed above in the context of the second stage of the debate.

173 One exception to the limited impact of interventions in Spanish upon the broader discussions of natural was their impact on E. Anciaux, “Vision intuitive de Dieu,” *Collationes Dioecesis Tornacensis* 27 (1932): 507–522. However, Anciaux’s work was of extremely limited influence.

174 Cf. ibid., 512n9.

175 Ibid., 516-17.

176 Ibid., 509-10, 517.
means, unless it is revealed to him that those means have been offered by God. Fernández thus combines Scotus’s and Ferrariensis’s doctrines of natural desire, holding them alongside one another. However, Fernández innovates Ferrariensis’s doctrine by placing the terminus of Ferrariensis’s natural desire for the vision of God as first cause outside the reach of man’s natural faculties, subjecting it to Suárez’s conditionality.

Garrigou-Lagrange’s replied to Fernández the following year. Although his article was directed explicitly at an older debate concerning whether Thomas’s proof for the existence of God from natural desire should be associated with the fourth of his Five Ways, Garrigou-Lagrange deliberately applies his engagement with that debate to Fernández’s work. According to Garrigou-Lagrange, a natural desire can in no way abstract from the concrete possibility of achieving its end. If it did, it would be a “chimeric desire,” which sought an end that could conceivably not exist. Such a desire would establish the creature possessing it in a metaphysical absurdity: its whole being and all its actions would be ordered to an end that did not exist. It is true to say that natural desires are absolute, but consequently they always tend towards

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177 Ibid., 513. Ironically, Fernández calls the question of a desire that arises from a passive faculty and abstracts from the possibility of fulfillment a “new question,” as though Laporta were the first to raise it.


179 Cf. ibid., 130. The older debate concerned the work of Josef Gredt in the third edition of his *Elementa Philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomistica* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1922). Gredt argues on the basis of an epistemology resembling that of Rousselot that the motion of the human will towards degrees of good proves the existence of an unlimited good. He received a reply from P.G.M. Manser in “Das Streben nach Glückseligkeit als Beweis für das Dasein Gottes,” *Divus Thomas (Freiburg)* 1 (1923): 44–50, 146–164; *Divus Thomas (Freiburg)* 2 (1924) 100-104, 331-339. The fifth edition of Gredt’s work came out in 1928, and it appears that Garrigou-Lagrange is responding to that version of the work.


181 Ibid., 137.
something that exists. Fernández cannot be correct, therefore, when he asserts that man has an
innate desire for the vision of God, which abstracts from the achievability of the desire’s end.\(^{182}\)

Garrigou-Lagrange received a brief reply to his critique of Fernández in the form of a
review article by his French Dominican confrère, Antonin Motte, in 1932.\(^{183}\) Motte’s article was
in no way directed at Garrigou-Lagrange in particular; it was a review of a very broad spectrum
of literature on the natural desire for God. But Motte did not hesitate to give his own views on
the subject in the midst of reviewing other’s contributions. In a brief article in 1931 on the
interpretation of *S.T.*, Ia, q. 12, a. 1, Motte expressed his conviction that man’s natural desire for
beatitude proves the possibility of the vision of God, but not the actuality of it.\(^{184}\) In his review
article of 1932, he therefore whether Garrigou and those who similarly hold that man’s natural
desire concerns solely a naturally achievable end perhaps “soften” Thomas’s argument.\(^{185}\)

\(^{182}\) Ibid., 141n2. Given the association between Fernández and Roland-Gosselin, it is not clear whether
Garrigou-Lagrange intended to critique Fernández alone, or whether he intended to critique Roland-Gosselin as
well. If Garrigou-Lagrange did intend to critique Roland-Gosselin, this would explain Garrigou-Lagrange’s critique
of the Aegidian doctrine of the “necessity” of grace (145-46). As noted above, Roland-Gosselin had drawn a
radically Aegidian conclusion about this necessity.

If, on the other hand, Garrigou-Lagrange did not intend to critique Roland-Gosselin, one might account for
the same concern by suggesting that he continued to associate any natural desire for the vision of God with Scotism,
and to associate Scotism with an exigency for the term of man’s natural desire.

\(^{183}\) Motte, “*Désir naturel et béatitude surnaturelle,*” 651-76.

\(^{184}\) Antonin Motte, “Pour L’exégèse de I. Pars, Q. 12 a. 1,” *Notes et communications du Bulletin Thomiste* 1
(1931): 125*-130*.

\(^{185}\) Motte, “*Désir naturel et béatitude surnaturelle,*” 658. “Il est juste de remarquer le caractère négatif que
revêt chez S. Thomas la preuve de la possibilité de la vision de Dieu. Il entendait réfuter des théologiens qui
rejetaient la vision intuitive de l'essence divine au nom de son impossibilité. On voit paraître ces *quidam* négateurs
neuf fois au moins dans l'œuvre de S. Thomas, preuve qu’il eut d'un bout à l'autre de sa carrière le souci d'écarter
leur erreur; son insistance avait d'ailleurs des motifs très concrets, qu'il serait trop long d'exposer ici. Mais faut-il
pour autant minimiser comme on le fait la force de la preuve? A relire les textes cristallins de la *Somme* ou du
*Contra Gentiles* on gagne invinciblement l'impression que nos interprètes les amolissent.”
Garrigou-Lagrange replied directly to Motte in 1933. Having entered a debate earlier that year with the Dominican, Maurice Corvez, over the possibility of demonstrating in general that there exists in God a supernatural order above what man can know by natural reason, Garrigou-Lagrange extended that debate to the particular question of knowing the vision of God. He argues that one can know by natural reason that God’s interior life is above man’s interior life in general, and consequently that there exist supernatural mysteries within God. However, knowing that supernatural mysteries exists is different than knowing what they are. Man absolutely cannot know what they are, because the inner life of God is above human comprehension. As Garrigou-Lagrange repeats three times: “what is supernatural in substance is supernatural with respect to being known, because being and truth are convertible.” Since man’s elevation to the supernatural vision of God is a supernatural mystery, it follows that man cannot know it demonstrably by natural reason.

To be fair, Motte had never said that one could prove by natural reason that God had, in fact, offered the vision of himself to man, and Garrigou-Lagrange does not accuse Motte of this specifically. The real disagreement between the two is over the demonstration of the possibility of the vision of God. Motte, following de Broglie, thinks that Thomas provides a philosophically

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189 Ibid., 671.

190 Ibid., 673, again at 674-5, and again at 681. “Quod est surnaturale quoad substantiam est surnaturale quoad cognoscibilitatem, quia verum et ens convertuntur.”

191 Ibid., 674.
rigorous demonstration of the possibility of the vision of God, and a theological demonstration of its actuality. Garrigou-Lagrange, following de Broglie’s first critics, Blanche and Mulard, thinks that Thomas’s philosophical demonstration of possibility is not a demonstration strictly speaking, but only an argument of fittingness. For Garrigou-Lagrange, a rigorous demonstration that the final end of man is the vision of God would have to prove the possibility both of man’s receiving the vision of God, as well as the possibility of the grace which would elevate him to it. However, no one can demonstrate rigorously whether the vision of God is possible or impossible, since these truths are supernatural mysteries in the inner life of God.

Motte would reply again to Garrigou in 1935, but the next intervention in the debate came in 1934 from an Italian Dominican, Stefano Vallaro (1871-1951). Responding in the journal *Angelicum*, Vallaro came to the same conclusion as Motte on the demonstrative value of Thomas’s argument for the possibility of the vision of God, but attempted to respond to Garrigou-Lagrange’s criticism of Fernández more thoroughly. Vallaro argues that both Garrigou-Lagrange and Fernández have fallen into a trap, laid by the commentators, of assuming that an elicited desire for the vision of God must be conditional. Such a restriction arose in the commentators in reaction to Baianism and out of a desire to avoid saying that man is naturally capable of achieving the vision of God. In more recent writers, the restriction was maintained in reaction to modernism, so as to avoid saying that man has a natural exigence for the vision of God.

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192 Ibid., 674-75, 676.
193 Ibid., 684.
195 Stefano Vallaro, “De naturali desiderio videndi essentiam Dei et de eius valore ad demonstrandam possibilitatem eiusdem visionis Dei quidditativae,” *Angelicum* 11 (1934): 133–170. I have not been able to find any biographical details about Vallaro.
God. However, besides the fact that such a restriction is difficult to ground in the actual texts of Thomas, the assumption that an absolute, elicited desire implies exigence for the desire’s end rests on a failure to distinguish between the order of intention and the order of execution. A desire in the order of intention, which arises from a metaphysical possibility, does not imply anything in the physical order of actual achievability. According to Thomas, as interpreted by Ferrariensis, man has an absolute, not a conditional elicited desire in the order of intention, arising out of an obediential potency for the vision of God. This desire demonstrates not just the probability, but also the strict possibility of the vision of God, even though it says nothing about whether the means of achieving that vision have in fact been offered. Vallaro thus follows in the wake of Fernández, assuming that even the vision of God as first cause lies outside the reach of human nature as such.

Furthermore, responding to Garrigou-Lagrange’s support of Gardeil’s argument against Blondel’s and Rousselot’s epistemology, Vallaro argues that man can indeed know naturally of an obediential potency for the vision of God. Doing so does not require a confusion of the analogical manner in which intellectuality is possessed by humans, angels and God. Instead, while recognizing their specific differences, one can observe a generic similarity among them: precisely because all intellectuality is abstracted from matter, it is ordered towards common

196 Ibid., 138.
197 Ibid., 151.
198 Ibid., 153.
199 Ibid., 152-55.
200 Ibid., 163.
being as its adequate object, which is unlimited.201 Therefore, and here Vallaro comes to the same conclusion as his epistemological predecessors, God himself falls under the adequate object of the human intellect.202

Garrigou-Lagrange responded to Vallaro in a brief note in 1935,203 devoting a simple, two-part argument against a rigorous demonstration of the possibility of the vision of God.204 First, Garrigou-Lagrange repeats that what is supernatural in itself must be known supernaturally, because being and truth are convertible. Consequently, since the vision of God is supernatural in itself, its possibility can only be known supernaturally.205 Second, if man has a natural knowledge of the possibility of a supernatural mystery, that would make the mystery only above human reason with respect to its actuality. This, however, would compromise the absolute nature of its supernaturality, as if one were to suggest that man could have natural knowledge of the possibility of the Incarnation, or of the three persons in God.206 Garrigou-Lagrange concludes on this basis that, _a priori_, there cannot be a rigorous demonstration of the possibility of the vision of God.

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201 Ibid., 163.

202 Ibid., 158-59. Vallaro would expound upon this capacity in Stefano Vallaro, “De naturali capacitate intellectus creati ad videndam divinam essentiam,” _Angelicum_ 12 (1935): 192–216. Vallaro’s second article does not appear to add much to the substance of his first, though it does give more extensive textual and theoretical support for it.

203 Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange, “De demonstrabilitate possibilitatis mysteriorum supernaturalium,” _Angelicum_ 12 (1935): 217–222. Garrigou does not mention Vallaro’s name anywhere in the article, but the first page makes it clear that the occasion of his writing is Vallaro’s doctrine of an absolute desire for the vision of God in the order of intention.

204 It is not clear whether or to what extent Garrigou may have read Vallaro’s second article before composing his response, even if it seems clear that he had read the Vallaro’s first article.

205 Ibid., 219-20.

206 Ibid., 221.
At the same time as Vallaro’s intervention, but outside the consideration of Garrigou-Lagrange’s response, a priest of the Diocese of Belley, A. Darmet, published a doctoral thesis at the Faculty of Theology at Lyons on *rationes seminales* and obediential potency, which also considered the question of natural desire.\(^{207}\) Seeking confirmation in his interpretation of Thomas from Giles of Rome,\(^{208}\) Darmet claims that Thomas distinguishes clearly between obediential potency and a natural capacity. An obediential potency is the manner in which all Creation stands in passive receptivity to whatever God wills to do, while natural capacity denotes that specific manner in which intellectual creatures are oriented towards the vision of God.\(^{209}\) For Darmet, only natural capacity gives rise to a natural desire for any specific act, because only natural capacity implies any proportion of the soul to its end or any necessity of reaching that end.\(^{210}\) This being the case, man’s natural desire seeks the subjective perfection of human nature, which can only be found in the highest knowledge of universal truth and goodness, which in turn can only be found in the vision of God.\(^{211}\)

Since man’s natural desire for the fulfillment of his natural capacity implies a necessity of that fulfillment, and since man has a natural desire for the vision of God, it remained for Darmet to explain the character of that necessity in the face of the critique that he compromised the gratuity of grace. According to Darmet, the “necessity” thus posited is purely subjective, not

\(^{207}\) A. Darmet, *Les notions de raison séminale et de puissance obédientielle* (Belley: Chaduc, 1934). I have been unable to locate any biographical information about Darmet.

\(^{208}\) Ibid., 143. This was a somewhat ironic choice given Giles’s explicit disagreement with Thomas on the question of *rationes seminales*. Nevertheless, it confirms a certain Aegidian tendency in Darmet, which will be highlighted below.

\(^{209}\) Ibid., 159. On obediential potency, see also p. 107. On natural capacity, see also p. 114.

\(^{210}\) Ibid., 114-15, 119.

\(^{211}\) Ibid., 114-15.
objective: “Far from imposing the laws of its tendency on its term, every act of the will is borne towards things according as they are in themselves and thus receives the laws of its tendency from its term.”212 Thus, man has an innate desire for the vision of God, which is nevertheless conditioned by God’s freedom to withhold that vision.213 Such a desire reveals a positive ordering in human nature towards the vision of God,214 which can issue forth into an elicited desire based upon natural knowledge, and which terminates in the vision of God as first cause.215

As far as rati ones seminal es are concerned, Darmet does not contribute much to the scholarship of his day. The reason for this is that he distinguishes two kinds of rati ones seminal es. Rationes seminal es of the first degree are those combinations of active and passive potencies, which Thomas uses to account for natural change, natural desire, and natural perfection; rationes seminal es of the second degree are equivalent to what Thomas describes as obediential potency.216 Since Darmet says explicitly that he intends to discuss rationes seminal es of the second, not the first degree,217 he does not raise any questions about the relationship of “natural” or “material” potency to grace.

Although Darmet does not see the potential in what he calls “rationes seminal es of the first degree” for understanding Thomas’s account of nature and natural desire, he nevertheless

212 Ibid., 120. “...tout act de volonté se porte aux choses selon ce qu’elles sont et donc reçoit de son terme, loin de les lui imposer, les lois de sa tendance...” Also see p. 128. Darmet’s conception of natural desire is similar to that of de Broglie, in that it allows the object of the desire to impose the condition of gratuity upon it.

213 Ibid., 115.

214 Ibid., 100.

215 Ibid., 115-16.

216 Ibid., 13.

217 Ibid.
makes a substantial contribution to the third stage of the debate. Particularly, although Darmet describes man’s innate desire for the vision of God as an “absolutely passive” tendency, which sounds Scotistic, what he means is that, while man has an orientation towards God as his final end as well as a certain proportion in his soul towards this end, man is nevertheless completely passive with respect to the reception of that end. Darmet’s position is thus substantially Aegidian. For Darmet as for the Aegidians, man’s positive orientation towards the vision of God confers upon human nature a desire which is so radical that nothing short of the completely possession of its end can constitute beatitude for human nature simply speaking. In addition, like Paludanus, Darmet does grant that man can nevertheless come to a lesser, naturally achievable beatitude; but this will only be beatitude in a certain respect.

The next development in the debate was Motte’s intervention in 1935, in which Motte replied both to Darmet as well as to Garrigou-Lagrange’s critique of Motte’s 1932 intervention. Besides noting that Darmet’s scope was too narrow, Motte’s main criticism of Darmet is that, like Laporta, Darmet does not rely exclusively on the concept of obediential potency in order to ground man’s receptivity to grace and glory. Consequently, Darmet proposes that human nature has a supernatural end, a conclusion which Motte is unwilling to grant. On

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218 Ibid., 123.

219 Ibid., 114.

220 Cf. ibid., 162. Here, Darmet describes man’s obediential potency for grace and glory as a “material submission,” something which hearkens back to Thomas’s language of “material potency,” even if Darmet does not perceive the connection between obediential and natural potency under the banner of material potency in Thomas’s thought.

221 Ibid., 121.


223 Ibid., 583. Motte is willing to grant a certain “proportion” between human nature and the vision of God, so long as one denies that anything supernatural is said to be man’s “finality.” (584)
the other hand, Motte is willing to grant, with Darmet, that there is a certain “proportion” in human nature for the vision of God, so long as the proportion only signifies receptivity without any positive finality.

Motte also recognizes the shift in Garrigou-Lagrange’s argument towards an *a priori* exclusion of the possibility of demonstrating the possibility of the vision of God. However, Motte criticizes Garrigou-Lagrange for misusing the transcendental sense of being and truth. According to Motte, the transcendental identity of supernatural being and supernatural truth only proves that supernatural being can perfect the intellect. Far from placing supernatural being outside the realm of knowability by a created intellect, this actually places it *within* the realm of knowability by created intellect. The created intellect will simply know supernatural being only according to its own mode and imperfectly. From this perspective, knowing the possibility of the vision of the divine essence is the same as knowing any other truth that can be known from natural reason about God; it is firmly distinguished from the knowledge of the Trinitarian persons, which presupposes Revelation. In this respect, Motte voices his approbation of Vallaro, whom he thinks rightly followed Ferrarisiens in saying that man’s natural desire for God

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224 Ibid., 584.
225 Ibid., 585. There is a certain irony in Motte’s approach to Darmet. It is true that Darmet grounds himself to a certain extent in the work of Laporta (104n1, 106n2, 163n2), and that Laporta advocated what is in substance a Scotist position on natural desire. However, Darmet only makes use of Laporta in order to recover the broader sense in which nature itself lies open to the influence of grace without any additional potency (something about which Thomas and Scotus agreed). However, on points where Scotists and Aegidians disagree, Darmet places himself for the most part in the Aegidian camp.
226 Ibid., 574.
227 Ibid., 575.
228 Ibid., 576.
229 Ibid., 577-78.
terminates in the vision of God as first cause.\textsuperscript{230} However, knowing the possibility of seeing the divine essence does not reveal what it would be like to see the three divine persons any more than knowing from natural reason that God exists reveals affords man any knowledge about them.

Moreover, and again following Vallaro, Motte proposes that while the possibility of the vision of God can be naturally known and hence naturally desired, this does not mean that the existence of grace can be naturally known. One must distinguish between the metaphysical possibility of the vision of God, which is only limited by what implies a contradiction, and physical ability to see God, which presumes the availability of the means.\textsuperscript{231} On the basis of man’s natural knowledge of the metaphysical possibility of the vision of God, one can conclude that there is in human nature an obediential potency to receive this vision from God, while on the basis of God’s omnipotence, one can conclude that God could choose to grant this vision.\textsuperscript{232} Nevertheless, man will never know by natural reason whether God has chosen to offer the grace necessary for that vision.

Garrigou-Lagrange replied to Motte in 1936 with two articles: one appeared as a short note in the journal \textit{Angelicum},\textsuperscript{233} updating his response to Vallaro in light of Motte’s intervention; the other appeared as a longer, direct response to Motte in the French Dominican

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{230} Ibid., 580.
\item \textsuperscript{231} Ibid., 581.
\item \textsuperscript{232} Ibid., 589-90. Here again one encounters the argument from Sestili’s first defence of his dissertation.
\end{itemize}
The argumentation in the two articles is effectively the same. Garrigou-Lagrange summarizes Motte as claiming that while supernatural mysteries cannot be known \textit{perfectly}, they can nevertheless be known imperfectly; in other words, they can be known materially but not formally.\textsuperscript{235} Garrigou-Lagrange does not deny that man can form some idea of a truth that is materially supernatural, but he does object that this idea could inspire more than a conditional wish, and that it could be useful in a metaphysical demonstration.\textsuperscript{236} When Thomas says that Aristotle’s \textit{dictum} that a natural desire cannot be vain proves that the possibility of the vision of God is necessary, Thomas speaks of a necessity of the most compelling fittingness, but not of rigorous demonstration.\textsuperscript{237} In the longer article, Garrigou adds that the conditional nature of man’s desire is actually twofold: first, man desires to see God if it is possible at all; second, if it is possible, man desires to see God if God chooses to grant the vision of God to humanity.\textsuperscript{238}

The Louvain Jesuit, Edmond Brisbois, responded to Motte in a much more positive way than Garrigou-Lagrange.\textsuperscript{239} Brisbois’s intervention in 1936 was no different than his intervention in 1927; it expresses the same Scotism, although it phrases that Scotism in a tone which is more conciliatory to the Thomistic commentators. Brisbois states that his intention is to attempt to develop a framework for understanding Thomas, which can bring together three different

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid., 243-44. Cf. “La possibilité de la grâce,” 204-05.
\item Ibid., 245-46. Cf. “La possibilité de la grâce,” 214n20.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
interpretations: the Cajetanian, the Bañezian (which does not differ substantially from what has been called the “Suarezian” interpretation), and Scotism. Brisbois’s solution proposes that each of the three approaches to natural desire is correct in some sense, because each speaks of a different desire. The Scotists discuss the first motion that God imparts to the will before any action, the *virtus volendi*, which is undetermined towards any particular good because it abstracts from knowledge entirely. In some sense, this knowledge is ordered even towards the vision of God. The Bañezians discuss the first act of the will, which determines the will to a naturally known end. This is the act from which the finality and exigencies of the will’s nature arises. The Cajetanians discuss the second act of the will, which includes and presupposes the finality and exigencies of the first act, because it determines the will yet further.

Apart from Garrigou-Lagrange’s and Brisbois’s responses to Motte, the final contributions to this branch of the debate was in the form of two interventions from Dominicans in Italy, which seem to be responses to Vallaro’s 1934 intervention and not to take cognizance of Motte’s 1935 intervention, nor of subsequent responses to Motte. The first of these interventions was that of Mannes Matthijs, who in 1936-37 published two articles on natural desire. For Matthijs, man’s knowledge of the possibility of the vision of God does not proceed deductively

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240 Ibid., 981-84.
241 Ibid., 1099-1100.
242 Ibid., 1091.
243 Ibid., 1091-92.
from any knowledge of supernatural being. Rather, it proceeds from an innate desire to know *quid est* of the ultimate cause of those things which are connatural with human nature. Inspired by Vallaro, Matthijs maintains that such an innate desire abstracts from the availability of the means of achieving its end and seeks the end in itself insofar as that end does not imply a contradiction. The presence of such a desire does not, *ipso facto*, allow for a rigorous demonstration of the possibility of the vision of God. However, it does shift the burden of proof onto those who would deny the possibility of giving some demonstration of the contradiction that its fulfillment would entail.

The second contribution came from a certain A. Raineri, a Dominican from Turin, who published a four part article that overlapped the work of Matthijs. Raineri grants, with Vallaro and Matthijs, the distinction between a desire that seeks its end only under the condition that its end does not imply a contradiction, and a desire which takes cognizance of the availability of the means to this end. However, rather than describing this as a distinction between a metaphysical and a physical possibility, Raineri describes it as the difference between a logical and a metaphysical possibility. The affirmation of a logical possibility entails the affirmation of simple non-contradiction, while the affirmation of metaphysical possibility implies some actual receptive potency in a subject for the *terminus* in question. The logical possibility of the vision

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245 Matthijs, “Quid ratio naturalis doceat,” 224.
246 Ibid., 220-21.
247 Ibid., 220.
248 Ibid., 224; Matthijs, “Quomodo anima humana sit ‘naturaliter capax gratiae’,” 187n2.
250 Ibid., 307.
of God can be guaranteed in three ways. First, it can be known to fall within the adequate object of the intellect, which is “being in all its latitude;” here, Raineri situates himself within the long line of early twentieth century Thomists who had adopted such an epistemology as part of their doctrine of natural desire. Second, the logical possibility of the vision of God can be known from the terminus of man’s natural desire; Raineri distances himself from Matthijs, arguing that an innate desire for an end which abstracts from the availability of the means to that end would be “absurd.” Consequently, man’s natural desire for the vision of God must be elicited. Moreover, following Fernández and Vallaro Raineri claims that man’s desire for the vision of God is absolute. If it were not absolute, nothing certain could be demonstrated from it. Following Ferrariensis, as Fernández and Vallaro had done, Raineri claims that man has an absolute, elicited desire to see God as the first cause. However, Raineri also suggests that the vision sought by man’s natural desire formally concerns God as first cause, but is materially the same as the vision of God as triune. Finally, Raineri adds that man can know the logical possibility of the vision of God from the nature of intellectual substance in general. However, man’s receptivity for the vision of God does not correlate with any active power ordered towards

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251 Ibid., 318.
252 For Raineri’s response to Garrigou, see ibid., 321-23.
253 Ibid., 419-20.
254 Ibid., 416.
255 Ibid., 417.
256 Ibid., 417-18, 422.
257 Ibid., 311, 417-18.
that vision. Rather, man’s pure passivity to the vision of God guarantees its non-contradictory nature.\textsuperscript{258}

On the premise that man’s pure passivity to the vision of God guarantees its non-contradictory nature, Raineri affirms both the logical and metaphysical possibility of the vision of God.\textsuperscript{259} Such a metaphysical possibility does not create any exigence for the vision of God, however, because exigence only arises out of an active power, not a passive receptivity.\textsuperscript{260} Moreover, there can be no exigence because God could have created human nature with some lesser participation of the vision of himself as its end, in which man would receive less than the complete actualization of his passive potency.\textsuperscript{261} However, in spite of the obvious affinities between this position and that of Paludanus, Raineri explicitly distances himself from the Aegidian tradition. For Raineri, Aegidianism is the same as Scotism, because it posits an allegedly absurd innate desire for an end that exceeds the capacity of nature.\textsuperscript{262}

Apart from Brisbois’s explicitly Scotistic intervention and Raineri’s reiteration of de Broglie’s quasi but implicit Aegidianism, the third stage of the debate on natural desire in the 1920s-1930s focused mostly on Garrigou-Lagrange’s opposition to the idea of a natural desire for a supernatural end, whether that idea was articulated based upon principles drawn from the Aegidian tradition, from the Scotistic tradition, or from Fernández’s reworking of Ferrariensis’s position. When Garrigou-Lagrange’s arguments about natural desire itself did gain acceptance,

\textsuperscript{258} Ibid., 426-9.
\textsuperscript{259} Ibid., 5.
\textsuperscript{260} Ibid., 13.
\textsuperscript{261} Ibid., 117.
\textsuperscript{262} Ibid., 419-20.
he turned to a transcendental argument about the convertibility of supernatural being and supernatural truth. However, this argument also failed to gain as wide a reception as it might have, since Garrigou-Lagrange never gave a thorough response to Motte’s critique that he had misunderstood the nature of the transcendental.

In addition, in this third stage of the debate there was a tendency among the Dominicans similar to that which occurred among the Jesuits in the second stage of the debate, of so separating human nature from the vision of God that it is difficult to see how, as Thomas had observed, man’s material potency lies ever open to grace and glory. Seen in tandem with the tendency in the second stage of the debate towards crystallizing positions in the debate into generic forms of “Thomism” and “Scotism,” the third stage of the debate ended with Garrigou-Lagrange on one side advocating in the place of Thomism a yet more radical Cajetanianism, which overlooked in some respects nature’s openness to grace and glory, and a variety of other, eclectic positions, which lacked the rhetorical consistency and vigor of Garrigou-Lagrange’s, and consequently were not able to oppose it effectively.

D. Stage 4: De Broglie Re-Enters the Debate (1937-39)

The fourth stage of the debate came more as an appendix to the third stage than as an organic development from it. The occasion for this fourth stage was the return of Guy de Broglie to the question after nearly a decade of absence. The catalyst for de Broglie’s intervention appears to have been twofold: first, there was the tendency towards identifying all doctrines of a

natural desire for the vision of God with one another, which meant the conflation of de Broglie’s doctrine with those which he criticized and rejected; second, there was the continued adherence by many to the argument that man’s natural desire for God only proves the probability, and not the possibility of the vision of God.264

De Broglie begins by insisting that not all doctrines of a natural desire for the vision of God imply the offer of that desire’s fulfillment.265 Most theologians until the time of Jansen maintained that man has a natural desire for the vision of God, without therefore implying that it could be known by natural reason whether God had in fact offered that vision.266 De Broglie supports this claim that man’s natural desire proves the possibility of the vision of God, without revealing anything about the interior life of God or suggesting anything about the actual offer of the vision. He does this by making a distinction between four levels of obscurity:

First, there is the “paradoxical” nature of the concept of the vision of God, since it proposes that the ultimate terminus of man’s immanent activity is in another. This, however, poses no special problem, because nature is replete with paradoxes.267

Second, there is the obscurity deriving from the nature of the vision of God in itself; this corresponds with the question of what that vision is in itself (quid est). Neither does this pose any special difficulty, because man cannot know quid est of God in this life, and nevertheless man

264 Ibid., 342, and again at 347n1. As an example, he cites the Jesuit, Joseph de Tonquédec, who had adopted the thesis in a 1936 article in response to a study of Maurice Blondel. Blondel’s study was Maurice Blondel, La Pensée, 2 vols. (Paris: F. Alcan, 1934). Tonquédec’s response was Joseph de Tonquédec, Deux études sur La pensée de M. Maurice Blondel (Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1936). While possible, it seems doubtful that de Broglie would have come back to the debate solely because of the writings of Tonquédec. It would seem more likely that Tonquédec’s writings were indicative of wider tendencies that de Broglie wished to criticize.

265 Ibid., 338.

266 Ibid.

267 Ibid., 344.
can have an analogical knowledge of God in which human understanding stops short of comprehending the *terminus* of the analogy.\(^{268}\)

Third, there is the obscurity deriving from the question of whether God has offered this vision to man. This answers the question *an est*. Such an obscurity can only be overcome by faith, since it depends upon the free choice of God.\(^{269}\)

However, none of these questions touches upon a fourth question: *an esse possit* (whether it is possible).\(^{270}\) De Broglie acknowledges that some mysteries, like the Incarnation, are subject to this level of obscurity as well.\(^{271}\)

De Broglie does not think that the vision of God is subject to the fourth level of obscurity, like the Incarnation is.\(^{272}\) Those who think that it should be, de Broglie alleges, argue from a misunderstanding of the mode of man’s knowledge about the vision of God. They presume that any knowledge of the vision of God would have to be reached *deductively* by a comprehensive knowledge of God *in himself*.\(^{273}\) However, no one ever claimed that man has the sort of comprehensive knowledge about God required for deductive reasoning. Rather, man reaches knowledge of the vision of God by *inductive* reasoning from man’s subjective desire for complete beatitude.\(^{274}\) Since this desire can only be fully satisfied by the vision of God, it proves

\(^{268}\) Ibid., 344-45.

\(^{269}\) Ibid., 346.

\(^{270}\) Ibid., 347.

\(^{271}\) Ibid.

\(^{272}\) Ibid., 373.

\(^{273}\) Ibid., 350.

\(^{274}\) De Broglie uses the words “*deductively*” and “*inductively*” in a different sense than in his work from the 1920s, when he spoke of deductive arguments as establishing the possibility of the vision of God and of inductive arguments as establishing the probability of the offer of that vision. Both forms of argument, however, proceeded
that it is possible for man to receive that vision, without therefore revealing anything about what
the interior life of God is like, or whether God has offered to man the vision of himself as a share
in that interior life.\footnote{275}

De Broglie’s article elicited a book-length reply from Pedro Descoqs, the Suarezian
professor of metaphysics at the Jesuit house of formation in Jersey.\footnote{276} Descoqs argues that de
Broglie begs the question. There are, says Descoqs, two modes of argumentation that one could
use to prove the possibility of the vision of God from man’s natural desire for it. The first is a
direct argument. A direct argument would suggest that since the \textit{terminus} of man’s natural desire
is the vision of God, the vision of God must be possible. However, in order to know that it is
possible, the one posing such an argument has to assume enough knowledge of what the vision
of God is (\textit{quid sit}) that he can be absolutely sure that it does not imply a contradiction.
However, even de Broglie had acknowledged that such knowledge about the interior life of God
is impossible.\footnote{277} The second is an indirect argument. An indirect argument suggests that, since
man’s natural desire cannot be satisfied in anything but the vision of God, the vision of God must
be possible. However, in order to know that the vision of God is possible, the one posing such an
argument has to assume that the vision of God exists (\textit{an sit}), otherwise there is no reason to
suggest that this is not simply a chimeric desire.\footnote{278} Be that as it may, de Broglie had granted that

\footnotesize{from an analysis of man’s desire. Here in 1936, what he calls an “inductive” proof is the same was what he had
called a “deductive” proof in the 1920s, and it is now contrasted with a deductive proof that proceeds not from the
nature of man’s desire, but from a comprehensive knowledge of the divine essence.}\footnote{275}{Ibid., 350-51.}
\footnote{276}{Pedro Descoqs, \textit{Le mystère de notre élévation surnaturelle} (Paris: Beauchesne, 1938).}
\footnote{277}{Ibid., 96.}
\footnote{278}{Ibid., 111.}
one cannot know this by natural reason either. Moreover, it rests on the dubious assumption that in the order of the intellect (as Rousselot had argued) and/or the will (as Blondel had argued), the openness of man’s immaterial faculties to universal truth and goodness respectively implies an openness to the infinite being which is God.\footnote{Ibid., 116-17.} Either way, direct or indirect, the proof would imply more than the teaching of the Church can allow on the nature of supernatural mysteries. It may be true that Cajetan’s approach to the question is not infallible.\footnote{Ibid., 132. “Sans doute, Cajetan n’est infaillible ni en matière d’histoire ni en philosophie ni en théologie. Mais enfin Cajetan est Cajetan, c’est-à-dire, quoi qu’on pense de certaine, voire de beaucoup de ses théories, un métaphysicien et un théologien de premier ordre, l’un des plus grands à coup sûr de l’Ecole thomiste après saint Thomas, auprès de qui les Lodigerius et autres!”} However, at least Cajetan’s doctrine, complemented by Ferrariensis’s addition that man has an elicited desire for the vision of God as first cause, gives a reasonable interpretation of Thomas without compromising any aspect of the Christian faith.\footnote{Ibid. “Son explication d’autre part, non seulement ne heurte aucun principe de raison ni de foi, mais elle se présente comme raisonnable et donnant une clef de plus simples et des plus naturelles pour interpréter la pensée de saint Thomas.”}

De Broglie responded to Descoqs almost immediately.\footnote{Guy de Broglie, “Le mystère de notre élévation surnaturelle. Réponse au R.P. Descoqs,” Nouvelle Revue Théologiques 65 (1938): 1153–1176.} De Broglie’s first critique was that Descoqs aims his arguments at a vague “Rousseloist” movement, without actually engaging the particular arguments of any actual philosopher or theologian.\footnote{Ibid., 1156.} Descoqs constructs this so-called movement as though Rousselot were the first person in it, but in reality, Lepidi, Sestili, and Pègues anticipated him.\footnote{Ibid.} Second, Descoqs erred philosophically in suggesting that one
must know what something is in order to know that it is possible. If that were so, it would follow that any time someone knew that something existed, he would know what it was, since to affirm that something exists is to affirm that it is possible for it to exist. Third, Descoqs gravely misunderstands the nature of a mystery in the Christian faith. According to de Broglie, Descoqs’s understanding of Revelation has not so much to do with the infusion of faith and hope, which help man to begin a journey towards his final end, but with “revealed metaphysics,” which add to his abstract knowledge. Fourth, de Broglie criticizes the idea that natural desires imply an absolute exigency for their end, the positive possibility of their end, and a natural proportion to their end. Although saying that natural desires must be proportioned to natural ends sounds nice, it is little more than sophistry. All that one can say, and all that many writers in the theological tradition have said, is that man’s natural desire for the vision of God is an “inefficacious wish,” which implies no exigence. Finally, even the solution which Descoqs proposes, that of Ferrariensis, is not without difficulty. Besides the Suarezian argument against it that the vision of God always implies the vision of the Trinity, de Broglie also claims that Ferrariensis’s doctrine compromises the transcendence of grace by reducing the essence of God to something naturally viewable.

285 Ibid., 1158.
286 Ibid., 1159, 1168.
287 Ibid., 1160.
288 Ibid., 1162.
289 Ibid., 1163, 1171.
290 Ibid., 1174.
291 Ibid., 1174-75.
Descoqs and de Broglie had a final échange de vues the following year, 1939.²⁹² Descoqs reiterates the philosophical positions articulated in his earlier reply, but also develops his thought in relation to de Broglie’s latest charges. Concerning Rousselot and “Rousseloism,” Descoqs argues that a number of theologians had indeed followed Rousselot’s epistemology as well as his doctrine of natural desire.²⁹³ Concerning the nature of a supernatural mystery, he argues that it is not merely a question of “revealed metaphysics.” Rather, the knowledge communicated to man by Revelation is one aspect of Revelation, even if not the sum total of it.²⁹⁴ Concerning Ferrariensis’s doctrine of the vision of God as first cause, Descoqs notes that he had only proposed it as a hypothesis without endorsing it completely.²⁹⁵ Concerning the proportion between natural desires and naturally achievable ends, Descoqs argues that without this restriction one has to admit the possibility of a chimeric natural desire. However, if the possibility of such a desire is granted, man’s natural desire for God becomes at once a term without substance,²⁹⁶ which compromises the gratuity of grace.²⁹⁷ Concerning the relationship between knowing the possibility of something and knowing what it is, Descoqs notes simply that since “essences and possibles are one and the same,” to know one is to know the other.²⁹⁸


²⁹³ Descoqs, “Autour du mystère de notre élévation surnaturelle,” 403-05.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 409.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 410-12.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 418.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 419.

In reply, de Broglie first asserts that several of Descoqs’ arguments do not admit of a reply, because they assume principles which are placed outside of discussion. For example, Descoqs assumes the equivalence of essences and possibles, the correlation between natural desire and exigence, and a denial of properly analogical knowledge of that about which man does not know whether it is. De Broglie also suggests that, although Descoqs says that he only maintained the doctrine of Ferrariensis concerning man’s final end as a hypothesis, he nevertheless devotes a significant amount of argumentation in its support. Accordingly, de Broglie argues that he is justified in criticizing Descoqs on this point. According to Catholic tradition, the end of man is the vision of the essence of God, not the vision of the Trinitarian relations as such. Consequently one cannot abstract from these relations without harming what Revelation proposes as the end of man. De Broglie goes on to excuse Ferrariensis, in a manner that is admittedly rather stretched, as having held only that man desires the vision of God as the


300 Ibid., 437.

301 De Broglie cites the constitution Benedictus Deus of Benedict XII: “Hac in perpetuum valitura constitutione auctoritate apostolica definimus: quod secundum communem Dei ordinationem animae Sanctorum omnium, qui de hoc mundo ante Domini nostri Iesu Christi passionem decesserunt, nec non sanctorum Apostolorum, martyrum, confessorum, virginum et aliorum fideliun defunctorum post sacram ab eis Christi baptismas susceptum, in quibus nihil purgabile fuit, quando decesserunt, nec erit, quando decedent etiam in futuro, vel si tunc fuerit aut erit aliquid purgabile in eisdem, cum post mortem suam fuerint purgatae, ac quod animae puerorum eodem Christi baptismate renatorum et baptizandorum cum fuerint baptizati, ante usum liberi arbitrii decedentium, mox post mortem suam et purgationem praeefatam in illis, qui purgatione huiusmodi indigebant, etiam ante resumptionem suorum corporum et iudicium generale post ascensionem Salvatoris Domini nostri Iesu Christi in coelum, fuerunt, sunt et erunt in coelo, coelorum regno et paradiso coelesti cum Christo, sanctorum Angelorum consortio aggregatae, ac post Domini Iesu Christi passionem et mortem viderunt et vident divinam essentiam visione intuitiva et etiam faciiali, nulla mediante creatura in ratione objecti visi se habente, sed divina essentia immediate se nude, clare et aperte eis ostendente, quodque sic videntes eadem divina essentia perfruantur, necnon quod ex tali visione et fruitione eorum animae, qui iam decesserunt, sunt vere beatae et habent vitam et requiem aeternam, et etiam [animae] illorum, qui postea decedent, eadem divinam videbunt essentiam ipsaque perfruentur ante iudicium generale; ac quod visio huiusmodi divinae essentiae eiusque fruitio actus fidei et spei in eis evacuant, prout fides et spes propriae theologicae sunt virtutes; quodque, postquam inchoata fuerit vel erit talis intuitiva ac facialis visio et fruitio in eisdem, eadem visio et fruitio sine aliqua intercisione seu evacuatione praedictae visionis et fruitionis continuata exstitit et continuabitur usque ad finale iudicium et ex tunc usuque in sempiternum.” (D. 1530, ctd. in ibid.)
first cause, not that anyone could actually see God that way.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 438.} Finally, de Broglie quotes the Thomistic commentator Xantes Mariales (d. 1660), claiming that even the vision of God as first cause would not be \textit{due} nature, but would be rather a gratuitous gift.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}

\textbf{E. Conclusion}

De Broglie’s final intervention brings the second part of the early twentieth century debate on natural desire back to its starting place. On the one hand stands a quasi-Aegidian doctrine of natural desire, in which man has an elicited desire for the vision of God as triune, which nevertheless does not make the vision of God \textit{due} nature. On the other stands a doctrine of natural desire drawn from the commentarial tradition, which obscures the distinctions among proponents of natural desire for a supernatural end, and in which man has an elicited desire for a naturally achievable end. In fact, there was a variety of positions on both sides. Supporters of de Broglie included Scotists like Laporta, Doucet, and Brisbois, as well as Thomists like Elter, Mahony, Roland-Gosselin, and Raineri. Opponents of de Broglie included rigorous Suarezian Thomists, like Pelster and Cathrein, rigorous Cajetanians like Bliguet, Blanche, Gardeil, Garrigou-Lagrange, Balzaretti, and Pirotta, and more moderate Cajetanians like Van der Meersch, Dumont, and Matthijs. In addition, there arose in the latter part of this period a group of eclectic supporters of Ferrariensis, such as Charlier, Fernández, and Vallarò, who do not quite fit into any of the above categories.

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 438.}

\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}
Two common features in most contributions to the debate on natural desire in the second part of the early twentieth century were a general decline in any awareness of Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition, as well as contempt for the manner in which Berti defended the gratuity of grace. The combined effect of these two tendencies was a widespread ignorance of the similarities between positions on the natural desire for God put forward during this period and those held throughout the Aegidian tradition. This was particularly the case with Guy de Broglie, who both started the debate and brought it to a close, and whose doctrine of a natural desire for the vision of God as triune, which nevertheless allowed for the possibility of a naturally achievable but less fulfilling beatitude for man, was similar to that of Michael Paludanus.

Accordingly, the vast majority of theologians during the second part of the early twentieth century lost sight of the fact, well known to the theologians even of the first part of the early twentieth century, that the thesis of an active desire for the vision of God had enjoyed a robust history throughout the scholastic tradition, and had already faced many of the challenges that were put to its unknowing adherents in the second part of the early twentieth century. The Aegidian tradition, thus little known at this time but in many ways widely embraced, was well positioned for a revival in the middle of the twentieth century. Its champion—though his role in this regard would go as unnoticed as had the tradition he was to champion—was Henri de Lubac.
While Henri de Lubac’s *Surnaturel* ignited a significant controversy in its own right, it did not begin the twentieth century debates about natural desire.¹ This chapter will argue that Henri de Lubac developed, wrote, delivered, and published the work that would culminate in *Surnaturel* in the context of the neo-Aegidianism of the early twentieth century. *Surnaturel* constitutes the culmination of an early twentieth century neo-Aegidian revival, which began in Gioacchino Sestili, continued in Hippolyte Ligead, developed in Pierre Rousselot, and came to particular attention in the work of Guy de Broglie. In order to explain the context of de Lubac’s particular association with the Aegidian tradition, the chapter will do three things. First, it will examine the development of de Lubac’s understanding of natural desire and related questions over the course of his philosophical and theological formation from 1921-1929. Second, it will examine the forerunners to *Surnaturel* in four publications from de Lubac’s professional career in the 1930s and early 1940s, which would later be revised for inclusion within *Surnaturel*. Third, it will consider those portions of *Surnaturel* which were newly composed in the mid-1940s. In each case, the texts of de Lubac will be arranged in the order in which he composed them, noting the development of his ideas on natural desire from the beginning of his formation until the conclusion of *Surnaturel*. Beginning from an initial insight into the question of natural desire, inspired by Blondel, that man has a natural desire for a supernatural end, but nevertheless

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¹ As seen above in chapters three and four, a long and multifaceted debate had already taken place on the question from 1893-1939, with voices from a scholastic context representing various forms of Cajetanianism, Ferrariensianism, Suarezianism, Aegidianism, and Scotism, together with contributions of a less overtly scholastic provenance, such as those of Blondel, Rousselot, and Maréchal. Neither did the early twentieth century debate arise spontaneously. As seen in chapter two, it had a long pre-history in the disputations among the various branches of the scholastic tradition.
has no exigence in his nature whereby he could demand that end from God, de Lubac developed a doctrine of natural desire rooted in Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition. *Surnaturel*, seen in this light, is de Lubac’s proposal of a return to the Aegidian tradition, and the first step in affording the Aegidian tradition the rigorous defense he thinks that the tradition would need in order to stand against the elements of Cajetanianism, Suarezianism, and other kinds of Aegidianism that were dominant in the early twentieth century.

De Lubac’s embrace of the Aegidian tradition took it in a new and more radical direction towards the affirmation of a form of Aegidianism that for most of the early twentieth century bore the stigma of Jansenism in its denial of the reasonableness of pure nature and its defense of the gratuity of grace by means of a moral necessity. In dialogue with other forms of Thomism, de Lubac would propose that an authentically Thomist doctrine of natural desire is *innate, active, specific, absolute*, and terminates in the vision of God as triune, that the specific end of that desire remains unknown to man by natural reason save for the fact that it is supernatural, that a hypothesis of pure nature is unreasonable because it would deny man the possibility of achieving his only end, that nevertheless God could *de potentia absoluta* create man in such a state even though it would be unthinkable *de potentia ordinata*, and that a lack of humility before God, evident in the manner in which the hypothesis of pure nature posits an end that man can require of God, stands at the heart of modern secularism.
Over the course of his formation, de Lubac wrote about or gave conferences on several themes related to those of *Surnaturel*. The first of these compositions was a conference entitled, “The Desire for God in the Philosophy of Plotinus and of St. Augustine.”² This conference was given in two parts during the second year of de Lubac’s philosophical studies, in December 1921 and January 1922. At that time, de Lubac had just begun to become interested in the philosophical writings of Maurice Blondel.³ Blondel’s influence on the conference’s interpretation of Augustine is unmistakable, for de Lubac interprets Augustine as holding a doctrine of natural desire nearly identical to the one articulated by Blondel in *L’Action*.

De Lubac sees in the work of both Plotinus and Augustine a natural desire to see God, which arises out of the nature of the intellect. The difference between the two ancient thinkers is the origin of the desire in question.⁴ For Plotinus, the natural desire for God in the will corresponds with the knowledge of God in the intellect. However, this knowledge of God is static and immanent. It is static because it is based on an epistemology of Platonic remembrance and does not open up into any sort of transcendence.⁵ It is therefore immanent without being transcendent, since the object of desire is already present in the soul.

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² The manuscript for this conference, known to Chantraine, has unfortunately been lost, along with de Lubac’s precise references to passages in the works of Plotinus and Augustine. Fortunately, Chantraine, published a summary of its contents together with several extracts of the text in *Henri de Lubac*, 2:392-400.
⁴ For what follows, see ibid., 2:392-400.
⁵ Ibid., 2:397.
The opposite is the case with Augustine. For Augustine, the intellect is desire, because knowledge is “eminently active,” existing within the soul but moving the soul beyond itself to an object outside itself. When the intellect’s knowledge is natural, received in the soul by illumination, it draws the mind out from within itself to the source of its illumination in God. When its knowledge is revealed and taken on faith, it bears the soul along to the destination of the attraction it has already experienced with respect to natural knowledge, but now as to an end known by the light of grace. Augustine, according to de Lubac, steers carefully between two poles towards which his interpreters have pushed him. On the one hand, Platonic and Plotinian interpreters have wanted to see in him a repetition of Plotinus’s proto-ontologism. However, Augustine avoids this in his critique of Platonic reminiscence by placing God as the source of illumination outside the soul as one naturally unknown to it. On the other hand, voluntarist and Protestant interpreters have wanted to see in Augustine a form of voluntarism which denigrates the intellect. Augustine avoids this possibility in virtue of the fact that his desire is specifically intellectual.

In conclusion, de Lubac notes that Augustine’s intellectual dynamism could be salutary for an age, such as the early twentieth century, in which people find it difficult to relate to the

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6 Ibid., 2:395. “Le désir de Dieu est comme l’essence dynamique de l’âme.”
7 Ibid., 2:396.
8 Cf. ibid., 2:194, 325.
9 Ibid. De Lubac would express the same idea in a paper in 1924 on “Philosophy, the Science of Destiny.” Also cf. ibid., 2:197, where de Lubac expresses this distinction between natural and supernatural knowledge in an exchange with Gaston Fessard. Also, cf. ibid., 2:462-63.
10 Ibid., 2:397.
11 Ibid., 2:396.
reflections of the medieval scholastics, who appear to suffer from a certain stasis. Augustine and
the medievals are not opposed to one another in fact; the medievals spoke of God from the
standpoint of possessing him, while Augustine spoke of God from the standpoint of seeking
him.\footnote{Ibid.}

In this earliest of de Lubac’s writings on natural desire, one can begin to see the direction
that some of his subsequent writings on natural desire would take. First, de Lubac affirms that
the end of man’s natural desire is the vision of God. In the context of the early twentieth century
debates about natural desire, this affirmation would place de Lubac on the side of the debate with
Sestili, Blondel, Ligeard, Rousselot, de Broglie, and others who had rejected the Cajetanian
restriction of natural desires to naturally achievable ends. To be sure, there is no evidence that de
Lubac had at this point consciously placed himself in any line of thought, except for that of
Blondel, nor that he had read any work of any of these early twentieth century theologians.
Rather, one can note here, in light of the early twentieth century dichotomy between
Aegidians/Scotists on the one hand, and Cajetanians/Suarezians on the other, that from an early
date de Lubac’s thought bore the closest affinity with the Aegidian/Scotist side of the debate.

In spite of de Lubac’s early affinity with certain elements of early twentieth century
thought on natural desire, there is a certain tension in de Lubac’s thought. In the first part of the
early twentieth century, responses to Blondel from within a scholastic context took two forms.\footnote{See above, chapter 3, section C.}
The first response, that of Pierre Rousselot, emphasized primarily the role of the intellect
informing the will. The development of this response came ultimately, in Guy de Broglie, to
articulate a specific, elicited, and absolute desire for the vision of God, and to bear a certain
affinity with the Aegidianism of Michael Paludanus. The second response, that of Hippolyte
Ligeard, emphasized the role of the will on its own, and developed into a specific, innate, and
absolute desire for the vision of God; Ligeard explicitly associated this with Berti’s Aegidianism.
These two responses to Blondel were not always seen as compatible.\(^{14}\) Indeed, as de Broglie
related very early on, Rousselot was harshly critical of Berti’s Aegidianism, a critical stance
which de Broglie himself shared. Yet in this earliest of de Lubac’s writings on natural desire one
can note a desire to overcome the dichotomy between Ligeard and Rousselot, between will and
intellect, in the question of natural desire, and so to find a less divisive way of appropriating
Blondel’s insights within traditional theology.

In order to overcome the dichotomy between the two scholastic recensions of Blondel, de
Lubac had to do two things. First, he had to develop an understanding of a fundamental
association between the intellect and the will so as to overcome the proposed dichotomy between
them in responses to Blondel; second, he had to soften Rousselot’s intellectualist critique of
Blondel, and show how an intellectualist response to Blondel need not be at odds with one
emphasizing the role of the will.

In 1922, de Lubac and one of his confrères, Gaston Fessard, jointly sketched out some
ideas on the nature of intellect, which articulated the association they perceived between the
intellect and the will.\(^{15}\) Together, de Lubac and Fessard suggest that the “fundamental act” of the

\(^{14}\) See above, chapter 4, section A.

\(^{15}\) The outline of this sketch can be found in ibid., 2:484-90. Also cf. Antonio Russo, *Henri de Lubac*
intellect is an intuition of itself.\(^{16}\) In this act of intuition, the soul apprehends itself as a dynamic and active reality, defined by its desire for God as an orientation towards “the Absolute” as its final end.\(^{17}\) Intellect and will are thus united at the core of man’s rational activity, such that any supposed dichotomy between them would be at most conceptual. This fundamental act of self-intuition is the basis for what the scholastics called the “first principles” of knowledge, now grounded in a subjective apprehension of self, not an objective apprehension of the principles in themselves.\(^{18}\) De Lubac developed these thoughts in an article in the Jesuit student journal, *Quodlibeta*, where he grounds all human knowledge in a dialectic between the soul’s fundamental act of the self-intuition, including its desire for God, and man’s experience of the world, by which one achieves greater degrees of objective awareness of this act of intuition.\(^{19}\)

Applying an understanding of the beginnings of knowledge similar to the one expressed in the sketch with Fessard as well as in the article for *Quodlibeta*, de Lubac then turned to the second task, and softened Rousselot’s critique of Blondel in some notes responding to an unpublished letter of Rousselot, who had criticized Blondel.\(^{20}\) In the letter, Rousselot argues that Blondel’s principle of immanence is inconsistent. Blondel had started *L’Action* by constructing a *tabula rasa* in which no prior knowledge or supposition would be admitted in the immanent subject. From this standpoint, Blondel was supposed to have concluded by reflection on action in the will antecedent to considerations of knowledge in the intellect that the transcendent exists

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\(^{16}\) Ibid., 2:486.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 2:487.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 2:488.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 2:377-78. These thoughts would eventually come to fuller expression in de Lubac’s *De la connaissance de Dieu* (Paris: Témoignage Chrétien, 1941).

\(^{20}\) The text of the letter is quoted in ibid., 2:320.
within man’s immanent experience. Rousselot alleges that this approach is inconsistent because the principle by which one forms the *tabula rasa* is itself a presupposition that would have to be excluded in order to clear the mind completely.  

Blondel thus wasted his time in trying to establish a basis for the affirmation of the existence of the transcendent, when he should have assumed it and spent his intellectual efforts on the relationship between the existent soul, possessed of an imperfect, intuitive knowledge, and its supernatural end in the vision of God, without which the soul experiences “a certain disequilibrium.”

De Lubac responds that Rousselot has gone too far. Blondel was not trying to start from nothing and then establish the existence of transcendent reality. He was moving in the other direction: starting from the data of lived experience; he sought to analyze its constituent aspects and conditions, and so assumed legitimately everything that Rousselot would have assumed. In short, the method of immanence employed by Blondel is a tool of *analysis*, where one deconstructs the data of lived experience, not one of *synthesis*, where one constructs an account of lived experience from *a priori* first principles. Rousselot, speaking from the standpoint of synthesis, could not see the affinities between his own thought and that of Blondel.

In non-scholastic language, de Lubac thus attempts to grapple with several of the fundamental questions posed to the scholastics about our natural desire for God. First, there is the question of the relationship of the intellect to the will in first act. Rousselot had interpreted Blondel as suggesting that the will is independent of the intellect in first act and that man’s natural desire does not depend upon knowledge. Rousselot had criticized Blondel from a

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21 De Lubac’s response is quoted in ibid., 2:320-21.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid., 2:321.
Thomist perspective, and not altogether wrongly, because the idea that the will is independent from the intellect in first act comes from Scotus, not from Thomas. Second, there is the question of the natural knowability of the terminus of man’s natural desire for God. For Rousselot and Thomas, the terminus of man’s natural desire, connected as it is with the finality of our intellect, is naturally knowable as the vision of God. For Blondel and Scotus, the terminus of man’s natural desire is not naturally knowable, since man’s motion towards it occurs independent of the intellect. By seeking to overcome the differences between Blondel and Rousselot, de Lubac was effectively seeking a means of overcoming the dichotomy between Scotus and Thomas on this question, suggesting that they are simply speaking from two different perspectives on the same reality, rather than two mutually exclusive metaphysical doctrines.

In March 1923, de Lubac met Blondel in person. This meeting confirmed his esteem for Blondel and his philosophy. So great was his enthusiasm for Blondel’s thought that he could be numbered with a group of “Blondelian” students at the philosophate. This Blondelian cohort sought out and read whatever works of Rousselot were available, including his unpublished works, at the direction of Auguste Valensin, who was the custodian of Rousselot’s papers at Fourvière.

In March 1924, de Lubac and Fessard took their nascent ideas to Guy de Broglie. Unsurprisingly, they had a much more difficult time convincing this successor of Rousselot that

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24 Ibid., 2:202.
26 Ibid., 2:214.
27 Ibid., 2:215.
28 Ibid., 2:337-44.
Rousselot’s critiques of Blondel were unnecessary. De Lubac perceived the point of disagreement with de Broglie to be the subjective standpoint of the metaphysics that de Lubac and Fessard used to ground the harmony between Rousselot and Blondel. That disagreement only intensified following the appearance of de Broglie’s first article on natural desire in 1924. Writing to Fessard, de Lubac gave a long and extended critique of de Broglie, outlining the differences between de Broglie and himself. Objective/synthetic and subjective/analytic conceptions of metaphysics, de Lubac suggests, result in two different notions of causality. For de Broglie’s objective metaphysics, which considers the universe in terms of act and potency, that which is in potency stands in complete passivity to that which is in act. Such a conception of metaphysics is entirely appropriate for the world of inanimate objects, which are passive in the reception of their motion, but is not adequate for a rational creature, which exercises a certain activity in achieving its end.

In order to provide a more comprehensive account of motion in a rational creature, which takes into account the relationship between activity and passivity, de Lubac suggests an axiom: “Causality is the objective translation of activity,” which is to say that objectively and passively received motion must first arise from a subjectively and actively given motion. There is, therefore, no objective/synthetic metaphysics except that which is based upon a subjective/analytic metaphysics. Applied to the question of the relationship of human nature to

29 Cf. ibid., 2:339.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., 2:343.
32 Ibid., 2:341.
33 Henri de Lubac, Letter 8 to Gaston Fessard, qtd. in ibid., 2:342-43. “La causalité est la traduction objective de l’activité”
its supernatural end, this means that an objective, passive, structural account of the relationship between God and man is insufficient. Only a subjective account of the relationship between man and God, which takes into account the activity of man, ordered towards his final end, does justice to the unique dignity of an intellectual nature.

The idea that scholastic accounts of natural desire, even those of a confrère like de Broglie, were based entirely in an objective metaphysics that lacked an adequate account of subjective activity, suggested to de Lubac that contemporary theology needed to rethink the meaning of natural desire. Pondering this question, de Lubac announced the first inklings of what would become *Surnaturel*:

And this question of the Supernatural is the most important. If Religion can justify itself, the Supernatural is the only route. So here is the problem: philosophy is insufficient for humanity, either because the whole of mankind is much too unreasonable, or because [philosophy] does not succeed at fulfilling the highest desires of reason. One needs to choose between these two ways of making a place for Religion. Now, if we are explaining Religion, it is clear that only the second way legitimizes it. But for this [to be effective], it is necessary that the Supernatural be thinkable, whether it be negatively so (problem of the desire for the Supernatural, of the exigence of the Supernatural [*sic!*]). It is a question of establishing a double paradox. I think that I see in general how this demonstration can be done. But to do it would be an enormous undertaking. Nevertheless, nothing would be more interesting. We will have to talk about it again.34

34 Henri de Lubac, *Letter 8 to Gaston Fessard*, qtd. in ibid., 2:343. “Et cette question du Surnaturel est la plus importante. Si la Religion se justifie, ce n’est que par le Surnaturel. Car voici le dilemme: la philosophie est insuffisante aux hommes, ou bien parce que l’ensemble des hommes est trop peu raisonnable, ou bien parce qu’elle ne réussit pas à combler les plus hauts désirs de la raison: entre ces deux manières de faire à la Religion une place, il faut choisir. Or il est évident que seule la seconde manière, en expliquant la Religion, la légitime. Mais pour cela, il faut que le Surnaturel soit pensable, qu’il le soit négativement (problème du désir du Surnaturel, de l’exigence du Surnaturel). Double paradoxe, qu’il s’agit d’établir. Il me semble que je vois en gros comment cette démonstration peut se faire. Mais, la faire, serait une entreprise énorme. Rien cependant ne serait plus intéressant. Il faudra que nous en reparlions.”
Here again one encounters the repetition of the same doctrine that was expressed in de Lubac’s earliest writing and inherited from Blondel. Man has a natural desire for the vision of God, which he experiences as a motion towards an end that is in itself unknown, yet is made known in Revelation. One also witnesses an apologetic tone similar to that of de Lubac’s first writing on the natural desire for God. In order to justify a place for religion in contemporary society, it will be necessary to adopt a dynamic metaphysics of the subject, which discusses nature’s openness to the supernatural in terms of a desire for a \textit{terminus} which cannot be naturally known, but which nevertheless makes the idea of its \textit{terminus} intelligible from the experience of the desire.

Two other themes emerge in de Lubac’s response to de Broglie which will become important to de Lubac in his later writing: first, there is a clear emphasis on the distinction between inanimate objects and rational creatures. The latter exercise a subjective activity not proper to the former, and so an objective metaphysical approach, which otherwise suffices for inanimate objects, is inappropriate for rational creatures. The second theme is a nascent critique of obediential potency as the best means of conceiving rational nature’s openness to grace and glory. To be sure, de Lubac does not use the term, “obediential potency,” at this point in time. However, when he denies that motion is received by a rational creature in a purely passive manner because a rational creature is borne towards its end by an activity that originates within it, which is not purely passive, he criticizes the pure passivity at the heart of the doctrine of obediential potency.

In this same response to de Broglie, the perspective from which de Lubac will attempt to achieve his harmonization of Blondel and Rousselot, of Scotus and Thomas, and of the voluntarist and intellectualist understandings of natural desire, also emerges. De Lubac will base
such a harmonization on a metaphysics of *activity*, in which, in order to account for a subject’s motion and desire towards an end, it will be necessary to posit an active disposition in that subject towards the desired end. De Lubac appears to have come to this position at this time solely through his own personal reflections on Blondel. Nevertheless he stumbled, perhaps serendipitously, on the metaphysical doctrine of the Aegidian tradition, which from the time of Giles had emphasized the active disposition of human nature towards an end outside its reach. Yet it would be some time before de Lubac would make overt use of that tradition in his writing on natural desire and utilize its resources to achieve his end of reconciling the different traditions on natural desire. Nevertheless, from his earliest writings on natural desire, one can see a doctrine of natural desire emerging, which bears an important affinity with the Aegidian tradition.

While de Lubac was developing a doctrine of natural desire that was inspired by Blondel but similar to the Aegidian tradition, de Lubac and his confrères were eagerly awaiting the publication of Maréchal’s *Cahier V*, which they knew to have been completed but which was still awaiting publication.\(^35\) In the meantime, they sought as many writings of Maréchal as they could find. De Lubac thought that Maréchal’s idea of the intellect as a “*faculté de l’absolu*” was beneficial for the goal he had in mind,\(^36\) but was concerned that it was too intellectualist and therefore too mechanistic.\(^37\) Indeed, he did not hesitate to say that it was in danger of a certain “ontologism,”\(^38\) similar to that of Plotinus, because it seemed to compromise the mystery of the

\(^{35}\) Ibid., 2:349-50.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., 2:352.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 2:353.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., 2:353, 355.
fulfillment of man’s natural desire. While de Lubac wants to defend the idea of an active
tendency in human nature towards the vision of God, he nevertheless wants to do so while
preserving the unknowability of that end by natural reason.

De Lubac’s philosophical studies came to a close in the Spring of 1924. At this point in
his formation, de Lubac had yet to connect effectively the two strands of his reflection on natural
desire: that which concerned historical-theological sources, like Augustine, and that which
concerned the work of more recent thinkers, like Blondel, Rousselot, de Broglie, and Maréchal.
Nevertheless, de Lubac had begun to develop a consistent doctrine of natural desire in reflecting
on both, even if the two sets of reflections tended to remain separate.

The separation between de Lubac’s historical and theological studies on the question of
natural desire would gradually disappear over the course of his theological studies, which began
in the Fall of 1924. Although excused from most classes during his first year of theological
studies on account of illness (1924-25), de Lubac continued to reflect on questions related to
the supernatural. In April 1925, he sent some preliminary reflections to his confrères, including
Fessard, with whom he had earlier worked out some preliminary thoughts on the relationship
between the intellect and the will. In addition to a metaphysics of activity, de Lubac came to
reject the hypothesis of pure nature as a tool for establishing the gratuity of grace. Indeed, de
Lubac preferred not to make a distinction between nature and the supernatural that would suggest
that man was not ordered towards a supernatural end, but rather to distinguish more simply
between human nature with its end, and grace as the means of bringing human nature to its end.41

39 Ibid., 2:354-55.
40 Cf. ibid., 2:518.
41 Ibid., 2:543.
De Lubac’s continued reflections thus inched him closer and closer to the Aegidian tradition. Among all the branches of the Aegidian tradition, this brought him closest to Berti’s branch, for which human nature is in all hypotheses ordered towards the vision of God as its end, but for which nature lacks the grace needed to reach that vision.

Whatever de Lubac’s engagement with specific elements of the scholastic tradition may have been by the end of his first year of theological studies, he began to perceive a fundamental harmony between non-scholastic accounts of human nature’s motion towards its end. Reflecting on the treatment that Blondel had received from some of the faculty at the theologate, de Lubac remarked, “But why do people today consider authors like Blondel or Paliard [Blondel’s student], as ‘modern,’ in opposition to ‘traditional thought’? Rather, one should see in them the contemporary representatives of Catholic tradition…”⁴² Here, de Lubac shows the same tendency towards harmonizing scholars of different time periods as he had previously shown in relation to Thomas and Scotus. According to de Lubac, all of the thinkers in question bear witness to a common tradition.

De Lubac continued in his second year of theological studies (1925-26) to deepen his thought on the supernatural. He was guided in his further reflections by Joseph Huby, one of the professors at the theologate,⁴³ who was professor of Sacred Scripture, but had formerly been an

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⁴² Henri de Lubac, Letter 25 to Yves de Montcheuil, qtd. in ibid., 2:535. “Mais pourquoi oppose-t-on aujourd’hui des auteurs tels que Blondel ou Paliard, comme ‘modernes,’ à la ‘pensée traditionnelle’? Il faudrait plutôt voir en eux des représentants contemporains de la tradition catholique…” (emphasis in original). De Lubac thought that Paliard did a better job than Blondel of establishing a connection between immanent experience and exterior reality, but nevertheless saw Paliard’s work as but the outworking of principles laid down by Blondel. Cf. ibid., 561-62.

⁴³ Cf. Chantraine, Henri de Lubac, 2:677-78.
ardent supporter of Rousselot’s apologetics. In spite of suspicion for Rousseloism, Huby served as the official protector of one of the three “academies” at the theologate charged with preparing the scholastics for priestly life after formation, La pensée. When the Blondelian group arrived at Hastings from Jersey, and particularly after the move of the entire theologate from Hastings to Fourvière, this group was assumed into that more formal structure.

Huby, then, was in a position to exercise significant influence on de Lubac’s theological studies, both because of his sympathies with positive responses to immanentism, as well as his role in shepherding the Blondelian students at the theologate. In this capacity, Huby first suggested to de Lubac the project that would formally become Surnaturel. As de Lubac recounts,

[The supernatural] had just been treated by Fr. Guy de Broglie in very well known articles, which I had been able to consider as a sort of passageway between the theses of our manuals and the re-invention of traditional thought. It [i.e. the supernatural] was at the center of the reflection of the masters of whom I have spoken: Rousselot, Blondel, Maréchal; we were discovering it at the heart of all great Christian thought, be it that of such thinkers as a St. Augustine, a St. Thomas, a St. Bonaventure… We agreed that it was also at the heart of discussions with modern unbelief, that it formed the core of the problem of Christian humanism. Fr. Huby, following the line of reflection inaugurated by

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44 See above, chapter 4, section A. Chantraine notes (2:528) that Huby’s official position did not stop him from commenting on theological matters. For example, he once included a criticism of Cajetanians and Suarezians on the act of faith in the midst of his course on 1 Corinthians (2:538).

45 Cf. ibid., 2:677-78.

46 Ibid., 2:677.

47 Cf. ibid., 2:654-72.

48 Henri de Lubac, Mémoire sur l’occasion de mes écrits, 33. De Lubac dates the suggestion just after de Broglie’s first articles on the subject, which puts the suggestion most likely in the Fall of 1925. It cannot have occurred after December 1925, because by that time de Lubac was already conducting research into the question. Cf. Chantraine, Henri de Lubac, 2:564-65.
Rousselot, passionately enlisted me to verify if the doctrine of St. Thomas on this most important point was indeed that which the Thomist School, constituted around the sixteenth century, codified in the seventeenth, and which was emphasized more clearly than ever in the twentieth.49

From the start, *Surnaturel* was intended to be a work on Thomas and Thomism, a work of *ressourcement*, in which the doctrines of the later Thomist traditions would be compared and contrasted with the text of Thomas, in search of his authentic doctrine. The intended scope of this work encompassed the very scholastic period during which the Aegidian tradition gave rise to the branch most resembling de Lubac’s nascent thought.

Over the course of the next academic year (1925-26), de Lubac expanded his studies of Blondel and Blondel’s followers,50 adding studies in the scholastic tradition in support of his new project. In September 1925, de Lubac submitted the first installment of his material to Huby.51 He reaffirmed his goal of synthesizing modern and traditional thought thus: “My whole ambition for now it to make use of those notions which I have borrowed, especially from Blondel, to

49 Ibid. “[Le surnaturel] venait d’être traité par le Père Guy de Broglie dans des articles très remarqués, que j’ai pu considérer comme une forme de passage entre les thèses de nos manuels et la ré-invention de la pensée traditionnelle. Il était au centre de la réflexion des maîtres dont j’ai parlé: Rousselot, Blondel, Maréchal; nous le découvrions au cœur de toute grande pensée chrétienne, que ce fût celle d’un saint Augustin, d’un saint Thomas ou d’un saint Bonaventure… Nous constatons qu’il était de même au fond des discussions avec l’incroyance moderne, qu’il formait le noyau du problème de l’humanisme chrétien. Le Père Huby, poursuivant la ligne de réflexion inaugurée par Rousselot, m’avait vivement engagé à vérifier si la doctrine de saint Thomas sur ce point capital était bien celle que lui prétait l’école thomiste constituée vers le seizième siècle, codifiée au dix-septième et qui s’affirmait avec plus de relief que jamais au vingtième.” De Lubac’s reflections about de Broglie accurately recount his attitude towards de Broglie at the time. On the one hand, de Lubac remained critical of de Broglie’s work; on the other hand, he defended de Broglie against contemporary critics whom he thought misrepresented de Broglie’s thought. Cf. Chantraine, *Henri de Lubac*, 2:519, 551; Russo, *Henri de Lubac*, 131.

50 Cf. Ibid., 2:557-62.

51 Ibid., 2:558.
organize in a somewhat personal manner the givens of faith and of tradition."  

That December, in order to carry out his goal, he began to read Augustine’s works on nature and grace, as well as Thomas’s *Summa contra Gentiles*. Eight months later, in July 1926, he returned to his study of Maréchal, whose *Cahier V* had recently appeared. De Lubac found himself convinced by Maréchal’s use of the Kantian critique in Thomist epistemology, but there is no indication that de Lubac sanctioned the disdain for scholastic language, which Maréchal and Blondel had expressed to one another at this time. Rather, de Lubac intended to use scholasticism, as received through Rousselot and Maréchal, as a base from which to unite Blondel and traditional theology in a creative synthesis, rather than casting aside the centuries of scholastic discourse.

In the Fall of 1926, the theologate at Hastings moved to Fourvière in France, outside Lyons. Here de Lubac delivered his next formal conference on questions related to nature and the supernatural. The conference, dated February 28, 1927, is entitled, “The Natural Order.”

Granted that the end of man is the vision of God, how does one discuss the end of man from a philosophical perspective without naturalizing his supernatural end? In particular, how can one express questions of philosophy and ethics without posing a natural end for man apart from his

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53 Ibid., 2:564-65.

54 Ibid., 2:599.

55 Ibid., 2:583.

56 Ibid., 2:603.

57 Ibid., 2:583.

58 Ibid., 2:615-17.

59 Ibid., 2:685.
supernatural one, thereby “separating” speculation about human nature from the question of its supernatural destiny? Unfortunately, there is no transcript of the conference, but only these general questions that formed the outline for the talk. What one can say is that, in his talk, de Lubac re-ordered questions of natural philosophy and ethics around the question of man’s supernatural end, and so sought to give a more systematic account of human nature and human ethics in light of a doctrine of a natural desire for a supernatural end.

If the text of de Lubac’s conference on the natural order is missing, however, there are two unedited papers of about the same time in which de Lubac thinks through some of the consequences of his thoughts about the natural order. The first, “On miracles,” discusses how a miracle can be recognized as such in light of the fact that human nature is ordered to a supernatural end. De Lubac argues that it only happens by the light of faith. However, this does not mean that miracles are apologetically useless. Much to the contrary, since human nature of itself lacks “equilibrium” on account of its orientation towards a supernatural end, one would have to lie to himself in order to exclude antecedently the possibility of miracle by assuming that human nature was perfectly complete in itself without any possibility of receiving supernatural intervention. When God presents himself to an unfilled soul in the form of a miracle, it is an invitation to faith. However, since the miracle cannot be recognized as such without the simultaneous offer of faith, and since one cannot know whether God is offering the grace of faith

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60 This was two years before Franz Pelster would suggest that man cannot conceive of philosophical ethics and the natural law without positing a naturally achievable end for man’s natural desire, so the question does not appear to have been raised by that article. Cf. Franz Pelster, “Zur Frage nach der Möglichkeit einer ‘Beatitudo Naturalis’,” *Scholastik* 4 (1929): 255–260.

61 Ibid.


63 Ibid., 2:692.
at any given moment, one ought not to assume that a miracle will be enough to lead any given person to faith at any given time.\textsuperscript{64}

The second paper, without a title, discusses supernatural and meritorious actions.\textsuperscript{65} If the final end of human nature is the vision of God, how or to what extent can one avoid saying that every moral act ordered to man’s final end is meritorious? How ought one to account for acts which are naturally and morally good, but do not merit the vision of God? De Lubac’s solution is to distinguish between a “supernatural act,” one carried out under the influence of grace, and a “meritorious act,” one ordered ultimately to the possession of man’s final end.\textsuperscript{66} The two are not synonymous. A person may carry out many acts under the influence of grace which do not, as a series, lead him to his final end, because they are not undertaken with the motive of faith. In reality, no one reaches the vision of God without performing a supernatural and meritorious act, but the chain of actions in which a given supernatural act occurs may lead a person ultimately towards one final act by which, at the end of his life, he gains possession of his end, or to the opposite.\textsuperscript{67}

In short, de Lubac attempts in the second paper to solve a problem of moral philosophy, which lacks a natural end for man, by distinguishing two meanings of the word “order.” An act can be “ordered” to an end in an immediate sense; those who think that a natural end for man is necessary for moral philosophy think of an act being ordered in this manner. But an act can be “ordered” to an end in a remote sense; de Lubac suggests that this is the most proper sense in

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 2:693-94.
\textsuperscript{65} The contents of these untitled papers are summarized, though not transcribed, in ibid., 2:707-10.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 2:708.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 2:709.
which a moral act can be said to be “ordered.” Finally, de Lubac turns to the question of actions undertaken in a state of sin. If “order” is taken in the latter of these senses, then to the extent that an action is even naturally good, it represents a “re-ordering” of a person’s life towards his final end, without yet being supernatural or meritorious.68

In both of these papers, the hypothesis that man has a natural desire for a supernatural end, far from naturalizing that end, at most prepares man to receive that end supernaturally. Miracles do not demonstrate that man is called to a supernatural end; they simply prepare him to accept the grace of faith, insofar as they correspond with the imbalance that human nature experiences from its calling to an end that it does not know by natural reason. Nor does the fact that the end of nature is supernatural make all moral action, or even all supernatural action, meritorious. Not all of man’s moral actions participate in that chain of actions which could ultimately lead him to the possession of human nature’s supernatural end. Many naturally good actions may in fact prepare a person for the possession of that end. However, those natural actions only result in achieving that end if they are elevated by grace to be both supernatural and meritorious.

By the conclusion of his philosophical and theological formation, de Lubac was developing the consequences of a doctrine of a natural desire for a supernatural end. His purpose in doing so remained the same. As he would later write to his Jesuit Provincial, “My greatest preoccupation during my several years of theology has been particularly… to study Tradition,

68 Ibid.
with the most comprehensive method, so as to lose nothing of its authentic riches."\(^{69}\) While de Lubac had not yet completely worked out his doctrine of natural desire by this time, and had yet to find or develop all of the connections between it and the theological tradition, he had a definite course in mind at the start of his professional theological career. Following Huby’s suggestion, he was seeking a way of comparing the Thomist tradition with the text of Thomas. Inspired by Blondel, he was going to do so from the standpoint of the doctrine of an active, natural, specific desire for a supernatural end, whose *terminus* cannot be known by natural reason.

Having arrived at a position on natural desire that bore a remarkable similarity to that of the Aegidian tradition, de Lubac had also embraced the same conclusion as them concerning the lack of necessity for a hypothesis of pure nature, and the lack of necessity for a naturally achievable end in establishing a coherent system of moral philosophy, or even the gratuity of grace. For de Lubac, as for the Aegidians, the orientation of man’s nature towards a supernatural end does not posit an exigency in nature for grace, even if it does make it very difficult to conceive of any sense in which God would deny the means of man of achieving his only end. However, it does suggest a theological tension concerning the gratuity of a gift that it would be difficult to conceive of God withholding. De Lubac had yet to think through that difficulty entirely. However, it was first on the list of questions for him to address at the start of his professional career.

\(^{69}\) Henri de Lubac, *Letter to the Jesuit Provincial*, qtd. in ibid., 2:674. “Ma préoccupation la plus grande, pendant mes quelques années de théologie, a été précisément… d’étudier la Tradition, selon la méthode la plus compréhensive, afin de ne rien perdre de ses richesses authentiques.”
B. Natural Desire in de Lubac’s Professional Career before *Surnaturel* (1930-1945)

1. “Deux Augustiniens fourvoyés” (1931)

In 1931, while debates about natural desire were raging amidst Thomists, de Lubac published his first contribution to the question: an historical study on Baius and Jansen. Largely overlooked because of the historical nature of the subject matter, the two parts of this article would form the foundation upon which the edifice of *Surnaturel* was to be built.

The first part of de Lubac’s study concerned Michael Baius. Augustine and Baius, de Lubac observes, start from a common set of premises: in every hypothesis, man requires the help of God to reach his final end. Consequently, a state of pure nature, in which man were created

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71 Henri de Lubac, *Mémoire sur l’occasion de mes écrits*, 34. Perhaps with an ailing memory, de Lubac recalled towards the end of his life that the two articles had been reproduced “unchanged” in the first three chapters of *Surnaturel*. That is not entirely accurate. A close comparison of the articles with the initial chapters of *Surnaturel* reveals numerous emendations, and even several large insertions to the text of *Surnaturel*. However, the insertions for the most part add details, support, and clarification to the central argument of the text, without altering it substantially.

The changes are so numerous that it would be difficult to list them all here. These are some of the largest: “Depuis le temps… théoriques du pharisaïsme.” (20-21, nearly a page); “Nous pouvons le remarquer…l’esprit judaïque.” (25-26, an entire page); “Or – chose trop peu… ni même de saint Thomas.” (41-42); “Quand l’homme déchoit… la conscience individuelle.” (44-45); “Le dominicain Pierre de Soto… et de la ‘grâce déterminante’…” (46-47); “La question a été… de tirer au clair.” (49, an entire paragraph); “Ce texte du *De civitate dei*… Pareillement dans le *De correptione et gratia*…” (51-52); “L’amour de la justice… parler de felix culpa.” (52); “Cet attrait… que méconnaît Jansénius.” (54); “Leporcq n’est pas… retenir de son explication. En effet…” (57-59, two entire pages); “On peut dire… Dans ces conditions…” (60-61, an entire page); “Les Confessions… centre de perspective.” (66); “Remarquons toutefois… au moins quelque peu” (67-68); “Il savait la Transcendance… entre la nature et la grâce” (69); “Mais une métaphore… non aux résistances du vouloir.” (71-74, four entire pages); “On n’est pas janséniste… steriliter boni.” (75); “…formuée en thèses explicites… très différente de la nôtre” (78); “C’est un principe universel… C’est qu’en effet…” (80-81). The entire “note” on pp. 82-85 has also been added.

At times the insertions represent the moving of material from the footnotes of the article to the body of the text of *Surnaturel*. At other times, they represent original compositions. This appears to be a consistent pattern in de Lubac’s composition of *Surnaturel*.

with an end that he could achieve without God’s help, would be “inconceivable.” At this point, Baius departs from Augustine. For Augustine, man stands humble before God because he can never require from God the grace that would lead him to his final end; for Baius, however, man’s need for grace makes that grace due nature provided that man observes the natural law. In this sense, Baianism bears an intrinsic relationship with Pelagianism, because it makes the achievement of man’s final end due to nature. Moreover, however much the Church may have overcome Pelagianism properly speaking, the spirit of Baianism lives on among theologians in the tendency to place man’s end within his reach. Such a tendency closes human nature to the immanent experience of the transcendent, and so isolates man from God.

Baius’s error, de Lubac argues, was the error of a positivism, which emphasized the letter of Augustine’s text to the expense of the spirit, and anachronistically read all manner of later concerns into the letter, thus missing the spirit. Under the influence of a positivist age, “Baius… lost the understanding of the mystery of grace.” For Baius, to the extent that grace is necessary for fallen man, it is a completely extrinsic condition, having nothing to do with the substance of a meritorious act. Baius thus reduces all merit to merely human merit, all sense

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73 Ibid., 425-26; Surnaturel, 15.
74 Ibid., 426-27; Surnaturel, 16.
75 Ibid., 427-27; Surnaturel, 17-18.
76 Ibid., 429; Surnaturel, 18-19.
77 Ibid., 431-32; Surnaturel, 22-24.
78 Ibid., 433; Surnaturel, 24. “Baius… a perdu l’intelligence du mystère de la grâce.”
79 Ibid., 434; Surnaturel, 26.
80 Ibid.; Surnaturel, 27.
of man’s “exaltation” to his “natural condition,” and Augustine’s distinction between the soul’s natural and supernatural formation to a merely natural formation.

Augustine and Baius therefore exhibit two contrary tendencies. “Saint Augustine was accustomed to show the completion of nature in its supernaturalization. Baius, on the other hand, naturalizes the supernatural.” Augustine, as a consequence, is essentially a mystic, while Baius is essentially a naturalist. In confirmation of this dichotomy, de Lubac turns towards Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition. Bellelli, de Lubac observes, was correct to argue that Baius reduced everything in man to a “purely natural state,” while Augustine rejected such a possibility. This earned Bellelli criticism for denying the possibility of pure nature, as though his doctrine were no different from that of Baius. In fact, Berti rightly defended Bellelli, because while Bellelli and Berti both denied the possibility of pure nature in order to preserve the supernatural character of nature’s destiny, Baius (and later Jansen) denied it in order to form an anthropology in which all of human existence is effectively carried out in a state of pure nature.

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81 Ibid., 435n24. In Surnaturel, the main point of this footnote has been worked into the body of the text of p. 28.

82 Cf. ibid., 438. Here, the text distinguishes between a “natural/essential” formation of the soul and a “natural/spiritual” formation of the soul. In Surnaturel, however, the latter distinction has been emended to read “supernatural/spiritual” (31). Given the context of the passage, the text from Surnaturel seems simply to correct a typo rather than add any substantial modification to the thought of the earlier article.

83 Ibid., 439; Surnaturel, 32. “Saint Augustin montrait l’achèvement de la nature dans sa surnaturalisation. Baius, lui, naturalise le surnaturel.”

84 Ibid.

85 Here de Lubac references Charles Boyer, “Dieu pouvait-il créer l’homme dans l’état d’ignorance et de difficulté? Étude de quelques textes augustiniens,” Gregorianum 11 (1930): 32-57. This reference has been removed from Surnaturel. It does not concern the Aegidian tradition, as the title might suggest, but rather several texts drawn directly from the text of Augustine.

86 Ibid., 440; Surnaturel, 33-34.

87 Ibid., 440n38. The substance of this note has been worked into the body of the text of Surnaturel, 33-34.
In the second part of the article, de Lubac suggests that Cornelius Jansen did not fall into the same trap as Baius in making the vision of God due the merits of natural actions, but he did fall into a similar trap when he made the grace needed to achieve the vision of God due human nature. Jansen’s error was to treat Augustine’s distinction from De correptione et gratia between *adiutorium sine quo non* and the *adiutorium quo* as though it described the difference between the grace that Adam had and the grace that man now has after the Fall. This would mean that Adam had grace at his natural disposal, which he used wrongly (sufficient grace, *adiutorium sine quo non*), whereas postlapsarian wills are commanded by a grace that cannot but be used rightly (efficacious grace, *adiutorium quo*). In reality, we and Adam stand in the same dependence on grace. The only difference is that, *ex post facto*, we can describe Adam’s grace differently than ours because we know that he did sin, while we know that the saints in heaven

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88 Ibid., 516-17; *Surnaturel*, 43-44.

89 Ibid., 520-21; *Surnaturel*, 48-49. Cf. Augustine, *De correptione et gratia* 12.34 (PL 44.936-37). “Itemque ipsa adiutoria distinguenda sunt. Aliud est adiutorium sine quo aliquid non fit, et aliud est adiutorium quo aliquid fit. Nam sine alimento non possumus vivere, nec tamen cum adfuerint alimento, eis fit ut vivat qui mori voluerit. Ergo adiutorium alimentorum est sine quo non fit, non quo fit ut vivamus. At vero beatitudo quam non habet homo, cum data fuerint, continuo fit beatus. Adiutorium est enim non solum sine quo non fit, verum etiam quo fit praeter quod datur. Quapropter hoc adiutorium et quo fit est, et sine quo non fit: quia et si data fuerit homini beatitudo, continuo fit beatus; et si data numquam fuerit, numquam erit. Alimenta vero non consequenter faciant ut homo vivat; sed tamen sine illis non potest vivere. Primo itaque homini, qui in eo bono quo factus fuerat recte acceperat posse non peccare, posse non mori, posse ipsum bonum non deserere, datum est adiutorium perseverantiae, non quo fieret ut perseveraret, sed sine quo per liberum arbitrium perseverare non posset. Nunc vero sanctis in regnum Dei per gratiam Dei praeestinationis, non tale adiutorium perseverantiae datur, sed tale ut eis perseverantia ipsa donetur: non solum ut sine isto dono perseverantes esse non possint, verum etiam ut per hoc donum non nisi perseverantes sint. Non solum enim dixit: Sine me nihil potestis facere, verum etiam dixit: Non vos me elegistis; sed ego elegi vos, et posui vos, ut eatis, et fructum afferatis, et fructus vester maneant. Quibus verbis eis non solum iustitiam, verum etiam in illa perseverantiam se dedisse monstravit. Christo enim sic eos ponente ut eant, et fructum afferant, et fructus eorum maneant, quis audeat dicere: Non manebit? quis audeat dicere: Forsitan non manebit? Sine potentiis enim non dixit Dei: sed vocatio eorum qui secundum propositum vocati sunt. Pro his igitur interpellante Christo ne deficiat fides eorum, sine dubio non deficiat usque in finem: ac per hoc perseverabit usque in finem, nec eam nisi manentem vitae huius inveniet finis.”

90 Ibid., 524-25; *Surnaturel*, 53-54.
have persevered.\textsuperscript{91} The difference lies in an extrinsic description of what has happened, not an intrinsic description of what was offered.\textsuperscript{92}

In effect, de Lubac applies the same juxtaposition between Augustine and Jansen as he had applied to Augustine and Plotinus a decade earlier, as well as to Blondel and Rousselot/Maréchal only a few years prior. Augustine and Blondel were observing human nature analytically from the standpoint of their experience; Plotinus, Rousselot, Maréchal and Jansen all attempted to give a synthetic account from first principles.\textsuperscript{93} The result in Plotinus (and to a lesser extent Rousselot and Maréchal), was the destruction of the distinction between the intellect and its ultimate perfection in the vision of God through a certain degree of ontologism. The result in Jansen, focused as he was on the will, was the destruction either of the supernatural character of the vision of God before the Fall,\textsuperscript{94} or of man’s freedom in achieving it after the Fall.\textsuperscript{95}

De Lubac concludes his 1931 article with a brief discourse on theological methodology. The synthetic method, with its hypothesis of pure nature, can be useful,\textsuperscript{96} but it has the danger of leading to unnecessary dichotomies in theological anthropology. The chief example of this is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 522, 526; \textit{Surnaturel}, 49-50, 56-57. In \textit{Surnaturel}, there is a lengthy list of authors who support this understanding of Augustine (57-59).
\item \textsuperscript{92} Cf. Ibid., 523; \textit{Surnaturel}, 52. De Lubac also states that the offer of grace to postlapsarian man includes the grace to heal him from sin, a grace of which Adam had no need.
\item \textsuperscript{93} De Lubac notes this tendency with respect to Jansenius at ibid., 531-32; \textit{Surnaturel}, 66-67.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 533; \textit{Surnaturel}, 68-69.
\item \textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 535; \textit{Surnaturel}, 75-76. \textit{Surnaturel} adds a long defense of de Lubac’s conclusion (71-75).
\item \textsuperscript{96} Ibid., 536; \textit{Surnaturel}, 76-77.
\end{itemize}
when theologians make an unnecessary dichotomy between nature taken in the abstract and the supernatural taken in the abstract, when they should be focusing on the relationship between fallen humanity in the concrete and the grace which establishes man’s freedom in the concrete.97 A subjective, analytic approach to human nature keeps the relationship between sin and grace intact, as well as nature’s inherent relationship to the supernatural. It thereby prevents a return to the pride of Adam such as Baius and Jansen envisaged, wherein man may demand grace and glory from God.98

De Lubac thus unites several tendencies in his previous writings. First, he continues to maintain, as he had for a decade, the doctrine of an active, specific, natural desire for the vision of God, whose end is nevertheless not known naturally to man. He had maintained this doctrine unchanged for a decade. For the first time in print, however, he unites here his doctrine of natural desire, which had been inspired by Blondel, to the doctrine of Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition. Second, de Lubac carefully distinguishes Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition from Baius and Jansen. Although the Aegidians, together with Baius and Jansen, denied the reasonableness of a hypothesis of pure nature, the Aegidians did so from a subjective, humble, analytic, and authentically Augustinian perspective, in which they denied nature’s self-sufficiency. Thus the Aegidians affirmed nature’s need, in all states and hypotheses, for grace. Baius and Jansen, on the other hand, denied pure nature from an objective, synthetic, and un-Augustinian perspective. Their denial of pure nature masked a doctrine of nature that was

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97 Ibid., 537-39; Surnaturel, 78-81.
98 Ibid., 539; Surnaturel, 80-81.
completely self-sufficient, and for which grace was at most (in Jansen, at least) nature’s instrument.

These reflections brought de Lubac ultimately to a final set of reflections on the usefulness of a hypothesis of pure nature. Continuing to emphasize the importance of subjective metaphysics, de Lubac refused to consider the consequences of objective metaphysics without mentioning their subjective consequences. Pure nature is dangerous not only because it engenders mistaken theses about the relationship between grace and free will, but also—and more importantly—because it destroys that fundamental humility upon which Augustine, as well as Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition, based their subjective, analytical reflections.

2. “Remarques sur l’histoire du mot ‘Surnaturel’” (1934)

At the conclusion of de Lubac’s first publication on the natural desire, he hints at a forthcoming publication, whose purpose is to study the history and theology of the term, “supernatural.” 99 That publication appeared in 1934, 100 and was extremely influential in the composition of Surnaturel. Although Karl Neufeld and Michel Sales suggest that this second publication was for the most part only incorporated into the third part of Surnaturel, which discusses the etymological and theological history of key terms like “supernatural,” and

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99 Ibid., 537. “Corrélatifs du mot 'nature', les mots même de surnaturel et de grâce ont une histoire étonnamment complexe.”

“superadded,” a closer study of the text, as shall be indicated below, reveals that this article also undergirded de Lubac’s thinking about pure nature in the fifth and sixth chapters of the first part of *Surnaturel*.

In his 1934 article, de Lubac claims that the word, “supernatural,” has a twofold history. In the Greek fathers, that which is ὑπέρ φύσιν is above the normal course of nature, which is to say God himself. In the Latin fathers, that which is *supernaturalis* is extraordinary within the course of nature, a miracle. For both the Greek and the Latin fathers, the end of man in the vision of God could not be called “supernatural” in any proper sense. However, more recent theologians began to associate the word “supernatural” with the concept of finality, an association which it had never previously enjoyed. In order to do so, they blended the two previous senses of the word: God (in the Greek sense), was considered as an end for man, to which man is brought by an extraordinary power (in the Latin sense). Alluding to material from his 1931 article, de Lubac explains that the development of an understanding of nature, in

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101 Karl Neufeld and Michel Sales, “Entwicklung des Werkes ‘Surnaturel,’ 1946,” in *Bibliographie Henri de Lubac S.J. (1925-1974)* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1974), 64. Neufeld and Sales rightly note that, “…diese texte sind für die Buchveröffentlichung beträchtlich umgearbeitet und erweitert worden.” The parts of the text that have been retained in the third part of *Surnaturel* can be found scattered about the first two chapters of that part (325-373), and concentrated in the fourth (395-428). However, Neufeld and Sales do not mention the fact that some of the reworking led to the placement of material in other parts of *Surnaturel*.

102 The significance of this fact cannot be overlooked, since those parts of the article that undergird de Lubac’s later thinking on pure nature also mention explicitly his understanding of his own place in early twentieth century debates on natural desire, references which were later removed or obscured in *Surnaturel*.

103 Ibid., 232-33; *Surnaturel*, 348-49.

104 Ibid., 233; cf. *Surnaturel*, 397. Here de Lubac expands his reflections in *Surnaturel* to include the categories of supra naturam, praeter naturam, and contra naturam.

105 Ibid., 247.

106 Ibid., 242-43; *Surnaturel*, 423-26. On p. 246 of the article, de Lubac cites Francis de Sylvestris Ferrariensis as one of the first to exhibit this tendency. This reference is absent in *Surnaturel*.

107 Ibid., 247; *Surnaturel*, 424
which nature was seen as complete in itself apart from any end above its powers, enabled this transition of thought.\textsuperscript{108}

Unfortunately, the move away from the patristic understanding of the supernatural in the modern period caused two fundamental and apologetic problems. First, it placed the vision of God, as supernatural in the Greek sense, completely outside the reach of human nature.\textsuperscript{109} Second, it enabled rationalist thinkers to conceive of the means of coming to the vision of God (grace, Revelation, etc.) as supernatural in the Latin sense. The result was that the vision of God came to be thought of as a rare and extraordinary intervention in the realm of nature, in which only the superstitious believe.\textsuperscript{110} Although de Lubac does not say so in the body of his text, he mentions in a long footnote that the main contemporary proponent of such an idea is Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange.\textsuperscript{111}

Garrigou-Lagrange, de Lubac observes, had effectively accused Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition of Baianism for failing to distinguish between a natural order with a naturally achievable end, and a supernatural order with a supernaturally achievable end.\textsuperscript{112} However, de Lubac argues that he is mistaken in doing so. Building upon his previous work, in which de Lubac had carefully distinguished Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition from Baius and Jansen, here de Lubac adds an exegetical argument to his theological argument: not only had

\textsuperscript{108} Ibid., 239; \textit{Surnaturel}, 414-15.

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid., 238; \textit{Surnaturel}, 414.

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 240-41; \textit{Surnaturel}, 417.

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 248n2. This footnote has been relocated in \textit{Surnaturel} to de Lubac’s discussion of pure nature immediately after the recension of his first articles on Baius and Jansenius. Cf. \textit{Surnaturel}, 120n4.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid. The reference to the Aegidian tradition has been moved to the discussion of pure nature in \textit{Surnaturel}, 101n1, but has been separated from the reference to Garrigou-Lagrange.
Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition avoided the pitfalls of Jansenism, but in doing so it gave the authentic interpretation of Thomas Aquinas.\textsuperscript{113} Quoting a text of Robert Bellarmine, which de Lubac takes as a summary of the scholastic tradition, de Lubac notes that for Albert, Bonaventure, Thomas, and Scotus, the vision of God “is natural with respect to desire, but not with respect to achievement.”\textsuperscript{114} In light of de Lubac’s previous article about the latent naturalism of Baius and Jansen, the implicit conclusion is clear: Garrigou-Lagrange is far closer to Baius and Jansen than Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition, because his conception of nature is objectively closed to the vision of God through a lack of subjective humility.

Examining Garrigou-Lagrange’s argument in detail, de Lubac claims that it depends upon three problematic methodological premises. The first is the use of a synthetic, objective method, rather than an analytic and subjective method.\textsuperscript{115} Following in the line of Elter and Doucet, de Lubac notes that Thomas, as well as his “best disciples,” had preferred the analytic and subjective method.\textsuperscript{116} The transition to a synthetic and objective method gave rise to the theory of nature that closed it off to grace.\textsuperscript{117} With nature thus closed off to grace, people had to find another way of accounting for its receptivity to grace, and so they posited it in obediential

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid.\textsuperscript{113}
\item \textsuperscript{114} Robert Bellarmine, \textit{De gratia primi hominis} 1.4, in \textit{Opera omnia}, vol. 5, ed. Justin Fèvre (Paris: Vivès, 1873), 191, ctd. in ibid.; \textit{Surnaturel}, 114. “Respondeo beatitudinem finem hominis naturalem esse quoad appetitum, non quoad consecutionem.”
\item \textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 350. In \textit{Surnaturel}, 137, de Lubac accuses Cajetan of being the first to break substantially with Thomas.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 351. For Doucet, see 356n3; for Elter, see 363n2. The two are referenced together in \textit{Surnaturel}, 137n6.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 352. For de Lubac a similar transition of method is behind changes in perspective on the Eucharist. Cf. Henri de Lubac, \textit{Corpus mysticum: L’Eucharistie et l’Église au Moyen Âge} (Paris: Aubier, 1948), 271.
\end{itemize}
potency and *rationes seminales* of the second degree.\textsuperscript{118} Locating himself expressly in the tradition of Martin, Laporta, Roland-Gosselin, Charlier, and Motte, all of whom had criticized the use of obediential potency to account for nature’s receptivity to grace and glory, de Lubac argues that such an idea, which even Étienne Gilson had placed as a crowning achievement of the medieval synthesis was “anachronistic.”\textsuperscript{119} In contemporary theology, de Lubac observes, the main proponent of such a “closed” understanding of nature is Ambroise Gardeil.\textsuperscript{120} Gardeil, wrongly associating the view he opposes with Scotism, impugns Thomism when he insists that a natural desire must have a naturally achievable end.\textsuperscript{121}

The second cause of Garrigou-Lagrange’s doctrine of nature, according to de Lubac, follows from the first. Once a natural end for nature has been distinguished from a supernatural end, and consequently a natural order from a supernatural order, the translation from one to the other order is no longer conceived of simply as the perfection of nature in the achievement of its end, but rather as the translation from one “state” or “order” of nature to another.\textsuperscript{122} Hence, the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 353. De Lubac nowhere references Darmet’s thesis on *rationes seminales* of the second degree, noted above in chapter four, which was published in the same year as this article. This omission may perhaps be explained by the supposition that Darmet’s thesis had not appeared in print yet when the article went to press. All the same, de Lubac does reference Darmet in *Surnaturel*, 138n3.
\item \textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 356n2. I have not found a corresponding criticism of Gilson in *Surnaturel*.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 357nn1-2.
\item \textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 357n1. The footnote has been shortened and combined with the above mentioned criticism of Garrigou-Lagrange in *Surnaturel*, 120n4. The reference to rejecting Thomas with Scotus has been removed.
\item \textsuperscript{122} Ibid., 358. “Chez un saint Thomas, la finalité tient une place essentielle dans l'étude et la définition de tout être; mais à mesure que, dans les systèmes postérieurs, on la considéra comme plus extrinsèque, elle s'effaça de l'horizon philosophique. Il en résulta que, lorsqu'on se mit à étudier à part la vision de Dieu avec tout l'ordre qui s'y rapporte, on la considéra beaucoup moins dynamiquement, comme fin dernière, que statiquement, comme un état. On s'occupa moins de la destinée surnaturelle, que de l'état surnaturel; moins de l'appel éventuel à la vision, que de l'infusion de la grâce. Ou plutôt,--et cela surtout dans une période postérieure,--on traita le premier de ces problèmes sous les espèces due second. L'on eut ainsi moins à consulter les anciens traités sur la bénédiction, que ceux sur la justice originelle, et sans même y prendre garde, on répeta de l élévation à l'ordre surnaturel ce que ces traités enseignaient de l élévation à l'état surnaturel.” (emphasis in original)
\end{itemize}
vision of God becomes something “superadded” to nature rather than its ultimate end. At that point, the delicate balance that Thomas had forged between nature and its end is upset, and one can subsequently begin to ask questions about God withholding nature’s only end *de potentia absoluta*.124

The third cause, which de Lubac discusses more briefly, follows from the second: where previous theologians spoke of the supernatural as surpassing the “forces” of nature, more recent theologians, conceiving of the supernatural as a separate order from nature, consider it as surpassing the “exigencies” of nature.125 Such considerations predominated only after Baius placed the gratuity of grace in question, and stand at the heart of Suárez’s doctrine of natural desire.126

As a remedy to the three problems he perceives in Garrigou-Lagrange’s methodology, de Lubac returns to his original observation that the modern tendency towards associating nature with a naturally achievable end has led to an apologetic problem: the supernatural, rather than rightly being perceived as the end of man’s nature, appears to the world at large as a purely arbitrary “fact,” bearing no intrinsic connection to man’s experience of his own nature. It is “abnormal,” just like any other miracle.127 By thus abnormalizing the supernatural, theology

123 Ibid., 359; *Surnaturel*, 394.

124 Ibid., 360; *Surnaturel*, 286.

125 Ibid., 361; *Surnaturel*, 428. “Le miracle était dit surnaturel en ce sens surtout qu’il était un effet dépassant les *forces* de la nature. Les dons reçus par Adam, surtout en ce sens qu’ils mettaient en lui quelque chose de supérieur à son *essence*. Mais voici qu’à partir de Baius on se trouva dans la nécessité d’insister davantage sur le caractère qu’offre tout l’ordre de la grâce et de la gloire d’être au-dessus des *exigences* de la nature humaine.” (emphasis in original)

126 Ibid.

127 Ibid., 363; *Surnaturel*, 428.
became the unwitting accomplice of the advance of secularism. “The queen of the sciences became a ‘separated theology’, an unknowing accomplice of separated philosophy and of secularism.”  

The time has come to “liberate” the supernatural from its modern distortions.

Nevertheless, de Lubac acknowledges that a problem arises in returning to what he considers to be the earlier doctrine, in which the end of human nature is the vision of God. Some theologians argue that the Church has already condemned the thesis that nature could not be created without the vision of God as its end, and thus has formally taught that theologians must affirm the possibility of a state of pure nature. 

The source of the difficulty is the fifty-fifth proposition condemned in relation to Baius: “God could not have created such a man from the beginning as is now born.” However, de Lubac argues, one must carefully distinguish three senses of “pure nature” in this condemnation: “nature not destined to a supernatural end;… nature not yet in possession of grace or a supernatural state; finally, nature not exempted from concupiscence by the gift of integrity.”

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128 364. “La reine des sciences devint une ‘théologie séparée’, complice inconsciente de la philosophie séparée et du laïcisme.” This text which was not retained in Surnaturel, is included in Henri de Lubac, Catholicisme: les aspects sociaux du dogme (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1938), 270. “Un recul suffisant ne nous permet-il pas aussi de voir aujourd’hui que la ‘philosophie séparée’ de ces derniers siècles a trouvé son corrélatif en même temps que son antagoniste dans une ‘théologie séparée’?”


130 Ibid., 367.

131 DH 1955, ctd. in ibid., 367; Surnaturel, 104. “Deus non potuisset ab initio talem creare hominem, qualis nune nascitur.”

132 De Lubac, “Remarques sur l’histoire du mot ‘surnaturel’,” 367. “L’expression de ‘pure nature’ va ainsi désigner successivement trois choses: la nature non destinée à une fin surnaturelle; puis, la nature non encore en possession de la grâce ou de l’état surnaturel; enfin, la nature non exemptée de la concupiscence par le don d’intégrité.”
requires that one affirm the possibility that man could be created without the gift of original justice; it says nothing about needing to affirm a natural end for man. 133 Nothing thus stands in the way of reinventing the nature of “spirit” and of “theology” for the present age. 134 Indeed, de Lubac notes, the work has already begun in Blondel, Sestili, Rousselot and Maréchal. 135 What remains is to complete the work that they have already begun.

In this second article, de Lubac develops the thought of his first article in four primary ways. First and foremost, for the first time he explicitly connects his own reflections on natural desire, Blondel, and Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition with wider, ongoing debates about natural desire among contemporary Thomists. In doing so, he explicitly opposes the work of Garrigou-Lagrange and Gardeil, and explicitly endorses the work of Blondel, Sestili, Rousselot, Maréchal, Martin, Laporta, Roland-Gosselin, Charlier, and Motte. Just as de Lubac’s fundamental predilection for a doctrine of a natural desire for the vision of God placed him on one side of the ongoing early twentieth century debate, here de Lubac provides the first evidence of how he perceives his own work in the context of the Thomism of his day. However, one can also observe that de Lubac does not embrace every aspect of the neo-Aegidianism with which he begins to associate himself; he does nothing to temper his earlier concerns about certain elements of Rousselot and Maréchal.

In addition to associating his doctrine of natural desire with that of his contemporary Thomists, de Lubac for the first time associates his reflections on Baius and Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition with claims about an authentic reading of Thomas Aquinas. Progressing in the

133 Ibid., 367-68.
134 Ibid., 369.
135 Ibid., 369n1.
plan outlined by Huby of evaluating later scholastic developments in light of the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas, de Lubac expressly claims that Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition interpreted Thomas authentically, and that Berti’s authentic interpretation can be contrasted both with Baianism, in which the vision of God is due man, as well as with the Thomist traditions expressed by Gardeil and Garrigou-Lagrange (i.e. Cajetanianism), in which some other, natural end is due man. At the bottom of a footnote, de Lubac even goes so far as to hint at a nascent criticism of other branches of the Aegidian tradition. He criticizes Sestili, who followed Michael Paludanus, for his affirmation of the possibility of a natural end for man. 136 Thus de Lubac indicates not just a marked preference for the Aegidian tradition broadly speaking, but even an acceptance of one branch of that tradition as the authentic interpretation of Thomas to the exclusion of others.

Third, de Lubac for the first time expressly associates the developments that led to contemporary Cajetanianism, Suarezianism, and other forms of Aegidianism with the general approach to man in the work of Baius. De Lubac also accuses those traditions of being responsible for the advent of modern secularism. In this regard, he associates a doctrine of a separated supernatural order with the practice of a separated theology, in which the supernatural appears for all intents and purposes as completely unconnected with the ordinary course of human life. Responsibility for such an apologetic deficiency lies, for de Lubac, with those who upset the balance between nature and the vision of God evident in Thomas, and in later Thomists like those of Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition.

136 Ibid., 367n1.
Fourth and finally, de Lubac discusses previous ecclesial pronouncements on the subject of the vision of God; he is very careful to establish what precisely was condemned in the doctrine of Baius, and so to acknowledge the possibility of man’s being created without original justice. However, he is not aware of any censure of the position in which a “natural” end for man is denied.

However, de Lubac’s thought at this period was also subject to four main difficulties. The first is that de Lubac appears not to have read very widely in the early thirteenth century. Although he references theologians like Albert and Bonaventure, he does not show much awareness for the place that obediential potency held in Bonaventure’s writing. De Lubac’s thoughts about this subject are guided more by his engagement with Martin, Laporta, Roland-Gosselin, Charlier, and Motte, all of whom had understand Thomas as teaching that man is naturally *capax dei*, without delving into the immediate historical context of Thomas’s doctrine. Instead, de Lubac assumes that the concept was a later scholastic development, and that its application to Thomas was “anachronistic.” \(^{137}\) Thus, while de Lubac rightly perceives the lack of emphasis that Thomas places on obediential potency, he draws an inaccurate and overly broad conclusion about the historical origin of that term.

Second, while de Lubac references important representatives of the Aegidian tradition, he is unaware of two key doctrines of Giles of Rome that stand at the base of that tradition. First is the importance of obediential potency. As seen in chapter two, Giles had to adopt a doctrine of obediential potency because he thought that Thomas’s doctrine of nature’s complete passivity in the reception of grace was inadequate. De Lubac seems unaware of the difference between Giles

\(^{137}\) Ibid., 356n2.
and Thomas on this point. Likewise, de Lubac criticizes the view in which the distinction between what God can do *de potentia absoluta* and what he can do *de potentia ordinata* is used to ground the possibility of God’s refusal of the gifts of grace and glory.\(^{138}\) Yet Giles used precisely this distinction to affirm the possibility that God might create man without original justice. Likewise, Berti used it to affirm that God might create man without the offer of grace.

Third, insofar as de Lubac expressly follows Elter and Doucet on the affirmation that there was a common doctrine of a natural desire for the vision of God among a majority of scholastic thinkers, he also fails with them to distinguish between a Scotist way of considering that desire as *passive*, and an Aegidian way of considering that desire as *active*. De Lubac clearly shows a preference for the Aegidian way, but for this very reason it would seem inconsistent to claim that the existence of Scotists, who hold a different conception of nature desire, is evidence of the transmission of a *common* doctrine.

Fourth and finally, while de Lubac suggests that there is a common attitude about man in the works of Baius, Cajetanians, Suarezians, and non-Bertian Aegidians, and while de Lubac blames this attitude for the rise of modern secularism, he does not provide a more precise account of any development of ideas that led *directly* to the advent of secularism. For it is one thing to say that the hypothesis of a natural end for man leads to secularism, and another thing to say that it makes it hard to overcome secularism. Although de Lubac suggests that certain attitudes found in the works of Baius, Jansen, Cajetanians, Suarezians, and non-Bertian Aegidians led directly to secularism, de Lubac does not show that any secular thinker intentionally relied upon any scholastic advocate of the pure nature hypothesis. Absent positive

\(^{138}\) Ibid., 360; *Surnaturel*, 286.
evidence of any direct influence of any of specific scholastics on specific secularists, de Lubac can be said to have provided a case for the apologetic failure of Christians to oppose secularism, but not for the positive influence of scholastic advocates of pure nature on modern secularists.

3. “Esprit et Liberté dans la tradition” (1939)

As if responding to the cri d’armes that he had issued at the end of his 1934 article, de Lubac next published a two-part article on “Spirit and Freedom in the Theological Tradition” in 1939. This text was included as chapters one to three of the second part of *Surnaturel*, and de Lubac’s edited it only minimally. The immediate context of this article was in response to an article published by Jacques Maritain that same year in the French Dominican journal, *Revue Thomiste*. Noting that Maritain follows the Thomistic commentator, John of St. Thomas, de Lubac suggests that his own purpose is to oppose the idea, found in the work of John of St. Thomas and of Maritain, that freedom should be associated with peccability (the ability to sin). Notwithstanding the seeming theological character of such a proposal, de Lubac states

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140 The text has been left largely unchanged in *Surnaturel* save for several insertions, the vast majority of which are about a paragraph long. Passing over smaller emendations and insertions, I have noted the following larger additions: “Dieu ne peut...libre en perfection” (194); “Au livre second...‘...ipse qui Deus.’” (195-96); “On sait que l’abbé...toute la tradition chrétienne.” (200-01); “L’abbé Rupert...discuter avec Dieu?” (204-05); “Comme le disait...‘...nihil est nisi Deus’.” (207); “La puissance de pécher...En attendant...” (225); “Tout être créé...nous le garantir. Mais...” (227); “L’esprit, même considéré...du monde être méritoire.” (247-48); “...et Duns Scot dira de même...mettre en relief.” (252-53); “...indice de la tendance...question d’accent.” (253-54); “En d’autres termes...bétitude de cet esprit.” (255-56); “Aucune créature, selon lui...établir son principe...” (256-58).


142 For de Lubac’s reference to John of St. Thomas, see “Esprit et Liberté,” 192; *Surnaturel*, 235. For de Lubac’s reference to Maritain, see “Esprit et Liberté,” 207n57; *Surnaturel*, 259n5. De Lubac summarizes the general tendency that he later identifies with John of St. Thomas and Maritain in “Esprit et Liberté,” 121; *Surnaturel*, 187.
that his purpose is “to clarify a point of history” concerning the common doctrine of freedom among theologians before Thomas, as well as the reception of that doctrine in Thomas’s work, rather than to make any theological argument.143

The bulk of de Lubac’s argument discusses the meaning of freedom in various historical figures from the turn of the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth centuries: Anselm of Canterbury,144 Bernard of Clairvaux,145 the writers of books of Sentences,146 William of Auvergne,147 Robert Grosseteste and the early Franciscan masters,148 Bonaventure,149 Pierre Jean Olivi,150 and Albert the Great.151 This survey prepares de Lubac to clarify the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas in its historical context.152 The structure of the article is significant, because it marks de Lubac’s first attempt to place Thomas in a thirteenth century historical context and to compare Thomas on that basis with later interpreters. De Lubac, however, does not attempt to establish an immediate context for Thomas’s teaching beyond general affinities between his own teaching

143 De Lubac, “Esprit et Liberté,” 122; Surnaturel, 188. “Dans notre intention, il ne s’agit d’ailleurs de forger contre personne un ‘argument théologique,’ mais seulement de chercher à éclairer un point d’histoire.”
144 Ibid., 126-27; Surnaturel, 194-95.
145 Ibid., 127-30; Surnaturel, 195-200. In Surnaturel, de Lubac inserts a paragraph on the Cistercian, Gilbert of Hoyland (200-01).
146 Ibid., 130-38; Surnaturel, 201-12.
147 Ibid., 142; Surnaturel, 219-20.
148 Ibid., 143-45; Surnaturel, 220-23.
149 Ibid., 145-46; Surnaturel, 223-25.
150 Ibid., 146-47; Surnaturel, 225-26.
151 Ibid., 147-50; Surnaturel, 226-29.
152 Ibid. 189-207; Surnaturel, 231-60.
and that of Albert,\(^{153}\) or broader comparisons between Thomas and the previous theological tradition.\(^{154}\)

De Lubac’s argument is simple, though not simplistic. He summarizes the first part of it:

All [of the pre-Thomistic authors] recognize, of course, that freedom does not of itself, in virtue of its pure essence, entail the ability to sin, because God is undoubtedly free and impeccable at the same time. All admit that the more one is unfettered from this terrible ability [to sin], the more free one is, for it should be called an infirmity much rather than an ability. But these points of agreement do not at all weaken the following two principles. On the one hand,… every spirit is free… On the other, every creature is changeable and subject to limitation… For, it is this--inevitable--encounter between the essential perfection of spirit and the essential imperfection of a creature which produces in every spirit the power of sinning. One must repeat, with St. Jerome and St. Augustine: “God is the only one in whom no sin is found”; “God is the only one whose nature is naturally repugnant to sin.”\(^{155}\)

In the thirteenth century, however, the juxtaposition of Aristotle’s doctrine of the separate intelligences, which move the simple, heavenly bodies, with the angels of the Christian faith,

\(^{153}\) Ibid., 150, 190, 195; *Surnaturel*, 229, 232, 238.

\(^{154}\) Ibid., 206; *Surnaturel*, 258-59. “Quoi qu’il en soit de l’utilisation que des théologiens postérieurs ont pu faire de telle ou telle de ses formules, à partir de présupposés et en fonction de problèmes qui n’étaient pas les siens, quelle que puisse être aussi la légitimité des distinctions nouvelles et des subtilités par lesquelles on a ‘prolongé’ sa pensée et dont l’histoire pourrait être instructive, saint Thomas maintient à travers toute son oeuvre, explicitement et sans exception aucune, la doctrine qu’il avait reçue de la tradition et qu’il possède en commun avec toute la philosophie chrétienne de son siècle.”

\(^{155}\) Ibid., 134; *Surnaturel*, 206-07. “Tous reconnaissent, bien entendu, que la liberté n’entraîne pas par elle-même, en vertu de sa pure essence, le pouvoir de pêcher, puisque Dieu est indubitablement à la fois libre et impeccable. Tous admettent que plus on est affranchi de ce redoutable pouvoir, plus on est libre, car bien plutôt qu’un pouvoir, il faut l’appeler une infirmité. Mais ces constatations n’ébranlent en rien les deux principes suivants. D’une part… tout esprit est libre… D’autre part, toute créature est muable et sujette à manquer… Or, c’est cette rencontre – inévitable – entre la perfection essentielle à l’esprit et l’imperfection essentielle à la créature qui produit en tout esprit le pouvoir de pêcher. Il faut le répéter, avec saint Jérôme et saint Augustin: ‘Solus Deus, in quo peccatum non cadit’; ‘solus Deus est, cujus natura naturaliter peccato repugnat.’” In *Surnaturel* (207), de Lubac inserts a quotation from Pseudo-Bede, *Aliquot questionum liber*, q. 13 (*PL* 93, 466B-C). “Deus... fecit hominem talem, scilicet, ut posset velle bonum, et non velle bonum; quia, si talem fecisset ut numquam posset nisi velle bonum, inconvertibilem fecisset eum. Inconvertibile autem nihil est nisi Deus.”
posed two difficulties for the common doctrine summarized above. First, if an angel is a separate intelligence, how could it ever err, and thereby sin? Second, if all an angel does is push around a heavenly body whose course never changes, how could an angel ever change, and so manifest its freedom? De Lubac acknowledges that no serious Christian theologian actually attributed those properties to angels, but nevertheless the questions had to be answered.

According to de Lubac, from the beginning of Thomas’s career Thomas argued that while an angel is pure intelligence, and consequently cannot err concerning those things which pertain to its nature, it can nevertheless fail to consider something needful, like the ordering of its own good towards God as its final end. In this way, an angel can err morally, and so sin, although it does not thereby draw a mistaken conclusion from an error of judgment. On that basis Thomas could argue that no matter how perfect a given creature is, “every created spirit is naturally peccable.”

A difficulty arises, however, in the interpretation of some of Thomas’s later texts where he describes the peccability of angels in terms of an inability not to order their acts towards God as the author of nature as contrast to an ability not to order their acts towards God as their supernatural end. De Lubac’s interpretation of these later texts suggests that Thomas changed

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156 Ibid., 140; Surnaturel, 216.
157 Ibid., 140-41; Surnaturel, 217-19.
158 Ibid., 141; Surnaturel, 219.
159 Ibid., 190; Surnaturel, 232.
160 Ibid., 199; Surnaturel, 243.
161 Ibid., 202-03; Surnaturel, 246-49.
from a subjective to an objective point of view, but did not change his doctrine.\textsuperscript{162} In the first case an angel is ordered to God by its natural desire, while the second case an angel has to be ordered to God by grace. However, the end is the same in either case; all that is different is the manner in which the end is desired. Since an ordering by natural desire to God as our final end is not a free ordering (indeed, since it is contradistinguished from free desire),\textsuperscript{163} it is subject neither to sin nor to merit. It is, in other words, amoral.\textsuperscript{164} For this reason, an angel’s natural orientation towards God does not make it impeccable; for the question of how it will use its free will with respect to its final end remains alongside its ordering to God by natural desire.\textsuperscript{165}

De Lubac’s 1939 study begins to discuss another aspect of the problem of natural desire that the medievals faced: how does one account for the ability of a rational creature to turn away from an end that it desires by nature? For Thomas,\textsuperscript{166} the answer was to draw a distinction between the active and the passive component of natural desire. Free desire is determined by the active component of natural desire, not the passive component. Since the active component seeks beatitude in general, men and angels remain free to deflect from the moral path leading to the vision of God, even though they desire it naturally. Giles’s answer, however, was somewhat different.\textsuperscript{167} Granting that man has a specific, active desire for the vision of God, man’s freedom

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid., 204; \textit{Surnaturel}, 251. “Au point de vue plutôt psychologique et subjectif de tout à l’heure, un point de vue plus résolument objectif et ontologique vient s’adjoindre, mais la doctrine n’en est aucunement changée.”

\textsuperscript{163} Ibid., 205; \textit{Surnaturel}, 251-52.

\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., 206; \textit{Surnaturel}, 251-52.

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., 207; \textit{Surnaturel}, 258-59.

\textsuperscript{166} See above, chapter 1, section B.

\textsuperscript{167} See above, chapter 2, section A.
to deflect from the moral path leading to that end could only be accounted for by introducing weakness into the desire itself.

De Lubac’s specific, active desire for the vision of God thus bears greatest affinity with that of Giles. Consequently, de Lubac faced with Giles and the Aegidian tradition the difficulty of accounting for the possibility of deflecting from the end of an active and specific desire. De Lubac was aware of this difficulty. Citing Anselm, he distinguishes three ways in which such a deflection could occur: reason is overcome by the lower appetites (a sin due to weakness in the will), there is an error of practical judgment about one’s personal good (a sin due to error in the intellect), or there is a failure to order one’s personal good towards the divine good (a sin due to weakness in the will). 168 Although the second of these possibilities would be most subject to criticism in light of de Lubac’s interpretation of Thomas, de Lubac excludes it antecedently. According to Thomas, man could not have erred concerning his personal good before the Fall. This leaves de Lubac with the first and third possibilities. In humans, the first is sufficient to account for peccability, because in all states human reason can be overcome by the lower appetites. At least as concerns humans, de Lubac follows a similar line of reasoning to that of Giles, though de Lubac only considers the weakness of the will with respect to the lower appetites, not the weakness of the will in itself. Angelic peccability poses a special problem, however. Since angels are not subject to lower appetites, nor to error about their personal good, de Lubac concludes that they are peccable from the possibility of failing to order their personal good towards the divine good. 169

168 Ibid., 194; Surnaturel, 237.
169 Ibid., 196-97; Surnaturel, 240-41.
In itself, the emphasis in de Lubac’s 1939 article of establishing the meaning of freedom with respect to peccability might seem like an interesting historical exercise, but one which was only tangentially related to the questions raised by de Lubac’s 1931 and 1934 articles. Its immediate context in a response to an article by Maritain on freedom would suggest a provenance similarly dissociated from the context of early twentieth century reflections on natural desire. However, the article’s conclusion provides two clues that this text was essential in the ongoing development of de Lubac’s thought on natural desire. The first clue is de Lubac’s observation that natural desire was historically distinguished from free desire, not supernatural desire. According to de Lubac, this distinction is essential for maintaining with Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition that a natural desire for God and any desire caused in us by grace have, in fact, the same end. The pre-Thomistic history of this distinction is likewise essential for responding to the common claim that natural desire corresponds with a naturally achievable end. The second clue is the gradual but deliberate isolation of any and all possible objections to a doctrine of a natural desire for the vision of God on the grounds that it compromises the possibility of sin, even ones based in angelology. De Lubac in this article anticipates an important objection to his Aegidianism and so, taking the opportunity to clarify some questions concerning freedom, advances his defense of the Aegidian tradition a step further.

4. “La rencontre de superadditum et supernaturale dans la théologie médiévale” (1945)

De Lubac’s fourth precursor to Surnaturel appeared in 1945. It builds on the etymological discussions of his 1934 article and applies them to the development of the term,
This article was later reworked into chapter three of the third part of *Surnaturel*. Like de Lubac’s other etymological study, it was heavily edited for inclusion in *Surnaturel*. But unlike de Lubac’s other etymological study, the text itself and its order were kept mostly intact, though with several large insertions.

According to de Lubac, the word *superadditum* was only used with respect to biblical imagery related to sin and grace before the thirteenth century. Before the thirteenth century, authors had a common doctrine of human nature, in which nature was neither divine nor perfect until it came to participate in the divine. For these authors, sin was “superadded” to nature at the Fall, wounding it. This was often described on analogy with the man aided by the Good Samaritan. The man was wounded and stripped naked. According to the Patristic authors, both of these events refer to the effects of the Fall on human nature itself, not on any supposed

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171 The most significant of these are: “…à mesure que… être seule retenue.” (376); several sentences which have been reworked on p. 376–77; “Que ces tuniques… parvenir au salut.” (378); “avant le péché…de la purité.” (379); “Illis nos exuens… ne rougissent pas.” (379); “…pas plus que ne se contredisent… question de doctrine.” (379); “Origène le reconnaît… où elle s’arrête.” (380); “… si elle doit… de farouches gardiens.” (380); “…à mesure qu’elle s’éloigne… le mystère chrétien.” (380-81); “On peut dire… obstruaient l’esprit.” (381); “Après cette vie… ce qu’on découvre.” (381-82); “C’est ce qu’on expliquait… ‘secunda circumdedit me.’” (383-85); “Origène lui-même… de l’Esprit Saint.” (386-87); “L’homme est dépouillé… ‘quam nudatus.’” (387); “Celle-ci n’est pourtant… Chez les Latins…” (388); “Un peu plus tard… ‘sicut per accidens superadditum.’” (389); “…c’est encore saint Bonaventure… ‘...gratia gratum faciens...’” (389); “ce qui ne signifie… qu’un ornement postiche…” (391-92); “…au moins en passant… ‘...naturae principis pervenire.’” (392); “Saint Thomas s’exprime… ‘...scilicet gratia, etc.’” (393)

172 De Lubac, “La rencontre de superadditum,” 30; *Surnaturel*, 385-86. “…L’homme n’est vraiment spirituel et n’obtient sa perfection que par une participation toute gratuite à l’unique Πνεῦμα. Le voûz n’est pas divin par lui-même. Une fois rendue, telle une perle qui avait été recouverte de boue, à l’éclat de sa pureté primitive, l’image divine doit encore accéder à la divine ressemblance.”

supernatural gifts to it. In this respect, the transition from sin to grace could be conceived in Pauline terms as “putting off” what had been superadded, and “putting on” what was lost.

In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, a different use of *superadditum* crept into scholastic usage. It was inspired by Aristotle, for whom “accidents are ‘superadded’ to essences, *habitus* to faculties, [and] forms to matter.” Once grace was conceived as a habit, infused as an accidental form into the soul, it was only natural that people would begin to describe grace as “superadded” to nature. However, for all the medieval authors, including Thomas, what is “superadded” to nature is not another order or another end; it is the means of achieving nature’s end. Lacking the precision of their forebears, later scholastics eventually began to discuss grace and glory not as goods superadded to nature but as comprising an order with an end superadded to nature. This necessitated the hypothesis of a natural end for man, something unknown in the great medieval scholastics.

De Lubac’s fourth article thus confirms and summarizes the Aegidian position of his previous three: man has an active, specific desire for the vision of God; this desire creates a certain imbalance in man without the possession of God, but does not posit in man the beginning of that possession or an exigence for it; grace does not add another finality to human nature—it

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174 De Lubac, “La rencontre de superadditum,” 30; *Surnaturel*, 387.

175 De Lubac, “La rencontre de superadditum,” 30; *Surnaturel*, 384-85. Between this passage and the one just cited, *Surnaturel* adds a large number of Pastristic citations.

176 Ibid., 31; *Surnaturel*, 388. “Il est assez naturel de dire que l’accident est ‘surajouté’ à l’essence, ou l’habitus à la faculté, ou la forme à la matière.”

177 Ibid., 32; *Surnaturel*, 390-91. De Lubac points out that grace was always compared to free action, not natural action.

178 Ibid., 33; *Surnaturel*, 393. “Ce qui est ‘surajouté’, c’est seulement l’ensemble des moyens destinés à procurer cette fin [i.e. Dieu].”

179 Ibid., 34; *Surnaturel*, 393-94.
only provides the means necessary for attaining nature’s unique end; scholastics after Thomas, failing to recognize the manner in which previous generations understood grace as a gratuitous means of helping humanity achieve its end, posited an order of grace with its own finality, and contrasted it with an order of nature with its own finality; pure nature arose, therefore, out of the collapse of the patristic and medieval doctrine of man, ordered towards a supernatural end, and morphed into a doctrine of a self-sufficient human nature to which God offers another, superadded end, bearing no intrinsic relationship with the end of human nature as presently experienced.

C. Natural Desire in the Newly Composed Sections of *Surnaturel* (1946)

By 1946, De Lubac had well-articulated positions on natural desire, sin, grace, the vision of God, obediential potency, pure nature, and the rise of secularism. He had bolstered these positions with studies in the patristic and medieval periods, as well as limited considerations of the early modern period. In order to complete the task set by Huby, what remained was to complete the work already begun, not to compose a work on the supernatural afresh. In light of the four articles, which de Lubac incorporated into the text of *Surnaturel*, the majority of de Lubac’s remaining work lay in the consideration of Thomists during the early modern period. De Lubac had begun to consider them in his previous articles, but his considerations had been confined to Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition, with whose doctrine of natural desire de Lubac’s Blondelian doctrine bore the most affinity. De Lubac had yet to compare and contrast Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition with other Thomists of the early modern period. At most,
de Lubac had engaged these other Thomisms either in general terms, through his critiques of pure nature, or in their contemporary representatives. Likewise, he had yet to study the development of the idea of the natural impeccability of the angels in the early modern period. Finally, de Lubac would also need to engage his early twentieth-century contemporaries in the light of his studies of natural desire, pure nature, and angelic peccability.

1. *Surnaturel*, Part One, Chapters Four to Seven

De Lubac’s treatment of pure nature in the early modern period occurs in additions to his two-part 1931 article on Baius and Jansen, which constitute chapters four through seven of Part One of *Surnaturel*. The first of these additions, chapter four of *Surnaturel*, serves as an appendix to de Lubac’s argument about Adam in the second part of his 1931 article. In 1931, de Lubac had argued that Jansen mistakenly suggests that Adam had grace at his natural and free disposal, while man’s will is presently commanded by a grace that man cannot but use rightly. De Lubac examines various texts from Augustine that Jansen and his supporters used to justify their position. In an effort to promote humility in contemporary man, Baius, Jansen, and their followers had tried to contrast integral nature, which could achieve its end by right, and fallen nature, which owes all of its good works to God. Far from achieving their goal of promoting humility, however, they actually promoted a radical pridefulness on the part of human nature, by suggesting that in any state human nature could have some right, title, or exigence for grace or


182 Ibid., 93-95.
On the contrary, de Lubac argues, if Augustine ever said that Adam did not need to pray as man now does, that does not mean that Adam could ever be less humble in thankfulness for the gratuitous gifts of God. It simply means that he had no need to ask of God again for what he had already been given. Rather, in humility and thankfulness, as well as by the grace of God, Adam was to press on towards the goal of his nature in God by the means which God had already afforded him of doing so. If Augustine does not call this disposition “prayer” in the proper sense, one can rightly see in it an “attitude of prayer,” which corresponds to what medievals such as Thomas came to call prayer in the proper sense.

Although chapter four seems to concern Adam more than the hypothesis of pure nature, de Lubac makes it clear in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters that he sees a fundamental conceptual and moral continuity between the subjective attitude of a Baius or a Jansen, who could conceive of Adam as in some sense requiring grace and/or glory from God, and those who hypothesize the possibility of a state of pure nature, in which man could, by the same right, demand a naturally achievable end for his nature. De Lubac establishes this connection to oppose the idea that the fundamental error of Baius and Jansen was the denial of the possibility of pure nature, as though pure nature had been a long accepted hypothesis only recently denied by Baius and Jansen. Such an argument would inculcate Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition in the same condemnation. Rather, de Lubac suggests that the idea of pure nature came to prominence historically in opposition to Baius and Jansen, and was a relatively late development.

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183 Ibid., 97.
184 Ibid., 99.
185 Ibid., 100.
186 Ibid., 101-02.
This preserves Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition from any critique of having denied a common theological tradition.\textsuperscript{187}

Historically, de Lubac adds, pure nature was a fairly insignificant hypothesis, which arose in the thirteenth century in a distinction between those who, like Peter of Tarentaise and Bonaventure, thought that Adam was first created \textit{in naturalibus} and subsequently elevated to a state of grace, and those who, like Thomas Aquinas, affirmed that Adam was created from the first moment in grace.\textsuperscript{188} From the mid-thirteenth century theory that man was created at first \textit{in naturalibus} arose the question in the late thirteenth century of whether man could be created \textit{in naturalibus} and subsequently \textit{not} elevated to the vision of God (that is, \textit{in puris naturalibus}). Authors at this time relied on the distinction between what God can do \textit{de potentia absoluta} and what God can do \textit{de potentia ordinata} to suggest that, \textit{de potentia absoluta}, God could create man \textit{in puris naturalibus}. However, such a solution was not equally tolerable to every theologian. Those given to abstract speculation, like Richard of Middleton, were willing to entertain the idea, but those given to more concrete speculation, like Giles of Rome, showed themselves averse to it, even if Giles was willing to consider the possibility.\textsuperscript{189}

Relying explicitly on the historical work of Sestili, as well as de Broglie, de Lubac argues that the use of pure nature as an essential theological hypothesis did not arise until Cajetan.\textsuperscript{190} Cajetan was responsible for two changes that caused this shift.\textsuperscript{191} The first was the move towards

\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., 105.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., 141-43.
\textsuperscript{189} Ibid., 105, 144.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 116.
considering spiritual substance as natural substance. Second, Cajetan was responsible for the adoption of obediential potency as the means of accounting for nature’s receptivity to grace. According to de Lubac, who now bases himself in the work of Charlier, Thomas always considered man as naturally *capax dei*, and used obediential potency as a means of accounting for our receptivity to miraculous change. By uniting a doctrine of a natural desire for a naturally achievable end to a doctrine of nature’s receptivity to grace in obediential potency, Cajetan for the first time made the hypothesis of pure nature something not only conceivable, but even in some way necessary.

On de Lubac’s account, as much as Cajetan is responsible for pure nature, Suárez worked the hypothesis into the form, which was so commonly received among Thomistic commentators. After Suárez, pure nature became an usual explanation of what God could do *de potentia ordinata*. This led to the inclusion of a so-called “state” of pure nature in scholastic treatises written to oppose Baianism and Jansenism, as though it were an ordinary manner of existence for humanity, like integral nature, fallen nature, or redeemed nature. Although it was commonly acknowledged that the state of pure nature was a hypothesis, the

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192 Ibid., 117. “Tout l’augustinisme – dans l’acception la plus large du terme – ne consiste-t-il pas, en cette matière, à souligner la différence essentielle qui existe entre les êtres de la nature, dont la fin est proportionnée à leurs limites, et l’esprit, qui est ouvert sur l’infini?” Above, it was shown how de Lubac considered this a capital error because it denies to spiritual substance the metaphysical *activity* proper to it, restricting its end to something achievable within the exigencies of its nature. Here de Lubac unites his metaphysical considerations to his historical studies. Where he had previously observed that the doctrine could be found in Ferrariensis, he now accuses Cajetan specifically of being the first to expound it.

193 Ibid., 136-37.

194 Ibid., 123-25, 148-49. Ironically, de Lubac here refers to Suárez’s theory of pure nature as “*la nouvelle théologie*.”

195 Ibid., 149.

196 Ibid., 144-45.
consideration of nature in such a state gradually led theologians to consider that state as an “order” of nature. Such a consideration of natural order was useful in opposing Baianism and Jansenism, because it could establish the gratuity of grace by asserting God’s freedom to withhold it. However, by severing the supernatural from the natural, and suggesting that man can and does have an end that he can achieve by his natural powers, it paved the way for the process of secularization beginning in the Renaissance.

De Lubac highlights two important elements of the scholastic tradition that opposed pure nature as examples to show that pure nature is not an essential part of the scholastic tradition, and to suggest that it can be rejected. The first is the Tridentine theology of Domingo de Soto and of the Roman Catechism. De Soto refused to capitulate to Cajetan’s collapsing of the distinction between natural and spiritual substance. For de Soto, the fact that man has an end that he cannot achieve of his own accord shows the dignity of man, not a failure of his nature. For the Roman Catechism, as for de Soto, human beatitude is singularly situated in the vision of God.

The second element was Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition. In the post-Tridentine period, when the vast majority of theologians had adopted the doctrine of pure nature in response to Baianism and Jansenism, Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition maintained the doctrine of a natural desire for a supernatural end unchanged:

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197 Ibid., 150.
198 Ibid., 153, 161.
199 Ibid., 151-52.
200 Ibid., 121. Cf. ibid., 107-09.
201 Ibid., 112.
The Augustinian School *par excellence*, or at least by proper title—that which the Hermits of St. Augustine formed—is still more formal. Achieving distinction successively by Frédéric Gavardi, by Enrico Noris, by Fulgence Bellelli and by Giovanni Lorenzo Berti, it maintained its doctrine unchanged amidst opposition. Wrongly do people commonly attribute to them the idea of a metaphysical possibility of pure nature and a merely “moral” necessity of the supernatural, in virtue of the wisdom and the goodness of the Creator, intending to distinguish them from the Jansenist School. At the least, according to them, this moral necessity—in view of God’s providence—concerns not the end, but the means; the help of grace and the light of glory, not the destiny itself; or, if one prefers, the effective gift of beatitude to the individual, not the ordering of nature to this beatitude. Rational creatures for example, says Gavardi, cannot have a final end other than the possession of God; such is his principle point of departure for establishing that God must create them “in grace.” According to Noris, it would be morally impossible that, in a state of innocence, the sensible appetite not be at all submitted to reason. According to Bellelli and Berti, God owes it equally to his wisdom and to his goodness to afford man grace, i.e. the means which alone permit him to attain his end; for, granted that man is made in the image of God, i.e. endowed with reason, he is ordered towards seeing God. None of them places in doubt that the end of spiritual being is in every hypothesis beatitude, such as St. Thomas defined it, i.e. what we call and what they themselves call a supernatural end.202

It is a fundamental error, de Lubac argues, to accuse Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition of Jansenism because they denied that a hypothesis of pure nature is reasonable. Such an accusation confuses two distinct questions: the supernaturality of man’s end and the gratuity of the means of...
obtaining it. Accordingly, de Lubac explicitly criticizes de Broglie’s 1924 article, where de Broglie follows Rousselot in criticizing Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition. On the contrary, the Aegidians’ “…‘obscure concepts’ of half-exigence, of pseudo-necessity or of quasi-gratuity,” do not, “‘denote a sad poverty of thought.’” Such concepts are not authentically Aegidian when applied to man’s supernatural end in itself. Much to the contrary, they simply explain what the Aegidians had always humbly but confidently asserted with the whole tradition: man has one final end, and it would be difficult to imagine that God would not grant the means for achieving that end.

In his defense of Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition, de Lubac is willing to grant a measure of scholastic distinction concerning man’s final end among some of its members. Unfortunately, however, de Lubac relies for this distinction on Michelangelo Marcelli, who had taken an extreme position within the Aegidian tradition. In spite of Marcelli’s extremism, de Lubac summarizes Marcelli’s position: “…from the fact that God ordered man to the vision of himself as to his ultimate end, by establishing [man] in his image, it follows that a state of pure nature is impossible.” De Lubac articulates two distinctions which the Aegidian tradition uses to defend themselves against the charge of compromising the gratuity of grace while asserting that the end of human nature is supernatural. First, the Aegidians distinguish between man

203 Ibid., 168. “Ne disons donc pas que leurs ‘concepts obscurs’ de demi-exigence, de pseudo-nécessité ou de quasi-gratuité dénotent en eux ‘une triste indigence de pensée.’”

204 Ibid.

205 Ibid., 170.

206 Marcelli, Institutiones Theologicae, 3, 146, qtd. in de Lubac, Surnaturel, 166. “...ex quo Deus, ad imaginem suam condendo illum, ad suipsius ordinaverit visionem, tanquam ad ultimum finem, sequitur impossibilem esse statum purae naturae.”
considered “as a species” and man considered as “in the image of God.” De Lubac does not explicitly attribute this position to Marcelli. Secondly, and here de Lubac explicitly cites Marcelli, one can distinguish between what God can do \textit{de potentia absoluta} and \textit{de potentia ordinata}:

We could not dream of contesting, [Marcelli] says in the name of his entire school, that God could, by his absolute power, designate such an other end for man as pleases him; that is enough for man not to have any right to require anything [from God], since if the introduction of the concept of “ordered power” renders hypotheses objectively realizable, it does not confer any new title at all to a creature of which it could boast.

De Lubac’s use of Marcelli raises an important question concerning de Lubac’s understanding of the Aegidian tradition: does de Lubac intend to embrace Marcelli’s defense of the gratuity of grace by means of the impossible possibility of a non-rational rational creature? Although de Lubac appears to grant Marcelli’s distinction between man considered in himself and man in the image of God, it is not at all clear that de Lubac thinks that man, denied an ordering to the vision of God, would be man not made in the image of God. It would not be unreasonable to garner that affirmation from de Lubac’s text. De Lubac’s summary of Marcelli suggests that de Lubac interprets Marcelli as saying that God could justly deny man, made in the

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207 Ibid., 168.
208 Ibid., 168.
209 Nevertheless, the position is faithful to Marcelli’s thought as outlined above, chapter 2, section E.
210 Ibid., 169. “Nous ne songeons pas à contester, dit-il au nom de toute son école, que par sa puissance absolue Dieu puisse désigner à l’homme telle autre fin qu’il lui plait; cela suffit pour que l’homme ne soit en droit de rien exiger, car, si l’introduction du concept de ‘puissance ordonnée’ réduit les hypothèses objectivement réalisables, elle ne confère pour autant à la créature aucun titre nouveau dont celle-ci pourrait se prévaloir.”
image of God, the means to his only end, not that God could justly not make man in the image of God. In short, when de Lubac comments that Marcelli speaks “in the name of his entire school,” what he apparently intends is to summarize Berti’s Aegidianism, and he does so unaware of the very different consequences of Marcelli’s Aegidianism.

Be that as it may, de Lubac goes on to claim that a vast number of theologians, ignorant of the difference between Berti’s Aegidianism and Jansenism, rallied against it. As a result, opponents of Berti’s Aegidianism and of Jansenism continued to support the separation of nature from the supernatural. The contemporary result of such sustained criticism of the Aegidian tradition is that, “in order to better dismiss immanentism, which obsessed them like a ghost, they discredited what their ancestors, for whose support they always called, had for such a long time adored.”

Nonetheless, the Church never condemned Berti’s Aegidianism. In spite of fierce criticism, it was not censured by Benedict XIV, Pius VI, or Pius X. However, in embracing the contemporary movements, which promise to replace the doctrine of pure nature and its secularity with a doctrine that is both Aegidian and immanent, one must take care not to return to some supposed original purity. Replacing the system of pure nature must be done with

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211 Ibid., 173-75.
212 Ibid., 175.
213 Ibid., 175. “… pour mieux écarter l’immanentisme qui les obsédait comme un spectre, ils brûlèrent ce que leurs ancêtres, dont ils se réclamaient toujours, avaient si longtemps adoré.”
214 Ibid., 176-78.
215 Ibid., 179.
216 Ibid., 151-52, 180-81. According to de Lubac, Not even Pius X’s Pascendi precludes Berti’s Aegidianism. When it excludes the affirmation of any exigence for the supernatural, it says nothing about having to affirm a state of pure nature in order to do so.
as much intellectual rigor as that with which the system was built.217 A revival of Berti’s Aegidianism can only take place in such a way that it accomplishes everything that pure nature could accomplish, but does so in a manner that is at once “humanist and theocentric.”218

In the original material for the first part of Surnaturel, de Lubac thus explores the historical basis for his positions on natural desire, pure nature, and obediential potency, as well as the history of the Aegidian tradition. He unites these considerations into a coherent historical narrative that explains both the development and the consequences of the pure nature hypothesis. In relation to his previous work, de Lubac for the first time identifies Cajetan as the specific theologian responsible for the turn towards pure nature, finding in him the advent of an association between natural and spiritual substance, the restriction of natural desire to a naturally achievable end, the use of obediential potency to ground nature’s receptivity to grace apart from its natural potency, and consequently the separation of nature from grace in a self-contained state. Tracing the reception of this doctrine through Suárez and most of the scholastic tradition, de Lubac argues that such a self-contained doctrine of man was responsible for the secularization of society that began at the Renaissance. All hope is not lost, however, because throughout the ascendency of pure nature, the previous tradition continued, achieving prominence in Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition. The retrieval of that Aegidian understanding of nature and natural desire, in addition to overcoming the objective problems in the doctrine of pure nature, can both offer a return to subjective humility in contemporary conceptions of human nature, and help to reverse the tide of secularism. Such a return to the Aegidian tradition would also mean

217 Ibid., 181.
218 Ibid.
the adoption of the best fruits of the immanentist movement with an intellectual rigor to rival that of the scholastic adherents of pure nature.

2. *Surnaturel*, Part Two, Chapters Four and Five

As de Lubac had acknowledged in his 1939 article, part of the intellectual rigor required by a return to Berti’s Aegidianism includes the question of the natural peccability of the angels. This question arises from the claim of John of St. Thomas, renewed by Jacques Maritain, that angels cannot sin with respect to their natural end. In his 1939 article, de Lubac completed a study of angelic peccability up to the period of Thomas, concluding that, although Thomas acknowledges that an angel cannot fail to seek its own good, it can sin with respect to its natural end by failing to order it to the divine good. However, de Lubac still needed to study the same subject in the late medieval and early modern periods, a task which he undertook in the fourth and fifth chapter of Part Two of *Surnaturel*.²¹⁹

The move away from Thomas’s position and towards that of John of St. Thomas, de Lubac argues, happened in three steps. The first step began in William de la Mare and continued in William of Ockham, during the advent of the nominalist tradition.²²⁰ By separating the divine will from the divine intellect, this tradition exalted hypotheses about what God could do *de potentia absoluta* far beyond what had previously been considered.²²¹ Where for Thomas God’s *potentia absoluta* is an abstraction which is not used to posit anything that God could do here

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²¹⁹ Ibid., 261-321.
²²⁰ Ibid., 267.
²²¹ Ibid., 269.
and now, beginning with William de la Mare, the nominalists attributed to God the possibility of acting here and now by the power of the divine will outside the providential order foreordained by the divine intellect.\textsuperscript{222}

The second step happened with Cajetan’s distinction of a natural from a supernatural order that allowed scholars to reinterpret Thomas’s later writings, in which he refers to angels as impeccable with respect to their natural end, as meaning that an angel, in a state of pure nature, would be impeccable simply speaking.\textsuperscript{223} To be fair, de Lubac does not actually attribute this position to Cajetan, but he notes that the hypothesis of a natural end for a rational creature, which is necessary to it, arises in Cajetan’s work as the second stage leading towards John of St. Thomas.

The third step occurred in the writings of Domingo Bañez, who relied on a nominalist idea of God’s \textit{potentia absoluta}, combined with Cajetan’s idea of a natural end, and argued that, \textit{de potentia absoluta}, God could create an angel in pure nature, and that such an angel would be naturally impeccable.\textsuperscript{224} From there, it became a widely accepted doctrine of most of the theologians within the Dominicans, including John of St. Thomas, as well as the Jesuits.\textsuperscript{225} For John of St. Thomas, however, an angel is naturally peccable, but only because it is in potency to elevation to a supernatural end and could sin against that end if it were elevated to it, not because it could ever sin against its natural end.\textsuperscript{226}

\textsuperscript{222} Ibid., 268.
\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., 279.
\textsuperscript{224} Ibid., 279-80.
\textsuperscript{225} Ibid., 280-81.
\textsuperscript{226} Ibid., 288.
Alongside a doctrine of the natural impeccability of the angels, which de Lubac does not think can is a development that cannot be reconciled with the text of Thomas, de Lubac also highlights what he considers to be an undesirable consequence of the Bañezian tradition: Juan Martinez de Ripalda’s doctrine of the possibility of a supernatural substance, i.e., a substance, distinct from God, for whom the vision of God is natural. De Lubac had to consider this hypothesis because it is essentially what someone following John of St. Thomas might allege as the logical consequence of his Aegidianism. If the end of an angel’s nature is the vision of God, and if an angel is impeccable with respect to its natural end, then an angel in a state of pure nature would have the vision of God as his natural end, and not be able to sin against it. This hypothesis, de Lubac argues, far from being the consequence of any Aegidian thought, is actually the outcome of a nominalist conception of God’s *potentia absoluta* an Cajetan’s doctrine of two orders. For, if *de potentia absoluta*, God could create an angel in a state of nature in which it was impeccable with respect to its final end, why could God not also create *de potentia absoluta* an angel in a state of grace in which it was impeccable with respect to its final end?

Unlike the idea that an angel created in a state of nature would be naturally impeccable, the idea that an angel could be created naturally impeccable in a state of grace met with broad resistance. De Lubac highlights several theologians among the Jesuits, the Dominicans, and

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227 Ibid., 294.
228 Cf. ibid., 297.
229 Ibid., 300-03.
230 Ibid., 303-07.
the Aegidians, who opposed it. However, Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition gets the most praise among the three:

The Augustinians did not run any risk of yielding to the new opinion, it being understood that they denied what it presupposed by firmly maintaining their veto against pure nature. But they showed themselves doubly distant from it. According to Berti, since rational nature is essentially free, angels could transgress even the natural law, since the intellect of a pure spirit is not in act except with respect to universal truths, [while] it is first [only] in potency with respect to singular and concrete ones. Berti adds that, if the good angels are henceforth essentially determined by the beatific vision towards the love of God, the demons, by contrast, continue to adhere to evil in virtue of their own obstinacy, so that neither [the good angels nor the demons] remain fixed in their lot only by the effect of their past choice, as St. Thomas supposed it to be. At the very end of the century, his confrère Marcelli… maintained implicitly the same doctrine while accentuating its voluntarism.

De Lubac sees in Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition not only an authentically traditional doctrine of natural desire, but also an authentically traditional doctrine of angelic freedom. Indeed, Berti, in his doctrine of a natural desire for a supernatural end, far from compromising angelic peccability, is actually one of its strongest supporters.

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231 Ibid., 307.

232 Ibid., 318. “Les Augustinens ne couraient aucun risque de céder à l’opinion nouvelle, attendu qu’ils en niaient le présupposé en maintenant ferme leur veto contre la pure nature. Mais ils s’en montrent doublement éloignés. Selon Berti, la nature rationnelle étant essentiellement libre, l’ange pouvait transgresser même la loi naturelle; car l’intelligence du pur esprit n’est en acte que par rapport aux vérités universelles; par rapport aux vérités singulières et concrètes, elle est d’abord en puissance. Berti ajoute que, si les bons anges sont désormais essentiellement déterminés à l’amour de Dieu par la vision béatifique, les démons, eux, continuent d’adhérer au mal en vertu de leur obstination propre, en sorte que ni les uns ni les autres ne demeurent fixés dans leur sort uniquement par l’effet de leur option passée, comme le supposait saint Thomas. Tout à la fin du siècle, son confrère Marcelli… maintiendra implicitement la même doctrine en en accentuant le voluntarisme.”

233 Cf. ibid., 309-15. De Lubac also argues that the Scotist tradition remained untinged by Bañezianism and Ripaldism. However, there is a danger of making too close an association between Aegidians and Scotists in a question touching upon natural desire, given the differences between the two traditions.
In the original material for the second part of *Surnaturel*, de Lubac supports Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition by defending the natural peccability of angels. De Lubac notes a defection from the common medieval tradition in Cajetan, although he acknowledges that rather than containing explicitly the idea that an angel is naturally impeccable, Cajetan’s doctrine of a natural order was more the occasion for one to be developed, because the hypothesis of a natural end and a natural order allowed for the hypothesis that an angel could be created with a natural end other than the vision of God. The doctrine that angels are naturally impeccable did not arise until Bañez united the idea of God’s *potentia absoluta* with Cajetan’s conception of a natural order so as to suggest that an angel, created *de potentia absoluta* in a state of pure nature, could not defect from his natural end, since an angel cannot err concerning things pertaining to its nature. Parallel to this came another unwelcome development, Ripalda’s hypothesis that a creature could be created *de potentia absoluta* in a state of grace, which could nowise defect from the vision of God as its natural end. Both hypotheses were made possible by Cajetan’s doctrine of a natural end for a rational creature, and Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition steered clear of both by maintaining its commitment to the vision of God as man’s only end.

3. *Surnaturel*, Part Four

After completing his studies of the early modern period, defending Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition as a coherent system and as the authentic interpretation of Thomas, which is best suited to overcome the ills of secularism in the present age, de Lubac turned to consider
several objections against his work in six brief “notes,” which comprise Part Four of *Surnaturel*.  

The first note concerns the concept of a “natural desire for the supernatural.” While affirming the substance of the concept, de Lubac acknowledges three difficulties. First, the precise terms are not found in Thomas. Second, in considering the vision of God as a supernatural end, the phrase capitulates to the later usage of the term, “supernatural,” which applied it to the end of nature, not the means by which nature achieves its end. Third, it contrasts natural and supernatural in a manner similar to Cajetan. While granting that the formulation is somewhat “inconvenient,” de Lubac argues that there is good reason to use it. First, it indicates that human nature has a real finality in the vision of God. Here, de Lubac cites Elter’s 1928 historical study as bearing witness that this doctrine was held by a vast number of theologians in the early modern period. Second, de Lubac alludes to Laporta’s work of the same year, arguing that since man has a real finality in the vision of God, man’s desire for such a real finality must in some way be innate, and not “without ontological interest.”

However, de Lubac notes, if man’s desire for the vision of God is “natural,” one must avoid any equation between the constitutive desire of human nature and the motion of inanimate objects. Although Thomas spoke in Aristotelian language about man’s desire for his final end,

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234 Ibid., 431-80.
235 Ibid., 431-38.
236 Ibid., 431.
237 Ibid.
238 Ibid., 431-32.
239 Ibid., 431-32.
240 Ibid., 433.
Thomas spoke from the context of man, made in the image of God, and called to vision of the one in whose image man is made. But if Thomas did not work out all of the details of how to hold the Aristotelian view of nature alongside the biblical view of image, that is because he was a “transitional” theologian. But just because Thomas was transitional does not mean that what historically followed him was a legitimate development of his thought. To whatever ambiguities the biblical view of man might be subject, Thomas did not reduce it to an Aristotelian nature, like subsequent Thomists did. If one wishes to overcome the mistakes of those Thomists, one will have to answer questions Thomas did not consider. However, one cannot answer them at the expense of destroying the delicate balance that Thomas effectively maintained between man’s spirit, made in the image of God, and the vision of God to which the image of God is called.

In the second note, de Lubac weighs in on the final exchange between Guy de Broglie and Pedro Descoqs, in which Descoqs had advocated the Ferrariensian view that man’s natural desire terminates at the vision of God as one, but not of the Trinitarian persons. This question follows logically from the question considered in the first note: if it is granted that man has a natural desire to see God, does this mean that man has a natural desire to see God naturally? De Lubac responds that since the classical doctrine of the beatific vision suggests that the blessed see God’s essence, and since the divine essence is common to the three persons, it is not possible

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241 Ibid., 434-35.
242 Ibid., 435.
243 Ibid., 435-37.
244 Ibid., 437-38. In the juxtaposition of Aristotelian nature and man in the image of God, one may observe a repetition of Marcelli’s distinction between man as such and man in the image of God.
245 Ibid., 439-47
to see the essence without seeing the persons. De Lubac acknowledges, that Scotus had allowed for the possibility that God would cause such a vision *de potentia absoluta*. However, for Scotus and his followers, both visions remain gifts of grace; neither is in any sense “natural.” Even in the work of Ferrariensis, who clearly juxtaposes a natural desire to see God as first cause and as Trinity, the distinction is more a distinction in desires than a distinction in ends. By contrast, any sort of “natural beatitude” is always abstractive, not intuitive.

In the third note, de Lubac considers the concept of “natural beatitude” in the Thomistic corpus. Here he surveys four contemporary theologians on the subject: Sestili, whose position he explicitly associates with the Aegidianism of Paludanus, Rousselot, Hugueny, and Jean Mulson, a follower of de Broglie, who came to similar conclusions, and Cathrein and Johann Stufler, who affirmed a more rigorous doctrine of pure nature. Exegeting several texts of Thomas, de Lubac concludes that any time that Thomas uses man’s natural desire for beatitude to prove that man’s beatitude must be after this life, that is the equivalent of saying that

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246 Ibid., 439. This was Suárez’s position; see above, chapter 2, section D.

247 Ibid., 440-41.

248 Ibid., 441-42.

249 Ibid., 442-43.

250 Ibid., 446.

251 Ibid., 449-65.

252 Ibid., 449-50.

253 Ibid., 450n1.


there is no natural beatitude. Although Thomas acknowledges a certain abstractive, metaphysical perfection of the intellect consequent upon the vision of God, such a natural perfection is an accidental addition to the vision of God, is caused by it, and is never had apart from it. Apart from this distinction of principal and accidental beatitude, whenever Thomas speaks of a “natural” beatitude it is always a participation in this life of what is to be had in the life hereafter, or of some sort of happiness in the political realm, which is in no sense final.

In the fourth note, de Lubac takes up the question, much disputed in the 1930s, of what Thomas intended to prove from natural desire. Treating all of his contemporaries together, whether they thought it proved the possibility or only the probability of the vision of God, de Lubac takes the position that all of his contemporaries condemn: these passages prove the fact of the vision of God, not just the possibility or the probability of it. De Lubac begins by quoting several Thomistic texts that exclude Garrigou-Lagrange’s argument for probability. Then de Lubac takes up Aristotle’s dictum about the impossibility that a natural desire be vain. Those who think that Thomas proves only the possibility of the desire’s fulfillment, but not the fact that

256 Ibid., 459. “Lorsque saint Thomas écrit, par exemple: ‘Nécessairement, quand l’homme aura atteint sa fin suprême, son désir naturel trouvera le repos, mais cela ne peut se faire en cette vie,’ cette dernière parole équivaut pour lui à cette autre: il ne peut y avoir de béatitude naturelle.” Cf. ibid. “Même en en tenant compte, on doit continuer de dire que la notion d’une fin naturelle extra-terrestre est absente de l’oeuvre de saint Thomas.”

257 Ibid., 460-61.
258 Ibid., 462-63.
259 Ibid., 461-62.
260 Ibid., 463-65.
261 Ibid., 467-71.
262 Ibid., 467.
263 Ibid., 467-468.
it will be fulfilled one day, and consequently that a state of pure nature is possible, cannot show any text where Thomas discusses that precise question.\textsuperscript{264}

In the fifth note, which spans only a paragraph, de Lubac responds to the charge that Thomas chose the Aristotelian system to the exclusion of other systems.\textsuperscript{265} In line with his view that the Aegidian tradition is harmonious with immanentism, de Lubac argues that Thomas “received” rather than “chose” Aristotle.\textsuperscript{266}

In the sixth and final note, de Lubac discusses three different ways in which theologians understand Thomas’s use of the term “natural desire” (\textit{desiderium naturale}).\textsuperscript{267} The first, proposed by Cajetan and Garrigou-Lagrange, is that the desire to see God is not of man’s “essential” nature but of his “historic” nature, in other words that it is the result of a contingent ordering to the vision of God.\textsuperscript{268} The second, that of Suárez, makes the desire conditional.\textsuperscript{269} The third, that of Ferrariensis, sees in the \textit{terminus} of man’s desire a purely natural end.\textsuperscript{270} De Lubac thinks these various positions disprove each other. Suárez and Ferrariensis disprove Cajetan and show that man’s desire is essential. Cajetan and Ferrariensis disprove Suárez and show that man’s desire is not conditional. Cajetan and Suárez disprove Ferrariensis and show that man’s desire

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\textsuperscript{264} Ibid., 469.

\textsuperscript{265} Ibid., 473.

\textsuperscript{266} The subtext to the argument suggests that Thomas’s use of Aristotelianism was not exclusive, and that Thomists may “receive” other philosophical systems insofar as they elucidate the tradition faithfully.

\textsuperscript{267} Ibid., 475-80.

\textsuperscript{268} Ibid., 478. This is really the position of Ramellini, attributed to Cajetan. It is ironic for de Lubac to attribute it to Cajetan, since Rousselot was the one to point out the inaccuracy of that attribution.

\textsuperscript{269} Ibid., 478-79.

\textsuperscript{270} Ibid., 479.
De Lubac concludes that man has an essential, absolute desire for a supernatural end.

De Lubac then draws his work to a conclusion by considering the question of exigence. De Lubac saw no need of defending the gratuity of the vision of God as an end, since he carefully distinguished the gratuity of the end from the gratuity of the means of achieving it. Nevertheless, he embraces de Broglie’s argument that the end is gratuitous because it is desired as a gift:

Spirit, in effect, does not desire God like an animal desires its prey. It desires him as a gift. It does not at all seek to possess an infinite object; it wants the free and gratuitous communication of a personal Being. If thus, per impossibile, it could take its highest good with a blow, this would no longer be its good. Does one still want to speak of exigence? In this case, one should say that the only exigence of spirit is to require (exiger) nothing in this regard. It requires that God be free in his offer, like it requires that it be free itself (in a completely different sense) in accepting this offer. It does not want a happiness that it takes, so much as a happiness that it has but to receive.

Owing to the fact that no desire of nature puts any constraint on God in fact, there is no problem in speaking of man’s desire as objectively absolute, but subjectively humble. Man’s whole

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271 Ibid., 480.

272 Cf. Ibid., 487, where de Lubac states in the clearest of terms, “En réalité, la question de l’exigence ne se pose pas.” (emphasis in original)

273 Ibid., 483-84. “L’esprit, en effet, ne désire pas Dieu comme l’animal désire sa proie. Il le désire comme un don. Il ne cherche point à posséder un objet infini: il veut la communication libre et gratuite d’un Etre personnel. Si donc, par impossible, il pouvait prendre son bien suprême, du coup, ce ne serait plus là son bien. Veu-t-on parlet encore d’exigence? En ce cas, l’on devra dire que l’unique exigence de l’esprit, c’est ici de ne rien exiger. Il exige que Dieu soit libre dans son offre, comme il exige d’être libre lui-même (en un tout autre sens) dans l’acceptation de cette offre. Il ne veut pas plus d’un bonheur qu’il prendrait, que d’un bonheur qu’il n’aurait qu’à recevoir.”

274 Ibid., 484.
being is constituted by a desire to whose fulfillment he has no right; anything less, impinges upon the divine freedom.275

However, de Lubac argues, man’s absolute desire for the vision of God does not impinge upon God’s freedom to grant that vision because the desire is in man as a result of God’s free choice to call man to himself.276 Rather than any need (besoin), this desire posits in man a duty (devoir), a duty of death to self, and, as Blondel had observed, of not fashioning an idol in the search for an end that it is within his reach.277 Man’s only exigence is the exigence that the object of his desire places on us of desiring it.278 By requiring that man follow, God creates in man a moral responsibility, flowing from man’s natural desire, of seeking first God’s glory, and only secondarily man’s own perfection.279 In this sense, the “exigence” of beatitude is really an exigence that man serve God; the exigence of “vision” is really an exigence that man adore God; the “exigence” of freedom is an exigence that man depend on God; the “exigence” of possessing God is really an exigence of man’s ex-stasis, of going out of himself towards God.280

De Lubac concludes his study of the supernatural by offering two notes in support of Berti’s Aegidianism. The first is a defense of that tradition’s denial that a natural desire for the vision of God causes any exigence in man with respect to God. The second is an implicit defense, specifically against Pelster’s criticism, that a doctrine of a natural desire for the vision

275 Ibid., 485.
276 Ibid., 486-87.
277 Ibid., 488.
278 Ibid., 490.
279 Ibid., 491-92
280 Ibid., 492.
of God cannot account for the existence of natural ethics. De Lubac argues that a natural desire for a supernatural end creates a stronger case for the moral imperative of knowing, loving, and serving God than any natural end that could be claimed from God by right. For only a natural desire for an end outside man’s reach engenders in man the humility to receive his end, rather than require it from God.

Second, de Lubac brings his defense of Berti’s Aegidianism to bear on some of the work of his early twentieth century predecessors. With Elter, de Lubac defends the idea that the theological tradition bore witness to a widely held doctrine of a natural desire for the vision of God. Against Descoqs, he argues that this vision could not be divided into a natural vision of the divine essence and a supernatural vision of the divine persons, because the divine essence is common to the persons. Against his predecessors in the early twentieth century neo-Aegidian revival, who would admit some sort of natural beatitude short of the vision of God, as well as those, like Cathrein, who insist on the necessity of pure nature, he argues that the only kind of natural happiness, for Thomas, is either that which is had in this life or that which is caused by the vision of God in the next; there is no natural beatitude to be possessed after this life. Against those suggesting that Thomas chose Aristotle in such a way as to preclude a fruitful Thomistic engagement with other philosophical systems, he argues that Thomas “received” Aristotle in a non-exclusive manner, and that Thomistic insights could fruitfully and rigorously be brought into dialogue with other philosophical systems. Lastly, against the peculiarities of Cajetan’s “historical” desire, Suárez’s “conditional” desire, and Ferrariensis’s “natural” end for man’s desire, he argues that the majority of the tradition overcomes whatever difficulties these three thinkers may have had with an essential, absolute desire for a supernatural end. De Lubac
concludes that such an essential, absolute desire for a supernatural end in no way causes an exigence in man for the vision of God. On the contrary, it creates a moral imperative, such as Blondel had envisioned, that man act in accord with the end towards which his desire is ordered.

D. Conclusion

Starting from a first reading of Blondel in the early 1920s, de Lubac made an initial commitment to an analytic approach to the doctrine of a natural desire for the vision of God, in contrast to a synthetic and ontologistic one; then de Lubac slowly considered the consequences of a natural desire for the vision of God over the next decade and a half. Around the end of 1925, de Lubac responded to the suggestion of Joseph Huby of verifying to what extent the doctrine of the Thomistic commentators about natural desire corresponded with the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas. De Lubac thus began his professional career by investigating the branch of the Aegidian tradition bearing the closest resemblance to his Blondelian Augustinianism: that of Berti. From that point, de Lubac blended non-scholastic and scholastic considerations about natural desire into a single narrative, which rehabilitated Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition for the twentieth century as a substitute for the more prevalent forms of Cajetanianism and Suarezianism, as well as other branches of the Aegidian tradition.

De Lubac’s embrace of the Aegidian tradition, which characterizes his professional publications on natural desire from 1931-1946, explicitly recognized his indebtedness to other twentieth-century Thomists, such as Sestili, Rousselot, Ligeard, and de Broglie, who had implicitly or explicitly embraced the Aegidian commitment to the vision of God as man’s only
end. Sestili, Rousselot, and de Broglie, however, had all done so by means of an elicited but absolute desire for the vision of God. For Rousselot and de Broglie, this doctrine arose out of an intellectualist response to Blondel. For all three, it led to an Aegidianism resembling that of Michael Paludanus, who had acknowledged the possibility of a natural end for man in a lesser participation of the knowledge of God, which, while it would not be man’s final end, would nevertheless be satisfying to certain extent. De Lubac found fault with this intellectualist response to Blondel as well as with the kind of Aegidianism resulting from it, because it compromised the commitment, at once Blondelian and Aegidian, to man’s single, supernatural end. By contrast, de Lubac maintained with Ligeard that a better response to Blondel consists in adopting with Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition a doctrine of a single, supernatural end for man.

With Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition, de Lubac affirmed that since man is made in the image of God, man consequently has a natural desire for the vision of God. That end is not due to man, however, because God remains free not to give the grace, which is the only means of attaining that end. A state of pure nature would not therefore constitute a state in which man had a naturally achievable end, such as Cajetan, Suárez, and Michael Paludanus had thought. It would constitute a state in which man was denied the only means of achieving his final end. While it is possible that God could create man in such a state \textit{de potentia absoluta}, it is unthinkable that he would do so \textit{de potentia ordinata}.

For de Lubac, only the conception of man found in Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition preserves the humility proper to man before God, the humility which he observed at the start of his formation in the work of Augustine, and which he later emphasized as central to the
authentic patristic and medieval tradition. Far from constituting another branch of Jansenism in its denial of the reasonableness of pure nature, Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition was one of the few branches of the theological tradition that resisted *en masse* the Baianist and Jansenist temptation to make God a debtor to man, whether of a supernatural end, as in Baius and Jansen, or of a natural one, as in Cajetan, Suárez, and their modern representatives like Gardeil and Descoqs.

Thus, de Lubac completed the task set before him by Huby and concluded that, of all the different varieties of Thomism to be found among the commentators of Thomas, only Berti’s Aegidianism maintained Thomas’s authentic doctrine. Other Thomists corrupted Thomas’s idea of a nature open in humility to a supernatural end. As Ligeard had noted, these Thomists paved the way for the rise of modern secularism. Moreover, the Church will be unable to stem the tide of secularism unless and until it abandons Cajetanian and Suarezian understandings of natural desire and turns back towards a Bertian Aegidian conception. Such a change will not be easy and must be done with the utmost intellectual rigor, but de Lubac thinks that it is possible. The one *caveat* is that, rather than granting the Aegidian argument that man’s final end can be known by natural reason, de Lubac concluded with Blondel that man can know by natural reason that his natural desire bears him towards a supernatural end, but not that this specific supernatural end is the vision of God. On this basis, de Lubac suggests, one can build an anthropology, an ethics, and an apologetics, all without losing any of the authentic fruit of the theological tradition, and all arising out of man’s search to respond to the transcendent motion at the core of his being.
Henri de Lubac, both in his personal intention as well as in the objective results of his work, remained throughout his formation and the period of his career leading up to the publication of *Surnaturel* a “traditional” thinker, who maintained a conscious appreciation for and dedication to the history of theological discourse about natural desire. Moreover, much of de Lubac’s thought relied upon the scholarly work of the members of a neo-Aegidian movement of the early twentieth century, even if this movement was at times more implicit than explicit.

Following the work of Hippolyte Ligeard, de Lubac specifically embraced Giovanni Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition, which maintained that the end of man is vision of God, although *de potentia absoluta* God could deny the grace which brings man to that end. This position was in preference to Michael Paludanus’s branch of the Aegidian tradition, which allowed for the possibility of a *penultimate*, naturally achievable end for man. Only on two questions did de Lubac adopt a thesis outside the Aegidian tradition. First, he followed Blondel in suggesting that the *terminus* of man’s natural desire for a supernatural end cannot be knowable specifically by natural reason. Second, although de Lubac did not think that Berti’s Aegidianism required any defense of the gratuity of the vision of God, he was for the sake of argument willing to consider Guy de Broglie’s idea that the vision of God cannot satisfy man unless it is received as a gift.

I would like to conclude by proposing a constructive answer to the question with which the present work began: to what extent can the two sides in the contemporary disagreement over de Lubac’s work be brought together? However, doing so will require that two questions be
answered: First, to what extent did de Lubac’s historical studies accurately represent Thomas and the Thomist tradition? Second, to what extent de Lubac’s thought can be reconciled with that of the Thomistic commentators?

A. De Lubac’s Relationship to Thomas and the Thomist Tradition

De Lubac’s relationship to Thomas and the Thomist tradition can best be considered in terms of several theological themes:

The End of Man’s Natural Desire. By the end of Surnaturel, de Lubac had identified Cajetan as the source of two fundamental errors in interpreting Thomas. First, there was Cajetan’s equation of desire in inanimate objects with desire in rational souls. De Lubac alleged that Cajetan overlooked the manner in which Thomas considered rational souls to have an activity with respect to their final end, and consequently denied that the human soul, more than any other creature, could have a natural, active desire for a supernatural end.

De Lubac was correct to note a certain divergence in Cajetan’s work from that of Thomas on the question of natural desire: Thomas affirmed a natural desire for the vision of God, while Cajetan, and a number of scholastics after him, denied it. However, de Lubac’s account of the divergence from Thomas to Cajetan was not entirely accurate. Cajetan did not err by considering natural desire in man on analogy with natural motion in celestial bodies. In fact, Thomas’s recension of Averroes’s doctrine of the combination of active and passive potencies in celestial bodies was one of the pillars upon which Thomas built his own concept of nature and of natural desire. Thomas specifically likens the first motions of the intellect and the will with the motions
of inanimate objects, since they are set in motion by God and receive their end from him. Cajetan did err, however, in the manner in his understanding of the relationship between material and formal principles in nature to natural desire. Where Thomas indicates that the soul, like matter, desires the complete actualization of all its potency, Cajetan wrongly thinks this means that the soul has a generic desire for form, which is then specified by specific forms. According to Cajetan, the soul has a generic desire for beatitude, but its desire can only be specified in accord with its knowledge. For Thomas, however, the soul, like matter, desires the complete actualization of all of its potency all at once. The difference between the soul and matter is that matter has to receive this perfection successively, but the soul is capable of receiving it all at once in the vision of God. For Thomas, unlike Cajetan, the soul therefore desires objectively and implicitly the vision of God, since this would constitute the highest fulfillment of its subjective potency. In this sense, de Lubac was correct to point out that Cajetan wrongly restricts man’s natural desire to a naturally achievable end.

Activity and Causality. Insofar as de Lubac’s doctrine of natural desire posits an activity in man towards the vision of God, his doctrine bears the strongest affinity with the Aegidian tradition. Giles of Rome agreed with Thomas that man has a natural desire for the vision of God, but criticized Thomas for not affirming any active disposition in matter for form, nor any active disposition in the human soul for the vision of God. De Lubac seems to have been unaware of Giles’s criticism of Thomas in this regard, and to have thought that Thomas and the Aegidian tradition had the same doctrine of a natural desire for the vision of God, when in fact the Aegidian doctrine was always distinguished from Thomas’s doctrine.
Since de Lubac does not adequately distinguish between Thomas’s and Giles’s conceptions of natural desire, he goes too far in attributing to Thomas a complete dichotomy between natural desire in natural creatures and natural desire in rational creatures. At the end of his career, Thomas distinguished between these two kinds of creatures and between the fact that natural creatures reach their end non-voluntarily, while rational creatures reach their end voluntarily. However, for Thomas the initial, general motion by which a rational creature desires its end is non-voluntary, and caused in it by a motion analogous to that by which God moves non-rational creatures, even if it must be completed by voluntary action. De Lubac, therefore, is not wrong to note the difference between natural desire in non-rational and rational creatures, but he errs in overlooking the similarity between them.

If de Lubac overlooked differences between Thomas and Giles, like many of his twentieth century predecessors, de Lubac also at times overlooked the difference between Giles and Scotus. Seeing in both figures a natural desire for the vision of God, de Lubac was often too quick to assume with other early twentieth century thinkers, like Elter, that Giles and Scotus, as well as their respective followers, transmitted a common doctrine. However, since man’s natural desire is fundamentally active for Giles, while for Scotus it is fundamentally passive, Aegidians and Scotists need to be distinguished from one another, and cannot be grouped together as evidence of a common, undivided tradition concerning natural desire.

Part of the difficulty that led to the association of Aegidianism and Scotism was the twentieth century use of Suárez’s distinction between innate and elicited desires. This led most early twentieth century thinkers, including de Lubac, to
assume that desires could not be distinguished into any finer categories, and precluded them from seeing the possibility of a bi-partite natural desire, such as Thomas developed from his bi-partite doctrine of *rationes seminales*. Unfortunately, the one early twentieth century figure who came closest to Thomas’s doctrine, Roland-Gosselin, obscured it by drawing consequences concerning the necessity of the offer of grace that were more like Berti’s quasi-exigence for grace, or compromised the gratuity of grace altogether.

*Obediential Potency.* One consequence of de Lubac’s ignorance of the difference between Thomas, Giles, and Scotus on man’s activity with respect to grace is de Lubac’s account of the history of obediential potency. De Lubac suggests that obediential potency was a later development misattributed to Thomas. However, obediential potency preceded Thomas in Bonaventure. Thomas emphasized the term less because he affirmed matter’s complete passivity with respect to form, and consequently nature’s complete passivity with respect to grace. The term is similarly absent in Scotus, who accounted for natural change by means of matter’s receptivity. For both Thomas and Scotus, matter’s passivity with respect to form and nature’s passivity with respect to grace, although not generally called “obediential,” are among the most important aspects of theological anthropology.

Thus, de Lubac’s accusation that Cajetan bears the primary responsibility for making obediential potency the hinge of man’s openness to grace is not entirely appropriate. Cajetan did not err in suggesting that, for Thomas, man is absolutely passive with respect to the reception of grace, and so Cajetan in part preserves a common doctrine of Thomas and Scotus. But Cajetan did err, at least in emphasis, by suggesting that the best way to account for nature’s receptivity to grace is by postulating an obediential potency in nature for grace. For Thomas, unlike Cajetan,
man is naturally *capax dei* in that man has a “material” potency whereby he stands in privation to accidental perfections received from God. Consequently for Thomas, unlike Cajetan, these accidental perfections are suitable objects of natural desire insofar as they fall under what is included in the complete actualization of man’s intellect and will. Cajetan, on the other hand, by limiting man’s natural desire to an end which is naturally known, and separating obediential from natural potency, placed the fulfillment of obediential potency outside the bounds of natural desire. Following Martin, Laporta, Roland-Gosselin, Charlier, and Motte, de Lubac rightly criticized Cajetan’s sole reliance on the concept of obediential potency to establish nature’s receptivity to grace, though greater awareness of those few texts where Thomas shows an openness to the concept would have been beneficial to his argument.

*The Possibility of Natural End for Man.* Another consequence of de Lubac’s ignorance of the difference between Thomas and Giles is in de Lubac’s account of the possibility of a natural end for man. De Lubac tends to associate the claim that man can only have a natural desire for a natural end with the hypothesis that a natural end for man is possible. However, these two questions are logically distinct, and have a different historical provenance. De Lubac correctly observed that the restriction of natural desires to natural ends arises in Cajetan. However, Thomas proposes that a natural end for man is nevertheless possible, because while man desires the complete fulfillment of his soul’s potency, the highest end that the human soul can achieve of its own accord is the natural knowledge of God. Thomas at several points acknowledges a multiplicity of “participated” beatitudes, none of which substitutes for man’s final end, but any of which could serve as a secondary, “natural” end. This was particularly the case in Thomas’s later treatment of the state of infants who die in original sin only. Thomas’s final position is that
these infants are aware of the possibility of the vision of God from a reflection on the potential of their nature to receive this vision, but are unaware of whether or not God has chosen to grant this vision to them; accordingly, they content themselves with a natural end, which does not completely satisfy their receptive potential. Thomas affirms both that man has a natural desire for the vision of God and that a natural end for man is possible, even if he does not say that this natural end would be an “ultimate” or “complete” beatitude.

De Lubac is correct that Cajetan and others after him misattribute to Thomas the doctrine of a natural final end for man, but de Lubac is incorrect in the claim that Thomas has no doctrine of natural end for man. De Lubac’s emphasis on the impossibility of such an end is more akin to the doctrine of Giles than to that of Thomas. Giles, by positing an active disposition in man for the vision of God, denied that anything less could constitute an end for man. More specifically, de Lubac follows Berti’s Aegidianism, which denied the possibility of a natural end for man in the face of critics arguing that it was necessary to posit such a natural end in order to safeguard the gratuity of grace. For Giles the disposition by which man is actively ordered towards the vision of God is superadded to nature as such, and some branches of the Aegidian tradition, such as those of Paludanus and Lafort, entertained the possibility that God might create man and call him to an end short of the vision of God. Although de Lubac gave an appropriately Aegidian response to such contemporaries as Garrigou-Lagrange and Descoqs, he seems overly critical of his predecessors in the Aegidian revival, such as Sestili, Rousselot, and de Broglie, whose Aegidianism relied on other branches of the tradition.

The Conclusion Reached by Aristotle’s Dictum. In light of de Lubac’s Bertian Aegidian doctrine of natural desire, he argues that Aristotle’s dictum that a natural desire cannot be vain
proves not only the probability or the possibility of the vision of God, but the actual fact that God has offered this vision, to the exclusion of other possible ends. In the face of Garrigou-Lagrange’s insistence that man’s natural desire proves only the probability of the vision of God, de Lubac rightly insisted that it had some more real, demonstrative value. Thomas certainly thought it did; however, Thomas consistently uses Aristotle’s *dictum* throughout his career to prove only the possibility of that vision, distinguishing the actual fact that God has offered this vision to man as a revealed truth, unknowable by natural reason. For Thomas, man’s natural ignorance of whether God has in fact offered the highest end that human nature is capable of receiving is the basis upon which he establishes the lack of suffering in infants who die in original sin only. De Lubac’s argument, by contrast, is closer to the Aegidian tradition than to that of Thomas, since the Aegidian tradition had long asserted that it would be unthinkable, in view of God’s Providence, that God would refuse to offer man the means to man’s only end.\(^1\)

Inspired by Berti’s Aegidianism, de Lubac denied the possibility of a natural end for man, proposing that man’s desire for the vision of God shows that it has in fact been offered to man as his end, even if one cannot know whether the means towards that end have been offered as well.

_The Natural Knowability of Man’s Final End._ There is one point at which de Lubac parts ways with the Aegidian tradition. Giles argues that it can be demonstrated by natural reason that, since the human soul is capable of the vision of God, the vision of God is the final end of man. While acknowledging the force of this argument, de Lubac expresses some hesitancy as concerns the natural knowability of the specific term of man’s natural desire. He is willing to grant that

\(^1\) As noted above, chapter 2, section A, Giles acknowledged the possibility of limbo for infants who die in original sin only. However, these children were only considered to be in a final state because they lost the *transmutatio* which causes a natural desire for the vision of God. If they still had a natural desire for the vision of God, they could not be satisfied with anything less than that vision.
man has a natural desire for a supernatural end, that Christian Revelation teaches that this supernatural end is the vision of God, and de Lubac maintains that man has a natural desire for a supernatural end, which is the vision of God. However, from his very first conference on natural desire in Plotinus and Augustine, de Lubac derived the idea from Blondel that, although man can know by natural reason that he has a natural desire for an end that exceeds the power of human nature, man requires Revelation in order to show what precisely that end is. In this point, de Lubac’s doctrine of a natural desire for the vision of God is more Blondelian than Aegidian.

Thomism and Scotism. De Lubac’s deference to Blondel on the question of the natural knowability of the specific terminus of man’s natural desire raises a question about the consistency of his doctrine. Rousselet correctly said that, since for Thomas the will is informed by the intellect in first act, the natural end of the will is naturally knowable. The idea that the natural end of the will might be naturally unknowable derives from Scotus, who separated the will from the intellect in first act, and thereby allowed the will to tend towards an end beyond that which could be known by natural reason. Blondel aligns with Scotus on this point. De Lubac, in spite of his express desire to overcome the dichotomy between Thomas and Scotus, does not successfully do so in Surnaturel. Be that as it may, de Lubac’s doctrine of the natural unknowability of the terminus of man’s natural desire is important in his system, and has consequences both in ethics as well as in apologetics.

Natural Ethics and the Natural Law. In the face of the objection from Pelster that the denial of a natural end for man entails the denial of natural ethics and the natural law, de Lubac concluded his final note of Surnaturel by emphasizing the general direction in which such an account might be given. After sketching the possibility during his formation of an account of
natural action and the natural law flowing from a doctrine of a natural desire for a supernatural end, de Lubac finally suggests in *Surnaturel* that such a doctrine could be developed, but that it would take the apophatic shape of Blondel’s metaphysical askesis rather than the more positive shape of the scholastic doctrine of natural law. Such a Blondelian askesis would be characterized not by the observance of an objective law, but by a struggle for subjective authenticity. An authentic subject, faithful to the experience of a natural desire for a supernatural end, would act only to prepare or dispose himself to receive his end, and would avoid acting in any way that would hamper the reception of that end or ill-dispose him towards it. De Lubac does not develop the consequences of such a conception of natural ethics and the natural law. Nevertheless he does acknowledge their importance.

*Apologetics.* De Lubac thinks that his doctrine of a natural desire for a supernatural end, whose specific term cannot be knowable by natural reason, will bear the most fruit in apologetics. Following Ligeard, de Lubac argued that a return to Berti’s Aegidian interpretation of Thomas in the response to Blondel would be salutary for the efforts of a contemporary Church, which was suffering from a conception of man that was closed off to the influence of the grace. De Lubac blamed the hypothesis of a natural end for man and of a state of pure nature for the advance of secularism, and so thought that a return to a doctrine of natural desire such as expressed in Berti’s Aegidianism, though it would have to be done with scholastic rigor, might turn the tide of popular opinion in favor of the Christian faith. De Lubac here confuses two questions, however: the cause of secularism and the cause of the Church’s inability to stop it. De Lubac’s argument at most speaks to the latter, as he does not give any positive evidence that any modern, secular thinkers were positively influenced by scholastics touting a doctrine of pure
nature. Still, de Lubac’s suggestion raises pertinent questions about the Church’s response to secularism.

**Conclusion.** In some of his broader conclusions, de Lubac can rightfully be said to have achieved his goal of evaluating the Thomism of the commentators and of restoring to twentieth century Thomism the doctrine of a natural desire for a supernatural end, as well as of nature’s natural receptivity to grace. However, de Lubac left a mixed legacy to his Thomist successors in that his understanding of Thomas, read through Berti’s branch of the Aegidian tradition, at times obscured the differences between that tradition and Thomas himself. This was not a deliberate attempt to misrepresent Thomas or the Aegidian tradition. Most of the theologians of the early twentieth century had difficulty categorizing the similarities and differences among Thomas, Giles, Scotus, Cajetan, and Suárez, whether maximizing or minimizing those differences. In this context, de Lubac added a singular note of historical erudition to the discussion in his search “to lose nothing of [the theological tradition’s] authentic riches,” and in so doing rehabilitated and raised to prominence a significant branch of the theological tradition that might otherwise have been long forgotten, and which contributed a unique and timely perspective to a long-standing debate about man’s natural desire for God.

**B. The Reconciliation of de Lubac and the Commentators**

This assessment of de Lubac’s place within the Thomist tradition can offer three ways of reconciling contrasting views of de Lubac’s work: first, by evaluating de Lubac’s thought in light
of the interpretation of Thomas advanced in chapter one; second, by evaluating de Lubac’s thought in light of the Aegidian tradition; third, by evaluating de Lubac’s thought as it stands.

1. First Suggestion: Reading de Lubac in the Light of Thomas

Thomas held that man has a natural desire for the vision of God, but that this desire consists of a general, active tendency in human nature towards the complete fulfillment of its intellectual potency, complemented by a passive receptivity to that fulfillment in the vision of God. In the face of early twentieth century Cajetanianism and Suarezianism, which denied that there is in man properly a natural desire for the vision of God, Surnaturel reminded Thomists that several texts in the Thomistic corpus explicitly teach that man has a natural desire for the vision of God. Yet de Lubac’s account of natural desire, read through the lens of the Aegidian tradition, was not without difficulty. That tradition’s originator, Giles of Rome, disagreed explicitly with Thomas about nature’s receptivity to grace. Thomas thought nature’s receptivity was completely passive; Giles thought it was in some way active. For Thomas, since man’s natural desire for the vision of God proves only the structural possibility of the vision of God, it allows for the historical possibility that God may choose to leave human nature to a lesser participation of this end in natural contemplation; for Giles, since man is actively ordered towards the vision of God, human nature can rest in nothing short of the vision of God. In other words, while de Lubac was right to remind followers of Cajetan and Suárez that Thomas embraces a natural desire for a supernatural end, the followers of Cajetan and Suárez have been right to remind the followers of de Lubac that Thomas acknowledges the possibility that human
nature could come to rest in a naturally achievable, but lesser participation of its supernatural end
as in the case of children who die in original sin only. Reading de Lubac in light of the
interpretation of Thomas advanced above in chapter one would pose the least difficulty for a
critical reception of de Lubac. It would affirm, with de Lubac, man’s orientation towards the
vision of God as a final end, but would acknowledge, with the commentators, that a natural end
for man is possible. It would affirm, with de Lubac, that human nature as such is open to the
vision of God and that this openness need not be considered as an obediential potency, but it
would acknowledge, with the commentators, that this receptivity is purely passive. It would
affirm, with de Lubac, that Aristotle’s *dictum* that “nature does nothing in vain” does not prove
that the ultimate *terminus* of man’s natural desire must be granted to him by God in actual fact,
but it would acknowledge, with the commentators, that the same *dictum* does not prove that such
an end has been chosen in actual fact for the human race in the present order of Providence. It
would affirm, with de Lubac, that a natural desire for the vision of God does not make the vision
of God due nature, but it would acknowledge, with the commentators, that one reason why the
vision of God not due nature is that God could *reasonably* withhold it without causing any
suffering to man, as Thomas argued in the case of children who die in original sin only. Finally,
it would affirm with de Lubac that only the vision of God could ever be man’s *ultimate* end,
while acknowledging with the commentators that human nature, deprived of this end, could
come to rest in a lesser participation of that end.

Concerning this last point, that man’s ultimate end could only be the vision of God, a
question arises. Part of the objection levied against de Lubac by contemporary critics is that, by
positing the end of man in the vision of God, which can only be known about by Revelation, it
becomes impossible to give an account of human nature and the natural law. How, therefore, 
would a return to Thomas’s doctrine in its thirteenth century context, in which the ultimate end is 
the vision of God, affect the Thomistic doctrine of natural law? In response, one must first note 
that the claim that placing man’s ultimate end in the vision of God makes it therefore 
inaccessible to natural reason is not authentically Thomist; it is Scotist, although Cajetan adopted 
this Scotist conclusion in the sixteenth century, Blondel adopted it in the nineteenth century, and 
Cajetanians like Garrigou-Lagrange adopted it in the twentieth century. Thomas, by contrast, 
consistently held that Aristotle’s dictum enables man to prove by natural reason that the ultimate 
end of man is the vision of God, even if it does not enable man to prove that God has, in fact, 
offered man the means of achieving his ultimate end, nor does it give man the means of 
understanding what that vision would be like. However, if it does not give man the means of 
understanding what that vision would be like, that is not the same as saying that the vision of 
God remains inaccessible to reason. Not even Scripture suggests what the vision of God would 
be like: “Quod oculus non vidit, nec auris audivit, nec in cor hominis ascendit, quae praeparavit 
Deus ii qui diligunt illum”2 Arguing that placing man’s ultimate end in the vision of God makes 
it inaccessible to philosophical reasoning because natural reason cannot know what it is like 
would constrain one to grant that the vision of God is inaccessible to theological reasoning as well.

Granted that placing the ultimate end of man in the vision of God does not make it 
antecedently inaccessible to natural reason, the question arises of which end ought to be taken as 
normative for human nature so that an account of the natural law might be derived from it: man’s

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2 1 Cor 2:9. “Eye has not seen, nor has ear heard, nor has it arisen in the heart of man, what God has prepared for those who love him.”
ultimate end in the vision of God, or the highest end achievable by man’s natural powers? This question entails a false dichotomy. For Thomas, it is entirely natural for man to have a bipartite natural desire, consisting of an active inclination towards the complete fulfillment of man’s intellectual potency and a passive receptivity towards the actualization of that potency in the vision of God. Any account of the natural law, if it is to avoid speaking of nature in an equivocal sense, has to take into account both aspects of human finality, that which it can achieve by its formal, active potency, and that which it can receive by its material, passive potency. In this way, while a system of natural ethics might be derived in relation to the end achievable by man’s formal, active potency, such an account of human nature would never be so determinate of human nature that the teaching of the Second Vatican Council would be contradicted: “Christ… fully shows man to himself and brings to light his highest calling.” Natural reason and natural ethics will always know about the possibility of the vision of God, even while they are left to wonder whether in fact God has chosen to offer man the means to this highest end. It is therefore incumbent upon a fully Thomistic natural ethics to mention man’s supernatural, ultimate end, and at the least to incorporate the duty of man not to obstruct his receptivity to that end, alongside the more customary considerations of acting in such a manner that is conducive to a naturally achievable participation of that end.

To advocate a return to Thomas’s bipartite doctrine of natural desire is not to suggest that there is only one way of reconciling the concerns of de Lubac’s contemporary supporters and critics. As a diversity of opinions flourished in the medieval and early modern periods, and as a similar diversity of opinions flourished in the early twentieth century, so is there nothing to

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3 *Gaudium et Spes* 22. “Christus… hominem ipsi homini plene manifestat eique altissimam eius vocationem patefacit.”
preclude a similar diversity flourishing in the early twenty-first century. In the spirit of that
diversity, and of an intellectual charity which respects it, I would like to suggest two other ways
of appropriating de Lubac’s thought for the twenty-first century: a return to a purer form of
Aegidianism, and the consequences of de Lubac’s thought as such.

2. Second Suggestion: The Development of Aegidianism

Giles, like Thomas, thought that natural reason could prove that the ultimate end of man
could only be the vision of God. The difference between Giles and Thomas was that Thomas
allowed for the possibility that man might be left to a lower, naturally achievable participation of
the vision of God, while Giles did not. Giles posited in man an active disposition for the vision of
God, which precludes the satisfaction of human nature in anything less than that vision. At first
glance, Giles’s doctrine might seem to preclude a comprehensive, yet authentic, Aegidian
concept of natural law, since the teleology of human nature is in a supernatural end. However, a
similar difficulty arises for Thomas as well. For Thomas, there will always be a tension in natural
ethics because, even though it may be conceived in relation to an end that man may achieve by
his natural powers, it must remain open to the possibility that God may have chosen to afford
man the means to his ultimate end. A more purely Aegidian approach to nature and natural law
would radicalize an already Thomist tension. In recognizing that man’s only end is the vision of
God and that nevertheless, de potentia absoluta, God could withhold the means to that end, its
account of natural ethics would be less prescriptive and more proscriptive; that is, it would focus
less on acts that seek to achieve the perfection of human nature of their own accord, since only
grace could ever bring man to that end, and more on acts that avoid compromising human nature’s receptivity to its final end, on the assumption that God has not, *de potentia absoluta*, elected to deny human nature that end. Perhaps even more than in Thomas’s system, a more Aegidian approach to nature and natural law would include a duty to seek the manner in which God may have chosen to offer the means to our ultimate end, since it would be unthinkable, *de potentia ordinata*, that a provident God would withhold them.

3. Third Suggestion: The Development of de Lubac’s Thought

The distinction in emphasis between *prescriptive* and *proscriptive* conceptions of natural law would be most important in the development of de Lubac’s Aegidianism. Since de Lubac admitted with Blondel that man’s end can be known by natural reason to be supernatural, but that it cannot be known by natural reason what precisely that end is, de Lubac had to suggest with Blondel that the goal of natural ethics is almost entirely proscriptive: man must avoid fashioning for himself an end of his own making, even as he awaits the reception of the end towards which the transcendent motion in his nature urges him. De Lubac began to take such an approach to the natural order, natural law, and natural ethics in his 1927 presentation on the natural order, as well as in his papers on miracles and on supernatural and meritorious actions. If he did not develop these thoughts further in *Surnaturel*, that does not mean that they could not be developed. Such an approach might perhaps face greater difficulties than a return to Thomas’s bipartite doctrine of natural desire or of a return to a purer form of Aegidianism, because it lacks a naturally knowable specific *terminus* around which to order man’s acts, but it would profitable to explore
further the metaphysical askesis proposed by Blondel in the search for authenticity in human action from the standpoint of de Lubac’s Aegidianism.

The greatest challenge to contemporary developments of de Lubac’s Aegidianism lies not in conceptions of nature and the natural law, but in the defense of the gratuity of grace. Utilizing the distinction between what God can do de potentia absoluta and what God can do de potentia ordinata as a means of defending the gratuity of grace has always been a somewhat tenuous argument within the Aegidian tradition, subject to severe criticism from other Thomists. There have always been thinkers who pushed the limits of that distinction and either broke them, such as Baius and Jansen, or stretched them to the breaking point, like Marie-Dominique Roland-Gosselin. But abusus non tollit usum. It remains an open question as to whether this Aegidian distinction is sufficient to guarantee God’s freedom in the bestowal of grace, or whether it is necessary to posit the possibility of a lesser participation of the vision of God in order to safeguard that gratuity more completely. One thing is certain, however. As de Lubac rightly noted, following Thomas: just because man has a natural desire for the vision of God does not mean that the vision of God is due to human nature. The Aegidian question concerns the gratuity of the means, not the gratuity of the end.

D. Paths to Further Development

This work began at an impasse in the reception of de Lubac’s doctrine of natural desire. It has concluded by proposing three constructive ways in which a critical reception of that doctrine, which takes into account the concerns of both his supporters as well as his critics, might be
pursued. I would like to suggest several more ways in which these historical studies could be further enriched, and in which developments of the paths I have proposed could be pursued.

**Studies of Thomas’s Immediate Context.** This work establishes a basis for considering the immediate context of Thomas’s doctrine of nature and the natural in debates about matter’s desire for form in Richard Rufus, Roger Bacon, and Bonaventure. Further studies of the understanding of nature in the early- and mid-thirteenth century could deepen contemporary understanding of that context, and shed new light on Thomas’s understanding of nature and natural desire. An incredible diversity of thought reigned among scholars of the mid-thirteenth century. Further diversity may yet be uncovered among the other theologians of that period.

**Studies of the Reception of Thomas’s Doctrine.** Giles and Scotus were not the only contemporaries or near-contemporaries who responded to Thomas’s doctrine; they were just two of the most important. The diversity of thought in these two thinkers, who straddled the border of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, suggests that there remains a wealth of material to consider in the early reception of Thomas, and in the abundance of diversity it occasioned. In this dissertation, particular attention has been paid to the tradition following from Giles, since the Aegidian tradition had the most direct influence on de Lubac’s work. Although this tradition began from several basic positions in Giles’s work, it gave rise to the diverse flowering of thought in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries. The history and theology of this tradition, little known to contemporary scholarship but tremendously important to de Lubac and to early twentieth century theology, warrants further consideration. Moreover, the Aegidian tradition did not develop on its own; it existed alongside the other scholastic traditions, each of which deserves careful consideration in its own right.
Studies of Henri de Lubac. Finally, there is need for further study of the work of Henri de Lubac. Establishing the context for his theological anthropology in a neo-Aegidian movement of early twentieth century theology, while it helps to explain de Lubac’s understanding of natural desire and to open paths towards its critical reception by contemporary scholars, raises many more questions about de Lubac’s *Oeuvre* than it has been possible to consider here. It is well known that de Lubac’s theological anthropology was at the heart of his apologetics, Christology, Ecclesiology and Sacramental Theology. The Aegidian context of de Lubac’s theological anthropology may serve as a basis from which to consider de Lubac a “traditional” theologian across a broad range of theological areas, and so shed fuller light on how de Lubac retrieved the theological tradition to meet the needs of the Church in the present day.
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