

# EDIFICATION

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OF CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGY

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# EDIFICATION

THE TRANSDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGY

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# EDIFICATION

## THE TRANSDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Edification encourages scholars from all disciplines to submit research papers relevant to Christian Psychology.

Edification is also especially interested in ideas for a discussion article to be published at the beginning of an issue and for an entire issue that explores a single theme of relevance to Christian Psychology.

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Manuscripts, ideas for discussion articles, and book reviews can be emailed to Lydia Kim-van Daalen, Managing Editor of Edification at [lydiakim.vd@gmail.com](mailto:lydiakim.vd@gmail.com).

# “By knowledge and by love:” The integrative role of *habitus* in Christian psychology

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*In Aquinas’ account of human action, habitus is the theo-psychological dynamic which strengthens and integrates moral, intellectual, and theological virtues. Bridging cognitive and moral psychology, a recovered concept of habitus is crucial for understanding person formation, moral agency, and identity. The introduction of habitus into psychology can be accomplished in three moves: first, by a direct application of the construct to issues in moral psychology; second, by a broader philosophical framing of (moral) psychology; and third, by the introduction of the question of theological virtues and the couching of psychology as a whole within a theological architectonic. The habitus concept is outlined at these various levels, and applications for education, environmental issues, and therapy are briefly discussed.*

History, it is said, is written by the victors, sometimes on a grand scale, and as Charles Mathewes (2001) boldly states, the entire “history of Western thought since Augustine can be seen as a series of readings – or, better, *misreadings* of his work” (p. 61; also Rist, 1994). As we know, there are riches for Christian psychologists to recover in Augustine’s writings (Charry, 2007); so, an accurate reading of Augustine is important. But if Augustine has been misread, the same is true to a far greater extent for St. Thomas Aquinas. Not only is Thomas frequently suspected of many of the same philosophical crimes as Augustine, complicity by association perhaps, but, or so it seems, he is also often assumed to be excessively rationalist, to dabble in abstruse and impossible metaphysics, to construe emotions as nothing but annoying disruptions of reason, to focus on the God of the philosophers to the exclusion of the God of Scriptures, to have invented “faculty” psychology, and to have an excessive interest in the terpsichorean skills of angelic beings! The reader may recognise and perhaps even identify with some of these mistaken characterisations.<sup>1</sup> All this is a great pity since there are treasures to be recovered from Aquinas especially, as I shall argue, his account of action and *habitus*.

## Plan

To show this, I shall first briefly outline what I see as interesting parallel issues in need of resolution in moral psychology, moral theology, and the wider culture. I shall then unpack St. Thomas’s ideas about *habitus* in a reading heavily influenced by the Radical Orthodoxy theological movement (e.g. Milbank & Oliver, 2009; Milbank, Oliver, Lehmann Imfeld, & Hampson, 2012). Thirdly, I identify some current loose ends in moral psychology. I try to show how the highly integrative power of Aquinas’ theological anthropology offers ways to resolve currently puzzling gaps in our psychological explanations, following Macintyre (1988, 1992) in which one rival

tradition is used to critique another. With Macintyre, I take it that the power of a rival tradition, Thomism in this case, can be vindicated not merely by its ability to identify epistemic crises in an afflicted tradition, psychology here, but is most successful and effective when it shows where and why the afflicted tradition has gone off course, and offers solutions comprehensible in the language of the afflicted tradition. Though to do this, as theologian Craig Titus (2010) reminds us, the two traditions must be commensurable. I will therefore try to do that by keeping an eye out for where commensurability obtains, breaks down, and can be re-established.

I next introduce a brief discussion of the status of the theological virtues in Christian psychology, and briefly indicate three areas in which a recovered concept of *habitus* might be of some practical use in domains such as education, therapy, and environmentally sustainable behaviors.

A second important aim is to explore how best to communicate the riches of the theological tradition to secular psychology, to examine how Christian psychology might assist, and best frame its endeavour. I will suggest as an apologetic strategy that what is repristinated by the theological tradition and explored fully by Christian psychology may need first to be communicated to secular psychology in a simplified and conceptually reduced way in order simply to move psychology on. Only then, in a second engagement, might secular psychology be ready and able to appreciate the fuller possibilities and wider view of interdisciplinary engagement and participation.

To gain this vista, I will climb two ladders: the first to win a better view of the psychological landscape chiefly from a more nuanced philosophical understanding of action, *habitus*, and the virtues, and the second to a higher theological level. I shall then throw both ladders away. But to temper Wittgenstein’s analogy somewhat I will offer a

safer and more elegant route down to reach back from the theological through the philosophical to the psychological. I hope, therefore, that my propositions are still recognized as having good sense after descending, and in that way are less gnomic than some of Wittgenstein's (cf. Wittgenstein, 1922).

From a theological perspective, there are two models of theology-psychology relationship in play here. The first, following Macintyre (1992), is based on the engagement of one "rival" tradition by another. The second, following Radical Orthodoxy and a de Lubacian concept of grace (Lubac, 1946), views secular psychology as at a lower level of "participation" than *sacra doctrina* and philosophical theology, and all under the aegis of and subordinate to divine *scientia*.

### **Analogous problems in moral theology and moral psychology**

Leaving Thomas aside for a moment, I now want to consider what I see as analogous problems in moral psychology and theology. *Analogous* problems note, not identical or isomorphic. I am *not* saying that the problems in one domain are strictly equivalent, correlate directly with, or are reducible without remainder to the other. I am simply suggesting that they appear to be related. I offer these analogous problems to explore how and where connections are possible.

Moral theologian Michael Sherwin (2005) begins his monograph on Aquinas's moral theology, *By Knowledge and By Love* (whose title I gratefully re-use here) by indicating a disjunction, not to say a disagreement between two sets of Catholic moral theologians in the twentieth century. The first set he dubs theologians of the manuals. Put simply, and certainly until the Second Vatican Council, Roman Catholic priests were trained in moral theology in an approach which tended to reduce complex issues of moral life and associated decision-making to sets of rules or propositions. The manuals, so called, were codifications of the Catholic system designed largely to help priests in giving guidance and hearing confessions. What the manuals apparently lacked in subtlety, they made up in rigour, with no stone of the Christian life left unturned. This intellectualist, regulative approach to moral behavior was shaped, in part, by a Neo-Scholastic, propositionalist reading of Aquinas after his revival following the instruction of Pope Leo XIII (Kerr, 2002, 2007). Quoting Mahoney (1987, pp. 27-36), Sherwin notes that "this method of analysis leads to several imbalances. It generates a preoccupation with sin, an almost obsessive concern for law; and a myopic focus on the individual and his or her specific acts" (p. 3). Agreeing with Karl Rahner (1974), he rightly points out "the moral life must be more than this" (Sherwin, p. 3).

In contrast, those whom Sherwin (2005) calls "theorists of moral motivation," emphasise the primacy of love (*caritas*) and feeling for God over knowledge, and therefore stress rather more

the role of correctly ordered good will, feeling, and conscience. "(A)s the theologians of moral motivation claim, charity's act is a morally significant motion in the will occurring at a level distinct from one's concrete (categorical) knowledge. ... According to this view, one is good or bad depending on how, in grace, one exercises one's basic self-realization, by whether one opens up toward God or turns away from him" (Sherwin, pp. 7-8). It is easy to see how the former stresses the rightness of the act in terms of rules and criteria, and a well ordered intellect, while the latter emphasises the importance of love, feeling, a rightly ordered will, and self-realisation. To parody and simplify both somewhat: "if it is within the rules, it is right," or, alternatively, "if it feels right and *true to oneself* and is lovingly ordered to God it is right." Interestingly, and staying within the broad sphere of ethics, though this time informed by Biblical theology, the Anglican Bishop of Durham, Tom Wright (2010), has recently identified a similar *cultural* dichotomy between moral rules and moral authenticity in his book *Virtue Reborn* (U.S. title: *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters*).

Now, a potentially parallel analysis to these two Catholic perspectives on moral theology has been clearly outlined by Hardy and Carlo (2005) in moral psychology:

One of the first and most influential theories of morality, Kohlberg's (1969) cognitive developmental theory, focused largely on the role of moral reasoning. In contrast, Hoffman's (1970) moral socialisation theory emphasized moral emotion.... More recently, some scholars have suggested that moral motivation is more fully understood by considering the role of the self in morality, often termed *moral self*, or *moral identity* (Lapsley and Narvaez, 2004) (p. 232).

As I intimated earlier, moral theology and moral psychology have identified parallel, not identical problems, and so it is worth briefly considering their relationship. The problems are related at the obvious level that the same apparent distinction arises in both cases: between intellect and rules, on the one hand, and emotions, judgements of value, motivation, and the self, on the other hand. The emphasis on rules by the theologian of the manuals resonates with rule based accounts of moral development.<sup>2</sup> The stress on intention, feeling, and value by the theologians of moral motivation connects in an obvious sense with accounts of moral emotion. This suggests a deeper connection: whatever cultural (and theological) forces have been responsible for the partial disconnection between reason and emotion in the culture at large may also have been active in moral psychology and moral theology, though admittedly in different measure.

But there are differences too, and these are arguably more important for us here. Moral theology's problems, and therefore its solutions, are

about our right relationships with God and with each other. Its interest in theological anthropology is important, but ultimately secondary to its interest in relationality. Moral psychology's concern, however, is with the acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of moral judgements and behavior. Its focus is solely on the person. Three immediate problems here arise:

1. It is not clear for psychology, on psychological grounds alone at any rate, what counts as moral behavior or the good. "Whose morality? Which behavior?" we might ask.
2. Nor is it necessarily the case that God is represented in the secular moral psychology equation. Rarely in fact, in my experience, is God invoked, and so where the good is considered (is it ever?), it is typically discussed univocally as a non-transcendent concept within the created order.
3. Nor is it the case that terms like "reason," "emotion," and "will" have exactly the same connotations or extensions in psychology and theology. Simply to assume in advance that problems and solutions are *isomorphic* in the cases of moral theology and psychology is unwise in the extreme. And as we shall see, it is the disjunction between moral psychology and theology that affords the opportunity for their productive conjunction.

Whatever the wider causal factors, intellect and emotions appear in predictable opposition in all this, or as Sherwin (2005) puts it quoting Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, act 3, scene 1, "Reason and love keep little company together nowadays" (p. xvii). Knowledge lacks love, love knowledge, and the two fail to cohere.<sup>3</sup>

I want to suggest that theology currently has the more nuanced and sophisticated solution to these issues at its disposal. In the short term, this can add conceptual value to psychology and assist it in integrating concepts and literatures that are at present only loosely connected.

There is a sting in the tail, however, which is this: If psychology accepts the offer of help from theology in this way, it is effectively signing up to a philosophical framework which will at least challenge its standard accounts of causality, through the reintroduction of an Aristotelian concept of action. In short, it will need to re-evaluate its position on the nature of psychological change in general, its notions of causality, and on teleology, the purposes of actions; and if it chooses to accept the whole package on offer, it begins to acknowledge its legitimate positioning by theology. So what help is on offer? Re-enter Thomas with his *Summa Theologiae*.

It is in the *prima pars secundae partis* of the *Summa*,<sup>4</sup> especially QQ 49-54, where St Thomas unpacks his concept of *habitus*, on habits in general, and QQ 55-89, on habits in particular with a special consideration of good habits, namely the virtues QQ 55-70 (the latter are further examined by Thomas in

the *secunda pars secundae partis*).

#### *Virtues and habitus*

So why is *habitus* so important? Why this concept rather than the more familiar term "virtues"? Anticipating what comes later, as the underpinning of the virtues, *habitus* can be considered to have important psychological, philosophical, and theological implications, and to get the full picture we need to review all three. But first what is *habitus*?

To understand how the term *habitus* is used, we must not be misled by its similarity to the English word *habit* (i.e., the repetition of automatic, often meaningless behavior). *Skill* is a better term to use, though this too has reductive connotations that can mislead. For Aquinas, *habitus* refers to the ways in which repeated *acts* become perfected dispositions to act for good or ill; this is how, if repeated, they become part of our second nature.<sup>6</sup>

The notion of repetition is worth nuancing here. Rather than thinking of it as the automatic, *exact* repetition of as behavioral sequence, *habitus*, as theologian Simon Oliver reminds us, relates to '*non-identical* repetition' (Milbank, Oliver, Lehmann Imfeld, & Hampson, 2012). Nor is the term "automatic" strictly applicable to *habitus*. In psychological terms, the deployment of a well-developed *habitus* is more like a demonstration of flexible expertise, sensitive to different situational demands, routinized but not robotic (before robots got clever that is!).

So, while the concept includes the notion of repetition familiar to students of the modern skills literature, or therapy for that matter, it is articulated within a teleological understanding of "acts," which are oriented towards goals or goods of one sort or another, each act involving a deepening participation in being. Hence, "non-identical repetition" is itself a more sophisticated concept than meets the eye. It is "non-identical" not simply in the psychological sense, but ontologically too in that deepening participation takes one nearer to union with one's goal as the "movement" becomes more swift and delightful. To see why this is the case, remember that Thomas brings Plato and Aristotle together and, in Aristotelian terms, an act is a form of movement or change from potentiality to actuality. That is, *habitus* moves us closer to attaining or *actualizing* (making real) the goods we value, desire, and seek, until we cohere with them. The concept requires, implicitly or explicitly, an account of what constitutes the good or goods, as actions are inextricably bound to goals. It also implies that our actions become more attuned to their goals as they approach them. Thus, the will becomes more of a "good" will the nearer it approaches the good; the intellect more "true" to its nature the nearer it approaches the truth; and Truth and Goodness are ultimately identical in God so that the will's desires (love), and the intellect's knowledge and understanding ultimately converge. In this vein, theologian Herbert McCabe (2008) writes, "There is an interweaving of understanding and being

attracted that cannot be unravelled in practice. We think of what we are attracted to thinking of, and we are attracted to what we think of” (pp. 79-80).<sup>7</sup>

The fact too that *habitus* refers to all *repeated* acts shows how *routinized* moral behaviors ultimately underpin all virtues. Two points are worth reinforcing here. First, for Thomas, intense moral struggle is not necessarily the sign of “good” character, instead it is those moral acts which flow effortlessly from our second nature which show that we are morally well formed. Second, *all* the virtues, and vices too of course, are underpinned by habits.

Turning to the wider psychological effects of habits, we can list these briefly as the formation of character; the shaping, honing, and connecting of virtues; the creation of second nature dispositions. The route from habit to character is not yet fully mapped psychologically, but I would suggest that one route is through the repeated retrieval, use, and elaboration of relevant moral self-narratives which then become components of autobiographical memory. With Tim Hulsey, I have begun to consider theoretically the ways in which retrieval practice of self-referring moral beliefs will not only strengthen the repeatedly retrieved beliefs about one’s self and actions, but through the process of “retrieval induced forgetting” will weaken non-rehearsed beliefs (Hulsey & Hampson, 2010; see also Anderson, Bjork, & Bjork, 2000).

*Habitus* underpins all repeated *acts*, and acts, as we have seen, are movements or changes from potentiality to actuality. Hence, it is important to grasp that virtues, good acts, involve more aspects of our psychology than just behavior. Virtue is not merely overtly *doing* good things. *Habitus* forms beliefs, shapes and modulates emotions, and correctly aligns our appetites and apprehensions (Cates, 2009; Lombardo, 2011; Sherwin, 2005). As such, in the *Summa*, we have intellectual virtues which strengthen the intellect, and moral virtues which strengthen the will, appetites, and affections, as well as a focus on external acts. Crucially, too, in the classical tradition, virtues are not “modular” or stand alone. They interact and mutually cohere and are balanced. As Chesterton (1908) pointed out, times of religious crisis are not merely marked by the vices being let loose, but also by the virtues being uncoupled. This does not happen in Thomas’s anthropology and is a point ripe for exploration and development by psychology.

And habits create dispositions to act in a similar way in the future. Thomas and Aristotle make the point that this becomes part of our “second nature,” as good a term as any. Hulsey and I tend to think of these as second-order or acquired dispositions that eventually come to take on trait like qualities (Hulsey & Hampson, 2010). In our opinion, positive psychology has focussed on this dimension of virtue to the exclusion somewhat of the dimensions to do with development, learning, and maturation.

Given these psychological effects, what briefly

are their philosophical implications? First, it is worth emphasising, if it is not obvious by now, that acts and *habitus* are, unavoidably, built around the idea that humans act for reasons and purposes. The teleology is inescapable. Second, in Aristotelian terms, goals then become the *formal* causes of our actions, while motives are their *efficient* causes, and God, within a Christian framework at least, is the final (non-univocal) “cause.” Psychology’s account of causality is thus enriched too. This may hardly seem worth noting to the theologian or some philosophers, but fellow psychologists will know that it is important and potentially controversial. Third, the *habitus* model is parsimonious. One single account of repeated action pulls together the virtues, but also acts as connector for various functional aspects of the system, linking cognitive with moral psychology, thought with feeling, beliefs with actions, and so on. The integrative power of Aquinas’s anthropology is indeed stunning (Oliver, 2005, see also Lombardo, 2011). Fourth, moral acts are placed in a framework in which the good must be specified. Fifth, and this is less explicit in Aquinas’s account than in later developments, it is possible to see how the moral life as a whole must be embedded within supportive social frameworks and traditions (MacIntyre, 1984; Smith, 2003, Rowland, 2003).

All this sets the scene for the theological move which we shall make later. First, however, how specifically might *habitus* help moral psychology?

## **Tying up loose ends in moral psychology**

### *Moral identity*

If virtues understood as moral habits are so important, presumably they have been taken up and extensively studied by moral psychology? In fact, the answer to this question is not so straightforward. The most extensive studies of virtues have taken place under the umbrella of positive psychology, and typically understood as traits, with little reference to moral psychology (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). Moral psychology has only recently begun to signal an interest in virtues and moral expertise, but thus far without the concept of *habitus* (Weaver, 2006; see also Narvaez & Lapsley, 2005 on moral expertise) and the virtue tradition is only just starting to have some impact on therapy (Dueck & Reimer, 2003; Russell, 2009). So what is moral psychology’s approach?

A currently popular move in moral psychology appeals to the notion of moral identity as the construct which helps integrate both moral understanding and moral emotion (Hardy & Carlo, 2005). Moral identity is roughly one’s moral self. Blasi (1980, 1983, 1993, 1994, 2005) and others maintain that maturing identity correlates with an increasing desire to behave in a way consistent with one’s beliefs (Glodis & Blasi, 1993). Beliefs, values, and emotions are linked, it is assumed, and simply interconnect with action.

But as Hardy and Carlo (2005) point out with



some justification “little has been done to explicate links between these facets and to understand their relative role in relation to moral behavior” (p. 247). Hardy and Carlo list a further seven unanswered questions for work on moral identity. For convenience I will group all but one of these into three topic areas I wish to consider here:

1. What are the causal relations between moral identity and moral behavior? What mechanisms link moral identity and moral action, and what factors might mediate this link (Hardy and Carlo, 2005, pp. 244-246)?<sup>10</sup>
2. “How does moral identity relate to more automatic, less reflective moral behavior” (Hardy and Carlo, 2005, p. 246)?
3. “How does moral identity develop, and what factors influence moral identity development” (Hardy and Carlo, 2005, pp. 247-249)?

To which I add a fourth:

4. How do the virtues and vices, that is good and bad moral habits, relate to these issues?

I hope it is beginning to be clear that *habitus* does help with Hardy and Carlo’s (2005) unsolved problems. In this sense:

1. As a construct closely connected with act and linking knowledge, desire, and ideals, *habitus* effectively knits together the various components of moral activity. Put simply, it connects what we believe and what we desire with what we do. It is interesting here to recall the U.S. title of Wright’s (2010) recent book, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters*. The answer to “What must I do after I believe,” the question of the rich young man, is really the same as the jokey response to the musician who asks, “How do I get to Carnegie Hall?” The answer is, “Practice!” And practice strengthens both what we believe and desire, through intellect and the will, our ability to balance immediate desires and more general knowledge and understanding, the courage and fortitude to act justly, put our beliefs into action, and so on. Here again is the integrative power of Thomas’s anthropology. (The answer to number 1 is also partly the complementary answer to number 4 and vice versa).

2. As for how *habitus* relates to automatic moral behavior, one way to construe the *habitus* account is as a theory of *moral expertise*. I prefer this term to automaticity for a variety of reasons. I will mention three here. First, psychologists studying automaticity frequently use tasks involving simple, pre-specified, affect-free activities and consisting of short perceptual-motor sequences, with well-defined stimuli and simple responses, occurring in predictable contexts over brief time frames (e.g. Treisman & Gelade, 1980). Simple fixed tasks in other words. By contrast, real world moral decisions and actions are more likely to be emotion-rich, occur in more ambiguous situations, involve complex

chains of responses, ranging from brief to long time periods in their execution. Second, the notion of “automatic” too easily connotes “non-conscious,” yet “non-conscious” and “automatic” simply do not have the same extension. It does not follow that we are necessarily non-conscious of largely automatic activity, nor *fully* conscious of all controlled processing. Instead of considering automaticity in rigid or absolute terms and as simply equivalent to non-conscious activity, a more fruitful approach is probably to construe well-formed moral habits as examples of *routinized* processing that nevertheless demonstrates *expertise* (Ericsson, Charness, Feltovitch, & Hoffman, 2006). Expertise is flexible and responsive to situational demands in a way that strict automaticity is not. Third, notions of automaticity are too easily connected with an overly rigid, modular view of the mind. This is neither good psychology nor good theology.<sup>11</sup>

3. In connecting beliefs with actions, *habitus*, in reverse we might say, helps also shape character and moral identity, and lays down “second order” dispositions to act in related ways in the future. Again, this is best left for a much longer treatment but, briefly, it is suggested that moral identity can be shaped, bottom up, by the effect of repeated actions, and top down by the social contexts in which we are embedded. Dispositions to act are laid down as a function of repetition. This is very much in tune with work on embodiment and the plasticity of neural networks.

4. *Habitus* underpins *all* repeated acts. Virtues and vices emerge through *habitus*. This is important in that it provides us, we might say, with an account of undesirable as well as desirable moral formation.

5. In addition, to underline the point, it is clear that emotions are as trainable as is the intellect. Of relevance here is the claim of Siemer and Reisenzein (2007) that emotional judgments, which are initially inferred and carefully thought through, can become automatic or “proceduralized” through repeated practice. Desire as well as reason can be shaped and trained, and love and knowledge thereby mutually shaped and reconnected.

### Theological virtues: Just habits or what?

What I have outlined may be helpful to a secularized moral psychology in indicating how it might better integrate moral emotion, knowledge, and agency. It also positions psychology within a more sophisticated account of causality. To communicate this more widely would be a real achievement, and important given psychology’s cultural influence and standing. But is this sufficient for a *Christian* psychology or theological anthropology? All this talk of act, habit, and virtue, at least as I have outlined

it, suggests that we can achieve moral and possibly spiritual perfection through our own efforts. Is there not a role for God and grace and religious or at least moral frameworks in all this? Perhaps all we have done is to integrate the dimensions of moral psychology within an admittedly improved psychological account of action. We have made the Aristotelian move in other words, but what about the theological move? Here we need to climb our second ladder.

Thomas, of course, holds the ladder here and makes a distinction between the intellectual and moral virtues on the one hand and the theological virtues on the other.<sup>12</sup> The core theological virtues, theological affections would be another way of describing them, are the familiar trio of faith, hope, and charity (see Cates, 2009). These are said to perfect the intellect and will so that natural knowledge and wants are redeemed and graced by love and thence for the divine.

Two definitions of virtue thus come into play here, and are apparent in the *Summa*: first virtue simply as *habitus* (ST, 1a2ae.55.1.resp), and second a fuller more inclusive definition in which some virtues are seen as “infused” or dependent on grace (ST, 1a.2ae.55.4.resp). Both aspects of virtue involve degrees of participation, but infused virtues enjoy deeper participation in God’s nature, and are invitations into friendship with God through Christ and the Spirit. Participation, here elevated to a Christian concept, is a transcendental sharing in God’s being itself and its perfections, for example, its goodness. It is an invitation to become God-like or, more accurately, Christ-like. This “divinisation”<sup>13</sup> relation is again one of potency to act. So, for example, in moving from knowledge to faith, we move increasingly from truth-seeking to fuller participation in (and thus increase our potential to actualise) the Truth, and from trust in the intelligibility of the world and the things it contains to trust in the ultimate intelligibility of the world as a sign of God’s created gift, and hence of the guarantor of all that is intelligible. Likewise, my natural desires and human wants become purified through charity in loving others and the source of love *per se*.

But none of this can be done unaided, so the expression “deeper participation” can be misleading, especially if we think of this as an extrapolation of our purely human efforts. “Grace names, in particular, the way God gives himself or communicates his goodness to the human creature, even beyond the divine gift of being” (Te Velde, 2006, p. 148). Hence, it is better to think of these as two different orders of participation which correspond to what Aquinas calls the *effectus naturae* and the *effectus gratiae* (ST, 1a,1.8.ad1). From this perspective, the gift of creation allows us to share in God’s gift of being; the gift of grace invites us to share in God’s divinity, but only through Christ in whom “the fullness of grace and truth” has become visible (John 1:14). All this takes place within and is part and parcel of an

internalized moral belief system and a framework of moral law (though I shall not be considering this issue further here).

I offer us a single route back down. Before descending, I should make it clear that the theological virtues are not, according to this position, an extra storey or layer above the moral and intellectual virtues. There is a deeper interconnection of the virtues here. As Vivian Boland, OP, puts it, Christianity is not in this sense simply the icing on top of the moral cake (Boland, 2010). It is not merely humanism with accessories. This is why we need to throw (at least) one of the *two* ladders away. There is ultimately only one moral and spiritual ascent and *one* downward perfection of all nature by grace. Why is this?

To begin with, as Henri de Lubac, Rudi Te Velde, and others have carefully pointed out, all is part of an economy of grace in Thomas, there is no sharp divide between grace and nature (Lubac, 1946; Te Velde, 2006). Grace, the gift of God, is nothing more, nor nothing less than a deepening of participation by human creatures in His life through Christ. “He became what we are that we might become what He is,” as St Athanasius put it in the fourth century (Athanasius, 2011). There is though, for Thomas, as we have just seen, a twofold order of gift - the gift that holds us in being and continually sustains us, and the gift of invitation into a relationship, a friendship of *caritas* with God -and a corresponding twofold order of happiness (te Velde, 2006). Grace then perfects nature, for sure, but it also presupposes it.<sup>14</sup>

So, gift and response are both needed, and the perfection of the intellect through the gifts of faith is only fully realized when faith is put into practice, or when it is “in act,” as Thomas would say. Hence, faith itself is also a *habitus* as well as a gift. And there is no loss of creaturely freedom here. We must *practise* our faith, as well as responding graciously to the invitation to faith. The same is true of hope and *caritas*. We love God and that love *has* to overflow into love of our neighbour and resulting actions. In so doing, of course, the other virtues, both intellectual and moral, are thereby perfected in turn. This is where we descend the staircase and invite secular psychology through a theological analysis to take seriously the proposition that God does matter, the Christian life does make a difference, and even, potentially, that it makes a psychological not simply a metaphysical difference. Although here, we are speaking of a difference not (just or at all) with narrowly empirical consequences, but with *meaningful* consequences that are accessible through the hermeneutics of a Christian life. This is a strong claim for Christian psychology to make to the psychology of religion and moral psychology. But I think it is an essential one if psychology is carried up into and conceptually made subordinate to the interpenetration between philosophy and what Thomas calls, *sacra doctrina*, the revealed truths from the tradition, the book of nature, and Scripture.

Boland (2010) uses the example of courage

to illustrate this point.<sup>15</sup> A soldier possessed of the classical virtues may exhibit high degrees of bravery and courage in battle to the extent that he may risk injury or death in carrying out his duty, seeking honor, and supporting his comrades. But a Christian martyr, and I think here of a Dietrich Bonhoeffer or a Maximilian Kolbe,<sup>16</sup> shows a perfected courage in letting go of their life purely for the love of God and concern for others, believing in the limit case that only in losing their life would they gain it, and acting on that belief.

### Some applications

In these days of accountability and targets, when our labors as academics are often judged by their applicability and utility, it may be wise and circumspect, attributes of prudence after all, to suggest at least some “uses” for *habitus*. There are, too, more principled reasons for doing so. We can have an effect, positive I hope, on practice, culture, and the wider world. With this in mind, let me indicate briefly in broad brush strokes how *habitus* might help in three domains of cultural significance: in education, in ecological issues and “green” or sustainable behaviors, and in therapy.

In education, Aquinas’s account reminds us that there are intellectual virtues, which are more than mere “transferable” or “subject specific skills.” Good intellectual habits, for Aquinas, improve our ability to aim for the truth and to exhibit practical intelligence (prudence or good sense). Knowledge, understanding, and judgement are part of this. It may seem a trivial remark to make at one level, but truth matters. In a culture where truth appears at times to be whatever Western intellectuals deem it to be, it may need restating.<sup>17</sup>

But in saying that the intellectual virtues are not just skills, I do not mean to imply that practice is not important. It is. And, it has to be said, the relatively poor levels of mathematical and numerical attainment let alone the apparent inability to make poetry part of oneself in our Anglo-American culture, compared, say, with India or the Far East, may have something to do with the suspicion with which learning involving repetition is viewed.<sup>18</sup> As an aside, educationalists should not really need theologians to tell them this. A more careful reading of the psychological literature from the 1970s onwards should remind them of the important difference between maintenance and elaborative rehearsal, (see Craik & Tulving, 1975). Had we more time, we could also think about how Thomas anticipates the sweet delight of “flow” that comes from immersing oneself in intellectual work.

Of course, this application of *habitus* to education is still to operate at the secular/psychological level. The theological move, where faith perfects the intellect and infuses all the way down, means that disciplines are not only truth-seeking, but like theology in a sense, must begin in awe and end in worship. They are, after all, increasing levels of participation from the Book of Nature toward God.

As we saw, repeated habits, and by extension the intellectual habits of learning, get stronger not just or primarily in terms of their alacrity or accuracy, but in terms of the fuller participation they engender with being itself (see also Griffiths, 2009). The standards this sets for our intellectual life and formation could not be higher – or more perfect. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah, 55.9).

Turning to matters ecological, a virtue approach to encouraging and sustaining sustainable behaviors may be more useful than one based on legalism or rule enforcement. It makes sense to argue that the formation of virtues such as justice for the present and future generations, temperance in being less attached to physical comfort, fortitude in sticking with it (e.g., walking to work when we are tempted to take the car, or putting on an extra sweater when we might turn up the heating), and, of course, prudence, the practical intelligence and moral discernment needed to make the right decisions in specific circumstances based on our general knowledge. All this chimes well with theologian Celia Deane-Drummond’s (2009, 2012) views. She has argued recently on theological grounds in favor of a virtue based approach in which prudence has a key role, in preference to “contractualism” or “covenant ideas.”

But again, are we not still talking about the cardinal virtues? Here too, there is a need to perfect these with the theological. With Deane-Drummond (2009, 2012) we can take the approach further, taking a deep incarnation view, so that our ecological endeavors are sustained and raised up until our sense of justice is suffused by *caritas* grounded in God’s care for the whole of creation, and with hope too, that, difficulties apart, we can work to build a flourishing, and sustainable kingdom. Only in this way, I suspect, will we be able to co-create a physical and social environment not simply free of pollutants, and with clean water, but also free from gross injustice and poverty, and genuinely open to a life-affirming, relational justice which cares for the poor, the elderly, the vulnerable, and is conducive to full human material and spiritual flourishing. This would be real sustainability.

My third example is therapy. I will mention this equally briefly, and do so with even more trepidation than with the previous two. I am neither a clinician, a therapist, nor a counselling psychologist. It is *prima facie* true, however, that a great variety of therapeutic techniques involve repeated home work done by the client, and to that extent these techniques obviously and trivially perhaps involve *habitus*. Attempts are made to change or invoke changes in the psychological expertise of clients by encouraging practise of new cognitions and behaviors, for example. But what rules of thumb beyond this, might we give the therapist? In brief, I think there are four things to note. First, *habitus* relates to acts and acts have goals. The teleological aspect of therapy

is unavoidable, no matter how “non-directive” we may claim to be. Second, goals relate to desires and our images of flourishing. Whether we like it or not, implicit in all therapies is some concept of the good. Therapies are moral endeavours – period. An explicit understanding of *habitus* and the virtues brings this into the spotlight. Third, there are neglected habits, in our culture at least, such as resilience, temperance, and justice. Unfashionable though these may be, perhaps these can be brought back into those therapies that work (eventually) to balance the client’s needs with those of others. Fourth, the virtues are integrated. We can engage with clients in working on thoughts, emotions, and actions, and as we have seen, the balance of knowledge and desires are refereed by prudence. I can do no more than point to the possibility here, but an investigation of the therapeutic significance of the virtue *prudentia* in cognitive, emotional, and behavioral management, especially in insight-oriented therapies, could be timely.

Once again, we can make the theological move, the real work is still to be done here, and the full purchase of faith, hope, and love in the therapeutic endeavor remains to be explored. So, and I must admit somewhat speculatively, I argued recently along these lines that approaches such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) could in principle be “Christianized” and framed within a meditative, prayerful, accepting, and virtuous acting context, building on its Buddhist and radical behaviorist bases (Hampson, 2010). But others need to take this idea forward, and I am sure there are many who can.

## Conclusions

To summarise, I have argued that there are parallels, not perfect equivalences, between issues in moral theology and moral psychology, and that both of these have not been immune from wider cultural factors. In the case of moral psychology, I suggested that the formation of moral identity from moral emotion and moral knowledge, and the connections between moral identity and action, can be explicated by a recovered concept of virtue underpinned by the integrative concept of *habitus*. I claimed that a fuller analysis of this concept inevitably draws theists into a consideration of issues involving the relation between human action and divine grace. A view has been presented in which, although simplified, an Aristotelian account of *habitus* is seen as useful for psychology, but a full Christian psychological account will involve the challenge, for secular psychology at any rate, that God’s grace does make a difference. I offered some tentative, sketchy, and provisional applications and illustrations of these ideas in the domains of education, sustainable behavior, and therapy.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In Aquinas’ case, however, we are up against more than the standard airbrushing of many

Anglo-American philosophy undergraduate courses that nod sagely in the direction of the Socratics, ignore the medievals, then pick up the story from Descartes onwards, with Kant eventually making traditional theology impossible, thereby neglecting nearly 2000 years of intellectual history in the process (for a discussion, see Clark, 1998). With Brother Thomas we have potential misunderstanding *within*, as well as without the Christian family. Augustine, at least, has the advantage of being accepted and variously appropriated by Catholic, Orthodox, Evangelical, and Reformed wings of the tradition; Aquinas, unfortunately, has tended to be taken up more selectively. Nor is Catholicism completely exonerated from his misrepresentation. Influenced first by Suarezian metaphysics, and by later rationalism and modernism, neo-scholastic readings tended to reduce the subtleties of Thomas to a rigid, rule-governed, propositional system (Kerr, 2002; 2007). Only with the *ressourcement* of the Second Vatican Council, and the recovery and sympathetic, contextually sensitive reading of the treasures of the Church, particularly the patristics and medievals, has this tide receded to some extent. As Fergus Kerr (2002) has noted, there are a variety of Thomisms and a variety of Thomists, and Thomas himself would not necessarily have resonated with them all. It is tempting to refute these misreadings one by one, but contemporary theology is doing so very effectively (for a small selection of relevant work, see for example, Burrell, 2008; Cates, 2009; Te Velde, 2006; Milbank & Oliver, 2009; Milbank & Pickstock; 2001; Sherwin, 2005). And doing so, too, will only keep me from my main task. This main task is to explore facets of Aquinas’ account of action, considering especially how the recovery of one of his concepts, *habitus*, might assist us in Christian psychology and its applications. I hope, however, that it will become apparent as we proceed that what I have just pinpointed are misreadings and that Aquinas may have much to offer a Christian psychology/theological anthropology which not only wishes to be of use to counselling and therapy, but also to inform the mainstream academic discipline itself.

<sup>2</sup> As well as its neo-scholasticism with its longer rationalist history, there is more than a whiff of Kantian deontology about the “manual” approaches to moral theology. Moreover, it is certainly the case that Kohlberg, the major force behind rule-based theories of moral psychology was a Piagetian, and Piaget himself was trained in Kantian philosophy. Likewise it may be more than a coincidence that positivism helped trigger the mid-twentieth century responses of expressivism in ethics, as the only place for it to go when the doors of meaning were slammed shut,

and this in turn somewhat ironically aided and abetted the focus on feelings of “authenticity” by existentialism, just as Romanticism was an earlier response to Enlightenment rationalism (see also, Wright, 2010).

3 But *eadem est scientia oppositorum*, as St. Thomas was fond of quoting Aristotle, each gives a knowledge of its opposite, and we can see from each approach what to some extent the other lacks (Turner, 2002). No doubt the full story is more complex than this and the scholarship more involved. It is worth noting, for example, that Johnathan Haidt (2001) has proposed a sophisticated psychological model which contrasts moral judgements based on more affect-laden *intuition*, with more affect-free *reasoning*, but he is quick to remind us that both intuition and reasoning are forms of cognition. They certainly do not correspond in a simple or clear sense to a split between reason and emotion, if the former is seen to be affect-free and the latter reason-absent. Nevertheless, the parallels of rule based and more emotive or intuitive *psychological* accounts, with cognitive and affect based moral *pedagogies* and *justifications* for morality, are suggestive. This leads me to ask, with some concern, whether both psychology and theology have unwittingly responded to and correlated in related ways with currents in the wider liberal culture in which emotivism seems to have displaced rationalism in some spheres. I also take some intellectual comfort in the fact that the different traditions of moral theology, Biblical theology, and moral psychology appear to have identified an important set of related issues.

4 With regard to biographical background, Thomas Aquinas, or Tommaso d’Aquino as his family and neighbours knew him, lived roughly in the middle fifty years of the 13th century (c. 1225-1274). Destined by his family for an illustrious career in the prestigious Benedictine order, Thomas expressed a desire instead to join the Dominicans. The Dominicans, punned as the “domini canes,” the hounds of the Lord, were set up partly to combat the heresy of the Cathars in Southern France through preaching and instruction. Like their contemporaries the Franciscans, they were a mendicant order. Not settled in one place in monasteries like Benedictines, they wandered around the countryside preaching and teaching. This was certainly not a respectable life for an upper class Italian destined for a powerful and prestigious career in the church. Rather as if today, a child in a middle class family announced her intention not to go to medical school, but to study alternative medicine and live on welfare with a group of New Age travellers. Thomas’s family was outraged. The stuff of soap opera, we are told that his brothers are said to have

captured him, imprisoned him, and tempted him with an attractive prostitute in an attempt to get him to change his mind. He politely refused her advances, and rejected the standard career opportunities. The rest is history but still very relevant for us today (Kerr, 2009).

Not noted for his slight figure, the large, lumbering, and seemingly slow witted Thomas was inevitably teased by school friends and referred to as “the dumb ox;” but his teacher, the distinguished theologian Albertus Magnus (Albert the Great), who obviously recognised talent when he saw it, said, “You call him a Dumb Ox; I tell you that the Dumb Ox will bellow so loud that his bellowing will fill the world.”

Albert of course was right. Thomas became a bellowing giant of Christian theology and wrote, as well as spoke, volumes, producing a corpus of around 8.5 million words in all. His greatest work, the *Summa Theologiae*, runs to 60 volumes in the Blackfriars edition and is a superb achievement which fuses Aristotelianism, which he received via Averhoes and Albertus, with the neo-Platonism, which he got from Augustine, Proclus, and Plotinus. Aquinas skilfully used the Platonic notion of participation, or *methexis*, to lift Aristotle’s act-potency distinction to the level of a theological concept (Rziha, 2009). He also emphasizes the subtle interplay of faith and reason, the interpenetration of grace and nature, and embeds the whole within a thoroughly apophatic mystical theology.

5 Aquinas’s *Summa* is divided into three parts. Originally thought to be an *exitus-reditus* structure in which there is an outward movement from God, to creation, followed by a return to God, the work is now thought to be organised chiefly as God and creation, Humanity, and Christ, though this may not capture it perfectly either (Te Velde, 2006; Candler, 2010). In the *prima pars*, which is largely concerned with God and creation, Thomas begins to consider theological anthropology with discussions of the intellect and will as spiritual powers of the soul, but it is in the *secunda pars* that he deals extensively with human acts, the passions, the virtues, gifts of the Spirit, law, and grace.

6 Some of the numerous references to “second nature” in the context of habits and virtues in St Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae* (henceforth ST) include: ST, 1a2ae.53.1.obj2; 1a2ae.53.1.ad2; 1a2ae.56.5.responsio; 1a2ae.56.6.obj1; 1a2ae.58.1.obj1; 1a2ae.58.1.responsio; 1a2ae.58.1.ad3; 1a2ae.58.4.obj1; 1a2ae.60.4.ad1. Also, more generally, ST, 1a2ae.32.2.ad3; 1a.18.2.ad2; and ST, 1a.64.2.ad2 on second nature in demons!

7 And as philosopher John Haldane (2004) puts it: “according to Aquinas every tendency has its natural object, and virtue, whether in respect of intellectual, affective or volitional

powers, consists in a correct ordering of each faculty with regard to its proper object. Thus intellectual virtue is a habit or disposition of judgement tending towards truth, and away from falsity. Likewise, affective and volitional virtues are habits of feeling and choice directed towards goodness and away from whatever is bad. *In this way, then, Aquinas integrates cognitive and moral psychology in a single theory of the structure and powers of the human soul* (p. 193, my emphasis).

- 8 This consistency is assumed to be reciprocal. We seek to act on our beliefs, and beliefs are accessible in so far as they have been recently activated (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000). Acting on beliefs makes them more salient and significant, making it more likely that they will influence future actions. That said, the connections between moral beliefs, identity as a whole, and action are by no means yet fully understood. Remember that people have desires (they are driven by loves) as well as knowledge and beliefs, and these too contribute to their identity. How then, for example, do moral beliefs connect with emotions as well as with action? According to one account, as moral beliefs (and actions) become central to our sense of self, they become a motivating force, somehow linking moral identity with moral behavior (Aquino & Reed, 2002). The process whereby such beliefs and values become our own, or deeply embedded, is thought in turn to depend on the extent to which they acquire emotional significance. So, Cornelius (2006) writes, "if you want to understand what a person values, examine what makes him or her emotional" (p. 990).
- 9 A psychologist who explored this aspect in some detail some time ago was Magda Arnold (see Cornelius, 2006; Gaspar & Bramesfeld, 2006). Arnold was (initially) working at a time when psychology was dominated by behaviorism, but she was able to develop an approach to emotion as appraisal which has been highly influential in the "development of modern approaches to the study of emotion" (Cornelius, p. 976). What is perhaps less well known, as Cornelius documents, is that Arnold's views were themselves based on Aquinas's analyses of the relation between beliefs and the sensory and intellectual appetites and apprehensions, or what we know and what we want (see also Gaspar & Bramesfeld, 2006; Arnold, 1954). There is pleasing convergence then between Magda Arnold's work and the recent recognition by other researchers that moral identity, moral understanding, and moral emotion are obviously connected (e.g. Hardy & Carlo, 2005).
- 10 Arnold was beginning to open discussion of the first of these, especially the links between moral identity and moral action. Because emotional

appraisals relate to felt inclinations, our appetites, and cognitive assessments of what we desire, want, and deem to be good, and because emotional responses reflect the desires of the ideal self, behavioral choices are inevitably moral choices. For Arnold, this effectively solved the problem of moral agency and connected emotion, belief, and action. Moreover, "A person's repeated actions help form emotional attitudes and habits, which ultimately become the foundation of personality and create a sense of self. Therefore, Arnold's theory aims to explain not only why people act, but also how action forms personality and identity" (Gasper & Bramesfeld, 2006, p. 1005). To take this further, we would really need to explore Aquinas's theory of emotions in more depth, but briefly, as Cates indicates, an emotion, for Thomas, "is a form of appetitive motion" (Cates, 2009, p. 63, see also Lombardo, 2011), which can influence, but also be influenced by the intellectual appetites and apprehensions. As such, it is inevitably caught up in the cycle of evaluation and action. An emotion for Aquinas, at least in its fullest aspects, is, as Cates indicates, neither reducible downwards to feelings and appetites, nor cognitively upwards to evaluations or apprehensions. Emotions, for Thomas, are the sensory appetitive motions embedded within acts, whether exterior or interior, which means that they are repeatable, and, in principle at least, morally trainable.

- 11 Work in cognitive developmental neuroscience suggests that it may be better to think here of processes of "modularization." Karmiloff-Smith (1995) has argued that the increased specialisation of neural-cognitive sub-systems, modularization, results from development and learning, rather than only from evolution. According to this view, some dedicated functional systems and modules form as a result of increased exposure to situations and performance on tasks, within a broader, more generally specified neural architecture (e.g. Johnson, 1997; see also Donahoe & Dorsel, 1997; Edelman, 2006; Mareschal, Johnson, Sirois, Spratling, Thomas, & Westermann, 2007). Thus, we *grow* or selectively *shape* many of our modules through our actions and interactions. More automated behaviors result. In terms of theological anthropology, a strict, rigid, or innate view of modularity feels uncomfortably like a return to the faculty psychology that Thomas never actually espoused. ("Faculty" is a frequent mistranslation of the highly dynamic "*potentiae*" that Thomas discusses.) In this sense, it seems to me, Thomas is very much operating at the level of interacting processes, not fixed structures.
- 12 In fact, he makes a complex move from what he, following Plotinus, calls the "political virtues,"

fortitude, temperance, justice, and prudence, to the “theological” ones, and then later on, he subsequently considers the gifts and fruits of the Spirit.

- 13 The notion of “deification” or analogical “divinization” by resemblance has been retained by the Eastern Orthodox and recently recovered by the Latin tradition. Both share a more theophanic approach to creation than the Protestant. It is a far less dualistic notion than one which sees creation as radically fallen, or graceless, but needs to be handled carefully to avoid a collapse into pantheism or liberal, process theology.
- 14 And in perfecting nature, it is not really making up for an intrinsic lack or flaw – Thomas is much less interested in repairing the effects of the fall than one might expect - he is more interested in how grace raises our nature to new life.
- 15 Vivian Boland, OP, March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Symposium on Human Flourishing, Blackfriars, Oxford.
- 16 “Maximilian Kolbe was a Polish priest who died as prisoner 16670 in Auschwitz on August 14, 1941. When a prisoner escaped from the camp, the Nazis selected 10 others to be killed by starvation in reprisal for the escape. One of the 10 selected to die, Franciszek Gajowniczek, began to cry: ‘My wife! My children! I will never see them again!’ At this Father Kolbe stepped forward and asked to die in his place - his request was granted. As the ten condemned men were led off to the death Block of Building 13, Father Kolbe supported a fellow prisoner who could hardly walk” (<http://www.fatherkolbe.com/> accessed 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2010). Of course the secularist could easily maintain that such examples merely show the powerful meanings engendered by the Christian narrative and that she need make no commitment to their truth value. To which the believer could reasonably retort that a semantic theory such as Davidson’s collapses the truth and meaning distinction in any case, since to state that “God’s grace is active for someone” (truly) means that God’s grace is active for someone, if and only if, God’s grace is active for someone (Davidson, 1967, 2001). Or less casuistically perhaps, as Christian Smith (2003) points out with some irony, given the explanatory and integrative power of the claim that God exists and is active, it may simply be more parsimonious to assume that God exists and is active, rather than appeal to narrative power alone or social constructivism or evolutionary psychology. “Here, by contrast, is a theory that would be truly controversial, daring and radical: human religions have existed and do exist everywhere because a God really does exist, and many humans – especially those not blinded by the reigning narratives of modern science and academia – feel a recurrent

and deeply compelling ‘built in’ desire to know and worship, in their various ways, the God who is there” (Smith, p. 109). Psychology ought at least to consider these arguments if only as good scientific practice.

- 17 MacIntyre (1988) also draws attention to this problem, especially in the humanities, referring to, “the loss of contexts provided by traditions of enquiry (which) has deprived those teaching the humanities of standards in the light of which some texts might be vindicated as more important than others and some types of theory as more cogent than others. What the student is ...generally confronted with...is an apparent inconclusiveness in all argument outside the natural sciences, an inconclusiveness which seems to abandon him or her to his or her prerational preferences. So the student characteristically emerges from a liberal education with a set of skills, a set of preferences, and little else, someone whose education has been as much a process of deprivation as of enrichment” (MacIntyre, p. 400). (I would like to thank to my colleague Joshua Schwieso for drawing my attention to this quotation.)
- 18 Although “practical courses” exist in many disciplines, the idea that *all* learning requires time for practice and consolidation is often neglected in the drive toward “semesterization” and short courses. Another potentially deleterious factor may be educational fashions favoring self-motivated discovery rather than carefully guided learning. The parlous state of school math education in the U.S., for example, may well be because the notion of mental practice has been side-lined in favour of creative discovery (see Ninness, Holland, McCuller, Rumph, Ninness, McGinty, Austin & Dixon, 2009). The same appears to have been true until recently of the U.K.’s mathematical pedagogy in the primary sector, though current trends now favour increased use of imaginative and enjoyable mental math exercises involving extensive practice.

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# Commentaries on Peter Hampson's "By knowledge and by love: The integrative role of *habitus* in Christian psychology"

Each issue of *Edification* begins with a discussion article followed by open peer commentaries that examine the arguments of that paper. The goal is to promote edifying dialogues on issues of interest to the Christian psychological community. The commentaries below respond to Peter Hampson's "By knowledge and by love: The integrative role of *habitus* in Christian psychology"

## Self-regulation and a meaning-based approach to virtues: Comments on Hampson's *habitus*

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Hampson's stimulating treatise is a bold and integrated approach to applying Aquinas' *habitus* concept to the moral life. It is bold because he proposes (among other things) to bridge theology and (secular) psychology via *habitus*. It is integrated, because his account addresses the whole person, rather than splitting intellect, will, and emotion. He also points out how the virtues, heretofore studied empirically in isolation (if at all), work together, and proposes adding several theological virtues. Aquinas is still relevant, particularly when Hampson brings his ideas to life and applies them to 21st century issues.

Hampson's discussion of *habitus* has a host of advantages. One of the primary advantages is its holistic nature. So much of psychology appears to focus on isolated attitudes or behaviors, or separates emotion, reason, and will, perhaps due to the methodological complexities. Although the reductionist approach may be inescapable in the initial stages of research in new areas, science advances best when creating comprehensive meta-theories that more fully capture the richness and complexity of human thought and behavior. *Habitus* links acts to goals and rightly includes both emotion and reason. We agree with Hampson that recent empirical work in moral psychology seems to more heavily weigh emotion and intuition over deliberative thought, in part due to Haidt's influential and thought-provoking moral intuitionist model (Haidt, 2001), and perhaps to an overcorrection from Kohlberg's work and its mixed empirical support (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hower, 1983). As Hampson argues, individuals, over time, develop good habits or skills, and their moral character is deepened. This is richer than simply examining isolated moral decisions, with corresponding great practical applications.

Perhaps inevitably, however, *habitus* lacks some specificity (at least in its current formulation), and does not take into account situational factors

that are the bedrock that we social psychologists love to investigate. Put another way, what are some of the situational pitfalls that beset individuals trying to reach their goals and develop their moral character? (We shall put aside, for now, the theological component of what is moral and where goals come from, though we later propose a motivation for moral behavior.)

## Self-regulation: The master virtue

Self-control (psychologists often prefer the term self-regulation) is at the heart of every virtue. Virtuous responding often requires that individuals resist natural, selfish desires in favor of other-oriented, prosocial acts that contribute to the well-being of others. We are enamored of considering how *habitus* might be linked to recent research on self-regulation, conducted primarily by social psychologists in the last 15 years. Researchers have conducted dozens of studies that support a resource or "muscle model" of self-regulation (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998). Self-regulation resources are limited and depletable. Self-regulation consists of exercising effort to enact (or inhibit) a non-natural response. Eating ice cream does not require self-control, unless one dislikes ice cream and is eating it in order to be polite, but inhibiting eating ice cream does consume self-control resources. Though the vast majority of self-regulation research has focused only on self-oriented actions (e.g., persistence on a difficult task), a central goal of self-regulation pertains to opportunities for exercising virtues and inhibiting more selfish or short-sighted behavior, such as turning the other cheek when attacked verbally or physically when the "natural" response would be to retaliate. In fact, we argue that self-regulation is a "master virtue," from which most other virtues flow—one must first inhibit the natural proclivity to behave selfishly in order to rather act virtuously.

Perhaps the most studied outcome of self-regulation research is that, after exercising self-control, individuals are in the state of ego depletion and less likely to perform well on a second (unrelated) task, just as a hard workout at the gym leaves muscles temporarily weakened and unable to perform at the usual capacity. Research has looked at a variety of ego-depleting tasks such as inhibiting aggressive responses or the expression of emotions,

using physical strength (e.g., handgrip), persisting on a difficult task, accommodating rather than retaliating after a romantic partner's bad behavior, or maintaining information in working memory (e.g., Finkel & Campbell, 2001; Schmeichel, 2007; Stucke & Baumeister, 2006). If you use self-control, you lose self-control, at least temporarily.

Such work might fruitfully be linked to the *habitus* model for their mutual benefit. Hampson discusses how “non-identical replications” help integrate moral behaviors into one’s identity so that future moral actions become second nature. Some evidence exists that continually practicing self-regulation builds the “regulatory muscle” that makes future virtuous responding more likely, just as regular workouts at the gym lead to greater athletic performance and potential in the long-run (Baumeister, Gailliot, DeWall, & Oaten, 2006). Hampson points out that both virtues and vices are “underpinned by habits.” This point is particularly poignant given that our default reaction to any situation may be selfish, requiring (sometimes considerable) effort to overcome our natural penchant toward selfish responding; the more we build our “moral muscle,” the easier it will be to resist selfish impulses.

It is still unclear exactly what ego depletion is, though some evidence has recently accumulated that the muscle metaphor may be closer to the mark than initially considered. To be specific, some evidence has found that exercising self-control reduces blood glucose levels, and that replenishing these levels (e.g., consuming a sugary drink compared to an artificially sweetened drink) helps to restore the self-control “muscle” more quickly than the simple passage of time.

However, this finding has been questioned (Kurzban, 2010), and some have suggested that the issue is more a matter of glucose allocation (Beedie & Lane, 2012). Moreover, certain findings do not clearly fit with this conceptualization of self-control. For example, increased motivation, such as providing external incentives (Muraven & Slessareva, 2003), seems to wipe out the effects of ego depletion. Even more fascinating, a positive mood induction (e.g., watching some stand-up comedy clips) can eliminate ego depletion (Tice, Baumeister, Shmueli, & Muraven, 2007), as can a self-affirmation task (i.e., affirming one’s values; Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009). Clearly, it is difficult to see how a mood boost or affirmation of values would suddenly restore blood glucose levels; rather, it appears that personal motivation is involved (Inzlicht & Schmeichel, 2012).

Previous research suggests that virtuous behavior requires eschewing immediate, selfish rewards (telling a lie) in favor of progress toward longer-term, relationally-oriented goals (telling the difficult truth). Self-affirmation appears to eliminate the effects of ego depletion because it sparks greater consideration of long-term goals. This may be where *habitus* can play a critical role in extending our theorizing. *Habitus*

may help to explain why we sometimes focus more deliberately on our goals (moral and otherwise), and how that renewed focus and determination may help us reduce or eliminate the effects of ego depletion. In fact, we may more prospectively order our lives and environments in order to avoid depleting (tempting) situations, such as not keeping ice cream in the house, surrounding ourselves with virtuous people, or taking breaks between taxing events. Rather than taking a single situation perspective, as self-regulation work has done, *habitus* may help to explain why we take a more long-term and disciplined approach to not cheating in school, exercising pro-environmental behavior in spite of the costs, and much more: We want to act in accordance with our moral identity and translate our virtues into action.

Our argument that self-regulation is a master virtue that resides at the core of most other virtues echoes the view of Aristotle (*phronesis*) and Aquinas that prudence is the virtue that coordinates and mediates other virtues—the charioteer of the virtues (*auriga virtutum*). Moderation, reflective judgment, practical wisdom, and farsightedness are aspects of *phronesis* (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). That is, prudence appears to emphasize the cognitive aspects of knowing and reflecting on broader, longer-term goals, while research on self-regulation elucidates *how* individuals can act prudently by avoiding impulsively choosing suboptimal shorter-term goals. Perhaps *habitus* provides the bridging framework between these two concepts: how individuals can harness greater self-control in the service of acting more prudently, and eventually how acting prudently will be less effortful and taxing over time, becoming fully integrated into our moral identity.

Moreover, Aristotle’s *phronesis* includes both means and ends, as does *habitus*. That is, prudence consists not simply of focusing on longer-term goals (as well as harmonizing among many, potentially conflicting, goals), but choosing and desiring the good or noble or moral goals. Theorizing in the self-regulation domain of psychology begs the question of where our self-regulation goals come from; that is, what desire do we have to restrain ourselves from acting selfishly and instead act virtuously? To be sure, much self-regulatory effort is still self-focused by giving up a short-term benefit for a greater long-term payoff. But why don’t we simply maximize our own benefit, even at the cost of others? Why be moral at all? Some have theorized various proximal benefits of virtuous actions (e.g., increased social status within one’s group, reciprocal altruism). However, we propose that virtues may be motivated, at least in part, by a more distal process: the desire for meaning in life.

### **On virtues and meaning**

Humans are inveterate meaning-makers. Our proclivity for meaning is a powerful impetus that impels a variety of social motivations, including the desire for closure, the quest for self-esteem, the need to belong, and striving for symbolic immortality (Heine,

Proulx, & Vohs, 2006). Research has demonstrated that the human penchant for meaning is so profound that individuals *automatically* (i.e., nonconsciously) defend a sense of meaning in life (Van Tongeren & Green, 2010); that is, implicitly-processed threats to meaning, presented too quickly (i.e., 50ms) to be consciously-recognized, evoke strategic compensatory reaffirmation of various sources of meaning in life. Relative to a control group, individuals whose meaning was threatened by implicitly processing words related to meaninglessness reported higher self-esteem, need for closure, belonging, symbolic immortality, and religiosity, presumably aimed at reestablishing meaning. The defense of meaning is seen as a self-protective process whereby individuals bolster aspects central to their self-concept (and thus their meaning) following a threat in order to restore psychological equanimity.

Meaning preservation is driven, in part, by integrating the values that individuals cherish most deeply into their self-concepts. Therefore, acting virtuously, in accordance with cherished values, may provide a sense of meaning—or *telos*, as Hampson posits (Van Tongeren et al., 2011). In other words, it may feel good (that one's life is full of meaning) to do good. Initial empirical evidence appears to support this theorizing. A longitudinal study of over 100 romantic couples revealed that greater forgiveness of offenses by one's partner over time resulted in increased meaning in life, and this was partly due to (i.e., partially mediated by) increased relationship satisfaction (Van Tongeren, 2011). Virtuous actions contribute to quality relationships, which are a vital source of meaning in life, and moral identity is an important component in meaning maintenance (Zhu, Martens, & Aquino, 2012). More directly examining the centrality of morality in making and defending meaning, some of our additional research suggests that moral identity moderates the effects of meaning threats on moral self-perception (Van Tongeren, Green, & Hulse, 2013). That is, following a loss of meaning, those with a strong moral identity bolstered their self-reported morality, arguably as a way to regain meaning. Thus, for those for whom morality is a large part of their identity, reaffirming one's virtuousness is a source of meaning.

The research on the interplay between virtues and meaning is nascent, yet initial work is promising and seems to align with Hampson's *habitus* model in several ways. First, Hampson argues that repeated virtuous acts are integrated into the sense of self and become "second nature." This appears to be analogous with how virtuous actions are made central to identity and may help serve the function of preserving meaning; moreover, this process, because it becomes second nature, may occur with less deliberate or conscious effort over time (Van Tongeren & Green, 2010; Van Tongeren et al., 2013). Self-regulatory efforts aimed at suppressing selfish impulses, which are key to virtuous responding, initially are deliberate, difficult, and depleting. However, over time, we build

our "moral muscle," which makes future virtuous actions more natural, less difficult, and less depleting. Second, and more broadly, Hampson contends that the process of *habitus* propels one toward a desired end-state, approximating (for some) an intimate and meaningful relationship with God (or the Sacred). Put differently, this suggests that virtuous actions help orient individuals toward achieving meaning and significance (Van Tongeren, 2011). Finally, *habitus* further argues that all human action, including virtuous action, is, at some level, motivated by a larger purpose. We suggest that this teleological-driven approach is consistent with theorizing that posits a sense of meaning is the larger motivation (Van Tongeren et al., 2011).

### Reflections and future directions

Hampson's *habitus* model is a useful paradigm through which to evaluate the relationships between virtuous actions and meaning in life. Focusing on seeking meaning in life may provide a more versatile model than one that relies on a Deity. That is, meaning-seeking may underlie religious seeking (in monotheistic religions as well as religions without a central deity) as well as non-religious seeking. However, Hampson might very well argue that God provides both the motivation (by seeking Him) and the ability (via grace) to develop virtuous skills or habits. Moreover, one of Hampson's goals appears to be to provide secular psychology with a different perspective via Christian theology in general and Aquinas' *habitus* in particular. Does a meaning-seeking motivation for virtuous behavior throw the baby out with the bath water?

We contend that a meaning in life approach to virtues and moral behavior complements, rather than competes with, Hampson's *habitus* model. First, a meaning account may provide a partial explanatory account of why individuals may be pursuing virtuous life as a means to a relationship with God, by positing that, in part, virtuous actions and a virtuous identity provide people with meaning and significance. To be sure, that is not the only reason why people seek a relationship with the Sacred, but it might certainly be a reason for some. Second, a meaning account theorizes that those values that become central and integrated into one's self-concept, such as one's sense of virtue or morality, are an important source of meaning. The integration of virtue, by making it "second-nature," leads to a life of significance and purpose, which coincides with Aristotelian and Thomistic concepts via Hampson's *habitus* model. Finally, a meaning account of virtue explains how both the religious and non-religious may strive for meaning and significance in their lives through virtuous actions. Much good in the world seems to lack religious motivation but still benefits humanity. Many financial contributions to charities, scientific advancements in the war against cancer, and efforts to eliminate curable diseases, may have little (if any) religious motivation, but certainly aim to reduce suffering and improve well-being for all. Thus, such

an account is a fruitful perspective for explaining a wide variety of virtuous behavior.

We applaud Hampson for proposing a broad and integrative model that weaves together moral psychology with theology in order to better explain the various factors involved in virtuous living. The *habitus* model has many strengths, not the least of which is its rich, interdisciplinary theoretical foundation, from which future fruitful work may be based. The *habitus* concept appears to be generative (as a useful theory should be), suggesting a variety of testable hypotheses for psychologists. Such overarching theories help explain existing findings and point future scholars toward promising avenues of research and inquiry. The *habitus* model does precisely that, and the field is enriched for such a contribution.

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### **Habitus: A perfecting quality of the soul**

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In the spirit of Gerald Vann's (1940/1999) *The Aquinas Prescription*, Peter Hampson reminds us of the metaphorically healing power of St. Thomas Aquinas' anthropology. By specifically returning to the great saint's teaching on *habitus*, Professor Hampson argues that modern psychologists might fruitfully integrate conceptualizations of morality that have heretofore been divided. He moreover presents a compelling case for building bridges between secular and Christian psychology by way of the theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity. Hampson closes by discussing a number of topics of interest to secular psychologists that might profit from careful consideration of Aquinas' anthropology and his teaching on *habitus*.

Having been an admirer of St. Thomas' anthropology for the past ten years, having taught it to students in my *Theories of Personality* class, and having incorporated it into a novel way of reasoning about data collection and analysis (Grice, 2011), I am enthusiastic about Hampson's thesis. His command of the contemporary literature strikes me as sound, and overall I find his arguments to be persuasive, timely, and important. I particularly found enlightening his discussion of the intellectual, emotional, and motivational views of morality in modern psychology and how St. Thomas' anthropology might provide an integrative way forward in this domain. Such a hopeful and positive view of St. Thomas is, as Hampson points out, a far cry from the worn out criticism against scholasticism as interested only in the "terpsichorean skills of angelic beings." Carl Jung may yet prove prophetic, then, in that "future generations will see clearly how far scholasticism still nourishes the science of today with living undercurrents." (1956/1976, p. 20).

In the context of these overarching positive comments, however, I would like to argue that Hampson's thesis can be clarified and strengthened through a closer examination of how St. Thomas defines *habitus*. Following Aristotle, St. Thomas explicitly defines *habitus* as a quality:

A disposition, says Aristotle, is a state which is either a good state or a bad state for its possessor either absolutely or relatively: health is a disposition of this kind. It is dispositions, so defined,

which are our present concern. We must conclude, therefore, that dispositions are qualities [*Unde dicendum est quod habitus est qualitas*]. (*Summa theologiae* [henceforth ST] 1a2ae, 49.1, resp).

It should be noted in the Blackfriars edition of the *Summa*, *habitus* is often translated as *disposition*. In the same question (49), St. Thomas further draws distinctions between habits connected primarily to being, such as health, and habits connected primarily to operations or actions, such as fortitude or temperance. While drawing this distinction, St. Thomas delimits habits from acts,

"A disposition [*habitus*] is an actuality of a kind in so far as it is a quality: and as such it can be a source of action. But it is in a state of unactualized potentiality by comparison with the action." (ST 1a2ae, 49.3, resp. 1st objection).

In Question 50, St. Thomas further qualifies health and beauty as "habit-like states" while locating the habits of operation in various powers of the soul. Habits can be found in the sensory powers of the soul if they are under the control of reason. Science and wisdom are habits of the intellect, and justice is a habit whose subject is the will. St. Thomas makes it clear, then, that *habitus* is a quality whose subject is the human soul. As a quality, *habitus* is distinct from acts, but it is concerned primarily with what St. Thomas refers to as human acts; that is, those acts under control of the intellect and will. The function, so-to-speak, of a *habitus* is to empower the powers of the human soul, to aid in the movement from potentiality to actuality. As Kenny (1964, p. xxi) points out, a *habitus* is a quality "half-way between a capacity and an action, between pure potentiality and full actuality." An undergraduate student, for instance, will possess the capacity to concentrate, read, and think critically. If the student possesses the habit of studiousness as well, she will be more likely to use the powers of her intellect in a fruitful evening of studying compared to a student with the same capacity for reasoning but who is not studious. Lastly, virtues and vices are good and bad habits, respectively, and are thus particular types of habits.

With all of these points in mind, it appears Hampson occasionally advances an inconsistent and sometimes inaccurate understanding of *habitus*. For instance, he writes, "*habitus* is the theo-psychological dynamic which strengthens and integrates moral, intellectual, and theological virtues." This definition is confusing because virtues are habits; thus, it is tantamount to stating that habits strengthen and integrate habits. This particular failure to clearly classify virtues and vices as habits occurs twice more: "Second, all the virtues, and vices too of course, are underpinned by habits;" and "Virtues and vices emerge through *habitus*." On the other hand, some statements clearly refer to virtues or vices as habits, for example, "How do the virtues and vices, that is good and bad moral habits, relate to these issues?"

Describing *habitus* as “a dynamic which strengthens and integrates” is also an unfortunate choice of words. A dynamic is in no way a quality, and habits do not serve an integrative function, strictly defined. Habits related to human acts belong to the soul, and St. Thomas makes it clear when discussing virtues that such good habits perfect the powers of the soul:

Virtue denotes a determinate perfection of a power. The perfection of anything, however, is considered especially in its relation to its end. Yet the end of a power is its act. A power is said to be perfect, therefore, in so far as it is determined to its act. (ST Ia2ae, 55.1, resp).

Hampson offers a definition that appears to be at odds with this view, “For Aquinas, *habitus* refers to the ways in which repeated acts become perfected dispositions to act for good or ill.” Habits are not clearly presented as being seated in different powers of the soul, nor are they stated to perfect those powers. Hampson does go on to state that habits “become part of our second nature,” which is consistent with a real change in the soul (psyche) of the person who develops an operative habit or who receives a habit infused by God.

There are two reasons why I think it is vital to provide an accurate and wholly consistent treatment of *habitus*. First and foremost, it helps to clarify and strengthen Hampson’s general thesis. With regard to clarity, it is St. Thomas’ anthropology which is integrative rather than the quality *habitus*, although utilizing *habitus* theoretically may prove particularly fruitful for secular and Christian psychologists. With regard to strengthening Hampson’s thesis, one might further argue that it is not the integrative anthropology of St. Thomas that matters, but the integrated nature of the human person instead. In the order of knowing, *person* precedes *habitus* or any other quality, and a human person is *an individual substance of a rational nature* (the classic definition from Boethius, see ST Ia, 29.1, 1st objection). In other words, a person is an integrated whole; and it is this cornerstone Hampson may be implicitly urging us to consider regarding our theories of psychology.

Moreover, modern psychology has over-utilized methods developed in the context of positivism, which has led to the current crisis with its Modal Research Practice (Grice, Barrett, Schlimgen, & Abramson, 2011; Lebel & Peters, 2011). These methods rely almost exclusively on a variable-based framework rather than a person-centered framework. The result is an overarching view of psychology as comprised of disparate topics or domains of study. One need only examine contemporary introductory psychology textbooks where chapters are divided according to topics and domains of research (e.g., personality, social, industrial/organizational, clinical) that appear quite disparate. Compare such texts to Brennan’s (1941) classic text, *Thomistic Psychology*, in which chapters are organized around the acts, powers,

and habits of the human person. It is the integrated nature of the person which brings such coherence to Brennan’s text and which ultimately draws all of Hampson’s examples and applications together.

The second reason for my concern with properly defining *habitus* is more technical. Specifically, as Hampson notes, modern psychologists are apt to think of constructs such as virtues, emotional states, and personality traits as dimensions. A modern psychologist who takes an interest in vices or virtues will consequently be keen to measure such habits; for example, with a self-report questionnaire. The problem is, modern psychologists have not demonstrated that constructs they have been studying for some time, such as intelligence or personality traits, are structured continuously. As Joel Michell (1999) has argued in recent years, psychologists have largely ignored the scientific task of demonstrating the measurability of their various constructs, and it would be a shame if they continued to do so while incorporating *habitus* into their theories. By recognizing *habitus* strictly as a quality, psychologists can be held accountable if they attempt to treat virtues, for instance, as dimensions without the proper demonstration thereof. Aristotle and St. Thomas were both interested in the possibility of qualities that might admit to variation of degree, and the latter wrote of *quantitas virtutis* as a “quantitative quality” that could be measured via analogy to dimensive quantities (e.g., measuring temperature by examining the height of mercury in a calibrated tube; see Crowley, 1996). Modern psychologists do not typically refer to intelligence, depression, anxiety, personality traits, etc. as qualities. Following St. Thomas, however, habits are clearly qualities. If psychologists wish to argue that habits, such as virtues, are “quantitative qualities” then the scientific work must be done to support such a hypothesis; and whether or not virtues can be analogously understood as dimensions would in turn impact the methods and analytic procedures utilized by research psychologists (see Grice, 2011). Tying into the first point above, research methods aimed at qualities would necessarily be person-centered rather than variable-based.

In closing, I would like to also convey my enthusiastic support for Hampson’s discussion of the importance of Aristotle’s four causes. Joseph Rychlak (1988) has long championed a return to the four causes, and he even designed an entire theory of learning based on final cause which he tested with numerous experiments. It is a shame his work has not received more attention over the years. Not only is final cause invaluable for understanding human persons, but Aristotle’s four causes provide a framework for thinking about structures and processes; that is, integrated systems. Such thinking is far richer than the variable-based models employed so ubiquitously by research psychologists today. It is high time for psychology to move forward by first going back to a time before positivism and Cartesian philosophy began dividing human nature and



dividing persons from nature.

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## Ordinary virtue

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I read Peter Hampson's "By knowledge and by love: The integrative role of habitus in Christian

psychology" with great pleasure. Peter is an eloquent writer with a keen understanding of both psychological science and scholastic philosophy. This is immediately apparent as he exposes the unacknowledged role of teleology in modern psychology and notes (rightly) that moral theology offers a more sophisticated explanation of morality than does psychological science.

As Peter notes, he and I have been working together to study, "the ways in which retrieval practice of self-referring moral beliefs will not only strengthen the repeatedly retrieved beliefs about one's self and actions, but through the process of 'retrieval induced forgetting' will weaken non-rehearsed beliefs." It should come as no surprise, then, that I share his belief in the explanatory power of habitus. The concept offers a powerful tool for understanding the, "concordance of emotion, thought, and action" (Fowers, 2005, p. 45). So, while Peter and I may differ in some specifics, we are in agreement that habitus offers a powerful way to understand human behavior.

In the present paper, we find Peter supporting a broad role for habitus, offering it as both a catalyst for integrating moral psychology and a bridge between Christian psychology and psychological science. He is astute in his observation that, "Psychology has much to learn from Aquinas, therefore, and potentially much to give back. Obvious concepts for rediscovery by the human sciences include the appetites, will-as-desire, schooled-passions as virtues, and the full, flourishing possibilities for human nature, but to do so psychology will need to make its peace with teleology as well as theology" (Hampson, 2012, p. 374).

Social scientists as diverse as Pierre Bourdieu and Magda Arnold have embraced the integrative power of habitus, offering it as a conduit between objectivism and subjectivism (Bourdieu) and between identity and action (Arnold). In Bourdieu's reimagining:

The habitus is necessity internalized and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions; it is a general, transposable disposition, which carries out a systematic, universal application—beyond the limits of what has been directly learnt—of the necessity inherent in the learning conditions (in Lizardo, 2004, p. 392).

Habitus offers a way to capture both the goal-directed nature of behavior and the bidirectional nature of development, providing a parsimonious explanation of how the self shapes experience even as experience shapes the self. As Peter and I noted in an earlier work, "Virtuous habits aimed at their characteristic goods are strengthened by, and subsequently strengthen, virtuous actions; character is formed in the process. The integrative power of the habitus construct is demonstrated by how it connects

intellectual and moral goals, knowledge, and emotions with moral agency” (Hulsey & Hampson, 2010).

Our habitus model also underscores the importance of identity integration, of marrying intentions to behaviors until they become second nature. As Peter says, connecting appropriate goals with successful behaviors produces a unified self, “not simply in the psychological sense, but ontologically too in that deepening participation takes one nearer to union with one’s goal as the ‘movement’ becomes more swift and delightful.” Indeed, new research finds that moral evaluation not only guides behavior, it actually shapes factual beliefs (e.g., Liu & Ditto, 2012). Failure to integrate intentions with actions leads to fragmentation, repression, and self-deception (see Fingarette, 1969/2000 for a full treatment of this).

As he moves further into his treatise, Peter reminds us that the teleological requirement of habitus, that behavior is inherently goal-directed, is not the liability modern psychological science pretends. Rather, it embraces the purposeful nature of human behavior directly, “that acts and *habitus* are, unavoidably, built around the idea that humans act for reasons and purposes” (italics in original).

As Peter recounts, Aquinas posited two different types of habitus: those that aim at earthly happiness (acquired virtues) and those that aim at a higher form of happiness, participation in the divine caritas (infused virtues). The acquired virtues are created through habituation and practice. And, though they may aim at good ends, they do not in themselves lead to participation in the divine (Pinsent, 2010). The infused virtues are of a different species entirely, given by God, rather than earned through action. In fact, Aquinas did not regard acquired virtues as “true” virtues at all, reserving that designation for those virtues infused by the divine essence (Pinsent, 2010).

The distinction between acquired and infused virtues is fundamental to Aquinas’ philosophy, and to his efforts to synthesize Christian theology with Aristotelian psychology. It is only through the infused virtues that the true happiness found in relationship with God is possible. Absent the infused virtues, Aquinas’ psychology is little more than Aristotle’s *Ethics*.

It is at this point that Peter enters a discussion of the theological virtues. Desire and practice alone, he maintains, are not enough to realize the true virtues. In Thomistic theory, the moral virtues perfect the appetites and allow us to aim at good ends. And, as the only true virtues are those infused by God’s love, aiming at the *eternal* good is only possible through grace. Echoing Thomas, Peter claims, “Grace then perfects nature, for sure, but it also presupposes it.” Or, a paragraph later, “So, gift and response are both needed, and the perfection of the intellect through the gifts of faith is only fully realized when faith is put into practice, or when it is ‘in act,’ as Thomas would say.” He caps his thesis by acknowledging that, “This

is a strong claim for Christian psychology to make to the psychology of religion and moral psychology. But I think it is an essential one if psychology is carried up into and conceptually made subordinate to the interpenetration between philosophy and what Thomas calls, *sacra doctrinae*, the revealed truths from the tradition, the book of nature, and Scripture.” (italics in original).

While the acquired virtues may allow one to create a virtuous life, in the absence of grace they lack something of essential importance—they fail to acknowledge that the ultimate goal of human life is an orientation towards the absolute. And, this, Thomas argues, represents a failure to achieve the full potential of being human. In Aristotelian language, all human action is driven towards the ultimate by a final cause (*telos*). In the Thomistic version, God become the final cause while grace serves as the formal cause in developing the true virtues. This language reveals the underlying assumption: There is (and must be) a transcendent source for all moral actions.

This element of Thomistic psychology is, of course, the fly in the ointment. Modern psychological science has abandoned both purpose and God in its century and a half of self-discovery. Aquinas’ psychology requires both a teleological understanding of motivation and a special dispensation from God. How, then can habitus help integrate psychological science with Christian psychology?

If Peter is to realize his goal of translating moral theology into the language of psychological science, he must render the concept of grace in the language of psychology. Critical to this is the question of whether the theological virtues are *essential* to the moral virtues. It is here that my interpretation of habitus begins to diverge from Peter’s.

While Thomas believed that true virtue required an infusion of divine grace, I retain faith in the Aristotelian habitus: Repeated acts, coupled with beliefs and aimed at goals may, over time, become perfected second nature traits, without any additional help. To borrow Fowers (2012) words, “Virtues are, simply, human excellences or character strengths that make it possible for individuals to pursue characteristically human goods (e.g., social connections, knowledge) that allow them to flourish as human beings” (p. 6).

However, removing the necessity of divine intervention for the highest levels of virtuous living does not solve the “problem” of teleology. Fortunately, this seems to be more of a logical distinction than an actual one. Despite protestations to the contrary, psychological science is rife with teleological assumptions; from developmental psychology to evolutionary psychology, we find claims that development and behavior aim at goals.

How, then do we address the teleology inherent in the habitus model without including a supernatural element? If we render Peter’s claim differently, say, “*the search for meaning* then perfects nature, but it also

presupposes it,” we make an existential, rather than a supernatural claim while retaining the teleology of the habitus model. We may also maintain the central claim of both Aristotle and Thomas, that the goal of human life is the proper attainment of purpose. And, the study of meaning resides well within the boundaries of psychological science, provides a goal toward which human behavior may be oriented, and addresses the teleological “problem” directly.

There is a substantial body of empirical and theoretical work examining the role of existential motivations on human behavior (e.g., Koole, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2006). We seek to find meaning in our actions and in our lives despite our tenuous perch on a small planet, orbiting an inconsequential star, at the distal end of a galaxy among billions. Unable to escape the eventual grip of death or share identical phenomenological experiences with others (thus remaining isolated from them), we live in a world suffused with subjective meaning. The simple fact that competing, and seemingly viable paths to meaning exist suggests that a single approach to finding meaning in life is unlikely. At the very least, we are born into a world with no universally endorsed system of meaning. Faced with uncertainty, we seek security.

This may be nowhere truer than in our efforts to be moral; morality provides existential security primarily by conferring a sense of meaning. Following Beck (2004, 2006) and Yalom (1980), my colleagues Jeff Green and Daryl Van Tongeren and I have defined existential security as “a sense of peace and understanding regarding the nature of human life and a resolution of the givens of human existence.” Further, we suggest that meaning serves primarily to organize the social world in a way that is expected and valuable and that imbues life with purpose and a sense of cosmic specialness.

Virtuous actions, conceived as habitus, include both acts and the disposition toward those acts. Thus, humans, motivated by a desire for meaning, engage in virtuous actions; the motivation for meaning is manifested through these acts (see Proulx & Heine, 2008). If virtuous actions enhance our sense of meaning then existential security is increased. If humans are motivated to act virtuously in order to achieve existential security, the conditions for habitus obtain.

I expect that many readers of this journal will identify their Christian faith as the source of their sense of meaning and existential security. Some may even argue that discussions of meaning absent grace and faith are pointless. I would argue that meaning and security emanate from many places. Socrates maintained that happiness is the chief goal of human existence, and that it is attained through the perfection of the soul; that is, through living a virtuous life. It is toward this end that all human endeavors must aim.

Virtuous living has distinct outcomes that include both benefits to others and benefits for

the self. These benefits include the enhanced sense of meaning that follows from acting in prosocial, esteem-enhancing ways. By living virtuously, we derive a sense that our lives are meaningful. This, in turn, increases our existential security.

The quest for meaning, as I have defined it here, implicitly embraces the relation between the theological virtues and the moral virtues. If grace is understood as the awareness of the infinite, then wherever virtue is present, it is empowered by grace as we seek ultimate, even transcendent, meaning. However, if a transcendent goal is necessary for a meaningful human life, how can the finite goal of meaning suffice?

Faith, hope, and love only have meaning in an interpersonal world. It is through interactions with others that we encounter both the infinite varieties of human experience and the ultimate goal of our lives: meaningful relationships. Our relationships with others provide the crucible within which we encounter the transcendent. In this way, the virtuous life makes the quest for meaning possible.

#### Note

- <sup>1</sup> To roil the waters further, Aquinas adds a third type of habitus, the Gifts, to his concept of the virtues. However, a meaningful discussion of the Gifts is beyond the scope of this response.

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## Psychology, Radical Orthodoxy, and Thomism

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Peter Hampson's thoughtful article on *habitus*, Thomism, and psychology invites us to integrate psychology and theology in three stages. First, we can promote discrete Thomistic ideas (like *habitus*) within existing psychologies. Second, we can promote Thomism as a new philosophical framework for psychology. Third, we can promote "the couching of psychology as a whole within a theological architectonic." In response, I wish to consider Hampson's last step, which involves taking not only moral *habitus* but also theological (theological) *habitus* into psychological account and developing a non-secular psychology. The goal of casting psychology, and indeed all disciplines, inside a theological system of knowledge is one that is distinctive of Radical Orthodoxy (hereafter "RO"), the theological and cultural movement by which Hampson is "heavily influenced."

I should say that my own sympathies lie with Thomism as it is traditionally understood in the Dominican school. Indeed, John Milbank, the father of RO, has named two of my favorite Thomists, Professor Steven Long (2010) and Father Romanus Cessario (2005), as his main living opponents in the contest between "romantic orthodoxy" (which

includes RO) and "classical orthodoxy" (which includes what I call traditional Thomism) (Milbank, 2010). I mention this partly by way of explanation, in case my response to Professor Hampson should seem stilted or off-key: we are conversing, alas, across a wide theological gap. I offer these brief paragraphs with respect and gratitude for Hampson's proposal, and in the hope of advancing all that may be for the good in Christ.

Those interested in RO, Thomism, and Christian psychology will have some interest in the deliberately radical ways that RO differs from classical Catholic and Thomistic theology. The differences would not be easy to overstate. The chief authors of the RO movement are frank about their dismay and frustration with modernity, secularity, and what they (following Henri de Lubac) see as the collusion of classical orthodoxy in the marginalization of Christianity in Western society. At the same time RO's classically orthodox critics resent the accusation of collusion, and are likewise frank in their own dismay and frustration with RO (Janz, 2004; Kenny, 2001; Marenbon, 2005; Marshall, 2002; Mulcahy, 2011; Shakespeare, 2007). Suffice it to say that the resulting clash has not been good for much, except perhaps demonstrating depth of the theological divide and the desirability of a more calm and charitable engagement. I want to suggest to interested psychologists that they have a stake in this romantic-classical dispute, and that their appropriation of Thomism will be poorer if they fail to take the dispute into account. (The roots of the division, as Hampson notes, are in the work of Henri de Lubac and the *Surnaturel* controversy of the mid-20th century. My study of this matter [Mulcahy, 2011] may be useful.)

Now, on to what I take to be the goal of Hampson's project, the couching of psychology within a theological architectonic. Traditional Thomism does not propose a theological systematization of all human knowledge (which I take to be the definition of "theological architectonic"). RO, in contrast, does. Both schools agree that God himself possesses the one, true omni-science, the one full and complete understanding of everything. Where they differ, it seems to me, is in their ideas about the kind of share we have in God's knowledge in this life. Let me try to show what I mean by comparing RO and traditional Thomism to the Platonic and Aristotelian architectures of knowledge which they resemble. After that I will offer some thoughts on the consequences of this divide.

In Plato's *Republic*, famously, we have a pedagogy that takes its best and brightest students and makes them philosophers—philosopher-kings, in fact. To see how this works, think of knowledge like a long, steep staircase: the learner starts at the bottom and climbs, step by step, until he can go no farther; then he stops, having reached the level of knowledge that matches his capacity. The smarter and better the student, the higher he or she climbs. The steps go up

through music and gymnastics, through the arts and crafts, through logic and mathematics, through civil and military service, and finally to the very top, to philosophy. At the top the philosophers contemplate the Good and, in virtue of this and of their previous mastery of all the lesser disciplines, govern the city. (Plato thinks knowledge and virtue go together, too, so there is no fear that the philosopher-kings will be unpleasant.) Thus the *Republic* shows us a unified system of knowledge, an architectonic, in which everything is ultimately a subfield of the supreme science, philosophy.

In RO something similar obtains. There is no grand pedagogy, but there is thought to be an architecture of knowledge with a top discipline governing—in this case, supervising all the other intellectual domains. RO's science of the Good is not philosophy, however, but theology—or, if you like, philosophical-theology. And while RO does not expect to rule society any time soon, it does have a political hope: “anarchic theocracy” (Milbank & Suriano, 2005; Sharlett, 2000), the fulfillment of its desire “to reclaim the world” from secularity “by situating [the world's] concerns and activities within a theological framework” (Milbank, Ward, & Pickstock, 1999). What makes this theocracy necessary, in RO's view, is that genuine knowledge can be had only through theology: knowledge is “by faith alone” (Milbank, 1999, 2000). We must not think, though, that RO accepts classical or modern standards of rationality: in fact RO is a deliberately post-modern “exercise in skeptical relativism” (Milbank, 2006), which locates truth not in a correspondence between the mind and reality (Milbank & Pickstock, 2000) but rather in the “narrative knowledge” of Christian storytelling: “the ceaseless re-narrating and ‘explaining’ of human history under the sign of the cross” (Milbank, 2006). RO's theological work is one of *collage-making* (Milbank et al., 1999), *poiesis* (Milbank, 1997), and “fiction,” a theology “reconfigur[ed] . . . in terms of fairytale [or] inner-tribal local folklore” (Milbank, 2005), claiming “no foundation for the truth of Christianity beyond the compelling vision of the story and of the vision it sustains” (Shakespeare, 2007). Radical Orthodoxy is “romantic orthodoxy” (Milbank, 2010), and it disqualifies critics by denying the possibility of non-theological reason on one hand and of objective rationality on the other: narrative knowledge is the best we can hope for, and RO's Christian narrative is divine (hence true). On this view there is really not much more to discuss, and the best hope for any intellectual discipline is to find its place in theology's narrative, outside of which there is no conceptual salvation.

What about the traditional Thomists? They think that truth is when our understanding is adequate to reality outside our minds. Thomists do offer pedagogies for philosophy and theology, but they do not propose a theological architectonic for all knowledge. Instead they adapt Aristotle's account

of the relations of the sciences, not Plato's. In place of a linear subordination of one science to another (like the staircase climbed by the philosopher-kings), they see a complex network of interrelationship and subalternity. This latter logical concept, subalternity, helps describe how disciplines overlap and depend on one another. A lower (less abstract) field may adopt the conclusions of a higher (more abstract) field as its own axioms or first principles: the lower is then a subalternate field of the higher. For instance an optometrist takes certain conclusions of geometry, mineralogy, physics, and other domains as axioms for optometry. The physicist and the geometrical theorist need not know all about lens-making, nor does the optometrist master their fields: all the optometrist needs to know is that the conclusions of geometry, mineralogy, etc., are reliable enough to be principles of his own science and art. The disciplines are related, then, in a way unlike that envisioned in the *Republic*—there is no comprehensive mastery or linear subordination among disciplines, but there is subalternation, a deriving of principles from among the conclusions of one field by another.

Now, what about theology? Traditional Thomists distinguish philosophy (particularly metaphysics) from theology in three major ways. First, each discipline looks at the world under a different formality: philosophy studies all things “insofar as they are knowable in the light of natural reason,” while theology studies them “insofar as they may be known in the light of divine revelation” (Aquinas, *STh* Ia, q. 1, a. 1). Second, unlike philosophy, the principal concern of theology is God; creatures are theologically interesting only inasmuch as God is their origin and end (Aquinas, *STh* Ia, q. 1, a. 3). Third, unlike philosophy, theology draws its first principles from God's own knowledge, the *scientia dei*, which is truly the highest science: theology itself is not the supreme science, nor does the believer or theologian comprehend the *scientia dei* in this life. Instead theology progresses painstakingly by faith and reason, looking at the revealed truth in the light of faith. Consequently theology sees its subject matter “in a glass, darkly,” and does not possess the kind of simple, complete knowledge that would enable it to grasp everything in God. In a traditionally Thomistic understanding, the highest science is not enjoyed by human beings in this life. We grope along doing the best we can with a complicated knowledge that deals largely in analogies.

For traditional Thomists, then, theology is more circumscribed than it is for RO, and other disciplines are considered autonomous: there is no overall theological architectonic for secular disciplines. Traditional Thomists do not hold, with Milbank and other RO authors, that faith alone gives knowledge, nor do they teach that the secular order of knowledge must be overcome, denied, evacuated, or redeemed by theology.

What does this mean for Christian psychology? On RO's account (or something similar), we must

work to see that theology comes, in a benevolent, non-violent way, to dominate psychology as a subdomain in its “anarchic theocracy” of knowledge. On classical Thomism’s account (or something similar), we must observe boundaries between the theological and psychological domains, expecting psychology to be more autonomous and theology to contribute less to the answering of psychological questions.

Thomism and RO—or, if you like, classical orthodoxy and romantic orthodoxy—are not the only theologies that differ over the legitimacy of the secular, the intelligibility of nature to unaided reason, and about the scope of theology’s competence. There are somewhat similar divides between Catholics and Calvinists, Thomists and the *Communio* theologians, and between the branches of Jewish tradition represented by David Novak and Michael Wyschogrod.

This brings me to my two suggestions.

First, I would suggest that Christian psychologists and theologians alike approach the disagreements between romantic and classical orthodoxies (Milbank, 2010) in a spirit of gentleness. Hampson has done this, and there is generally a need for more generosity and humility between RO and its critics. If we now have too much “bitter zeal” and evil contentiousness, we might instead try to work in “the wisdom from above” that is “first of all chaste, then peaceable, modest, easy to be persuaded, consenting to the good, full of mercy and good fruits, without judging, without dissimulation” (cf. James 3:14-17).

Second and more concretely, I would suggest that psychologists drawn to Aquinas and his thinking on *habitus* make a special study of the Thomistic adage *gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit*—grace does not remove nature, but rather perfects it. There is more than one way to take this axiom (Elders, 2010), and it will give a useful entree into the dispute that has emerged from the work of Lubac. With regard to the adage that grace perfects nature, psychotherapists, for instance, will want to know, theologically, whether or not grace can normally be expected to remove or heal humanity’s inherent imperfections in this life. Similarly, many will wonder if Thomas’s dictum means our human nature, whether in itself or in its actual fallen condition, does or does not need the theological virtues, or sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*) to be psychologically well. There are other ways to begin exploring the matter, but to my mind this one seems promising.

I imagine the readers of *Edification* will agree with Professor Hampson at least in desiring that Christian psychologists take the truths of faith into psychological account. Whether psychology itself belongs within a theological architectonic, and whether Henri de Lubac and RO are good guides to Thomism, are more debatable claims, and worth the hard labor of study. I look forward to Hampson’s continuing work and especially to any further

light he may shed on theology’s relationship to the psychological sciences.

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## A “Copernican Revolution” of the virtues: One more step for Peter Hampson’s integrative role of *habitus*

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Peter Hampson’s paper is an excellent contribution towards the rescuing of the work of Aquinas, arguably the greatest intellectual genius of all Christ’s followers, from the dead weight of centuries of misinterpretation. Hampson is surely right in saying that there are “treasures to be recovered” from Aquinas, especially his account of action and *habitus*, although I would have added the *passiones* and actualisations called “beatitudes” and “fruits,” some of which are mentioned briefly in footnotes 5 and 12, since these constitute what Servais Pinckaers (2001) calls an “organic unity” (p. 87). Furthermore, Hampson is bold in suggesting that we should not focus exclusively on the (purportedly) non-theological aspects of Aquinas’s account of human flourishing, noting the possibility of future exploration of approaches such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) in the light of the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. Nevertheless, from my reading of his article, I think that the ghost of Aristotelianism has not yet been fully exorcised from his interpretation of Aquinas’s account of the virtues. I would like to propose that one further shift in understanding, a change of perspective, is needed for the full benefits of Aquinas’s revolution to be realised for psychology today. Due to the constraints of space, I present a brief summary of this proposal in the following paragraphs; for full details and references, see Pinsent (2012).

To grasp the need for a shift of perspective, it is important to recall that what Aquinas means by a “virtue” in the proper or perfect sense differs radically from the notion of a virtue described by Aristotle. Aquinas does acknowledge that we can acquire virtues in the Aristotelian manner by repeated good actions; he refers to such virtues as acquired.

Aquinas also claims, however, that perfect virtues are not acquired, but infused in us by God (*ST* 1a2ae, q.63, a.2). These infused virtues are not just the theological virtues but include counterparts of the acquired moral and intellectual virtues. So besides acquired justice there is infused justice, which is the perfect sense of justice (*ST* 1a2ae, q.100, a.12). Similarly, besides acquired prudence there is infused prudence, which is the perfect sense of prudence (*ST* 1a2ae, q.47, a.14) and so on. These infused virtues are not acquired by repetition, in the manner of a practised skill, but are “worked in us, without us” (*ST* 1a2ae q.55 a.4). These virtues can also be infused instantly, lost or “cut off” instantly, possessed by anyone, including children and the intellectually disabled, and are unified by love (cf. *ST* 1a2ae, q.65, a.3; q.71 a.4; 2a2ae, q.47, a.14). What is still more challenging for an Aristotelian reading is that these infused virtues are interwoven in *ST* 2a2ae, qq.1-170 with still more infused dispositions, called gifts, and are actualized as beatitudes and fruits.

For all these reasons, I think that Hampson is absolutely correct to reject the neo-Thomist understanding of perfection by means of the metaphor of dual layers, a life of nature and a “higher” life of grace, signified by his claim that we need to “throw (at least) one of the *two* ladders away.” Aquinas’s dispositions are clearly not “higher” versions, by any kind of *proportional* scale, of those of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Nevertheless, it is not enough, I contend, to get rid of the two-layer model and collapse grace into nature, since Aquinas’s account is so clearly distinct from that of Aristotle. Furthermore, although Hampson emphasises the importance of repetition and practice, for Aquinas, this kind of acquisition of virtue, in the manner of learning a skill, is surprisingly unimportant and certainly not enough for heaven. We need a radically new metaphoric understanding of his virtue ethics.

How is this understanding to be achieved? I think that a solution is impossible unless one takes a holistic view of Aquinas’s account and especially the role of the gifts. According to Aquinas, the gifts dispose us to be moved easily by God with respect to all the things to which the virtues pertain (*ST* 1a2ae, q.68, a.1; a.4). In other words, gifts operate in a unique and triadic God-person-object manner. This claim might seem bizarre, but human counterparts of such operations are commonplace. When a parent points out an object to a child, and the child turns to look at the object with the parent, there is a triadic person-person-object operation. In psychology, such phenomena go by the name of “joint attention,” and a failure to engage in joint attention is a principal symptom of autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). Interpreting Aquinas’s claims in modern terms, one might say that the gifts, and the infused virtues with which they are interwoven in the life of grace, remove our spiritual autism before God. To put this interpretation another way, the infused virtues and gifts enable “second-person relatedness” to God,

culminating in friendship.

This second-personal understanding is, I think, key to understanding Aquinas's counterintuitive claims about the virtues and benefitting from his insights today. Consider, for instance, perhaps his most bizarre assertion, that infused virtues can be gained or lost instantly. This immediacy is totally impossible for virtues acquired by repetition. Yet what Aquinas actually says is that when love is banished by a seriously evil act all the infused virtues are "expelled," "excluded," or "cut off" (*excluduntur*) (*ST* 1a2ae q.71 a.4). In other words, such exclusion does not mean that all habitual dispositions previously associated with good actions suddenly vanish, but that any remaining dispositions cease to be effective as virtues. How is such a claim to be understood, in the light of a second-personal interpretation?

As a possible resolution, consider the example of a couple who have been happily married for some years. Imagine now that one of the spouses suddenly betrays the other in some serious manner, such as adultery. The spouse who does the betraying will not suddenly lose all the good habitual dispositions of daily life. Nevertheless, acquired dispositions to eat and drink moderately, to clean the house regularly, and so on will not be conducive to the flourishing of the relationship with the other person for as long as this relationship has been betrayed, and there has been no act of reconciliation. In other words, the form of these dispositions will have changed, even if, materially speaking, much of the outward appearance of daily life continues as before. Conversely, if and when an act of reconciliation is carried out, then any enduring dispositions of ordered living will once again be reconnected with the flourishing of the relationship, a reconnection that happens immediately with the restoration of the relationship. What makes no sense in terms of repetition suddenly makes complete sense in terms of relationship or, more specifically, second-person relatedness.

So what are the implications for this re-reading of Aquinas's account, especially for those who do not share his theological commitments? The answer, I think, is that it should make us pay attention to second-person relatedness in the formation of virtue. The role accorded to God in Aquinas's account also applies, in a limited way, to other persons with whom we can be in second-person relationship, such as parents, friends, and spouses. Consider, for instance, how we first acquire temperance. The canonical account of the Western tradition is that we choose a virtuous mean by practical reason and then acquire the habit of choosing that mean easily by repetition. Yet anyone who has brought up children will know that this is not how we first acquire temperance. Infants typically learn to eat the right amount at the right time through games and other second-personal interactions with their parents, not from their own judgment of reason.

For these reasons, I commend Hampson's engagement with Aquinas, but I would encourage

him to take one further step. Aquinas pioneered a way of thinking of virtues not simply as skills acquired by practice and repetition, but as dispositions engendered in us through second-person relatedness. Brought into engagement with new research into social cognition and character formation, I hope that, with this further step, Aquinas's approach may help to promote a "Copernican revolution" in the understanding of the virtues – a shift in emphasis from the first-person to the second-person perspective.

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## Virtue as creative freedom and emotional wisdom

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Wittgenstein (1998) once famously quipped that certain expressions need to be sent "for cleaning" before they can be put back into circulation (p. 44). This is especially true of moral expressions, which are particularly prone to losing their luster over time. Peter Hampson gives this type of restorative attention to the notion of habit, seeking to put it back into circulation with its original brilliance restored. In what follows, I focus my comments on three aspects of Hampson's essay: (1) the excellence that virtue imparts, (2) the relationship between knowledge and emotion presupposed by this excellence, and (3) the unique role of infused virtues in the Christian life.

## The excellence of virtue

In contemporary parlance, the term habit has come to mean a psychological groove that diminishes freedom and restricts a person to stereotypical forms of behavior. Like the ruts in Roman roads, habits are viewed as determining us to one fixed course. For



Thomas Aquinas and the ancients, however, *habitus* was exactly the opposite of diminishment and restriction. It is best understood as a psychological empowerment or as what Hampson helpfully describes as an “expertise.” Although a *habitus* does indeed dispose us to act in certain ways, this dispositional effect exists only at a general level of specificity. This, I take it, is what Hampson, quoting Simon Oliver, means when he affirms that *habitus* “relates to ‘non-identical repetition.’” This is exactly right and can be illustrated from the case of justice. According to Thomas Aquinas (*Summa theologiae* [henceforth ST] II-II 58.1), the virtue of justice disposes us to act justly—to render each one his due. What is due to another in the concrete, however, varies greatly. What is due to an employee, for example, varies according to his age, his time with the company, his health, and even the value of the currency in which he is paid. It is here that Hampson’s comparison of *habitus* to a skill is apt and merits further development. Indeed, by developing this analogy between *habitus* and skill, Hampson would be able to explain more fully not only what he means by “moral expertise” but also the “social context” of habit formation that he briefly considers. Moreover, attention to this analogy might help moral psychologists to develop a more convincing account of “moral identity” and its relationship to “moral behavior.”

The skills we acquire when we learn to play the piano or to speak a foreign language have several features in common (Pinckaers, 1995, pp. 354-374, MacIntyre, 1984, pp. 181-203). First, they presuppose some standard of excellence according to which the beginner’s actions are judged—a master pianist or a native speaker of the language. Second, the primary task of the beginner is to internalize by means of repeated action a set of sub-skills that embody the structure of the activity (the rules of music or the grammar and syntax of a language) and that are the building blocks of excellent action. Further, the purpose of these sub-skills will not always be apparent to the beginner. The beginner must take certain things on faith and place his trust in an expert (the piano teacher or the teacher of the foreign language). As the beginner grows in proficiency, however, the teacher increasingly places these activities in their normal social context: music recitals or conversations in the language. Lastly, the excellence that is acquired is a form of freedom: it is the acquired freedom to play or speak well. All of these five features of skill acquisition—(1) a standard of excellence, (2) the internalization of rules, (3) trust in an expert, (4) the social context of learning, (5) and expertise as a freedom for excellence—are analogously present in virtue acquisition.

The acquisition of virtue presupposes some conception of human flourishing. It also entails an apprenticeship with an expert or experts in the moral life whom we trust as we begin, in community with others, the difficult discipline of internalizing

the basic rules of living. Virtue, however, is more than following rules, just as proficiency in music and language is more than memorization. The excellence of virtue is something like the improvisation of a jazz quartet or the waltzing of expert dancers: it requires the internalization of the rules, but is more than the rules. The rules are part of what enables four musicians to create music together, but the rules cannot tell the musicians what to play at each critical creative moment. In other words, both the expert artist and the person of virtue must both acquire facility in judgment and in execution of that judgment: they must learn to recognize and do the *kalos* (the beautiful good) in the *kairos* (the critical present moment). This leads us to our second point: the relationship between knowledge and emotion in moral excellence.

### Knowledge and emotion

Hampson calls for a renewed understanding of *habitus* precisely in an effort to provide a more adequate account of the relationship between knowledge and emotion in moral development. Specifically, he argues that an Aristotelian account of habit formation could answer many of the issues raised by Hardy and Carlo (2005) concerning the role of emotion in human action. I agree with this and with his suspicion that real world moral decision making is more “emotion-rich” than standard accounts recognize. To understand the importance of Hampson’s perspective, we need to view it in relation to modern philosophy. As Iris Murdoch (1998) noted, the dominant tendency in modern philosophy has been to view moral reasoning in isolation from will and emotion. The goal has been both to preserve the objectivity of moral reasoning and the freedom of the human person. Reason, even concerning practical matters, was viewed as following necessary principles to necessary conclusions, while the will was regarded as radically free in the face reason’s conclusions. Lastly, the emotions were viewed almost exclusively as something that posed a potential threat to reason’s functioning or the will’s independence.

A growing number of scholars have shown, however, that the emotions play a crucial role in moral judgment. Specifically, much of how we view the world and judge what is beneficial or harmful in it is shaped by the emotional memory of past experiences stored in the limbic (emotional) brain (Lewis, Amini, & Lannon, 2001). As the famous case of Phineas Gage suggests, destroy the limbic region of the brain and you destroy a person’s ability to reason practically about his own behavior (Damasio, 1994, pp. 3-33, but see also Macmillan, 2008). It is here that Thomas Aquinas’ modified Aristotelianism can offer a helpful corrective. Aristotle and Aquinas both distinguish between the speculative and practical uses of reason. While the conclusions of speculative reasoning are not influenced by will or emotion (I know that two plus two is four whether I want to

or not and no matter how angry I am about it), practical reasoning depends of the participation of will and emotion in order to arrive at a judgment (ST I-II 9.1 ad 3). This is why, as Hampson notes, the virtues are all connected: practical wisdom (*phronesis* or *prudentia*) in the intellect requires the presence of justice in the will and courage and temperance in the emotions. Strictly speaking, practical reasoning does not conclude in knowledge, but in action (Westberg, 1994, p. 19). It concludes in the command to do a particular act here and now. This act, however, will only seem good to me if my loves are well-ordered: if I am disposed to render each one his due (justice) and to desire sense pleasures rightly (temperance), as well as to bear or confront obstacles I may encounter (courage) (ST I-II 65).

Although a fuller account of the relationship between knowledge, will, and emotion in moral judgment is beyond the scope of these reflections, we should note that from the Christian perspective, unless there is some standard of value underlying this moral formation, a virtue psychology only leads at best to a form of communal moral relativism (Sherwin, 2012). Aristotle had already seen an aspect of this problem when he addressed the apparent circularity of his account. Not only does right reason depend on well-ordered love, but for Aristotle (and for Aquinas) well-ordered love depends on right reason (*De malo* 6). Aristotle recognized that in order to avoid an infinite regress one had to posit the existence of principles that transcend both will and reason. Aristotle argued that these principles come from God (*Eudemian Ethics*, 7.14 [1248a25]). Aquinas builds on this insight by identifying these principles with the natural law (ST I-II 94.2). The precepts of the natural law and the corresponding inclinations of the will orient us toward the general goods necessary for human flourishing, but they do not teach us how to embody these goods in concrete acts. This we must learn in community with others and in an apprenticeship with the moral authorities in our lives. Attentiveness to this synthesis between virtue and natural law traditions would enable Hampson to develop his account of how one tradition of moral enquiry could fruitfully engage other traditions.

### The infused virtues

Hampson seeks to develop a Christian psychology of moral development that both respects nature and adequately describes the transforming action of grace in our lives. He notes with approval that Thomas Aquinas refers not only to the “intellectual and moral virtues” but also to the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. These later virtues, he explains, are “infused” and thus “dependent on grace.” He further describes infused charity as purifying our “natural desires and human wants,” as well as suffusing “our sense of justice.”

All of this is excellent. Hampson, however, remains silent on one important aspect of Aquinas’ account of infused virtue. Aquinas holds that in

order to live the Christian life we need to receive not only the theological virtues, but also infused cardinal virtues (infused prudence, justice, courage and temperance) so that we can act according to the Gospel concerning those things that are necessary for salvation (ST I-II 63.3-4). Aquinas’ doctrine is in sharp contrast with those, such as Duns Scotus, who held that the infused cardinal virtues are an unnecessary complication because the animating influence of the theological virtues upon the acquired cardinal virtues is sufficient to account for the new life that grace makes possible. As I argue elsewhere (Sherwin, 2009), however, the Scotistic view fails to account for how adult converts who do not have the acquired cardinal virtues are nonetheless able to do what virtue demands. An important feature of the infused cardinal virtues is that although they empower us to do what is right, the residual effects of our acquired vices may hinder us from feeling that this is the case. Normally, when I acquire a virtue or a skill I have the psychological awareness that I can engage in its act. If someone were to throw me a basketball, for example, I know I could dribble it with facility, promptly, and with real pleasure.

Those who have converted from a life of vice, however, although they receive the infused cardinal virtues, they often lack this psychological experience of facility. Indeed, on the dispositional level, they may still feel inclined to their former life of vice. In Aquinas’ view, therefore, the new convert is called to live a twofold trust: he must trust that Gospel morality really will lead to his deepest happiness, and he must trust that God gives him here and now the grace (the infused dispositions we call virtues) necessary to live the Christian life. Interestingly, this is exactly what many recovering addicts experience, as Bill Wilson (1976, pp. 11-13), one of the founders of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, eloquently asserts. The doctrine of the infused cardinal virtues, therefore, is an area where psychology and theology can pursue a fruitful collaboration for both cognitive and therapeutic ends.

### Concluding remarks

Peter Hampson’s essay is stimulating and has led me to consider afresh the unique contribution that Thomas Aquinas’ theory of virtue can make to research in the biopsychosocial sciences. Many of Hampson’s remarks offer only a brief intimation of the insights that lay behind them. I look forward to seeing him develop these insights more fully in subsequent studies. I was especially intrigued by his concept of “retrieval induced forgetting.” I hope that my above comments demonstrate my admiration for his work and can serve as a stimulus for him to continue to pursue it.

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## Up the down staircase: From the psychological to the theological

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In “By knowledge and by love: The integrative role of *habitus* in Christian psychology,” Hampson presents Aquinas’ view of *habitus* in order to inform, enrich, and foster ecumenical “interdisciplinary engagement and participation” in contemporary

secular psychological discourse. This is accomplished by climbing two metaphorical ladders: first, to view habits, behavior, and morality from a nuanced philosophical (relative to psychological) perspective; and, second, to view these phenomena from a higher theological (relative to psychological and philosophical) perspective. Thereafter, both ladders are discarded to offer an “elegant route down to reach back from the theological through the philosophical to the psychological.”

As a secular (experimental, evolutionary, agnostic) psychologist, I found Dr. Hampson’s paper graceful, provocative, and compelling. It is an excellent example of the natural affinity and synergy between theology, philosophy, and science; and, a poignant reminder that for most of human history, theological and scientific inquiry were not fundamentally mutually exclusive and adversarial enterprises. And it suggests that future theoretical and empirical advances in moral psychology and positive psychology (as well as clinical psychology) will be made by scholars well-versed in philosophy and theology in addition to psychology.

Moreover, and this is the main point of my short commentary, I am struck by the compatibility between a top-down (i.e. from theology to psychology) and a bottom-up (i.e. from philosophy and psychology to theology) analysis of habits, behavior, and morality. [In accord with Dr. Hampson’s stipulations in the target article, I am not claiming that a top-down and bottom-up approach are identical, isomorphic, or equivalent; rather, I believe that viewing habits, virtue, morals and religion from these different perspectives yields potentially fruitful connections.]

## Habitus

*Pitch upon that Course of Life which is most Excellent, and Custom will render it the most Delightful*. Pythagoras, (cited in Addison [1712], p. 190)

Aquinas’ conception of *habitus* is derived from Greek philosophy, based on an essential distinction between *habitus* and habit that has for the most part been obscured or obliterated in contemporary psychological discourse. Habit refers to the automatic repetition of behavior; for example, Pavlov’s dogs drooling reflexively in response to a bell, or repeatedly hammering a nail into a board until it is done precisely the same way. *Habitus*, in contrast, entails reflective, recursive, “non-identical” repetition -- in the service of continuous refinement. Such undertakings “have a necessary relation to mental awareness and volition and are always under the control of an agent” (Fiering, 1978, p. 202). They are acts purposefully undertaken toward specific goals or moral ends.

William James had a similar view of the distinction between habits and *habitus*, as well as the behavioral and psychological consequences of *habitus*. Martin Halliwell (1999, p. 45–46, 48–49) explains:

James splits self into two aspects: the adjusting 'nuclear' self which provides a sense of continuity, and the executing 'shifting' self which enables one to act upon the environment in the pursuit of future goals. In the dynamic interaction between these two, which is both conservative (the cumulative result of following habitual patterns) and projective (the revision of those patterns in the light of new experiences), James locates the primary mark of identity 'I'. This 'I' is both a linguistic structure which enables the individual to express him or herself in language, and a felt centre of activity which exists, despite the mutable fringes of experience, as 'the birthplace of conclusions and the starting point of acts'. In other words, the self is a site where remembering (retaining traces of past activities) and willing (forcing new perceptual stances) meet. Memory does not trace backwards in an unidirectional fashion to connect with a line of identical past selves, nor does the self maintain a stable shape as it pushes into the future. Instead, these fringes of experience which disrupt such a linear sequence cause slight modifications and disruptions in habitual behavior. *This description of repetition-with-difference explains the way in which the self can preserve a dynamic pattern without surrendering to blind habit.... The necessary adjustment enables one to locate the bridging dynamic self as the maker of meaning, rather than the epiphenomenon of passive sensation... will [is] a type of habit which has entered the realm of conscious life, possessing the capacity to override and legislate for activities which would normally occur beneath consciousness. [my emphasis]*

James' pragmatic depiction of the self in action is in accord with Aquinas' conception of *habitus*; "repetition-with-difference" is fundamentally active and intentional; moreover, it is a critical component of human ingenuity and creativity.

### Virtue and morals

*Every religion emphasizes human improvement, love, respect for others, sharing other people's suffering. On these lines every religion had more or less the same viewpoint and the same goal. Dalai Lama (1998), The Path to Tranquility*

In the target article, Hampson writes: "It is not clear for psychology, on psychological grounds alone at any rate, what counts as moral behavior or the good." Agreed. However, some version of "The Golden Rule" (e.g., "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Matthew 7:12 [Christianity]; "Hurt not others in ways you yourself would find hurtful." Udana-

Varga, 5:18 [Buddhism]) and The Cardinal Virtues (prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude) are ubiquitous among the world's religions. This is no coincidence from an evolutionary perspective. In *Moral Origins: The Evolution of Virtue, Altruism, and Shame*, anthropologist Christopher Boehm (2012, p. 32) argues that morality evolved to foster cooperative behavior between individuals in large groups of genetically unrelated individuals:

it seems obvious that several brain states have evolved to give us this remarkable moral faculty that might be unique to humans. A sense of right and wrong and a capacity to blush with shame, along with a highly developed sense of empathy, compel us as moral beings to consider how our actions may negatively affect the lives of others--or how we may gain satisfaction in helping them.

In evolutionary terms, "the good" is that which helps perpetuate one's genes over time; and, for gregarious and fundamentally social animals, cooperation and reciprocity are superior (for individuals and the groups to which they belong) to ruthless selfishness for survival and reproduction. In accord with this view, recent research shows that primates (de Waal, 2005) and humans (Dunfield & Kuhlmeier, 2010) are innately predisposed to favor equitable outcomes and to help others who help them (or those who intend to help but are unable to do so).

### Transcendence

*Without myth we are like a race of brain-injured people unable to go beyond the word and hear the person who is speaking. Rollo May, The Cry for Myth (1992, p. 23)*

In the target article, Hampson writes: "Nor is it necessarily the case that God is represented in the secular moral psychology equation. Rarely in fact, in my experience, is God invoked, and so where the good is considered (is it ever?), it is typically discussed univocally as a non-transcendent concept within the created order." True, and necessarily so, in that a transcendent God beyond the created order is epistemologically inconceivable from a scientific vantage point. Nevertheless, some scholars posit that a transcendent God -- gestated within, and sustained by, the created order -- is a crucial human adaptation, as valuable and significant as art and language. For example, classicist Walter Burkert (1987, p. 172; see also Burkert, 1996) proposed that supernatural beliefs (including God) are natural and necessary for humans, who by virtue of self-consciousness, are "painfully aware of past and future." Such beliefs serve to focus and channel the awe that the love of life ("Give us life, life, life." -- African harvest ritual) and the dread that the fear of death ("And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." -- Hebrews 2:15) inevitably engenders.

From this perspective, humans are fundamentally religious animals; and religion is neither an “opiate of the masses,” or an infantile phase of human development to be outgrown or replaced by scientific beliefs, technological progress, or (especially) psychotropic or psychotherapeutic interventions. As Otto Rank (1931, p. 192) presciently observed: “psychology, which is gradually trying to supplant religious and moral ideology, is only partially qualified to do this, because it is a preponderantly negative and disintegrating ideology.”

### Application

*Religion opens up the depth of man's spiritual life which is usually covered by the dust of our daily life and the noise of our secular work. It gives us the experience of the Holy, of something which is untouchable, awe-inspiring, an ultimate meaning, the source of ultimate courage. This is the glory of what we call religion. But beside its glory lies its shame. It makes its myths and doctrines, its rites and laws, into ultimates and persecutes those who do not subject themselves to it.* Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture*, (1964, p. 9)

At the end of the target article, Hampson considers some “uses” for *habitus* in education, “green” or sustainable behaviors, and therapy -- in hope of having a positive effect on “the wider world.” I applaud this sentiment, and in the same spirit, I propose that the concept of *habitus* can shed light on the distinction between, in Tillich’s terms, the glory and shame of religion. According to Karen Armstrong (2000) in *The Battle for God*, every religion is vulnerable to hijacking by fanatics who promote hatred and violence in their zeal to impose their views on others in a frantic effort to rid the world of evil.

Perhaps such inclinations result from practicing religion as a habit rather than as *habitus*; as Ernest Becker (1971, p. 197) put it: “religion, like any human aspiration, can also be automatic, reflexive, obsessive.” In contrast, religion as *habitus* could be characterized along the lines of Gordon Allport’s (1966, p. 455) conception of intrinsic religiousness, i.e. by striving for meaning and value, and viewing “faith as a supreme value in its own right. It is oriented toward a unification of being, takes seriously the commandment of brotherhood, and strives to transcend all self-centered needs” (see Jonas & Fischer [2006] for empirical evidence in support of the distinction between extrinsic (i.e. religion as habit) and intrinsic (i.e. religion as *habitus*) religiosity).

### Conclusion

*to those...of moderate and modest minds who--speaking of that which is of the highest importance, but lies beyond experience--decline to say on the one hand, “This can never be,” and on the other hand, “It must needs be precisely thus, and we know all about*

*it.* Edwin Abbott, *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (1884, p. x)

In sum, Hampson’s theologically inspired analysis of *habitus*, intention, morality, and transcendence contains cogent theoretical and empirical insights that serve as a model of interdisciplinary excellence and integration of philosophical, psychological, and theological perspectives. And there is substantial commonality between a theological (i.e., top-down) and a natural (i.e., bottom-up) view of *habitus*. *Habitus* as iterated intentional goal-directed activities in the service of personal refinement is common to Aristotle’s philosophy, Aquinas’ philosophy, and William James’ pragmatic psychology. The Golden Rule and the Cardinal Virtues can be viewed as products of theological selection or products of natural selection; what is “good” in God’s eyes is also good in the eyes of nature. And religion is (and will remain) a primary source of awe-inspiring meaning and courage, whether viewed as a transcendent concept in a divine order or a non-transcendent concept within the created order.

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## The Christian difference of *habitus* in virtuous acts, dispositions, and norms

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Peter Hampson has written a remarkable article. He is quite right to turn to *habitus* in order to understand the nature of virtue and its potential use in psychology. He courageously makes a case not only that *habitus* can serve an integrative role in Christian psychology but that it can do so in secular psychology as well. Both cases need sustained argument and nuanced language, for which he sets a frame and offers a method using psychological, philosophical, and theological idioms. In what follows, I suggest how at several points his argument can and even must be strengthened using his own sources, Aquinas being the most cited among a very full roster.

### A realist frame on *habitus* (and virtue)

As Hampson has indicated, *habitus* (in Latin and *hexis* in Greek) is a complex notion that needs to be recovered in order to contribute significantly

to the use of virtue in psychology. I agree that virtue cannot be understood without grasping the developmental and embodied and ensouled reality of *habitus*. Moreover, the intellectual, moral, and theological/infused virtues cannot be understood without addressing the particular human acts and the normativeness that underlies virtues and *habitus* (Titus, 2010). And neither *habitus* nor virtue will serve psychotherapy without a realist frame.

In searching for a robust account of consistency and stability in human agency over time, Hampson focuses on Aquinas' treatment of action and *habitus*, which underlie virtue and vice. Aquinas is part of the common Christian heritage that is both pre-modern and pre-Reformation. He offers a sophisticated realism and a rich teaching on the relationship between nature and grace, action and *habitus*, and virtue and the model of virtue who is Christ. Although the modern sciences, including the psychological sciences, have made significant contributions to knowledge (for example, about the importance of human emotions and neurobiology in human agency), the philosophical perspective that underlies modern science has often been a type of naïve realism. This fact has its advantages and disadvantages. The advantage is that, as implicit realists, contemporary scientists can appreciate Aquinas' appeal to experience, observation, and reality, which involves a critical and metaphysical realism. The disadvantage is that, since they are trained in perspectives that tend to be materialist, they tend to stop their investigation short of its causal end.

Hampson makes a brave pedagogical move in using the ladder metaphor to explain the advantages of the theological underpinning for *habitus* before offering it for psychological considerations. He recognizes that method and the ordering of the sciences are important issues in establishing a commensurate vision of mankind (MacIntyre, 1992). Commensurability will be found inasmuch as the common realist strain in modern thought is construed not to be essentially materialistic or deterministic but rather open to real sources, including personal, metaphysical, and spiritual ones.

### The inadequacy of the English term "habit"

Hampson employs Aquinas' thought on *habitus* in order to recover this notion for contemporary psychology. However, the common translation of "*habitus*" as "habit" lends itself to confusions, even as found in the English translations of Aristotle and Aquinas. The contemporary use of "habit" displays many senses that, when used without great care, mistranslate the richness of the original.

Besides a peripheral reference to clothes ("the habit does not make the monk"), the word "habit" often is used to refer to external behavior, deportment, or even appearance. "He is in the habit of pulling on his left ear." "Their habit is to eat at 6:30 pm." "She fell into the habit of smoking Lucky

Strikes.” The primary focus of this use of “habit” involves more external and less voluntary types of action or movements.

At a more promising level, “habit” can also refer to a person’s mental or moral constitution or to a customary practice or way of acting. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (2012) offers two pertinent definitions in this regard. First, habit is “a settled disposition or tendency to act in a certain way, especially one acquired by frequent repetition of the same act until it becomes *almost or quite involuntary*” (emphasis mine). The second definition (OED, 2012) is more centrally psychological: “an automatic, ‘mechanical’ reaction to a specific situation which usually has been acquired by learning and/or repetition.” As Hampson has noted, the issue of being “acquired by frequent repetition” is of interest for “habits” of intellectual and moral qualities, but we need to wonder how they might be considered “almost or quite involuntary.” Furthermore, the second definition recalls stimulus-response theorists that use the language of habit, as well as behaviorists and materialists that focus on human learning and plasticity.

The notion that a habit can be “quite involuntary” (first definition) or “mechanical” (second definition) leads one to draw attention to the need for careful distinctions. My point is not to discredit these examples or to deny these phenomena. Rather, I will try to show, as does Hampson, that there is more to human experience and a Christian construal of freedom and responsibility and that these examples of “habit” are a starting point for the work on the classic notion of *habitus* rather than its ending.

Admittedly, some measure of mechanical or involuntary habit is operative in every person’s day. But even more interestingly, a very great diversity of almost automatic habits surrounds our more conscious efforts and what I would like to call voluntary *habitus* or dispositions. Voluntary *habitus* or dispositions inform our capacities to receive and give, be nourished and nourish, and learn and teach, as well as to be in relationship with other persons, the world, and our Maker. The psychologist should be aware of not only disordered and maladaptive tendencies in these areas (i.e., interpersonal relationships, emotion, cognition, volition) but also the well ordered and adaptive ones; not only the automatic and involuntary “habits” but also the intelligent and intentional, the free and the felt dispositions or *habitus*.

In general for Aquinas, a *habitus* is a quality of “a disposition whereby that which is disposed is disposed well or ill, and this, either in regard to itself or in regard to another” (ST I-II, q. 49, a. 1). In particular, virtues are operative *habitus*. As St. Augustine says in his *De Libero arbitrio* (ii, 19): “Virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us” (as cited in Aquinas, ST I-II, q. 55, a. 4). Virtues, specifically, are operative *habitus*, which

means that they are not only in act (existence) but that they are the basis for further acts (ST I-II, q. 55, a. 2). Operative *habitus*, in contrast with “habits,” are controlled and voluntary dispositions to act. They are an expression of freedom, not just a “freedom from” morally significant slavish compulsions or automatic actions but also a “freedom for” morally significant goals and spiritual ends. Servais Pinckaers (1985/1995, 2005) has described the latter type as a freedom for excellence. Aquinas, for his part, views *habitus* in rational and volitional capacities as goal-directed dispositions, which aids us to act knowingly, lovingly, freely and firmly.

### **Habitus beyond the “habit”**

Employing philosophical and theological insights, following the suggestion of Hampson, we can look for something more than the term “habit” to bolster our search for an adequate recovery (or revival) of the classic notion of *habitus* and virtue. I find that “disposition” is a more adapted translation of *habitus* and *hexis* than is “habit.” Here are some reasons why: Hampson might be misunderstood when saying that “*habits create* dispositions to act in a similar way in the future” (italics added). In order to understand his point, we must further distinguish (1) the *acts* that create habits and the diverse types of acts that create dispositions to act (*habitus*) from (2) the actual *dispositions* to act (*habitus*) from (3) the *ordering or norm* that underlies these acts and dispositions. Aquinas would want to affirm that there are not only “habits” that influence dispositions but also *habitus* that *are* dispositions to act freely and intelligently in a similar way in the future. What does Aquinas mean in this regard?

On the one hand, Aquinas uses the notion of act and potency to analyze how we acquire *habitus*. In order for us to acquire a rational *habitus*, we must have as-yet-undetermined potential, different possibilities, and the ability for rational investigation (according to nature, operation, or goal). We can habitually dispose a faculty only if it is not naturally determined to one specific act but rather open to further specification. Two critical open faculties are reason and will, but in certain ways so are the sense affections (emotions) and sense cognition (evaluative sense, memory, imagination, common sense), as well as our relational capacities.

On the other hand, a *habitus* can only be understood in terms of three further constructive elements: acts, dispositions to act, and norms for action. While good *habitus* (the virtues) can only be understood in the light of these three constituents, Hampson is not always clear in this regard. For example, he identifies acts with virtues while trying to go beyond action when he says: “virtues, good acts, involve more aspects of our psychology than just behavior.”

### **Acts, dispositions to act, and norms of right action**

What are the defining aspects of the three

elements of operative *habitus* and virtue?

First, virtuous knowledge and love is expressed in acts and practices that involve the whole person (including unconscious aspects) at rational, volitional, emotional, and even interpersonally relational levels (Titus, 2010). Such acts, even intended omissions, are complex and important. Hulsey and Hampson (2010), for example, are right to indicate that autobiographical memory is significant not only in what is recalled (e.g., successes and failures that contribute to one's life goal), but in what is not recalled (e.g., the deliberate distance put between one's conscious efforts and certain distractions, temptations or evils).

Second, human acts are not irrelevant. When we act intentionally, or even casually, we form second-nature dispositions. A human operative disposition is a quality that is an actualization of the diverse powers of the person (ST I-II, q. 56, a. 1; I-II, q. 55, a. 4). Good operative *habitus* are dispositions that aid us to act toward our end according to reason and nature with three key psychological and spiritual characteristics: ease, promptness and joy. By the nature of the human soul, the diverse levels of *habitus* tend toward the unity of each person, through both unconscious and conscious movements, although there is also the counter influence of sin and various evils (those privations of what is due the person and his or her relationships). A current interest in how neurons that fire together wire together speaks to the neurobiological basis of the acquisition of both *habitus* and habits, that is, the neuroplasticity of learning. Although having neurological bases, human dispositions cannot be reduced to them (Gazzaniga, 2006).

Third, *habitus* can only be fully understood and distinguished from 'habits' with reference to its normative dimension. Aquinas goes so far as to say that "*habitus* primarily and of itself implies a relation to the thing's nature" (ST I-II, q. 49, a. 3). Nature is the basis for the intelligible order and norms of the natural law. The most basic rooting of the *habitus* is as a power's quality to aim to act in accord with its nature, which from a Christian perspective has been discovered with new clarity through Christ, who "fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear" (Second Vatican Council, 1965, 22). Understanding the spiritual and personal nature of human body-soul composite reveals the need for ordering of each disposition in itself, the harmony of all the dispositions of the various powers of the soul, all of which must be well-ordered toward the ultimate end, who is God (ST I-II, q. 50, a. 4 co & ad 1; and *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, 1). In this regard, Hampson is right to say that it is not just a matter of becoming closer to the potential of its nature (good and truth) but closer to its end by becoming more like its end. This is ultimately the issue of grace building up nature through virtues that are significantly personal and interpersonal, that is, the sanctification due to the theological virtues

(1 Cor. 13) and Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Pinckaers, 1985/1995, 2005).

### **Virtue and vice**

Good dispositions are in accordance with nature; they are virtues. Bad ones are against nature; they are vices (ST I-II, q. 49, a. 2). We can distinguish those virtuous acts, dispositions to act, and norms as related to the various human capacities of knowledge and affection. First, humans attain knowledge at different levels of cognition (ST I-II, q. 51, a. 2 & q. 51, a. 4). When this knowledge is retained, the agent has a particular type of intellectual virtue (knowledge, science, and wisdom; prudence and art). Second, humans must formulate intentions and make choices and manage their emotions in order to act well as persons in interpersonal commitments. In addition to acquiring cognitive dispositions, humans must also acquire dispositions in their capacities to intelligently use will and emotion in action. They are the moral (oretic) *habitus*, which when good are the moral virtues (justice, courage, temperance, and prudence) with their associated virtues (ST II-II, qq. 47-148).

The place of volition or will and emotion in moral *habitus* is critical, but so is the place of cognition and reason. For Aquinas, we choose knowingly to exercise our *habitus*. A *habitus* not only pertains to the nature of the possessor but also to the action that is either "the end of nature, or conducive to the end" (ST I-II, q. 49, a. 3). Therefore, moral *habitus* do not become "almost or quite involuntary"—although they may depend (in various ways) upon involuntary movements and habits (sic)—but rather they allow us to act more voluntarily. They constitute an element of creative and faithful liberty, through which we fulfill our well-formed will. Inasmuch as a faculty or power's nature correlates with action, then the disposition will direct us to act in new ways (which can also be faithful to the norm, even graced movements in imitation of Christ).

Karol Wojtyła (one source that Hampson did not integrate in his article) speaks of a need for an ethical skill (virtue), through which we integrate our efficacious self-determination (reason and will) and our spontaneous emotivity (emotion). Wojtyła (1979) says:

The integration of the person and the action on the basis of emotivity (emotionality and emotivity) of the human psyche is accomplished through proficiency, which from the point of view of ethics deserves to be called "virtues." An essential element in the idea of "virtue" is that of moral value and this entails a reference to a norm. (p. 252)

Two critical ideas in Aristotle and Aquinas' discussion of virtue, which must also be understood in order to revive *habitus* for contemporary psychology, are that of the mean of virtue and the connection of the virtues. First, virtue involves a mean: "*in medio stat virtus.*" But the reality is both that there is a



middle ground between the extremes of excess and defect and that there is a type of excellence that knows no bounds in a virtue's goodness, especially charity's (Aquinas, ST I-II, q. 64). Second, the complexity of the doctrine of *habitus* and virtues is also found in the notion and reality of the connection of the virtues which is worked both by right practical reason and charity, to which Hampson makes a passing remark and which I have treated elsewhere (ST I-II, q. 65; Titus, 2010).

### Natural and spiritual inclinations

One major gap in the Hampson article is the absence of a treatment of the role of natural and spiritual inclinations in the work of *habitus*. They are commonly misunderstood or ignored, even though they are inclinations of the soul that influence the whole person and are important for psychology. Different approaches have misunderstood natural inclinations as effects of original and social sin. Contemporary psychological theorists have tended to neglect the inclinations (at least at non-rational levels, e.g., in cognitive theories). They have treated them as "instincts" in a descriptive and therapeutic but non-moral and non-metaphysical and non-theological framework.

In the classic tradition of understanding the human person as created in the image of God, it is the natural and spiritual inclinations that first express the human intra- and interpersonal ordering towards goodness, being, truth, family life, and social action (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2). In the tradition of natural law, these inclinations underlie the moral precepts that flow from the most basic practical moral principle to seek and love the good, while rejecting and hating evil. Even in the midst of the Fall and the influence of sin, these inclinations represent something of the image of God present in human nature.

The natural inclinations help to render psychological states, action, and life intelligible. The reason that Aristotle and Aquinas can pay special attention to the inclinations (which are larger than particular instincts or intuitions or temperament traits) is that they observe and analyze the human person and relationships in terms of not only their functional but also their metaphysical roots and spiritual depth.

Natural inclinations as pre-conscious, pre-rational, and passively received, however, are inadequate in and of themselves for a responsible and fulfilling life. As tendencies of human nature toward virtue (development), the natural inclinations are only the "seeds of virtue" (ST I-II, q. 51, a. 1; I-II, q. 63, a. 1; I-II, q. 27, a. 3). A person must actively shape them, with the help of grace, into stable virtuous dispositions (including love), while distinguishing natural and spiritual potential and influences from evil ones. Even though they are under-specified, these inclinations involve inchoate goals. They are a first step: to love the good, to know truth, to conserve our health and being, to commit

ourselves to the marriage union and the educating of children, to live in society. We must, however, rationally investigate the objects of these inclinations and goals. Moreover, the Christian difference is found in them inasmuch as they are informed by the desire for God and the call to imitate Christ.

The inclinations are further developed in the human cognitive and affective acts involved in moral and spiritual agency. It is not enough to recognize intellectually a morally directed inclination (e.g. pity or mercy for the hungry). We need to construct good *habitus* (virtues) that positively make these promptings move to action (e.g., to provide a well-measured act of mercy to the person in need).

### Conclusion

In the spirit of a continuing conversation, I can leave off with two questions before my short conclusion. First, can Christian and Thomist discussions of *habitus* and virtue not include a fuller treatment of law? The framework for moral law that Hampson mentions must be completed with reference to the natural law (with its underlying inclinations), Divine Law, Eternal Law, and the New Law of grace of the Holy Spirit in order to strengthen the notion of Christian psychology, as well as in order to properly represent to secular psychology the interpersonal nature of Christian religious experience and belief.

Second, does Hampson adequately account for the place of rules and rule-informed practices in the development of *habitus*? Pinckaers (1985/1995, 2005) adds nuance on the need for rules (Titus, 2012). Aquinas outlines the dynamic of the development of virtue in terms of three movements that are interdependent (ST II-II, q. 24, a. 9). First, as a beginner in the life of charity and moral acquisition of virtue, there is an explicit need for rules and laws that seem external and burdensome. Second, as one makes progress, there is growth in the virtues through internalizing the wisdom present in the rules and laws, which is found not only in the Decalogue but also the Sermon on the Mount and the apostolic exhortations of St. Paul. Third, there are manifestations of the freedom of the Spirit and spontaneity in the mature discipleship that must always remain rooted in the intelligibility of the law and the need for grace, which for Christian psychology will focus on Christ and His Body, the Church. The connection of the law from beginning to end is demonstrated in how Aquinas speaks of the highest form as the New Law of grace. Inasmuch as this developmental journey becomes an explicit part of personal and interpersonal narrative, the message of Christ will not only be embodied in one's identity and virtues but also be communicated to others, through the help of grace.

Hampson takes a courageous step, in order to meet secular psychology on the clearly common ground of human action and identity. I have argued that a presentation of the Christian view of virtue

and vice recognizes that human nature involves these qualities called *habitus* or second-nature operative dispositions that must be understood in terms of the acts and practices through which they are acquired, but also through the normative frame which alone makes them intelligible in their human content and religious form. The virtue of love can only be understood with a sustained treatment of its being integrally constituted of loving acts, a disposition to love, and the command to love (Titus & Scrofani, 2012). Such charity involves a self-gift indicative of friendship love between the Divine Author and human subject (John 15:13; John Paul II, 2006; Second Vatican Council, 1965, 24). Hampson takes up the challenge to recognize psychologically the difference that Divine grace makes in human knowing and loving. The challenge for secular psychology will be to admit that there is a spiritual source for goodness and even one for evil. The challenge for Christian psychology will be to recognize that mankind is wounded by sin, capable of growth, and offered redemption through Christ Jesus. It is through Divine grace, as Aquinas says (ST III, q. 2, art. 10; Sherwin, 2005), that believers are united “with God by knowledge and by love.”

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# Habitus Matters

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Bretherton (2006) writes that “the practice of hospitality constitutes the way in which Christians should respond to moral disputes in a context of deep diversity” (p. 5), and I am humbled by how commentators on my target article, Christian and non-Christian alike, have responded not only hospitably, but also in a subtle, well informed, nuanced, and intellectually generous way. To say that I have benefitted from their contributions is an understatement, but, more importantly, they have helped achieve what I set out to do which is to initiate a free, frank, and hopefully productive interchange, between moral theologians, philosophers, and psychologists on the topic of *habitus*, an integrative construct with the potential to further our understanding of moral psychology, and, as such, ultimately to be “given back” to secular psychology. My hope, too, was that through mutual conversation the wider enterprise of building an integrated, *trans*-disciplinary Christian psychology would be furthered, while respecting the integrity, if not complete autonomy, of the contributing disciplines, maintaining a principled view of their respective relationships, acknowledging the challenges raised by the at times apparent incommensurability of their discourses, and being intellectually honest about the limits of our human knowledge. I trust I am not being self-deluded in thinking that we have gone some way toward meeting these goals, and have opened up a space for our future discussions.

In my target article I sought not only to recover the concept of *habitus* for general use by moral psychology, but also tried to offer a way forward for Christian psychology which resists three traps for the unwary: the perhaps too easy assumption of compatibility and correlation between theology and secular disciplines which typically ignores the genealogy and history of scientific and theological constructs and their associated background assumptions; the pull back by the undertow of positivism which still characterizes much contemporary psychology and hinders the more rapid development of a truly “enlightened” and teleological science; the temptation simply to re-assert the “truths” and received wisdoms of a particular theological anthropology, *contra mundum*, in a manner neglectful of the wider and valid truth-seeking enquires by those inside and outside the Christian family. My overall impression from reading the commentaries is that my interlocutors have been equally if not more sensitive to these issues, and, where there is shade and darkness in my account, they have frequently been able to shed light, where error, gentle correction, and where incompleteness, suggestions

for future development. In what follows I shall attempt to respond to those of their comments that appear most salient and important to me, and which in my judgment might permit us to identify useful foci for future work. It is unfortunately not possible to treat each and every one their observations with equal weight; in any case there is much unfinished business here for others to take up.

## Jeffrey Green and Daryl Van Tongeren

I am delighted that Drs. Jeff Green and Daryl Van Tongeren immediately acknowledge the holistic integrative power of *habitus* in moral psychology. This was one of its aspects that attracted me to the construct in the first place. I agree that the idea as currently articulated needs further specification, in particular in terms of its situational aspects. Indeed it could be argued that a social and cultural reading of much of this is still undeveloped.

What delighted me even more about Green and Van Tongeren's response, however, was their suggestion that the *habitus* approach is ripe for a complementary engagement with other existing areas of moral psychology, in particular with work on self-regulation and on the motivation supplied by the striving for meaning, or what Bartlett (1932) used to call “the effort after meaning.” As for self-regulation or “moral muscle,” I agree that there is much to be explored here, and the possible connections between *habitus*, self-control, and prudence are worth further consideration. Like Green and Van Tongeren, I am not convinced that the current findings on “moral muscle” lend themselves simply to a (reductive) glucose depletion account. As an erstwhile cognitive psychologist, however, I suggest that demanding activities such as self-regulation are likely to require central, attentional, limited capacity resources, and we have known for some time that the use of these imposes considerable energy demands (Eysenck, 1982; Kahneman, 1973). It is not inconceivable, therefore, in fact probably highly likely, that the processing demands of higher order activities such as these in the moral domain do have significant, measurable, physiological consequences. The take home message here, however, is it is crucial to consider the initiation and early management of moral habits, and their collateral consequences, before they become second nature.

I agree, too, that the link between *habitus* and meaning motivation is worth further exploration, but this issue is possibly more conceptually complex, for philosophical and theological reasons. This need not detract, however, from the main point that these

approaches have much mutually to offer. Green and Van Tongeren suggest that “acting virtuously, in accordance with cherished values, may provide a sense of meaning—or *telos*.” We might need to sharpen this idea a little and distinguish more carefully between meaning and truth. Philosophically speaking, truth is to do with what states of affairs obtain, what is in fact the case; meaning is to do with their sense, signification, and intelligibility. In the *habitus* model, the process itself is obviously teleological and will be experienced as meaningful. But its goal, or *telos*, is to “know” the desired intellectual or moral good, and ultimately God. There is thus something deeper at stake, and more to the process, than just experiencing satisfaction from meaning. *Habitus* seeks unity with a state of affairs that does not yet obtain, and union with its goal is what it is to *know* the good, the true, and the beautiful, and rest delightedly in them. Thus, *habitus* sits comfortably with an *ontological* account of truth in which there is a coming together between knower and known (Milbank & Pickstock, 2000), rather than a functionalist account. Existentially, therefore, there are likely to be associated feelings of satisfaction in finding meaning through moral activity, as Green and van Tongeren suggest, *and joy and delight in attaining, however partially, its goals, as the habitus model implies.*

Given this difference between meaning and truth, where does this leave the relation between the exercise of virtuous *habitus* as truth and goodness seeking, and meaning motivation? I suspect the answer may well emerge from a more nuanced understanding of teleology in the human sciences. So, Oliver (in press), for instance, reminds us that the formal cause in Aristotelian teleology is the “cause for the sake of which,” but that this has, in turn, according to Aristotle, both an aim as goal, and an aim as beneficiary. For example, the goal of medicine is health, while its beneficiary is the (healthy) patient. In the case of *habitus*-driven God-seeking, and meaning motivation, the final goal and formal cause, God, is poignantly unattainable by humans in any complete sense in a contingent universe, but the movement toward God is attainable, driven by the *desiderium naturale pro bonum* [the natural desire for God], with its proximal benefits of “sweet delight” in its meaningfulness (see also Titus’s comments on natural and spiritual inclinations). The former cannot be fully enjoyed this side of the *eschaton*, the latter can. So, a suggestion: the conceptual space to work when trying to connect meaning motivation with *habitus* is the possible connection between properly ordered desires, well harmonized virtues, an immanent sense of meaning, and a sense of chafing, joyful striving, and poignancy regarding one’s final transcendent goals.

### James Grice

Dr James Grice was also flattering in his comments. He is highly sympathetic toward “the healing power of St Thomas’ anthropology” and

finds the overall case I make “persuasive, timely and important.”

Rightly, however, he suggests that the main thesis can be “strengthened and clarified through a closer examination of how St. Thomas defines *habitus*.” In particular, he draws attention to the need to distinguish more clearly the relation of *habitus*, act, and disposition. I agree that conceptual sharpening is needed here. I was aware when first presenting the paper that for pragmatic reasons to do with ease of communication, I was guilty of eliding some important distinctions. Ironically, in an earlier but lengthier version of the paper, I included a more detailed section on this very topic. Indeed, although the terms ‘habit’ and ‘disposition’ can be used informally somewhat interchangeably, Aquinas carefully explains that “disposition” and “habit” can either be used in the sense of perfect and imperfect versions of the same type (species), such as “a disposition becomes a habit, just as a boy becomes a man” (ST 1a2ae 49.2, ad3), or as different species which are either relatively fixed, like well-formed habits, or relatively changeable, like dispositions: “so that we call dispositions, those qualities...., which by reason of their very nature are easily lost, because they have changeable causes; e.g. sickness and health: whereas we call habits those qualities which, by reason of their very nature, are not easily changed, in that they have unchangeable causes, e.g. sciences and virtues. And in this sense, disposition does not become habit” (ST 1a2ae 49.2, ad3). I agree with Grice, therefore, that “a *habitus* is a quality half-way between a capacity and an action, between pure potentiality and full actuality,” it hovers in Aristotelian motion between the two, and also note the need to distinguish the steadiness or stability of dispositions.

Craig Titus, whose substantive comments I shall return to later, also offers helpful clarification between what we might here call ‘habit 1’ in Titus’s sense of “settled disposition” and ‘habit 2’ as “an automatic... reaction to a specific situation which usually has been acquired by learning and/or repetition.” Of course, in psychological terms, we can use habit in both senses, as potential to act, and as activated action program. And so I would maintain that the repeated exercise of actions forms and strengthens habit 1 which can then be deployed more fluently as habit 2. In this sense, habit can harmlessly be said to strengthen habit, though I agree that the terms are not now used univocally. An analogy might be the way in which we can think of an underlying motor program (disposition or habit 1) as formed through repeated practice of a tennis stroke (action), and which can then become activated in, refined by, and deployed in expert ways in, say, a game of tennis (habit 2). All this indicates the need not only for conceptual precision to remain true to our sources and avoid philosophical confusion, but also the need to map accurately and carefully onto existing psychological categories, or to refine the latter as required, and to negotiate

alternative rational traditions and background assumptions with care.

Grice also suggests that describing *habitus* as “a dynamic which strengthens and integrates” is also an unfortunate choice of words. I am sympathetic to Grice’s point that it is St Thomas’ overall anthropology which is integrated and integrative but would still want to commend the integrative power of *habitus* in moral psychology to Christian psychology for the reasons outlined in the article.

Finally, I was intrigued by Grice’s point that virtues can be construed as “quantitative qualities.” This merits a great deal of further exploration, and I am completely open to the idea that a more sophisticated methodology than trait approaches will be needed to explicate virtues psychologically. The bio-psycho-socio-cultural-spiritual aspects of virtues should make this need glaringly obvious, but, sadly, modern psychology so frequently atomises the whole person as we know and pours the quality baby away with the quantitative bathwater.

Not surprisingly, I was heartened by Grice’s comments that a return to the four causes is long overdue, and was pleased to be informed of work by Rychlak (1988).

### Timothy Hulsey

Unsurprisingly, my colleague Dr Tim Hulsey is generally very positive about our *habitus* approach. He does, however, have some discomfort with the concept of infused virtues and grace, remaining content for the moment with an Aristotelian psychology that recovers teleology, “without any additional help.” In this move he provides us with the opportunity to think more about the key idea of grace and its relation to psychology.

Hulsey suggests that we need to be able to “render the concept of grace in the language of psychology.” Agreed. However, I think some important qualifications are in order and of help to the field as a whole. For a start, I am not too comfortable with so a sharp demarcation between nature with and without grace as will become apparent below. This means that in a fully developed Thomistic psychology, of the sort I have in mind, grace is, in a sense, always operative (though see Mulcahy’s commentary). But where I think I need to debate in more depth with Tim is in questioning his assumption that the “additional help” [from God] to which he refers involves “the necessity for divine *intervention*” (my emphasis) and that removing this means that we still need to “address the teleology inherent in the *habitus* model [but now] without including a *supernatural* element”.

My guess, and I expect he will be able to clarify this in due course, is that he might be entertaining a background model of God a supernatural agent who, from time to time, univocally “intervenes” as an efficient cause among other causes in a two level, natural versus supernatural universe, and thereby adds the “additional help,” or the extra power if you like.

But if we are not careful we then treat God as quasi-efficient casual *agent* in the direct and sometimes competing sense, rather than that which underwrites *all* causality. If we do this, we do indeed then have a huge, and I would say irresolvable problem, when we try to marry concepts of grace with a psychology still wedded to standard causal accounts. But this is not how I, and (some) others at least, want to think of God’s activity here (see for example Pinsent’s commentary, but note again Mulcahy’s), since I do not wish psychology to rest content with only two causes, the material and the efficient. God in a Thomistic scheme, whether classically or radically orthodox, is not another article of furniture in the universe or a being among other beings who meddles in a competing efficient-causal way. As Nicholas of Cusa later put it, God is a no-thing, a not-other, a *non-aliud*, not a further “force” to be reckoned with. Given creation *ex nihilo*, God is the source of all being(s). This puts God in an entirely different logical and causal relation with the universe. If, then, we see God as exercising final and formal, rather than efficient causality over the universe, we have a different relationship entirely. Hence, ironically, I have some sympathy with Tim’s suggestion that psychology may need to recover the idea of teleology without supernaturalism. This is precisely why I am enamoured by a de Lubacian rejection of a two world cosmology (de Lubac, 1946). But, and here is where I suspect we really differ, in rejecting such a supernaturalism, I do not wish to trade it for an account which reduces all human behavior to radical immanence and existential states, but rather for one that in rejecting the idea that there is such a thing as *natura pura*, accepts the transcendent aspects of the most mundane, celebrates “enchanted immanence” (Milbank, 2005), or what Lash (1988) eloquently called “Easter in ordinary.”

That said I do accept that for much of the time psychology may well have to confine itself to immanent, human notions of meaning and purpose at least in its standard, quantitative, empirical observations, and that an Aristotelian psychology could be a realistic goal here. But this need not stop Christian psychologists conceptually embedding such a psychological account within a wider Thomistic scheme in which, for example, as God moves the will interiorly as a formal cause through operating grace, we also have a natural desire for the good, and in turn are moved, say to acts of generosity, through co-operating grace in which the “natural” movements of the will co-operate in movement toward the divine (see Oliver, in press). Nor need it block the fuller application of qualitative (or mixed) methodologies to these topics, as Grice seems to be suggesting.

As we shall see shortly, however, this position is not without its theological critics, but if we accept it for the moment, the question now is whether a purely Aristotelian teleology will suffice or whether we will need one that has room for grace. To which I respond, even an Aristotelian one will be

a vast improvement on what we have at present in secular, moral psychology, but it will not ultimately allow us to construct a fully-fledged, coherent Christian psychology, i.e. one in which there are no metaphysical rabbits pulled out of hats, but which does fuller justice to our understanding of the Christian life.

Finally, Tim writes: “we live in a world suffused with subjective meaning.” Agreed, again, but I would drop the word “subjective”. If we see matter as primary, and ourselves over and against a dead or inert world, then meaning, purpose, intention, value, consciousness, and spirituality do get pushed inside and become “subjective.” But I would contest that meaning and value are as much objective as subjective and are likely to be part of the way the universe is unfolding, with as much primacy as matter. I take comfort that at least one leading non-theist philosopher is now beginning to think so too (Nagel, 2012).

### **Bernard Mulcahy**

I found Fr Bernard Mulcahy’s contribution very helpful indeed. In the longer term, his comments may prove among the most useful in so far as they alert readers of *Edification* to a non-trivial theological controversy with implications not only for our understanding of the grace-nature relationship, but also for the relation between secular disciplines and theology. I chose to sidestep this debate somewhat in my target article in my eagerness to communicate the key ideas about *habitus*, and so could be charged with telling only half of a complex story, though this was because I wanted to keep the original communication clear and straightforward.

So what are the issues at stake? Mulcahy is quite correct to point out that there is no theological unanimity on the issue of whether there is such a thing as pure nature, and that this has led to something of a stand-off between proponents of what Milbank (2010) has called romantic and classical orthodoxy, the former including but not reducible to Radical Orthodoxy (RO). Mulcahy also correctly points out that this debate has not always been conducted in a spirit of Christian charity and generosity, perhaps because of one or two strong personalities on each side, and has been marked by “too much “bitter zeal” and evil contentiousness”. Like Mulcahy, I eschew *odium theologicum* [theological enmity]. I agree that “we might instead try to work in “the wisdom from above” that is “first of all chaste, then peaceable, modest, easy to be persuaded, consenting to the good, full of mercy and good fruits, without judging, without dissimulation” (cf. James 3:14-17).” Hence, I greatly welcome the “respect and gratitude” he has for my proposal and join him “in the hope of advancing all that may be for the good in Christ”.

The conclusions we reach on the issues that Mulcahy raises, however, are too important to be airbrushed away, and this is not what he wants either, for they affect not only the way we construe

moral psychology, but also Christian psychology as whole, whether, for example, the latter confines itself to only those aspects of human nature that are deemed to be infused by grace, or attempts to reach further down in its reconstructive efforts. My own sympathies are indeed more with the RO side of this debate, or better still with the broader, ‘romantic orthodox’ perspectives, and while it would take a far longer response to unpack this fully I can highlight a few reasons why I personally find this a congenial theological environment.

First, romantic orthodoxy encourages us to be aware of the genealogy of the concepts used in secular disciplines. In the case of psychology, this can be important, since many of its theoretical constructs have a historical tail going back to philosophy and then before that into theology. By remaining unaware of this, we can too easily forget useful notions, such as how the will was traditionally understood, the natural desire for the good, or how the affections and passions were construed for instance. We can deploy other concepts unaware of their ontological and philosophical baggage, and we might continue to use complex, philosophical notions oblivious to the philosophically contested, and sometimes recent, ways in which their component parts have been construed. I think here of such things as “freedom of the will” and “choice” for example. Romantic orthodoxy also compels us to examine the possible relationships between theology and secular disciplines. It is simply not a default option to consider that there can be business as usual, and to treat secular scientific discourses as somehow metaphysically neutral. The need to address secular psychology’s ontological opacity and attendant confusions is required of us if we operate within a romantic orthodox frame.

Next, theology’s scope, engaging as it can with literature, history, philosophy, science, and so on, means that its wider debates are also likely to spill over into psychology. New topics for study such as the imagination, the feeling-intellect, and pre-reflexive assent can then be (re-) discovered. Thus, ironically, far from leading to a dismissal of secular psychology, I suspect that romantic orthodoxy can help bring it in from the metaphysical cold and feed and enrich if further.

Finally, both the romantic and classical strands are part of orthodox Christianity, and thus tap back into a shared Christian tradition; they offer together a non-trivial, theologically principled benchmark for moral psychology, psychology of religion, and Christian psychology as a whole. But romantic orthodoxy appears to me to open up more of the wealth of that tradition, from the patristics, the mediaeval period, the early modern, as well as being in dialogue with cultural movements such as the Romantic movement itself, postmodernity, and so on. As such it seems to bring more cultural and historical goods to the table than its classical sister, and these can only enrich psychology in the longer term.

I should state clearly, however, that I am less convinced than some in the RO fraternity and sorority of the need to view the theological task one of “out-narrating” their opponents. I do think, too, that some RO members may have a serious blind spot as to what modern psychology potentially affords, due largely, I believe, to a lack of understanding of its scope. And I am seriously worried when I hear either side assert “but we are right!” suggesting to me that knowledge as gentle participation in being, might then have become subordinated to goals of knowledge in the service of power and self aggrandizement. I also think the RO critique of representationalism may be overstated, but there is insufficient space here to unpack this here.

Some further points may be worth making, again in a fraternal spirit. First, it would be most unfortunate if readers unfamiliar with the territory were to take away from Mulcahy’s commentary the idea that (all) Thomism and RO are essentially antithetical, and so at odds, with the former a unified position over and against Mulcahy’s portrayal of the latter as a rather scattered “deliberately post-modern exercise in skeptical relativism”. Classical Thomism of the sort that Mulcahy discusses has its roots in so called neo-scholasticism, which, among other things, once characterized the theology of the manuals. It is important to note, however, that this is but one of several ways in which Thomist thought has developed after Aquinas (Kerr, 2002). Indeed, as at least one confrere of Mulcahy shows in his responses, there are others within the Thomist family more open to more obviously neo-Platonic ideas of participation, as well as to the more “traditional” Aristotelianized version of Aquinas. As Milbank (2010, FN 1) himself notes, “the Dominican Fribourg-Toulouse school...mediates between the tendencies I am describing” [romantic versus classical orthodoxy], though he then judges them to be ultimately more romantic than classical. Romantic orthodoxy also draws extensively on Aquinas, though frequently reading Thomas through neo-Platonic, Augustinian spectacles.

There may even be cultural and personal biases here caused by the propinquity to, familiarity with, and acceptance of ideas from postmodern European philosophy, as well as wider historical and cultural factors at work. At the risk of introducing an unnecessary, trans-Atlantic, dimension into a perhaps already overheated theological controversy, and sounding a jarring *ad hominem* note, it is instructive to acknowledge, as Milbank (2010) also points out, that many key players on the side of *neo-scholasticism*, or classical orthodoxy, happen to be based in the US. If such biases turn out to be real they may in turn influence why proponents of classical orthodoxy appear to be less comfortable with RO’s attempts to take on postmodernity positively, *and to seek ways to move through and beyond it*. Certain UK agnostic analytic philosophical bedfellows often share the same incomprehension and incredulity

toward postmodern European philosophy, of course, and thus become interesting allies of the classically orthodox. Now, one could equally easily put the argument the other way, of course, and claim that those less affected by the viruses of postmodernity, living in a free and truly enlightened land, have a much clearer view of the “objective” truth, and in reversing the claim, thereby avoid serious injury from brickbats in the curious melee of classical Thomists, Barthians, secular psychologists, and unreconstructed analytic philosophers! But, frankly, the safer view from mid Atlantic is probably that the jury is out, and that we may well need to recover a different, pre-modern route out of Kant and the Enlightenment in order to move beyond the postmodern!

Again, does this apparently arcane debate on postmodernity matter? Yes, it clearly does, as the consequences of these socio-cultural differences may be considerable for Christian psychology. For example, they can conceivably bias the way in which an important theological tradition, RO, can be seen in too simple a way as replacing Christian “objective” truths with *nothing but* narrative and fairy-tale. This is apparently then to dispense with truth and to reduce the Christian story to mere creative fiction. I, however, am far less convinced by Mulcahy, and some commentators on RO (e.g. Shakespeare, 2007), that RO, at least in its later versions, has rejected the concept of truth so radically and reductively as he suggests, so much as critiquing post Fregean, representationalist, correspondence, and coherence accounts, and reminding us that there are other trustworthy facets of our being such as habit, imagination, feeling, and symbol making. If anything, and by contrast with nihilistic postmodern relativism, RO rejects the whole post Kantian representationalist split between subjectivity and objectivity, of which it sees late modernity to be a victim, and has much more in common with adequate truth-seeking knowing. As for Milbank’s work on poesis, and fairy-tale, I can only strongly recommend and reference his essay “Fictioning Things” as a fine exercise in theological literary scholarship, which if anything offers a non-dualistic reading of “enchanted immanence,” emphasizes the sacramental importance of objects and matter in transacting meaning, and affording ways of breaking out of our solipsism and self-regard through “gift exchange” (Milbank, 2005). If for no other reason than it opens up new topics for Christian psychology, it is well worth reading, but so too, for different reasons, is Mulcahy’s more sober and careful scholarship, it must be admitted (Mulcahy, 2011).

Mulcahy also claims we are conversing across “a wide theological divide.” I suspect, by contrast, that the divide may be seen as wide or narrow depending on the calibration of one’s theodolite and scale of mapping. It is both sobering and instructive to reflect that whether this is seen as a significant divide at all, or an unimportant crack on a pre-modern, disused *via* now unfit to carry the heavy traffic on modern

psychology's highway, depends on one's point of view. To the secular psychologist, all this may simply appear as a meaningless and pointless debate about grace, quaintly charming maybe, but of no real import whatsoever. To the Christian psychologist, at stake is whether we leave much secular psychology untouched as a supposed autonomous rationality in its own right, or whether we subject it to a more thorough conceptual, metaphysical, and genealogical scrutiny by means of a theological architectonic. There is much to be gained therefore from thoughtful reflection on these issues, and here Mulcahy and I are at one.

To conclude my thoughts on Mulcahy's excellent commentary, the position is further complicated in that there may also be personal and dispositional factors at work, since knower, knowing, and known are not always easily dissociable, at least in my frame of reference. Mulcahy, I suspect, intuitively as much too. For instance, I am unsure whether I am an intellectual fox or a hedgehog, i.e. whether I am one who knows a little about a lot, in broad brush strokes, or a lot about a little, a big thing in much more detail (Mulcahy, 2008, p. 359-60), or simply one with a cognitive and affective bias and intuitive preference for lived, first order, pre-reflexive engagement grounded in doxology, since *lex orandi lex credendi* [the law of prayer is the law of belief] after all, rather than someone possessed of a more detached, dispassionate, ahistorical, analytic sensibility. Either way, at the risk of being utterly reductive, McGilchrist (2009) has much to offer on these psychologically distinguishable ways of knowing and their ideal interaction. At the end of the day, there may, that is, be quite distinctive cognitive styles at work in different theological traditions, and further careful study of these too will be needed to transcend them. Hence, Eleonore Stump (2010) to me has it right when she looks for ways to combine narrative and analytic theological modes, and more integrative work akin to hers may eventually be needed here.

### Andrew Pinsent

Fr. Pinsent contributes a piece of potentially great importance for way in which Christian psychologists approach moral psychology. I am delighted that it is part of this set. He writes: "I think that the ghost of Aristotelianism has not yet been fully exorcised from [Hampson's] interpretation of Aquinas's account of the virtues. I would like to propose that one further shift in understanding, a change of perspective, is needed for the full benefits of Aquinas's revolution to be realised for psychology today."

Since I presented the original paper behind the target article, I have been privileged to find out more about Andrew Pinsent's excellent work on the virtues, gifts, fruits, and beatitudes, with its creative use of second person analogies, and to get to know Andrew himself. I thoroughly recommend his treatment to Christian psychologists, not only for its creative use

of a powerful psychology analogy, which he uses to shed further light on neglected aspects of Aquinas's work without lapsing into unreflective ideas on "divine intervention," or a two levels cosmology, but also for opening up a new way of approaching Aquinas in general. I am sympathetic, therefore, to his charge that my account still harbours the spectre of Aristotelianism. In a way it does. In commending *habitus*, I am for the most part chiefly discussing the acquired virtues, though within a theistic framework I would add. I have little to say at this stage, in any depth at any rate, as to the psychological concomitants of the infused virtues (Sherwin and Titus make related points). But here, I think, the territory may again look different depending on one's starting point. From the perspective of some theologians, what I have to offer will look (merely) like dressed up Aristotelianism, and their eagerness to see a more rounded Thomistic psychology is then completely understandable. Interestingly, others are clearly uncomfortable with the target article's RO blend of the neo-Platonic and the Aristotelian and, somewhat ironically, should be more comfortable as a result with the idea of un-infused virtue as a suitable topic for an autonomous psychology.

So, with a foot in both psychology and at least one theology camp, I do think there are issues of tactics as well as strategy here, as well as questions as to the boundaries of psychology. At stake are how best can we: a) make a contribution to moral psychology that brings immediate benefits to the field as a whole, insofar as it dovetails into the existing literature, and has the theoretical cogency to lead to testable predictions; b) build a psychologically plausible (to the rest of the field) as well as theologically robust Christian psychology; c) construct an account which takes due note of but is not paralysed by current theological controversies; d) be comfortable with the trans-disciplinary potential, scope, or relative autonomy of psychological science.

To see that there are real issues of communication and background expectations here, consider again Hulsey's account. Here is a colleague more than open to the *habitus* idea, and to such notions as teleology, value, moral standards, and so on; indeed we work together on these topics. Notice, however, how he expresses discomfort at moving too far beyond an Aristotelian psychology at present in the direction of infused virtue. Then take Mulcahy's theological position that there is, after all, such a thing as pure nature. From both these perspectives, as well as to keep lines open to secular moral psychology, *habitus* as underpinning moral expertise may be about as far as we can get in common at present. At least this establishes a core concept and begins to open up a discussion on the metaphysical environment in which moral acts take place.

So, sympathetic though I am to a more de Lubacian/RO position on grace, and to the theology behind the infused virtues, and also eager to build a fuller psychology, it may nevertheless be that we



have to accept the occasional Aristotelian ghost for now simply to move psychology on. I am willing to be persuaded, however, that this is more a tactic of accommodation than one driven by principle, and I fully appreciate the power of Pinsent's arguments that the picture looks different when "one takes a holistic view of Aquinas's account and especially the role of the gifts." I would suggest, though, that if we already had a well-developed *habitus*-based moral psychology, the next move might be easier. But this is a counterfactual right now, and so we ourselves should move on!

### Michael Sherwin

I was affirmed and encouraged by Fr. Michael Sherwin's piece. He addresses three issues the first two of which appear to be largely by way of amplification "(1) the excellence that virtue imparts, (2) the relationship between knowledge and emotion presupposed by this excellence, and (3) the unique role of infused virtues in the Christian life."

Finding broad agreement with characterization of the *habitus* as analogous in some ways to skill and the virtuous life as one of moral expertise, Sherwin claims that "by developing this analogy between *habitus* and skill, Hampson would be able to explain more fully not only what he means by "moral expertise," but also the "social context" of habit formation that he briefly considers." Sherwin's enumeration of aspects of skill acquisition is most helpful in this respect. "All of these five features of skill acquisition—(1) a standard of excellence, (2) the internalization of rules, (3) trust in an expert, (4) the social context of learning, (5) and expertise as a freedom for excellence—are analogously present in virtue acquisition." Psychologists will notice that several of these factors that he lists have indeed already been studied by students of cognitive and motor skills, and that literature is readily available (e.g. Ericsson, Charness, Feltovitch, & Hoffman, 2006), but the nuances here are, I think, the "standard of excellence," and "expertise as a freedom for excellence" [my italics]. The former in the limit case has to be Christ for the Christian psychologist; the latter presupposes a philosophically different concept of freedom from that which characterizes late modernity. This is a freedom for the "beautiful good" freed from distractions and diversions, rather than a freedom to make arbitrary choices. We are schooled and "trained" by grace, and disciplined by practice in our moral communities and traditions, to be free!

Sherwin's discussion of the relation between knowledge and emotion was timely too. There is fertile territory to be explored here by psychologists, and recent work on the emotions and desires as explicated by Aquinas shows the clear relationships that obtain between well-ordered desires and the virtues (Lombardo, 2011).

Sherwin takes this further, however, in claiming "unless there is some standard of value underlying

... moral formation, a virtue psychology only leads at best to a form of communal moral relativism." Unpacking this, there are really two points here. First, what standards are in play and to what or whom do we owe these? Second, how, psychologically speaking, are such standards deployed in moral formation? Now, psychology typically moves quickly to answer the second functional question and deems the first, the ontological and metaphysical one, to be beyond its competence. In a full account of virtue as the formation of moral expertise, I agree that we will need at least to take account of a prior (propositional) standard-guided phase of skill acquisition, but we perhaps should note that such propositional expression need not be held continually in mind once virtuous expertise is acquired. Ryle (1949) made a similar observation in *The Concept of Mind* when he wrote using the analogy of swimming: "some propositional competence is a condition of acquiring any of these competences. But it does not follow that the exercises of the competences require to be accompanied by exercises of propositional competences. I could not have learned to swim the breast stroke, if I had not been able to understand the lessons given me in that stroke; but I do not have to recite those lessons, when I now swim the breast stroke" (Ryle, 1949, p. 48). Sherwin, however, draws our attention back to the first question as well, what is it that underwrites moral standards, and correctly describes Aquinas's development of the Aristotelian position on the God-assured standards behind moral competencies? He is correct, therefore, when he states, "Attentiveness to this synthesis between virtue and natural law traditions would enable Hampson to develop his account of how one tradition of moral enquiry could fruitfully engage other traditions." This is indeed what will be required too for a fuller psychological account of moral formation, *habitus*, and virtue, if we wish such an account to be theologically grounded in transcendentally underwritten standards and values.

As for the infused virtues, more work is clearly needed to understand how we can conceptualize these psychologically. Like Pinsent, Sherwin rightly notes the theological issue of whether or not even the cardinal virtues are thought to be open to infusion. I was partly gesturing toward this in the target article in suggesting that the theological virtues are not icing on top of the cake, but permeate all the way down, but I agree that more thought is required as to how this might be psychologically pertinent. To this extent, Sherwin's observation that infused cardinal virtues may be operative in some recovering alcoholics is intriguing and merits further study, as does the relation between infused virtue and "moral muscle" (see also Green and Van Tongeren's comments).

### Sheldon Solomon

One of the many strengths of St Thomas was his realization that the Christian understanding could be enriched by dialogue with different traditions,

and whatever our differences, I have found that this still characterizes the broad Thomist approach. It is a spirit I should like to help foster. But Thomists also believe that aspects of our Christian understanding can and should be shared with those not of our faith, as the *Summa Contra Gentiles* so abundantly shows. I hope Dr Sheldon Solomon doesn't mind me putting it this way, but the fact that he is himself self-confessedly a "secular (experimental, evolutionary, agnostic) psychologist" makes it all the more pleasing that from his gracious comments, he seems to have found food for thought. In the past, I have learned a great deal from his work on "death awareness" and "terror management theory." His present response was not only receptive and open minded, but, again, was intellectually encouraging in return. Solomon writes that "for most of human history, theological, and scientific inquiry were not fundamentally mutually exclusive and adversarial enterprises." This suggests for him "that future *theoretical and empirical* advances in moral psychology and positive psychology (as well as clinical psychology) will be made by scholars well-versed in philosophy and theology in addition to psychology" [my emphases]. It will be progress indeed if we can persuade other secular, psychological colleagues that what we have to offer is not only robust in a scholarly sense, but intellectually productive in the ways he outlines as well.

I was fascinated, therefore, when Solomon forged a connection between *habitus* as non-identical repetition, and William James's considerations of the difference between this and blind mechanical habit, as explicated by Halliwell (1999). I agree with Solomon that even outside the moral domain, this concept is useful in that it is "a critical component of human ingenuity and creativity." A full account of the primacy of habit understood thus is an important aspect of the RO project (Milburn, Oliver, Lehman Imfeld and Hampson, 2012). At the risk of digressing too far from the focus of the target article, a deeper study of the iterations between repeated, experiential, habitual engagements with reality, subsequent reflections on them, and the incorporation of such reflections into future engagements may well hold the key to fields as apparently diverse as creativity, moral psychology, moral innovation, and religious understanding, as well as fields such as autobiographical memory.

Solomon also draws attention to the common ethical ground in otherwise disparate moral and religious systems and points to an underlying evolutionary reason for the commonality of at least some moral and ethical values, siding with the view that "morality evolved to foster cooperative behavior between individuals in large groups of genetically unrelated individuals." I have no difficulty at all in principle with an evolutionary account of the emergence of moral behaviours. Indeed, I suspect such an account to be necessary for any comprehensive understanding. Moreover,

as someone who subscribes to the idea that humans are *embodied* souls (or ensouled bodies), I should be surprised if our primate heritage shed no light at all on our moral propensities, or lack of them. But, setting aside the historicist, genetic fallacy that we are nothing but that from which we came, I am far less comfortable with the more general reductionist assumptions of evolution-ism, in this case that morality in all its facets is totally explicable in terms of a neo-Darwinian "just so" account which ultimately reduces to physicalism. In particular, I note with interest the sub-title of Nagel's recent book, *Mind and Cosmos: Why the materialist neo-Darwinian conception of nature is almost certainly false* (Nagel, 2012). Nagel claims with some vigor that consciousness, cognition, and value cannot be reduced to the chance afterthoughts of a basically meaningless, physical process. Now I am not implying that Solomon is making such a reductive assumption; I believe him to be far too sophisticated a thinker for that. Nor for that matter, am I convinced that Nagel's account of teleological humanism will come to be seen as prophetic in 100 years time, and not be drowned by the strange confluence of the *infra* human (evolutionism) and *post* human (cyber-techno-rationalism) alternatives to a religious world view. But it is important to assert, I think, that an approach which treats humans as part of, and thereby restricted by, but striving to transcend the natural is essential to a fully developed, *Christian* humanism. We are the hinge between nature and culture after all. So, back to transcendence:

Like Hulsey, Solomon appears to be comfortable with some of the immanent and existential aspects of spirituality and religion while remaining circumspect as to the relevance of its transcendental dimensions for psychological science. Solomon writes, "a transcendent God beyond the created order is epistemologically inconceivable from a scientific vantage point." Again, curiously perhaps, I want to say that I agree in part here, though probably for different reasons from Solomon. My reply to Hulsey's commentary might further clarify this bald response, but it might help too if I expand on this a little more here as well.

Both Hulsey and Solomon appear to me to treat immanence and transcendence as ontologically disjunctive, and therefore dissociable, whereas the (classical and well as romantic) orthodox Christian theological tradition sees God as transcendent not as infinitely *distant* from or in that sense "beyond" or separate from the creative order, but transcendent *precisely because of* the utterly distinctive, intimate, *immanent*, relation of dependence of creation on God, and yet at the same time the utter *difference* of God and creation (Turner, 1995). As St Augustine succinctly put it (The Confessions, 3.6.11): "*tu autem erat interior intimo meo*" [you are more intimate to me than my most intimate thought]. This robustly orthodox position manages to avoid collapse into pantheism, resolutely maintaining the relation of God

and creation to be asymmetrical: creation, always and everywhere (not just at its start), relies completely on the gift of being from God, but the reverse does not obtain. Now, psychological science, for arguably the right reasons, is a modernist enterprise that has privileged epistemology over ontology (Taylor, 2007). So far so good. The problem arises, however, when ontological assumptions that are often hidden or opaque, surreptitiously come to dictate what counts as appropriate epistemology. This, I would suggest, is what may have happened in areas such as moral psychology and, among other things, is blocking the fuller recovery of a more nuanced causal understanding in which a transcendent formal cause can be seen to have immanent, existential consequences.

Finally, Solomon discerns some wider, creative, potential applications of the *habitus* construct. While I suspect we both agree that *habitus* is far from the only factor at work in the complex theological and socio-cultural-political phenomenon of fundamentalism, I am grateful again for the insight that the wrong type of habit may “shed light on” this phenomenon and be a contributory factor to and feed into the well known phenomenon of extrinsic rather than intrinsic religiosity.

### **Craig Steven Titus**

Dr Craig Titus provides a sharp and astute commentary and offers helpful clarification on acts, dispositions to act, and ways of construing *habitus*. As I have already acknowledged and responded to this when considering Grice’s commentary I shall not repeat myself here, save to say that I welcome his helpful clarification and that I think we do already have some related constructs in other parts of psychology, which, with suitable modification, can be pressed into service in moral psychology. Though sometimes picked out by more technological labels, concepts such as “motor program” or “procedural representation,” for example, can be seen as related to aspect of *habitus* understood as disposition, but, and this is a crucial difference, without the all important norms for action. Titus also asks whether a more comprehensive Christian psychological account might not need also to include “a fuller treatment of law,” and “rules and rule- informed practices.” The short answer is “yes,” and I have said a little more about the latter in particular in response to Sherwin.

The normative aspect of *habitus* itself is worth commenting on further, however, and relates to the “standards” of action, which Sherwin also discusses. It is through reference to this, Titus maintains, that “*habitus* can ... be fully understood and distinguished from ‘habits.’” Developing this, I am pleased that Titus agrees that it “is right to say [of *habitus*] that it is not just a matter of becoming closer to the potential of its nature (goodness and truth), but closer to its end by becoming more like its end. This is ultimately the issue of grace building up nature through virtues that are significantly personal and interpersonal, that

is, the sanctification due to the theological virtues.” This is precisely why I think the emphasis on (grace supported) deepening participation is so crucial on the journey of deification, and we obviously agree that “from a Christian perspective [this] has been discovered with new clarity through Christ.” Where I think Titus’ remark is additionally helpful is in pointing to the “interpersonal” as well as “personal” aspects of virtues. This was undeveloped in my account and would not only allow a fuller account of the sociality of the virtues (see Green and van Tongeren) but also, potentially, open up a way to think psychologically about the fruits and beautitudes in a way that connects with Pinsent’s approach.

Titus also makes some excellent points regarding the Thomistic understanding of virtues and vices in general, and I commend these to the reader. What I wish to single out for brief mention here is Titus’ “natural spiritual inclinations.” Titus writes that, “One major gap in the Hampson article is the absence of a treatment of the role of natural and spiritual inclinations in the work of *habitus*. Contemporary psychological theorists have tended to neglect the inclinations (at least at non-rational levels, e.g., in cognitive theories). They have treated them as ‘instincts’ in a descriptive and therapeutic but non-moral and non-metaphysical and non-theological framework.” Again, Titus highlights with great prescience a connection ripe for development in psychology, though this time as much by the psychology of religion as moral psychology. Titus has managed to pinpoint another of my current interests here, but I must confess that I have tended to think about the dynamics of our supposed natural desire for the good separately from *habitus*, while at the same time knowing that connections will eventually need to be made. Contemporary work on religious epistemology (Cottingham, 2005) and overviews from cultural and cognitive psychology (McGilchrist, 2009) may be natural partners in this dialogue. Thus, Cottingham outlines the importance of pre-reflexive spiritual praxis as a key to religious knowing, self-understanding, and moral growth, while McGilchrist offers a fascinating account of the relation between engaged, experiential, participatory knowing, and a more detached, analytic, reflexive mode. A rich psychology indeed would emerge if we were able to situate *habitus* in this context, but I suspect there is much initial ground clearing and more basic spade work to be done first. The theologian’s rightful top down enthusiasms may need to be tempered by the psychologist’s need painstakingly to build things bottom up.

### **Concluding observations**

Standing back from all this, three overview remarks are in order. First, it appears there is sufficient interest in the construct of *habitus* for it to be worth further exploration, expansion, and connection with allied issues in moral psychology. Key themes to emerge from our discussion are the

nature of *habitus* itself, its relationship with rules and law, and its possible connection with work on moral muscle and meaning motivation. The general idea that it does make sense to speak of the growth of *habitus* as a way to understand moral expertise appears to command some support. Here I must acknowledge a recent debt to Darcia Narvaez whose work on moral expertise I have just begun to appreciate more fully (e.g. Narvaez, 2008, 2010), and to which connections can be made.

Second, a rigorous examination of *habitus* raises the question of psychology's status as a teleological science. Given the current state of secular psychology this might well be the most important effect of any attempt to reconstruct moral psychology using *habitus*. Such a debate raises not only the familiar idea that human action is intentional and purposive, but questions the received wisdom that material and efficient causality are as much as psychology can handle.

Third, for Christian psychologists at least, the issue of the relation grace and nature is crucial. Our understanding of this will not only affect whether and how we can engage secular psychology, but also whether and how we treat not only the virtues but also the gifts, fruits, and beautitudes. It also crucially affects how we view the relationship between disciplines. As someone with great sympathies for romantic orthodoxy, *nouvelle theologie*, and the *Communio* tradition of Catholic thought, I have already nailed my colors to the mast, but I am also eager to see whether the divide between this approach and classical orthodoxy can be transcended.

In conclusion, I am immensely grateful for the time and care expended by colleagues in reading and commenting on my target article. Together, I believe that we have begun a debate which I hope has advanced our and others' understanding so as to help us articulate better the nature of Christian moral psychology, and to bring us all nearer to the truth.

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# Agency and Being Moved by the Other

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*In different contexts, being moved by another person can be thought of in very different ways. When discussing gullibility, manipulation and the like, it is a bad thing, but when discussing humility, salvation, or even cognitive development, the influence of others upon us is revealed as something we need. Paying close attention to what distinguishes good from bad cases of being moved by another person provides insight into the nuances of human agency that come from being designed for relationship.*

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## Agency and Being Moved by the Other

Being moved by another person is sometimes seen as a good thing and sometimes as a decidedly bad thing. The person who is too easily moved by another may be said to be gullible, fickle, naive, cowardly, or weak-willed. On the other hand, wisdom literature such as the book of Proverbs consistently associates the fool with the person who fails to listen to others and be moved by their advice, and the wise person is the one who is quick to listen and takes correction seriously. In this paper, I will elucidate what it means to be moved by another person. I will show what distinguishes being moved by another person in a virtuous manner from being moved in a vicious manner, drawing on conceptual analysis, developmental psychology, and theology.

## Gullibility

There are various ways in which we may describe the threat to someone's agency posed by the influence of other people. Gullibility is an especially good example of what it is that we feel threatened by when it comes to being moved by others and the sorts of stigmas that we predicate of people who are especially open to the influence of others.

A well known aphorism says, "You should not believe everything people tell you." One might rephrase this aphorism, "Don't be gullible." "Gullibility" is a disposition to believe what others tell one without having a good reason to so believe. It is more than that, however.

For one thing, one might come by a belief for a *good* reason that is not an *epistemic* reason. To adapt a well-used example in philosophical circles, it might be prudential for me to believe that I can hit a curveball when I approach the plate (Cf. Feldman 2003). I may have no evidence for this ability. I may have performed abysmally against this pitch in all my previous appearances at the plate. Nevertheless, there may be a good reason that I allow myself to believe that I can hit that ball, namely, I am more likely to hit it if I have this belief. This reason just has nothing to do with the truth, and since a belief just is a commitment about what is true, this kind of reason does not hook up in the right way with a belief's achieving the aim internal to it.

Being gullible, one might think then, involves a

failure to form a belief for a good epistemic reason, perhaps due to a failure to be properly related to others. Once again, however, gullibility is more than this. If one were to slip a hallucinogenic into Sam's coffee, Sam might begin to form some rather strange beliefs as a direct result of the influence of another person. Nonetheless, we would not describe him as gullible because he unwittingly ingested a hallucinogen. To use a less fanciful example, if Eric tells Sam that Eric's favorite color is blue, when in fact it is green, Sam may believe him without being gullible. Sam may have no reason not to believe Eric, supposing Eric is able to bring off his lie without giving himself away. Though one might expect a vulnerability to misdirection to be what is characteristic of gullibility, in fact, Sam may be unlucky in this case without being gullible. If Eric had been telling Sam the truth, Eric might have comported himself in the same manner as Eric did when he lied, and there is nothing outlandish about having green as one's favorite color.

One must also distinguish being gullible from two closely related concepts, namely, being naive and being such that one should know better. One should even distinguish gullibility from forming naive beliefs based on the word of others, and being such that one should know better than to form a given belief on the say-so of others. Suppose Samantha is a paranoid Luddite. She distrusts all technology, but she also distrusts all people. Because she is wary of technology, she is very naive in her understanding of topics such as how a computer works or how reliable elevators are, and these naive beliefs can be partly based on what other people claim concerning technology. She is not gullible, however, because she is completely resistant to the influence of anyone who might try to sway her opinions. No one takes advantage of her, yet she has many naive beliefs. It may be that naiveté predisposes one toward being gullible, but they are different traits.

Similarly, it could be the case that one forms a belief when one should have known better and yet is not gullible. For example, if Gloria tells Gary that the morning session of a conference starts at *eight* and Gary is not paying attention, then he might form the belief that Gloria already *ate*. Perhaps she has even told him that she is on her way to dinner, but Gary has failed to notice that this bit of information

conflicts with Gloria's having already ate, also due to his inattention. Gary's inattention causes Gloria and himself to fail to be properly related, and it causes him to form a false belief. It could be that Gary should have known better than to form such a sloppy, inattentive belief. Yet, there is no reason to think he is being gullible, even if he is displaying other vices.

What is gullibility then, if it is neither naïveté nor knowing better nor forming beliefs for bad reasons? Gullibility is a kind of epistemic spinelessness. Something, or usually someone, pushes one towards certain beliefs and away from others, and one moves accordingly. Gullibility is the disposition to be moved by another person when what one should be moved by is the truth or indications of the truth. Gullibility is a problem because our beliefs have a certain aim internal to them, to get at the truth. Our beliefs just are our perspective on the way the world is. If one is gullible, then one allows others to aim one's beliefs at whatever they want to aim them towards, and others might not direct one's beliefs at the truth. The very fact that attempting to track the truth is optional for the person who exercises influence over the gullible person introduces a measure of luck into whether or not gullible beliefs achieve the end they are supposed to achieve.

Thus, gullibility is a defect in a person in that she fails to exercise her epistemic agency in a way that reflects the value of truth, and gullibility produces defective beliefs because they fail to be properly aimed at the truth. Even if the gullible person forms a true belief and even if the persons who influence the gullible person are only trying to direct her toward the truth, the defect in the gullible person and her beliefs is not erased. If one created a world in which gullibility reliably produced true beliefs, that world would no more lack the stain of vice than a world in which the prevalence of cowardice produced world peace.

Gullibility offers us a clear illustration of the way that being moved by another person can be closely associated with vice. Namely, gullibility renders one susceptible to having other agents co-opt one's role as an agent, and thereby, potentially decouple one from one's proper aims. The results of our investigation into gullibility generalize. If one is disposed to feel what other people want one to feel, to do what other people want one to do, to want what other people want one to want, one is in danger of surrendering one's agency to someone else. If one surrenders one's agency, among other things one loses the capability of directing oneself to one's proper ends, to do or want what is good for oneself for instance. Thus, one might think that being moved by others is a very risky business and is even somewhat irresponsible when what is at stake is whether one will be the kind of person who pursues the good, the true, and the beautiful or someone who just pursues whatever other people happen to want one to pursue.

The rather negative conclusions about being moved by others that one might be tempted to derive

from our discussion of gullibility are checked by focusing on the necessity of being moved by others.

### **The Necessity of Being Moved: Shared Attention**

Just as we focused on gullibility when exploring the dark side of being moved by others, so I want to focus on the development of shared attention in the first year of life to help us understand the central and positive role that being moved by others plays in our lives.

Signs that other people are affecting the mental life of the infant are present from birth (Cf. Reddy, 2008; also Meltzoff and Moore, 1977). Infants come into the world ready to respond to the attention and emotion of their caregivers, devoting a fair bit of their time to identifying other people in the environment, mimicking them, calling out to them. It does not take long before infants move beyond picking up on the presence of attention and affect in single looks or sounds made by others and track the pattern of behavior exhibited by others and the responsiveness of others to themselves.

Hobson (2004) describes one infant-adult interaction study as follows. Mothers and their two month olds were in separate rooms, seeing each other via a two-way video link.

This may sound a highly artificial arrangement, but mother and baby were able to engage with each other over video in a surprisingly natural and fluent way. Until the disruption was introduced, that is. In this case, what perturbed the interaction was a delay of just thirty seconds between events at the two ends of the video link. Now when the baby acted and watched the video monitor, what the baby could see was the mother responding to her actions of thirty seconds ago. It was not that the mother's earlier responses were unpleasant in any way. It was just that they were suited to a different moment, and not in tune with what the infant was expressing now. The effect of introducing the delay was considerable infant distress. Often the infant would turn away from the mother's image and then dart brief glances back at the screen—a quite different set of reactions from those that occurred when the mother merely looked away to one side. Therefore it was not simply that the infant felt unattended to or even unresponded to—it was that the interactions were not in tune, and disturbingly so (Hobson, 38-39).<sup>1</sup>

Initially, the interactions between an infant and caregiver are largely dyadic. Each individual focuses on the other and expresses emotions that take the other as object. These emotions are also partly determined by what the emotion of the other is. Interest begets interest, affection begets affection, and distress begets distress. As dyadic interactions are mastered, triadic interactions can emerge. The caregiver and infant can

share attention on the infant's hand or on a toy held between them, and they can share emotions about that third object.

Around nine months, interactions about third objects distal to the self can occur by means of pointing. About the same time, infants begin to engage in social referencing where they orient themselves to novel objects and situations by looking at what the attentional and emotional state of the other is vis-à-vis the novelty. For example, a remote controlled robot or a dog may be alarming to an infant, and a child will look at its caregiver to see whether she is threatened by it or not. The infant will then absorb the attitude of the caregiver to the object and treat it in the same manner. The infant looks to the caregiver to shape its perspective on the world around it, and it is this natural inclination to be moved by others and especially caregivers that allows cognitive development to proceed in a typical manner.

Within the first year of life, an infant learns to use others as a guide to its environment. The infant accomplishes this not simply by registering the import of single looks or sounds. The infant actively tunes in the perspective of the other person through patterns of interaction and often accommodates its own perspective to that of the other. It does not just tap its caregiver for information, but absorbs much of the perspective of the other about how it should feel and what it should pay attention to. In short, the typically developing infant is wired to spend its time being moved by others.

The infant is not a blank slate, however. Though the infant does not take a critical, independent stance towards its caregiver, it is nonetheless surprisingly sensitive to whether or not other people are in tune with its own movements and feelings. A failure of the other to be moved by the infant triggers dissonance or even resistance in the infant toward the influence of the other.

One of the things that the developmental literature shows us is that part of what it means to have a social interaction is to feel the weight of the perspective of the other person. Interestingly, persons who are impaired in social interaction, such as autistic persons, generally fail to feel pulled toward the perspective of others in interactions with them. Instead, the impaired person needs to acquire socially mediated information in a more abstract fashion.

Consider, for example, what Temple Grandin (2008), a high functioning autistic woman, has to say about the affective distance in her social interactions.

I do not read subtle emotional cues. I have had to learn by trial and error what certain gestures and facial expressions mean. When I started my career, I often made initial contacts on the telephone, which was easier because I did not have to deal with complex social signals (Grandin, p. 156).

And she notes:

My first inkling that my emotions were

different came in high school, when my roommate swooned over the science teacher. Whatever it was she was feeling, I knew I didn't feel that way toward anyone. But it was years before I realized that other people are guided by their emotions during most social interactions. For me, the proper behavior during all social interactions had to be learned by intellect (Grandin, p. 97).

Persons who are impaired in this manner also tend to struggle with gullibility. An autistic person might act as if any smile indicates a person is happy and any frown indicates sadness. Detecting pretense can be quite a problem, and keeping an autistic person from being taken advantage of becomes a burden that the family and friends of the autistic person must bear.

In sum, being moved by others and seeking out the influence of others is a typical feature of cognitive development and a key ingredient in the social abilities that set apart a typically developing person from persons who suffer a social impairment such as autism. An impairment in being moved by others can actually put one at risk for being taken advantage of by others rather than insulating one from harm.

Welcoming the influence of others, and even seeking it out, is not limited to the relationship between infant and caregiver, nor is it limited to humans. In fact, some degree of *empathy*, "feeling into" others, appears to be present in all herd animals. It is part of what it means to be a social animal. As noted primatologist Frans de Waal (2009) puts it,

When I see synchrony and mimicry—whether it concerns yawning, laughing, dancing, or aping—I see social connections and bonding. I see an old herd instinct that has been taken up a notch. It goes beyond the tendency of a mass of individuals galloping in the same direction, crossing the river at the same time. The new level requires that one pay better attention to what others do and absorb how they do it (De Waal, p. 62).

De Waal gives examples of various kinds of imitative and empathic behaviors in primates, dolphins, elephants, dogs, and mice that serve functions from raising young to resolving conflicts to fleeing predators to spreading new techniques of food acquisition to forging alliances to just plain whiling away the time. One might quibble with various of De Waal's examples or conclusions. The point that remains is that being moved by others through patterns of interaction is a biologically widespread phenomenon. Moreover, to the extent that a species is supposed to be phylogenetically close to our own, responsive interactions are found to be typical characteristics of the species and to be present in one form or another across the lifespan. Thus, one should suspect that just as responsive interdependence is a present though evolving feature of the lives of other species, so the human infant's pursuit of the influence



of the other shows us something of our nature as social beings and not just a dependent stage in our development that is a regrettable necessity.

In the next section, we will see that, on a Christian story, being moved by God is not only necessary to typical development but to human flourishing.

### **Being Moved by God**

Across Christian theological traditions, one finds a consensus that the ultimate purpose of man is to live eternally in loving communion with the divine and that one cannot enter into loving communion with the divine without God moving one. Indeed part of our problem is that sin decouples us from God and leaves us to our own devices. Being moved by God is generally not thought to compromise our agency but rather to empower and perfect it.

The Westminster Catechism famously opens with the lines, “What is the chief end of man? Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever” (Williamson, 2003, 1). Both the catechism and the confession drafted by the same body are very clear, however, that glorifying and enjoying God is not something humans can do on their own. This end can only be achieved through the movement of God within one. Consider, for example, the following quotation from the Westminster Confession.

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by His almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace. This effectual call is of God’s free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it. (Westminster Confession, 1646, question 31)

Note that the confession takes it to be the case that man’s chief end cannot be achieved without one being moved by God in one’s heart and mind, but this divine influence is supposed to empower one’s agency rather than detract from it. In fact, it is supposed to enable relationship, which comes across in moving fashion in the catechal entry on effectual calling that says that the Spirit persuades us and enables us “to embrace Jesus Christ” (Williamson, 2003, p. 136). The Orthodox Church’s catechism too

refers to salvation as “returning to the arms of God” (Orthodox Catechism, 2003, 16).

The Catholic catechism is very clear on the relational aspects of human purpose:

Of all visible creatures only man is “able to know and love his creator”. He is “the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake”, and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God’s own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity ... Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead. (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2002, 1.2.1.1.6)

Notice once again that the catechism is explicit that a human being achieving her end requires the presence of human agency rather than its absence. Grace and freedom, response and self-possession are supposed to complement each other in one’s call to relationship with the divine.

In Galatians, we are told both that we have been adopted by God as sons and daughters, and this adoption manifests itself by the movement of God within us crying out “Abba!” (Gal. 4:5-6). This cry only makes sense as something that’s supposed to be coming from us, but notice that it is the Spirit that’s causing this cry. Furthermore, some kind of agency is presumed in the injunction to “walk by the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16). In John, we are called to have a relationship with God that is like a branch’s relationship to the vine. We are told that we cannot do anything apart from the vine, that being connected to the vine allows us to bear fruit, and that abiding in the vine involves obeying the command of Jesus to love one another (Jn. 15: 4-8). In Ezekiel, we see both the movement of God and the expectation of empowered agency and restored relationship in the statement, “I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances” (Ezek. 36:27).

Examples from the Scriptures or church documents in this vein could continue ad infinitum as could examples from great thinkers in the tradition such as Augustine or Aquinas. The same Bishop of Hippo who proclaimed that our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God was clear that the Pelagians were dangerous heretics for claiming that we could enter this rest on our own (Cf. Augustine, 2008a; Augustine 2008b). Aquinas, likewise, insisted that both operative and cooperative grace was necessary to salvation and both had their origins in God, not humans (Aquinas, 2008), and an exciting and recent development in studies of Aquinas’ ethical

theory highlights the importance for Aquinas of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit for ethics, where the gifts and fruits are understood as relational goods (Pinsent, in press; Stump, 2011).

I do not mean to drag up the mysteries that surround the interplay of the will of God and will of man. Though relevant, I am after a point that most of the disputants in such debates could agree to. What I am at pains to draw attention to is that the theological consensus within Christendom is that being moved by the other is not necessarily a problem nor is it *merely* a necessary feature in the life of a social animal. Instead, when God is the other, being moved by the other is necessary to human flourishing and to human flourishing as an agent.

Let us stop and puzzle a bit about why someone might take this stance to being moved by God given the negative features of being moved by others canvassed in the section on gullibility. After all, if a disposition to surrender one's agency is a defect, then the all-pervading influence attributed to the divine should be a big problem. One must not be hasty here, however.

There is at least one respect in which being moved by God is categorically different from being moved by anyone else. Consider, once again, that part of what makes gullibility and analogous problems bad is that they weaken the connection between the agent and the proper end to which the agent should be directed. The gullible person is not well connected to the truth. The coward and the reckless person fail to privilege right action and so on. According to Christianity, though, relationship with God just is the proper end of a human being. Moreover, within the Christian intellectual tradition there is a long history of associating the divine with what truth, goodness, and beauty are. Thus, being moved by God is in a way to be moved by the truth, and likewise to be moved by beauty and goodness. In fact, to the extent that one is moved by God, one is moved *only* by the true, the good, and the beautiful, and it is this very fact that may explain why being moved by God should actually be thought of as a perfection of agency. Only when one's will is moved completely by God is it aimed wholly at what is good.

There remains the following worry, however. Let us return to hitting curveballs. Suppose, due to some scenario worthy of Hollywood, Albert Pujols gains control of Sam's body. Sam goes to his amateur baseball game. The pitcher, knowing Sam cannot hit curveballs, winds up. Pujols sees the curveball coming and controls Sam's body so that Sam slams that ball out of the park...or rather Sam's body does. Hitting that curveball exemplified all the virtues hitting a baseball is supposed to exemplify. Nonetheless, it is not Sam who exemplifies these virtues. Sam is not the agent who hits the ball. Pujols is. Sam's agency has disappeared. The issue here is not really one of free will because the issue is prior to free will. It is a matter of Sam having a will at all. If one solves problems with Sam's agency by removing his agency

entirely, it is not Sam's agency that's been improved upon. There no longer is any such agency.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, one might worry that being moved by God replaces the agency of the individual with that of another. One's beliefs, desires, and actions would be aimed at their proper objects but at the expense of their really being one's own. A full consideration of this line of objection needs a principled answer to familiar questions about free will and providence. There is a helpful insight, however, that can be brought to bear from our discussion of the development of shared attention in the infant.

The infant's relationship to its caregiver is as dependent as any human bond could be. The caregiver must provide its every need, and the infant's ability to interact with its caregiver is often dependent on having internalized in some measure what its caregiver has already modeled for it. Receiving the perspective of another, however, can be an expression of agency. The infant must use its limited resources and what it has already received in order to make room for, if not pursue, the other person. The infant is dependent on the caregiver to put herself in range of interaction both in physical proximity but also in condescending to act in a manner that is more within range of the abilities and experience of the infant.

The case of the infant helps us to see that in an inherently relational activity, being moved can be heavily invested with agency. Hitting a baseball, reading a book, or staring at a wall are all monadic activities. To the extent that one's neighbor accomplishes a token of one of these types, one's agency is attenuated or removed from bringing about that same token act. Ballroom dancing, conversing, or having a staring contest are dyadic or polyadic activities. You can be fully engaged in waltzing, even if the way in which you are engaged in waltzing is receiving and accommodating the person who is leading one in the dance. There is a big difference between a dancing partner who is limp like a rag doll and one who is responsive. Neither the rag doll nor the responsive partner is initiating or directing the dance, but the responsive partner enacts agency in the way she dances, unlike the rag doll. If one thinks of being moved by God as a monadic activity, then one is likely stuck with the worry about God's will and mind replacing those of the believer. Instead, perhaps we should think of being moved by God as a dyadic activity, of receiving and reflecting what God condescends to reveal to us of Himself.

## Conclusion

Human agency is bound up with directing one's mind and will toward their proper ends. What is important here is both that one be directed at one's proper end(s) and also that it is how the agent expresses her agency that explains what the agent is directed towards, even if how the agent expresses her agency is by trusting someone else. One's agency is not expressed solely or even chiefly through one's actions as an independent reasoner. Rather, we are

by nature social animals, and we express our agency in no small part in the way that we accommodate ourselves to the presence of other agents. Receptive interactions with others are a necessary feature of human agency, and they are a necessary feature of human flourishing. Being moved by the other is virtuous when one's receptivity to the other is an expression of a valuing by the agent of what is good and true and beautiful, and it is vicious when one allows others to influence one toward improper ends or cedes the role of determining the final end(s) to which one is directed.

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> For the original study, see Murray and Trevarthen (1985).
- <sup>2</sup> I have heard Eleonore Stump make much the same point in conversation.

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# Interview and Conversation with John Milbank and Simon Oliver: Radical Orthodoxy and Christian psychology I - theological underpinnings

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*Radical Orthodoxy is a vibrant theological response to postmodernism which has much to offer to Christian psychology in particular and to dialogue between theology and secularity in general. In this, the first of two Edification interviews with leading members of the Radical Orthodox group at the University of Nottingham UK, John Milbank (JM) and Simon Oliver (SO) discuss the theological roots and current concerns of the movement and explore its relevance and challenge for secular and Christian psychology with Peter Hampson (PH). Zoë Lehmann Imfeld (ZL) assisted with question planning, transcription, and editing of the interview.*

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**PH:** Following and building on the earlier *Edification* interview with James K.A. Smith (Smith & Watson, 2007), it is a great pleasure to talk with key members of the Radical Orthodoxy (RO) group, including those directly and very closely involved with the RO project for some time now, to learn more of its possible relevance for Christian psychology. It might help readers, John, if you first outline some of the main themes and current concerns within the wider movement, if movement it is, how you envision the RO project right now, and how it might develop in the future.

**JM:** It is quite difficult to sum up briefly what RO is, and what it has become. It started out in the context of responses to post-modernism, beginning with a deep dissatisfaction with Christians who merely wanted to “baptise” post-modern philosophy. Within RO we wanted both to appropriate post-modernism and to criticise it. The key here was the idea that post-modernity had somehow dissolved a humanistic confidence, suggesting instead that everything is in flux, everything is uncertain and undecidable, everything is commanded by power. We wanted to say that in a way this is positive, because it gets rid of an immanentist certainty, to

affirm that in theology, also, everything is finite or approximate. The challenge of post-modernity would then become a choice between either an immanentist post-humanism or a return to a theological post-humanism. This led to a sense that the uncertainty and the flux of the world can still be read in Platonic terms, especially if you realise that Platonism does not completely subordinate matter and the body. We wanted to return to a notion of *methexis*, or participation, as being at the centre of theology (see Smith & Watson, 2007). However, we wanted somehow to increase the sense of the importance of the world changing and recreating itself, and human beings particularly reconstituting reality. This is the sense that life and human creativity participate in the creative life of God. One might say that this is a modern reworking of the notion of participation. By putting participation at the centre of our theology we were also stressing that one should not choose between a fideism on the one hand, only stressing faith, or the foundationalism of reason on the other hand. We need to recover the sense that both human faith and reason participate in the divine mind, that there is a continuum between them. There is a sense in which reason always requires faith, and faith goes on using reason. It is a much more Augustinian way

of putting things. On the other hand, RO theologians tend to read Augustine in a very Catholic, Thomistic way, a more humanist Augustine, if you like, than the pessimistic Augustine of the Reformation or of Jansenism.

But then conversely we have also always read Aquinas in a very Augustinian way, and in a way that relates him to Greek patristics. This allows us to test readings which put a sharp divide between faith and reason in Aquinas.

Over the years, as Radical Orthodoxy has developed, it has become clear to me that the key notion is really paradox, in ways that pick up elements both in Kierkegaard and Chesterton (e.g. Chesterton, 1908; Kierkegaard, 1985). I think that the key notion is paradox because one has the idea that we are naturally orientated to a supernatural destiny, so that our end is to receive a gift, which is itself paradoxical (Milbank, 2003). We read the whole of Christian doctrine with a strong stress on paradoxicality, which sees creation as both outside God and yet not outside God. There are other theologies that would put a much stronger stress on the idea of creation as simply being outside God, to try to read it less paradoxically, but then I think you end up with a kind of literalism. So we would stress that God is both completely replete and yet paradoxically in himself more than God. We would also read the doctrine of the incarnation very paradoxically, that Christ is *most* man, precisely by being divine, and not merely a human person. Again, this is a very paradoxical take on Christology and ecclesiology. We also extend that paradoxicality to our approach to social and political thinking, and this has been more manifest in recent times, in the idea that equality paradoxically requires hierarchy because otherwise a flattened “uniformity” exposes each individual to the play and vicissitudes of sheer power in the political realm (Blond & Milbank, 2010). This has had some kind of impact at least within British politics. It would be very interesting to consider how there might be a paradoxical psychology, although I do not know exactly what that would look like (but see Hampson, 2010, for some initial thoughts). I think that human beings themselves are paradoxical creatures. We are animals and yet we are more than animals, and yet we remain animals. We are thinking animals.

**PH:** I’ll ask Simon to come in here; I’m still a little concerned that the background to the notion of participation may not yet be crystal clear to people in the human and social sciences. I wonder how we can best explicate the idea for them, and indeed what its implications might be. In his *Edification* interview, James K.A. Smith spoke of the basic approach of *resourcement*, or recovery of lost ideas and concepts, and mentioned “participation” as a key recovered idea in RO. As he said:

the unique emphasis of Radical Orthodoxy

on a “participatory ontology,” with its notion of the material world being “charged with transcendence,” points to a kind of third way for understanding the human person—and thus perhaps a third way between crass, biologicistic materialism and naïve, supernaturalistic dualism. (Smith & Watson, 2007, p. 71).

We have clearly established that “participation” is a key notion. Can we now unpack the useful phrase “charged with transcendence” a little? I am thinking here of the philosophical and theological roots of this and idea, in Plato for example, and what this implies about our relationship with and dependence on God and accounts of human nature. Also, do you agree with James Smith’s suggestion regarding the “third way”?

**SO:** Participation, *methexis*, as Radical Orthodoxy has tried to recover it, does go back to Plato, and actually to a very straightforward idea that we find in the *Republic*, and in other dialogues as well, that in the end there is only one source of being, and therefore one source of truth, beauty and the good. Transposed into a Christian theological mode in the doctrine of creation, the claim then is that when God creates, there is not one thing, and then all of a sudden two things, God and the universe. There is only ever one source of being, in which *all* else shares or participates. Plato expressed this through his famous simile of the Sun in the *Republic*. Just as the Sun is the single source of light and illumination, making all other things visible and therefore knowable by its light, so the Good is the single source of “being” in which all else participates, thereby coming into being. What we see in the realm of flux and change, in “becoming” as Plato puts it, is not something that is self-standing, but something that taken in itself in isolation is nothing, and therefore is, to use the subtitle of the first Radical Orthodoxy volume, “suspended over the nihil”.

Transposed into Christian theology, the idea is that God is the single source of life and being. No creature accounts for its own existence, but can only be accounted for in terms of its relationship to the divine. The key problem then is, how do you preserve that from the charge of pantheism? How do you stop everything collapsing back into what the Neoplatonists called “the One,” or what Christian theology calls “God”? Pantheism is avoided by distinguishing ontologically between God, who exists by his essence, and creation, which exists only by the constant donation of their own being by God. So the Christian doctrine of creation is not about a single moment of creation, it is not about privileging some primordial moment of creation several billion years ago, but instead it is about the sustaining of creation and existence at all times. This is what Jewish, Christian, and Islamic theology points to in the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of

nothing): the view that, at every moment (and not just at some 'Big Bang' moment), creation is "out of nothing," receiving its created being from "being-itself," namely God.

Meanwhile, the notion of participation is trying to describe the sense that being itself, God, is infinitely proximate to creative being, to the realm of becoming. Other words that Plato uses, which we often translate as participation, describe this for us very well. *Symploke*, "interweaving," is an example. The metaphor of "interweaving" preserves the sense of difference between God and creation, while also expressing an infinite proximity. That difference between God and creation is itself a gift of the divine. It is not something which creation has in itself (Milbank & Oliver, 2009, 3-27).

**PH:** And of course, that is a paradox in itself. In the one sense, there is the collusion between the two, God and the world, in the other sense, as we have just established, God and creation are not the same. Treating these categories as interacting containers, of God being *in* or *outside* of creation, is simply inapplicable.

**SO:** That is absolutely right, and we should be clear that whatever we mean by the difference between God and creation, it is not like the difference between, say, you and me. The real problem begins when we think of God as an object, as a cause amongst causes, and another item in our conceptual or perceptual landscape. This is why Radical Orthodoxy is very committed to the view that to talk about God is always to talk about something else. Because if we conceive of theology as having a bounded subject matter, where we are concerned with "God," we are treating God as if he were another item in our perceptual landscape, competing for our attention with other things, an entity among other entities, in the way that chemistry treats chemical substances. If theology is concerned with all things in relation to God, then in principle this precludes nothing. That is not to say that theology usurps all other disciplines (quite the contrary), but it is to say that all things *qua* created things have theological meaning and implications.

**PH:** In trying to ground that notion further for people who are interested in human nature, but often in a different way from theologians, what can we usefully give them?

**JM:** One thing I would say is that without this sense of transcendence and participation in transcendence, you cannot save something that might seem otherwise seem quite commonsensical; it is really a matter of saving the ordinary world. At its most extreme, I would say that ordinarily we believe in meaning, intentions, emotions, and love, and this sort of thing, and yet, if you adopt a naturalistic or scientific view, there is a sense in which those

things turn out not to be real, that we are living out a fantasy all the time. Only something like a theological discourse allows us to think that these notions are ultimately real, that there is something called spirit, and the ultimate source of everything is spiritual rather than material. Also, participation is linked to the idea of the primacy of relation; that the relationship of the Trinity is symmetrical, but that our relationship with God is utterly asymmetrical, God is not related to us, but we are related to him. That gives a certain primacy to the relational that can really only be secured by the doctrine of creation. If you have an immanentistic doctrine, either you say that everything is all one, or everything is all completely atomistic and differentiated. But the way we normally think of things is relational, and allied to that, we tend to think of things as being not completely "unlike" but somewhat "like," therefore analogical. Once again, analogy is a very paradoxical idea, in that it is not that things are a bit like each other or a bit unlike each other, but that they are both at once. This keeps in play the idea that we live in an analogical reality, that there are affinities between things, maybe that there is some kind of affinity between the ordering of our mind and the order within things, as Kant discerned.

Again you need this sense that the ultimate source of everything is meaningful, in the sense that it relates identity and difference. This is what I think Plato is talking about, that the dominance of thought or dialectics is to do with a blending of the same and the different, whereas if you have a philosophy only of the same, or a philosophy only of the different, these are inevitably materialist or idealist philosophies. And yet there is something profoundly human about the alternative view that we interact with the world and with each other in this relational and analogical way. Something like participation would allow you then to have a sociology and a psychology which put that at the centre.

**PH:** If I have understood you correctly, you are starting to make quite strong connections between paradox on the one hand, and analogy on the other. That is very useful because it implies that there is a way of working with and through paradox, not simply acknowledging it and backing off, but rather celebrating it.

Perhaps we might think about the split that afflicts certainly Anglo-American psychology, and probably many other disciplines in these terms, a split between what we might call scientific/modernist approaches, and post-modern/hermeneutic interpretative traditions. In Anglo-American psychology at least, this often results in something of a stand off. I know colleagues who are almost tribal in their adherence to what they would call quantitative measures, and the set of assumptions that go with them, while others are drawn to qualitative measures. This surely is a very reductive way of looking at a much more complex split. And we know from the experience

and scholarship of other theological colleagues that this fissure afflicts the European tradition less than ours, but it certainly has done here in the UK, and it certainly has in the United States. I wonder if we have become stuck in an unnecessary and false dichotomy. Is a possible way through this, by appeal to paradox and analogy perhaps?

**JM:** I'm not sure that I could answer that adequately, but I would say that we need something much more like a metaphysical approach that would undercut the opposition between naturalism on the one hand and hermeneutics on the other.

We need perhaps to see the continuity between our feeling and our interactions in the world. Looking back at somebody like Whitehead, and his notion of apprehension, that everything in reality exists through its negotiation of its relations to everything else, its awareness of everything else, this fits with the way that RO has always wanted to talk about non-identical repetition rather than interpretation, because there is something about interpretation that suggests that you are standing outside whatever you are reading, and that we are playing a sort of humanistic game that spins round in a cosy circle and that does not have very much ontological bearing.

I think repetition somehow helps to break up the opposition between causation and interpretation. By interpreting, one is altering reality, and causation itself is in itself like an act of interpretation. Notions of repetition and habit are here very allied, in that there are realities composed of habitual patterns, and, in the case of human beings, habit is much accentuated in terms of freedom, but that we only establish genuine freedom by creating second nature as a skill. For instance, the lightness of the ballet dancer is a profoundly learnt thing, even though it is free. It is significant that Kierkegaard is obsessed with the example of ballet.

**PH:** I spotted a fascinating insight in one of John Haldane's essays recently (Haldane, 2004). He makes the point that Aquinas effectively pulls together cognitive and moral psychology, but then Haldane moves on, and does not address the idea in any great detail. Yet in an interesting way you can see that this is what is happening. At one level Thomas is not really providing a neutral epistemology, but he is nevertheless addressing some of the basic concepts of the raw material of human nature, and then looking at these in (moral) action, in their moral applied context. It is not as if the one, the natural and socio-cognitive we might say, is "de-theologised," or "de-spiritualised," and then the second, the moral, is "re-theologised." The theology runs right through.

So what are the fundamental linking concepts? Given that we now have the very interesting domain of cognitive psychology, which examines cognition, neuroscience, memory, reasoning, thinking, and on the other hand we have what might be called an "infant" field of moral psychology, what are the

key concepts that link them? Perhaps it is habit, or *habitus* in the full Thomistic, paradoxical sense. But I wonder, is it really habit that is properly basic, or is it *act*? After all, a lot of contemporary psychology has privileged perception and cognition over and above action. Is habit really primary, or do we need to get psychologists to go back to first principles and think about action and motion?

**SO:** If we think about movement in relation to habit, what the pre-modern tradition understands by "movement" is what we would now describe as "change," (learning, growing, ripening, as well as locomotion). Such motion in general can be described as from potency to act. Motion also goes back to the relational idea that John was talking about in the sense that there is always a mover and that which is moved. Aquinas has an understanding of motion that includes a doctrine of grace, which is quite interesting, because he understands motion as not only a mover acting on that which is moved, but also the donation to that which is moved, of an ability to make that motion its own. So as motion intensifies towards its conclusion and towards actuality, that which is moved makes the motion more properly its own by habit, which emerges from its nature, and that nature is characterised by an habitual, settled way of being. Now, there is a big debate about what moves a heavy object to its lower position. The answer that comes back if you correctly interpret Aristotle and Aquinas is it is whatever gave the stone its nature in the first place; that then allows the stone to make its motion its own.

Motion, then, is not a straightforward category by any stretch of the imagination, but it allows something to actualise its own nature, "sweetly and delightfully," as Aquinas puts it, so that something is fully itself through habit. That is what constitutes its freedom. A bird is most "bird-like" when it is in flight, which it does habitually. It does not perceive this as a choice, "shall I fly or shall I not." Its freedom does not consist in sheer "choice" Its freedom consists in the bird being most fully itself, and that "settled way of being" is what we call *habitus*. But the question is, then, where does that habit come from? From where does the habit of forming habits come from? The bird cannot account for itself. It cannot account for its own nature through itself, therefore it has a donating source. Aquinas would say that human beings are most fully human in their rational nature. Where does that nature come from? We are recovering a tradition which suggests that its nature is a gift from a donating source.

**PH:** It might be worth emphasising that motion is a broader category than simply the output of behaviour. We are talking here about any change from potential to actualisation. This, I suspect, is a concept that might usefully be re-learned in certain parts of psychology. Combined with a teleological understanding, this idea of motion becomes very

powerful. Extending your bird example, for instance, we can say that the intellect is most “intellectual” when it is truth-seeking, when it is moving to truth, the will is most “will-like” when it is good-seeking, and that the true and the good are the same thing, so the operations of will and intellect, at best, converge.

It would be interesting now to learn more about “non-identical repetition” which John mentioned earlier, and concepts such as *habitus*, and to connect them with your work on motion, Simon. When I read Aquinas on *habitus*, the eye-opener for me was that if you approach these sections as, say, a jobbing cognitive psychologist might, you could be forgiven for thinking “the guy is simply talking about skill,” but actually he is talking about a deepening participation in being, as a function of each of those repeated engagements. That really is a very different concept to apply not only to skill, but of course, to virtue as well, because people tend to think these days, however benignly, of virtue as simply the practice of a good act.

**SO:** Yes, we should probably give more background to habit than we have done, and explore the idea of the history of *habitus* as being in some sense contrary to reason or freedom. The notion of habit is treated with enormous suspicion in modern philosophy, as it seems to denote things that we do simply by rote rather than by reflection. Typically, many Protestant thinkers have been very suspicious of habit, as they believe our religious actions in particular should be done consciously, and not merely habitually.

To see how “moral effort” drops away, let us take the example of learning to kick a football well. The process which we call “learning to kick a football” is itself a motion, from potentially being able to kick a football, to actually being able to kick a football. Now, imagine that I have never seen a football, and I do not know what one is. One would have to say that my potential to kick a football is very acute. Then I watch a football match, so I see other people doing it, then I have a go myself, then I practice and practice, until in the end I score a goal every time, and I do so without “trying.” In other words, I kick a ball and score a goal without “thinking” about it in the usual deliberative sense of the term. I do so, as it were, habitually. That is part then of who I am. The business of practice and repetition is crucial to the habit of being able to kick a football, to the point where there is a sense in which I know how to kick a football in a way that a scientist, who would experiment on my anatomy, observes how I kick the football, knows in a completely different way. And the intimacy of that knowledge, that is part of the habit; it’s the biblical notion of “knowing something” as second nature. The point is that the motion of learning to kick a football intensifies towards the actuality of being able to kick a football, to the point where it gets easier and easier. The movement becomes “sweet and delightful” (Oliver, 2005).

**JM:** Another thing about virtue is that it cannot really have a beginning. It is a skill that you have to be already in, so that you learn it from somebody. Simon and I have been reading Ravaissou’s (2008) book about habit in the nineteenth century, and the whole tradition of thinking about habit again emphasises the paradoxical, because if you say that habit is fundamental, rather than law, you are faced with the question of how habit begins, as a habit is by definition something that is formed. If you say that there nothing more fundamental than habit, then this is very paradoxical, and it is interesting that Ravaissou actually does invoke notions of grace, even when thinking about paradoxia. And he cites theological traditions of thinking about grace, so that somehow habit begins by grace. Again you have this notion that the most natural actually seems to require something beyond and outside nature.

**SO:** That’s very important. No matter how much I tried or practiced, I could not kick a football like Wayne Rooney. It is simply not “in me;” it’s not something I have been “given” to do. So habit must begin with the gift of a particular and unique being which is brought to realisation (actuality, in Aristotle and Aquinas’s parlance) through deeper habituation to certain ways of being.

**PH:** If motion is a key linking concept it is because motion, understood as you do, is right there in the dynamics of the psychological system itself, as well as in a human’s overt activities. It becomes a binding concept which runs right through. It must do in Thomist thought of course, because, among other things, Thomas is interweaving Aristotelian ideas into his theology. But we underestimate the extent to which this could once again be a radical and useful new way of looking at people in the human sciences. It is not perhaps as unfamiliar for those of us who come to it via a long philosophical and theological tradition, of course, but it is these days for many psychologists.

**JM:** I think it is absolutely fundamental that somehow we too easily think that there is no intrinsic connection between thought and reality, so that the relationship tends to get narrowed down to a matter of representation, as if we were an empirical investigator taking a photograph of reality. Then, the effective parts of the mind are not seen as referential in any way, whereas earlier I think passions were referential, often in a bad sense, in that they distorted your ability. I think you are right to raise the issue of whether psychology is too much about perception, which seems to be linked to the model of representation, or alternatively it is about interpretation, and that action and feeling, or action and emotion, really ought to be at the centre.

Here I think Simon’s idea about motion is very relevant, because as he says in his book (Oliver, 2005), there is a continuity between material and



psychic motion for somebody like Aquinas. In fact, he thinks of the mind almost quite naturalistically, as when motion becomes reflexive, when it returns to itself, then you have mind. In a way, Bergson (2009) recovers this in a new sense, in that there is a deep link between movement and meaning. I think this is much more the way that we need to think about things, in that things affect us that becomes reflexive in us, and that we are then able, unconsciously and then consciously, to affect things. A perception is primarily a reaction to something, and feeling is more fundamental than perception because there is no uninflected response, it is always a feeling.

This is why I am very interested in Hume, and like a lot of people, I think that Hume has been totally misread. I do not think he supports this representationalist view of things at all, and that by actually making feeling primary, he is trying to overcome a scepticism that results from just concentrating on freedom, so that in a way he is very open to the idea that feelings do actually have a referential context. In fact, there is something actually counter-modern about Hume, which is what the best Hume readers are saying, that he is pointing towards a romantic alternative, and that the current coming through Ravaissou and Bergson is really reading Hume in a very different way. In Hume, already this importance of habit is becoming fundamental. So one tries to recover this continuity of motion and meaning, but the stress on feeling, on the effective, becomes even stronger, just as the stress on the imagination becomes stronger, beginning with Hume, but also in someone like Coleridge. This is the sense that we never sense anything without imagining, so that an impression or feeling is always an action. The primacy of action and reaction here is crucial, and that could help to give us a different type of psychology.

**SO:** There is also a strong tendency in modern moral philosophy to say that if I need to make a *mental* effort to act well, then my action is more praiseworthy, because I have had to make the effort, whereas Thomas would say exactly the opposite, that if it has required an effort of will, then you do not have the correctly settled habit, and therefore you do not have the correctly oriented will to the good. So the fact that one does something habitually is actually an indication of a settled and good will. The business of moral philosophy as deliberative moral reasoning is indicative of the fact that we do not have good moral characters.

**PH:** I agree, but before we get too “radical,” perhaps what is first needed may be to re-triangulate that which we already know, not to reject or rewrite all secular psychology! I think it would be foolish in the extreme, for example, to assume that we have not at our disposal a lot of useful and practical knowledge from, say, many of the explorations of the neurosciences. If I had a relative who has a stroke,

I would want them to be seen by a good neuro-psychologist or neurologist, because they will be able to tell what she can do, what she cannot do, what she needs to practice and so forth.

**JM:** Of course. But I’m fascinated by the genealogy of all this, that there has always been a discourse that has recognised the link between the soul and the body, such as the discourse about the humours and so on, which were clearly aware of that, and the relationship between these discourses and theological ones about the soul, I do not fully know or comprehend the history of it, but certainly naturalistic psychology is not completely new.

**PH:** Let us return to the notion that ideally psychology does need to look outside itself, the notion that there has to be some sort of meaningful reference for feeling, for example. In the 1970s, many psychologists realised that perhaps they should get interested in the everyday world! It is not sufficient simply to explain activities that go on inside people’s heads without some explanation or account of the environment in which people are immersed. This leads to a whole tradition of studies of everyday memory, of reasoning in everyday contexts and so on. As Mace (1977) wrote of perceptual psychologist J.J. Gibson, “Ask not what’s inside your head, but what your head’s inside of.” We can take that idea as an analogy and ask, is it really that we need psychology and the social sciences to embed themselves within the wider theological and philosophical environment? It is not then simply the natural environment that we are talking about, but a set of meanings and concepts that those disciplines can bring to bear make a “conceptual environment” for psychology.

**JM:** It is very strange the way naturalism seems to trade on a materialised Cartesian idea that somehow “soul” is simply something inside you, as if we simply think with our brains, whereas a lot of work has been done on how we think with our bodies, with our environment, and so strangely, the more we materialise, or recover, the soul as something tangible that is part of this entire set of interactions, the more you understand that you cannot really reduce the soul.

**PH:** But what we are doing, perhaps, is challenging psychology to think again about the ontological *milieu* in which it is doing its job. On some occasions I have accused psychology, for all its strengths, of being guilty of ontological opacity. To take another example, beliefs arguably change *what* and *who* we are as much as how we think.

**JM:** This is where I would suggest something bold and simple, that the problem for psychology is that it should either just be honestly naturalistic and utterly reductive, or it should realise that “soul” discourse

is in the end related to something metaphysical or theological. If you do not do that, you get almost a folk discourse about relation, intention and love, or you get something like a brilliant pseudo-theology, and this is how I would read Freud. By saying that, I do not mean to say that the whole of Freud is wrong, or that he does not have some genuine metaphysical insights, but in a sense Freud occupies a weird hinterland in which he goes on believing in the soul after a fashion, and yet is naturalistic, so you end up with new myths, of which most, I think it is fair to say, have been empirically falsified. So oddly, part of my critique of Freud would be that he is not naturalistic enough, but often reads things that were completely physical in social terms.

**PH:** Fine, so one route out of this is for psychology to become humble and honest and to say, “OK, we’re simply going to be a naturalistic discipline.” What that might do would be to force us to let go of certain domains, or to considerably reduce their scope. One area for downsizing would be the psychology of religion, which would probably have to be severely curtailed, another might be moral psychology. And it is very interesting to read work on moral psychology at the moment. It seems to come in and out of focus when it wants to have accounts that simply talk about moral activity and moral behaviour, but without recourse to any notion of the good, or God. One could say that it is not possible to have any such coherent account in this domain, unless it is fully contextualised. On the other hand, I do think that it is possible to have a fully coherent account of the visual cortex and its operations, without recourse to concepts like participation.

**JM:** Here one is on the controversial terrain of saying that humanism is a bit silly, and the alternative is either a complete naturalism or actually proposing, shockingly, that something like psychology does not have to be dogmatically secular, it does not have to be free of all metaphysical or all religious commitments. This does not mean that it is going to be something ludicrously doctrinaire, but that it will be trying to explore, phenomenologically, normal human phenomena without reducing them, and it will have to take account of the hinterland, and say, if this stuff makes sense, then it involves some sort of metaphysics. It will have to be more in relationship to philosophy and theology.

**PH:** Well, I would agree with you again, and so I hope might a growing number of psychologists too. But at the moment, what we seem to have is the emergence of three groupings in Christian psychology. There is the liberal integrationist stance, which seems to rely almost on a correlational account of psychology and theology, and at that level at least appears to be somewhat philosophically uncritical. It effectively says there are theological concepts that we can raid,

borrow, or repristinate, of which virtue is a classic example. And while some of its simple assumptions may make you as theologians wince, nonetheless, it is paying dividends and moving the discipline of psychology on. Secondly, there is what we might call the more evangelical position, informed either by a strong Biblicism, or Reformed Epistemology. Again this is helping “out” some of the assumptions of secular psychology, but in a different way from RO. The third, which we are exploring here, introduces a more nuanced, Radical Orthodox/Catholic tradition which looks to position psychology within a theological context in which there is a powerful account of the relation between faith and reason, grace and nature, and so on. Suddenly then, we see something not unlike the spread within the Anglican communion, or even the Christian church in general.

Is it inevitable and healthy for Christian psychology to acknowledge that these three positions are in some sort of ecumenical creative tension, or is it that “denominations” are inevitably going to emerge from Christianised psychology?

**JM:** I think people will become aware that if you have a too fideistic approach, it tends to either a sort of fundamentalism, or it becomes a self-referential discourse in a way that does not make a difference to anything. If you use the correlationist approach, this does not run well in the new, more aggressive environment, in which the idea that there are philosophically posed, neutral existential questions is just not true. It is far more apparent nowadays that Heidegger only thought that because he was still thinking like a theologian. There is effectively, then, this sharp Tillichian division between the philosophical and the theological, and the dualism of form and content which he had. And, in general, I think Church people are very nostalgic about what I call this type of humanism, and they are very frightened of a situation in which there is not that as a mediator. But the fact of the matter is that that is rapidly how things are becoming, that there is not that safe ground for them to stand on. Increasingly we face a persecuting secularity. So it is crucial that we fall back on our genealogy and our Christian traditions, and I think that if we are to avoid the implications of apparently liberal secularity that will not be liberal at all, and if we are to avoid a fundamentalist corral, then we need this much more fluid and paradoxical discourse about faith and reason.

**PH:** I realise I am asking for a magic bullet here, but what might we recommend, as something to get psychologists a little more interested in this critical relationship between faith and reason?

**SO:** The best, briefest account, is probably Pope Benedict’s Regensburg lecture (Benedict XVI, 2006).

**JM:** Unfortunately it is only known for one thing,

but it is actually a very thoughtful, perceptive lecture.

**SO:** I have been recently reading some work by Hans Jonas, who was a German Jewish phenomenologist, a pupil of Heidegger, but who in the end turned on Heidegger, who wrote a lot about the phenomenology of life (Jonas, 2000). Jonas has a very simple, but very striking essay, in which he comments on the invention or prioritisation of death, or necrophilia, so he is saying that for the ancient, pre-modern tradition what was always primary was life, and the cosmos was understood as a living organism. Motion is indicative of life, and saturated in motion, the universe is in some sense alive, and the notion of life is analogically attributed to various aspects of the natural. Even the inert is still in some way oriented towards the generation of life. This dies away with modernity and what becomes primary is the inert, the object as opposed to the subject. He argues that the invention of the science of biology is essentially the prioritisation of death, because life is then treated as the aberration, as something that is weird and odd, and requiring explanation. I wonder if psychology is running on the back of that, because consciousness is suddenly an aberration, it is that which is weird and has to be explained. It is something that goes on in one corner of the universe, as opposed to something which is part and parcel of the way things are.

This is where, I think, psychology might have a “recovery of nerve” and gain a clearer sense of its own place within the hierarchy of *scientia*. If human intellectual life is in some sense the apex of material life itself (as Aquinas thought), and psychology is the particular study of that life, it is placed at the heart of our study. Yet this requires some sense that the phenomenon of human intellectual life is not some unbelievably weird fluke in an essentially lifeless universe, but is in fact the goal of that creation. The raises the problematic spectre of teleology, but it is an issue which I think we need to confront very urgently.

**JM:** This is where it seems to me that we have a loss of *hylomorphism*, in which you had the sense that everything is composed of form and matter, that the mind is the form of forms, that you had this mediation. It was as if the forms of the things “out there” were like embodied meanings.

**PH:** I think it is not just the notion of consciousness which is problematic, it is meaning, it is teleology, as we were discussing earlier. It is as if the burden of explanation or proof is set in the wrong direction. Given the background assumptions of modernity, we have to swim against the tide to establish the validity of ideas which from a different standpoint could be taken for granted.

**JM:** John McDowell’s (1994) book *Mind and World* edges towards the idea that meaning is not just something inside us, but then curiously backs off

from the implications of what he is saying, which does require a re-enjoinment with the world, but it is as if nobody wants to look at that or thinks it silly.

Another simple way of putting this is that if there is no God, you seem to be stuck with saying that either matter is primary, or reason is primary, ending up either with materialism or with idealism, but theology allows you somehow to have both these realities, and there is a higher reality that transcends them, especially if you bring in some things from theological neo-Platonism which allows that there is something in matter which reflects the One, that mind does not capture. I think this needs to be more worked into Christian theology, in order to justify the sacramental.

**SO:** It’s also worth mentioning that faith is not simply a propositional state, at least not as Aquinas or Augustine understand it; faith is actually a way of being. So, in this way, the best scientists are those who tend to be quite faithful, in the sense that they have a certain way of being. Any research project, by necessity, is always going to begin with best guesses and intuition, and is never going to be able to delineate its outcome with any precision. Being able to make best guesses, based on what has gone before, or what we understand now, is actually quite a skill, which comes partly by practice and through sheer experience. So many of science’s best breakthroughs have been based on the best intuitions, which reason then works on, and yet so many of those discoveries have surprised us. If it was simply a matter of extrapolating or unfolding what we already know, nothing would ever really come out of science, and yet it does. In any human intellectual enterprise, we are always working with that which we perceived through a glass darkly, that we then try to illuminate or elucidate the meaning and implications of, by reason of different kinds and in different contexts.

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# Interview and Conversation with Conor Cunningham and Aaron Riches: Radical Orthodoxy and Christian psychology II – Ontological Naturalism and Christology

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*In this, the second of two Edification interviews with leading members of the Radical Orthodoxy group at the University of Nottingham UK, Conor Cunningham (CC) and Aaron Riches (AR) offer a robust and lively Radical Orthodoxy approach to ontological naturalism and Christology and begin to explore their relevance and challenge for secular and Christian psychology with Peter Hampson (PH). Zoë Lehmann Imfeld (ZL) assisted with question planning, transcription, and editing of the interview.*

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## Ontological Naturalism

**PH:** Conor, perhaps a brief definition of what you understand by the term “ontological naturalism” would be a good way to start.

**CC:** Ontological naturalism is a pathology plaguing Western culture, to the extent that we do not even know we see through its lens, yet it informs our thinking to the highest degree. In short, it is the intellectual position that will do everything in its power to banish the divine, to the point that it is quite literally willing to cut off its nose to spite its face (Cunningham, 2010). From colour to free will, the mind to beauty and truth, all are sacrificed in the name of an ontological cleansing that is more accommodating to a world without God. Indeed, as a number of atheist, analytic metaphysicians have admitted, if we appeal only to ontological naturalism, we cannot in all honesty say that the Twin Towers fell, for the simple reason that there is within the grammar of that philosophy no such things as towers nor people (Baker, 2007). And that means that ontological naturalism is, when you think about it, a more heinous ideology than all the diseases, wars, crimes, and disasters combined, because, in short, it forces us to be Holocaust deniers, for how if matter is all there is, can we discern real difference *between*

*matter thus and now matter so, even if in our folk language that change might be rape, murder, cancer and so on. This is the very liquidation of existence.*

**PH:** At the recent ‘Religion and Naturalism Conference’ at Heythrop College, University of London (12th June 2010) it was not clear to all participants that all types of ontological naturalism need be so physicalist or materialist in their reductionism, I wonder what you think about attempts to offer what we might call an “expanded naturalism” in which there is supposedly some room for “values” and “meaning” or even “human valuing,” but which are not necessarily theistic? Are these worth considering or does the centre not hold in your opinion?

**CC:** Yes, echoing W B Yeats, the centre cannot hold for naturalism. Indeed, the most accurate definition of naturalism is probably that of “hopeful naturalism” – we really just hope there is no God – in fact, rather tellingly, Karl Popper referred to “promissory materialism” (see Popper & Eccles, 1977). But such wishful naturalism really will not get us very far. So there seems to be two choices. On the one hand, we can embrace restrictive naturalism; the nonsense, hard-nosed stance that accepts the limits of naturalistic explanation no matter the consequences,

even if they include incoherence, rabid scepticism, and the undermining of science, which is, in the end, the undermining of naturalism as an intellectual position. On the other hand, we can follow Stroud (2004), who recommends a much more open form of naturalism, but points out that we might just as well call it open-mindedness and therefore drop the otiose, or maybe even distracting, tag of “naturalism,” because in the end, it is just dogma, in the pejorative sense. And I really cannot bring myself to speak about something so vulgar and incoherent as “valuing.” Well, being intemperate, what we should ask here is what the value of valuing is? Such a question reveals that all is reduced to function, and thus devoid of content.

**PH:** The issue of ontological naturalism is of course crucial for trying to sort out the relationships between theology, philosophy, and psychology and for the ways in which psychology goes about its business. There are some people who are engaged in psychology and theology debates who maintain that simply because psychology is methodologically naturalist, it need not succumb to the assumption of ontological naturalism. I am not sure I agree. The Radical Orthodoxy critique of the “implicit atheism” of the social sciences is for me easily extendable to psychology, and challenges this position which basically says “business as usual.” The debate on the relation between faith and secular reason seems to have implications then. Do you agree? Should our critique of “naturalism” be more far reaching than a position which remains methodologically naturalist? If so what might the consequences of rejecting naturalism be for psychology?

**CC:** The problem here is keeping naturalism methodological, because in a certain sense, the methodology implies ontology and vice versa. What needs to be done is a collapse of the divorce between what people say and how people live (Cunningham, 2010). For lives are lived in a manner that is replete with the signs and goods of transcendence, yet they are denied by the fashionable, wilful philosophies espoused. The position that methodological naturalism is laudable though may be naïve. I will return to this in the next question.

**PH:** The fact that you are writing on Darwin suggests that you may have interesting views on evolutionary psychology (EP). There are many psychologists who would have criticisms to make of evolutionary psychology, but from within the discipline of psychology itself. I assume you have criticisms to bring to bear from the outside. Could you sketch out some of these?

**CC:** As far it goes, evolutionary psychology is a good thing, insofar as most of its findings are fully consonant with, for example, Aquinas’ view of human behaviour, especially sex. But the problem

it faces, as do all disciplines when operating outside theology, is that they fall into the temptation of functionalisation (Spaemann, 1985). In other words, in the absence of theology, or a proper metaphysics, the only terms in which much discourse can anchor itself is that of function: religion, society, mental thought, art, literature, and of course ethics. But this leads to absurdity, and indeed nihilism. It does so, quite simply, because that which performs the function is wholly underdetermined, by which we mean, content is impossible. For example, National Socialism or the Decalogue are equal candidates for the provision of social cohesion, identity, and even “ethics,” which is to say, a realist account of ethics is now wholly impossible. But even more disturbingly, if that is possible, all rational, formal thought likewise becomes merely functional, and in so being is epiphenomenal – a mere shadow cast by the hard sides of brute matter, in this case the evolved brain (Stroud, 2004; Plantinga & Tooley, 2008; Fodor, 1998; Nagel, 1986). But this lands us in radical scepticism, both epistemologically speaking and ontologically. The former because we can no longer trust thought, the latter because entities which we took to be real are again only shadows. Here the person is the most notable casualty.

This radical challenge presented by evolutionary psychology runs all the way down, for, as mentioned, it threatens to undermine ethics, formal thought, and free will—not to mention science itself (Stroud, 2004; Fodor, 1998; Nagel, 2003; Ruse, 1986). Crucially though, we must not think that evolution or natural selection is in some sense outside us or is going on somewhere else, like some external force. Rather it is us, to the degree that we are vehicles for genes. And this makes us liars or, more accurately, a lie. We are what Nietzsche called a true-lie: true because we do have a function and a lie because that function is not about us. We are a lie in the sense that we are not what life is about, since life is about the replicator, at least from the perspective of ultra-Darwinism. Consequently, all our actions are tainted. All our thoughts have an underbelly. There, just at the edge of our peripheral vision, we can maybe just catch the briefest of glimpses of our true reflection. Recall all those journalists relaying back their reports from foreign lands via satellite, telling us at home what is happening in the rest of the world. But because of the distance there is a time delay. Likewise, for us, our mental lives suffer an analogous delay, for in their midst lies evolution, and of course, we should ask, “Does that evolution include the thoughts of Charles Darwin?” There is, as it were, a *méconnaissance* between our animal natures and our humanity. Consequently, it seems we are left without any solid reference points or foundations. Now disorientated, man stumbles around the rooms of his own home as if it were someone else’s house. What was once familiar seems strange, odd, even threatening. Sigmund Freud refers to this as the uncanny (this has the double etymology of

*Heimlich*—home-like, familiar—and *Unheimlich*—eerie or strange). In light of this, ultra-Darwinism (and ontological naturalism) leaves us in a world that is no different from brains-in-a-vat or the world portrayed in the movie *The Matrix*. For there, too, truth was subordinated to function. It did not matter that one of the characters knew that the steak they were eating was not real, as it makes no difference. Likewise, ultra-Darwinism need only guarantee function, that of survival, not truth (Fodor, 1998; Ruse, 1986).

The problem being that on its own, a discourse such as evolutionary psychology cannot help but pretend to be a metaphysics, a First Philosophy, as it were (witness universal Darwinism, as espoused by Dawkins). However, any such expansive move is wholly self-defeating. With regard to bare function, which is now the only game in town, all thought is subsumed by the one prime objective: Darwinian fitness.

With regard to this prioritisation of sex, there is a wonderful story told about one of the greatest footballers (soccer, that is) who ever played—the outrageous George Best. Having prematurely ended his career, he is holed up in a posh London hotel with yet another Miss World, and he orders up Champagne after winning £30,000 in the casino. The money is lying all over the bed. A knock comes to the door from room service. Best opens the door, and the waiter peers in, seeing Miss World walking half-naked across the room, the money on the bed, and the Champagne on the tray—the *very dream Darwinian fitness is made from*. The waiter pauses, plucks up the courage, and says to Best, “Do you mind if I ask you a question?” Best replies, “No, go ahead.” “Mr. Best, *Where did it all go wrong?*” Does the waiter, then, live in a world at least partially outside that of ultra-Darwinism—which would rather have us ask, “Where did it all go *right?*” It seems that in the shadow cast by the ultra-Darwinism that underwrites a great deal of EP, Einstein’s famous formula  $E=MC^2$  becomes a roundabout way of getting someone to breed with you (and Einstein was, after all, rather popular with the ladies). As Fodor says, “Have you heard the joke about the lawyer who is offered sex by a beautiful woman?” “Well, I guess so”, he replies, “but what’s in it for me?” (Fodor, 1998). But is this not all a drastic conflation of sex and reproduction? (Bunge, 2003; Berry, 2001).

**PH:** Evolutionary psychology, and their associated *psychologisms*, have to some extent “piggy-backed” on early uses of the concept of “modularity.” This is a concept which is pragmatically and flexibly deployed in *experimental* cognitive neuroscience and neuropsychology where, I should add, it can be practically useful and readily applicable for understanding the brain injured, for example. Perhaps the problem starts when we shift from honest, everyday science and its valid use of a *theoretical construct* such as modularity to scientism

or to philosophies which reify it and find it hard to discern the difference. In this context, Simon Oliver suggested that you may have some thoughts to share on rigid, Fodorian “modularity.” What are these?

**CC:** A major characteristic of modularity is informational insensitivity with regard to information that exists elsewhere in the brain. Put simply, some parts of the brain have information that others do not, and such parts (i.e. modules) are not “interested” in information possessed by other parts of the brain (Fodor, 1983, 1985). Three main theses seem to underwrite modularity. First, there is *nonglobalism*, according to which a function involves some subset of neurons that are small in relation to the rest of the brain. Second, there is *anatomical localization*, whereby the relevant set of neurons appears to reside in an identifiable part of the brain. Third, there is implied in modularity the thesis of *nativism*, based on the work of Noam Chomsky, which holds that some functions are nativistically determined and thus not learned as such. For Fodor there are input systems such as perception, and central systems or cognition. The former are analogous to the blades in a Swiss army knife (think of touch, sight, and so on), whilst the latter do not have any obvious architecture at all, or at least it remains beyond our epistemic reach (probably because it is just too holistic to be identified in any particular sense).

According to Fodor, input systems are *encapsulated*, that is, sealed, so to speak. Thus, there is little or no cross-domain thinking. For example, taste does not encroach on sight. Or consider illusions: that they do not actually alter suggests there is something impenetrable with regard to the module that deals with this type of perception event. For this reason, Fodor calls input systems stupid. For they are so hardwired that they afford little reconsideration or adjustment, as it were, no matter what evidence to the contrary. By contrast, cognition is quite different, being characterized by non-encapsulation, creativity, holism, and the analogical. In relation to evolutionary psychology, modularity suggests that not all is cultural (and if it were, we will see that that would be a very bad thing indeed). Some things are fixed. Thus relativism is a non-starter. And it is good that everything is not plastic because it helps us survive. The fast but dumb systems or modules appear to be content rich, and as we already know, this simply means that they don’t start from scratch since they are function specific—for to be functional in this way requires that a great deal already be in place. An analogy might be the difference between a general body—one that grew the required organ or limb in reaction to certain demands or needs (*besoin*)—as opposed to a body already organized into functional units. And to be honest, we speculate that it is easier to run from a pursuing predator if we already have legs in place, rather than having to grow them. Thus a body with “hardwired” specifications is better than a general body. And so it is also in the case

the mind, which certainly benefits from not simply consisting in general intelligence.

Consider Chomsky's nativism, which helps us understand language acquisition in terms of a content rich module or hardwired disposition (Chomsky, 1972). Chomsky famously argued that children could never learn language the way they do without some sort of native propensity; after all, they only ever hear a limited number of linguistic examples from their parents (a phenomenon called *poverty of stimulus*). Yet they manage to get all that syntax, grammar, etc. correct, doing so rapidly. If nativism is not correct, then we would have to suppose that the children have been taking secret lessons that Ma and Pa just do not know about. Advocates of modularity appeal to something called the *frame problem*. To understand what this means, we need only think of animals trying to avoid being eaten. Now, predator-detection (or the disposition to detect that which will eat you) is coarse-grained and thus leads to *false positives*, that is, false attributions of agency, in this case to predators. But this is a good thing in the case of predator-detection. For example, imagine that two demiurges create two different animals, both of which are herbivores. The first of them is a deer, and it is a rather stupid animal as it tends to think nearly everything is a sign of a predator. So it is perpetually nervous, fleeing at the slightest sound. But even though it gets it wrong more often than not, such behaviour still protects it from its real predator, the tiger on the occasion when there is actually one there. Hence the deer manages to breed. By contrast, the second animal is very intelligent and apt to extensive deliberation, for its cognitive target is much more narrow—in this case an actual tiger, stripes and all. Consequently, when a sound is heard, the animal engages in extended assessment: "Is that really a tiger? And if it is, is it a hungry one? Maybe it is a tiger cub." And so on. The point is that the trigger for actual flight involves the confirmation of a real, hungry tiger. And to be honest, that is usually too late. Or recall the football match in Monty Python played between the philosophers, all of whom take an inordinate amount of time to actually kick the ball because they are too busy thinking about what they should do. Thus the *frame problem*: if thought were purely general, then any particular thought would fail to cohere into a whole, so to speak. Any candidate for a boundary would always invite extension beyond it, or any single thought would, in an almost Hegelian sense, have to contain infinity. Think of a single object, a cup. It rests on a table, which rests on the floor, which rests on the earth beneath, not to mention the sky above, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Crudely put, the buck has to stop somewhere—if, that is, there is to be any thought at all. Or, recalling Monty Python, if the ball is actually going to be kicked.

Maybe somewhat surprisingly, Fodor is actually quite conservative with regard to modularity, in stark contrast with some evolutionary psychologists who

appear less temperate (to say the least), devising wholesale lists of modules, even to the point that there appears to emerge something approaching a module for modules. An example of this profligate modularity (or what Fodor calls "modularity gone mad") is offered in the work of Tooby and Cosmides (1992), who basically have a module for everything - bar Santa Claus, lest we think that is the case.

Indeed, it does seem that at times evolutionary psychologists have a *deus ex machina* in the form of natural selection, and this god bears the same qualities as a C19th Paleyite (mechanical designer) creator (Paley, 2006). Accordingly, it is natural selection (or the adaptations nature has selected) that does the thinking, as it were, whilst we are left to do the doing—one example being the pianist whose performance is impaired when she suddenly becomes aware of her hands (did not Nietzsche say as much about cows?). And of course there is some truth in this, for when we drive our car between two posts, for instance our brain (or part of our brain), and not any mode of explicit deliberation, tends to inform the act (we shall return to the question of invented histories below).

With regard to the massive modularity thesis, it is in fact undermined by the evolutionary psychologists' own cherished analogy—the Swiss army knife—because in this analogy modularity appears to be subordinate to other modes of thinking (Gardner, 1983). And if this is not the case, then there would indeed have to be a module for modules. Crudely speaking, this is somewhat similar to what is known as *the binding problem*: In any particular representation there are many separate representations, raising the question of how these come together to form a single image. Consider, for example, what is involved in our perception of a cup of coffee: There is a plurality of distinctions, yet in spite of this there is a unified perception. Similarly there may be many blades, but the knife seems to unify them. Others argue that the mind is not at all analogous to a Swiss army knife but is rather a general-purpose learning program. There is modularity, but it comes late in the day as a product of development. Moreover, the nature of the developmental environment will help determine what modules do in fact fixate, as it were. It may be a knife, then, but the types of blades it possesses are not set from the start. In addition, while there is domain specification (very generally, parts do have a particular function or role), they nonetheless accommodate flexibility, in other words, knowledge that is represented in a certain domain becomes reused, so that new forms of cross-domain knowledge arise. An analogy might be feathers, for they are supposed to have been used originally for thermo-regulation, but evolution co-opts them for flight. Similarly, a thought native to a specific domain becomes used in some new and exotic way—just as an action hero might adopt an everyday object for use as a weapon (a magazine springs to mind, as seen in a recent movie). The point is that during evolution



areas are redeployed in a different manner, so that there is more cognitive fluidity than the modular model allows.

Another major challenge to strict modularity comes in the *massive redeployment hypothesis*, advocated most notably by Michael Anderson (2007). This does exactly what it says on the tin: modules are reused for completely different tasks. It should be noted, however, that Fodor himself does not think that modularity is an all-or-nothing matter. While a module may well be strictly insensitive to other types of information, for example, it is not necessarily so insensitive to all other information. In addition, he is highly critical of evolutionary psychology (Fodor, 2005).

**PH:** To what extent can we connect your critiques of naturalism with debates on the grace-nature relationship and “participation” (see Smith & Watson, 2007; Milbank, Oliver, Lehmann Imfeld & Hampson, 2012) and then bring the implications to bear back on psychology and the human sciences? (Presumably there is a wider question behind this on the relation between metaphysics and scientific approaches to the person.)

**CC:** The relation between appropriate critiques of naturalism and the grace/nature debate are intrinsically related. Let me explain it this way. I read recently in the paper that Richard Dawkins has funded a children’s summer camp, one that will encourage atheism, and the old campfire song of “Kum-bi-ya my Lord” is to be replaced with John Lennon’s secular hymn “Imagine.” And this brings us to the heart of the matter. In that song, as you will remember, I am sure, we are asked to imagine a world without religion, it is easy if you try, no heaven, above us only sky, and so on. If we would only embrace this rational account of the world, then most of our problems would vanish, all the religious superstition and mumbo jumbo, all that theological guff. And in its place, we would behold a pristine nature, overflowing with self-evident sensibleness.

Not at all, quite the reverse! Indeed, it is here that we can locate the cultural confusion that has bedevilled the debate between science and religion, between the natural and the supernatural. For we have, it seems, articulated this debate in a wholly question begging manner, and I must say that both sides are guilty of the same crime. On the one hand, we have theologians, and religious people, speaking about their faith in manner that leads them to be guilty of what I would term *anonymous atheism*, to corrupt a phrase of Karl Rahner’s (1969). For they have indeed bought into the idea that the supernatural is something discontinuous or unrelated to the natural, it is, in short, something extra, even if, to them, it is something extra special. In a manner reminiscent of Descartes’ division of reality into mind and extended matter -- a division that arguably accommodates the eradication of the former, and the veneration of the

latter -- in other words, the division allows for the eradication of mind. Religious people have bought into the idea that faith is something of a lifestyle choice, like marathon running, or Pilates (or mere individual salvation, understood as a “ticket” that gets us somewhere else, namely, Heaven – a bit like that *very special* holiday we have always been saving for).

And here the new atheist is in complete agreement, religion is indeed something extra, the supernatural is therefore over and above the purely natural, but for them, in the name of economy, Ockham’s razor, if you will—we can just ignore it, setting it adrift, to the point were it becomes irrelevant. For we can indeed imagine its absence, and can get along without it very well, thank you very much—why not, it does not seem to do very much. And it is here that the debate is conducted today, at least in the press, especially the Sunday papers. But this is a false debate, and it is this debate that is irrelevant, and moreover, nonsensical.

John Milbank (2006) once wrote that “once there was no secular,” meaning that the theological affected all areas of life. And in one sense Milbank is absolutely correct, but this is not quite enough. Why? Because there is still no secular realm, and there never will be, at least without begging the question. Let me explain. My waking hours (not to mention my dreams) are filled with the writings of atheist thinkers, philosophers, scientists, and so on, whether it be about evolution, philosophy of mind, ethics, or metaphysics. And one thing is clear in the starkest of terms: Ontological Naturalism is in crisis. And there are two types of reaction to this crisis: celebration and acceptance, or disconcerting alarm. Those that celebrate it, do so because what they have set out to achieve is the banishment of the divine, doing so, no matter what the cost. These fundamentalist atheists will bring the whole house down, so as to leave no room for God. To repeat, they quite frankly are willing to cut their noses off to spite their faces. Whilst those who are alarmed, face up to the crisis in as brave a manner as possible, admitting the shortcomings, yet unsure as what to do, but certainly aware that something is dreadfully wrong.

Let me spell out this crisis, however briefly. The banishment of God, something enabled by the strict opposition of the natural and the supernatural, has come at an enormous cost. We have ended up in world, a supposedly natural world, which is devoid of that which we presume to be natural: people, free will, 1st person language, colour, ethics, organisms, and indeed life itself. Now you may think I am over egging the omelette a little. But here is a taster sample: As one Nobel winning biologist put it: “Biology no longer studies life” (Jacob, 1973). And as a philosopher of science tells us: “if we ask the question when did human life begin? The answer is never” (Ghiselin, 1997). Here are four more philosophers: ‘Could it turn out that no one has ever believed anything.’ (Baker, 1988) “No such thing as

selves exist in the world: Nobody ever was or had a self” (Metzinger, 2003). “Ethics is an illusion fobbed off on us by our genes” (Ruse & Wilson, 1983). “Biological fitness is a function of reproductive advantages rather than a philosophical insight. Thus if we benefit biologically by being deluded about the true nature of formal thought, then so be it. A tendency to objectify is the price of reproductive success” (Ruse, 1986).

Now, Dawkins may just tell us to pull our socks up, stiff upper lip and all that, as we just have to accept *that there is such a thing as just being plain wrong*. Right on! And we have, it seems, been indeed wrong, presuming that people, and so on, exist. But the problem here is that there no longer seems to be any such thing *as being plain right!* As the philosopher Paul Churchland admits, in light of a universalised Darwinism (that is, the idea that Darwinism is applicable outside the realm of biology to the point that, as said, it becomes a First Philosophy), truth is epiphenomenal - like some shadow cast by the solid stone of evolutionary survival (Churchland, 1986). There we are, at Dawkins summer campfire, singing Lennon’s song, but we, with our stiff upper lip, have embraced our situation, and have altered the lyrics: Imagine there’s no people, it’s easy if you try, no free will within us, nor life, or death, ethics, or reason, arts or sciences. Was it not one of Darwin’s most avid supporters, E.O. Wilson, who told us that evolution was the best myth we have (Wilson, 1978). This being the case, prisons become a cultural artefact, an eccentric Holocaust deniers, for reality is merely the agitation of matter (not that matter is any longer a well-principled term), *matter once thus and now so*, for we find it impossible to provide a metaphysics that can notice real difference, consequently, *all wounds become impossible, cancer is removed from the dictionary*, and is no longer to be eradicated, for this is a radicalized democracy, the very flat-lining of reality (Cunningham, 2010). Such notions now only appear in folktales.

So if we were tempted to adopt the vulgar tactics of the new atheists, and pay for slogans to be put on London buses, we could try this one: *There’s no God, so no joy or life*. As I said, there is still no such thing as the secular, by that I mean the secular is an achievement, not a given, it is not just simply there, but is in fact a gift. If we continue to debate in the manner outlined earlier, it is not Heaven that is under threat, but earth, the common sense world, the world of nature, and of the natural, it is the end of Man, not God. We must, therefore, save the natural by reconfiguring the debate, realizing what is at stake - not the afterlife, but the everyday, for the ideological exclusion of the importance of religion is indeed the very beginning of reality’s destruction.

**PH:** I detect Chestertonian rhetorical flourishes here. In this vein, John Milbank mentioned “paradox” as

potentially a more important RO concept than (or at least equally basic as) “participation.” Does this have any resonance with your work?

**CC:** Well, that’s a difficult one, because prioritising one over the other would involve a paradox, no pun intended: paradox is crucial because of participation. For example, according to Aquinas, creation involves what is called a “mixed relation,” which simply means that creation is only a logical relation for God, but for creatures it is a real relation; indeed he tells us that *creation is only a change for us*. But yes, the only way to avoid heresy or the domestication of God or of creation is through paradox, as all other approaches end up creating an idol.

**AR:** Echoing Cyril of Alexandria, Henri de Lubac used to call the Incarnation the supreme paradox, the paradox of paradoxes (de Lubac, 1987). In this sense “paradox” is perhaps a more concrete concept than “participation”: Jesus Christ is himself the paradox. But then, we can immediately add that the paradox of Christ is the content of what we mean by “participation”: in the Incarnation the Logos becomes himself the paradigm and ground of the God-creature relation. So the Christian conception of “participation” will have to be worked out in a way that confirms the paradox of the hypostatic union, where the “mixed relation” of God and creation is exemplified in its most radical form according to the doctrine of *enhypostatos*. According to this doctrine, the human nature of Christ “subsists” wholly in union with God such that the human nature of Jesus cannot have any independent “subsistence” – it “is” insofar and only insofar as it is “one” with the Son of God. In this way, following the French Oratorian Pierre de Bérulle, we can perhaps see that the “nothingness” of Jesus’ human nature apart from its oneness with the Logos precisely unlocks the full reality of creaturely existence: the creature is created *ex nihilo* and is “nothing” apart from God (Bérulle, 1996). Therefore, the “difference” of created life should be thought of as actualised in direct proportion to its communion with God – *maior dissimilitudo* [ever increasing difference] is perfected in *unio* [union]. Or to pick up on what Conor was saying about heaven: the newness of Christ is not an “absolute” or “discrete” newness, but the newness of the truth of creation itself. The newness of Christ does not point “elsewhere,” it points to the hidden root of created being, to the absolute “before” which is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world. Heaven is not an “elsewhere,” heaven is that dimension of creation where the soil of created reality touches and is in perfect communion with the Father himself. This pattern of paradox is one way of thinking the concrete mode of creaturely participation – our creaturely “difference” from God is realised in perfect “oneness” with him, a “oneness” that is always already the ground of being as such. Being is *communio*.

## Christology

**PH:** At this point we have neatly moved to Christology. Aaron, you have just completed a Ph.D. on this and its possible connections with secular accounts of the person. What are its aims and main themes?

**AR:** Yes, my Ph.D. was an attempt to articulate a “Christological humanism.” I wanted to explore what kind of conception of the human person is tenable in light of the grammar of orthodox Christology, which claims that Christ is *verus Deus et verus homo* [true God and true man]. What does it mean to claim that Christ is the true human? This question, as I understand it, lies at the heart of Christology from its origin: what is disclosed in Jesus Christ is utterly unique; nevertheless, what is revealed in him is not for us a mere speculative exception but the revelation of the mystery of what it means to be truly human.

I took a significant cue in my research from the contemporary French Jesuit theologian, Édouard Glotin, who has suggested that in the early development of Christological doctrine, from the first Council of Nicaea in 325, the primary impulse of investigation concerned the status of “true divinity” revealed in Christ. But then, from the Third Council of Constantinople in 680-81, more and more theological reflection began to focus on the “true humanity” revealed in the divine person of the Son (Glotin, 2007). The dyotheletism of the Council of Constantinople allowed for a new focus on the *synergism* of divinity and humanity in Christ, as the Council Fathers proposed that in Christ salvation was divinely willed *through* a human will. A millennium and a half later, this new doctrinal focus made possible the Conciliar articulation of *Gaudium et spes*, paragraph 22 – paraphrased from Henri de Lubac’s *Catholicisme* (McPartlan, 1992), beloved of Pope John Paul II and offered by the last two popes as the hermeneutical key to the whole of the Second Vatican Council. The text states: “Christ ... in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to himself and brings to light his most high calling.”

On one level the intention of my thesis has everything to do with beginning to formulate a Christian response to secular accounts of the human person, even while this is not directly my topic nor is it explicitly explored in the thesis itself.

Robert Spaemann (2007) has noted how, since Boethius, the term “person” served always as a *nomen dignitatis* [a dignified name], deployed to signify the inalienable dignity of the human creature. In the last century, however, the function of the term “person” was reversed – coming now to play a key role in overturning the idea that every human being has a necessary dignity and therefore inalienable “rights” before other human beings. The contemporary argument is that not all human beings are “persons,” and those “humans” who are not “persons” – the severely disabled, the elderly who suffer from acute

forms of dementia, fetuses and embryos, etc. – are not to be granted the “rights” of the dignity afforded to other human creatures.

Within this contemporary erosion of the inalienable dignity of all human beings, I wrote and researched with an eye to resourcing the dogmatic foundations of a polemic against the self-sufficing humanism of liberal bourgeois culture, which tends to underwrite precisely this erosion of the universal dignity of all humans and so tends to negate the “human” as a meaningful category of social and political discourse. At the beginning of the third millennium, in the realms of philosophy, science, law, and politics, we are witnessing an unprecedented negation of the human as such. In its most acute form, this is happening where liberal biopolitics and capitalist bioethics converge. In the realm of biopolitics, as Giorgio Agamben (1998, 2005) has shown, a renewed logic of *homo sacer* [the sacred human] has come to play an increasingly normative role, especially in the practice of erasing or bypassing the legal status of certain individuals, classifying them unclassifiably as “enemy combatants,” individuals to whom the legal norms of the Geneva Convention or Miranda rights can be suspended at will.

In the realm of bioethics, likewise, the dignity of the human creature is being called into question, governed now by an ideology that, on the one hand, unquestioningly subjects human life to the pure decisionism of a supposedly inalienable “human right,” while on the other hand objectifying certain forms of human life in the service of a neo-eugenicist project of “scientific necessity” that purports to operate in the name of “human progress.” In all events, the dignity of the human person is called into question in the name of humanity itself. And so, in the name of humanity, “humanism” becomes impossible.

The condition of this “post-humanist” crisis is, I think, the internal logic of “secular humanism,” of trying to configure “humanism” in purely immanent terms. This was already apprehended by Pope John Paul II and expressed his address to scholars at Lublin University in 1987:

The reduction inherent in the Enlightenment view of man, of “man in the world”, to the dimensions of an absolute immanence of man in relation to the world, ushers in not only Nietzsche’s issue of the death of God, but the prospect of the death of man who in such a materialistic vision of reality does not in the final eschatological sense have any possibilities other than those objects of the visible order. (Rowland, 2003, p. 39).

Secular humanism is not “humanism” at all. Freed from transcendent guidance, the Kantian autonomy of “enlightened man” leads to the Nietzschean proclamation of the “death of God,” which was always already the fulfilment of Michel Foucault’s

(2002) prophecy, that “man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea” (p. 422).

Far from confounding the tradition of Catholic humanism, this “post-human” situation confirms it: the “modern” conception of the human – materialistically confined to an autonomous, self-enclosed immanence – conditions, not humanism, but the end of humanism. As de Lubac (1995) put it in *Le Drame de l’Humanisme Athée*: “It is not true, as is sometimes said, that man cannot organize the world without God. What is true is that, without God, he can only organize it against man” (p. 14). Secular humanism arrives unwittingly at the same position as Catholicism: there is no “pure” humanism. The choice was always “post-human”: either the “death of man” or the God-Man.

**PH:** One thing which strikes me about Christological compared with psychological accounts are that the former deal with the “scandal of particularity” the uniqueness of Christ, whereas, a lot of the time (but not always) psychological accounts are normative. Do you have any comments on this? Is the relationship between the two always likely to be problematic?

**CC:** Well, this is not quite true, because the particular is in fact the possibility of the normative, it is, in other words, the truly normative, and it is for a very simple reason, already touched upon above. Any normativity that psychology might attain cannot resist functionalisation, and this means that any instance of such normativity, say, “Jim” is easily replaceable by, say, “Susan.” In contrast, the particularity of the Christ makes normativity possible because it underwrites, and thus makes possible analogical thinking, and thus resists reductionism, and therefore nihilism (Cunningham, 2002, 2010).

**PH:** If Christ is truly God and truly human and held up as a pattern or example for us, what does this suggest about a) any account of the human which neglects the spiritual or theological and b) the (ultimate/ eschatological?) perfectibility of human nature?

**CC:** Spiritual is a bad word, because misleading; again, it sets the natural over and against the supernatural, so-called. In short, there is no such thing as a person without theology, and this is not a religious view as such, one need only survey the conclusions of Western thought in the last century to see the pervasive and wholesale annihilation of the person, whether in philosophy (both Continental and analytic), science, or sociology, and arguably psychology.

**AR:** I fully agree with Conor here, but I would say that the word “spiritual” is only bad to the extent that it is misconstrued in a way that does not correlate with its paleo-Christian meaning. To understand the spiritual correctly, I think, is to understand

it in terms of the *pneumatic* principle of St Paul’s anthropological trichotomy of “spirit,” “soul,” and “body” (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:23). Here the “spiritual life” is the ecclesial life of communion, the life of the Resurrected Christ described concretely by Paul in Romans 8, where he writes of the Spirit interceding with our spirit with sighs too deep for words, crying “Abba! Father!” on our behalf. The spiritual life of our adoptive filiation is the Christoform deification of our humanity “caught up” through the synergism of our spirit with the Holy Spirit into the life of the Son’s pure relativity of being in relation to the Father. For Paul, this life is irreducible to either the “body” or the “soul” or to any juxtapositioning of immanent and transcendent, material and non-material, natural and supernatural. *Pneuma* is the deep secret of the human mystery realised in the crucified and risen Son: “if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit which dwells in you” (Romans 8:11). Here the spiritual life can be thought of as the supreme activation of a quasi “created/uncreated” principle of integral communication of spirit and Spirit, where nature/matter is made perfectly porous to the supernatural life of God. And I think this is what de Lubac was getting at when he said that *pneuma* is simply the paradox of the human creature: *desiderium naturale visionis dei* [the natural desire to see God]. And so in the conclusion to *Surnaturel*, de Lubac (1946) describes the spiritual life, not as an occupation of the creature with an “other worldly” reality, but rather the liberation of the most intimate desire of the creature on the one hand, now purged through the radical transformation of *metanoia* on the other (p. 483).

In terms of the second part of this question, it relates for me to the possibility or impossibility of *duplex hominis beatitudo* [man’s happiness is twofold] – or, the status of Aquinas’s claim that the human being has a twofold end. Of course RO rejects categorically the Suárezian reading of *duplex hominis beatitudo* as an ontological *duplex ordo* [a twofold order] – a paralleling of two discretely perfect ends, one governed by *debitum naturae* [the debt of nature], the other realised as an extrinsic *donum perfectum* [perfect gift]. But if RO rejects this parallelism, it does so precisely in a manner that refuses every trace of “monism” that would confuse the two ends by collapsing them one into the other. The eminent Russian Orthodox patrologist John Meyendorff, for example, used to say that deification was not a supernatural gift, but rather the core of human nature (Meyendorff, 1975, p. 11). I would want to both agree *and* disagree with Meyendorff: the deification of the creature in the bliss of vision of God *is* a supernatural gift, while at the same time it is *also* the heart of the human vocation. On my view, the two ends must be integrally related without confusion and without separation – the hermeneutic again is Christological.

If the new creation in Christ cannot rely on any prior created “ground,” if it does not “build” on creation (de Lubac, 1949, pp. 104-105), then the incarnation is the analeptic condition of the possibility of creation as such. Christ fulfils for the first time every longing of nature and the vocation of the human creature so that in Him human nature is explained and never the inverse. But if grace explains nature and not otherwise, grace explains precisely the deep truth of nature – *interior intimo meo* [more intimate to me than I am to myself]. The “supernatural” is therefore supra-intimate, it is the supra-immanence of the world itself – or, as Nicholas Healy (2008) puts it, it is the “nature of nature.” The supernatural is the secret truth of nature which nature cannot disclose, which nature itself does not even possess. The movement of natural being toward the supernatural therefore requires a radically ecstatic movement, a patient waiting that is a receptivity (in a Marian sense) of being in non-contrastive relation to God. In this way is accomplished the *unio* [union] of *maior dissimilitudo* [ever increasing difference], which alone fulfils the longing of the human heart and alone accomplishes the human vocation. With this in mind, we can approach the twofold end of the human creature in a manner that is neither monistic nor dualistic: for the human creature there is *one perfect end*, which is nevertheless twofold. How so?

In this regard I can only reiterate what de Lubac argued in this 1948 article on the *duplex hominis beatitudo*, published in *Recherches de science religieuse*. There de Lubac showed how the doctrine of *duplex hominis beatitudo* in Aquinas articulates the difference between (1) the imperfect beatitude of human nature within the purview of its “contemplation of divine things,” and (2) the perfect beatitude of human nature according to the vision of God himself through grace in the *lumen gloriae* [light of glory]. *Duplex hominis beatitudo* specifies the distinction of the happiness of the *viator* [traveller] and that of the *comprehensor* [one who understands or has attained full knowledge]. On the one hand, we have a beatitude by participation, a contemplative anticipation of the *visio divina* [divine vision]; on the other hand, we have the *ultimum* [end], the perfection of the second gift of grace in the divinising vision of God himself. One beatitude has clear ontological priority and is the prime analogate that gifts itself (in diminished intensity) as the sufficient ground of the other, which, in turn, anticipates and “is” insofar as it is toward the *ultimum* (in a quasi-*enhyposstatic* fashion, if we can use that language in this context). Just as *sacra doctrina* [sacred doctrine - includes Scripture but not only Scripture, PH] is a speculative participation in the beatific vision, so the happiness of the *viator* is likewise a speculative anticipation of the gift of the beatific vision of the *comprehensor*. The *duplex hominis beatitudo* is “one” – *indivisibile, inseparabiliter* [indivisible and inseparable].

**PH:** As I said earlier, “participation” and “paradox”

not surprisingly cropped up in my discussions with Simon Oliver and John Milbank (Milbank, Oliver, Lehmann Imfeld & Hampson, 2012). I am gathering here that both of these are relevant for any attempts to relate Christology and secular accounts of the person, but can you sketch out a little more in what way paradox is?

**CC:** The person is ultimately a paradox because the person is not empirically verifiable, yet it is the very possibility of all and any acts of verification. You cannot, in other words, locate a person. And here we see the strange fundamentalism, and crudity of much modern, scientific thought so often beholden to a strange Cartesianism. Cut the skull open and we do not find a soul, ergo there is no soul. But all we need do is ask how this is falsifiable? Say we find a “soul” inside the skull, but then we need to cut its skull open, so to speak, and of course an infinite regress of absurdity gets on its merry way. The point being that such modern thinking is absurdly Gnostic, for the big revelation, the main accusation is “ah ha” you are material – pointing to our organs, as if that actually meant anything interesting. This being the case, the ultra-Darwinist, or indeed the modern materialist or ontological naturalist resembles the fundamentalist who goes to Bible college, only to discover that Moses may not indeed have been the author of Exodus (which should not come as that much of a shock, since it contains an account of his death!) and subsequently loses faith. But he remains a fundamentalist by default, insofar as he has not thought to question the original model of truth that governs his approach to existence. For example, because he cannot find people in a pure, objectified mode, he presumes, as a behaviourist would, a merely symbolic reality - think of Walter Gilbert’s comments about being able to carry a person on a CD in his back pocket (Gilbert, 1992). In other words, the person, or the person’s reality, is not real. Instead, when we witness consciousness, pain, etc., there is no real presence as such—this then is their Zwinglian metaphysics; in other words, the reality of evolution, the reality of that which appears in evolution, and thus the reality of our lives is forbidden true existence, it being merely symbolic, as it is subjected, once more, to a functional logic.

In precise terms, we cannot, on pain of crass dualism or matter-hating Gnosticism, locate mere matter. In other words, the swamp cannot be found, at least not innocently. We cannot find mere matter for, as we know, to do so is to presume its opposite. God asks in Genesis: “Who told you that you were naked?” (3:11). Usefully, we can we translate this question as: “Who told you that you were merely matter?—or that matter was mere?” To argue, then, that man is merely animal because he is continuous with animals is to employ a logic that presumes mind to be *res cogitans* [a thinking thing]. Indeed, to approach matter or animality in this way is strictly pre-Darwinian, and in terms of Christianity, heretical (Cunningham, 2010).

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**2013 Baylor Symposium on Faith and Culture**  
**Kierkegaard: A Christian Thinker for Our Time?**  
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The year 2013 will mark the 200th anniversary of Søren Kierkegaard's birth. This seminal figure in Western thought wrote some definitive essays in Christian psychology and called himself a Christian psychologist, before Freud was born. He is therefore considered the father of Christian psychology. The Society for Christian Psychology will be joining Baylor University to celebrate this event and will have their own set of papers where Kierkegaard's contributions to psychology will be explored.

**Keynote Speakers:**

**Simon Podmore**

He is currently a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Theology, Philosophy, and Religious Studies at Liverpool Hope University. Next year he will be Lecturer in Systematic Theology there. He received an M.A. in Theological Studies from the University of St. Andrews, and a PhD from King's College, University of London. In *Kierkegaard and the Self Before God: Anatomy of the Abyss* (Indiana University Press, 2011) he explores the difficult relationship between consciousness of self and consciousness of God with reference to the problem of the "infinite qualitative difference" between the human and the divine. He is drawn to the darker, and hence often under-examined, aspects of theology and their relationships with issues in philosophy, spirituality, and mental health. He is currently working on *Struggling with God: Kierkegaard, Temptation, & Spiritual Trial*. Dr. Podmore is also the Secretary of the Søren Kierkegaard Society of the United Kingdom, and the co-founder of the Mystical Theological Network.

**Mark Tietjen**

Mark A. Tietjen is associate professor of philosophy and religion at the University of West Georgia and secretary-treasurer of the Søren Kierkegaard Society. He holds an M.Div and Th.M from Princeton Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. in philosophy from Baylor University. He is the author of *Kierkegaard, Communication, and Virtue: Authorship as Edification* (Indiana University Press, due out in spring, 2013). His articles have appeared in such journals and books as *Faith and Philosophy*, *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, the *International Kierkegaard Commentary* series, and *Southwest Philosophical Review*. His specialization is Søren Kierkegaard and, in particular, his relation to the classical virtue tradition. He has also begun interdisciplinary work on the concept of authority and the virtues that accompany authority relationships. He has been a summer fellow at the Hong Kierkegaard Library at St. Olaf College and participated in the Templeton-sponsored Science for Ministry initiative at Princeton Seminary.

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**Call for Papers**

If you are interested in presenting a paper on some aspect of Søren Kierkegaard's Christian psychology at this conference, please submit a proposal of no more than 250 words, along with a copy of your vitae, on the SCP website—[www.Christianpsych.org](http://www.Christianpsych.org)—by April 1, 2013.