

## Human Being as Primary Analogate of Being: Reflections on Blanchette's "Key to Metaphysical Science"

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*Professor Blanchette proposes taking human being as the primary analogate for metaphysics. I would modify this by taking, as primary analogate, the pattern of operations by which human persons are related to the totality of being. In this way the primary analogate in metaphysics is sublated in what theology names the imago Dei, and forms the basis for analogically conceiving God as an infinite act of understanding love, and the Trinitarian processions as the immanent terms of those operations. The continuity between metaphysical and theological inquiry is thus secured not only by a shared analogical procedure but also by a common analogate.*

...All things whate'er they be  
Have order among themselves, and this is form,  
That makes the universe resemble God.  
Here do the higher creatures see the footprints  
Of the Eternal Power, which is the end  
Whereto is made the law already mentioned.  
In the order that I speak of are inclined  
All natures, by their destinies diverse,  
More or less near unto their origin;  
Hence they move onward unto ports diverse  
O'er the great sea of being...  
(Dante, *Paradiso*, I)<sup>1</sup>

It is as obvious from his life as from his publications that Prof. Blanchette is a lover of wisdom in the best and truest sense. He has been creatively engaged with the most important questions of philosophical and theological inquiry from the beginning of his intellectual work. It should go without saying that it is a tremendous honor for me to be invited to respond to his magisterial paper, especially among many more learned colleagues.

This colloquium was established in part as a response to the Holy Father's call for theologians to "recover and express to the full the metaphysical dimension of truth" (*Fides et Ratio* §105). No serious inquiry into the right way of living can long avoid raising metaphysical questions. Classical philosophy began in pursuit of rightly ordered living and became of necessity a quest for what Pierre Hadot characterizes as "nothing more than the vision of things as they are, the vision of the cosmos as it is in the light of reason, and... nothing more than the

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<sup>1</sup> Trans. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

mode of being and living that should correspond to this vision.”<sup>2</sup> From the beginning, Christianity has always brought a particularly keen focus to bear on this question by insisting on the truth and not only the pragmatic worth of its profession of faith.<sup>3</sup> Ancient Christian thinkers understood their reflection on the true meaning of the Gospel, not as *theologia*, religious myth-making (in the pejorative sense), but as *philosophia*, the love of wisdom.<sup>4</sup> This is because they shared with the best of the classical tradition the conviction that truth is the norm of intelligence. Thus the enterprise of Catholic theology has (with some notable exceptions) ever understood itself as somehow prolonging and deepening what is best and truest in *philosophia* as a quest for the right way to live in accordance with the ordered totality of being. This is a question that Prof. Blanchette has occupied himself with in the most serious way, as his study *The Perfection of the Universe According to Aquinas* bears out.<sup>5</sup>

It is in some such vein that I was asked to make a specifically theological contribution to this conversation. I understand my responsibility to include suggesting some ways in which metaphysical wisdom opens out onto a theological vision of the whole. In order to do so, however, it is also necessary to make some philosophical clarifications. I would like to take as my point of departure Prof. Blanchette’s conception of the human being as the ‘primary analogate’—the methodological focal point—for disengaging the properties and structure of being, and formulating a set of general expectations about the ordered totality of being.<sup>6</sup> This move is potentially very rich for theology because of its consonance with a deep and fruitful tradition in theology which sees the human being, precisely in its constitution as a material and spiritual composite, as a microcosm reflecting the constitution of the created universe.

## I.

The previous Metaphysics Colloquium was the occasion for a vigorous debate on the possibility, method, and implications of an analogical approach to being.<sup>7</sup> On the whole, Prof. Blanchette offers an approach to this complex of questions that is rooted in the progressive and cumulative achievements of the tradition extending from Aristotle through Thomas Aquinas, and

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<sup>2</sup> Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. A. Davidson, trans. M. Chase (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 58.

<sup>3</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, “The Origins of Christian Realism,” in *A Second Collection*, ed. W. Ryan and B. Tyrrell (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 239-61.

<sup>4</sup> See Robin Darling Young, “*Theologia* in the Early Church,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 24 (1997): 681-90; and John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* §77.

<sup>5</sup> University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> On the role of the primary analogate in the development of metaphysical science, see, in addition to Prof. Blanchette’s contribution to the present colloquium, his recent *Philosophy of Being: A Reconstructive Essay in Metaphysics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University, 2003), 115-144.

<sup>7</sup> See Donald Keefe, “Creation as Existential Contingency,” *Saint Anselm Journal* 1.1 (2003) 32-64; Earl Muller, “Creation as Existential Contingency: A Response,” *ibid.*, 65-78; and Roger Duncan, “A Philosophical Response to Donald Keefe’s *Creation as Existential Contingency*,” *ibid.*, 79-87.

rooted in a soundly conceived method that respects the autonomy of philosophical inquiry.<sup>8</sup> In his present paper, and at a more leisurely pace in his recent monograph,<sup>9</sup> Prof. Blanchette offers a persuasive rendition of the reasons why metaphysical inquiry requires an analogical conception of being. As he puts it here, “the analogy of being... is the only way of understanding how being simply as being can be the subject of a scientific inquiry in the proper sense of the term” (6). This is because only an analogical conception can bring the diverse kinds of existence and occurrence under a single heuristic framework.<sup>10</sup> In other words, analogy is the key to the unity of metaphysical inquiry. It provides a way of “speaking about being in terms that are at once universal and concrete” and relating univocal terms “according to some order among them” (10). But an inquiry into being which proceeds by way of analogy—by way, that is, of investigating the analogical order obtaining among the totality of “univocal terms that express real differences in being” (10)—requires, if it is to be methodical, a primary analogate in the order of analogates, which “is at the center of the analogical order and gives it focal meaning” (11). The ordered totality of being, apart from which there is nothing (8), is interpreted in light of the primary analogate.

The centrality of the primary analogate to the analogical order is not so much ontological as intentional, for clearly, from an ontological perspective, the divine perfections, which are participated in myriad ways by contingent beings, stand at the center of the analogical order.<sup>11</sup> But in the order by which we come to know things, the divine perfections are not first but last; and what is at stake for Prof. Blanchette is rather the most appropriate and fruitful procedure for developing metaphysical science. In developing our understanding we have to start from realities which are proportionately known by us (18-28). But since being “does not present itself in experience according to some abstract lowest common denominator,” but rather “according to an order of higher and lower kinds... intelligible to us by the analogy among them” (15), the most fruitful way to unfold a science of metaphysics will be to start from the highest form of being proportionately known by us, which is also the form of being “we know first and ... best in our experience” (18).

Accordingly, in contrast to what he calls “non-reductionist physicalism,” which wants to take the basic entities and processes of theoretical physics as the prime analogate for metaphysical science, Prof. Blanchette proposes the human person as the primary analogate for metaphysical science.<sup>12</sup> In the present paper he devotes some ten pages to spelling out his procedure (18-28), which involves unfolding the transcendental properties of being as they are grasped in the primary analogate:

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<sup>8</sup> On the autonomy which theology must accord philosophy, see John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* §§45, 48, 49, 67, 75, 85, 106, 108.

<sup>9</sup> See *Philosophy of Being*, 3-144, esp. 115-130 which parallels sections of his present paper.

<sup>10</sup> See *Philosophy of Being*, 144.

<sup>11</sup> See *Philosophy of Being*, 528-533.

<sup>12</sup> See *Philosophy of Being*, 13-39.

Even if we take a human being, a particular kind of being, as our primary analogate, there is a lot that we can say is *per se* known about being simply as being in its analogical or transcendental sense, namely, what are referred to as the transcendental properties of being, without denying the radical differences of being we find in experience. We can speak of being as one, active, true and good as a further elaboration of what goes with being *per se* or as properties that are convertible with being in all the degrees of being that we may find in experience (18).

As an example of what he means, he speaks of “the experience or the dialectic of mutual recognition among selves,” which can only occur because the two parties understand themselves to be one in their respective identities, “at the same time as in relation to one another” (20). In other words, the primary analogate is a complex unity in relation, and other unities are conceived analogously. Professor Blanchette suggests that “the analogy of being ... first discloses itself to human beings, our primary analogate of being, in mutual recognition of one another both as being and as different from one another” (39). In this mutual recognition of oneself along with another self, the human being as a whole comes into focus as “the being we know best” and also the highest form of being proportionate to our intelligence.<sup>13</sup>

Although there are doubtless points at which one might quibble, it remains that Prof. Blanchette's is a pregnant strategy for developing metaphysics. It unfolds by extrapolating from this discovery of oneself as a unity in relation to other selves. "If we think of the primary analogate as having a certain perfection, we shall have to understand all the other analogates as having the same perfection according to different degrees, some closer to the first and some more distant from the first" (16). This obviously does not mean that we have to conceive every contingent being as enjoying the perfections of intellect, or will, or sense, or life, in varying degrees. Rather, what is required is disengaging precisely those properties which are transcendental.<sup>14</sup>

In his monograph, Prof. Blanchette argues that the isomorphic structure of knowing and known on which Bernard Lonergan had famously erected his metaphysics<sup>15</sup> needs to be complemented by verifying an isomorphism “between knowing as the proper activity of human being and the same human being as *knower*.”<sup>16</sup> In fact, for Prof. Blanchette, the requisite verification can be obtained by reflecting on our volitional as well as our cognitional operations, for in either case there comes to light a distinction between the concrete determination of the power of the soul and its openness, in principle, to the whole range of being, thus yielding a “parallel distinction between the material principle of movement and individuation in our

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<sup>13</sup> *Philosophy of Being*, 137; see 135-139.

<sup>14</sup> See *Philosophy of Being*, 147-155.

<sup>15</sup> See Bernard Lonergan, *Insight*, Collected Works 3, ed. F. Crowe and R. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1992), 483-87.

<sup>16</sup> *Philosophy of Being*, 315 (original emphasis).

substance and its substantial form.”<sup>17</sup> This further step is necessary, he maintains, if the heuristic structure of being is to be more than “a *dogmatic rationalist leap* from the structure of knowing to the structure of the known. Taken in this [i.e., Lonergan’s] sense, the so-called transcendental method does not yield a knowledge of the structure of being itself, but only of knowing, as Kant understood very well.”<sup>18</sup> The “dogmatic rationalist leap” Prof. Blanchette declines to make is reminiscent of the rather more stringent terms in which a permutation of the same criticism of Fr. Lonergan was once formulated by William Richardson: “...when one begins the discussion of being by simply declaring that it is the ‘objective of the pure desire to know’, it does not take a very subtle analysis to infer that being is intelligible.”<sup>19</sup>

Fr. Richardson’s variation on the theme is in fact the clue to the difficulty that he, Prof. Blanchette, and Kant all seem to share (though in saying so I would not wish to elide the very basic differences between their projects<sup>20</sup>). This is because the affirmation that ‘being’ is the objective of the pure desire to know, and *not* the object of any kind of intuition whatsoever, is a matter, not of simple declaration, but rather of the thematization of actual cognitive performance. It is thus the fruit of a very sustained self-attention by which one discovers that whatever other meaning one wishes to assign to ‘being’ (or ‘is’), as a matter of cognitional fact it has and can have no other operational meaning than ‘to-be-known.’ This means the structure of ‘being’ is simply isomorphic to the structure of the mind as *potens omnia fieri*; as a first approximation, we may say that ‘being’ designates what the mind may become, intelligible possibility.<sup>21</sup>

Now, while Professor Blanchette is admirably aware of some important implications of the principle of knowledge by identity to which I advert,<sup>22</sup> nevertheless it seems that the full implications of this for the heuristic meaning of ‘being’ have been overlooked. For Kant, the activities of *Denken* refer to reality through sensible intuition.<sup>23</sup> Professor Blanchette recognizes the critical role played by the twofold operation of the mind in understanding and judging, and rightly insists—against Kant—that there is no primordial dichotomy of knower and known, that knowing reality is not a matter of constructing a bridge. All of this is excellent. Nevertheless, he seems *effectively* to assign the immediate intention of being, not to questions, but to a “sense of being,” a “sense intuition,” which refers to the “real world of experience.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 316.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 315 (emphasis added).

<sup>19</sup> William Richardson, “Being for Lonergan: a Heideggerian view,” in *Language, Truth, and Meaning. Papers from The International Lonergan Congress 1970*, ed. P. McShane (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1972), 272-83, at 277.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Prof. Blanchette’s important criticisms of Kant’s essentialism: *Philosophy of Being*, 22-25.

<sup>21</sup> Economy requires me to leave in abeyance the epistemological issues this raises.

<sup>22</sup> See *Philosophy of Being*, 26-32.

<sup>23</sup> See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (NY: St. Martin’s, 1965), Transcendental Aesthetic §1 (pp. 65-67).

<sup>24</sup> *Philosophy of Being*, 66-80; the quoted phrases are from 70, 69, and 68, respectively. In this connection we might also query Prof. Blanchette’s regular contrast of ‘a priori’ with ‘a posteriori.’ Typically, ‘a priori’ is associated in his usage with what is ‘per se’ known. Kant defines ‘a priori’ and ‘a posteriori’ in terms of what is known absolutely

I would certainly not wish to be apodictic, but it seems to me that, as ingenious as his argument for the isomorphism of knowing and knower is, in the final analysis Prof. Blanchette has lost sight of the fact that ‘to-be’ is a heuristic notion specifying the to-be-known correlative to the mind as *potens omnia fieri*. Being is what is apprehended through the structured operations of the mind verifying intelligible possibility in data; it is the structured content of those operations. But why, Prof. Blanchette wonders, should the ontological structure of the object necessarily correspond to the structure of the operations by which it comes to be known? Why should the transcendental reflection on the structure of knowing—a reflection which Prof. Blanchette himself has engaged<sup>25</sup>—yield not just a knowledge of the structure of knowing but also a knowledge of the structure of the known? The reason is that the only transcendental meaning of ‘being’ available to us is heuristic: it is the to-be-known through the structured ‘becoming’ of the mind. As there is no other performative meaning of ‘being’, so there is no other structure of proportionate being than the structured pattern of operations by which the knowing mind becomes intentionally *identical* to being. The proportion of these operations is thus the primary analogate for a metaphysical analysis of the components of being. This is also the reason why metaphysical science is essentially heuristic: it investigates the structure but not the particular content of the ordered totality of being because it is a thematization of cognitive performance, of the mind as *potens omnia fieri*.

This proposal means pursuing Prof. Blanchette’s project in a rather different direction from the one he takes. I conceive the fundamental argument of metaphysics along the following lines: metaphysics is a heuristic structure of the to-be-known (‘being’); coming to know is a matter of the mind intentionally coming to *be* the known; consequently the basic terms and relations of the to-be-known will be isomorphic to the basic terms and relations of the ‘coming to be’ of the mind. The heuristic character of metaphysics requires that the basic terms and relations of metaphysical science be drawn from the intentional operations of the knower which alone specify—operatively—the heuristic meaning of ‘to be.’ Thus in a sense we might say that the primary analogate in the metaphysical order is drawn from the intentional operations of the knower. Experience, understanding, judgment are the primary analogate for potency, form, and act; the finality of this cognitional process is the primary analogate for finality generally; and so forth. Another way to put this might be to say that the human being is the primary analogate, precisely as subject of the ordered pattern of operations in and through which the universe becomes known to us; as, in Prof. Blanchette’s words, “a being in communication with other

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apart from experience and what is known through experience (KRV B 3). Prof. Blanchette seems to use them this way too (see, e.g., *Philosophy of Being*, 67). But the more usual distinction in St Thomas is between what is naturally known and what is known by acquisition. It is this distinction which is at stake for St. Thomas in articulating the notion of being and nonbeing, and while it is naturally known—not inferred from data but spontaneously evident in the operation of the mind—the principle of non-contradiction still comes to light through experience (See *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.83 §§29-30). Prof. Blanchette is not unaware of the difference between Kant’s meaning and that of St. Thomas, but I would find it helpful if he were to clarify what significance, if any, he ascribes to this difference, and whether it might have any bearing on his project.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 43-85.

beings through a twofold power of intelligence and appetite” (26). The difference from Prof. Blanchette’s execution of this project lies precisely in overcoming the tendency to suppose an ‘intuitive sense’ of being and recognizing instead that the one and only notion of ‘being’ which can be disengaged from our actual cognitive performance is the ‘to-be-known’ isomorphic to the intentional operations through which it comes to be known. Although the case cannot be made here, I think this is what is suggested by Thomas Aquinas’s treatment of the transcendentals ‘true’ and ‘good’ in the first question of *De veritate*, to which Prof. Blanchette refers, and in numerous other places where the Angelic Doctor correlates essence with the first operation of the mind (grasping the intelligibility in the data), ‘esse’ with the second operation of rational judgment, and the good as the object of rational willing.<sup>26</sup>

## II.

So far I have been making essentially a philosophical point about the way in which human being—the human person—can be taken as the primary analogate for metaphysical science, in a way which respects the proper autonomy of philosophical inquiry. I would like to spell out some implications of this position I see as important for theology.

As I noted at the outset, there is a long tradition in theology (not without philosophical precursors) of conceiving the constitution of the human being—incarnate spirit—as a microcosm reflecting the constitution of the contingent universe, and a mediator engaged in reconciling the material and the spiritual.<sup>27</sup> Professor Blanchette’s proposal for a metaphysical science which takes its stand on the discovery of the human person as a unity in relation has obvious resonances with this tradition insofar as the transcendental properties of being are worked out from the constitutive elements of human being. In this sense for Prof. Blanchette, too, the human being is fundamentally a microcosm, which is precisely why human being can be the primary analogate of being. Moreover, insofar as the human person is oriented and related to the whole of being through intellect and will, as Prof. Blanchette also emphasizes, the human being is also a mediator in whose knowing and loving the cosmos is brought into a kind of unity.

Undoubtedly the way Prof. Blanchette concretely implements his project in metaphysics—keeping in mind, as he does, the problems inherent in “non-reductionist physicalism”—is more than incidentally related to Thomas Aquinas’s interpretation of the human being, as a composite being, standing as a horizon and limit (*horizon et confinium*) of

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<sup>26</sup> Substantial data for following up on this suggestion are collected by Frederick Crowe, “St. Thomas and the Isomorphism of Human Knowing and Its Proper Object,” in *Three Thomist Studies*, ed. Michael Vertin (Boston: Lonergan Workshop, 2000), 205-235.

<sup>27</sup> A notable retrieval of this theme is Lars Thunberg, *Microcosm and Mediator: The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor* (Chicago: Open Court, 1995). On the theme in St. Thomas Aquinas, see M. F. Manzanedo, “El hombre como ‘Microcosmos’ según santo Tomás,” *Angelicum* 56 (1979) 62-92. Cognately, in *The Perfection of the Universe*, Prof. Blanchette shows how the order of human agency “plays a central role in St. Thomas’s conception of the ultimate perfection of the universe coming from the very interaction of its parts” (19).

material and immaterial reality.<sup>28</sup> This is a theme, which has profound significance for St Thomas, not only in terms of the development of his metaphysics, but also in his theology. It enters into his Christology, for one of the reasons for the fittingness of the hypostatic union is precisely that the human being, as microcosm, is the creature in which the closest communion with all of nature is possible.<sup>29</sup> It enters into his account of creation, where he moves from incorporeal to corporeal creatures so to culminate with the composite creature which is the human being.<sup>30</sup> And the culmination of St. Thomas's treatment of the creation of the human being is relational in a still fuller sense, for the human person is created *to* the image and likeness of the Triune God—as ordered, that is, to the realization of the image by the perfection and elevation of her powers of knowing and loving (*ST* 1 q. 93).<sup>31</sup> With all of this, Prof. Blanchette's project stands in deep and creative harmony.

Effectively the direction I have been urging amounts to making the *potens omnia fieri* of the human mind the analogical focal point of metaphysics and of a theological anthropology. This is not at all radically discontinuous with what I take to be Prof. Blanchette's position. Nor should it be thought of as taking only a truncated aspect of the human being—neglecting the whole dimension of human being as *incarnate* spirit—as if the *potens omnia fieri* did not include experience, mediated through the senses and conditioned by space and time on account of the body.

What would be the implications of this kind of project? First, it would mean the primary analogue for metaphysics pertains to the human person in her most profoundly relational aspect,

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<sup>28</sup> See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* 2.68 § 6: “Hoc autem modo mirabilis rerum connexio considerari potest. Semper enim invenitur infimum supremi generis contingere supremum inferioris generis: sicut quaedam infima in genere animalium parum excedunt vitam plantarum, sicut ostrea, quae sunt immobilia, et solum tactum habent, et terrae in modum plantarum adstringuntur; unde et beatus Dionysius dicit, in VII cap. de Div. Nom., quod divina sapientia coniungit fines superiorum principiis inferiorum. Est igitur accipere aliquid supremum in genere corporum, scilicet corpus humanum aequaliter complexionatum, quod attingit ad infimum superioris generis, scilicet ad animam humanam, quae tenet ultimum gradum in genere intellectualium substantiarum, ut ex modo intelligendi percipi potest. Et inde est quod *anima intellectualis dicitur esse quasi quidam horizon et confinium corporeorum et incorporeorum, in quantum est substantia incorporea, corporis tamen forma.*”

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.55 § 5: “Homo enim, cum sit constitutus ex spiritali et corporali natura, quasi quoddam confinium tenens utriusque naturae, ad totam creaturam pertinere videtur quod fit pro hominis salute. Nam inferiores creaturae corporales in usum hominis cedere videntur et ei quodammodo esse subiectae. Superior autem creatura spiritalis, scilicet angelica, commune habet cum homine ultimi finis consecutionem, ut ex superioribus patet. Et sic conveniens videtur ut universalis omnium causa illam creaturam in unitatem personae assumeret in qua magis communicat cum omnibus creaturis.” It may be usefully noted that this idea sheds considerable light on the method and structure of the *Summa theologiae*, even if it is not by itself a sufficient explanation for the placement of Christology at the end of that work. It also dovetails with the reasons patiently laid out by Earl Muller, in his response last year (“A Response,” 66-73).

<sup>30</sup> *Summa theologiae* 1.50 prol.: “Post haec considerandum est de distinctione corporalis et spiritalis creaturae. Et primo, de creatura pure spiritali, quae in Scriptura sacra Angelus nominatur; secundo, de creatura pure corporali; tertio, de creatura composita ex corporali et spiritali, quae est homo.”

<sup>31</sup> See D. Juvenal Merriell, *To the Image of the Trinity: A Study in the Development of Aquinas' Teaching* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1990).



her ability to meaningfully engage with others, to understand herself as part of a whole order, and to subordinate herself to that order and to its transcendent Author. And this process in the human person is itself constitutive of the dynamic ordered whole that is personal identity, “inclined to seek its further perfection in action and interaction with other selves and with other beings in the universe,” as Prof. Blanchette puts it (23).

This position also means that the primary analogate for metaphysics is the human person precisely in her openness to the infinite. Aristotle spoke of the natural desire to know operative in all persons. In the hands of St Thomas this became a natural desire to know God by his essence, and the anthropological foundation for supernatural grace. There are several important implications here. Because transcendental subjectivity is mutilated by sin, there is the problem of moral impotence which the classical philosophers had already grappled with and which came under a still more penetrating analysis by Augustine. So while the range of our intelligence and love are not restricted in principle, in fact they are disordered and disoriented by sin, and this also impedes the proper development of metaphysical science. Hence even the ‘natural’ enterprise of metaphysical science needs, from a theological standpoint, gratuitous healing in order to understand its own primary analogate properly. By working out a theory of natural proportion, the scholastics of the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries were also able to make a theoretical distinction between nature and supernature, between human openness to God in its natural integrity, and the gift of a knowledge and love natural only to God. Among other numerous implications, this distinction is crucial for an adequate differentiation of philosophy and theology, and developing their respective methods. It also shows how the relationship of metaphysical to theological wisdom can be understood in terms of a sublation of what is grasped in the light of reason by what is conveyed in the light of faith.

The question of the totality of being, of being as being, which is the basic question for metaphysical science, emerges from these aspects of relationality and openness. The totality intended—the universe—is, like the human subject, a dynamic *ordered* whole whose constituent parts enter into the perfection of the universe not only individually but also, and especially, in their mutual interactions and relations. From a theological perspective, the metaphysical question of a transcendent cause of contingent being as an ordered whole is joined to the affirmation in the light of faith, of creation from nothing. This confluence of metaphysical and biblical wisdom is hardly a colonization of biblical faith by Greek thought. Rather, by the beginning of the Christian era, the classical quest for wisdom had reached a degree of adequacy in naming God that biblical faith could recognize as consonant with its own apprehension of God as loving Creator of all things, an apprehension which had grown progressively clearer as the biblical tradition matured. The biblical doctrine of creation from nothing, as understood by the Church Fathers, corrected the implied dualism of the *Timaeus* (with its pre-existent matter of endless duration), and decisively situated God outside the whole order of contingent being. This means on the one hand, that the world-order is a unity; and on the other hand, that it is subject to a determinate divine providence because its wise and loving Author is present to it in its every dimension, including time.

Furthermore, the coherence of metaphysical and theological wisdom is underscored by the fact that the primary analogate for metaphysical science is the human person precisely in that aspect in which she bears the divine image, her capacity for knowing and loving. On a philosophical level, this capacity is analogous to the conception of the divine transcendent cause whose agency is by means of intelligence and will: human intelligence and will is a created imitation of the wisdom and love of the universal cause. Theologically, it is also specifically Trinitarian, since the immanent processions of word and love in the human mind are also the most adequate analogue for conceiving the infinite act of understanding love which is the Triune God (*ST* 1 q. 27; q. 93 aa. 5-8).

Notwithstanding the fitful and unexploited intimations in earlier authors,<sup>32</sup> it was Augustine who pioneered the implications of our knowing and loving for theological understanding of the Trinity<sup>33</sup> under the light of faith.<sup>34</sup> The radical clarification of infinite actuality in relation to finite possibility provoked by the Arian crisis made it clear that divine persons could only be distinguished on the basis of relational properties.<sup>35</sup> This drained of meaningful bearing, for theological understanding, any material analogy (the sun and its rays, for instance, or Adam, Eve, and Seth<sup>36</sup>), as well as analogies drawn from the ordering of possibility to act in us—for example, from intelligence as a power to intelligence in act. Yet while Augustine was hardly the only Christian thinker who noticed this, still his predecessors and contemporaries were, for various reasons, unable to bring a properly spiritual analogy effectively to bear.

What Augustine proposed by way of a mystagogy—*verbum nullius linguae, nexus amoris*—Thomas Aquinas gradually refined and made his own as an instrument of analysis. In his early works he situated the generation of the divine Word in the general analogical framework of self-diffusion.<sup>37</sup> But through a sustained engagement with Augustine, he learned to conceive the processions of Word and Spirit on the specific analogy of human knowing and loving. Rather than the diffusion of the Good, St. Thomas in his maturity conceived the divine

<sup>32</sup> See Henri Paissac, *Théologie du Verbe, saint Augustin et saint Thomas* (Paris: Cerf, 1951), 61-100.

<sup>33</sup> See Augustine *De Trinitate*, especially 9, 1-7 (*mens, notitia, amor; verbum mentis*); 10, 17-19 (*mens meminit sui, intelligit se, diligit se*); 14, 11-21 (*memoria Dei, intelligentia Dei, amor in Deum*); and 15, 40-43 (*verbum nullius linguae, amor coniungens*). The significance of the theological trajectory thus inaugurated for an increasingly explicit and explanatory differentiation of interiority is amply if indirectly shown by Lonergan's *Verbum*.

<sup>34</sup> See *ibid.*, 7, 6, 12.

<sup>35</sup> There are incidental statements to this effect in Athanasius (see *Orat. III c. Arianos* 4 and 6; *De decr.* 30; *De syn.* 49) and Hilary of Poitiers (see *De trin.* 2, 3; *ibid.*, 7, 31); it is more systematic in Gregory Nazianzen (see *Orat.* 29, 16; *Orat.* 23, 7 and 11; *Orat.* 30, 11; *Orat.* 31, 9 and 30, etc.), Basil (see *Adv. Eunom.* 2, 9; 2, 22; and 2, 28, etc.), Gregory of Nyssa (see *Contra Eunom.* 1 and 2; *Ad Ablabium*, etc.), and of course Augustine (see *De Trin.* 7, 2; *De doct. Chr.* 1, 5, etc.).

<sup>36</sup> For example, as in Ps.-Cyril, *De Trin.* 8 [MG 77: 1136-7].

<sup>37</sup> See 1 *Sent.* d. 2 q. 1 a. 1 c.; *De pot.* q. 2 a. 1; q. 9 a. 9 2<sup>nd</sup> series obj. 2 (conceded); the position is later repudiated: *ST* 1 q. 27 a. 5 ad 2; q. 32 a. 1 ad 2. Also eliminated are the Aristotelian modes of procession *per naturam* and *per voluntatem*, in favor of properly spiritual processions *per modum intellectus* and *per modum voluntatis*: compare 1 *Sent.* d. 13 q. 1 a. 2 c. to *ST* 1 q. 27 aa. 1-3.

procession as a kind of conversation *about* the Good: a divine personal *Speaker* enunciating a divine personal *Assent* emitting a divine personal *Consent* to the eternal Good.<sup>38</sup> To put it this way requires focusing on ‘conversation’ in terms of the community of mind and heart, the mutual understanding and shared commitment which are its end. The perfect act of loving understanding is also “the perfect community, not two in one flesh, but three subjects of a single, dynamic, existential consciousness.”<sup>39</sup>

The task of metaphysics is to develop a heuristic structure for contingent being. Theology sublates this project in an effort to work out “an increasingly determinate heuristic for the beatific vision” (Charles Hefling). Taking the human being as the primary analogate (in the order of knowing) for both inquiries helps to secure a continuity of perspective in metaphysics and theology. The openness of Prof. Blanchette’s project to the profoundest developments of the theological tradition is an index to its value and its seriousness as an engagement with being.

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<sup>38</sup> *ST* 1 q. 27 aa. 1 and 3; *Comp. theol.* cc. 37 and 45; *In Io.* prol. 1.

<sup>39</sup> Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, 25.