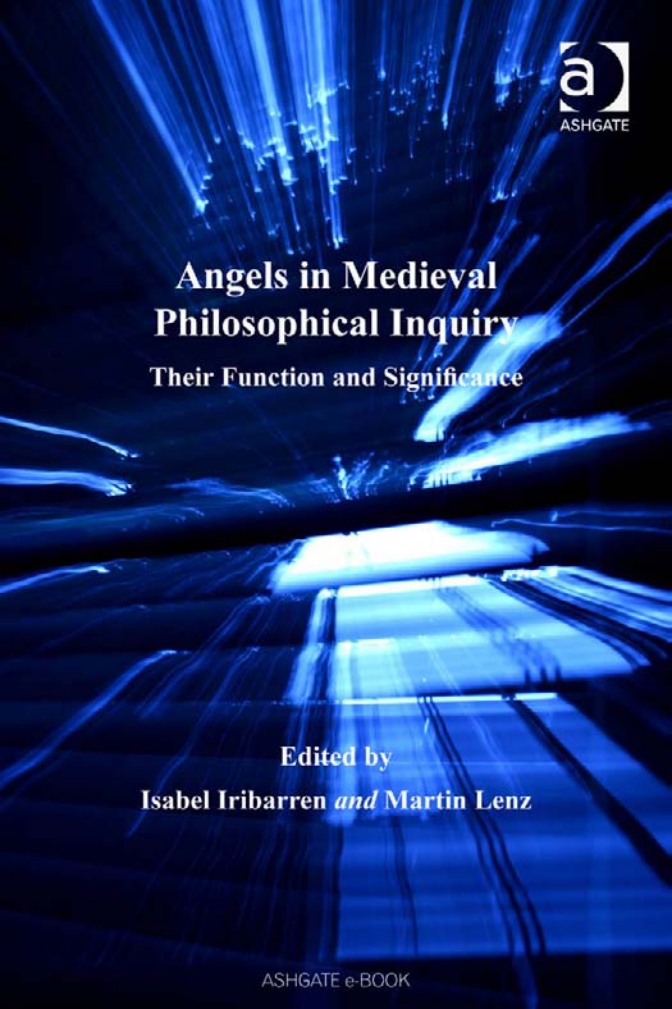
ASHGATE
Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry
Their Function and Significance
Edited by
Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz
ASHGATE e-BOOK

ANGELS IN MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY

The nature and properties of angels occupied a prominent place in medieval philosophical inquiry. Creatures of two worlds, angels provided ideal ground for exploring the nature of God and his creation, being perceived as 'models' according to which a whole range of questions were defined, from cosmological order, movement and place, to individuation, cognition, volition, and modes of language.

This collection of essays is a significant scholarly contribution to angelology, centred on the function and significance of angels in medieval speculation and its history. The unifying theme is that of the role of angels in philosophical inquiry, where each contribution represents a case study in which the angelic model is seen to motivate developments in specific areas and periods of medieval philosophical thought.

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Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry

Their Function and Significance

Edited by

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ASHGATE

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Contents

Preface

The nature and function of angels constitutes perhaps one of the richest topics in the Middle Ages. Creatures of two worlds, angels provided the ideal grounds for exploring aspects of both God and his creation, forming a nodal point where a wide range of subjects from metaphysics, cosmology, epistemology, ethics, to (mystical) theology converged and developed. Although the present volume was conceived as a coherent collection of papers unified under a single topic, its origin goes back to an international conference on medieval angelology held at Oxford University in April 2005. Even if not present in this volume, Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann's paper very much enriched the discussion. We would like to thank him warmly for his invaluable contribution and direct our readers to his *Philosophia Perennis. Historical Outlines of Western Spirituality in Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern Thought* (Springer, 2005). In bringing our collective work to the present stage, we naturally owe much to the sponsors of our conference. We would like to convey our deepest gratitude to St John's College, Oxford, which provided the space and covered many expenses, and where the project was first conceived during the period of Isabel Iribarren's affiliation as a Junior Research Fellow. Many thanks, too, to the British Academy and the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung for their very generous financial support. Martin Lenz owes a special debt to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, whose generous grant provided the basis for studies leading to this project. Our warmest thanks, also, to Anik Waldow and Markus Wild for valuable comments on our introduction, as well as to our group of contributors, all outstanding and scrupulous scholars, for their unfailing cooperation in editing this volume.

The Editors
November 2006

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List of Tables

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Abbreviations

Aquinas	
De anima	*In Aristotelis librum De anima commentarium*
De Ente	*De Ente et Essentia*
De Pot.	*De Potentia*
De Ver.	*De Veritate*
In De Caelo	*In libros Aristotelis De Caelo et Mundo Expositio*
In Hebdomadibus	*Expositio super Boetium De Trinitate et De Hebdomadibus*
In Metaph.	*In duodecim libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Expositio*
In Phys.	*In octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis Expositio*
QSC	*Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis*
Quodl.	*Quaestiones Quodlibetales*
SCG	*Summa Contra Gentiles*
Sent.	*Scriptum super Libros Sententiarum*
ST	*Summa Theologiae*
Aristotle	
Metaph.	*Metaphysica*
Phys.	*Physica*
'Articuli in quibus'	'Articuli in quibus magister Durandus deviat a doctrina venerabilis doctoris fratris Thomae'
Augustine	
De Gen. ad litt.	*De Genesi ad litteram*
CAG	Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca
CCCM	Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
CUP	*Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, 4 vols (Paris: Delalain, 1889–97)
Duns Scotus	
Lect.	*Lectura*
Ord.	*Ordinatio*
Quodl.	*Quaestiones quodlibetales*
Rep.	*Reportata Parisiensis*
Durandus of St Pourçain	
C Sent.	Third recension of *Sentences* commentary, repr. *In Petri Lombardi Sententias Theologicas Commentarium* (The Gregg Press, 1964)
Quodl. Aven.	*Quodlibeta Avenionensia*
GCS	Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller

Giles of Rome	
Sent.	*In Petri Lombardi Sententiarum lib. I commentarium*
GNO	Gregorii Nysseni Opera
Godfrey of Fontaines	
Quodl.	*Quaestiones Quodlibetales*
Henry of Ghent	
Quodl.	*Quodlibeta*
PB	Les Philosophes Belges
Peter John Olivi	
LSHA	*Lectura super librum de Hierarchia Angelica*
Summa	*Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*
Peter Lombard	
Sent.	*Sententiae in quatuor libros distinctae*
PG	Migne, Patrologia Graeca
PL	Migne, Patrologia Latina
Richard of Mediavilla	
Sent.	*Super quatuor libros Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*

INTRODUCTION

The Role of Angels in Medieval Philosophical Inquiry

Isabel Iribarren and Martin Lenz

This volume addresses a twofold question. The first is of a more historical nature, the second of philosophical concern: what was the place occupied by angels in the medieval world-view and what was their function in medieval intellectual speculation?[1] What can medieval angelological reflection contribute to contemporary philosophical discussions? Recent studies that have appeared in English on medieval angelology have mostly concentrated on the historical development of the perception of angels in medieval Church and society, or have approached the subject exclusively from the perspective of religious spirituality and theology.[2] Although there are a couple of notable exceptions,[3] studies devoted to medieval angelology from a philosophical perspective in all its argumentative variety, which would pay

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[1] From a more artistic perspective, a very instructive study on medieval perceptions of angels is Henry Mayr-Harting, *Perceptions of Angels in History: An Inaugural Lecture delivered in the University of Oxford on 14 November 1997* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

[2] An example of the first is David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998). For the second kind of approach, see *Angelic Spirituality: Medieval Perspectives on the Ways of Angels*, trans. and introd. by Steven Chase (New York: Paulist Press, 2002). Also by S. Chase, *Angelic wisdom: the cherubim and the grace of contemplation in Richard of St. Victor* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995).

[3] See Armand Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham in the Light of its Principles* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1999), pp. 339–74. Chapter 8, on Angels, gives a fairly thorough assessment on Ockham's angelology, comparing some major points to Aquinas and Scotus. Also Claude Panaccio's article, 'Angel's Talk, Mental Language, and the Transparency of the Mind', in C. Marmo (ed.), *Vestigia*, *Imagines*, *Verba: Semiotics and Logic in Medieval Theological Texts (XIIth–XIVth Century)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), pp. 323–35 offers a comparison between Ockham and Aquinas with regard to their models of angelic language. In tune with our purposes here, Panaccio highlights connections to contemporary issues in the philosophy of mind. In French the obvious reference is Tiziana Suárez-Nani's twofold study, *Les anges et la philosophie: subjectivité et fonction cosmologique des substances séparées à la fin du XIIIe siécle* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2002) and *Connaissance et langage des anges selon Thomas d'Aquin et Gilles de Rome* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2002).

equal respect to the historical context and to the speculative value of angelological discussions, seem to be rare. Partly motivated by this gap in the literature, we have conceived this volume from a frank interdisciplinary approach, thus wanting to benefit as much from the philosophical richness that the topic yields as from the perspective that history offers. Accordingly, the reader will find some chapters in which philosophical and theological issues appear intertwined. Rather than deliberate (or unwitting) confusion, this responds to the very nature of medieval philosophical thought, intrinsically connected to and almost always motivated by theological concerns (thus for example the much debated issue of angelic location could have been stimulated by an Eucharistic concern on how to explain Christ's real presence at the altar). An attempt to divorce the two domains would not only be anachronistic but also detrimental to the richness of our topic. On the other hand, chapters of a more systematic nature will at times knowingly risk anachronistic terminology in favour of a more coherent and rigorous philosophical presentation of the issue at hand. Finally, although contributions have mainly concentrated on the scholastic Middle Ages, you will find that the debate projects itself into the Renaissance and the early modern period. We have however confined the discussion to the Western Latin world, being compelled by space and thematic coherence to exclude the very rich angelological contribution coming from the Arabic and the Jewish traditions.

Angels in the Middle Ages

Much of the intellectual exercise of the scholastic Middle Ages can be seen as a collective effort to assimilate the ideas inherited from classical antiquity within a Christian world-view. Often objects of parody in succeeding centuries, angels were however at the centre of possibly the two most successful cases of 'ideological' appropriation for the benefit of the Christian outlook: the notions of 'hierarchy' and that of 'science', in its Aristotelian sense. Of Neoplatonist origin, the idea that the world is a hierarchical order of beings was best established in the writings of Denis the pseudo-Areopagite, a Christian Neoplatonist writing around the end of the fifth century. Falsely embraced as the writings of an Athenian convert of St Paul, the Dionysian texts acquired almost apostolic authority and enjoyed an enormous influence throughout the Middle Ages. The Dionysian notion of hierarchy borrowed much from Proclus, informing medieval conceptions of world order according to which all forms of being occupy a specific place and perform an appropriate function in the hierarchy, in a natural continuity that goes from the First Principle down to the lowest being. Conceived as 'Intelligences' on account of their participation in God's perfect knowledge, angels formed the axis in the twofold movement of procession and conversion leading to God. The Dionysian *corpus* is the object of study and commentary already in the ninth century, as Scottus Eriugena undertakes an ambitious translation. Although in the twelfth century theologians like William of Auvergne devote much thought to the Dionysian hierarchies, it is not till the early thirteenth century with the writings of Alexander of Hales (especially the *Glossa Ordinaria* of 1220–1225) that medieval angelological reflection begins in a proper

metaphysical and systematic sense.[4] Later scholastic commentaries, notably by Albert the Great, Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas betray the recent arrival of Aristotle's works on natural philosophy.

The Aristotelian notion of science met as much success in the schools and universities as the Dionysian idea of hierarchy did in the more general context of social and ecclesiastical organization. The arrival and translations of Aristotle's works on logic and natural philosophy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries not only expanded the Latin corpus of philosophical texts but also carried an education in scientific method, giving way to method of inquiry and systematization of knowledge which we generally call 'scholasticism'. The golden era of scholasticism, roughly between the early thirteenth and the mid-fourteenth century, saw an enthusiastic reception of Aristotelian thought. It was a period during which Aristotle was being much studied, often in a formal and exegetical fashion divorced from the wider theological considerations with which it was soon to be confronted. More balanced attempts to articulate Aristotelian philosophy within the demands of Christian theology gave light to the thirteenth-century notion of theology as 'the Queen of Sciences'. Following the Aristotelian sense of 'science', theology was thus conceived as a system of knowledge proceeding rationally from self-evident premises to true and previously unknown conclusions. 'Natural theology', as it was also known, was deemed to be capable of acquiring positive knowledge about God from his creation and on the basis of a harmonious relation between faith and reason. In this respect, it is no coincidence that the most notable advocate of natural theology was also honoured with the title of Angelic Doctor. Indeed, Thomas Aquinas saw himself as part of a philosophical and theological tradition whose chief concern was to guarantee the compatibility of the natural order with God's will and the essential continuity from creatures to God. In this view, angels were purported to represent, on a cosmological level, the harmonious balance between natural and supernatural epitomized in the notion of 'natural theology'.

Aquinas's outlook, however, proved to be a double-edged sword. The notion of theology as a science was not without its problems, especially when it came to justifying how its working premises, the articles of faith, were to function as self-evident principles. Either we admitted, with the risk of fideism, that theology was incapable of yielding positive knowledge about God, or we forced reason into faith in favour of a coherent philosophical system but at the expense of Christian doctrine. This tension eventually precipitated an intellectual crisis in the thirteenth century. Indeed, the Christian perception of its classical inheritance was profoundly ambivalent: Greek philosophy, epitomized in the works of Aristotle and the Neoplatonists, formed both an authority which could no longer be ignored, and an authority which in major respects sat uneasily within a Christian outlook.

This incipient strain in the working relation between philosophy and theology finally snapped in 1277, as the Bishop of Paris, Stephen Tempier, issued a condemnation against the University. Bishop Tempier and his commission of theologians were reacting against a wave of 'radical Aristotelianism' at the University

[4] See Marcia Colish, 'Early Scholastic Angelology', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 62 (1995): 80–109.

of Paris, in which mainly philosophers, but also some theologians, were boasting an autonomous use of natural reason without exhibiting any formal responsibility to relate their teaching to that of Christianity. Although one in a series of ecclesiastical interventions which took place in the thirteenth century concerning the reception of Aristotle, this notorious condemnation was to be one of the most significant events of the scholastic Middle Ages, as it divided medieval intellectual history into two distinct epochs: before and after the condemnation.

Within the collection of 219 articles which disjointedly formed Tempier's syllabus, the conception of angels as quasi-divine beings mediating between God and humans figured prominently: indeed, more than fifty articles were connected in some way or another with angelic nature, their function or their place in the heavenly hierarchy. Why? Are angels not essential members of God's household, divine messengers and ministers of God's order and legislation? One of the purposes of this volume has been to advance possible answers to the paradoxical question how their privileged status could have made angels a natural target of ecclesiastical condemnation. Admittedly, the spiritual nature and indivisibility of angels made them easily identifiable with the mediating 'intelligences' of Neoplatonist origin, in this way appearing to be assimilating Christian doctrine to pagan philosophy – rather than the other way around. But perhaps more importantly, the old hierarchical view of the world and its static nature betrayed a certain conservatism and appeared to subordinate God's power to the natural laws of his creation. Indeed, if there is any unifying strand in the 1277 condemnation it is the emphasis on God's absolute power and the free nature of his actions. Writing after the condemnation, later theologians would thus attempt to treat angels on an equal footing with the rest of God's creatures – that is, as individuals freely created by God.

The period following the condemnation saw the gradual waning of the thirteenth-century endeavour to build up a system of positive knowledge about God. By the turn of the fourteenth century medieval thinkers begin to be more critical of their classical inheritance, as they tend to question the legitimacy of philosophical reasoning in the domain of revelation. This gave way to new forms of religious spirituality, whereby what brings humans closer to God are no longer quasi-divine 'intelligences' in a static hierarchy leading to the first principle, but rather the merits of humans who led sinless lives and have accordingly received the divine gift of grace. This dynamic reinterpretation of the relation between God and humans went hand in hand with the angels' loss of theological significance. Admittedly, in the centuries succeeding the Middle Ages angels seem to lose their theological reality and cosmological function as chief mediators and warrants of world order. But this development was not wholly detrimental to our spiritual ambassadors. For as angels became lost in theological and cosmological relevance, so speculation about them gained in philosophical pertinence. Representing ideal beings in their perfect cognition and immateriality, angels provide privileged grounds for exploring a wide range of issues from epistemology, metaphysics, to philosophy of mind and language. Even contemporary philosophical discussions could have thus much to benefit from the lens provided by medieval angelological discussions. It is this second question about the *philosophical* importance of angels to which we will now turn.

Approaching Angels in Philosophical Inquiry

What are angels? Pondering on this question, one is likely to run into logical inconsistencies such as: 'angels are, say, spiritual beings superior to man, but there are none.' That is to say, contemporary philosophers or scientists do not ascribe any proper extension or any explanatory role to the term 'angel'.[5] Thus, investigating the 'role of angels in medieval philosophy' appears to be quite different from, say, investigating 'the role of animals in medieval philosophy'. But what is this difference founded on? Whereas the second formulation could be seen as containing a *tertium comparationis* between medieval and contemporary views, the first seems to lack such a point of comparison. Although medieval and contemporary theorizing about animals might take rather different aspects into account, there is a story to be told about the 'development' of the various approaches to the 'same subject' of investigation. In the case of angels, there seems to be no such story, because we cannot really 'point to' the things the medieval authors referred to. So whereas we might be inclined to say that 'there are things called "animals", but medieval thinkers had different (or wrong) theories about them', we are significantly less inclined to say that 'there are things called "angels" etc.' On a charitable reading, one might presume that medieval thinkers – when speaking of angels – relied on a view of the world which we do not share, or that they assumed entities which we do not accept – just as we no longer refer to phlogiston in chemical explanations. Accordingly, we would have to say that medieval philosophers and theologians got it wrong: angels are of *mere historical* interest.

Such a position, however, raises a number of methodological difficulties and occasionally the 'principle of charity' might make us overlook our own premises. To begin with, there is the question on what grounds we can decide to single out the topic of angels as being of mere historical interest. It might be because:

(1) there is no evidence for their existence (global eliminativism)
(2) they have no explanatory role in – contemporary – theories (local eliminativism)
(3) they are not talked about in – contemporary – philosophy.

These claims can be seen as reasons figuring independently of one another as well as lines of a single argument. Claim (3) is certainly true for a vast amount of contemporary philosophy and plainly false for a fair amount of medieval thought and thus, as it were, independent evidence for the historical difference between medieval and contemporary philosophy. And, to be sure, it can be argued that medieval philosophy and theology covered significantly wider realms than the syllabus in modern academia. But, clearly, if we speak of angels as being of *mere* historical interest, we probably take this to mean that contemporary philosophy differs from medieval thought with regard to other claims such as (1) and (2) and not solely with regard to the fairly trivial claim (3). That is, we might assume that philosophers

[5] In the same vein Henry Mayr-Harting opened his Inaugural Lecture at Oxford University on *Perceptions of Angels in History*, p. 2: 'Angels are comparatively little studied these days, except by people interested in the paranormal, which I am not.'

and theologians in the Middle Ages did discuss angels because they defended some claims which contradict some version of (1) or (2).

Let us begin with claim (1) on the presumption that medieval thinkers discussed angels because they thought that there is evidence for the existence of angels. We today might plausibly argue that there is no evidence for the existence of angels and that theories relying on their existence are seriously defective. Already the supposed immateriality of angels appears to be an easy target. Once we take an eliminativist stance towards angels, however, we could ask: 'why stop here? Is the notion of angels any clearer than, say, the notion of belief?' An old-fashioned behaviourist would certainly have taken this as a rhetorical question. And although terms such as 'belief' or 'desire' still figure in folk-psychological explanations and the philosophy of mind, their meaning is hopelessly vague, which is why some cognitive scientists claim that these terms will have to be replaced eventually by notions more congruous with physicalism, whereas others argue that we still need the term 'belief' or 'propositional attitude' to explain human behaviour and to pick out certain *explananda* in the first place.[6] Accordingly, eliminativism as such or a strict behaviourism of the kind that was acknowledged in first half the twentieth century, although it might downgrade claims about the ontological status of supposed entities, does not account for our decisions to keep or reduce theoretical elements.

This brings us to claim (2) about the explanatory role of angels. As should be clear by now, the notion of angels was a matter of controversy. Whereas Aquinas argued that the assumption of angels must be reasonably inferred from the idea of a perfect universe, already Ockham relegated it to a question of faith. Yet both held theories about angels. Similarly, a philosopher of mind (taking a methodological stance comparable to Quine's or Dennett's instrumentalism) might say that there are, strictly speaking, no beliefs, but that the term picks out something relevant to explaining behaviour or consciousness, even if 'belief' does not refer, strictly speaking, to any entity we can classify. Accordingly, even if we deny to have evidence for the existence of angels, one could still argue for an instrumentalist stance towards a refined notion of angels and say that, although we have no insights into the nature of angels, the term picks out something that is of interest and merits an explanation (such as the supposed motion of the heavens, the status of purely intellectual beings or the notion of thought under non-material conditions). This kind of instrumentalist caution, however, can be said to be already present in medieval writings on angels. With regard to Thomas Aquinas, Robert Pasnau states:

> He is so cautious, in fact, that he hesitates in identifying the immaterial substances with angels. They are "what we call angels," he says at the outset [of *ST* I, q. 88pr: "How the human soul cognizes things that are above it, namely immaterial substances"], but for the rest of the question he continues to refer to these entities as immaterial substances.[7]

What is at stake here? Aquinas recognizes tensions between the Aristotelian notion of immaterial substances and the term 'angels', which carries connotations he wishes to

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[6] See on these debates Eric Schwitzgebel, 'Belief', in E. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2006 Edition), URL = http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/belief/.

[7] Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 358–9.

exclude (such as some of the Neoplatonist conceptions according to which angels have ethereal or aerial bodies).[8] From his notion of a perfect universe he deduces that it is necessary to posit purely intellectual, immaterial creatures between humans and God ('… ad perfectionem universi requiritur quod sint aliquae creaturae intellectuales.' *ST* I, q. 50 a. 1 resp.). But despite his inference to the necessity of this assumption, his epistemological premises equally compel him to deny us any real insights into the nature of such substances in this life. Hence, there are no independent grounds to justify, for instance, an identification of angels as described in religious scriptures with the immaterial substances which are said to govern the motions of the heavens. Similarly, a philosopher of mind might lose some sleep and ink about the question how certain mental states relate to brain states and whether it is a good idea to hold on to the good old-fashioned talk of 'beliefs'. Hence, we should not presuppose that medieval thinkers' talk about angels rests on evidence for the existence or for the characteristics of angels, let alone the supposition that they 'believed in angels' – which is something into which we have no insights whatsoever. Rather, already Aquinas and other medieval authors can be said to share our doubts about merging different paradigms.

Now, would this amount to saying that already some medieval thinkers took angels to be of 'mere historical interest'? Clearly, this would be getting the wrong end of the stick. Rather, the distinction between historical and contemporary interests rests on thin grounds, since it presupposes a clearly cut notion not only of what is relevant to contemporary philosophical discourse but also of a technique enabling us to identify the 'corresponding' themes in medieval philosophy. 'Angels' would probably not count among these themes. Nor perhaps would 'zombies', 'brains in a vat', 'swampcreatures' or Chomsky's 'ideal speaker-hearer' appear in future histories of philosophy.

As has been mentioned above, the increasingly critical attitude towards the classical inheritance – though still reflected in the theological curriculum – did by no means diminish the interest in angelology. It rather gained philosophical momentum, which is present still in early modern discussions among authors such as John Locke and Richard Burthogge.[9] Questions on the nature, location, language, thought or cognition of angels were not only aiming at an understanding of angels as supposed members of God's creation. Rather, angels can also be seen as protagonists of thought experiments in which metaphysical, epistemological or ethical issues are analyzed under idealized conditions.[10] As we shall see, medieval discussions on the linguistic nature of thought, for example, often invoked comparisons to angelic thought, but while the relation between thought and language is still a major topic of discussion, we have – on the face of it – no counterpart to the medieval paradigmatic notion of angelic mental language. On a closer look, however, we might discover striking

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[8] See Thomas Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 50. Cf. Edith Dudley Sylla, '*Creation and Nature*', in A.S. McGrade (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 189–95.

[9] See John Yolton, *The Two Intellectual Worlds of John Locke: Man*, *Person*, *and Spirits in the Essay* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004).

[10] See esp. Dominik Perler's contribution in Chapter Nine.

parallels between the notion of an ideal speaker-hearer and the idea of an angel, unhindered by the shortcomings of average human speakers, designed to explore the structure of thought and to explain the limits of cognitive competence. The ascription of language to angels was, again, not an uncontroversial matter, as can be seen, for instance, in Dante's reaction,[11] who claimed, by contrast, that language is tied to the use of sensual signs and that angels cannot be said to have language – a disagreement which is partially mirrored, in turn, by the controversies over the contemporary notion of a mental language or mentalese.

Looking at such issues might, then, indeed contribute to the understanding of the traditions which contemporary philosophy implicitly links up with.[12] Yet, apart from the well rehearsed fact that medieval thought is no monolithic set of positions open to straight comparison, as the case of angels itself makes clear, it is not simply a matter of picking out the issues and arguments we deem relevant to 'our' topics: at least not without substantial loss. For not only are the divergences of historical contexts, terminology and focus often more instructive than the plain parallels – to answer the question what medieval angelology might contribute to the understanding of contemporary philosophical issues, we would first need to answer a prior question: what did discussions on angels contribute to *medieval* philosophy?

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Mirroring the twofold approach of this volume, the book's structure seeks to strike a balance between thematic coherence and a sense of chronology. It is divided into four main Parts, each devoted to a central issue of angelology. Part I, 'Angels as Exemplars of World Order', provides a good introduction, as its three chapters examine the significance and reactions to the traditional medieval view of angels as warrants of world order and intelligibility. Chapter One, 'The Hierarchies in the Writings of Alan of Lille, William of Auvergne and St Bonaventure', deals with the contrast between the shared conviction during the Middle Ages that order in this world should reflect the angelic exemplar, and the disagreement among many authors about what this meant, pushing to the limit their own interpretations of what that was or what it should be. David Luscombe's three examples of writers who explored these implications have in common an irrepressible urge to find extensive correspondences between the angelic and other worlds, and not just between the celestial and the ecclesiastical hierarchies as these had been formulated by Denis the (pseudo-)Areopagite.

In Chapter Two, 'Deplatonising the Celestial Hierarchy: Peter John Olivi's Interpretation of the Pseudo-Dionysius', Sylvain Piron examines Peter John Olivi's original reinterpretation of the Pseudo-Denis as an example of the reception of earlier

[11] See on Dante: Irène Rosier-Catach, '"Il n'a été qu'à l'homme donné de parler" Dante, les anges et les animaux', in J. Biard and F. Mariani (eds), Actes du colloque *Ut philosophia poiesis. Questions philosophiques chez Dante*, *Pétrarque et Boccace*, Tours, 21–22 October 2004 (forthcoming), whom we wish to thank for kindly letting us have a copy of her paper.

[12] See, for instance, Lorraine Daston, 'Intelligences: Angelic, Animal, Human', in L. Daston and G. Mittman (eds), *Thinking with Animals* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), pp. 37–58. We would like to thank Markus Wild for pointing out her approach to us.

accounts of the angelic hierarchy in the later Middle Ages. Conceived in the wake of the Paris 1270 condemnation and fuelled by that of 1277, Olivi's commentary on Dionysius's *Celestial Hierarchy* (1280) breaks with the standard understanding of this text by ascribing the hierarchies to the realm of glory, not of nature. Piron provides an account of the reasons and implications of such a move, including its most impressive consequence: the denial of all true correspondence between the celestial hierarchy and this world. The celestial hierarchy is not mirrored by the ecclesiastical hierarchy but rather manifests itself in the progressive history of the Church to its final perfection. Profoundly influenced by Joachimist theology of history, Olivi's view heralds the Christocentrism shaping most of fourteenth-century thought and leading to the Reformation.

Chapter Three, 'Angelic Individuality and the Possibility of a Better World: Durandus of St Pourçain's Criticism of Thomas Aquinas', follows on from Piron's contribution in its examination of the angelological view of another independent spirit of the late Middle Ages, the fourteenth-century Dominican Durandus of St Pourçain. By contrasting Durandus's account on angelic individuality with that of Thomas Aquinas, this Chapter attempts to show how their different angelologies reflect deeper theological concerns that have to do with their understanding of the relation between the natural order and God's power. The Thomist understanding of angelic individuality is embedded in the Neoplatonist tradition and underpinned by Aristotelian metaphysics. Its priority is to guarantee the natural continuity from creatures to God and the stability of the present order. By contrast, Durandus's view underscores God's absolute power and the contingency of creation. His position and criticism of the Thomist world-view reflects a symptomatic distrust of Aristotelian metaphysics and its applicability to theological matters.

Part II, on 'Angelic Location', also considers the significant impact that the 1277 condemnation had on this issue. A notable exception is Chapter Four, which opens the section with Peter Abelard's conception of angelic corporeality and relation to place in the context of twelfth-century discussions. Abelard is not generally thought to have had much to say about angels, but, as John Marenbon shows, he developed a theory of angels as spiritual beings, which coheres nicely with some of his logical teachings, and with his attempt to create a rationally acceptable and consistent Christian theology.

Chapter Five introduces the controversial aspect of angelological debates as they constituted a central target of the 1277 Paris condemnation, an ecclesiastical intervention which, as we shall discover, did not always paralyse, but in some cases stimulate, the intellectual discussion. In 'The Condemnations of 1277 and Henry of Ghent on Angelic Location', Richard Cross examines Henry of Ghent's extended discussion of proposition 204 of the 1277 condemnation: that it is an error to claim that the operation of an immaterial substance is a necessary condition for its being in a place. Henry endorses the proposition and castigates the condemnations for not going further in the direction of a defence of non-causal presence. As Cross shows, Duns Scotus, in his discussion of angelic presence, refers to the same condemnation, and further develops the view defended by Henry. According to Scotus, the presence of an immaterial substance (such as God) amounts to something more than its causal activity at a place. This somewhat materialistic and spatial view of the presence

of immaterial substances is reflected in Scotus's treatment of angelic presence too. One plausible background to this way of thinking on the matter can be found in proposition 204 of the 1277 condemnation.

Chapter Six looks further at Duns Scotus's view on angelic location, in order to assess its contribution to medieval angelology as well as its impact on the Aristotelian physics of *locus*. In 'Angels, Space and Place: The Location of Separate Substances according to John Duns Scotus', Tiziana Suárez-Nani offers an explanation of Scotus's claim that angels are located 'definitively' and not 'circumscriptively' by virtue of a 'neutral passive potency' (*potentia passiva neutra*) with respect to local determination. Scotus's theory signified an important contribution for medieval discussions of this issue in that it is the first to shift the discussion from an examination of the *fact* of location to its *conditions* of possibility. Moreover, Scotus's theory went beyond the Aristotelian conception of natural place, and revised the relationship of contiguity between the located body and the containing place.

Chapter Seven, 'Late Medieval Debates on the Location of Angels after the Condemnation of 1277', is devoted to the philosophical consequences of the 1277 condemnation. Henrik Wels's point of departure are two crucial, and from all appearances contradictory propositions of the Paris condemnation. According to Article 204, it is erroneous to claim that separate substances are in a place by their operations such that inactive substances are not in place. On the other hand, Article 219 condemns the tenet that separate substances are nowhere, thus implying that angelic substance itself cannot be the reason for their being in a place (*ratio essendi in loco*). This Chapter examines how medieval authors after the condemnation attempted to solve or avoid the philosophical impasse. As Wels shows, later discussions on angelic location were motivated and shaped by the condemned Articles, their inherent contradiction providing the main argument for restricting the validity of the condemnation up to the Renaissance period.

Part III, on 'Angelic Cognition and Language', concentrates on questions of epistemology and philosophy of mind and language. Chapter Eight, 'The Language of Angels: On the Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity of Pure Spirits', deals with the issue of the ability of pure spiritual beings to communicate with one another and the deeper underlying question whether a spiritual substance can communicate. Theo Kobusch shows how scholastic discussions on angelic language offer some new insights into the phenomenon of subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Angelic language, divested of sensual organs, is essentially understood as a voluntary activity differing in vital points from natural activities. By introducing the will into their reflections on angelic language, medieval thinkers thus wanted to suggest that speaking with one another is a moral matter. In this sense, true intersubjectivity involves a voluntary 'unveiling', an unveiling which we might call 'speaking'.

Chapter Nine penetrates further into the philosophical nature of the discussion as it engages with the crucial question why angels could be considered to be of *philosophical* importance. In 'Thought Experiments: The Methodological Function of Angels in Late Medieval Epistemology', Dominik Perler offers an account of Scotus's and Ockham's examination of various epistemological issues, namely how angels can acquire knowledge of things in the world, how their cognitive processes are structured, and how these processes are related to the use of language. Perler's

central claim is that it was primarily a methodological interest that motivated late medieval philosophers to draw attention to angels. Debates in angelology often had the status of thought experiments (comparable to thought experiments in contemporary philosophy of mind and epistemology) in which basic philosophical problems were posed and discussed under idealized conditions. It then became possible to depict the general structure of the process of cognition in order to study it in human beings, albeit under non-ideal conditions.

Chapter Ten, on 'Why Can't Angels Think Properly? Ockham against Chatton and Aquinas', follows nicely from Perler's contribution. It contrasts Aquinas's and Chatton's account of angelic thought, construed as simple intuitions within an innate net of knowledge, with Ockham's argument that theories of thought generally have to meet the requirement of compositionality. In examining Ockham's novel approach, this chapter offers an assessment of the implications that arise from ascribing the same kind of rationality to every thinking creature.

Part IV, on 'Demonology', offers a historically rich account of medieval perceptions of the devil, thus opening a gratifyingly concrete window to *histoire des mentalités*. In Chapter Eleven, 'Demons as Psychological Abstractions', Alexander Murray analyses the role of demons in two thirteenth-century writers, both writers with access to anecdotes about newsworthy private experiences taken from contemporary life. This analysis leads on to the question how far, if at all, these demons invite interpretation as internal forces within the mind, as distinct from preternatural forces outside it. That, in turn, leads to a more general reflection, in respect of ancient and medieval thought, between spirits and psychological abstractions.

Finally, Part V projects us towards a wider perspective, 'Angels in the Renaissance and the Early Modern Period', thus closing the historical lens of this volume. Chapter Twelve, 'Medieval, Renaissance and Reformation Angels: A Comparison', offers an instructive comparative study of three crucial periods of angelological reflection, based on the question of angelic cognition of material particular beings. Stephan Meier-Oeser attempts to explain the markedly different views characterizing each period by rendering explicit their underlying theological and ontological commitments. This overview takes us from scholastic angelology, in its Neoplatonist and Biblical foundations, on through the function played by angels in the Renaissance as explanations of the cosmological place of humans, finally to the notion of angels as counterpart of demons predominant in the Reformation, relying fully on Biblical sources without any significant recourse to philosophical foundations.

The final Chapter, 'On Angelic Bodies: Some Philosophical Discussions in the Seventeenth Century', carries us further in the historical timeline. Anja Hallacker shows how later angelological discussions disassociate themselves from the standard assumption shaping previous angelology, namely the notion of angels as immaterial beings. Chapter Thirteen thus presents some very innovative answers to the question what role the idea of angelic *bodies* plays in philosophical speculations of the seventeenth century. A combination of medical and philosophical theories on the notion of 'spiritual bodies' seems to lead to some version of 'Cartesian angelology'.

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PART I
Angels as Exemplars of World Order

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Chapter 1

The Hierarchies in the Writings of Alan of Lille, William of Auvergne and St Bonaventure

David Luscombe

The Dionysian notion of hierarchy supported medieval visions of order which assumed that some, if not all, forms of being had a particular position and an appropriate function in a number of chains of being. For many Christian thinkers in the Middle Ages angels, human beings, animals, plants and minerals were divided vertically into different grades. God is the measure of all being: the more close creatures are to the likeness of God the higher is their being, and the more remote they are from God the lower is their being. Hierarchy, however, is a distinct idea with its own particular range of references. Its principal source and authority in the medieval West was always the writings of Denis the pseudo-Areopagite. Hierarchy offered a model derived from the arrangement into orders of purely spiritual beings in the celestial world. Hierarchy signified the graduated manifestation of God to the universe of spirits and their assimilation to God. Denis, writing in Greek around the year 500 A.D., defined hierarchy in *Celestial Hierarchy* III, 1: 'Hierarchy, to me, is sacred order, knowledge and activity assimilating itself, as far as it can, to the likeness of God, and raising itself to its utmost, by means of the illuminations granted by God, to the imitation of God.'[1]

Denis himself portrayed the harmonious angelic hierarchy as a magnificent arrangement of nine orders divided into three superimposed triads according to their levels of knowledge and purity and of participation in God's secrets and goodness. Each triad, and within it each order, mediates purification, illumination and perfection between the order above and the order below. The process is both a descending and an ascending one, a going out and a coming back, as spirits are brought closer to God through being purified, illuminated and perfected by the higher orders. The celestial or angelic hierarchy provides the exemplar for another hierarchy which is ecclesiastical and human and in which bishops occupy the highest grade and communicate directly with the lowest order of angels above:

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[1] *Celestial Hierarchy*, in *Denys l'Aréopagite*, *La Hiérarchie céleste*, ed. G. Heil (2nd edn, Paris, 1970), p. 87; PG 3, col. 164D. The complete works of Denis, in their Greek version and in their medieval Latin translations are found in *Dionysiaca*, ed. P. Chevallier (2 vols, Paris, 1937–50). English translation by C. Luibheid, *The Complete Works* (New York, 1987).

The celestial hierarchy[2]

Seraphim
Cherubim
Thrones

Dominations
Virtues
Powers

Principalities
Archangels
Angels

The ecclesiastical hierarchy[3]

Bishops
Priests
Ministers

Monks
Holy People
Purified Orders

As far as I know, the first writer in the West to describe nine orders of just men and women, and nine offices in the church, and to base this enumeration upon the exemplar in heaven of nine orders of angels is Honorius Augustodunensis in his *Libellus duodecim quaestionum* which was written in the early twelfth century (see Table 1.1).[4] Honorius may have been inspired by his interest in the cosmology of John the Scot (Eriugena) who had translated the writings of Denis into Latin in the ninth century.[5]

Hugh of St Victor (d. 1142) wrote an influential Commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy*[6] in which, in particular, he advanced the notion that the divine Trinity itself constituted a hierarchy, not in the sense that inequalities are found in the divine Persons but in the sense that their inter-communication impressed a divine likeness on created beings which caused them to be formed into hierarchies. 'By

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[2] Denis, *Celestial Hierarchy*, ch. 7–9.

[3] Denis, *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, ch. 5–6.

[4] *Libellus duodecim quaestionum*, *Questio VIII*, PL. 172, cols 1177–86: 'Quod in Ecclesia sint novem ordines justorum secundum novem ordines angelorum'. In *Quaestio VI* Honorius associates the nine orders of beatitude (Matthew 5, 3–12, Luke 6, 20–26) with the nine orders of angels, adding that the Apostles will enter the order of the seraphim.

[5] Honorius's cosmological treatise, *Clavis physicae*, is based on Eriugena's *Periphyseon*. See M.-T. d'Alverny, 'Le cosmos symbolique du XII[e] siècle', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 20 (1953): 31–81.

[6] See PL 175, cols 923–1154. Cf D. Luscombe, 'The Commentary of Hugh of Saint Victor on the Celestial Hierarchy', in T. Boiadjiev, G. Kapriev and A. Speer (eds), *Die Dionysius-Rezeption im Mittelalter*, Rencontres de philosophie médiévale, 9 (Brepols, 2000), pp. 159–75.

these hierarchies or sacred powers the whole world is governed.'[7] A small collection of definitions which circulated in the late twelfth century and which may have been composed by Alan of Lille, helped to disseminate the notion of hierarchy and also of theophany which means the manifestation or the apparition of divinity. In this collection three hierarchies are presented – supercelestial, celestial and subcelestial – and three angelic theophanies – epiphany, hyperphany and hypophany.[8] The collection was surely the harbinger of an explosion of interest in hierarchical patterns of thought. To illustrate this, and just briefly, I offer three early examples of *tableaux* which are highly imaginative and impressive.

Table 1.1 Honorius Augustodunensis: Orders and Offices

Ordines	*Officia*
Patriarchs	Bishops
Prophets	Priests
Apostles	Deacons
Martyrs	Subdeacons
Confessors	Acolytes
Monks	Exorcists
Virgins	Readers
Widows	Doorkeepers
Married persons	Lay persons

In the writings of Alan of Lille and of William of Auvergne detailed, luxurious, innovative descriptions of the hierarchies blossomed. Alan of Lille, who died in 1203, having probably taught in Paris and in the south of France before becoming a monk, wrote a work called *Hierarchia* in which he made use of the collection of definitions just mentioned (see Table 1.2).[9] Alan describes the chief characteristics of the angelic orders and then the specific functions of angels in relation to human beings who will, after receiving appropriate angelic tuition, join the angelic order which most suitably corresponds to their condition. To do this he dispenses with the ecclesiastical hierarchy arranged by Denis that runs down from the bishops

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[7] 'His hierarchiis, id est principatibus sacris, totus regitur mundus'. Hugh of St Victor, *Celestial Hierarchy*, I, 5, PL 175, cols. 931D; I, 2. Cf. PL 175, cols. 927C–930B, where the orders are presented as participants in God's government, grace and glory, and as sharers and cooperators with God.

[8] H.-F. Dondaine, 'Cinq citations de Jean Scot chez Simon de Tournai', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 17 (1950): 303–11. M.-T. d'Alverny, *Alain de Lille*. *Textes inédits avec une introduction sur sa vie et ses œuvres*, Etudes de philosophie médiévale, 52 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1965), pp. 94–9, cautiously attributed these definitions to Alan of Lille.

[9] *Hierarchia*, in *Alain de Lille*, ed. d'Alverny, pp. 223–35; *Expositio prosae de angelis*, in *Alain de Lille*, ed. d'Alverny, pp. 206–10; *Sermo in die sancti Michaelis*, in *Alain de Lille*, ed. d'Alverny, pp. 249–51.

Table 1.2 The Hierarchies according to Alan of Lille

Theophany	The orders of angels	The chief characteristics of the angelic orders	The chief function of the angelic orders towards men	The class of men who will join each angelic order	The chief activity towards men of each of the opposite demonic anti-orders or *exordines*	The class of men who will join each of the *conventus demonum*
Epiphany = *superexcellens Dei visio* (from *epi* = *supra* and *phanos* = *visio*)	Seraphim	Burning with divine love	To warm men with love of God and one's neighbour	Contemplatives who are wholly given over to divine love, e.g. men of the cloister	To invite men to love the world	Men who prefer love of the world to love of God
	Cherubim	Fullness of knowledge	To guide men to divine knowledge and understanding	Holy students of Scripture	To prevent men from knowing God	Wicked men who prefer to study worldly wisdom
	Thrones	Sitting in judgement	To invite men to discriminate between good and evil	Men who judge justly and not rashly	Seducers of men	Prelates and terrestrial princes who do not uphold the order of justice
Hyperphany = *media visio* (*qui huiusilluminat ionis particeps est altiori intelligentia insignitur*) (from *iper* = *post* and *phanes* = *apparitio*)	Dominations	Obedient to superiors; set over inferiors	To teach men to obey and to revere their leaders	Men who duly obey their prelates and rule their subjects reasonably	To invite men to disobey	Men who disobey their superiors and rule their inferiors unreasonably
	Principalities	Rulers of the lower orders	To instruct princes how to rule their people (or to teach men how to show reverence to rulers)	Men who rule their subjects justly	Promoters of tyrannical governments	Men who prefer to dominate their subjects rather than be of benefit to them
	Powers	Invigilators of demons and of the airy powers	To teach men how to resist demonic temptations	Defenders of the good against the wicked; virile opponents of diabolic suggestions	To resist the Powers	Men who suggest evils to others

Hypophany = *inferior visio* (from *ipo* = *sub* and *phanes* = *visio*)	Virtues	Agents of divine miracles	Men with a special talent for performing wonders	To deceive men with *prestigia*	Men who pursue *prestigia* and divinations
	Archangels	Messengers for greater heavenly pronouncements	Well-intentioned preachers of the more sublime truths concerning God	To suggest abominable heresies	Inventors of abominable heretical testimonies concerning God
	Angels	Messengers for lesser heavenly announcements	Protectors of those beneath them; teachers and preachers of lesser truths	To suggest falsehoods concerning God	Lesser heretics deceived by greater ones

Sources among Alan's writings: *Hierarchia*, ed. M.-T. d'Alverny, *Alain de Lille. Textes inédits avec une introduction sur sa vie et ses œuvres*, Etudes de philosophie médiévale, 52 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1965), pp. 229–35.
'La Summa "Quoniam homines" d'Allain de Lille', ed. Glorieux, *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 20 (1953), pp. 283–5.
Expositio Prosae de angelis, ed. M.-T. d'Alverny, *Alain de Lille*, pp. 206–10.
'Sermo in die sancti Michaelis', in *Textes inédits. Alain de Lille*, ed. M.-Th. D'Alverny (Paris: J. Vrin, 1965), pp. 249–51.
Anticlaudianus, lib.V, 11.373-442, ed. R. Bossuat, Textes philosophiques du Moyen Age, 1 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1955), pp. 135–6.

to the purified orders. In a rather misty way he makes reference to actual social classes, professions and occupations in this world, in the church and in the state. Alan also constructs a table of nine demonic anti-orders which seek to wrench men away from their angelic guardians. This demonic anti-hierarchy struggles against the other hierarchies. One is reminded of a favourite motif in the art of the period which is the struggle between an angel and a demon for the soul of a person on the point of death. One's attention is also particularly caught by Alan's association of the Archangels and Angels with teachers and preachers, and of the anti-Archangels and the anti-Angels with the promotion of heresy, for Alan was himself a teacher and preacher who preached against the Cathars in the south of France and also wrote an *Ars praedicandi*.

With William of Auvergne, the Parisian university master who became Bishop of Paris in 1228, the new approaches developed by Alan were expanded and in particular the idea of hierarchy became politicised.[10] William wrote a vast encyclopaedia from *c.*1223 onwards embracing knowledge of the Trinity, the universe of spirits and of mankind, of planets, stars and the elements, as well as of the realms of faith, law,

[10] See B. Vallentin, 'Der Engelstaat. Zur mittelalterlichen Anschaung vom Staate (bis auf Thomas von Aquino)', in K. Breysig, F. Wolters, B. Vallentin, F. Andreae (eds), *Grundrisse und Bausteine zur Staats- und zur Geschichtslehre zusammengetragen zu den Ehren Gustav Schmollers* (Berlin, 1908), pp. 41–120.

Table 1.3 The Hierarchies according to William of Auvergne

First or divine hierarchy	Second hierarchy (angelic orders)	Other names	Presumed functions with respect to men	The abstract intelligences of Aristotle	Third hierarchy (human)		Possible anti-hierarchy that threatens the Church	Conjectural quasi-orders in the synagogue of Satan
					Proximi or *laterales* of an earthly king	The *clerus* constituted under the *pontifex* or high priest		
Trinity	Seraphim	*Recalefacientes* or *pennosi*	To inspire men with love for the Creator	The eight intelligences moving the eight heavens	The king's close friends, *amantissimi*	Cardinals burning with love	*Quasi-antiseraphim* (enemies of God)	Antiseraphim
	Cherubim	*Plenitudo* or *fusio scientiae*; *oculosi*	To illuminate men with wisdom		*Sapientes* who frame laws	Wise cardinals who are knowledgeable concerning *divinales*	*Tamquam anticherubim* (fools)	Anticherubim
	Thrones	*Sedes*	To judge men; to teach certain men rulership		*Iudices*	Cardinals versed in canon law who deal with petitioners	*Quasi-antithroni* (wicked men ignorant of spiritual laws)	Antithrones
	Dominations	In them shines the most supereminent dominion of the Creator	To tame wild men; to expand the honour of divine domination		*Magnati*, *proceres regni*, *barones*	Patriarchs or primates		Antidominations
	Principalities	Exercising fatherhood over their subjects	To rule men		*Praesides provinciarum*	Archbishops or metropolitans		Antiprincipalities
	Powers	Reducing rebels to subjection to the king	To curb wicked spirits		*Duces legionum*, *bellorum instructores*, *capitanei acierum*	Bishops (rulers of spiritual legions, wielding the spiritual weapons provided by the sacraments)		Antipowers

	Virtues[1]	Executors of the king's punishments and judgements	To work divine miracles		*Centuriones*	Archdeacons		Antivirtues
	Archangels		To announce greater things (e.g. virgin birth, incarnation)		*Magni nuncii* or *legati*	Archpriests		Antiarchangels
	Angels		To announce lesser things	The agent intellect (creator of human souls) moving the earth	*Minores nuncii* (*equites*, *pedites*)	Priests		Antiangels

[1] William (c. 112, p. 907) places Virtues, as in Denis, between Powers and Dominations and comments that 'other theologians' (examples would be Gregory the Great, Alan of Lille) put Principalities here and place Virtues above Archangels. But on p. 909 William restores the Gregorian arrangement, placing Principalities in the second hierarchy. On p. 909 William notes that 'modern theologians' ascribe to Virtues the work of performing divine miracles; Alan was among their number.

Source: *De universo* (written between 1231 and 1236), in *Guilelmi Alverni episcopi Parisiensis … Opera omnia* (Venice, 1591), II, ii, c. 112–120, pp. 907–14; II, iii, c. 10, p. 976.

sacraments, virtues and vices. In the second of the seven treatises which constitute his encyclopaedia, and which was written between 1231 and 1236, William described the 'universe of creatures'. He wrote of heaven as a kingdom which enjoys peace and which has many and varied orders of ministers who preside over the nations on earth. William tells us that when he was young he had the idea of comparing the ranks of angels with those of a well-ordered earthly kingdom. So he compares the nine orders of angels with two human hierarchies (together called the 'third hierarchy'), one the *clerus*, the other consisting of the offices found in the secular kingdom (see Table 1.3). Over each of the two hierarchies is placed a monarch, in the one case the pope, in the other a king, just as over the angelic hierarchy there is the hierarchy of the divine Trinity. William insists that the offices of state in the earthly kingdom are not casual resemblances to the heavenly order; they are actually modelled upon the heavenly order, for the orders in heaven provide the exemplars of secular government. In addition, William portrayed the church as being well-ordered under monarchical rule such as obtained in both the secular and in the heavenly kingdom. Like Alan, William details nine anti-orders of demons and, in addition, he left an incomplete list of three human anti-orders.

The correspondences that William found between the sets of nine orders in heavenly, ecclesiastical, secular and demonic society are detailed. It is worthy of note that William does not subordinate the lay and secular hierarchy to the ecclesiastical hierarchy nor derive the former from the latter. Lay holders of secular offices directly reflect the tasks of their angelic counterparts in the court and kingdom of heaven. Although William represents the secular hierarchy using antique Roman terms such as *centuriones*, *duces legionum* and *equites*, his account bears some traces of modern developments. He reflects the development of royal government in France from reliance on a small household of *palatini*, including a butler and a chamberlain, to the stage being reached in the thirteenth century when the king recruited professional lawyers to the court. William certainly puts the king's friends at the heart of royal government but close to them he places men who make laws, *sapientes* and judges, *iudices*, who settle legal disputes in a pacific way. Only beneath these professional office holders come magnates and barons.

Also remarkable is William's description of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Like Alan, William compared the qualities found in the *clerus* with those possessed by the angelic hierarchy. But he has a more governmental and administrative perspective. His ecclesiastical hierarchy is strictly priestly, ranging from cardinals at the top who serve the pope down to ordinary priests on the lowest grade. Members of the religious orders and students of the sacred page do not qualify for inclusion as they did for Alan. The fact that the top three grades are all filled by different ranks of cardinals indicates how important papal government and the papal court had become in William's mind. The fact also that the remaining grades of William's priestly hierarchy run down from the grades of patriarchs, archbishops and bishops to those of archdeacons, archpriests and priests is a clear reflection of the vision offered by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 of the church as an ordered pyramid containing at the top a busy papal court which gives central direction and then (moving downwards) consisting of provinces, then of dioceses and finally of parishes at the bottom. This was a natural outlook for a prominent diocesan bishop of the 1230s, especially one who owed his nomination

and his consecration as Bishop of Paris in 1228 to Pope Gregory IX and who was frequently employed by the Roman curia as a papal judge-delegate.

As for heaven William portrays it as a throbbing court busy with both the tasks of government and the settlement of legal disputes. Heaven includes a tribunal of justice, a consistory court to which accusations may be brought to be considered by judges and by defendants. Just as in an earthly republic advocates are appointed by the prince to assist litigants and to remedy the mistakes of government, so too in heaven Christ acts as the public advocate of the human race. William frequently calls Christ 'the legislator for Christians'. Many legal decisions regarding the human race are made in heaven by the angelic order of Thrones.

The birth and growth of the orders of friars during the thirteenth century presented challenges to the place and work within church and society of the diocesan and parochial clergy. William, for example, did not include friars or monks in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Friars retaliated vigorously to clerics who denied them a place and a role in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Vigorous quarrels occurred during the 1250s and, indeed, for centuries to come.[11] Hierarchical 'league tables' multiplied, diversified and became contentious. I focus on one example alone, the presentations made by Bonaventure, a university master and from 1257 Minister General of the Franciscan order. Like William of Auvergne, Bonaventure applied the conception of hierarchy to the whole universe – to the divine Trinity, the planets, the individual human soul[12] and much else, and, like William, he analyzed in fine detail the correspondences and resemblances between each and every hierarchy. But the details in Bonaventure's visions are far more profound and much fuller than in William's schemes. They are enshrined chiefly in his *Collationes in Hexaemeron* which he delivered in Paris in 1273, and most of the material summarized here in Tables 1.4 and 1.5 is taken from them.[13]

Table 1.4 is entirely about the celestial hierarchy and its correspondences with the divine Trinity which illuminates it like the sun. Column 1 shows correspondences between each angelic triad and each of the divine persons in the tasks of beatification, rulership and administration, as we might say. Column 2 introduces, alongside the triple distinction between knowledge, power and action, a distinction between the purely contemplative life of the highest angelic triad, the mixed life of contemplation and action led by the middle triad, and the active life led by the lowest. Column 3 develops the same distinction between contemplative and active states by representing

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[11] The classic study of these fights is that of Y. Congar, 'Aspects ecclésiologiques de la querelle entre mendiants et séculiers dans la seconde moitié du XIII^{e} siècle et le début du XIV^{e} siècle', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 36 (1961): 35–151.

[12] See E.-H. Wéber, *Dialogue et dissensions entre Saint Bonaventure et Saint Thomas d'Aquin à Paris (1252–1273)*, Bibliothèque thomiste, 41 (Paris, 1974), pp. 42–9 (*structure trinitaire de la MENS*) with further references.

[13] *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, in *S. Bonaventurae ... Opera omnia* (Quaracchi : Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1891), vol. 5. Also *S. Bonaventurae Collationes in Hexameron et Bonaventuriana quaedam selecta*, ed. F. Delorme, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi, 8 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1934). Cf. J.-G. Bougerol, 'Saint Bonaventure et la hiérarchie dionysienne', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 36 (1969): 131–67. See especially *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Visio IV, coll. II, ed. Delorme (spoken version) and *Collatio XXI*, *Opera omnia*, vol. 5 (enlarged reported version).

Table 1.4 Bonaventure: The Contemplation of the Sun which Illuminates the Heavenly Hierarchy

First principle of hierarchic distinctions: the conformity of the heavenly hierarchy to its exemplar, the Trinity		Second principle of hierarchic distinctions: hierarchic integrity (*triplex genus vitae*)	Third principle of hierarchic distinctions: the multiformity of heavenly monarchy (*praelatus bene ordinatus*)	
First hierarchy of angels corresponding to the Father		*Scientia*: *vita otiosa* led by the *contemplativi*	*Aspectus ad supremam*	
- as he is in himself: Thrones	*ratio beatificantis*	- *sursumactiva*: Seraphim	- *unio tranquilla*: Seraphim	*ordinata per converionem*
- as he is in the Son: Cherubim		- *speculativa*: Cherubim	- *speculatio clara*: Cherubim	
- as he is in the Spirit: Seraphim		- *discretiva*: Thrones	- *susceptio patula et tranquilla*: Thrones	
Middle hierarchy of angels corresponding to the Son		*Ordinatio sive potestas*: *vita permixta* led by the *permixti*	*Aspectus in seipsam*	
- as he is in the Father: Dominations	*ratio principiantis*	- *sublimis*: Dominations	- *imperare quid faciendum*: Dominations	*ordinata per potestatem*
- as he is in himself: Virtues		- *virilis*: Virtues	- *prosequi imperatum*: Virtues	
- as he is in the Spirit: Powers		- *triumphalis*: Powers	- *defendere quod est prosecutum*: Powers	
Third hierarchy of angels corresponding to the Spirit		*Operatio sive actio: vita actuosa* led by the *activi*	*Aspectus ad nos*	
- as he is in the Father: Principalities	*ratio gubernantis*	- *perfectio*: Principalities	- *quid prosequendum vires administrare*: Principalities	*tria beneficia*
- as he is in the Son: Archangels		- *illuminatio*: Archangels	- *quid praeeligendum assistit electioni*: Archangels	
- as he is in himself: Angels		- *purgatio*: Angels	- *quid agendum praeest actioni*: Angels	

Sources: *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Coll. I-II, Visio IV, ed. F. Delorme, Bibliotheca Franciscana scholastica Medii Aevi, 8 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1934), pp. 224–48.
Collationes in Hexaemeron, XX-XXI, *Opera omnia* (10 vols, Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882–1902), vol. 5, pp. 425–36.

Table 1.5 Bonaventure: Contemplation of the Moon which Symbolizes the Church Militant

Heavenly hierarchy symbolized by the Sun	*Processus*: orders in the Church militant according to the light received from the heavenly hierarchy		*Ascensus*: distinctions in the Church militant *secundum rationes ascensuum et graduum ecclesiasticorum*		*Exercitia*: distinctions in the Church militant *secundum rationem exercitiorum*	
Thrones / Seraphim	Three *ordines fundamentales* corresponding to the Father	- as he is in himself: Patriarchal (stability of faith; corresponding to Thrones)	Perfective or consummative grades	Patriarchal (pope and the four patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch; corresponding to the Seraphim)	The order of contemplatives, corresponding to the Spirit, being engendered and not engendering	- *per modum sursumactorium* (e.g. St Francis; corresponding to Seraphim)
Cherubim		- as he is in the Son: Prophetic (clarity of knowledge)		Episcopal (conferring holy orders and confirmation)		- *per modum speculatorium* (Preachers and Minors; corresponding to Cherubim)
Seraphim / Thrones		- as he is in the Spirit: Apostolic (fervour of love; corresponding to Seraphim)		Sacerdotal (administering sacraments necessary for salvation)		- *per modum supplicatorium* (Cistercians, Premonstratensians; corresponding to Thrones)
Dominations	Three *ordines promotivi* corresponding to the Son	- as he is in the Father: Martyrs (purified the Church with their blood)	Illuminative grades	Deacons or Levites (reading the Gospel and offering the chalice)	The order of clergy, both active and contemplative, corresponding to the Son, being engendered and engendering	Bishops
Virtues		- as he is in himself: Confessors (dispersed heresies with their teaching)		Subdeacons (reading the Epistle and preparing the chalice)		Priests
Powers		- as he is in the Spirit: Virgins (exhibit sanctity)		Acolytes (carrying candles)		Ministers (the first six clerical orders)

Principalities		- as he is in the Father: Presidents (prelates of whatever authority)		Exorcists (who chase away demons)		Sacred Princes
Archangels	Three *ordines consummativi* corresponding to the Spirit	- as he is in the Son: Magistrates (masters who teach law, theology, philosophy or any good art which promotes the Church)[1]	Purifying grades	Lectors (who dispel ignorance)	The order of laity, corresponding to the Father, engendering but not engendered	Sacred Consuls
Angels		- as he is in himself: Regulars (religious)[1]		Doorkeepers (who exclude the unclean or used to do so in the early Church)		Sacred People

[1] In Sermo I Contemplatives replace Magistrates and Actives replace Contemplatives in the orders *secundum rationem processus*.

Sources: *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Coll. II-III, Visio IV, ed. F. Delorme, F. Delorme, *S. Bonaventurae Collationes in Hexameron et Bonaventuriana quaedam selecta*, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi, 8 (Quaracchi : Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1934), pp. 234–56.
Collationes in Hexaemeron, XXI-XXII, *Opera omnia* (10 vols, Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882–1902), vol. 5, pp. 431–41.
Sermo I (on the feast of St Michael), *Opera omnia* (10 vols, Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882–1902), vol. 9, pp. 609–18.
Sermo II (on angels), *Opera omnia* (10 vols, Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1882–1902), vol. 9, p. 619.
A similar table is printed by J. Ratzinger, *Die Geschichtstheologie des heiligen Bonaventura* (Munich-Zurich: Schnell & Steiner, 1959), 49 and by J.G. Bougerol, 'Saint Bonaventure et la hiérarchie dionysienne', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 36 (1969), pp. 156–9 (using only Bonaventure's *Collationes*).

the highest angelic triad facing God and the lowest triad facing humanity and bringing benefits to it. Fundamental in this Table is the idea that the divine Trinity is itself a hierarchy which, through the procession of the divine Persons, impresses its character on the angelic hierarchy and thereby assimilates it to the Trinity.

Table 1.5 is about the ecclesiastical hierarchy which is symbolized by the moon which is lit in varying degrees by the sun. Column 2 shows the procession or descent or egress of the Trinity through the angelic hierarchy to the church. This has a historical basis. The orders in the church have evolved. First were laid the foundations which correspond to God the Father: these are the patriarchs, the prophets and the apostles. Then came the promoters of the church who correspond to God the Son: these are the martyrs, confessors and virgins. Finally comes the full achievement, with the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the prelates of the Church, the masters in their *studia* and the religious living under a Rule and professed in the religious life. Column 3, however, presents the response of the church to this *processus*, the response being the *ascensus* or *redditus* or *reductio* of the church militant to God. Reading this column from the bottom up there are displayed the activities of those who purify people, the doorkeepers (who correspond to the order of angels), the lectors and the exorcists; the activities of those who enlighten them, the acolytes, the subdeacons and the deacons; and the activities of those who perfect them, the priests, the bishops, the pope together with the patriarchs (who correspond to the Seraphim in the highest order of angels). Column 4, however, reintroduces the distinction between the higher life of contemplation and the lesser life of activity. For Bonaventure – the friar and the writer of the *Life* of St Francis (1263) – the souls that are the most hierarchized, the most filled with the Spirit, the most contemplative, the most comparable with the Seraphim, the Cherubim and the Thrones, are found in the holiest of the religious orders, in their greatest representative, St Francis himself, in the Mendicant orders and in the orders of Cistercian monks and of Praemonstratensian canons.

Bonaventure takes an evolutionary view of hierarchy. So, of course, do Alan of Lille and William of Auvergne but with an important difference. Alan and William bring the Dionysian hierarchies up to date to the extent of supplying details that had contemporary resonances. They modernize by substituting twelfth- and thirteenth-century realities for fifth-century ones. They have their own aims and purposes. Alan, for example, is especially alert to the dangers facing the church, for example from demons, tyrants and heretics. William, on the other hand, is the champion of an organized clergy working under centralized papal government and likewise the champion of a well-organized secular kingdom. Bonaventure introduces different contemporary realities, the newer religious orders for example, and very notably he places the four oriental patriarchs alongside the pope. This last feature may have a connection with the union of the Greek and Roman churches that took place during the Second Council of Lyons in 1274, a year after the delivery of the *Collationes in Hexaemeron*. Bonaventure preached to the Council. But more fundamental to Bonaventure's visions is his sense of history,[14] his sense that hierarchies have been

[14] On this see J. Ratzinger, *Die Geschichtstheologie des heiligen Bonaventura* (Munich-Zurich: Schnell and Steiner, 1959); English trans. by Z. Hayes, *The Theology of History in St. Bonaventure* (Chicago, 1971).

built up in a successional way which allows him to claim for some of the most recent achievements, most notably those of the friars, the attainment of the highest stages of perfection. Still more fundamental is Bonaventure's distinction within the church militant between an 'official' hierarchy which consists of offices and grades and a 'mystical' hierarchy which is rooted in the generation of God the Son by God the Father and in the procession of God the Spirit from them both.

Chapter 2

Deplatonising the Celestial Hierarchy: Peter John Olivi's Interpretation of the Pseudo-Dionysius

Sylvain Piron

Angels have been a favourite topic of high medieval scholastics. They served as a case study for central philosophical issues, from spaciality and temporality to cognition and language. The interest they attracted cannot be solely explained by the various metaphysical subtleties provided by their bodiless, unchanging and ever-operating intellectual nature. Beyond the wealth of paradoxes they could offer to curious minds, their success is to a large extent also owed to their strategic epistemological importance. They occupy a place on the medieval map of knowledge where Graeco-Arab philosophical traditions and the Judeo-Christian revelation overlap in a manner that necessarily provokes many tensions. Biblical angels are spiritual creatures, playing various parts in the history of salvation, interfering now and then with the earthly course of events, and holding their ranks in the celestial court. On the other hand, the intellectual substances of Greek philosophy are conceived in relation to their cosmological function and as necessary elements in the triple chain of being, causation and intelligibility that holds together the universe.

These two different pedigrees could not be easily reconciled. The encounter of biblical and Neoplatonist angels produced one of the most crucial questions that theologians had to face in the second half of the thirteenth century: could they, or indeed, should they be identified? Except for a few cases to which we will soon turn, the question was not raised so abruptly. Nevertheless, the discussion of any aspect of the angelic being involved an answer to this question, with major epistemological consequences as to the way in which philosophy and theology would be articulated together. This paper will be mainly concerned with the original and seemingly solitary route taken by one of the most adventurous minds of the scholastic era. The Franciscan theologian Peter John Olivi, educated in the Paris *studium* of the order in the years 1266–73, produced his main works during the following decade while teaching in Languedoc convents, before incurring a censure in 1283 on the part of his fellow friars in reaction to the unusual positions he was taking on many issues.[1] His intellectual project must be understood in the background of the debates of this period. Thomas Aquinas was certainly the major thinker with whom he was

[1] David Burr, 'The Persecution of Peter Olivi', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 66.5 (Philadelphia, 1976), is still the standard biographical approach.

sustaining an overall confrontation. More generally, Olivi's main drive was inspired by what he perceived as an abuse of Greek philosophy within theological issues, one of the results of which was, in his view, the unnecessary multiplication of intermediary instances between God and humans. For the same reason, he was also concerned with the philosophical tendencies of the Parisian masters of arts, whom he described as 'Averroists' and who, as recent scholarship has shown, were as much keen on Averroes as on the Neoplatonist tradition.[2]

Discussions on angels occupy a prominent part of Olivi's criticism. As his famous tract on *Glancing through the Philosophers' books* remarks, the higher their object of study, the poorer the result that pagan and Arab philosophers could obtain. If their knowledge of corporeal beings can be partially accepted, their discourse on separate intelligences is wholly erroneous, 'because they discussed them as if they were some kind of gods, as one can clearly see from the book of Proclus and the *Liber de causis*, and from the books of Avicenna and Averroes and many others'.[3] To Franciscan's eyes, these remains of polytheism would necessarily lead to attribute to creatures qualities that befit only God, such as creative power or unlimited cognition. In his view, such theological errors suffice to invalidate at once all endeavour to use pagan cosmology as a basis for angelological discussion. The reference to Proclus in such a context, whose *Elementatio theologicae* had been translated in 1268, is very revealing. Olivi may have had a first-hand knowledge of it and realized that in that work Proclus was indeed describing intelligences as deities. Another hypothesis could be that his source of information on the Neoplatonist religion was Thomas Aquinas's commentary on the *Liber de causis*.[4] Methodically searching to identify the sources of the latter in the *Elementatio theologiae*, Aquinas's efforts were, on the contrary, aiming at safeguarding as much as possible the philosophers' description of the hierarchical structure of the universe, correcting it on the basis of the Pseudo-Dionysius in order to make it consonant with the Christian faith. As Aquinas makes clear in his introduction to the related and unfinished treatise *De substantiis separatis*, he intended to accept all of ancient knowledge on angels that was concordant with faith, and reject only what was contrary to it.[5] No other attempt at reconciling both traditions was pursued as conscientiously and exhaustively in the thirteenth century, and that was certainly not a secondary matter, for in Aquinas's

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On Olivi's early years, see also my 'Olivi et les averroïstes', *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 53.1 (2006): 251–309.

[2] See for instance Dragos Calma and Emanuele Coccia, (eds), *Les sectatores Averrois. Noétique et cosmologie aux XIIIe–XIVe siècles*, *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 53.1/2 (2006): 132–342.

[3] F. Delorme, 'Fr. Petri Ioannis tractatus de perlegendis philosophorum libris', *Antonianum*, 16 (1941): 31–44, also p. 43. This text probably belongs to a very early stage in Olivi's career, around 1274–76.

[4] Thomas Aquinas, *Super Librum de Causis Expositio*, ed. H.-D. Saffrey (Fribourg, 1954). See in particular lectio 3 and lectio 32.

[5] Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis* (in *Opera omnia*, ed. Leonina, vol. 40), (Rome: ad Sanctam Sabinam, 1968).

cosmology and metaphysics, angels occupy a crucial place as warrants of world order and intelligibility.[6]

Taking a diametrically opposed stance, Peter John Olivi refused any identification between angels and intelligences. While he may appear isolated in explicitly holding such a radical view, Olivi was expressing concerns that were shared by a large section of the scholastic world. Thus, in the same period, the authoritarian answer of the Bishop of Paris to the same question was also a clear negative. As Andrea Robiglio has remarked,[7] one of the peculiarities of the 1277 condemnation lies in its emphasis on angels and separate substances or intelligences – the syllabus revealingly using the three terms alternatively.[8] This semantic hesitation reveals to what extent Bishop Tempier and his advisers perceived a dogmatical threat in this issue. While the works examined from the faculty of arts concerned only the philosophers' 'intelligences', Tempier must have felt that ascribing their characteristics and attributes to the Christian 'angels' could entail serious dangers for the faith. As they appeared in the lectures delivered at the arts faculty, most notably in Siger of Brabant's questions on the *Liber de causis*, these intelligences were invested with semi-divine qualities such as eternity, immutability and actual infinity, which seemed to blur the gap between the divine and created orders. It is within that section of the syllabus that Thomas Aquinas's position on this matter was very possibly aimed, and quite rightly, since among all scholastic theologians, the Angelic Doctor is certainly the one who most consistently tried to draw this identification to its ultimate consequences.

As Loris Sturlese has pointed out, Albert the Great took quite a different path.[9] At the time of his first commentary on the *Ethics* (Cologne, 1250–51), which inaugurates his project of making the whole of the Aristotelian corpus understandable to the Latin world, Albert pointed at a methodological disjuncture. The intelligences, he explained, can be understood in two ways: either from the viewpoint of the divine offices performed by the nine orders of angels, or according to the order of nature. A philosophical inquiry, such as was being performed there, could only be entitled to discuss them in the second way.[10] This epistemological turn, based on the methodological distinction between the knowledge that can be obtained of celestial beings by natural reason and the one that is accessible through revelation, is indeed

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[6] The latest treatment of Aquinas's angelology is provided by Tiziana Suárez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie. Subjectivité et fonction cosmologique des substances séparées à la fin du XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Vrin, 2002) and *Connaissance et langage des anges selon Thomas d'Aquin et Gilles de Rome* (Paris: Vrin, 2002). See also Isabel Iribarren's contribution to the present volume.

[7] Andrea A. Robiglio, 'Breaking the Great Chain of Being. A note on the Paris condemnations of 1277, Thomas Aquinas and the proper subject of metaphysics', *Verbum. Analecta Neolatina* (Budapest), 6 (2004): 51–9. Also essential in that respect is Ruedi Imbach, 'Notule sur le commentaire du *Liber de causis* de Siger de Brabant et ses rapports avec Thomas d'Aquin', *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theology*, 43 (1996): 304–23.

[8] David Piché (ed.), *La condamnation parisienne de 1277* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1999), pp. 100–104, art. 69–86.

[9] Loris Sturlese, *Storia della filosofia tedesca nel medioevo. Dagli inizi alla fine del secolo XII* (Florence: Olschki, 1990), pp. 90–96.

[10] Albertus Magnus, *Super Ethica*, ed. W. Kübel (Münster: Aschendorff, 1987), vol. 2, p. 446.

a major event in the history of Western thought. Still, its chronology needs to be slightly revised.

During the previous years, in Paris and then in Cologne, Albert was engaged in the commentary of most of the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus. Lecturing on the *Celestial Hierarchy* shortly before 1248, he had already stated the same point, albeit from a theological perspective. In the first chapter, a preliminary question had specified that, if the hierarchical disposition of angels is the proper subject of that book, the science involved is part of theology and its inquiries governed by faith, not by the principles of natural reason.[11] Discussing how angels 'illuminate' humans, the Dominican master assures us that this is something the philosophers can easily solve. Taking the intelligences as motors of the stars would allow to posit different types of natural influences on sublunar realities. By contrast, the Christian theologian is not entitled to do so since, for him, angels cannot be formally associated with heavenly bodies. He should therefore consider their intellectual influence upon human minds only in as much as it is exerted in a voluntary way, while fulfilling a divinely ordered mission.[12]

In these remarks, Albert was criticizing the conciliatory attitude of Philip the Chancellor, who was willing to associate the divine service performed by angels with the cosmological function of the intelligences.[13] The impossibility of equating both kinds of intellectual beings has been henceforth constantly maintained by Albert, on the grounds of an incompatibility between their two functions. Much later, in the *De causis et processu universitatis* (1263), Albert blamed the Jewish philosophers for having confused 'angels' with 'intelligences'.[14] This work, constructed as a paraphrase of the *Liber de causis*, was intended as a mere presentation of the 'Peripatecian' teachings (to which the *Liber de causis* would still belong, in Albert's

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[11] Albertus Magnus, *Super Dionysium de Caelesti Hierarchia*, ed. P. Simon and W. Kübel (Münster: Aschendorff, 1993), p. 45: 'Dicimus quod universalis habitus regens in omnibus theologicis est fides, quoniam in ea non possumus per principia rationis, sed per ea quae sunt supra rationem et naturam. Unde in haec doctrina quae pars theologiae est, fides est habitus regens, fides, dico, indistincta, quae est in credendo veritatem sacrae scripturae.'

[12] Albertus Magnus, *Super Dionysium*, p. 67: 'Dicimus quod secundum opinionem philosophorum facile esset respondere huic quaestioni. Ipsi enim ponunt intelligentias motores orbium et applicatos ad motum … Non autem possumus nos sic dicere, eo quod non ponimus angelos omnes coniunctos motui nec omnes movere orbes; et ideo oportet aliter dicere, scilicet quod angeli non illuminant animas nostras nisi missi ad nos.'

[13] Albertus Magnus, *Super Dionysium*, p. 86 : 'Nos autem distinguimus ordines secundum officia, quibus obsequuntur deo. Unde si poneremus aliquos angelos in motu orbium servire Deo, sicut dixit Cancellarius Philippus et Hieronimus ... omnes essent de inferiori ordine, licet non possimus ponere sicut philosophi qui posuerunt eos coniunctos mobilibus ut formas.' Philippus Cancellarius, *Summa de Bono*, ed. N. Wicki (Bern: Francke, 1985), contains the earliest major angelological treatise in the thirteenth century. On the gradual emergence of an interest on angels in the early scholastic period, see Marcia Colish, 'Early Scholastic Angelology', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 62 (1995): 80–109.

[14] Albertus Magnus, *De causis et processu universitatis*, p. 58, lines 19–29: 'Ordines autem intelligentiarum, quas nos determinavimus, quidam dicunt esse ordines angelorum et intelligentias vocant angelos. Et hoc quidem dicunt Isaac et Rabbi Moyses et ceteri philosophi iudaeorum. Sed nos hoc verum esse non credimus …' See also pp. 191–2.

eyes). A theological discussion of angels would have been out of place there, but a few passing remarks show that the great Dominican scholar was drawing more than a methodological distinction between these two kinds of entities: while angels were described by the ancient theologians as capable of motion and of assuming a body, the Peripateticians' intelligences were instead 'abstracted from all difference in time and space'.[15] Albert's followers, such as Dietrich von Freiberg and Berthold von Moosburg, would argue more explicitly along these lines, within the context of an opposition between natural and divine providence.[16] Thus, what had started as an epistemological distinction between different kinds of argument, followed by a separation between two kinds of celestial beings, was finally taking the form of a harmonious coexistence between the natural and supernatural orders of reality, each regulated by its own rules.

It may appear paradoxical to bring together Albert the Great and Peter John Olivi on such an issue, since they represent perhaps the most conflicting views of the relation between theology and philosophy in the thirteenth century. Nevertheless, both theologians were admittedly operating a similar distinction, if guided by diametrically opposite reasons. While the German Dominican school was disassociating angels and intelligences with the aim of preserving an autonomous realm for philosophy, the Languedoc Franciscan was seeking to disentangle the description of biblical angels from all concerns linked with the cosmological function of the separate intelligences. Their respective endeavours had indeed divergent purposes. If both of them were contented with safeguarding purely 'theological' angels, Olivi had no interest at all in the philosophical entities to which Albert would devote so much energy. Another common aspect uniting them is the importance both accorded to the Pseudo-Dionysius. Olivi was aware of the latter's connection to Proclus, a connection that Aquinas had already pointed out. Therefore, if the Franciscan's overall project can be described as aiming at a 'deplatonisation of the world',[17] intending to reject all natural mediations between God and the human world, one of his most daring tasks would be to 'deplatonise' Dionysius himself.

The main locus is Olivi's own commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy*, of which only a long preliminary disputed question has been published by F. Delorme.[18] This work occupies an important place in the young Franciscan's career. It is indeed the only one that has been properly 'published' before his censure in 1283. The commentary is

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[15] Albertus Magnus, *De causis*, p. 92, lines 24–36.

[16] L. Sturlese, 'Il "De animatione caeli" di Teodorico di Freiberg', in R. Creytens and P. Künzle (eds), *Xenia Medii Aevi Historiam illustrantia oblata Thomae Kaeppeli OP* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1978), pp. 174–247. Also T. Suárez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie*, pp. 143–71.

[17] As Prof. Theo Kobusch kindly pointed out to me, it would be more accurate, but less elegant, to speak of a 'de-neo-platonisation', since Plato himself has little to do with it.

[18] Peter John Olivi, *Quaestio de angelicis influentiis*, in Bonaventura, *Collationes in Hexaemeron et Bonaventuriana quaedam selecta*, ed. F. Delorme (Quaracchi: Coll. S. Bonaventura, 1934), pp. 363–412. I am currently preparing a critical edition of the whole commentary in collaboration with Piroska Nagy. The *Lectura super librum de Hierarchia Angelica* (henceforth, *LSHA*) will be quoted below from its most reliable manuscript, Vatican, B.A.V, Urb. lat. MS 480.

dedicated to his provincial minister who, as the preface states, had commissioned its writing. This local dignitary, Bermond d'Anduze, who disappears from the records after 1280, had been a strong support for Olivi during the previous years. He sensed that his protégé had important points to make on the understanding of the Pseudo-Dionysius, and encouraged him to do so. Various clues allow us to locate quite precisely the composition of this commentary during the summer lessons of 1280 within the Franciscan provincial *studium* in Montpellier.[19] Underpinning his work on the latest advances of scholarship, Olivi had at his disposal Robert Grosseteste's translation and was making abundant use of the commentary appended to it, mostly for its semantic and grammatical explanations of the Greek text. Before dealing with this commentary, it may be profitable to turn first to some other passages in which Olivi clarifies, in a shorter and sharper way, the guiding rule of his interpretation of the *Celestial Hierarchy*.

A few years before the composition of the commentary, some passing remarks show that he had already made a radical exegetical choice on his approach to the Pseudo-Dionysius. These comments appear in a series of disputed questions produced in Languedoc soon after the 1277 Paris condemnation. A number of these texts strongly attack the main tenets of Aquinas's angelology.[20] Two issues in particular were subjected to intense criticism. In the first place, the lack of material composition in angels was in itself perceived as a dangerous position, since conceiving them as pure forms would make them closer to God than to the rest of creation. And since matter was, for Aquinas, the principle of individuation, this position entailed, as a consequence, that no individual angel could be identical to another, which meant that each angel had to be a species of its own – in Olivi's view a useless natural constraint imposed on God's unlimited creative power.

Another major bone of contention concerned angelic cognition. According to Aquinas and many other thirteenth-century theologians, this kind of cognition relies on innate ideas, 'connatural intelligible species' through which angels would obtain knowledge of all that they can know by nature. These innate ideas would also serve as criteria for the hierarchical distinction of purely intellectual beings. The higher the angels, the more universal and less numerous the ideas they would require.[21] Olivi's theory of cognition rejects and literally reverses the main points of Aquinas's doctrine.[22] Denying the necessity of any kind of intermediary intelligible 'species' in human cognition, Olivi rejects it as well in the case of angels. On that particular issue, he is again dismantling an unwelcome dependence on a polytheist aspect of pagan philosophy. If intelligences are conceived as gods, their forms would be identical to their essence; a property that, for a Christian, could befit only God. Olivi then

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[19] A full study on the chronology of Olivi's work is forthcoming in the *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, synthesizing elements exposed in my unpublished PhD thesis (Paris: Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, 1999).

[20] These texts have recently been analysed in great detail by Tiziana Suárez-Nani, 'Pierre de Jean Olivi et la subjectivité angélique', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 70 (2003): 233–316. On their dating, see my 'Olivi et les averroïstes', pp. 255–7.

[21] Aquinas, *ST*, Ia, q. 55 a. 2 and 3.

[22] Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle-Ages* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997); also Dominik Perler, *Théories de l'intentionnalité au Moyen Age* (Paris: Vrin, 2003).

perspicaciously notes that for exactly the same reason Aquinas cannot allow himself to follow his sources thoroughly.[23] Going back to the same issue while commenting on chapter 12 of the *Celestial Hierarchy*, he speaks of Aquinas as 'following the philosophers' theology'.[24] He is even more critical of the way in which his adversary pretends to agree, not only with the philosophers (in that case, the *Liber de causis*), but also with the Pseudo-Dionysius. As an answer, Olivi starts by stating that all that Dionysius had to say about angels refers only to their state of glory and, therefore, should not be used as a basis to describe their natural cognition.[25] The same remark occurs again in the course of a long question on free will. While arguing in favour of the use of discursive reason in angels, Olivi insists that they cannot instantly have actual knowledge of all the conclusions that can be drawn from first principles, but would have to acquire it by making the necessary logical inferences. If Dionysius appears to deny such use of reason in angels, this is because he was concerned only with their beatific vision.[26]

These passing remarks are confirmed by an equally abrupt statement made in the opening remarks of the commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy*. As usual in a scholastic prologue, the lecture starts by explaining the subject-matter, the form and the end of the commented book. The first of the questions is solved in one remarkable sentence: 'Here, it is not dealt with the nature or the natural properties of angels, except maybe secondarily and for other reasons; instead, it is only dealt with the properties that the angelic orders have obtained through glory and consummated grace.'[27] Olivi, who did not consider theology as a science, did not put the question in the same terms as Albert had done. But the result was unequivocally the same: for Olivi too, the *Celestial Hierarchy* is distinctively a work of theology, not of natural philosophy. Its readers should not be fooled by its apparent proximity with pagan philosophy. Indeed, the 'most Christian theologian' was believed to be a direct disciple of saint Paul.[28] Like John the Evangelist, he had been educated in Greek

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[23] Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, ed. Bernhard Jansen (Quaracchi: Coll. S. Bonaventura, 1922–26), 3 vols, (henceforth, *Summa*), vol. 1, q. 36, pp. 641–2.

[24] *LSHA*, fol. 159va: 'Quidam enim theologie philosophorum sequentes superserunt ex hoc argumentum quod angeli sint universales, et quod in superioribus species speciales sint universaliores quam in inferioribus, quia et essentias seu naturas ipsorum superiorum dicunt esse universaliores quam naturas inferiorum.'

[25] *Summa*, vol. 1, q. 34, p. 613: 'in omnibus verbis Dionysii est regulariter advertendum quod semper loquitur de angelis et eorum cognitione, prout sunt beati.'

[26] *Summa*, vol. 2, q. 57, pp. 381–2: 'Si autem aliquando a Dionysio videantur dici non habere intellectum discursivum, scias quod ipse fere semper loquitur de eis in quantum sunt beati videntes omnia per Verbum in Verbo.'

[27] *LSHA*, fol. 130rb, Prol.: 'Quantum autem ad materiam, sciendum quod hic non agitur de naturis aut proprietatibus naturalibus angelorum, nisi forte aliquando ex consequenti et propter aliud, sed solum hic agitur de proprietatibus ordinum angelicorum quos per gloriam et consummatam gratiam sunt consecuti.'

[28] *LSHA*, fol. 143ra, cap. 4: 'Dionysius qui fuit Pauli singularis discipulus.'

philosophy and spoke the Platonists' language.[29] Yet, after his conversion in Athens, he put this knowledge to use for a totally different purpose. In this light, an attempt to read into this theological text a philosophical inquiry on the nature of celestial beings would amount to a total misunderstanding of this work.

The crux of the matter can now be stated clearly. In Olivi's view, the celestial hierarchy does not consist in a hierarchy of intellectual natures; it cannot be depicted as a ladder of spiritual beings, one more perfect than the next, that would somehow fill in the abyss separating God and humans. For Olivi, this gap is unsurmountable, and, on the contrary, should be widened as much as possible in order to safeguard both divine and human freedom. Faced with such a divide, angels would fall irrevocably on the side of the creatures. The hierarchy of which Dionysius is speaking, then, only consists in a hierarchy of 'consummated grace' accorded *unequally* between subjects sharing an *equal* dignity to receive it.

In the third chapter of the commentary a long discussion is devoted to the Dionysian definition of 'hierarchy' as consisting in 'order, science, operation and assimilation to godlikeliness'. Discussing Grosseteste's and Hugh of Saint-Victor's discussion of the same issue, Olivi takes great care to explain that 'science' cannot be limited to the intellectual acts but has to involve as well the most sacred one which is the act of charity. For that purpose, he translates the initial terms 'science and operation' into the scholastic dyad of 'habitual disposition (*habitus*) and act'. This move allows him to advance, later on, his own definition of hierarchy as consisting of 'dispositions and acts of grace, and an order of dignity and primacy or subjection and inferiority, either connected to the dispositions and acts of grace or comprehended within them'.[30] Such a definition would certainly prevent any possibility of reading the text on a noetical key.

Among the consequences of this interpretative choice, is the unusual position Olivi is compelled to take in his defence, on the strict equality of the human and the angelic souls. In this connection, a later question deals with the replacement of fallen angels by the elected. Inasmuch as their absolute beings are concerned, the intellectual part of the human soul (*mens humana*) is strictly equal to the angelic mind.[31] On the basis of this identity, a limited number of humans is able to compensate

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[29] Peter John Olivi, *Lectura super Iohannem*, Florence, Bibl. Medicea-Laurenziana, Plut. X dext. MS 8, fol. 6vb–7ra: 'conformans se phylosophie grecorum cuius et in quorum lingua hoc evangelium scribebat, utitur nominibus abstractis et sepe cum articulis in designationem precellentie et transcendentie divine. Quando enim Platonici volebant proprie exprimere Deum et eius perfectiones vel in abstracto vel in neutro substantivo cum articulis distinctis dicebant «lo bonum», «lo ens», «la vita», et aliquando addebant ibi «per se» vel «super», dicendo «lo per se ens», «lo per se bonum» vel «lo superbonum ens» vel «super bonum» et huius modis loquendi multum utitur Dyonisius in libris suis tamquam Grecus et in grecorum philosophorum sapientia enutritus.'

[30] *LSHA*, fol. 145va, cap. 6: 'Sicut enim ex hiis que supra dicta sunt patet, ratio ierarchie consistit in habitibus et actibus gratie et in ordine dignitatis et presidentie vel subiectionis et subsistentie habitibus et actibus gratie connexa vel in illis comprehensa.' This definition encompasses both the celestial hierarchy, where the order of dignities is included in the acts and habits of grace, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy, where these terms are merely connected together.

[31] *Summa*, vol. 1, q. 48, p. 759.

for the number of fallen angels in the celestial court. The same position is defended in the course of the commentary, against Aquinas's distinction between the 'rational' nature of humans and the 'intellectual' nature of angels. Although such a distinction is indeed grounded on the text itself, Olivi insists that Dionysius is not talking here about the respective essences of humans and angels, but only of their hierarchical status. Furthermore, he opposes to this distinction the well-known promise that 'we will be like angels in heaven' (Mt. 22, 30),[32] understanding the comparative as a real sign of identity.

Another difficult task was to explain the unequal distribution of one and the same gift of divine grace, identical in substance. Speaking with extreme caution on a topic for which no experimental knowledge is available, Olivi suggests that this unique gift can be understood in a variety of ways.[33] In the same way as the human body is composed of a plurality of partial forms (*rationes*) that can be added or diminished without jeopardizing the unity of the whole, one act can be subdivided into a multiplicity of partial forms (*rationes*) closely linked with one another. Following that model, celestial hierarchies and orders would differ according to the number of partial forms they would receive from one and the same gift of grace.[34] Degrees within the angelic hierarchy would then only depend on this unequal distribution. The conclusion of such an argument leads once more to a total reversal of Aquinas's views. Instead of being defined by its most universal and simple character, the higher degrees of the beatific vision would be described as encompassing the immense variety of partial forms under which God can be perceived by the glorious minds.

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[32] *LSHA*, fol. 142va–b: 'Tertio forte dubitabit quis de hoc quod nos vocat rationales, angelos vero intellectuales ac si sint duo gradus essentiales entium gradatim ascendentium, sicut sunt esse et vivere. Ex quo quidam acceperunt quod intellectualitate sit differencia specifica angeli, rationale vero sit differentia ipsius hominis … hic ad presens tamen dicere sufficiat quod ex verbis Dionysii hoc trahi non potest, quia ipse non curat hic loqui de diversitate essentiali hominum et angelorum, sed solum de diversitate status eorum ierarchici, quin pocius ipse alibi vult quod salva tota specie nostre nature, nos erimus aliquando intellectuales sicut nunc sunt ipsi, quod esse non posset si predicta sunt vera.' See also fol. 145va: 'Tenemus enim pro firmo et hoc ipsum auctor iste dicit libro de *Divinis Nominibus*, capitulo primo, confirmans hoc per verbum Christi dicentis Mt. 22, quod erimus 'sicut angeli Dei in celo'.'

[33] *LSHA*, fol. 146ra: 'Circa perscrutationem huius questionis et consimilium est cum multa sobrietate iudicii procedendum, quia circa archana supercelestium modicam aut nullam habemus experientiam … Occurrunt autem mee modicitati ad presens duo modi satis, ut credo, probabiles … Primus igitur est quod, eisdem donis aliquo modo eiusdem speciei existentibus in omnibus ordinibus et ierarchiis, possint plures rationes ad invicem modo aliquo specie differentes in predictis donis multiformiter comprehendi, ex quarum diversitate et mutua preeminencia formalis diversitas ierarchiarum et ordinum statuatur.'

[34] *LSHA*, fol. 146vb: 'ponit modus iste quod in superioribus ordinis et ierarchiis, caritas et sapientia et consimilia dona, plures et eminenciores rationes amoris et sapientie in se habeant quam in inferioribus, sicut scientia magistri plures habet in se rationes scientiales eiusdem scientie quam habeat scientia discipuli sui, et pro tanto modus iste ponit ierarchias differre per rationes donorum varias et inter se specie differentes, quia licet habitus totalis ipsorum donorum sunt idem specie iuxta modum superius prescriptum, nihilominus habent inter se plures rationes partiales ab invicem specie differentes.'

A major theological concern underlies Olivi's position. Earlier in 1280, he had been working on another treatise that is unfortunately not extant. The treatise dealt with 'the superiority of Christ and his mother's soul over all the other ones'.[35] Some traces or implications of this discussion can be found elsewhere, in other surviving texts. The equality of human and angelic minds is advocated in order to conclude with the confirmation of an article of faith: 'Thus we believe that the soul of Christ is more noble than any angelic mind'.[36] The statement is as clear as it can be. The human soul of Christ, together with his mother's, occupies the first rank of the celestial court, higher than any angel.[37] According to some views, saint Francis already occupies the third rank, having taken the place left vacant by Lucifer.[38] The very possibility of this being so, required not only a natural equality of all intellects, but, even more, an ascription of the principle of hierarchization to the sole realm of grace.

The same demands of faith are at the centre of the main issue under discussion in the long preliminary question which had been disputed shortly before the commentary. Here, in a rather solemn way, Olivi announces that he parts with 'the common opinion of modern doctors' who refuse to admit that any angel could contribute directly to the substantial glory of an inferior one, but would only play an indirect role in it.[39] This general agreement had resulted from the condemnation of 1241, which strongly emphasized the personal and direct character of the beatific vision.[40] Olivi felt it was possible to follow a different path, treating the common opinion with the respect due to no more than a fallible human opinion.[41] The possibility of an active part played by a superior angel in the beatific vision of an inferior one is argued in a complex and subtle way. One of Olivi's crucial arguments runs as follows. As he sees God, the angel, in all his intellectual clarity, becomes his mirror and his expressive image, in such a manner that the lower angels, by seeing him, see reflected in him a vision

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[35] See my 'Les œuvres perdues d'Olivi: essai de reconstitution', *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 91 (1998): 370–71.

[36] *Summa*, q. 48, p. 759: 'Unde et animam Christi quoad omnia credimus nobiliorem omni mente angelica.'

[37] *LSHA*, fol. 145vb: 'Certa fide tenemus scilicet quod Christus in quantum homo et eius mater, qui utique sunt eiusdem speciei nobiscum, sunt in gradu ierarchico transcendente omnes ierarchias et ordines angelorum et hominum beatorum.'

[38] *Summa*, vol. 1, q. 47, p. 753.

[39] F. Delorme (ed.), *De angelicis influentiis*: 'est hodie modernorum doctorum communis opinio quod nullus angelus illuminat inferiorem angelum in hiis que spectant ad eorum gloriam substancialem.'

[40] M.-D. Chenu, 'Le dernier avatar de la théologie orientale en Occident au XIIIe siècle', in *Mélanges A. Pelzer* (Louvain, 1947), pp. 159–81, reprinted in *La Théologie au douxième siècle* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1976).

[41] F. Delorme (ed.), *De angelicis influentiis*: 'Licet enim cum reverencia sit tractandus pro eo quod est omnium doctorum huius temporis, nisi tamen prius indubitabili fide claresceret, quod est de mente et substancia catholice fidei, non est ei tamquam catholice fidei adherendum, sed solum tamquam humane opinioni modernorum doctorum.' This criticism is aimed specifically at Thomas Aquinas, *ST*, Ia q. 106 a. 1 ad 1. Nevertheless, all 'modern' doctors, including Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure, are being criticized.

of God to which they do not have a direct access.[42] Such a vision, reflected on the superior angels, certainly adds something to the substantial glory of the lower ones, allowing to their more limited capacities an augmentation of beatitude that they could not have obtained by themselves.[43]

The key to this innovation rests again on the same move, which anchors the celestial hierarchy on the created human soul of Christ. Having been so closely united to God, Christ's soul enjoys his vision in an incomparable way. Its ascent to the top of the celestial court certainly gave angels a new and higher taste of the divinity.[44] In other words, the event of the Passion did affect the unchanging history of these eviternal beings. Likewise, one can deduce that the ascent of Francis must have had a similar effect. There seems to be no objection to the possibility that the substantial glory of the blessed would increase constantly as new elects take their place within the celestial court.[45] These thoughts gradually lead us to the core of what Olivi was attempting to convey in his re-interpretation of the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus. Against the Neoplatonist view of the intelligences as mediating instances, Olivi insists on the sole mediation of Christ between the believer and the creator. The opening lines of the *Celestial Hierarchy* already gives Olivi the occasion to comment on that role.[46] This theme constitutes indeed the centre of gravity of the whole commentary. The true meaning of the shift Olivi is operating in his interpretation of the celestial hierarchy lies in this defence of the exclusivity of the Christic mediation. Beyond this Christological emphasis, one can also sense the

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[42] F. Delorme (ed.), *De angelicis influentiis*, pp. 372–3: 'Constat enim quod illa intellectualis et habitualis claritas et illa actualis visio, qua superior angelus videt Deum, est Dei speculum et imago expressissima et suo obiecto, scilicet Deo, immediatissima et coniunctissima et totaliter in eum tamquam in suum intimum obiectum ordinata et relata, in tantum quod nullus posset videre actum illius visionis quin eo ipso aliquo modo videret Deum prout est eius obiectum … [angelus inferior] videt enim Deum prout est obiectum gloriae superiorum ordinum et prout in eo refulget et repraesentatur.' It should be noted that Olivi had a strong taste for mirrors. See also *Summa*, vol. 3, q. 73, p. 67: 'Post hoc attende de reflexione aspectus a speculis, quod est praemissis admirabilius, unde et specula in nostro vulgari vocamus miracula et speculari in eis vocamus mirari.'

[43] F. Delorme (ed.), *De angelicis influentiis*, p. 367.

[44] F. Delorme (ed.), *De angelicis influentiis*, p. 373: 'Hoc autem evidenter patet consideranti quid gloriae provenit angelis ex gloria animae Christi a tempore incarnationis Verbi et citra …'

[45] F. Delorme (ed.), *De angelicis influentiis*, p. 405: 'Forte dicetur quod secundum hoc continue cresceret substantialis gloria beatorum, quia in nova glorificatione cuiuslibet animae de novo introeuntis caelos cresceret gloria eorum, saltem in glorificatione illarum quae ad superiores ordines assumuntur …'

[46] *LSHA*, fol. 131ra: 'Ex prima enim propositione qua dicitur quod omnis perfecta illuminacio a Deo in nos descendit et sic per consequens in Deum nos reducit sequitur quod si nos volumus illuminari ad contemplandum supercelestia, quod debemus invocare Christum qui est ipsa veritas et essentialius fontani ac paterni luminis et quo omnis humana illuminacio procedit, et per quam tamquam per nostrum mediatorem ad patrem qui est fons luminis nos reducimur. Hinc igitur est quod ante primam conclusionem, istam primo interponit, dans in hoc ipso nobis exemplum inchoandi nostras inquisiciones et studia ab oratione et a Christi invocata intermediatione.'

importance of the historical dimension that is being introduced here. The dynamic conception of the diffusion of beatific vision among the elect and the angels in their state of glory can be read as an indicator that, in Olivi's view, eternity is not an immutable state[47] but rather the continuation of a history of grace, in which the Incarnation marks the central event. And since even the superior angels delight in perceiving God's reflections in the lower ones,[48] this continuous reverberation of the divine light could be compared to the entropy of a thermodynamic system tending towards its infinite source of energy.

We have been insisting so far on the originality and main peculiarities of Olivi's approach, which distance him from any other contemporary theologian. However, it is necessary to acknowledge a major source of inspiration in Bonaventure's angelology.[49] On many issues, Olivi appears to be taking a step further with respect to some tendencies already present in his master's writings. For instance, Bonaventure was not prepared to accept a total equality in dignity between the human mind and the angelic one, still accepting a natural basis as explanation for the angelic hierarchy. It can be argued that Olivi was following the path traced in the *Collationes in Hexaemeron* (1273), which made a strong impression on the young Franciscan student. In this work, Bonaventure advises to interpret all instances of 'emanations', 'rivers' or 'fountains' found in the Scriptures as referring to the sole flows of grace.[50] This is rigorously what Olivi did in his reading of the Pseudo-Dionysius.

Going back to our initial confrontation with Albert the Great, a first conclusion can be drawn on an epistemological level. The core of Olivi's view lies in a distinction, not between fields of inquiry, but rather between orders of reality. The disassociation he propounds here between the orders of grace and nature is a striking feature of his thought that deserves to be presented parallel to Albert's disjunction. Olivi makes a strong point on this same issue in the first question *De novissimis*. Among the arguments advanced to prove that happiness can be obtained without the vision of God, one presents a clear Neoplatonist stamp. It states that the return (*reditus*) of all beings to God has to conform itself to the order of their procession from God (*exitus*). Therefore, angels, who normally play the role of intermediaries in the procession of creatures from God, should fulfil a similar function in their final return.[51] Although Olivi's rejection of this argument goes without major difficulties, it does allow him

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[47] *Summa*, vol. 3, q. 75, p. 144.

[48] F. Delorme (ed.), *De angelicis influentiis*, p. 406.

[49] Jacques Guy Bougerol, 'Saint Bonaventure et le Pseudo-Denys l'Aréopagite' in *idem*., *Saint Bonaventure: études sur les sources de sa pensée* (Northampton: Variorum, 1989), pp. 33–123. Also Barbara Faes de Mottoni, *San Bonaventura e la scala di Giacobbe*, *Letture di angelologia*, (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1995).

[50] Bonaventura, *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, 3, 16, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 5 (Quaracchi: Coll. S. Bonaventura, 1891), p. 346: 'Unde ubicumque in Scripturis fit mentio de emanationibus, de fluminibus paradisi, de scaturiginibus fontium, ad hunc [sc. multitudinem gratiarum] referuntur.'

[51] Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones de novissimis*, ed. P. Maranesi (Grottaferrata: Coll. S. Bonaventura, 2004), p. 91: 'Item, ordo finalis reductionis omnium in Deum debet conformari ordini primordiali exitus rerum a Deo, ergo sicut in exitu sunt angeli ordinati tamquam intermedii inter nos et Deum, sic debet esse et in finali redditu.'

to make a remarkable statement. It does not suffice to stress that angels are not in any way intermediaries in God's creative action. More importantly, Olivi wants to emphasize that, since the final return to God belongs to the supernatural, it does not need to mirror the natural process of production of things. The only supernatural symmetry there is between the two lies in the fact that creation is the act of God alone, just as the final beatitude concerns God's vision alone.[52] A third remark hammers this point in by recalling that the order of grace does not necessarily follow that of nature. On the contrary, if it allows for a greater manifestation of the grace of the benefactor, the last in the hierarchy can become first and vice versa.

On the other hand, the comparison with Albert the Great serves to acknowledge an apparent disregard on the part of Olivi. While the Dominican distinguishes and articulates two levels of reality, the Franciscan does not seem to have had any qualms at leaving aside the whole natural science of the heavens. However, it would be rash to assert that the price for Olivi's radical theological interpretation of the *Celestial Hierarchy* is a necessary neglect of all cosmology. In order to make sense of his attitude, his own peculiar strategies on strictly philosophical issues have to be recalled. As he often stated, his principal aim was to question the received Aristotelian science, if only to show that the books of the ancient philosophers could not be treated as infallible sources of knowledge. Following Siger of Brabant, he insisted that philosophy could not be contented with arguments drawn merely from authority.[53] In Olivi's view, many of Aristotle's statements have not been sufficiently proven and should not be revered as first principles.[54] The main grounds on which he tried to prove Aristotle wrong was the definition of the categories and issues related to physics, especially concerning movement.

In what has been preserved of his writings, little attention is given to cosmological issues. But the little there is shows that Olivi intended to maintain, on this topic as well, the usual defying attitude. For instance, he was prepared to defend the opinion that the matter of all material beings belongs to the same species, unconcerned about Aristotle's opposing view that the incorruptible matter of the heavens belongs

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[52] Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones de novissimis*, p. 93: 'Secundo dicendum quod pro quanto finalis reductio est supernaturalis, non debet coaequari naturali ordine exitus rerum, sed solum eius supernaturali ordini in quantum est supernaturalis. Et hoc modo invenitur ibi coaequatio, quia sicut creatio est a solo Deo, sic et finalis beatificatio est a solo ipso et in ipso. Tertio dicendum est quod ordo gratie non necessario nec semper sequitur ordinem nature, quin potius aliquando ut gratia largitoris magis appareat …'

[53] See David Burr, 'Petrus Ioannis Olivi and the Philosophers', *Franciscan Studies*, 31 (1971): 41–71; also François-Xavier Putallaz, *Insolente liberté. Controverses et condamnations au XIIIe siècle* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1995), pp. 132–5; Sylvain Piron, 'Olivi et les averroïstes', pp. 260–65.

[54] Peter John Olivi, 'Epistola ad fratrem R.', ed. S. Piron, C. Kilmer, E. Marmursztejn, *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 91 (1998), p. 56: 'In talibus autem recitationibus hoc super omnia intendebam quod non nimis secure inhereret homo dictis Aristotelis quasi principiis inerrabilibus, sed potius averteret quod in rebus difficillimis nimisque perplexis, sine omni ratione et contrarietatum discussione plura dixit, que hodie tanquam prima principia, immo tanquam vera fides tenentur.'

to a different kind from the corruptible one.[55] In the same vein, the *De novissimis* contains a long and imaginative discussion of the possibilities of sensorial bliss in the heavens, admitting that they could be 'the vehicle and medium of the most noble melodies, sweet-smelling fragrances and the most pleasing flavours'.[56] This digression ends with a severe note, recalling that it is not the task of theology to dwell on such topics. The whole discussion was in fact meant to respond to the opinion of philosophers who ground their science on sensorial experience and deny other possibilities for insufficient reasons.[57] In the end, such an attitude opened the way, on purely theological grounds, for a non-Aristotelian cosmology – if not ever materializing in a serious attempt to fulfil such a programme.

But if Olivi's angelology leaves very little for cosmology, it brings forwards important discussions on a different field. As was made clear, with him angels become more akin to humans than they do with most theologians. Thus, an inquiry into their properties and actions could serve as a test-case for the discussion of anthropological issues on the idealized conditions that non-corporeal natures allow. And since the main activity of the beatified angels and the elect consists in sharing their love of God and expressing their mutual love, these theological texts convey important reflections on human love as well. The initial question *De novissimis*, on supernatural beatitude, thus attempts to argue from human experience in this world in order to conjecture on what awaits the blessed. This kind of argument is extensively used by Olivi, notably in order to show that 'love' and 'vision' are necessarily connected. Since 'all perfect friend wants to see his higher friend, at least from time to time', he says, 'the desire of vision belongs to the definition of friendship, at least the perfect one.'[58] The other major disputed question in that series deals with the mutual love of the elect, as it attempts to define whether one loves his superior in the celestial court more than

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[55] *Summa*, vol. 1, q. 48: 'tota materia corporalis omnium corporum est secundum se eadem specie … Et sic dicunt aliqui de perspicuitate caeli et aeris; non enim curant isti de positione Aristotelis quae dicit quod caelum tanquam incorruptibile non habet aliquod unum genus cum elementis corruptibilibus.'

[56] Peter John Olivi, *De novissimis*, pp. 107–12. Also p. 108: 'nobilitatis est eis quod possint esse veicula et subiecta nobilissimarum melodiarum et odoriferarum fragrantium et suavissimorum saporum.'

[57] Peter John Olivi, *De novissimis*, p. 112: 'horum profundior et prolixior pertractatio non est sic theologico negotio necessaria ut in ea debeamus diutius occupari'; p. 108: 'Si enim dicas quod hoc non possit esse nisi in elementaribus aut in mixtis ex quatuor elementis, dicetur tibi quod probes et cogeris fateri non habere aliam rationem nisi quod nondum es hoc expertus nisi in corporibus inferius quod palpasti. Unde nec philosophi huius mundi ad hoc aliam afferunt rationem et ideo supponunt hoc tamquam principium experimento probatum, et ecce optimam rationem philosophorum, dicunt enim, non sumus aliter experti, ergo non est nec potest aliter esse, ac si omne quod est et esse potest, sit subiectum sensuali experientie ipsorum.'

[58] Peter John Olivi, *De novissimis*, p. 74: 'Omnis enim perfectus amicus summum amicum suum desiderat videre, saltem aliquando; et precipue illum quem super se et super omnia amat … Talis amicus non potest beatificari seu quietari nisi prout habeat quod super omnia amat, scilicet visibili presentia et societate tanti amati perfrui. … Ergo omnino de ratione amicitie saltem perfecte est desiderium visionis.'

oneself.[59] Olivi was certainly not the first one to raise this topic; Bonaventure for one had already provided a lengthy and subtle discussion on the various ways in which one could either prefer oneself, his superior or his inferior.[60] From the variety of arguments advanced to show the superiority of the love of others ('social love') over self-love, Olivi points at the instinct of being ready to die rather than being deprived of the society of the loved ones.[61] The importance given to this 'social love', which expresses the collective dimension of the eternal bliss, is also reflected in the ideal of a 'pacific society' that friars minors strive to establish already on earth, and that was expected, in the Joachite program Olivi was sharing, to reign in the third and last period of church history.[62]

The discussion of angelic language in the commentary on the *Celestial Hierarchy* is also marked by such an emphasis. The Franciscan was not satisfied with a mere discussion of the possible modalities of angelic speech, as most of his colleagues did, and sometimes at great length. He also took into account the content of linguistic experiences such as sharing their mutual love. The discussion then moves on from the issue of language to that of a perfect communication that would allow the expression of the most intimate secrets:

> This society of friends requires mutual company, and a mutual enjoyment of each other that will never be perfect unless they can see their interior faces, and experimentally taste their interior loves, and unless they intimately embrace each other in the most spiritual embraces of each other's hearts.[63]

Remarkably, such an ideal serves as a yardstick for the communication between earthly lovers as well:

> It is clear that it belongs to the nature of perfect friendship to enter into communion and be intimately united with what one loves above all in one's friend, that is, the heart and the love of this friend. Accordingly, we see among ourselves that lovers try, as much as they

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[59] See the important discussion of this text in Alain Boureau, *La religion de l'État. La construction de la République étatique dans le discours théologique de l'Occident médiéval* (Paris: Belles-Lettres, 2006).

[60] Bonaventure, *In II Sent*, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 2 (Quaracchi: Coll. S. Bonaventura, 1885), d. 3 a. 3 q. 2, pp. 127–8.

[61] Peter John Olivi, *De novissimis*, p. 133: 'Preterea, etiam in vita ista videmus quod tanto amore amicitie quis afficitur ad filium vel patrem vel fratrem vel sponsam vel socium, quod libentissime se exponit morti pro eius; et est sibi summa mors vivere sine ipsis; et multis videtur quod tantum vellent non esse quam in eternum vivere sine omni amicabili societate. Ergo talis amor socialis videtur se habere ad amorem sui solius fere sicut se habet forma ad materiam.'

[62] See David Burr, *Olivi's Peaceable Kingdom. A Reading of the Apocalypse Commentary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

[63] Peter John Olivi, 'Quaestio de locutionibus angelorum', ed. S. Piron, in *Oliviana*, 1 (2003), URL = http://revues.oliviana.org: 'perfecta societas amicorum requirit mutuum convictum et mutuam sui ipsorum fruicionem que perfecte nunquam erit nisi visibiliter videant suas facies interiores et nisi experimentaliter gustent suos interiores amores et nisi per intellectualissimas adhesiones utriusque corda se intime amplexentur.'

can, to pour their heart or the interior of their heart into their friends heart, and vice versa. And because, while they are down here [in this world], they cannot achieve it perfectly, they practice it through the mediation of their bodies, as much as they can.[64]

[64] Peter John Olivi, 'Quaestio de locutionibus': 'constat hoc esse de natura perfecte amicicie posse, scilicet intimari et intime iungi ei quod in amico pre ceteris amat, hoc autem est cor et amor sui amici. Unde et in nobis videmus quod amantes quantum possunt, gestiunt suum cor seu viscera sui cordis refundere in cor amici et e converso, et quia dum hic sunt, non possunt hoc ad plenum, faciunt hoc per corpus intermedium prout possunt.'

Chapter 3

Angelic Individuality and the Possibility of a Better World: Durandus of St Pourçain's Criticism of Thomas Aquinas

Isabel Iribarren

In the following pages I would like to contrast two accounts of angelic individuality, that of Thomas Aquinas and Durandus of St Pourçain, in an attempt to show how their different angelologies reflect deeper theological concerns that have to do with their understanding of the relation between the natural order and the area of possibility accorded to God's power. I have focused on the question of the possibility of a better world because it is highly illustrative of the way in which each theologian articulates this relation. I shall first deal with the Thomist account of angelic individuality, arguing that Aquinas's emphasis on the compatibility of God's preordained will with the natural order is a natural consequence of the metaphysics of participation in which Thomist angelology is embedded. I shall then discuss Durandus's contrasting view, and how its emphasis on God's absolute power reinforces the division between the divine and created orders, with direct repercussions on the place attributed to angels. As I hope to show, Durandus's position and his criticism of the Thomist world-view rely on deeper reasons that have to do with his nominalist understanding of universals and the limits of the applicability of the Aristotelian metaphysics of act and potency which informs Thomist angelology. On a final note, I will make some comments on the way the two contrasting views reflect the priorities of the Dominican censure against Durandus in 1317[1] and the Paris 1277 condemnation respectively.

[1] Durandus's *Sentences* commentary was censured on two occasions by the Dominican authorities: the first time in 1314, issued as a disciplinary measure, but seized as an opportunity to put in evidence Durandus's deviation from Aquinas's teaching. The second censure of 1317 attempted more explicitly to reinforce the Thomist doctrine. As a result of both censure lists, Durandus was compelled to rewrite his commentary on two occasions, on account of which we have a hold of three different recensions of Durandus's work. In this paper I will only be using the third and final version of Durandus's commentary, since there seem to be no extant manuscript copies of the first version of book II, where angelological issues are contained: *Durandi a Sancto Porciano in Petri Lombardi Sententias Theologicas Commentarium libri IIII*, 2 vols. (Venice, 1579; repr. New Jersey: The Gregg Press, 1964). For the standard account of Durandus's life and career, see J. Koch, *Durandus de S. Porciano*

According to Aquinas:

> Although an angel is absolutely speaking better than a stone, nevertheless both natures together are better than one of them only. And it is therefore a better universe that in which there are angels and other beings (*res*), because the perfection of the universe is considered essentially according to the diversity of natures which fulfil diverse degrees of goodness, and not according to the multiplication of individuals in one nature.[2]

The world is thus conceived as a formal hierarchy, so that what gives it identity and determines its conditions of possibility is the way things are ordered according to their degree of perfection rather than the sum of its parts or any one of its parts considered absolutely.[3] Perfection is understood formally, as relying not on the individuating features of a thing, but on what makes it the kind of thing it is. Such a world-view would naturally privilege the species over the individual, since it is the species, as a being's formal nature, that conveys its degree of perfection and determines its relative place in the hierarchy.[4]

Accordingly, Aquinas would hold that God can add in the number of species already existing, he can add new ones, or improve the *accidental* properties of individual beings, and still preserve the essential features of the actual order. The result would be not a numerically different world, but a 'better' one to which the previous order would be related by participation – that is, it would be assimilated to the new one by participating in its higher degree of goodness. By the same token, God cannot add to the *essential* goodness of the beings constituting the hierarchy without impairing the actual order, for the simple reason that he cannot make a thing better than it is in itself without changing the kind of thing it is and ultimately upsetting the formal make-up of the hierarchy. God can make a dog more obedient, but he cannot make

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O.P. Forschungen zum Streit um Thomas von Aquin zu Beginn des 14. Jahrhunderts, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters, 26 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1927). For the full list of the 1317 censured articles, see 'Articuli in quibus magister Durandus deviat a doctrina venerabilis doctoris nostri fratris Thomae', in J. Koch (ed.), *Kleine Schriften*, 2 (Rome, 1973), pp. 72–118. The latest account to my knowledge of the status and manuscript tradition of the different recensions of Durandus's commentary is C. Schabel, I. Balkoyiannopoulou and R.L. Friedman, 'Peter of Palude and the Parisian Reaction to Durand of St Pourçain on Foreknowledge and Future Contingents', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 71 (2001): 183–300. See also my *Durandus of St Pourçain: A Dominican Theologian in the Shadow of Aquinas* (Oxford Theological Monographs: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[2] Aquinas, *Sent*., I d. 44 a. 2 ad 6: 'quamvis angelus absolute sit melior quam lapis, tamen utraque natura est melior quam altera tantum. Et ideo melius est universum in quo sunt angeli et aliae res, quam ubi essent angeli tantum, quia perfectio universi attenditur essentialiter secundum diversitatem naturarum, quibus implentur diversi gradus bonitatis, et non secundum multiplicationem individuorum in una natura.' Cf. *ST*, Ia q. 25 a. 6.

[3] The conception of the universe as 'order' seems to be a common trait guiding thirteenth-century angelological accounts. See T. Suárez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2002), pp. 15–17.

[4] See Aquinas, *ST*, Ia q. 77 a. 6 ad 1: 'ab uno simplici naturaliter possunt multa procedere ordine quodam;' q. 44 a. 1: 'necesse est ante omnem multitudinem ponere unitatem.' Also *SCG*, III cc. 64, 78–80; *Sent*., II d. 9 aa. 2–7.

it rational without changing its nature into human. The result would be a different, rather than a better world, where the new order would be *specifically* distinct from the old one, and therefore incompatible with God's preordained order.[5]

Aquinas acknowledged the standard distinction between God's 'absolute power' and his 'ordinate power' in their accepted meaning as the total possibilities initially open for God, some of which are realized in the established order, and his ordained will as his actual plan of creation.[6] As most theologians resorting to this distinction, Aquinas also recognized its usefulness in underlining the freedom of God's action and the contingency of the created world. But unlike later theologians, especially those writing after 1277, Aquinas limited the number of things God could do without contradiction, by proscribing other orders God might have established had he so chosen.[7] As Aquinas sees it, according to his absolute power God is omnipotent, such that he can do other things that he has not chosen to do. But whatever he has actually done must necessarily follow from what he preordained he would do. So whereas God's power is proportionate to his nature and hence absolute, his will must reflect the established order.[8] The world, as it actually is, cannot be any better.[9]

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[5] Aquinas, *Sent*., I d. 44 a. 2: 'bonum universi consistit in duplici ordine, sc. in ordine partium universi ad invicem, et in ordine totius universi ad finem, qui est ipse Deus … [Q]uantum ad partes ipsas, tunc potest intelligi universum fieri melius, vel per additionem plurium partium, ut sc. crearentur multae aliae species, et implerentur multi gradus bonitatis qui possunt esse … Et sic Deus melius universum facere potuisset et posset … Vel potest intelligi fini melius quasi intensive, et hoc unitatis omnibus partibus eius in melius, quia si aliquae partes meliorarentur aliis non melioratis, non esset tanta bonitas ordinis… Haec autem melioratio omnium partium, vel potest intelligi secundum bonitatem accidentalem, et sic potest esse talis melioratio a Deo manentibus eisdem partibus et eodem universo; vel secundum bonitatem essentialem, et sic etiam esset Deo possibilis, qui infinitas alias species condere potest. Sed sic non essent eadem partes, et per consequens nec idem universum … Sed ordo qui sequitur bonitatem essentialem, non posset esse melior, nisi fierent aliae partes et aliud universum.'

[6] See for example Aquinas, *Sent*., I d. 42 q. 2 a. 2–3; d. 43 q. 2 a. 1–2; *De Pot*., q. 1 a. 5; *ST*, I q. 25 a. 5. Also Peter Lombard, *Sent*., I d. 42 c. 3 part. 6.

[7] For an account of the distinction between God's absolute and ordained powers, see W.J. Courtenay, 'The Dialectic of Divine Omnipotence', repr. in *Covenant and Causality in Medieval Thought*, Collected studies series, 206 (London, 1984), pp. 1–37; also 'Nominalism and Late Medieval Religion', in C. Trinkaus and H. Oberman, (eds), *The Pursuit of Holiness in the Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), esp. pp. 37–43. See also Hester G. Gelber, *It Could Have Been Otherwise. Contingency and Necessity in Dominican Theology at Oxford*, *1300–1350* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), esp. ch. 3, pp. 107–50; also pp. 309–49, on discussions of the dialectic of divine power in early fourteenth-century Oxford Dominicans.

[8] Aquinas, *ST*, Ia q. 25 a. 5 ad 1: 'Dicendum est quod Deus potest alia facere de potentia absoluta quam quae praescivit et praeordinavit se facturum. Non tamen potest esse quod aliqua faciat, quae non praesciverit et praeordinaverit se facturum. Quia ipsum facere subiacet praescientia et praeordinationi; non autem ipsum posse, quod est naturale. Ideo enim Deus aliquid facit, quia vult; non tamen ideo potest, quia vult, sed quia talis est in sua natura.'

[9] Aquinas, *ST*, Ia q. 25 a. 6 ad 3: 'universum, suppositis istis rebus, non potest esse melius; propter decentissimum ordinem his rebus attributum a Deo, in quo bonum universi

Aquinas thus reasserts the goodness of the actual order, a goodness based on the formal continuity of the hierarchy rather than on the sum of its individual parts.[10]

Pivotal to Aquinas's understanding of the world as a hierarchical order is the Aristotelian axiom that 'the addition of a substantial difference in the definition of a thing is after the manner of the addition of unity in numbers.'[11] Like number, a being's perfection pertains to its formal definition. Thus, just as one number is greater than another according to the kind of number it is so that unequal numbers are distinct according to species, a being's species signifies its degree of perfection and determines its place in the hierarchy.[12] As I hope to show in what follows, this equation between formal perfection and number which governs Aquinas's hierarchical view of the world, will also inform his understanding of angelic individuality and his veto on a plurality of individual angels in one species.

Aquinas offers three main reasons in support of his thesis that angels are distinct according to species only. The first one is based on the immateriality of the angelic substance. In composite beings individuation is by matter, such that a substance is the kind of substance it is by its form, and numerically one and distinct from other substances of the same species by receiving matter. An individual is thus an imperfect – i.e. potential – exemplification of the form fully actualized only in the species. Since immaterial substances cannot be the subject of matter, one angel cannot be numerically distinct from another in one and the same species.[13] But this does not mean that angels form an absolute unity in the manner of the divine being. For apart from the potentiality provided by matter, of which angels are exempt, Aquinas accepts another type of potentiality resulting from the distinction between essence and existence which pertains to all creatures. As creatures, angels are in potentiality

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consistit. Quorum si unum aliquod esset melius, corrumperetur proportio ordinis … Posset tamen Deus alias res facere, vel alias addere istis rebus factis. Et sic esset illud universum melius.'

[10] The notion of a hierarchical continuity from one degree to the other is of Neoplatonist origin and is emblematically expressed in the *Liber de causis* by the principle that the highest degree of the inferior level touches the lowest degree of the superior. See B. Montagne, 'L'axiome de continuité chez saint Thomas', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 52 (1968): 202–21. Revealingly, Aquinas often cites the *Liber de causis* in this respect, especially prop. 19 (*Super Librum de causis expositio*, ed. H.D. Saffrey, p. 106 n. 19.19–24). See also *Sent*., II d. 39 q. 3 a. 1; *ST*, I q. 22 a. 3; q. 103 a. 6; *SCG*, III cc. 69, 77, 78, 97 esp. n. 2725; *De Pot*., q. 5 a. 8.

[11] Aquinas, *Sent*., I d. 44 a. 1: 'si adderetur ad bonitatem essentiali aliquid, non esset eadem res, sed alia. Quia … sicut in numeris, unitas addita vel substracta semper variat speciem.' Also *ST*, Ia q. 50 a. 2 ad 1: 'Unumquodque … constituitur specie, secundum quod determinatur ad aliquem specialem gradum in entibus, quia species rerum sunt sicut numeri, qui differunt per additionem et substractionem imitatis.' Cf. *ST*, Ia q. 25 a. 6. See Aristotle, *Metaph*., 7.3 (1043b34).

[12] Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis*, c. 8, p. 76 n. 39 (ed. Lescoe): 'Sicut enim numerus unus est maior alio secundum propriam speciem, unde inequales numeri specie differunt, ita in formis tam materialibus quam a materia separatis una est perfectior alia secundum rationem propriae naturae, in quantum scilicet propria ratio speciei in tali gradu perfectionis consistit.'

[13] Aquinas, *QSC*, a. 8. See also *Sent*., II d. 3 q. 1 a. 4; d. 32 q. 2 a. 3; IV d. 12 q. 1 a. 1; q. 3 ad 3; *Ente*, c. 5; *SCG*, 2.93.

to being because they receive their being from God.[14] The distinction between one angel and another is therefore according to the degree in which each angelic species participates in being. Underlying Aquinas's metaphysics of participation is his theory of analogy of being: that different degrees of perfection between forms or natures result in different species implies that this kind of diversity is not compatible with univocal predication of a specific form of substances differing in species. Because being is not univocal, some things participate in *esse* more perfectly than others. Thus, while being is said of God essentially, it is predicated of all else by participation only.[15]

This leads us to Aquinas's second reason, based on the notion of 'order' and its connection to goodness. Since higher beings participate in goodness in a higher degree, they must have order *per se* and not only accidentally. Individual substances form an accidental order, since it is according to accidental properties and their individuating characteristics that they are made distinct from one another. But as superior creatures, each angel formally signifies a different degree of goodness, such that they are *of themselves* hierarchically ordered.[16] This is connected to angelic perfection, Aquinas's third reason. A being is perfect insofar as it fulfils what pertains to its nature. As composites of matter and form, individuals belonging to the same species are corruptible, such that a plurality of individuals is needed in order to preserve the unity and perfection of the species. In the case of immaterial substances, however, each individual exemplification exhausts the perfection of its species.[17]

These three theses are well encapsulated in Aquinas's statement that angels are multiplied not according to numerical division but according to 'multitude'. In Aquinas's analysis, there is division by matter, which results in number and is a species of quantity; and there is division by form, which is according to formal diversity and results in multitude. Numerical plurality pertains to material substances and as such is a sign of imperfection, whereas multitude obtains between immaterial beings only. As the transcendental correlate to 'one', multitude does not take away

[14] This is what Aquinas means, in a formula borrowed from the *Liber de causis* (prop. 5), by the principle that 'immaterial created substances are finite according to their being, but infinite according to their form which is not the subject of matter.' See *De substantiis separatis* (ed. Lescoe), c. 8 n. 42 and 45; also *ST*, Ia q. 50 a. 2 ad 3 and ad 4; *De Ente*, c. 5, nn. 30–3; *Sent*., II d. 3 q. 1 a. 5; *De Pot*., q. 6 a. 6. For the important connection between act-and-potency metaphysics and the notion of participation, see *SCG*, 2.53; *De substantiis separatis* (ed. Lescoe), c. 8, p. 76 n. 38; *In Hebdomadibus* (ed. Marietti), lect. 2, pp. 396–7 n. 24; *In De Caelo*, II lect. 18, p. 233 n. 463; *In Metaph*., I lect. 10, p. 46 n. 154. Also J.F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), esp. pp. 94–107; E.P. Mahoney, 'Metaphysical Foundations of the Hierarchy of Being according to some late-medieval and renaissance philosophers', in P. Morewedge (ed.), *Philosophies of Existence: Ancient and Medieval* (New York, 1982), pp. 169–82.

[15] See Aquinas, *De substantiis separatis* (ed. Lescoe), c. 8, pp. 77–9, n. 41; also p. 80 n. 43. Cf. *Sent*., I d. 35 q. 1 a. 4 ad 3; *De anima*, q. 7 ad 6. See J.F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical*, esp. ch. 3 and 4.

[16] Aquinas, *QSC*, a. 8.

[17] Aquinas, *QSC*, a. 8.

unity, and is related to the things of which it is predicated in the same way as 'one' is related to being, without adding anything over and above their formal perfection.[18]

Since multitude signifies division by form, a multitude is of itself ordered according to degrees of perfection. As Aquinas puts it, 'it is of the definition of multitude that it should consist of imitated beings (*ex imitatibus*).'[19] Thus, a multitude of angelic species is arranged according to different degrees of imitability of the first principle. Following a standard Neoplatonist tradition, Aquinas identifies these different modes of imitability as 'divine ideas'. A divine idea is 'a given way in which God understands himself as capable of being imitated by a creature.'[20] Thus, all beings participate in the highest being by imitation insofar as they have *esse*.[21] Since only forms correspond properly to divine ideas, and numerical distinction between individuals is according to matter, distinction according to species is necessarily more perfect than individual distinction, because the former and not the latter implies a proper relation of imitability.[22]

Thus, adding to Aquinas's initial reasons in support of angelic distinction by species, we find a fourth one derived from the notion of God as exemplar cause of all being. That only forms properly correspond to divine ideas also dovetails with our initial passage: if the essential goodness of the world relies on species and not on the number of individuals, a world in which the multitude of angelic species surpasses the number of individual material substances is preferable because they are better assimilated to divine goodness.[23] The principle that higher beings must exceed the

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[18] Aquinas, *ST*, Ia q. 30 a. 3 ad 2: 'multitudo transcendens … non addit supra ea de quibus dicitur, nisi indivisionem circa singula'; also ad 3: 'multitudo autem non removet unitatem, sed removet divisionem circa unumquodque eorum ex quibus constat multitudo.' Cf. *QSC*, a. 8 ad 15.

[19] Aquinas, *ST*, Ia q. 30 a. 3: 'de ratione multitudinis est, quod ex imitatibus constet.'

[20] J.F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical*, p. 129. See Aquinas, *Sent*., I d. 36 q. 2 a. 1, a. 2: 'hoc nomen "idea" nominet essentiam divinam secundum quod est exemplar imitatum a creatura, divina essentia erit propria idea istius rei secundum determinatum imitationis modum'; also a. 3 ad 4. Cf. *ST*, Ia q. 15 a. 1 ad 3; a. 2; *De Ver.*, q. 3 a. 2.

[21] The question whether Aquinas explains creatures' finiteness by composition of *esse* and essence or by participation in the divine being, has been much debated. See C. Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo S. Tommaso d'Aquino* (Milan, 1939; 2nd revised edn, Turin, 1950); L.-B. Geiger, *La participation dans la philosophie de s. Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris, 1942; 2nd edn, 1953); J.F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical*, pp. 124–31; J.-D. Robert, 'Note sur le dilemme: "Limitation par composition ou limitation par hiérarchie formelle"', *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 49 (1965): 60–66. Given the predominantly theological content of this paper, I have privileged the explanation based on formal participation. But this is not to deny the usefulness of the other model in strictly philosophical discussions which do not involve prior knowledge of the existence of God.

[22] Aquinas, *Sent*., I d. 36 q. 2 a. 3 ad 3.

[23] Aquinas, *ST*, Ia q. 50 a. 3; *Sent*., II d. 3 q. 1 a. 3; a. 4 ad 3: 'perfectio universi essentialis non attenditur in individuis, quorum multiplicatio ordinatur ad perfectionem speciei, sed in speciebus per se. Unde magis apparet divina bonitas in hoc quod sunt multi angeli diversarum specierum, quam si sint unius speciei tantum.' Cf. *QSC*, a. 8 ad 10; *SCG*, II 92 and 93; *ST*, Ia q. 112 a. 4 ad 2; *Sent*., III d. 3 q. 1 a. 3; *De Pot*., q. 6 a. 6.

number of corruptible beings is of Dionysian origin,[24] and is fundamentally akin to the Aristotelian tenet that formal perfection is like number. For, if angels are pure forms, the number of angelic species is directly proportionate to the perfection of the universe. Both principles rely on the same insight that perfection is expressed by formal unity and imperfection by material division. Thus, contributing to a Neoplatonist world-view is Aristotelian metaphysics of act and potency: beings of a greater degree of actuality enjoy a greater degree of unity and are therefore closer in the hierarchy of being to the first principle, God, who is pure act and absolutely simple.

This also explains more clearly why Aquinas should emphasize God's preordained will at the expense of his absolute power. That God wills a creature means that he views it as a possible way of imitating his essence. Therefore, to say that God might have created a *different* world order – that is, one which involves a different formal hierarchy – is tantamount to saying either that there could exist a world with a different exemplar cause, or that there could exist a world which is not related to God by imitability. On the first count, there would be two worlds, each with a different exemplar cause. But this is impossible, because there can only be one source of goodness in which all other goodness participates. Therefore, both worlds would necessarily have to be the result of one and the same exemplar cause, where one world would be related to the other by participation.[25] On the same grounds, a world which is not related to God by imitability would not only be different but necessarily would not be good, for God is the source of all goodness. Thus, that God could create something that is not good would not only contradict his preordained will but also his very nature. By necessity, then, the actual world is the only good one and the only possible one.[26]

Aquinas's subordination of God's absolute power to his preordained will thus appears as a natural consequence of a view which privileges exemplar over efficient causality, and prioritizes formal continuity over individual plurality. Not surprisingly, those theologians contemporary to Aquinas, who to begin with were not over-enthusiastic about the introduction of a fully fleshed Aristotelian *corpus*, understood the Thomist veto on a multiplicity of angels per species as an expression of the view that bound God's power to the necessities of physical laws. Indeed, the unifying strand – if any – in the 1277 syllabus appears to be the emphasis on God's absolute power, the notion of God as absolutely free and omnipotent and as infinitely superior to his creation. In this spirit, all three instances in which the 1277 commission targets Aquinas's thesis on angelic individuality – Articles 81, 96 and 191 – point at the illegitimacy of inferring the impossibility of an individual plurality

[24] See Denis, *Celestial Hierarchy*, PG 1, c. 14 col. 322.

[25] See Aquinas, *In Hebdomadibus* (ed. Marietti), p. 405 nn. 61 and 62.

[26] As Hester Gelber puts it, 'Aquinas's assertion that much that happens within God's providential order happens through necessary causes and that not even contingent causes escape God's providence, established a world where everything is ultimately determined … Since contingent events are part of God's providential design, the important focus for a theologian is on what actually is the case, which is what offers information about God's purposes': *It Could Have Been Otherwise*, pp. 120–23.

of angels from their immateriality, as tantamount to subordinating God's absolute power to his plan of creation.[27]

Symptomatically, it is precisely these articles which Durandus adduces in his criticism of the Thomist position, for the same reason that it is disparaging of God's absolute power.[28] Admittedly, Durandus's position profits from the intellectual climate which resulted from the Paris condemnation, especially in the new avenues it opened in the understanding of God's power and its relation to the natural world.[29] As I hope to show in what follows, Durandus's arguments seek to make the possible existence of other types of creation intelligible, in an attempt to subvert what he perceived as the philosophical necessitarianism characteristic of the Thomist position in its Graeco-Arab bent.

Contrary to Aquinas, Durandus sees no contradiction in holding that separate substances, just like composite ones, are numerically multiplied within one and the same species. His reasons in support of this claim are connected to his rejection of the Thomist equation between potentiality and numerical plurality:

> [The claim] that a form's capacity to be numerically multiplied lies in the imperfection and potentiality whereby a form can be said to be a real part of some whole, must be denied. For it is the same to claim that only that form which is a part of a composite can be numerically multiplied, as it is to claim that a simple substance subsistent of itself cannot be numerically multiplied. Indeed, one is included in the other, so that to assume one in order to conclude the other without demonstration is to beg the question.[30]

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[27] Article 81: 'Quod, quia intelligentiae non habent materiam, Deus non posset facere plures eiusdem speciei.' 96: 'Quod Deus non potest multiplicare individua sub una specie sine materia.' 191: 'Quod formae non recipiunt divisionem, nisi per materiam – Error, nisi intelligatur de formis eductis de potentia materiae', in *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 mars 1277*, ed. Roland Hissette (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1977). For the significance of the Paris 1277 condemnation and the relation between its doctrinal priorities and Aristotelian natural philosophy, see R.C. Dales, 'The De-Animation of the Heavens in the Middle Ages', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 41 (1980): 531–50; A. Koyré, 'Le vide et l'espace infini au XIVe siècle', *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 17 (1949): 45–91; E. Grant, 'The condemnation of 1277, God's absolute power, and physical thought in the late Middle Ages', *Viator*, 10 (1979): 211–44; P. Duhem, *Le système du monde: histoire des doctrines cosmologiques de Platon à Copernic*, 10 vols (Paris: A. Hermann, 1913–59), vol. 6.

[28] Durandus, *C Sent*., II d. 3 q. 3, 138ra–rb, n. 15: 'Unde negare quod Deus non possit facere plures angelos sub una specie derogat potentiae, cum ex parte rei producibilis non sit contradictio … Et propter hoc illa opinio condemnata est Parisius pluribus vicibus.' For the Thomist counter-attack, see 'Articuli in quibus', a. 56 (Koch, p. 84).

[29] See R.C. Dales, 'The De-Animation': 547; and E. Grant, 'The Condemnation': 212, 220. For an opposite view, see A. Koyré, 'Le vide': 47–51.

[30] Durandus, *C Sent*., II d. 3 q. 3, 137vb, nn. 7–8: 'Quod autem additur, quod in substantiis separatis non potest esse differentia nisi secundum absolutam rationem formae, negandum est. Et cum probatur, quia latitudo formae per quam competit quod possit multiplicari secundum numerum est imperfectio et potentialitas formae per quam potest esse realis per alicuius totius, dicendum quod non est verum … Idem enim est dicere quod sola forma quae est altera pars compositi plurificatur numeraliter, et quod substantia simplex per se subsistens

According to Durandus, explaining angelic individuality in terms of a form's separability from matter is as unsubstantial as explaining multiplicity in terms of material division. To assume that matter is the principle of numerical distinction in order to conclude that separated forms are not numerically multiplied is hardly a proof at all, and is the fallacious result of treating angels as hypostasized forms. Anthony Kenny makes the point succinctly:

> [Aquinas's] doctrine of pure forms seems to be a lapse into the Platonism against which he was continuously anxious to guard in his account of material substances … [I]f the idea of an immaterial substance can be made coherent it is better presented not as an instance of pure form but as an instance of a type of substance to which the doctrine of matter and form does not apply.[31]

This is exactly what Durandus does. As he sees it, the benefits of angelic immateriality are not reflected on their individuality but on their mode of operation. Both angels and human souls belong to the same species of incorporeal substances. But what makes an angel better than a human soul is that an angel is a *separated* form whereas the human soul is merely a *separable* form, and this difference yields a mode of intellection in angels that is more perfect and less mediated than human cognition.[32] Durandus rejects the applicability of act-and-potency metaphysics for explaining individuality. Individuality is not explained by the contraction of matter by a common nature, because there is no such thing as a 'common nature' over and above its individual instantiations. What makes a thing an individual is identical to what makes it the kind of thing it is, such that an actual form is by definition an individual form.[33] Underlying this claim is Durandus's nominalist understanding of universals, whereby a universal is formally the result of an act of the intellect: nothing real is a universal, and whatever exists in extra-mental reality is by that fact singular.[34] This view renders an account of individuation in creatures irrelevant because extra-mental existence itself explains individuality. Only in God, where the *supposita* constitute one and the same subsistent reality, does an account of individuation become necessary in order to explain how the *supposita* are constituted

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non plurificatur numeraliter. Vel unum includitur in altero, et ideo assumere unum ad aliud concludendum sine probatione est petere principium.'

[31] A. Kenny, *Aquinas* (Oxford, 1980), p. 46.

[32] See Durandus, *C Sent*., II d. 3 q. 1, 136rb, nn. 10–11.

[33] Durandus, *C Sent*., II d. 3 q. 2, 137ra–rb, nn. 14–15: 'Dicendum ergo quod nihil est principium individuationis nisi quod est principium naturae et quidditatis.' In Durandus's view, therefore, nature and *suppositum* formally signify the same thing, but differ in their mode of signification: the nature 'humanity' signifies a human being in abstract, whereas the *suppositum* signifies the same human being by way of 'possessing' the nature, that is, by connoting a respect towards that nature. See *C Sent*., I d. 34 q. 1, 92rb–va, nn. 15–16.

[34] See Durandus, *C Sent.*, II d. 3 q. 7, 140.7–12: 'primum cognitum ab intellectu non est universale, sed singulare … [E]sse enim universale non est aliud quam esse intellectum absque conditionibus singularitatis et individuationis, ita quod esse universale est sola denominatio obiecti ab actu sic intelligendi … [U]niversalitas non potest esse in rebus, sed solum singularitas'.

as numerically three distinct individuals. A principle of individuation is then relevant only where real unity precedes numerical plurality.[35]

For Durandus, therefore, the Thomist thesis of individuation by matter would make sense only on the supposition that the species constituted a real unity prior to its division into numerically distinct individuals. As Durandus argues, the Thomist account rests on an equivocation between integral and universal unity. The quantitative division of a whole into parts differs on at least two counts from the division of one and the same species into its individual instantiations. First, a quantitative whole is a real unity, whereas a species is one only according to reason. Secondly, a quantitative whole is composed of integral parts and is not predicable of them, whereas the species is predicated of the individuals which constitute its subjective instantiations. Thus, numerical plurality between individual human beings cannot be explained by conceiving the individual instantiations as integral parts of the whole 'humanity'.[36] The notion of integral unity is extraneous to the question of individuation: the first refers to numerical plurality between individuals of the same nature, whereas the second pertains to what an individual adds to the nature.[37]

Durandus is pointing here at the very heart of Aquinas's metaphysics of participation and the theory of analogy of being on which it rests. One of the reasons why Aquinas rejects the univocal predication of being is because it would falsely presuppose that being is predicated of different things like a genus is predicated of its species. But unlike a genus, being is predicated by priority and posteriority of different things, expressing a relation of ontological dependence of the secondary instance on the primary instance.[38] As Durandus sees it, however, Aquinas's argument rests on an invalid inference. From 'being is not like a genus' it does not necessarily follow that 'being is not univocal'. Predicated in abstract, 'being' escapes categorical limitation and is univocal to all that is. Only when we predicate 'being' in concrete of substance or quantity or quality, do we predicate according to different modes. Thus, the way to solve the disjunction between the One and the Many is not by resorting to analogy, but by distinguishing between real being, which is only verified of extra-mental things in their multiplicity, and being in abstract, which is predicated as a unity according to reason only.[39] In Durandus's analysis, then, Aquinas's theory of analogy rests on the false presupposition that unity precedes multiplicity, which compels him to resort to participation as the only way to explain individual plurality. But as Durandus has been intent on showing, what constitutes an individual is prior to and distinct from what differentiates individuals of the same species. By taking individuality as basic and as a starting point of all metaphysical exercise, Durandus

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[35] Durandus, *C Sent*., II d. 3 q. 2, 137rb, n. 15.

[36] Durandus, *C Sent*., II d. 3 q. 3, 137vb–138ra, n. 9: '[D]ivisio quantitatis in suas partes et divisiones speciei in individua sunt diversarum rationum, et quasi oppositarum … Ergo, ex hoc quod aliqua forma potest esse pars integralis alterius, non potest reddi causa multiplicationis numeralis sub eadem speciei, sed est totaliter extranea applicatio.'

[37] Durandus, *C Sent*., II d. 3 q. 2, 137ra, n. 13: 'Aliud est principium individuationis, et aliud est causa et principium quare materia potest esse sub pluribus formis.'

[38] See Aquinas, *De principiis naturae*, c. 6, 46–7. Also J.F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical*, pp. 69–90.

[39] See Durandus, *Quodl. Aven*., III q. 1, ed. Stella, pp. 255.10–257.21.

makes irrelevant any attempt at reconciling unity with plurality, and on the same stroke renders participation unintelligible.

Durandus's subsequent re-definition of the issue of angelic individuality shows the impact of the Paris condemnation in later theological inquiry:

> Only the divine nature, as uncaused (*quia non habet causam effectivam*), is neither multipliable of itself (*de se plures*) nor by another (*ab alio plurificabilis*), but is of itself one in number and incapable of being numerically multiplied. Whereby those who held that angels or separate substances are not from God as an efficient cause but only as a final cause – just as some impute to Aristotle – said that all separate substances are distinct according to species and cannot be multiplied in one and the same species, just as the divine nature [cannot be multiplied]. But as the truth of faith has it … all separate substances are from God as an efficient cause, so that necessarily they are capable of being numerically multiplied in one and the same species, since they depend on God as their efficient cause by voluntary and repeatable action. And that is the imperfection on account of which they are capable of being multiplied, and not only that imperfection by which a form is capable of being a part of some whole (*alterius*).[40]

Imperfection in creatures is accounted for by their dependence on being, and not by their material composition. The question of angelic individuality is thereby disengaged from the status of angels as pure forms, to rest on the possibilities of action open for God in his absolute power.[41] According to Durandus, all created natures, especially separate substances which do not depend on secondary causes, are products of God's voluntary action, and as such depend on him for their being, their unity and their perfection. If God wills it, he can multiply the number of individual angels just as much as he can put an end to his creative action. Only divine action which proceeds from God's nature is necessary and unrepeatable.[42] Durandus thus establishes a necessary connection between createdness and numerical individuality, which problematizes the Thomist conception of a created substance which is

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[40] Durandus, *C Sent*., II d. 3 q. 3, 138rb, n. 16: 'Sola enim natura divina, quae nec est de se plures *nec est ab alio plurificabilis*, *quia non habet causam effectivam*, est de se et ex se una numero, nec potest secundum numerum plurificari. Unde qui possuerunt quod angeli seu substantiae separatae non sunt a Deo sicut a causa efficiente, sed solum sicut a causa finali – prout aliqui imponint Aristoteli – dixerunt quod omnes substantiae separatae differunt secundum speciem, nec possunt plurificari sub specie, quemadmodum nec natura divina. Sed ex quo veritas fidei habet … quod omnes substantiae separatae sunt a Deo sicut a causa efficiente, necesse est quod possunt plurificari secundum numerum sub eadem specie, quia dependent a Deo sicut a causa efficiente eas actione voluntaria et iterabili. Et haec est imperfectio propter quam convenit eis plurificari, et non solum illa imperfectio per quam forma potest esse pars alterius.' (My emphasis.) Cf. Article 96 of the 1277 syllabus (ed. R. Hissette).

[41] Durandus, *C Sent*., II d. 3 q. 3, 137va, n. 5: 'Entitas angelorum, et per consequens unitas et pluralitas, immediate et solum dependet a causa prima. Et ideo tota possibilitas unitatis et pluralitatis angelorum in una specie arguenda est ex natura potentiae divinae.'

[42] Durandus, *C Sent*., II d. 3 q. 3, 138ra, n. 14: 'actio qua Deus producit quascunque creaturas, maxime autem substantias separatas, voluntarie potest interrumpi in eis, etiam tota actio et productum dependent ex sola virtute producentis … Sequitur ergo conclusio, sc. quod omnis creatura, et maxime substantiae separatae, possunt plurificari secundum numerum.'

capable of subsisting as a nature rather than as an individual being.[43] Real unity and indivisibility pertain only to the divine. More interestingly, Durandus connects the Thomist veto on a numerical plurality of individual angels to the understanding of separate substances as the products of final rather than efficient causation, thus affiliating Aquinas's metaphysics of participation to the kind of view of the universe propounded by the *Liber de causis*.

On the same grounds, Durandus rejects the principle governing Aquinas's argument that formal perfection is like number, and its connected claim that spiritual creatures must exceed the number of corporeal ones.[44] According to Durandus, this view is ill-founded:

> For more perfect beings do not naturally exceed other beings except in perfection. *But perfection is not in number* – otherwise there would be more divine persons than creatures – but in quantity which is not according to extension [only], but according to greater virtue … Therefore, it is not necessary that, on account of their perfection, separate substances should exceed corporeal substances in number… It suffices that separate substances exceed corporeal substances … in greatness (*magnitudine*) of virtue.[45] (My emphasis.)

As Durandus sees it, Aquinas seems to be confusing the indivisibility of angels with their numerical value. Since 'being' and 'one' are convertible, angelic indivisibility should not entail greater number but rather greater perfection.[46] By the same token, Durandus dismisses the resulting view of the world as a whole constituted of indivisible forms and intolerant of essential improvement. As he sees it, the goodness of the world order consists in a natural rather than a mathematical sort of proportion, according to which:

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[43] The similarities between Durandus's position and Henry of Ghent's are remarkable. As is well known, Henry formed part of the commission of theologians assisting Bishop Tempier in the inquiry that led to the 1277 condemnation. For Henry, see mainly *Quodl*., II q. 8. Duns Scotus's position also reflects the spirit of the condemnation. See *Ord*., II d. 3 p. 1 q. 7, nn. 500–05 and *Lect*., II d. 9 qq. 1–2, n. 34. Also T. Suárez-Nani, *Les anges*, pp. 78–84, 185–8.

[44] Durandus, *C Sent*., II d. 3 q. 4, 138vb, n. 11.

[45] Durandus, *C Sent*., II d. 3 q. 4, 138va, nn. 7–8: 'Perfectiora enim non excedunt alia naturaliter nisi perfectione. *Perfectio autem non est in numero* – alioquin plures essent personae divinae quam creaturae – sed in quantitate non molis solum sed virtutis magis … Ergo, propter perfectionem substantiarum separatarum non oportet eas ponere in numero excedente substantias corporales… Sufficit quod substantiae separatae excedant substantias corporales … magnitudine virtutis.' (My emphasis.) Cf. 'Articuli in quibus', a. 57 (Koch, p. 84).

[46] Durandus, *C Sent*., I d. 24 q. 2, 72vb, nn. 11–12: 'unum quod est principium numeri est de genere quantitatis dicit indivisionem in quantitate specialiter, sicut unum quod convertitur cum ente dicit indivisionem in natura entis universaliter … Eadem ergo indivisio quae sumpta universaliter est formalis ratio unius quod convertitur cum ente, ipsa sumpta specialiter in … quantitate est ratio unius quod est principium numeri … Quia in aliis generibus a quantitate… non esset multitudo differentium nisi secundum species quae est multitudo formalis, saltem in his quae sunt per causas naturales, quicquid sit de his quae immediate possunt fieri a Deo solo, ut angeli.'

> one is naturally suited (*natum*) to act and another to be passive (*pati*); one to preserve (*conservare*) and the other to be preserved; and so forth. And that kind of proportion does admit of variation and improvement because it does not consist of indivisibles.[47]

The natural order does not consist of a hierarchy of indivisible beings proceeding from a first exemplar cause as numbers proceed from unity, and where any alteration to one of the parts impairs the formal unity of the whole. Only the divine nature is indivisible, because only God is immutable.[48] By contrast, the beings constituting the natural order are governed by secondary causation, are contingent, and as such susceptible to change, demise, or improvement:

> God can improve the universe by improving all of its parts or some of them or only one, and this does not mean that the harmony of the universe is impaired, because [the harmony] mainly (*principaliter*) consists in the degree and proportion of essential goodness, which cannot be altered … For secondary (*secundaria*) goodness can undergo intension[49] and the addition of another accidental goodness, without entailing that the first goodness is destroyed, and if it is destroyed it would be replaced by something better, because *what God can do through secondary causes he can do without them*.[50] (My emphasis.)

Like Aquinas, Durandus also maintains that a creature's substantial form, unlike its accidental features, cannot be changed without upsetting the overall harmony.[51]

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[47] Durandus, *C Sent*., I d. 44 q. 3, 116vb–117ra, n. 16: '[Consistit ergo bonitas ordinis partium universi in proportione naturali secundum quam] unum natum est agere et aliud pati; unum conservare et aliud conservari; et sic de caeteris. Et haec proportio recipit magis et minus et potest meliorari et deteriorari, cum non consistat in indivisibili.'

[48] See Durandus, *C Sent*., I d. 8 q. 2, 36rb, n. 23.

[49] Durandus subscribed to the theory, normally attributed by Godfrey of Fontaines, that a change from one degree of intension to another is explained by the complete corruption of the first form and the complete generation of the new form, such that no part of the previous form is a part of the new intensified form. See *C Sent*., I d. 17 q. 6, 58va–vb n. 8; q. 7, 59va, n. 20. For the standard literature on the subject, see A. Meier, *Zwei Grundprobleme der scholastischen Naturphilosophie: Das Problem der Intensiven Gröse. Die Impetus Theorie* (Rome, 1968), esp. pp. 3–87; J.E. Murdoch, 'William of Ockham and the Logic of Infinity and Continuity', in N. Kretzmann, ed., *Infinity and Continuity in Ancient and Medieval Thought* (Cornell, 1982), pp. 165–206; R. Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus* (Oxford, 1998), esp. pp. 117–92; P. Duhem, *Le Système du Monde*, vol. 7, esp. pp. 480–532.

[50] Durandus, *C Sent*., I d. 44 q. 3, 116vb, n. 13: 'Dicendum ergo quod Deus potest meliorare universum meliorando partes eius omnes vel quasdam solum vel unam tantum, nec propter hoc solvitur harmonia universi, quae principaliter consistit in gradu et proportione bonitatum *essentialium* quae variari non possunt … [Q]uia … secundaria bonitas potest recipere intensionem et alterius bonitatis accidentalis additionem, nec tamen propter hoc periret prima bonitas, et si periret recompensaretur per aliquid melius, quia *Deus potest facere sine casusis secundis quicquid facit cum eis*.' (My emphasis.) Cf. Aquinas, *ST* Ia, q. 25 a. 6; 'Articuli in quibus', a. 49 [*additones*] (Koch, p. 82).

[51] Thus, Durandus would countenance the principle that perfection is like number only when it comes to substantial forms, because substantial forms, unlike accidental forms, are not susceptible to intension or remission. See *C Sent*., I d. 44 q. 1, 115rb, n. 5. Cf. *ibid*., q. 3, 116va, nn. 11, 14, 15.

But where Durandus fundamentally departs from Aquinas's position is in his prioritization of efficient over exemplar causality and the considerably greater area of possibility he consequently accords to God's absolute power. Since all creatures ultimately depend on God for their existence and preservation in being, there is nothing in the natural order of causation that God could not alter or do directly. God's action is not committed to his preordained will but is absolutely free.[52] Predictably, Durandus severs all relation of imitability between God and creatures as he denies all causal power to divine ideas. 'The quiddity of creatures (*rerum*) understood as their specific formality and perfection', Durandus claims, 'cannot constitute something formally existing in God in a relation of similitude'.[53] The formal nature of a created being cannot correspond to any idea in God, for the only form that can be related to God by formal imitability is the divine essence itself.[54] Durandus submits all creatures to God's direct action, as he denies all normative value to intermediate instances.[55] Thus, in an opposite move to Aquinas's devolution of God's absolute power to secondary causes, Durandus re-assimilates God's will to his absolute power, and by the same token underscores the contingent nature of creation. This enables Durandus to claim that had he so chosen, God could have created a different world by replacing the actual one, just as he could have produced a plurality of numerically, if not specifically, distinct worlds.[56]

One final claim which would later shock the Dominican establishment further reflects the impact of Durandus's outlook in the role usually accorded to angels. According to Durandus, a world that includes both God and creatures is better than a world that includes only God. For although God's goodness is not affected by the addition or subtraction of created goodness, created goodness can be added to God's in an extensive if not intensive sense. This is because God's goodness does not formally 'contain' created goodness but is rather distinct from it in the same way in which God's being is distinct from created being. Once the idea that all possible created goodness could be paradigmatically pre-contained in God is rendered

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[52] Durandus, *C Sent*., I d. 44 q. 1 ad 1, 115rb, n. 7; also ad 2, 115rb–va, n. 8. We find a similar view in Oxford Dominicans of the 1320s and 1330s, notably Robert Holcot. The underlying thesis that logical possibility is coterminous with God's absolute power was of Scotist inspiration. See Hester Gelber, *It Could Have Been Otherwise*, pp. 127–38.

[53] Durandus, *C Sent*., I d. 36 q. 3, 99ra, nn. 18–21, 22: 'quidditates rerum secundum suas rationes specificas et perfectiones earum secundum modum specificum quo eis conveniunt, non sunt ideo formaliter et proprie sed solum metaphorice, *nec aliquid formaliter in Deo existens correspondens eis secundum similitudinem*. Ergo, res creatae quantum ad suas quidditates secundum rationem earum specificam … *non habent essentiam divinam propter idea*.' (My emphasis.) Cf. 'Articuli in quibus', a. 27 (Koch, p. 77).

[54] Durandus, *C Sent*., I d. 36 q. 4, 99va, n. 5: 'idea, ut nunc sumitur, dicit rem, quia dicit formam quae est imitabilis, et haec est una res (sc. essentia divina); respectus autem imitabilitatis, quia sunt respectus rationis, sunt plures. Ergo, est una tantum idea, plures tamen rationes ideales.' Cf. 'Articuli in quibus', a. 28 (Koch, p. 77).

[55] See for example *C Sent*., II d. 2 q. 1, 132rb, nn. 5–7.

[56] Durandus, *C Sent*., I d. 44 q. 3, 116va, nn. 8–9.

unintelligible, so goes the principle of continuity from God to creatures.[57] By the same token, since the natural world is no longer understood as mirroring divine ideas, there is no preordained pattern of imitability to which God's creative power would have had to conform. This goes to show to what extent the privileged status accorded to angels went hand in hand with an emphasis on exemplar causation.

Durandus's colourful claim was included in the Thomist censure.[58] Indeed, most of the articles targeted by the censure against Durandus function as a negative copy of the Paris articles of 1277. To Articles 81 and 96 of the condemnation, targeting the inference of angelic specificity from angelic immateriality, the Thomist commission responds with Article 56, reconfirming Aquinas's opinion against Durandus's.[59] Likewise, Article 57 attempts to re-establish the validity of the Dionysian axiom that spiritual substances must exceed the number of corporeal beings.[60] Other articles included in the censure further reveal the spirit and deeper motivations of the Thomist riposte: Articles 27 and 28 resent Durandus's rejection of the normative value and causal power of divine ideas,[61] whereas Article 49 intends to validate the conception of the world as a formal hierarchy in which any substantial change in the parts entails a change in the order itself.[62] Thus, the Thomist commission saw itself as defender of a philosophical and theological tradition whose chief concern was to guarantee the compatibility of the natural order with God's will, and the essential continuity from creatures to God. In this view, angels enjoy a central place as they both reflect the formal order and provide its intelligibility. Durandus's severed world ran counter to the spirit of this tradition, and acted as a reminder of the unsavoury events of the 1270s. The Dominican censure would then function as a rehearsal of the *Correctoria* offensive in its attempt to rehabilitate the world-view guaranteed by the old angelology and with it the doctrinal credibility of their very own Angelic Doctor.

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[57] Durandus, *C Sent*., I d. 44 q. 3, 116rb, nn. 4–6: 'bonum divinum et bonum creatum sunt aliquid melius, saltem extensive, quam solum bonum divinum.'

[58] See 'Articuli in quibus', a. 33 (ed. J. Koch, p. 79).

[59] 'Articuli in quibus', ed. J. Koch, p. 84.

[60] 'Articuli in quibus', ed. J. Koch, p. 84.

[61] 'Articuli in quibus', ed. J. Koch, pp. 77 and 78 respectively.

[62] 'Articuli in quibus', ed. J. Koch, p. 82.

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PART II
Angelic Location

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Chapter 4

Abelard on Angels

John Marenbon

Abelard is not thought to have had any distinctive views about angels, or to have been much interested in them. Abelard specialists have never dedicated an article, or even a paragraph, to this apparent non-subject, and Abelard's name goes unmentioned in discussions of twelfth-century angelology.[1] At first sight, this neglect seems justified. True, in his *Sic et non*, where Abelard identifies theological problems and assembles texts which support opposite answers, Abelard devotes three chapters to angels ([46] 'That the angels were made before the earth and heaven and all other creatures, or that all angels were created equal and blessed, and not'; [47] 'That the angel had fallen before the creation of man, and against this'; [48] 'That the good angels who enjoy the vision of God know all things, and not'[2]), but he never takes up any of these questions himself. In his *Collationes*, Abelard does indeed pose, through one of the speakers in this dialogue, a different question about angels: were Lucifer and the other angels who would fall created good or evil?[3] The answer – that they were created good – is most clearly enunciated in the commentary on the *Hexaemeron*.[4] But, as the context in both works shows, in posing the question, Abelard was not thinking about angels in particular, but about the meaning of 'good'. The goodness of even the bad angels in their creation is an excellent illustration of Abelard's principle that whatever is of some use and does not *necessarily* harm what is worthy or useful is good.[5]

Yet in fact, Abelard *did* have a highly distinctive and radical theory about one aspect of angels, their corporeality and relation to place. The topic is especially fascinating, because it bridges twelfth-century concern with whether angels are corporeal and the questions about angels and place which would occupy thinkers in

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[1] Such discussions are themselves rare. The excellent survey by Barbara Faes de Mottoni, 'Discussioni sul corpo dell'angelo nel secolo XII', in B. Faes de Mottoni (ed.), *Parva Mediaevalia: Studi per Maria Elena Reina* (Trieste: Università degli Studi di Trieste, 1993), pp. 1–42, omits Abelard. So does David Keck, *Angels and Angelology in the Middle Ages* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), whose treatment of the twelfth century is, in general, very sketchy.

[2] *Sic et non* (= *SN*), ed. B.B. Boyer and R. McKeon (Chicago and London: Universty of Chicago Press, 1976/7). Unless otherwise stated, the translations are my own.

[3] *Collationes*, ed. and trans. J. Marenbon and G. Orlandi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), II §144, pp. 152–4.

[4] *Expositio in Hexaemeron*, in *Petri Abaelardi opera theologica* V, ed. M. Romig assisted by D. Luscombe, CCCM, 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), I,31 §§308–9.

[5] *Collationes*, II §224, 70:1847–71:1859.

the universities. It has escaped attention because it is expounded only in the *Sententie*, a report of Abelard's teaching now recognized as authentic, and fully only in one particular version of the *Sententie*, the *Sententie Parisienses*.[6] The main purpose of this article is to present this theory and Abelard's arguments for it, and to look very briefly at their influence (§II). But his view will be clearer if it is seen against its background (§I). What are its sources and its relationship to other discussions from the same period? And how did Abelard approach the sources before he arrived at his own theory?

I

In the thirteenth century, the incorporeality of angels was generally accepted, and the question was how, given that they are spirits, are they related to place. By contrast, in the first half of the twelfth century, many thinkers considered that angels have bodies; Abelard was unusual in favouring their incorporeality and unique, except for those who reacted to his work, in developing a theory about how, although incorporeal, they are related to place.

Neither the Bible, nor the other sources used by twelfth-century writers, gives a decisive answer about whether or not angels have bodies.[7] The Biblical texts were open to different interpretations.[8] Augustine left explicitly unsettled both whether or not angels have bodies, and whether they are able to assume bodies. Gregory the Great held that angels are spirits by comparison with humans, but corporeal by comparison with God. Pseudo-Dionysius considered angels to be completely incorporeal, but his view was not usually adduced in the earlier twelfth-century discussions. By contrast, there was a Platonic tradition, going back to Apuleius (either directly, or through Augustine's *De civitate Dei*) and to Calcidius's commentary on the *Timaeus*, according to which angels have bodies, though of an especially subtle sort. Writers of Abelard's time and immediately before tended to prefer the view that angels are corporeal: Rupert of Deutz, Honorius Augustodunensis and Bernard of Clairvaux all support it. There were exceptions. In his *Philosophia mundi* (probably from the mid to late 1120s), William of Conches examines a number of the sources (Augustine, Gregory, the Platonic tradition) and ends by favouring angelic spirituality – though in the *Dragmaticon*, his later re-writing of the same material (1144–49), he is simply neutral.[9] Hugh of St Victor, in his *Summa de sacramentis* (written *c*. 1130–37), does definitely consider angels to be spiritual, but he does not elaborate on the issue,[10] and

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[6] On the authenticity of the *Sententie*, and the status of the *Sententie Parisienses*, see below, n. 22.

[7] This summary draws especially on Faes de Mottoni, 'Discussioni'.

[8] A central Biblical text is Psalm 103, iv (echoed closely in Hebrews 1, vii), 'qui facis angelos tuos spiritus et ministros tuos ignem urentem', which could be seen to favour either angelic spirituality or corporeality.

[9] See William of Conches, *Philosophia mundi*, ed. G. Maurach (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press, 1980), pp. 24–5; *Dragmaticon Philosophiae*, ed. I. Ronca, CCCM, 152 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), pp. 18–19.

[10] See Hugh of St Victor, *Summa de sacramentis*, in PL 176, pp. 248D–250A.

neither he nor William considers the relation between angels and place; Rupert and Honorius use the fact, attested by the Bible, that angels occupy place to support the view that they are bodily.[11]

Outside the *Sic et non* and the *Sententie*, Abelard touches on angels and their relation to bodies only fleetingly. Where he seems not to be upholding their incorporeality, the passages turn out, on further examination, to be vague or inconclusive. In his *Theologia Christiana* (a passage copied into the *Theologia Scholarium*), he explains how angels might be called bodies in the sense that every created thing is circumscribed.[12] But his comment is really an explanation of how they might be *called* bodily when they are not bodily in any straightforward way. The quotation which Abelard gives here from Gennadius of Marseilles does indeed state that angels are corporeal and in place, but Abelard himself does not indicate that he accepts this view.[13] In his commentary on the *Hexaemeron* (probably from the early 1130s), and more briefly in the *Theologia Christiana* and *Theologia Scholarium*, Abelard touches on Augustine's indecision about whether the sun and the stars could be considered angels, and he leaves it open that these heavenly bodies might be moved by some sort of spirits, but he does not commit himself to any view about angels.[14] He does, by contrast, definitely call angels spirits in the *Theologia Christiana* and the *Collationes*,[15] and in both the commentary on the *Hexaemeron* and the commentary on *Romans* (probably written c. 1134-5), he says explicitly that angels are not of a corporeal nature.[16]

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[11] Rupert of Deutz, *De sancta Trinitate et operibus eius* I, ed. H. Haacke, CCCM, 21 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), p. 139:383: the angels have bodies 'quia et locales sunt …'; Honorius Augustodunensis, *Liber viii quaestionum de angelis et hominibus*, in PL 172, p. 1189B: 'Non enim spiritus sine corporibus discurrunt, sed illocales sunt.'

[12] References to the *Theologia Christiana* (= *TChr*) are to *Petri Abaelardi opera theologica* II, ed. E. Buytaert, CCCM, 12 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969); references to the *Theologia scholarium* (= *TSch*) are to *Petri Abaelardi opera theologica* III, ed. C.J. Mews and E. Buytaert, CCCM, 13 (Turnhout: Brepols 1987). *TSch* is a much revised version of *TChr* and so some passages are repeated from *TChr* verbatim. *TChr* I, p. 114 = *TSch* I, p. 17: '"Corpora" summi Spiritus dici possunt etiam angeli, ab ipso, ut dictum est, spiritualiter uiuificati; uel etiam "corpora" dicit secundum hoc quod omnem creaturam Augustinus [*TSch* Gennadius] corpoream dicit, hoc est circumscriptam.'

[13] *TChr* I, p. 114 = *TSch* I, p. 17 (and also at *TChr* III, p. 117): '… angeli et omnes caelestes uirtutes corporeae, licet non carne subsistant. Ex eo autem corporeas esse credimus intellectuales creaturas quod localiter circumscribuntur …'. The passage is from John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa* ix, which Abelard wrongly attributed to Augustine at the time (c. 1125) when he wrote the *Theologia Christiana*.

[14] *Expositio in Hexaemeron*, I, p. 44 (§§178–90); cf. II, pp. 83–4 (§366); *TChr* I, p. 63 = *TSch* I, p. 117.

[15] *TChr* IV, p. 146 : 'Sicut ergo ipsos caelestes spiritus semper quidem spiritus sed non semper angelos esse profitemur, eo quod 'angelus' nomen sit officii, non naturae …' ; *Collationes* II, §144: '… illum fortassis angelum … bonum angelum uel bonum spiritum condidit.'

[16] *Expositio in Hexaemeron* I, p. 84 (§19): '… angeli, cum incorporeae sint naturae …'; Commentary on *Romans* ii, 9, in *Petri Abaelardi opera theologica* I, ed. E.M. Buytaert,

Abelard's fullest discussion of angels and place is in his *Sic et non*. Yet, in a sense, apart from its preface, *Sic et non* does not offer Abelard's discussion of anything. *Sic et non* is Abelard's equivalent of an old-fashioned contemporary scholar's card index. He began assembling it in the early 1120s and the first full version dates from the middle of that decade. Passages, almost all from patristic writings, were extracted and arranged under *quaestiones* to which some of the authorities apparently supported a positive, some a negative answer – hence the title, 'Yes and No'.[17] Abelard does not indicate in any case which answer he himself prefers.

The relation between angels and place is raised, not in any of the questions specifically on angels, but in two others. In no. 44, Abelard discusses whether or not God alone is incorporeal, where the answer 'Yes' implies that angels are bodily. This *quaestio* shows how keenly aware Abelard must have been of the weight of patristic opinion which many of his contemporaries could bring to their case in favour of angelic corporeality. Not only is the text from Gennadius of Marseilles used in the *Theologia Christiana* cited here (no. 1). Texts from Cassian (no. 5), and, added in a later version, Claudianus Mamertus (nos 14–18) affirm explicitly that angels are bodily, whilst a passage from Hilary (no. 6) says that 'there is nothing which is not bodily in its substance and creation.' Most of the passages which answer the question negatively assert the incorporeality of the human soul, but one (no. 10, from Isidore of Seville) states that angels are incorporeal. Abelard also cites (nos 2 and 3) Gregory the Great's theory that angels are bodily in relation to God but spirits in comparison to human bodies. From the perspective of the theory Abelard goes on to develop, the most interesting passage in the *quaestio* is one taken from Augustine, added in the later version. It explains that God is not anywhere, because what is somewhere is contained in place, and whatever is contained in place is a body.[18] The text does not directly support a positive or negative answer to the question at issue, since God's incorporeality is not in doubt. But it has a very important implication: if whatever is contained in place is a body, then for something to be incorporeal, it will have not to be in a place.

The theme raised by this passage is what the preceding *quaestio*, 43, discusses: 'That no spirit may be moved in place, and against <that>.' It contains a series of passages from Augustine, bringing out the same point as the text from Augustine in Question 44, that what is incorporeal is not in place; usually, the incorporeal thing in question is the soul, but the principle is made generally, in a way that would apply to anything spiritual.[19] Other texts attributed to Augustine use movement in time

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CCCM, 11 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), p. 82: '… angelorum uel daemonum gloriam … qui corporeae non sunt naturae'.

[17] The critical edition of *SN* (see above, n. 2) distinguishes between the material added at different stages. For the present discussion, the relevant distinction is between material present in the first full version, probably ready by *c*. 1126, and that added in the final recension, which was probably finished before *c*. 1132.

[18] *SN*, p. 44, no. 4: '… Deus non est alicubi; quod alicubi enim est, continetur loco; quod continetur loco, corpus est. Deus autem non est corpus; non igitur alicubi est, et in illo sunt potius omnia, nec tamen ita ut ipse sit locus.' (from *De diversis quaestionibus lxxxiii*, 20).

[19] See no. 1 (soul), no. 3 (soul), no. 4 (Spirit of the Lord), no. 12 – added in later version (soul).

and place to make a neat contrast between God, created spirits and created corporeal beings: 'Created spirit can be moved through time, not through place. The creator spirit is without time and place, whereas body is with time and place.'[20] The *quaestio* also, however, contains two passages that seem to attribute position or motion in place to spirits – in one case angels, in one Christ's soul.[21]

All the works by Abelard discussed in the last four paragraphs were very probably written in the decade before and up to the time when he gave the lectures recorded in the *Sententie*. Abelard's views about angels, body and place do not seem particularly to change during this period. He regards the question within the wider context of other, arguably spiritual created things, especially the human soul. Although he is aware of the patristic authority for regarding angels as corporeal, he clearly, unlike most of his contemporaries, prefers to see them as spiritual. And he seems to accept, as an idea to which there is no opposition, that, if angels are spiritual, they are not in place. All these elements find their place in the full exposition of Abelard's views in the *Sententie Parisienses.*

II

When Abelard returned to teaching in Paris, perhaps as early as 1132, after his disastrous period as Abbot of St Gildas in Brittany, he gave lectures on what would now be called theology. They are recorded in three main versions: the *Sententie Abaelardi*, which seems to have been an official version, corrected by Abelard himself; the *Sententie Florianenses* and the *Sententie Parisienses*. Although both these two are unofficial reports, the *Sententie Parisienses* are a *reportatio* which often appears to capture the texture of classroom discussion and sometimes contains elements of thinking preserved neither in the official *Sententie Abaelardi*, nor in the usually rather briefer *Sententie Florianenses*.[22]

It does not seem that in his lectures Abelard set out to discuss angels as such. Rather, he introduced into his theological teaching some considerations about place and non-corporeal things that he had already raised in his mid-1120s commentary on the *Isagoge*, the *Logica Nostrorum Petitioni Sociorum*,[23] and which were related

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[20] No. 6 (ps-Augustine); see also no. 7 (ps-Augustine); no. 5 (ps-Augustine: it talks of angels moving their bodies in place, but these presumably are bodies they have adopted); no. 1 (Augustine, *De Genesi ad litt.* VIII.20.39, just contrasts between soul and body: 'Per tempus mouetur animus … per locos autem corpus.'

[21] No. 11 – added in later version: 'Seraphim de loci ad locum transit …' (Ambrose); No. 10: 'Mortuus et sepultus descendit ad inferos' (Nicene Creed).

[22] On Abelard's *Sentences*, and the *Sententie Parisienses* in particular, see C.J. Mews, 'The *Sententie* of Peter Abelard', *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale*, 52 (1985): 109–58 (reprinted in C.J. Mews, *Abelard and his Legacy*, Aldershot and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2001), esp. pp. 155–63 and J. Marenbon, *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 62–4.

[23] *Logica Nostrorum Petitioni Sociorum* (= *LNPS*), in *Peter Abaelards philosophische Schriften*, ed. B. Geyer, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 21 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1919–31), pp. 549:4–550:3.

to texts by Augustine and pseudo-Augustine he cites in *Sic et Non* 43 and 44; in the fullest version of this discussion, which is preserved only in the *Sententie Parisienses*, it leads into some remarks specifically about angels. The discussion about place is itself something of an excursus. In all the versions, it occurs in the discussion of the triune God, but for different reasons. In the *Sententie Abaelardi*, it is raised with regard to Christ and the idea that he 'came down' from heaven to be born on earth, and that after his crucifixion, according to the Nicene Creed (quoted in *Sic et Non* 43: see above, n. 21) his soul 'descended into Hell'.[24] In the *Sententie Florianenses*, the context is God's power, to which his immutability is linked,[25] and in the *Sententie Parisienses* the subject is more directly divine immutability. Since it is only in the *Sententie Parisienses* that Abelard goes on to discuss angels, it is the passage in this work that will be examined here.[26]

God, Abelard explains, is immutable. He is said to show and exercise mercy, and so might seem to be mutable, but that is just because he wishes mercy and effects mercy. Abelard then makes a distinction between something having been changed (*mutatum esse*) and something having been moved (*motum esse*). If something was white and it becomes black, it has been changed, whereas if, having been sitting, I am now standing up, I have been moved. It is in order to clarify this distinction (*ad istud melius videndum*) that Abelard enters into a long discussion of how spiritual and non-spiritual things are moved, and so into the relation between spirits, such as angels, and place. He starts out, as just mentioned, by making a point in almost exactly the same words as he had used in the *Logica Nostrorum Petitioni Sociorum*, developing an idea he found in Augustine and pseudo-Augustine. The contrast between temporal and spatial movement is used to distinguish between spirits and bodily things:

> In order for us to see this better, let us see the division that Augustine makes. There are three kinds of things: body, uncreated spirit and created spirit. When he has made this division, Augustine says that only body moves according to place and locally. For it has six motions, according to the philosophers' classifications, that is forwards and backwards etc. But uncreated spirit is moved neither according to times nor according to places … Angels and souls are said to be created spirits. Created spirit is in the middle place, because it has something in common with uncreated spirit, namely because it is not moved according to place. It has something in common with body, because it is moved according to time, because the soul is now contented, now angry.[27]

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[24] *Sententie Abaelardi* (= *Sent.*), §141 (this is the section no. in the edition in preparation by David Luscombe; *Sententie Magistri Petri Abaelardi (Sententie Hermanni)*, ed. S. Buzzetti (Florence: la Nuova Italia, 1983), p. 88. These statements, it is explained, must be understood figuratively – an idea echoed in the *Sententie Florianenses* and the *Sententie Parisienses*, although there is a good deal of variation in the explanations given.

[25] *Sententie Florianenses* (= *SF*), ed. H. Ostlender, Florilegium Patristicum, 19 (Bonn: Hanstein, 1929), pp. 9–10.

[26] References to the *Sententie Parisienses* (= *SP*) are to the pages and lines of the edition in *Ecrits théologiques de l'école d'Abélard: textes inédits*, ed. A.M. Landgraf, Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense. Etudes et documents, fasc. 14 (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense, 1934).

[27] *SP*, p. 14:6–19. See *LNPS*, p. 549:19–30.

Abelard now brings forward a series of arguments to show that variously the soul, the soul or a spirit, and God are not in place. These include Augustine's reasoning cited in *Sic et Non* (see Notes 18 and 19 above) that whatever is in a place is bodily, and so, given that neither God nor the soul is bodily, neither can be in a place.

The only one of the arguments at this point in the discussion explicitly linked to spirits calls on a view about place and interposition. Abelard offers 'another proof that neither God, nor the soul nor a spirit is in place'

> because what is in place makes a gap between itself and another thing when it is placed between them: as is seen in the case of a pen when it is stuck into a hat and it makes a gap where previously the parts of the fabric were continuous.[28]

The same point had already been made in the *Logica Nostrorum Petitioni Sociorum*, where Abelard adds that we can gather from this that:

> whiteness is not something in place, because by its interposition, no gap is made between adjacent parts. This can be seen in this way: there is whiteness in the middle of the ivory, but it does not make a gap between one part of the ivory and another.[29]

Abelard's idea is that whatever is in place takes up a certain amount of space (he seems simply to rule out of consideration points, which have spatial position but not spatial extension), so that its interposition must cause something to be displaced. If the whiteness of ivory were in a place, then a supposedly solid piece of ivory would have to have chunks of whiteness all through it.

The passage now turns for the moment to explaining how God is not in place. There are authoritative statements in the Bible and elsewhere that seem to indicate the opposite – such as that God came down to earth, or that he is everywhere. These must be understood metaphorically: God 'came down' because he humbled himself, he is everywhere because his power is everywhere. And it is at this point that Abelard puts forward his view about angels, comparing and contrasting their relation to place with God's:

> Similarly, an angel is not in place, except according to the body which it takes up. Of itself an angel is never in place. If one were to cite against this view: 'One of the seraphim flew to me' (Isaiah vi, 6), the solution is that it should not be understood by these words that it could change place. But this is what is indicated by those words, that it exercises its actions in this way in one place and it doesn't do so in another place. And according to these actions angels are said to be circumscribable. What does it mean to say that they are circumscribable? It means that they exercise their actions in such a way that <what they do> in one place <they do not do in another>. But God is not even said to be circumscribable according to his actions, because God does not operate in one place in such a way that he is not operating in another, because he operates everywhere.[30]

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[28] *SP*, 14:29–15:3.

[29] *LNPS*, p. 549:16–20.

[30] *SP*, p. 15:20: 'Similiter angelus localis non est, nisi secundum corpus, quod assumit. Ex se vero angelus nunquam localis est. Si opponatur : 'Volavit ad me unus de Seraphim', solutio : Non est intelligendum in verbis his, quod mutet locum. Sed hoc notatur in verbis istis,

Abelard has, therefore, a neat theory about angels, corporeality and place. Being incorporeal, angels cannot, in his view, be in a place. When they take up a body, it is indeed in place. But the angels, even without their bodies, are associated with place, because they act in place. In this way they are circumscribable, and they have a quasi-spatial position, in that at any one moment they can act in only one place. God's being in place, too, is a matter of his acting in place, but he is able to act in every place at once and hence can be said to be everywhere.

Abelard's theory appears to have left only a little trace in the writings of his near contemporaries. In the *Sentences* of Roland of Bologna, from the middle of the twelfth century, there is an extensive discussion of angels, in which he broaches the question of angels and place.[31] One moment in the passage is decidedly Abelardian: Roland sees it as a sign that something is in place that its interposition creates a distance between the parts of the object between which it has been put. Yet the overall stance is distant from Abelard. The subject of place is raised when he considers where angels were created and rejects the view of those who judge this question inappropriate, because angels are 'neither in place, nor do they have place (they are not *locales*) nor are they circumscribable.' By contrast, Abelard does not make a distinction between 'having place' (being *localis*) and being in place, and he holds that angels are *not* in place but *are* circumscribable. Moreover, Roland seems deliberately to avoid reducing angelic location to the place where they perform their actions, since he explains that, when Gregory the Great says they are circumscribable (a description Roland himself rejects), he means that 'they exhibit their presence' in one place and not another.[32] A similar view is found in the long sections on angels in the *Ysagoge in Theologiam*, dating from c. 1150, and generally showing traces of Abelard's influence, although diverging from him on many points of doctrine.[33] After making the Augustinian contrast found in Abelard between how spiritual creatures are moved in time, but not in place, the writer goes on, like Roland, to say

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quod actiones ita exercet in uno loco, quod non in alio. Et secundum illas actiones dicuntur angeli circumscriptibiles. Quid est dicere circumscriptibiles? Id est, ita exercent actiones in uno loco quod non in alio. Deus vero neque secundum actiones dicitur circumscriptibilis, quia non operatur Deus sic in uno loco, quod non in alio, quia ipse ubique operatur.'

[31] They were once thought to be by Rolandus Bandinelli, who became Pope Alexander III, but this attribution is no longer accepted: see J.T. Noonan, 'Who was Rolandus?', in K. Pennington et R. Somerville (eds), *Law*, *Church*, *and Society: Essays in Honor of Stephan Kuttner* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), pp. 21–48.

[32] *Die Sentenzen Roland nachmals Papstes Alexander III*, ed. A.M. Gietl (Freiburg: Herder, 1891), pp. 88–9: 'Sunt tamen quidam dicentes, hanc questionem qua queritur ubi angelica natura fuerit creata penitus fore reprobandam, presertim cum angeli non sint in loco neque locales vel circumscriptibiles. Nos vero dicimus, questionem nulli modo fore reprobandam, et dicimus angelos esse in loco, non tamen locales uel circumscriptibiles, licet beatus Gregorius dicat angelos fore circumscriptibiles. Ad hoc enim ut essent locales seu circumscriptibiles, necessarium esset, ut secundum VI dimensiones possent metiri, videlicet ante et retro, supra et infra, dextrorsum vel sinistrorsum, vel ut sui interposicione loci facerent distanciam. Quod vero dicit beatus Gregorius eos esse circumscriptibiles, ita interpretandum est, circumscriptibiles, id est, ita exibent sui presenciam in uno loco quod non in alio.'

[33] *Ecrits théologiques*, pp. 220–35.

that spirits do not 'make a distance in place' and to draw out the conclusion that there could be many spirits in the same place without lessening the number of bodies that would fit into it. A spirit is said to be 'local', he adds, in almost the same words as Roland, 'because it is in this place in such a way that it is not in another.'[34] Roland and the author of the *Ysagoge* seem both to have known Abelard's theory but to have rejected it in favour of an idea that Abelard seemed not to consider worth canvassing. Angels, they hold, have spatial position but no spatial extension, and so they are indeed in place but cannot be circumscribed.

Abelard's theory that angels are related to place only because they act in given places is uncannily close to Aquinas's view: 'an angel is said to be in a corporeal place through the application of its angelic power to some place in some sort of way', as he puts it in his *Summa Theologiae*.[35] The lack of any followers for it in his own time suggests, however, that Abelard did not exert even a very indirect influence on Aquinas. Perhaps it is not strange, though, to find such a theory, independently, in these two philosophers, both of them – Aquinas subtly and with qualifications, Abelard boldly and wholeheartedly – committed to rationalizing Christian dogma, and to presenting a coherent philosophical picture of the world.

[34] *Ecrits théologiques*, pp. 234:28–235:8: 'Spiritualis itaque creatura movetur per tempora, quia in affectu et cognicione … mutacionem habet. Per loca autem non mutatur, quia localiter minime circumscribitur. Non enim secundum locum principium, medium, finis ei assignatur. Sed neque distanciam in loco facit. Si enim multi spiritus in eodem essent loco, nullatenus idcirco locus ille coangustaretur, nec ideo pauciora corpora ibidem comprehenderentur. Localis tamen dici debet creatus spiritus, cum ita sit in hoc loco, quod non in alio.'

[35] Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 52 a. 1; see T. Suárez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie. Subjectivité et fonction cosmologique des substances séparées à la fin du XIIIe siècle*, Etudes de philosophie médiévale, 82 (Paris : Vrin, 2002), pp. 87–90, and esp. the following three chapters of this volume.

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Chapter 5

The Condemnations of 1277 and Henry of Ghent on Angelic Location

Richard Cross

According to Duns Scotus, it is not possible to infer divine immensity from divine omnipotence:

> It seems that omnipotence is the ground for acting on anything (*ratio agendi in quodcumque*), and for producing whatever is possible, even if *per impossibile* [God] were not everywhere – and according to this a negative answer to the question should be given [namely, that God's omnipotence does not necessarily entail that he is everywhere according to his essence].[1]

When discussing angelic location, Scotus urges the same point, making explicit that divine omnipotence *entails* the possibility of God's acting immediately at a distance:

> [I]t seems less necessary for God to be present through his essence wherever he acts, than for an angel, because something of limitless power seems to be able to act at whatever distance, whereas that which is of determined and limited power requires determinate proximity to the patient in order to be able to act on it.[2]

On the face of it, this is a somewhat curious position to adopt. For God is an immaterial substance – not at all bodily, and not including any kind of matter – and it is hard to see what it could be for an immaterial substance to be present to a material object if such presence is not construed merely as a causal link that obtains between the two substances. Certainly, the thirteenth-century theological tradition tends to think of God's presence in the universe in fundamentally causal ways, identifying it as his causal interaction with creatures. In the passages just quoted, Scotus talks

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[1] Scotus, *Ord*., I.d. 37.q. un., n. 7, in *Opera Omnia*, ed. C. Balic and others (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950–), VI, 301: 'Videtur quod … omnipotentia sit ratio agendi in quodcumque et producendi quodcumque possibile, licet per impossibile ipsum non esset ubique – et secundum hoc videtur tenenda negativa pars quaestionis [viz. quod Dei omnipotentia non necessario inferat ipsum esse ubique secundum essentiam]'.

[2] Scotus, *Ord*. II, d. 2 q. 2 aa. 1–2, n. 205 (VII, 248): 'minus videtur de Deo quod oporteat ipsum esse praesentem per essentiam ubi operatur, quam angelum, quia illud quod est illimitatae potentiae videtur posse agere in quantumcumque distans, sed illud quod est determinatae et limitatae virtutis requirit determinatam approximationem passi ad hoc quod agat in ipsum'.

of God's presence 'according to essence', and this is a reference to a well-known distinction, found in Peter Lombard and with earlier antecedents, between God's being somewhere 'by power, presence and essence'.[3] Aquinas – to take an obvious example explicitly criticized in this context by Scotus – tends to see all of these kinds of presence in causal terms. Existing somewhere by *power* is straightforwardly causal. Aquinas reasons that a king – perhaps an absolute monarch – can be causally present throughout his kingdom without being present throughout it in any stronger sense: he is causally present by causing effects irrespective of his spatial relation to the effects. (A king can do things by means of his ministers, for example.) For something to exist somewhere by *presence* is for the place occupied to be subject to inspection by the thing so located. And an object is said to be present by essence wherever its substance is. In this case of God, this last sort of presence is reducible to a causal sort of presence: 'God is in all things through his essence in so far as he is present to all as the cause of being'.[4] God's substantial presence – his presence 'according to essence' – is here distinguished from his presence 'by power' merely in terms of its generality. There is no sense in Aquinas that it is a fundamentally different *kind* of presence, and it is for this reason that omnipotence immediately entails immensity:

> From this it is clear that it is necessary for God to be everywhere and in all things, for mover and moved must be contiguous, as Aristotle proves in book VII of the *Physics*. But God moves all things to their operations. … He is therefore in all things. … Since therefore God is the universal cause of all being … it is necessary that, wherever being can be found, divine presence is there.[5]

Now, there are two ways of understanding this. One is reductionistic: that God's presence is in effect reduced to the presence of his effects. This is the view taken by Boethius of Dacia on the general question of the location of immaterial substance. Boethius explicitly states that 'even though its actions are in a place, the intelligence itself is not in a place'.[6] The other would make God's presence something over and above the presence of his actions: his actions would *explain* his presence. It seems to me hard to tell what Aquinas would say: as Boethius notes, terms such as 'presence' are in this context highly equivocal.

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[3] See Peter Lombard, *Sent*., I d. 37 c. 1, n. 2 (3rd edn, 2 vols, Spicilegium Bonaventurianum (Grottaferrata: Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1971–81), I, 263–4).

[4] Aquinas, *ST*, I.q. 8 a. 3 c: 'Est in omnibus per essentiam in quantum adest omnibus ut causa essendi'.

[5] Aquinas, *SCG*, III 68: 'Ex hoc apparet quod necesse est Deum esse ubique et in omnibus rebus, movens enim et motum oportet esse simul, ut probat Philosophus in VII Physicorum. Deus autem omnia movet ad suas operationes. . . . Est igitur in omnibus rebus. . . . Cum igitur Deus sit causa universalis totius esse . . . oportet quod in quocumque est invenire esse, ei adsit divina praesentia'.

[6] Boethius of Dacia, *Quaestiones super libros Physicorum* 3.26 (ed. Géza Sajó, 2 vols, Corpus Philosophorum Danicorum Medii Aevi, 5 (Hauniae: Det Danske Sprogog Literaturselskab, 1972–74), 300, ll. 31–7): 'Licet actiones suae sint in loco, non est ipsa intelligentia in loco'.

Scotus's position is very different from this – in fact Scotus treats the presence of God and his causal interactions with material objects as, fundamentally, logically independent of each other. Scotus's way of understanding the presence of immaterial substances in the universe is not restricted to God. He treats the presence of angels in a similar manner, and explicitly ties the question of angelic presence to the question of divine immensity. His target is Aquinas, according to whom

> [A]n angel cannot be definitively located or determined to some place other than by its action and operation – and this is the third opinion, which posits that an angel is in a place in so far as its operation is applied to some place. … And for this reason, following this opinion (which seems more reasonable), I say that an angel, and any incorporeal substance, is in a body or a place only through an operation that causes some effect in it [viz. the body or place].[7]

Scotus's first argument against this position draws on Aquinas's inference from omnipotence to immensity:

> The one who posits this contradicts himself, because in the question 'Whether God is everywhere' he proves the positive through this, that according to Aristotle in *Physics* VII 'the mover is contiguous with the moved', and God is the first efficient cause and for this reason able to move every movable object, and from this concludes that God is in all and present to all. I ask what he intends to prove from this? Either that God is present, that is, moving [things], and then there is a *petitio principii*, because the premise is the same as the conclusion, and the answer is irrelevant to the question, because there he aims to conclude the immensity of God as God is present to everything. Or he intends to prove that presence which pertains to God in so far as he is immense, and then, according to him [viz. Aquinas], that presence which pertains to divine immensity (which belongs to God as God) follows from his operation somewhere, such that God will be present as immense earlier (by nature) than [he is present] as operating. And this is concluded from the fact that he is present through operation, just as the prior is proved from the posterior. Therefore, likewise in the case at hand, the angel will be present to some place through [its] essence naturally earlier (by nature) than it is present to it through its operation.[8]

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[7] Aquinas, *Sent*., I d. 37 q. 3 a. 1 c: 'angelus definiri vel determinari non potest ad locum aliquem nisi per actionem et operationem, et ista est tertia opinio, quae ponit angelum esse in loco in quantum alicui loco per operationem applicatur. … Et ideo, hanc opinionem sequendo (quae rationabilior videtur), dico quod angelus et quaelibet substantia incorporea non potest esse in corpore vel in loco nisi per operationem, quae effectum aliquem in eo causat'. See *ST* 1.52.1 c

[8] Scotus, *Ord*., II.d. 2.q. 2 aa. 1–2, n. 204 (VII, 246–8): 'sic ponens contradicat sibi ipsi, quia in quaestione illa "Utrum Deus sit ubique" probat quod sic, per hoc quod secundum Philosophum VII Physicorum "movens est simul cum moto", et Deus est primum efficiens et ideo potens movere omne mobile, et ex hoc concludit quod Deus est in omnibus et praesens omnibus. Quaero quid intendit per hoc concludere? Aut Deum esse praesentem, hoc est moventem, et tunc est petitio principii, quia idem praemissa et conclusio; et nihil ad propositum, quia ibi intendit concludere immensitatem Dei secundum quam Deus est praesens omnibus. Aut intendit concludere illam praesentiam quae competit Deo in quantum est immensus, et tunc ex operatione alicubi – secundum ipsum – sequitur praesentia illa quae pertinet ad immensitatem divinam (quae est Dei in quantum Deus est), ita quod prius naturaliter erit

Scotus tries two possible readings of Aquinas's argument from omnipotence to omnipresence here. The first is the reductionist reading according to which on Aquinas's account the presence of an immaterial substance is *reducible to* its causal interaction with material objects. In this case, Scotus argues, Aquinas's argument from divine omnipotence to divine omnipresence proves nothing, because on this reading the claim that God is omnipresent amounts to no more than that God is the cause of everything, and thus understood the argument begs the question. The second reading allows that there is a distinction, and supposes that immensity explains God's global causal activity. Likewise, Scotus reasons, Aquinas must suppose on grounds of generality that angelic presence explains the possibility of its causing an effect at a place. This, I take it, is held by Scotus to contradict Aquinas's teaching on angelic location on the grounds that the most natural non-reductionist reading of Aquinas is one that makes causation explain presence, and not *vice versa*.

The lesson here is that in any explanatory account, presence must be what explains the possibility of causal interaction. More generally, Scotus wants to maintain a strong distinction between specifically *causal* kinds of presence and a more general, non-causal kind of presence. This may seem reasonable enough (though I will have occasion to criticize it later), but in any case Scotus believes that he has authority on his side, since as he sees it Aquinas's view falls foul of the 1277 condemnation:

> Against this [viz. the opinion of Aquinas] is that it was condemned, just like a certain article condemned and excommunicated by the Bishop of Paris.[9]

The relevant article reads as follows:

> That separated substances are somewhere by operation, and that they cannot move from one extreme to another, or into the medium, other than because they can will to operate either in the extreme or in the medium – this is an error, if it be understood that a substance is not in a place, or mover from place to place, without operation.[10]

Key here is the rejection of the view that a causally inactive angel would be nowhere – a claim that Aquinas's position, on either understanding, seems to involve. (If activity explains presence, then Aquinas would need some other account of the presence of an inactive angel, and no such account is forthcoming.) As Scotus puts it:

Deus praesens inquantum immensus quam in quantum operans; et hoc concluditur ex hoc quod est praesens per operationem, sicut ex posteriore prius. Igitur a simili in proposito, prius naturaliter erit angelus praesens alicui loco per essentiam quam sit praesens sibi per suam operationem'.

[9] Scotus, *Ord*., II.d. 2.q. 2.aa. 1–2, n. 200 (VII, 244): 'Contra hoc [viz. opinionem Thomae] est quod istud est damnatum sicut quidam articulus damnatus ab episcopo Parisiensi et excommunicatus'.

[10] Article 204, *CUP*, ed. H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, 4 vols. (Paris: Delalain, 1889–97), I, 554). 'Quod substantiae separatae sunt alicubi per operationem, et quod non possunt moveri ab extremo in extremum, nec in medium, nisi quia possunt velle operari aut in medio aut in extremis – error, si intelligatur 'sine operatione substantiam non esse in loco, nec transire de loco ad locum'.

> It would follow that an angel is sometimes (indeed, frequently) nowhere, for it does not do anything in the heavenly empyreum (since that is neither changeable nor mobile); therefore it is nowhere in the heavenly empyreum. But it is there for the most part.[11]

The worry here is that an angel could be both 'in' the empyreum and yet nowhere in the universe. Clearly, Aquinas would hold that Scotus was simply begging the question against him, since on his view there would be no reason to concede that such an inactive angel was anywhere at all – though it is precisely this possibility that is excluded by the condemnation. Scotus himself never claims that an angel could be nowhere, even in the case that the angel was 'outside every bodily creature'.[12] Now, there is a lot that it would be possible to say about extra-cosmic space, and in terms of the development of ideas of space and time it would be very interesting. For the notion of space involved is far removed from relational, Aristotelian accounts of space.[13] Related to this, and more germane to my purposes, is Scotus's more general characterization of the non-causal presence of an angel, setting aside more specifically cosmological questions such as the nature of space in general. When discussing the possible limits to the extent of the presence of a single angel, Scotus offers an account of angelic presence that makes it, disconcertingly, almost corporeal. On the assumption that there is a maximum total volume that an angel can occupy (else it would be, like God, omnipresent), Scotus imagines an angel changing shape such that its overall volume remains the same. Since, as Scotus notes, angels have no extended structure – no 'figuratio' – and since there are thus no physical blocks on the kinds of shape angels can occupy, he imagines an angel stretching itself out such that it becomes, for instance, very tall and thin – with no limits other than that the total volume it occupies cannot exceed a certain given maximum.[14] Of course, Scotus does not suppose an angel is genuinely extended in the sense that it is commensurate with its place. For commensuration, there is required a relation between the parts of the substance and the parts of the place,[15] and that the substance is 'contained' by the place.[16] The angel interpenetrates its place, and it does so without itself having extended parts. (As to whether an angel could occupy a point, Scotus tends to the affirmative side of the debate, but not strongly so.)[17]

Aquinas, of course, treats the issue in terms of the limits on an angel's *power*: since presence is reducible to causal interaction, the extent of the causal interaction – the size of the space that the angel can effect – is directly proportional to the power

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[11] Scotus, *Ord*., II d. 2 q. 2.aa. 1–2, n. 207 (VII, 249): 'Sequitur quod angelus aliquando (immo frequenter) nusquam sit: nihil enim operatur in caelo empyreo (quia illud non est mutabile, neque mobile), igitur nusquam est in caelo empyreo. Ibi autem est ut plurimum'.

[12] Scotus, *Ord*., II d. 2 q. 2 aa. 1–2, n. 236 (VII, 261):'Extra omnem creaturam corporalem'.

[13] On this, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), ch. 10.

[14] Scotus, *Ord*., II d. 2 q. 2.aa. 1–2, nn. 239–40 (VII, 262–3).

[15] Scotus, *Ord*., II d. 2 q. 2 aa. 1–2, n. 245 (VII, 265).

[16] Scotus, *Ord*., II d. 2 q. 2 aa. 1–2, n. 237 (VII, 238).

[17] Scotus, *Ord*., II d. 2 q. 2 aa. 1–2, n. 242 (VII, 264).

the angel has.[18] By the same token, Aquinas can exclude commensuration by the simple and sensible expedient of noting that merely causal presence does not require that the cause in any sense have parts, and thus does not require that the cause is commensuratively present with its effect. Rather, the causal activity of an immaterial substance involves the presence of the whole substance at every part of the place.

How did Scotus come to adopt a view like this? Clearly, various features of Aquinas's view struck the theologians behind the 1277 condemnations as counterintuitive. By his own admission, one such theologian was Henry of Ghent, who devotes a whole quodlibetal question to a consideration of angelic presence. As we shall see, Henry found the issue difficult to resolve in a satisfactory way, though he was clearly as struck as Scotus was by the thought that something was wrong in Aquinas's position. I do not know all the considerations that lay behind the condemnation of Article 204. But Henry has some arguments that are not merely *ad hominem*. Henry is clear (just as Aquinas and Scotus are) that there is no sense in which the presence of an angel, however understood, is any kind of spatial presence – the angel is not circumscribed by the place in such a way that parts of the angel are located against parts of the place.[19] But given that an angel can be in some way or another in a place, Henry needs to define the relevant category, which he labels 'mathematical site':

> Mathematical site is defined as the application of a thing to some determined 'where', whether above or below, or in the east or the west, without any natural dependence or determination to one place more than to another, such that it is nevertheless necessary for the thing, from its nature, to be in one of them.[20]

Mathematical site is contrasted to natural site. Like mathematical site, natural site involves the 'application of a thing to a place', but unlike mathematical site, natural site involves an object thus located in having 'natural dependence' on one given place, such that it is 'violent and beyond its nature to be elsewhere, outside that [site]'.[21] I take it that in both cases the relevant sense of 'dependence' is formal, not efficient: the site is in some sense that in virtue of which the object is located.

Some of the difficulties that Henry will encounter are already apparent here, for mathematical site is already defined in a *causal* way – the 'application' of a thing to a place. When Scotus considers Henry's view, for example, he simply rejects it as another version of Aquinas's causally reductive account, differing merely in terminology:

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[18] Aquinas, *ST*, I q. 52 a. 2 c.

[19] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (*Opera Omnia*, ed. R. Macken and others, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, De Wulf-Mansion Centre, Series 2 (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Leiden: Brill, 1979–), VI, p. 58, l. 14–p. 59, l. 26).

[20] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 60, ll. 59–63): 'Appellatur situs mathematicus applicatio rei ad ubi aliquod determinatum, sive supra sive infra, sive in oriente sive in occidente, sine aliqua naturali dependentia et determinatione plus ad unum quam ad alterum, ita tamen quod necesse est rei ex sua natura esse in aliquo illorum'.

[21] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (p. 60, ll. 53–4).

> Others, not wishing to use a suspect word (namely that an angel is in a place by *operation*), say that it is in a place by its *application* to the place. But these seem to hide the same thing under a different word. For application cannot be understood to be anything other than first act or second act. But evidently not first act. Neither second act, for if second act is understood, there is therefore operation. And not immanent [operation], such as cognition and volition, because immanent operation abstracts from place just as the essence of an angel [does]. Therefore application is operation directed to a body, and thus [an angel] will be in a place through its operation directed to a body in the place.[22]

On this analysis, Henry's general definition of angelic presence has already got causal presence built into it. And this causes Henry difficulties (that he seems fully aware of) when trying to give an account of Article 204's rejection of the claim that an inoperative angel is not in a place.

Henry sets up the discussion by considering all the intrinsic features of an angel that could explain its being in a place (that could be its '*ratio essendi in loco*').

> (P1) An angel's substance explains its being in a place.
> (P2) An angel's power (viz. intellect and will) explains its being in a place.
> (P3) An angel's limitation explains its being in a place.
> (P4) Some other feature of an angel explains its being in a place.[23]

It might be thought that the (P1) would be the most natural alternative – if the presence of the angel is not explained in terms of causal presence, then we might just think that the substance of the angel is what explains its being in a place. The angel's substance is sufficient for the angel's being in a place. An angel can be in a place in the required way just because it is the kind of thing that it is. Now, it is certainly true that Henry thinks that, whatever else we want to say, we should want to say that the substance of an angel is in a place.[24] But (P1), the claim that an angel could be in a place by reason of its substance, was ruled out in another of the 1277 condemnation's articles:

> That separated substances are nowhere according to substance – this is an error, if it be understood such that the substance is not in a place; if however, it be understood that substance is the reason for [its] being in a place (*ratio essendi in loco*), it is true that [separated substances] are nowhere according to substance.[25]

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[22] Scotus, *Ord*., II d. 2 q. 2 aa. 1–2, n. 203 (VII, 246): 'Alii, nolentes uti verbo suspecto (angelum scilicet esse in loco per operationem), dicunt ipsum esse in loco per applicationem eius ad locum. Sed isti videntur idem sub alio vocabulo occultare. Non enim videtur applicatio posse intelligi aliquid esse nisi sit actus primus vel actus secundus. Non actus primus, patet. Nec secundus, quia si intelligatur actus secundus, igitur est operatio: et non immanens (ut intellectio vel volitio), quia operatio immanens ita abstrahit a loco sicut essentia angeli. Igitur applicatio est operatio transiens in corpus, et ita erit in loco per operationem eius circa corpus in loco'.

[23] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 65, ll. 65–70).

[24] See e.g. Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 66, l. 3; p. 67, l. 36; p. 68, ll. 46, 54).

[25] Article 219, *CUP*, I, 555: 'Quod substantiae separatae nusquam sunt secundum substantiam – error, si intelligatur ita quod substantia non sit in loco; si autem intelligatur quod substantia sit ratio essendi in loco, verum est quod nusquam sunt secundum substantiam'.

Presumably, the point here is that although it is true that the substance of an angel is what is located, nevertheless an angel does not *have* to be in a place. God would have made angels without making places at all – without, that is, making the material universe. And if the substance of an angel is sufficient for its being in a place, this ceases to be an option. This condemnation, or at least the combination of this one with Article 204, clearly caused Henry some embarrassment, as we shall see. As Henry reads Article 219, it rejects the claim that an angel's substance is sufficient for its having *natural* site. Understanding the substance to be the *ratio essendi in loco*, Henry reasons thus:

> For if it was thus in a site or a place, its substance itself, through natural dependence on the site and the place would be the reason for its being in a place, which is erroneous, according to what one article condemned by the Bishop rightly says.[26]

Henry immediately quotes Article 219. And an angel cannot have natural site because

> It has no natural dependence in its essence or substance, or in its existence, on the whole bodily substance or on any part of its, but rather *vice versa*. For bodily things depend more on spiritual ones in nature, essence and existence, than *vice versa*, just as the lower and less noble in degree and order of nature [depends] on the higher and nobler.[27]

If an angel had natural site, it would mean that an angel could not move around (or at least, could not do so other than against its natural inclinations) – which is not, I would judge, a position that most theologians would want to adopt.

So its substance as such cannot help explain how an angel has a site, and (P1) thus understood is rejected. On Henry's analysis, this leaves three alternatives. (P2) looks rather like the Thomist view, and as Henry develops it the resemblance becomes quite marked. Basically, Henry considers two ways in which an immaterial substance could be present in the material universe according to its power: first, in the case that the substance actually interacts, causally, with things in the material universe:

> (P2a) An angel's power explains its being in a place when active;

and secondly, in the case that the substance does not:

> (P2b) An angel's power explains its being in a place when inactive.

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[26] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 60, l. 72–p. 61, l. 75): 'Si enim sic esset in situ vel in loco, ipsa substantia eius per naturalem dependentiam ad situm et locum esset ratio essendi ipsum in loco, quod erroneum est, secundum quod bene dicit unus articulus ab episcopo damnatus'.

[27] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 60, ll. 67–72): 'Nullam habet naturalem dependentiam in sua essentia vel substantia aut in sua existentia ad totam substantiam corporalem vel ad aliquam partem eius, sed magis e converso. Plus enim in natura et essentia et existentia dependent corporalia a spiritualibus quam e converso, sicut inferius et minus nobile in gradu et ordine naturae a superiori et magis nobili'.

As Henry puts it, describing (P2b):

> In another way, as they are habitually or actually operating towards something other than towards bodily substance.[28]

This leaves open the possibility of a causally inactive immaterial substance.

Henry certainly agrees with something like the Thomist line that, in the case of (P2a), a causally interactive immaterial substance, the substance has site simply in virtue of the application of its power to a material place:

> In the first way, it is doubtless true that the substance of an angel is in a site and a place by its power applied in some work which it brings about in a bodily and located substance. … But this does not posit any determination in its nature or essence, for in this way God has existence in a place. … But this is not properly to be in a place, but to be in something that is moved.[29]

Again, this seems fully consonant with Henry's definition of mathematical site, and it makes it clear that 'application' is to be understood in fully causal terms. But unfortunately it seems to prove rather too much. For it seems to be equivalent to the definition of mathematical site. What Henry should be aiming for, in the light of Article 204, is an account of the presence of an angel that does *not* require causal interaction with the material world. Either the definition of mathematical site is insufficiently loose (because it includes the notion of the substance's causal 'application' to a place), or Henry needs another kind of site, real but not mathematical (since mathematical place includes the notion of causal application). This, I take it, is the gist of Scotus's criticism of Henry.

The difficulties Henry experiences trying to make sense of the condemnations only increase when he considers the other options for angelic location. For thus far, as he is well aware, he has not provided a way for an immaterial substance to be present without operating at a place. Henry begins his discussion of (P2b) by trying out, and rejecting, a few strategies that still appeal in some way or another to causal solutions. First, possession of the powers themselves cannot be sufficient, for

> A power of the soul is not of lesser abstraction from locational quantity than its substance [is], as is clear to those who follow the judgment of natural reason. … But … the episcopal opinion said that 'it is true' that 'separated substances are nowhere, if it be understood that the substance itself is not the reason for its existing in a place'. And this is because the substance is not the reason for the substance of the angel's being in a place, even if it is in a place. And for a similar reason, it is doubtless true that, if an angel through its power (namely, intellect or will) does not apply its power to a place by operating on it, then

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[28] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 65, ll. 73–5): 'Alio modo ut sunt in habitu vel in actu operandi circa aliquid aliud quam circa substantiam corporalem'.

[29] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 65, ll. 76–80, 83–4): 'Primo modo indubitanter verum est substantiam angeli esse in situ et loco per suam virtutem applicatam in opus quod exercet in substantia corporali et situali. … Sed hoc nihil determinationis ponit in eius natura vel essentia: hoc enim modo Deus habet esse in loco. … Sed hoc non est proprie esse in loco, sed in moto'.

> likewise its power (namely, intellect and will) is not the reason for its being in a place, as was said – unless perhaps its power is of lesser abstraction than its substance. And if this is true, then I am deficient in understanding it, as in many other things.[30]

Intuitively, the notion of substance is less abstracted from the notion of place than the notion of the substance's *powers* is abstracted from the notion of place. The idea of something's being at a place is more basic than the idea of the thing's powers being at the place, and, it seems to me, in at least two ways. First, the presence of the thing at the place explains the presence of the powers at the place; and secondly we might be inclined to think that while it is proper to say that a substance occupies a place, we might think it less proper to say that its attributes (such as its powers) occupy a place. Consider the case of a material object such as a cat. The cat occupies a place, but does its colour, or its scratching power? Perhaps so, but these claims cannot be made without a great deal of additional ontology. So if the notion of powers is more abstracted than the notion of substance is from the notion of place, it seems to follow that, if substance cannot explain site, *a fortiori* powers are even less well-equipped for the requisite explanatory task.

The final couple of clauses in this passage already reveal a certain hesitancy on Henry's part, and it seems to me pretty clear that he would like to be able to say that power is the basic explanation for angelic presence, and feels constrained by the condemnations to avoid this position (just as Scotus suspected about him, as we have seen). The discussion contains Henry's explicit comment on his role in the condemnations, specifically in relation to Article 219, and goes on to express rather explicitly his worries about the intelligibility of the position:

> For all the masters of theology, gathered to discuss this – of whom I was one – agreed on this, unanimously conceding that the substance of an angel is not the reason for its being in a place according to its substance. … Therefore, if perhaps the power of an angel is not the reason for its being in a place – which at the present time I neither determine, nor sustain, nor defend – it is necessary to seek for something else which is the reason for its being in a place – about which I would prefer to hear others than to say something. And it is safer for me to confess on this subject that I do not know what I should say, than to put forward something indiscreetly. For what that is, I do not know.[31]

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[30] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 66, ll. 4–6; p. 67, ll. 17–21, 24–30): 'Non est minoris abstractionis a quantitate situali potentia animae quam substantiam ut videtur sequentibus iudicium naturalis rationis. … Sed … sententia pontificalis dixit quod "verum est" quia "substantiae separatae nusquam sunt, si intelligatur quod substantia ipsa non est ratio existendi in loco". Et hoc ideo, quia substantia ipsa non est ratio essendi substantiam angeli in loco, etsi sit in loco. … Et consimili ratione verum est indubitanter quod, si angelus per potentiam suam, intellectum scilicet vel voluntatem, virtutem suam non applicat ad locum operando circa ipsum, quod similiter potentia eius, intellectus scilicet et voluntas, non est ratio essendi ipsum in loco, ut dictum est. Nisi forte potentia eius sit minoris abstractionis quam sit eius substantia. Quod si verum sit, in hoc intelligendo deficio, sicut et in pluribus aliis'.

[31] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 67, ll. 21–4, 31–6): 'In hoc enim concordabant omnes magistri theologiae congregati super hoc, quorum ego eram unus, unanimiter concedentes quod substantia angeli non est ratio angelum esse in loco secundum substantiam. … Igitur, si forte potentia angeli non sit ratio ipsum essendi in loco, quod ad praesens nec

The remaining causal strategies are also rejected by Henry: that an angel could be localized not by its causal activity but by the actualization of some passive potency of its by a material body (Henry's example is a demon suffering from corporeal fire); and that an angel has to operate in a place, such that (P2b) is counterpossible. The idea in this second case is that something could not count as part of the universe at all unless it had some kind of causal role in the universe. Against the first, Henry plausibly maintains that the aim in the condemnations is to reject all forms of causal relation, not merely active ones, and against the second he reasons that at least the spirit of the condemnation should allow us to assert that an angel would have a place even if, *per impossibile*, it were not to act in a place.[32]

So Henry, wanting to remain true to the condemnation, is forced to reject the view that an inactive angel could be in any way present by its power. This leaves (P3), the angel's limitation, or (P4) some other feature of the angel. Henry basically discards (P4) since he has no idea what such a feature could be.[33] So Henry is left with (P3), the angel's limitation. The appeal of limitation in Henry's mind is that it explains how an angel, unlike God, is not present everywhere.[34] This might seem like half an explanation, as it were, since, on the face of it, it does not explain how an angel gets to be *somewhere* at all. But Henry presupposes (as we have seen) that an angel *has* to be somewhere in the universe,[35] and I think Henry understands this presupposition to be entailed by the condemnation, according to which an angel does not have to operate in order to be present. According to this, on Henry's understanding, an angel has to be present even if it is not operating. And Henry appeals to the authority of John of Damascus in this context (even though, as he acknowledges, John holds that angelic presence requires, or is perhaps reducible to, operation, and that thinkers such as Aquinas were more likely to find John a useful authority on this question).[36] According to John of Damascus, as interpreted by Henry, angels have a natural aptitude for site: which is to say that they have site unless prevented by some other agent – specifically, God.[37]

Henry develops his position by trying to determine the precise ways in which an angelic substance is limited. He has two proposals. First, an angel's essence is finite, intellectually circumscribed by its definability (in terms of genus and difference).[38]

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determino nec sustineo nec defendo, oportet quaerere aliquid aliud quod est ratio essendi ipsum in loco – in quo mallem alios audire quam aliquid dicere. Et est mihi tutius profiteri in proposito quia ignorem quid dicam, quam quod aliquid de meo indiscrete ingeram. Quid enim sit illud, nescio'.

[32] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 67, l. 36–p. 68, l. 55).

[33] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 68, l. 57; p. 70, ll. 86–8).

[34] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 68, l. 59).

[35] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 68, l. 58; p. 70, ll. 82–3).

[36] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 69, ll. 67–9).

[37] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 69, ll. 70–72), referring to John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa* 17, n. 12 (ed. Eligius M. Buytaert, Franciscan Institute Publications, Text Series, 8 (St Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute; Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts; Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1955), 72, ll. 64, 66–7).

[38] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 70, l. 91–p. 71, l. 9): 'quia ita finita est et certis limitibus contenta, ut necesse est eam esse alicubi, non nusquam nec ubique'.

Secondly, and perhaps not very helpfully, Henry asseverates that every creature is limited to site,

> because it is finite and contained by particular limits, such that it is necessary for it to be somewhere – neither nowhere nor everywhere.[39]

This, of course, just amounts to the claim that every creature has some kind of site or place in the universe. Henry claims to understand the first kind of limitation clearly enough.[40] But he continues more apophatically:

> How indeed it is necessary for every creature to differ from and be distant from him [viz. God] through the second limitation (since he is everywhere, whereas every creature is necessarily somewhere but not everywhere), and whether the first limitation – namely, in nature and essence – is the cause and reason for this second limitation, or whatever else might be that [viz. the cause and basis for the second limitation], I say that I do not know at all.[41]

Henry's puzzlement is no surprise here, since the way in which he has defined limitation to site seems to render the whole account circular: what it is that explains angelic limitation to site is just angelic limitation to site. But presumably Henry cannot allow himself to say that what determines angelic limitation to site is just the essence of the angel itself, since this would fall foul of Article 219. Henry's highly agnostic conclusion is marked:

> I in no way teach, hold or defend, however, other than that an angel is in a place according to its substance without operation, and that the limitation of its nature, or something like this, is the reason for this. And, what is more, I intend to persuade neither myself nor anyone else to hold the opposite on the basis of what is proposed, which I have now suggested merely to intimate the difficulty of the matter, and to provoke someone else to solve it.[42]

Henry sees himself as, we might say, caught between a rock and a hard place. The Thomist position he finds comprehensible but insufficient to allow for the presence of an inactive angel. The view that an angel is present according to its substance, seemingly the position most contrary to Aquinas's, is ruled out on the

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[39] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 71, ll. 10–12).

[40] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 71, l. 18).

[41] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 71, ll. 18–22): 'Quomodo vero necesse est omnem creaturam differre et distare ab eo [scil. Deo] per secundum limitationem quia ipse est ubique, omnis autem creatura necessario alicubi, sed non ubique, et an prima limitatio, in natura scilicet et essentia, sit causa et ratio istius secundae limitationis, vel quodcumque aliud illud sit, dico quod penitus ignoro'.

[42] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 71, l. 22–p. 72, l. 28): 'Quin tamen angelus secundum substantiam sine operatione sit in loco, et quin ipsa limitatio naturae eius vel aliqua huiusmodi sit illius ratio, nullatenus dogmatizo, sustineo seu defendo quoquo modo. Et, quod amplius est, nec mihi nec cuiquam ut contrarium teneat, suadere intendo ex praemissis. Quae iam proposui, ut solummodo rei difficultatem insinuarem et aliquem ad eam declarandam provocarem'.

grounds (highly suspect, it seems to me) that such an angel would not be able to move around other than against its natural inclination. But there is no plausible or comprehensible third position that Henry can identify. (Godfrey of Fontaines makes just this complaint about the condemnations of Articles 204 and 219.[43] But Godfrey seems to have confused two distinct claims: first, that the localization is *attached to* the substance or activity, and secondly that the localization is *explained by* the substance or activity.)

Henry's account is in any case full of problems. First of all, if limitation is the relevant condition, then it should be the relevant condition whether or not an angel is acting. Henry holds that the presence of a causally active angel is explained by its causal activity. But there seems to be nothing about a causally active angel that renders it any more or less limited in essence than an inactive one. One difference that Henry toys with, that would go some way towards circumventing this objection, is that a causally active angel could be said to occupy an *extended* place in a way that, perhaps, an inactive angel could not:

> When it operates in an extended place, and because of this is in a divisible and extended place, then it is true that it is in a place through the quantity of its power. Nevertheless, however, when it is in a place but not by operating, it can truly be in a place (though not in a divisible and extended one, but in a simple and indivisible one, and perhaps even in an extended and divisible one) according to its substance, but through something else which is the reason for this. How and in what size place, however – one foot or two feet, large or smaller; or in a simple and indivisible one – to tell the truth, I say that I do not know at all.[44]

(Again, the agnosticism on the question of an inactive angel is marked.) In this passage, we could understand limitation as sufficient to get the angel to a particular place (rather than everywhere), where without further explanation this place is point-like; operation could be the explanation for the angel's occupying a place that has some kind of extension. In any case, Henry is evidently reluctant to commit himself to a kind of model based on extended material substances in the way that Scotus later does.

Secondly, limitation no more than substance itself seems able to explain why an angel is not tied to just one place. After all, the objection to substance as the explanation for localization is that if substance is sufficient for being in a place, then it is sufficient for being in exactly one place. But *pari passu* if limitation is sufficient for being in a place, then we would expect it to be sufficient for being in exactly one place. In any case, there seems to be no objection to a substance essentially having

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[43] Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodl*., XII q. 5 (*Les Quodlibets onze et douze*, ed. J. Hoffmans, PB, 5/1 (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1932), 101).

[44] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 72, ll. 33–40): 'cum operatur in loco quanto et per hoc est in loco divisibili et quanto, tunc verum est quod est in loco per virtutis suae quantitatem. Nihilominus tamen, cum est in loco non operando, bene potest esse in loco secundum substantiam per aliud, quod est illius ratio, licet non in divisibili et quanto, sed in simplici et indivisibili, et forte etiam in quanto et divisibili. Quomodo tamen et in quanto loco, pedali vel bipedali, maiori vel minori, vel in simplici et indivisibile, ut verum fatear, dico quod ignoro penitus'.

a *disjunctive* property – such that its essence is sufficient for its being in this or that place. Furthermore, thirdly, it seems hard to think of the essential limitation of a substance as anything really distinct from the essence itself. It is not an *additional* feature of an angel, over and above its being an angel, that it is limited. And I have already pointed out the problems with the definition of 'site' offered by Henry.

How does Scotus respond to the problematic Article 219? Although he does no more than allude to the Article without mentioning it, he seems to have a much clearer understanding of what might be involved than Henry does. As he sees it, angels do not have to occupy places, since God could make angels prior to the existence of a material world, or could make them outside the universe.[45] So the angel's substance cannot be sufficient for its localization – and this is (plausibly) what is meant in Article 219. Scotus does deal with the question of the *ratio essendi in loco*, thus silently quoting the Article, and all he says about it is that there is no need to try to find such a *ratio*. This too is in accord with Article 219, which merely states that the angel's substance is not the relevant *ratio* or explanation. His own view on the basis for angelic location is just that an angel has a passive potency for such location, and he leaves it an open question which feature of an angel is a sufficient explanation of this potency:

> In an angel there is a passive potency, by which it can be in a place, and this potency is either founded immediately in its substance, or in it in so far as it is an actually existent limited nature, or in something extrinsic to the angel (whatever that may be). And for this reason there is no need necessarily to seek some intrinsic reason (*intrinsecam rationem*) for an angel to be in a place, because there is no such, but there is in it merely a passive potentiality by which it can be in a place, because it is not incompatible with it.[46]

A *ratio* for Scotus is a sufficient condition, and the passive potency is not a sufficient condition for being in a place. The explanation – the sufficient condition – is (as Scotus notes) not intrinsic to the angel at all, but extrinsic. It is the place at which the angel exists. The angel has the potency even when it is not in a place, since, as Scotus makes clear, an angel need not be anywhere in the universe even given the existence of a material universe. At all levels, the account is non-explanatory. Angels can occupy places because they can, and we do not know which feature of an angel it is that explains this capacity.

Henry believes that talk of angelic presence is not exactly analogous to talk of divine presence. God's presence is causal in a way that an angel's is not. Scotus, it seems to me, has noted that in principle the 1277 teaching renders causal and substantial presence logically independent, and generalizes from the 1277 teaching on angels to infer that God's presence is not merely causal. Henry could perhaps argue

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[45] Scotus, *Ord.*, II d. 2 q. 2 aa. 1–2, n. 236 (VII, 261).

[46] Scotus, *Ord.*, II d. 2 q. 2 aa. 1–2, n. 236 (VII, 261): 'In angelo est potentia passiva, qua potest esse in loco, et ipsa potentia vel fundatur immediate in eius substantia, vel in ipsa in quantum est natura limitata actualiter existens, vel in aliquo extrinseco angelo (quidquid sit illud). Et ideo non oportet quaerere aliquam intrinsecam rationem essendi angelo in loco, necessario, quia ibi nulla est, sed tantum est in ipso potentialitas passiva, qua potest esse in loco quia non repugnat sibi'.

that God's presence can be merely causal since the notion of a causally inactive God coupled with that of a really existing material world makes no sense. Still, once the distinction between causal and substantial presence is made, it seems that substantial presence is globally more fundamental, and more explanatory, than causal presence, and thus that God should have it. This, incidentally, relates closely to Scotus's *ad hominem* rejection of Aquinas's position on the grounds that substantial presence ought to be generally more fundamental than causal presence.

I submit that the view, at least as it is developed by Scotus, is simply incomprehensible. Henry has some harsh words for those who (like me) would come to this judgment:

> Those therefore who cannot understand an angel, according to its substance, as a unity without being a point … are of a melancholy disposition, and make excellent mathematicians but very poor metaphysicians, because they cannot extend their understanding beyond site and magnitude, in which mathematical things are grounded; metaphysical things are in themselves really abstracted from site and magnitude, because metaphysical abstraction exceeds mathematical.[47]

(I am no mathematician, so if Henry is right my prospects are rather bleak.) Scotus is not exactly like Shakespeare's 'poet's pen', that

> … gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation …[48]

But nevertheless it seems to me that his view on divine immensity shares something with the bizarre claim of some modern theologians who hypothesize that God, in creating, needs to 'withdraw' to make space for the universe. Scotus's God interpenetrates the universe; but if he did not, he could still causally interact with it by doing so at a distance. What the immediate theological or philosophical consequences of Scotus's position may have been, from a historical point of view, I do not know, though Richard Sorabji has drawn attention in this context to a startling passage in Milton, who 'tells us … that angels, unlike humans, make love by total interpenetration, and

> 'Obstacle find none
> Of membrane, joint or limb, exclusive bars.
> Easier than air with air, if spirits embrace
> Total they mix.'[49]

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[47] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9 (VI, 63, ll. 35–6, p. 64, ll. 57–61): 'Qui ergo non possunt angelum intelligere secundum rationem substantiae suae ut unitatem absque rationem puncti … melancholici sunt, et optimi fiunt mathematici, sed pessimi metaphysici, quia non possunt intelligentiam suam extendere ultra situm et magnitudinem, in quibus fundantur mathematicalia, et metaphysicalia per se abstracta sunt secundum rem a situ et magnitudine, quia metaphysica abstractio excedit mathematicam'.

[48] Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, act 5, scene 1.

[49] Richard Sorabji, *Matter, Space and Motion: Theories in Antiquity and their Sequel* (London: Duckworth, 1988), p. 122, quoting Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book 8, ll. 614–17.

And there is a wider question about the ways in which immaterial souls might be present to their bodies, especially if we assume that souls are not the substantial forms of bodies. (Descartes, for what it is worth, seems to have taken the causal route here.) Perhaps other work will be able to take the story further.

Chapter 6

Angels, Space and Place: The Location of Separate Substances according to John Duns Scotus

Tiziana Suárez-Nani[1]

The term 'space', as it appears in the title of this Chapter, was not current in the Middle Ages. The notion of space familiar to us, from ordinary perception or philosophical analysis, as an undifferentiated and homogenous receptacle, was alien to the medieval mind.[2] The term as such was found only rarely, and then generally meaning an interval or the distance between two determinate points or places, without any reality in its own right.[3] Space was thus only seen obtainable between two items and 'made to exist only by sprinkling places in it'.[4]

The conditions and conception of place were altogether different. As the object of immediate perception and theoretical reflection, 'place' was concomitant to every individual existence and, together with time, determined it *hic et nunc*. Place was omnipresent and multiplied in a multitude of local determinations: that – uncountable – of every individual capable of movement; that of every object capable of locomotion; that of every reality with a fixed location; that of planets, stars, the world, paradise, purgatory, or hell.

The differentiation of places – some of which were charged with strong emotional or religious value – responded not only to the multiplication of physical objects, all necessarily determined locally. It also resulted from the differentiation of subjects, formulated in terms of ontological categories (human beings, angels, God), or of moral qualities within one and the same category – those qualities in their

[1] I am particularly grateful to Isabel Iribarren, who, with much competence, precision and patience translated into English the French version of this text.

[2] For the medieval conception of space, see P. Zumthor, *La mesure du monde. Représentation de l'espace au Moyen Âge* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1993). For theories of space and location, see E. Grant, *Studies in Medieval Science and Natural Philosophy* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1981), as well as vol. 25 of *Miscellanea mediaevalia* (1998).

[3] It must be remarked however that the rare occurrence of the term 'space' is characteristic of the discussions concerning location and space in the sublunar world. By contrast, the term appears fairly frequently in discussions concerning the location of angels. This contrast further confirms the centrality of these issues in angelological discussions, which in their turn contributed to physical and cosmological reflection.

[4] See P. Zumthor, *La mesure*, p. 51.

turn producing different situations or locations in the other world (hell, purgatory, paradise).

The differentiation of subjects into distinct ontological categories is what grounds the very possibility of the question of the location of separate substances. Since place is not a homogenous space containing different things but a specific categorical determination denoting the situation of each and every object, each reality has its own place. Thus, given that separate substances constitute a distinct ontological category, any attempt to assess their status calls for an examination of the question of their location.[5]

But before embarking on a determination of what this place is, medieval thinkers inquired about the very possibility of location of spiritual substances: 'Whether angels are spatially located' (*Utrum angelus sit in loco*). This is the question that will occupy the following pages. More precisely, I shall examine the discussion of this problem in John Duns Scotus, taking into account Scotus's predecessors in an attempt to assess his contribution both to angelology and to the physics of place.

Before Scotus

Scotus's discussion of angelic location follows the same approach of previous commentators of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. Distancing himself from Augustine[6] and Boethius,[7] who denied local presence to spiritual creatures, the Lombard distinguished between two modes of location: 'circumscriptive', which holds for corporeal substances – for bodies are physically situated in a place three-dimensionally; and 'definitive', which obtains in spiritual creatures – for non-corporeal creatures are related to a determinate place (and not to all places) without being physically circumscribed in it.[8] The Lombard's distinction was in all likelihood aimed at avoiding the unpalatable thesis that spiritual creatures are ubiquitous. Subsequent commentators will follow the Lombard's position on this issue, albeit granting that separate substances are located at least *definitive*.

This distinction, however, did not avoid all difficulties. The way in which '*definitive*' location was to be understood remained an open question, and it is on this point that the differences in opinion began to emerge. There were two alternative lines of thought: (1) according to the first, the relation of an angel to its physical place results solely from the angel's mental operations; (2) the second holds rather that the

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[5] The connection between the status of spiritual creatures and their location is particularly emphasized by Thierry of Freiberg. I have examined Thierry's account in 'Une contribution médiévale aux théories du lieu: Thierry de Freiberg et le lieu des substances spirituelles', in B. Mojsisch (ed.), *Dietrich von Freiberg – Eckpunkte seines Denkens*, Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie (Amsterdam-Philadelphia, forthcoming 2008).

[6] See *De Gen. ad litt*. VIII, 26, n. 48 (CSEL 28, I, p. 265).

[7] See *De hebdomadibus*, in *The theological tractates*, *Boethius*, ed. H.F. Stewart and E.K. Randed, Loeb Classical Library (London: William Heinemann; Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 40.18–27.

[8] Peter Lombard, *Sent*., I d. 37 c. 6 n. 1 (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae: 1971–81), vol. 1, p. 270, 12–17.

relation to their place inheres in the very substance of spiritual creatures.[9] Before examining Scotus's position, it would be helpful to identify some representatives of one and the other lines of thought, in order to provide the main points of reference and context for the Scotist discussion.

Location of angels by their operation

Thomas Aquinas explicitly supports this thesis in various writings: *Sent*., I d. 37 q. 3 a. 1–3; *Quodlibet*, I q. 3 a. 1; *Summa Theol*., I q. 52 a. 1–3. Aquinas's adherence to the Aristotelian definition of place as 'the innermost motionless boundary of the container',[10] as well as his conception of the status of angels as radically immaterial substances, led him to reject the thesis that angels are located by virtue of their being, in favour of the idea that an angel's relation to a physical place results from its operations of intellect and will. These operations produce a – virtual – contact through the application of the angel's *virtus* to a specific place, in relation to which the angel is then said to be located.[11] An angel is therefore located not by its presence *in* a place, but by a relation to the place which remains *external*, because it is brought about solely by the application of the angel's *virtus*. We are thus confronted with a notion of location disengaged from circumscription and reduced to a relation with space that does not denote dependence. When it comes to spiritual substances Aquinas inverts the terms of the standard relation between the containing place and the contained object, redefining it in terms of *containing subject* and *contained place*: the angel virtually contains the place to which it is related, because its status determines a relation to that place which depends on the angel's mental operations alone.[12] Although all kinds of circumscription or commensurability to the place are excluded, the angel remains nonetheless locally determined. Its local determination

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[9] The choice of one or the other option determined the solution to another important problem, that of the movement of separate substances. In this respect, see P. Porro, *Forme e modelli di durata nel pensiero medievale. L'*aevum, *il tempo discreto*, *la categoria 'quando'* (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1996), p. 286.

[10] See Aristotle, *Physica* IV, 4, 212a 20–21; and Thomas Aquinas, *In Phys*., lectio VI, n. 470. On the Thomist conception of physical place, see T. Suárez-Nani, 'Conceptions médiévales de l'espace et du lieu: les éléments d'une trajectoire', in M. Esfeld and J.M. Tétaz, eds, *Généalogie de la pensée moderne. Volume d'hommage à I. Schlüssler* (Ontos-Verlag: Frankfurt-Lancaster, 2004), pp. 97–114.

[11] See Aquinas, *Sent*., I d. 37 q. 4 a. 1: 'Eodem modo convenit angelo moveri in loco sicut esse in loco: et utrumque est aequivoce respectu corporalium. Dicitur enim angelus esse in loco inquantum applicatur loco per operationem'; *Quodl*., I q. 3 a. 1: 'Sicut ergo corpus est in loco per contactum dimensivae quantitatis, ita angelus est in loco per contactum virtutis'; *ST*, I q. 52 a. 1: 'angelo convenit esse in loco: aequivoce tamen dicitur angelus esse in loco et corpus. Corpus enim est in loco per… contactum dimensivae quantitatis. Quae quidem in angelis non est; sed est in eis quantitas virtualis. Per applicationem igitur virtutis angelicae ad aliquem locum qualitercumque dicitur angelus esse in loco corporeo'.

[12] *ST*, I q. 52 a. 3: 'Angelus dicatur esse in loco per hoc quod virtus eius immediate contingit locum per modum continentis perfecti'. On this point, see my *Les anges et la philosophie. Subjectivité et fonction cosmologique des substances séparées au XIIIe siècle* (Paris: J. Vrin, 2002), pp. 87–90.

is not however conceived as a permanent quality, since it results from the angel's free operations of intellect and will. It is therefore a very restricted sense of location, limited to the effective application of the angel's *virtus* to a given physical place.[13] Therefore, except for those who oversee celestial movement,[14] angels are not always located. Their freedom to relate to a place grants them control of the spatial dimension.[15] The Thomist position, heavily dependent on the privileged status attributed to separate substances, thus represents a 'minimalist' understanding of angels' local determination – an understanding which assumes only the strictly necessary in order to avoid the thesis of the ubiquity of spiritual creatures. In brief, Aquinas admits that an angel is related to a place '*definitive*, because it is in one place in such a way that it is not in another' (*quia ita est in uno loco*, *quod non in alio*),[16] even if the meaning denoted by '*definitive*' appears rather weak.

This difficulty did not escape Giles of Rome. He shared the Thomist view in general lines, but sharpened it by introducing the adverb 'always', and by acknowledging the impossibility of specifying the exact meaning of the angel's '*applicatio virtutis*' to a place. After rejecting two alternative positions as unacceptable,[17] Giles introduces his opinion in close connection to that of Aquinas. He presents the latter as holding that 'the angel is located by its operation' (*angelus est in loco per operationem*), adding however that 'angels sometimes do not operate in respect to bodies, and therefore they are not always located by their operation' (*angeli aliquando non operantur circa corpora*, *ideo aliquando non sunt in loco per operationem*).[18] At the same time, Giles takes issue with the Thomist position: 'The first statement seems correct, but I do not believe the second' (*primum est bene dictum*, *sed secundum non credo*).[19] He thus shares the thesis of location according to operation, but denies the possibility of an angel's non-location.[20]

Like Aquinas, Giles understands location according to operation as the result of the action whereby the angel applies its virtual quantity to a body.[21] But Giles

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[13] *ST*, I q. 52 a. 2: '[Angelus] voluntarie applicat suam virtutem ad corpus maius vel minus'; *Quodl*., I q. 3 a. 2: 'cum angelus sit… sua virtute supereminens in loco: unde non habet necesse quod sequatur in suo motu conditiones loci; sed voluntati suae subest quod applicet se per contactum virtutis huic loco et illo, et si vult, absque medio'.

[14] See my *Les anges et la philosophie*, second part.

[15] *ST*, I q. 52 a. 2: 'Angelus est indivisibile extra genus quantitatis et situ existens'.

[16] *ST*, I q. 52 a. 2.

[17] The first holds that 'angeli per essentiam sunt in loco'; the second that 'angeli nullo modo sunt in loco'. See Giles, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 37 q. 11, ed. C. Luna, *Aegidii Romani Opera omnia* III, 2: *Reportatio lecturae super libros I–IV Sententiarum*, Corpus philosophorum Medii Aevi. Testi e studi, 17 (Florence: Sismel, Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2003), p. 168. Both opinions already figured in Aquinas's commentary (*Sent*., I d. 37 q. 3 a. 1), to which Giles makes direct reference here.

[18] See Giles, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 37 q. 1, p. 169.

[19] Giles, *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 37 q. 1, p. 169.

[20] Note however that although Aquinas does not consider this possibility explicitly, it could be deduced from the voluntary character he attributes to angelic operations.

[21] *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 37 q. 1, p. 169: 'Sicut igitur corpus, applicando quantitatem suam alicui loco, est in loco, ita angelus, applicando alicui loco suam quantitatem

corrects Aquinas's view saying that 'the angel *always* operates in respect to a place and is thus *always* located' (*angelus semper operatur circa locum et sic semper est in loco*).[22] The double '*always*' (*semper*) rests on the idea of universal order, according to which the spiritual dominates over the corporeal and relates to it by virtual contact. That contact is constant, since separate substances are constantly exercising their influence on the corporeal world. Giles concludes on these grounds that angels are always located.[23] In this way, he removes the ambiguity in Aquinas's position by making of location a permanent determination belonging to separate substances: '[the angel] always operates in some way in respect to some body: for this reason it never happens to be the case that the angel is nowhere'.[24]

The permanent application of the angel's *virtus* to a body does not always imply movement. An angel can also be located in relation to the empyrean, which is motionless. Therefore, Giles concludes, it must be granted that we cannot explain all forms of location, even if we must admit that angels are always located.[25]

Giles's argument in *Quaestiones de motu angelorum* (1288–89), composed some sixteen years later, follows the same vein. Giles maintains his position, albeit varying the vocabulary somewhat. The opposition between 'dimensive quantity' (*quantitas dimensiva*) and 'virtual quantity' (*quantitas virtualis*) is replaced by that of 'extension' (*extensio*) and 'application' (*applicatio*), but with the same purpose of defending the thesis that bodies are located according to their extension, while separate substances are located according to their *virtus* or power.[26] Overall, Giles adheres to the Thomist thesis, but perfects it by adding some cogency to the notion of angelic location. He is however unable to give further clarification on the status of the operations that bring about the permanent relation between separate substances and space.

Location of angels 'per se'

The thesis of location of angels 'per se' predominates after 1277. As we know, Tempier's syllabus condemned the idea that angels are not in a place, together with the theses that they are located solely according to their operation, and that their

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virtualem, est in loco'.

[22] *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 37 q. 1, p. 169.

[23] *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 37 q. 1, p. 169: 'Intelligentia ponitur in optima dispositione semper in qua potest esse, secundum Philosophum; …sed optima dispositio ipsius universi est quod sit connexum… sic quod spirituale et corporale habeant connexionem ad invicem; sed haec connexio… est secundum contactum virtutis; ergo non erit dare instans in quo non applicet intelligentia suam influentiam corpori'.

[24] *Ordinatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 37 pars 2 princ. 1 q. 2 (Venice, 1521), 194vb Q: '[angelus] semper aliquo modo circa aliqua corpora operatur: propter quod numquam contigit ipsum nusquam esse'.

[25] *Reportatio in I Sententiarum*, d. 37 q. 1 p. 170: 'Sed haec applicatio non semper consistit in movendo… Quod patet, quia, cum est in caelo empyreo, in quo non est nisi per applicationem virtutis ad ipsum, tamen ipsum non movet, quia est corpus immobile, et ideo haec applicatio virtutis inexplicabilis est nobis'.

[26] *Quaestiones de motu angelorum*, q. 5, ed. G. Bruni, in *Analecta augustiniana*, 17 (1939/40), p. 42.

substance constitutes the ultimate foundation of their location.[27] The ambiguous, not to say problematic, character of these three articles – already pointed out by Henry of Ghent, a member of the commission –[28] neither compromised nor hampered their normative value for a good number of authors who, starting with William of la Mare,[29] rejected the thesis that angels are located according their operation. I shall consider the account of three such authors.

The first is Peter John Olivi, who discussed the problem of angelic location extensively in question 32 of his commentary on book II of the *Sentences*, composed in the years 1278–79. The purpose of his examination is to determine the (true) status of separate substances against the philosophical tradition which had erroneously attributed them a quasi-divine nature.[30] The question of location thus occupies a strategic place in Olivi's angelology.[31] The thesis of the location of angels 'per se' is proved by a threefold, rather elaborate argument. Essentially, it holds that there is an order or relation which intrinsically determines all spiritual creatures.[32] Olivi advances three kinds of relation which serve to account for angelic location: (1) a relation of '*assistentia*', which can be understood as coexistence or co-presence. The actual existence of two realities necessarily implies that they are related to each other, either immediately or in a mediated way. This is the equally case for spiritual as for a bodily substances: their coexistence implies the presence of one to the other – in the case of a spiritual substance, it consists in its immediate or mediated presence to the physical place of the body. This relation of mutual presence determines the being of the created realities and ultimately explains their location. (2) The second type of relation is based on action. All action performed with respect to an object implies that the subject must first be intentionally directed towards it. But this intentionality already implies a presence. Therefore, angelic action implies that the angel is present to its object and its place and is, for the same reason, located. (3) The third type of relation results from the capacity to move. Indeed, the angel's freedom to move to different places implies an orientation towards the term of the movement and, on the same grounds, a presence that explains the angel's location.

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[27] See *CUP*, ed. Dénifle-Chatelain (Paris, 1889), vol. 1, articles 204, 218 and 219, pp. 554–5. Also R. Hissette (ed.), *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 mars 1277* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1977), articles 53 to 55, pp. 104–10 (French translation in D. Piché, *La condamnation parisienne de 1277* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1999), pp. 140, 144 and 146).

[28] See Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*., II q. 9, ed. R. Wielockx, p. 67, 20–35.

[29] See *Correctorium fratris Thomae*, ed. Glorieux, *Les premières polémiques thomistes: Le correctorium corruptorii 'Quare'* (Le Saulchoir, Kain (Belgium): Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques, 1927), pp. 73–7.

[30] See *De perlegendis philosophorum libris*, ed. F.M. Délorme, in *Antonianum*, 16 (1941): 43.

[31] See my study 'Pierre de Jean Olivi et la subjectivité angélique', in *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age*, 70 (2003): 233–316. I profit here from some conclusions derived from this study, especially part III, pp. 262–75.

[32] See Peter John Olivi, *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, q. 32, ed. Jansen, vol. 1, p. 572: 'Rationes autem sumuntur ex triplici respectu seu ordine qui necessario est in angelis'.

According to Olivi, this threefold relation intrinsically determines spiritual creatures and explains their location as something '*per se*' and not merely according to operation. This tenet is underpinned by the hypothesis of the possible suppression of material bodies: even in the absence of all physical reality angels would be located, because their location consists primarily in a relational mode of being which intrinsically determines all creatures.[33] The necessary relation of the angel to space is thus presented as an essential mark of its finiteness and createdness.[34]

It would be useful at this point to recall a second opinion, that of Olivi's contemporary Matthew of Aquasparta, who develops his position in the *Quaestiones disputatae de anima separata*, composed between 1277 and 1279. Matthew treats the question of angelic location together with that of separate souls, a connection which is clearly illustrated by his use of the generic term '*substantiae spirituales*' to denote both '*anima separata*' and '*angelus*'. Explicitly referring to the condemnations of 1241 and 1277, Matthew unequivocally rejects the thesis that spiritual substances are located by their operation,[35] on the grounds that spatial determination is inherent to created being (creatures '*sunt per se in loco*'). He explains his position on the basis of four reasons:

(1) The first one derives from the order of the universe: as creatures, spiritual substances form part of the universe and the celestial sphere which encloses the world.[36] Since the order of the universe assigns a place to each creature and determines its situation in relation to other things, spiritual substances are necessarily located. (2) The second reason rests on the finiteness of spiritual substances: as creatures, they are intrinsically finite in their essence and in their faculties. This limitation also implies an *ubi*, since they do not enjoy the privilege of ubiquity.[37] (3) Divine providence supplies the third reason for angelic location. God has assigned angels a

[33] *Quaestiones in secundum librum Sententiarum*, q. 32, p. 586: 'Dicendum quod ubi seu esse hic vel illic addit aliquid ad rem quae est hic vel illic… [hoc est] quendam modum essendi multum relativum qui locatio vel situatio vocatur'.

[34] See my 'Pierre de Jean Olivi': 273.

[35] *Quaestio de anima separata*, q. 2, ed. V. Doucet (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonevanturae, 1959), pp. 26–7: 'Sed ista positio [sc. quod angelus est in loco per operationem], licet aliquando fuit opinio, tamen modo non debet pro opinione haberi, quoniam ab antiquo excommunicata fuit a domino Guillelmo Episcopo Parisiensi de consilio magistrorum tunc existentium Parisius; licet non sub ista forma. Excommunicata est nihilominus recenter a domino episcopo Parisiensi, qui nunc est, de communi consensu omnium Magistrorum, tam de existentia in loco quam de motu tam substantiarum separatarum quam etiam specialiter animae separatae, in diversis articulis'.

[36] *Quaestio de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 28: 'Substantiae spirituales sunt de mundo et de universo; ergo, non sunt extra mundo'. As O. Boulnois shows ('Du lieu cosmique à l'espace continu? La représentation de l'espace selon Duns Scot et les condamnations de 1277', in *Miscellanea Medievalia*, 25 (1998): 314–31), on this occasion Matthew is following Bonaventure's argument in *Sent*., II d. 2 p. 2 a. 2, qq. 1–4.

[37] *Quaestio de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 28: 'Constat enim substantias spirituales creatas limitatas esse et secundum virtutem et secundum essentiam. Igitur… cum non possint esse ubique, quia limitati sunt… necesse est eas esse in aliquo "ubi" determinato'.

place in the empyrean as the location most suitable to their nature.[38] (4) The fourth and last reason derives from divine justice, which assigns each being a place according to their merit. As creatures, it thus pertains to spiritual substances to be situated according to their moral condition (of beatitude or damnation), and consequently to be located according to essence.[39]

Matthew is nevertheless aware that the thesis that spiritual substances are located in a physical place is problematic on account of their simplicity and indivisibility. Eager to clarify this point, he adds that their location does not imply dependence on the place or circumscription in the sense of commensurability ('*nec per circumscriptionem sive commensurationem*'), but rather 'a certain communication of their presence or the presentiality of their substance and the definition of its existence as present.'[40] Separate substances are thus necessarily present in certain places according to the limitations assigned by God to their nature.[41] As with Olivi, the network of structural relations which forms the universal order confers to each and every member of the cosmos its local determination. Comprised within this network, angels do not escape location, even if they relate to their place without commensurability. Location by essence appears here again as a mark of finiteness: being locally determined means, strictly speaking, 'not being able to be everywhere'.

This point is reinforced by Matthew's justification of the 1277 condemnation, specifically the latter's rejection of the thesis that angels are located according to their operation, and the denial that it is their essence or substance that explains their location.[42] Underlying Matthew's justification of the condemnation is his distinction between *application to* a place and *delimitation within* a place. Application to a

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[38] *Quaestio de anima separata*, q. 2, pp. 26–7: 'Tertia ratio sumitur ex divina providentia… Nam secundum naturam suam et secundum naturae perfectionem locum illis substantiis deputavit, caelum scilicet empyreum, quod est locus et naturalis conditionis et beatitudinis'.

[39] *Quaestio de anima separata*, q. 2, pp. 26–7: 'Quarta ratio sumitur ex divina iustitia, quae secundum meritorum exigentiam loca distinxit: caelum ad gloriam, infernum vel purgatorium ad poenam; …unde… necessarium videtur debere poni eos [sc. substantiae spirituales] in loco secundum essentiam, non tantum secundum operationem'.

[40] *Quaestio de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 30: 'quandam suae [sc. angeli] praesentiae communicationem vel suae substantiae praesentationem et existentiae praesentialis definitionem'.

[41] *Quaestio de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 30: 'Supposita loci existentia et ordine et connexione partium mundi ad invicem, fortassis substantia spiritualis non potest non exhibere praesentiam suam loco corporali, in quo tamen, quia simplex est, ita est in toto quod totum in qualibet parte. Sed quia limitatae est existentiae, habet certum limitem et mensuram in quanto loco potest se facere et quanto loco suam praesentiam exhibere. Quis autem sit ille terminus, puto solum Deum scire, qui novit mensuras et modos omnium naturarum et omnibus naturis proprios limites praefixit'.

[42] *Quaestio de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 31: 'Circa declarationem autem rationis exsistentiae in loco intelligendum est quod operatio tantum non est ratio essendi in loco, sicut dicunt Magistri. …Nec essentia, sicut dictum est, est ratio applicandi seu exsistendi in loco, nam essentia de ratione sui a loco non dependet'. In these lines, Matthew betrays his compliance with the condemnation, unlike Henry of Ghent and Godfrey of Fontaines, who rather highlight the problematic, even incoherent, character of the three articles dealing

determinate place is explained by the order of the universe (first and third reasons above), while the delimitation within a place is explained by the finiteness which characterizes all creatures.[43] Matthew thus accounts for the location of angels by resorting to the relational structure of the universe and to created finiteness. He fails however to clarify the nature of this finiteness which does not seem to derive from the essence of the creatures.[44] Universal order on the one hand and createdness on the other – i.e. relation to other created beings and relation to God: this twofold relation determines and spatializes spiritual creatures without making them dependent on a physical place. For it is their dependence on God what ultimately grounds the angel's local delimitation. Local determination is thus articulated in terms of the limitation intrinsic to creatures: 'those [beings] which are limited are in potency to a place' (*eo quod limitatae sunt*, *sunt in potentia ad 'ubi'*).[45]

A third proponent of the location 'per se' of angels is Richard of Mediavilla, who treats the question in his commentary on the *Sentences* (1285).[46] Before developing his own position, Richard brings to the fore the condemnation of 1277.[47] Like Olivi, he distinguishes between the '*applicatio virtutis*' and 'operation' strictly speaking: the first requires the previous presence of the angel to its object, such that before any operation the angel is already located by being present to its object.[48] Richard explains this location '*per se*' in terms of Aristotelian causality: the efficient cause of the '*applicatio virtutis*' is the angel's will and its efficient power, as well as (indirectly) the divine will as superior efficient cause; the final cause of angelic location lies in the unity, order and connection of the universe; finally, the formal cause resides neither in being circumscribed in a place – since the angel has no dimensions – nor in the angels's operations nor in the order of the universe,[49] but in the relation of

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with the location of separate substances. On this issue, see L. Bianchi, *Il vescovo e i filosofi* (Lubrina editrice: Bergamo, 1990), pp. 16–61.

[43] *Quaestio de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 31: 'Ratio enim applicationis qua substantia spiritualis… loco se praesentem exhibet, est ordo est habitudo et connexio mundi et partium eius… Ratio autem determinationis et definitionis est propria limitatio, mensura et modus cuiuslibet naturae creatae…, et propterea sic est loco prasens quod ad locum aliquem determinatur et definitur'.

[44] *Quaestio de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 31: 'Si quaeras quid est ista limitatio, mensura vel modus, dico quod non est ipsa essentia. Nulla enim essentia est suus modus vel sua mensura, sed consequitur essentiam, prout est sub esse actuali, et fortassis est ipsum esse sic modificatum, sic mensuratum et limitatum'.

[45] *Quaestio de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 33.

[46] *Sent*., I d. 37 a. 2 q. 1 (Brixiae, 1591), pp. 325–7.

[47] *Sent*., I d. 37 a. 2 q. 1, p. 326b: 'Praeterea supradictam opinionem [sc. quod angelus non est in loco nisi per operationem] dogmatizantes, a domino Stephano Parisiensi Episcopo excommunicati sunt'.

[48] *Sent*., I d. 37 a. 2 q. 1, p. 326b: 'Cum ergo angelus praesens sit ubi est praesens virtus existens in ipso, sequitur quod prius ordine naturae angelus preasens est corpori, quam aliquam operationem causet in corpore. Ideo mihi videtur dicendum, quod angelus praeter omnem operationem, quam habet circa locum est in loco non circumscriptive, cum non sit res corporalis, sed diffinitive est praesens alicui loco determinato'.

[49] *Sent*., I d. 37 a. 2 q. 1, p. 327a: 'Ratio autem formalis illius applicationis non est circumscriptio a loco…, nec operatio circa locum…, nec ordo universi'. Note that Richard

simultaneity between the angel and its place or the physical realities existing in that place.[50] Note that this thesis reintroduces Olivi's idea of the coexistence of the angel with beings of the world – an idea found as well in Matthew in Aquasparta and his conception of '*presentialitas*' and '*communicatio praesentiae*'.

The ambiguity of the condemned articles thus incites Richard to develop an articulate explanation which results in the identification of three foundations for angelic location, the main one being neither the angel's operation nor its essence but its coexistence with other realities of the world. It is a factual argument, for it derives from the consideration of the order of things as it manifests itself *hic et nunc*. In this vein, to the objection that denies angelic location (by their presence to a body) in virtue of God's power to suppress the corporeal world, Richard responds that the problem does not consist in knowing what God can or cannot do, but in determining what has already been done: '*quod factum est*'.[51]

Duns Scotus and the place of angels

In his commentary on book II of the *Sentences*, Scotus devotes four questions to the issue of angelic location, in order to draw later the consequences for the concept of motion.[52] Predictably, he presents the thesis of angelic location according to operation in connection to Tempier's condemnation – a condemnation to which he attributes universal validity, in contrast to Godfrey of Fontaines, who had strongly relativized it.[53] Scotus then recalls the positions of Godfrey of Fontaines and Giles of Rome,[54] criticizing them for being merely disguised versions of Aquinas's inconsistencies.[55]

Scotus recapitulates several objections presented against the Thomist thesis of location according to operation. Among them we recognize an argument first found in Olivi and then reintroduced by Richard of Mediavilla – that of the necessary presence of the angel to its object before acting upon it – another one put forward by Giles of Rome against the Thomist position – namely, the consequences of the non-location of angels –[56] and the condition advanced by Richard of Mediavilla on the

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rejects here the argument put forward by Matthew of Aquasparta, according to which the order and structure of the universe constitute the foundation for the 'applicatio virtutis'. See above n. 35.

[50] *Sent*., I d. 37 a. 2 q. 1, p. 327a: 'Dico ergo quod formalis ratio applicationis angeli ad locum est sua simultas cum loco vel cum re in loco existente. Unde sicut formalis ratio applicationis corporis ad locum est circumscriptio, sic formalis applicatio angeli ad locum est simultas sua cum loco vel cum re existente in loco'.

[51] *Sent*., I d. 37 a. 2 q. 1, p. 327b.

[52] See *Ord*., II d. 2, pars 2, qq. 1–4, ed. C. Balic (Rome, 1963), pp. 241–77.

[53] O. Boulnois ('Du lieu cosmique': 319) attributes to Scotus two alternative interpretations of the condemnation, one 'strict' and the other 'very severe'.

[54] See Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodl*., VI q. 13, ed. J. Hoffmans, in PB 3 (Louvain, 1914), pp. 239–40; Giles of Rome, *De motu angelorum*, q. 5, pp. 30–39.

[55] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 246: 'Sed isti videntur idem sub alio vocabulo occultare'.

[56] See above, n. 17. Also Scotus, *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, pp. 248–9.

formal character of the location of spiritual creatures.[57] Despite their value, Scotus considers these objections to be insufficient, thus proceeding to concentrate for some time on the development of his own position.

The location of bodies

On a first stage, Scotus specifies the conditions of bodily location.[58] Following the lead of Aristotle, Scotus enumerates five: (1) being in an actual place, (2) being in a determined place because equal (to the body), (3) being in a place commensurably, (4) being in *this determinate place* at the exclusion of others, (5) being in a place in a natural or in a violent way.[59] The first four conditions pertain to a body as *quantum*, that is, insofar as it is endowed with mathematical dimensions, independently of the particular characteristics that qualify its nature. The body as *quantum* is in fact logically prior to any quality which could affect it, because quantity is presupposed by quality, even if in reality no corporeal quantity exists without qualities. Significantly, Scotus links this discussion to the Aristotelian hypothesis of the void. If we place a cubic body without natural qualities in the air or in water, the body will produce a void of the same dimensions. This 'production of a void' results exclusively from the body as *quantum* – that is, as possessing mathematical dimensions.[60]

Scotus's interpretation of the Aristotelian hypothesis finds resonance in his theory of place as primarily signifying a quantity and a figure, rather than a quality and a nature. For Scotus place appears as being a pure form, 'a mathematical property' before becoming a physical property.[61] All bodies are located insofar as they are mathematical

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[57] Scotus, *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 251: 'Praeterea, illud quod est angelo ratio exsistendi vel essendi in loco, est in eo formaliter, – alioquin nullo modo angelus erit formaliter in loco; operatio autem transiens in corpus, non est formaliter in eo, ergo etc'.

[58] For a detailed reconstruction of the Scotist theory of place, see R. Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus. The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 193–213.

[59] Scotus, *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 253: 'Corpori enim cuilibet, praeter "ultimum" (cuius non est aliud extra continens) quinque conveniunt: esse in loco actuali, esse in loco determinato quia aequali, esse in loco commensurative, esse in loco hoc determinate vel alio, et esse in loco naturaliter vel violenter'.

[60] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 254: 'Licet enim nullum quantum exsistat nisi ipsum si quale, – et secundum hoc, prius naturaliter est mathematicum quam quale, hoc est, tale quale primo consideratur a mathematico, per se et primo. Hoc intendit Philosophus IV physicorum "De vacuo", quia vult quod "si corpus cubicum ponatur in aerem vel in aquam – licet nullam habeat passionem naturalem, tantum tamen facit distare quantum est ipsum corpus impositum", ita quod quantum est ipsum corpus, tantum facit distare; et hoc non convenit sibi in quantum scilicet est tantum naturale, sed inquantum in se est "quantum" praecise, et ita mathematicum'. See also Aristotle, *Phys*., IV, 8 (216a–b 8).

[61] See O. Boulnois, 'Du lieu cosmique': 327–8. Note however that being a 'mathematical body' or reality does not signify for Scotus being a purely intelligible reality. To this effect, we read in his *Lect*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2 ed. Balic (Rome, 1982), p. 161: 'corpus enim mathematicum non est tantum in imaginatione…, sed est in re extra, nam quantitas est prior naturaliter qualitate, et sic consideratur ut in re praecedit qualitates sensibiles, et sic ab eis abstrahi potest secundum prioritatem naturalem, et non solum per considerationem intellectus'.

quanta. Only the fifth condition – being in a place naturally or violently – is fulfilled and understood in terms of natural quality.[62] Thus, despite the initial endorsement of the Aristotelian conditions of location, Scotus seems to distance himself from this teaching as he strongly relativizes the physical and natural dimension of place, tending rather towards a mathematization or geometrization of space.[63]

Scotus's distanciation from Aristotelian teaching is equally manifest with respect to the thesis of the immobility of place, a thesis which clashed starkly with Aristotle's theory of the contiguity of the place with the contained body (place being defined as 'the innermost motionless boundary of the container').[64] The question thus becomes how to safeguard the immobility of the place when, as a container, it becomes mobile? In his response, Scotus shows awareness of other solutions to this problem advanced by previous authors.[65] He alludes mainly to Aquinas, who had solved the question by conceiving every containing mobile place as part of the whole universal place, the latter being motionless on account of the fixedness of its centre and its poles. In other words, even if each particular place is mobile, its necessary relation to the whole universal place guarantees its immobility. Aquinas thus advanced the distinction – later sharpened by Giles of Rome – between *material place* (the mobile container) and *formal place* (the relation of the mobile container to the motionless whole).[66] The Thomist solution to the difficulty inherent in the Aristotelian thesis undoubtedly constituted a step forward, but remained nevertheless profoundly akin to the spirit of that thesis, especially in what regards the physical and natural status of a place – for Aquinas interpreted the contiguity of the containing place and of the contained body as a proximity of nature – and in the cosmological basis of the Aristotelian theory – for the immobility of a place was guaranteed by the fixed coordinates of the finite and motionless universe.[67]

Scotus finds the Thomist solution unconvincing[68] and in its place propounds a thesis on the immobility of place which distances itself markedly from the Aristotelian position. For Scotus it is evident that, if a subject changes, its accidents change too. As the accident of a containing movable body, place cannot remain under any

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[62] See *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 253: 'Prima quattuor conveniunt corpore in quantum "quantum" vel corpus, ultimum convenit sibi in quantum est corpus naturale'.

[63] See O. Boulnois, 'Du lieu cosmique': 328.

[64] Aristotle, *Phys*., IV, 4 (212a 20–21).

[65] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 255: 'Ultra autem istam continentiam praecisam, adhuc habet locus immobilitatem…, quam immobilitatem nisi sunt diversi diversimode salvare per respectum ad polos et ad centrum'.

[66] See Aquinas, *In Phys*., IV, lectio VI. For an account of the Thomist conception of place, see my 'Conceptions médiévales de l'espace et du lieu: les éléments d'une trajectoire', in M. Esfeld – J.-M. Tétaz, eds, *Généalogie de la pensée moderne. Volume d'hommages à Ingebord Schüssler* (Ontos-Verlag: Frankfurt-Lancaster, 2004), pp. 97–114. For Giles's theory of place, see C. Trifogli, 'La dottrina del luogo in Egidio Romano', *Medioevo*, 14 (1988): 235–90.

[67] On this issue, see my 'Conceptions médiévales de l'espace et du lieu': 105–106.

[68] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 256: 'Et si dicatur quod est ultimum totius universi, et licet ut est ultimum continentis varietur, tamen ut est ultimum totius universi non variatur, nec hoc solvit, quia non est ultimum totius universi nisi quia partis: et ideo si est aliud partis alterius et alterius, non est idem totius universi'.

circumstance numerically the same – i.e. permanent and motionless. Likewise, it is of no avail to attempt to fix it by attaching it to an absolute and motionless place, for, insofar as it is merely a part of such a place and the accident of a movable subject, it will always remain movable. Its immobility must therefore be guaranteed by means other than the relation to another, supposedly motionless, place. That alternative means consists in conceiving the immobility of a place 'in opposition to local movement' and its incorruptibility 'according to a relation of equivalence to local movement'.[69]

What does this mean? Put more simply, place is motionless by itself and by accident when considered at a specific instant. Thus, if a containing body moves, it is that body and not the place that is movable, because at the very instant when the containing body moves, its place, as an accident, also moves and is no longer the same. It is then the case not of the *same movable place*, but of *another place* which is – instantly – motionless. Furthermore, that same place is 'incorruptible by equivalence', for even if the place is destroyed by the movement of its subject, the place's foundation remains the same throughout the succession of places by virtue of a relation of equivalence to local movement. In other words, even if different places are numerically distinct from each other, they are incorruptible insofar as they all hold the same relation to local succession. These relations of equivalence allow us to consider all places as denoting one and the same relation, which in its turn guarantees the incorruptibility of each place.[70]

In developing his position, Scotus advances the example of the successive utterance of one and the same word. Each utterance of the word is numerically distinct and successive in time. But considered in relation to its end – i.e. to signify a concept – each utterance pertains to the same word and holds a relation of equivalence with the desired end. This relation allows us to conceive the different utterances of the same word as numerically one and the same word.[71]

The difficulty inherent in the Aristotelian theory of place is thus solved by appealing to the twofold notion of the instant immobility of place and its incorruptibility by equivalence.[72] This solution differs radically from the Thomist one as it distances itself from the Aristotelian teaching on at least two points: (1)

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[69] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 256: 'Dico igitur quod locus habet immobilitatem oppositam motui locali omnino, et incorruptibilitatem secundum aequivalentiam per comparationem ad motum localem'.

[70] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 258: 'Nullus autem motus localis potest esse ab uno "ubi" ad aliud "ubi", nisi quae duo "ubi" correspondent duobus locis differentibus specie, quia habentibus alium respectum… ad totum universum; ex hoc illi respectus qui sunt tantum alii numero, videntur unus numero quia ita sunt indistincti respectu motus localis sicut si tantum essent unus respectus'. See also R. Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, pp. 209–10.

[71] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 258: 'Exemplum huius patet aliqualiter in nominibus significatis, quia haec vox "homo", quotienscumque prolata, dicitur una vox numero, et differt ab hoc voce "lapis" numero; …tamen quia ad finem vocis (scilicet conceptum) exprimendum, per aequivalentiam sunt idem numero "homo" vel "lapis" quotienscumque prolata, ideo dicuntur esse una vox numero respectu illius finis'.

[72] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, pp. 258–9: 'Sic dico in proposito quod locus est immobilis per se et per accidens, localiter, tamen est corruptibilis moto subiecto localiter, quia tunc non

the first – clearly pointed out by O. Boulnois – is the rejection of the cosmological reference. By contrast to Aquinas, Scotus no longer explains the immobility of each particular place through the immobility of the universe, but rather changes the terms of reference by choosing the notion of instant: considered instantly, the place is motionless. By the same token, the place's natural properties become strongly relativized: place 'disengages itself from cosmology, and becomes a neutral space, a purely absolute form'.[73] (2) The second point in which Scotus distances himself from Aristotle – and Aquinas – consists in the (partial) dissociation of place (insofar as it is an accident) from its subject. Indeed, that the subject – i.e. the containing body – is movable does not entail for Scotus that its accident – the place – is also movable. In other words, the place as accident does not share – at least not totally – the conditions of its subject, for the subject's movement does not make *the same place* move, but rather produces *another place*. It is this dissociation which enables the immobility of place. Place thus appears to be the only accident to function in this way, i.e. by being attached to a subject without completely sharing in its condition. By virtue of this 'detachment' the place acquires a certain independence with regard to the subject it determines. This detachment confirms the Scotist tendency to conceive place as the specific and qualitatively neutral determination of all *quantum*.

To conclude his examination of the place of bodies, Scotus raises a question which brings to the fore another point of dissidence with the Aristotelian theory, and which will enable the transition to the issue of the place of separate substances. The question is 'whether every body, as *quantum*, is *necessarily* in a place'.[74] Rather surprising at first sight if we take into account the conditions of bodily location mentioned above, the question seems in fact to obey to a relativization of the Aristotelian theory. Against this theory Scotus levels a criticism strongly indebted to the condemnation of 1277 and the theological preoccupations surrounding it.[75]

According to Scotus, the view that bodies are *necessarily* located must be denied for reasons related to faith since, by virtue of his omnipotence, God could 'create a stone without a containing body, or create it outside the universe'. In both cases, the stone would exist without being in a place. Consequently, location is not an absolute necessity and is not imposed by something absolute and external to the object – such a thing being, according to Aristotelian teaching, the external celestial sphere which encloses the world.[76] Here again, Scotus weakens the relation between

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manet in eo illa ratio loci; et tamen non est corruptibilis in se et secundum aequivalentiam… ad comparationem ad motum localem'.

[73] O. Boulnois, 'Du lieu cosmique': 330.

[74] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 259: 'Sed numquid omne corpus – aliud a primo corpore – necessario sit in loco quia "quantum"?' This question is not included in the discussion of the same problem in *Lectura*, II d. 2 p. 2 qu. 2.

[75] The problem at hand concerns the presence of Christ's body in the Eucharistic bread. The discussion on place developed in *Quodl*., XI q. 1 constitutes an attempt to find a solution to this problem. Scotus's solution consists in conceiving the location of bodies as a possibility and not as a necessity. On this issue, see R. Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, pp. 196–202.

[76] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 259: 'Oppositum tamen videtur esse verum secundum catholicos, quia Deus posset facere lapidem, non existente aliquo alio locante corpore, aut separatim existentem ab omni alio corpore, quia posset illud facere extra universum; et

particular places and the universal place. A *quantum* can exist in the world without being located, just as it can be created outside of the world – which would purely and simply suppress all relation to the cosmic place. This is possible on the assumption of divine omnipotence, which here functions as a force of rupture with Aristotelian science. Thus, although taken into account at the beginning of his discussion, the Aristotelian definition of place as 'the boundary of the container' is considerably relativized by Scotus, as he limits its universal import and necessity. Thereafter, location is removed from the network of physical relations between bodies and is redefined as an intrinsic condition of all being: 'For [a body] is not necessarily located on account of anything absolute and external, but only insofar as it necessarily possesses a passive potency by virtue of which it can be in a place.'[77]

The location of angels

The previous considerations provide the context for the Scotist examination of angelic location, which essentially consists in applying the conditions of bodily location to the domain of separate substances. The connection with the realm of spiritual substances is made clear from Scotus's discussion, in which he declares from the outset – and in contrast to the previous Franciscan tradition – that an angel is not necessarily located (in a physical place).[78] The main reason for Scotus's thesis is that God could create an angel independently from the creation of corporeal realities, or outside the physical world. This thesis excludes – and for stronger reasons than in the case of bodies – any necessity derived from circumscribing angels within the coordinates of physical space. However, the rejection of that necessity does not imply a denial of all relation with the place. Indeed, Scotus maintains that relation and grounds it on a 'passive power which enables the angel to be in a place'.[79] In this way, he transforms necessity into possibility and interiorizes the latter by henceforth detaching it from an immediate reference to a physical container.

What exactly accounts for this passive power? In response to this question, Scotus proposes three possibilities: the angel's substance itself, the limitation inherent in its substance, or something extrinsic to the spiritual creature.[80] He seems in the end to discard all three possibilities, for he sees no sense in seeking an intrinsic reason (i.e. intrinsic to the angel's substance) for the necessary location of spiritual

utroque modo esset "non in loco", et tamen esset idem secundum omne absolutum in se. Per nihil igitur absolutum in alio, requiritur necessario esse in loco'.

[77] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 259: 'Per nihil igitur absolutum in alio, requirit necessario esse in loco, sed tantum habet necessario potentiam passivam qua posset esse in loco'.

[78] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 261: 'Ad propositum igitur ista applicando de angelo, dico quod angelus non necessario est in loco'.

[79] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 261: 'Et tamen in angelo est potentia passiva, qua potest esse in loco'.

[80] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 261: 'Et ipsa potentia vel fundatur immediate in eius substantia, vel in ipsa inquantum est natura limitata actualiter existens, vel in aliquo extrinseco angelo (quidquid sit illud)'.

creatures. Indeed, according to Scotus, there is no such reason.[81] By rejecting the idea of an intrinsic and necessary foundation, Scotus renders futile the question which much occupied the preceding philosophical and theological tradition of a necessary principle for angelic location. For Scotus, angelic location is no more than a possibility, and is explained solely by its compatibility (or non-contradiction) with angelic reality.[82]

It thus follows that, contrary to material realities (which have an intrinsic natural capacity to be located),[83] an angel is not necessarily and naturally comprised within the limits of a containing body existing in act. In this respect, angelic location is equivocal to the location of material bodies.

As regards the second condition (being 'in a determinate place because equivalent to it'), angels fulfil it, but – again – only equivocally in respect to bodies. For bodies necessarily occupy a place which is equivalent to their material quantity – which an angel cannot do, since it is immaterial. Still, an angel cannot be in a place which is infinitely large or infinitely small, but rather occupies a determinate place by its '*quantitas virtutis*',[84] that is, according to the power or potency that characterizes its being. Consequently, the angel effectively occupies a determinate – i.e. limited – place, but 'in an indeterminate way'.[85] This caveat ('*indeterminate tamen*'), at first sight rather vague, could be understood in two different ways: the indeterminacy primarily indicates that the angel is not located according to a material equivalence with the containing place; alternatively, it can indicate a margin of indeterminacy between the infinitely large and the infinitely small. Both magnitudes are excluded, but within the interval separating them an angel can occupy places in a differentiated manner (that is, not fixed or previously determined), since 'no configuration of place is repugnant to it'.[86] Thus, the '*quantitas virtutis*' of the angel determines the

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[81] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 261: 'Et ideo non oportet quaerere aliquam intrinsecam rationem essendi angelum in loco, necessario, quia ibi nulla est'.

[82] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 261: 'Tantum est in ipso [angelo] potentialitas passiva, qua potest esse in loco quia non repugnat sibi'. Scotus's position appears to be ambivalent. Indeed, although we can detect some conformity with Stephen Tempier's view that an angel can be in a place by its substance – as O. Boulnois points out, 'Du lieu cosmique': 321 – Scotus's argument in fact operates at a different level, for he redefines the problem treating it instead in terms of necessity and possibility. In other words, location is not considered as a given which must be explained by identifying its foundation, but is rather dealt with as a pure possibility. This way of approaching the question is verified in question 3 of his *Ord*. ('Utrum angelus posset simul esse in duobus locis'), in which Scotus explicitly contrasts his position with the *de facto* approach to the question of the 'possibilitas naturalis' (II d. 2 p. 2 q. 3, p. 268).

[83] See Scotus, *Quodl*., XI q. 1, in F. Alluntis and A.B. Wolter, *John Duns Scotus. God and Creatures. The Quodlibetal Questions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), p. 259.

[84] In *Lect*., II d. 2 p. 2 qq. 3–4, p. 171, we also find the term 'gradus entitatis'.

[85] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 264: 'De isto articulo videtur concedendum quod habet locum determinatum, indeterminate tamen. Hoc modo et aliquis est quo maiorem non posset habere, et aliquis quo non posset habere minorem (loquendo de loco continuo)'.

[86] See *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 262 : 'Sed in angelo nulla figuratio loci, in quo est, sibi repugnat; igitur si potest esse in uno aequali, et in altero, et per consequens, si potest esse in quadrato parvo, et non repugnat sibi esse in quadrato quantumcumque stricto (quod oportet dicere, dicendo quod non repugnat sibi esse in quantocumque loco)'. Scotus appears here

possibility of its presence in a place, but not in the sense of constituting the natural foundation of its presence in such or such a place by equivalence or proportionality. For the angel has the freedom to be in a place more or less large, provided that the place is neither infinitely large nor infinitely small.[87] Therefore, in respect to the second condition we find both analogy (an angel is in a sense present in a determinate place) and equivocity (it is not the case that an angel is present by equivalence) between angelic location and bodily location.

On the same grounds, separate substances fail to fulfil the third condition, since they are not commensurable to the place in which they are present, insofar as they are not composed of parts which could be adequate to the parts of the physical place.[88]

The fourth condition, by contrast, is verified in spiritual creatures, since each and every one of them occupies a determinate place rather than being everywhere.[89] Actual location does indeed occur in relation to a determinate place, which nevertheless does not imply – as already pointed out – a '(necessary) presence by equivalence'.

As for the fifth condition, we find again equivocity between the mode of angelic location and that of bodies. Angels do not have a natural relation to their place, so that they are not found in any place either naturally or violently, just as no containing body would be able to preserve them in a place.[90] The passive power which founds the possibility of angelic location is therefore neither natural nor violent, but neutral – just as a surface is indifferent to blackness or whiteness – whereby the passive potency of angels is indifferent to such or such a place and is thus able to occupy any place provided that it is neither infinitely large nor infinitely small. This neutrality or indifference allows for the free exercise of the will, by virtue of which an angel can decide to move to one or to another place.[91]

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to be indebted to Mathhew of Aquasparta's comments in *Quaestiones disputatae de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 38.

[87] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, pp. 264–5: 'Utrum autem determinatum locum requirat et determinate, ita quod habens tantam virtutem (si est praesens loco) de necessitate est praesens tanto loco, nec in potestate sua est ut sit praesens maiori vel minori loco (sicut est in corporibus, quia quodlibet necessario est in loco sibi aequali; …hoc dubium est, quia non videtur posse probari faciliter, necessario, una pars nec alia. Quod enim incoveniens est si quantitas sua virtutis (per quam potest esse praesens alicui loco) sit naturalis ratio essendi in tanto loco suo modo, sicut quantitas corporis naturalis est ratio essendi in loco suo modo…, vel si ponatur quod quantitas eorum habet aliquem locum adaequatum quo maiorem non posset habere, licet tamen ipsa subsit voluntati angeli ut possit non semper habere illum locum, sed maiorem vel minorem, non sequitur inconveniens'.

[88] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 265: 'De quarto patet quod non est in loco commensurative, quia non habet partem et partem cum parte loci'.

[89] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 265: 'De quinto dico quod est in hoc loco vel in illo, quia non est ubique'.

[90] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 266: 'De sexto dico quod non est in loco aliquo naturaliter, quia tunc esset in alio loco violenter; tunc etiam aliquod corpus haberet naturalem habitudinem ad ipsum conservandum in loco, ea aliud corpus ad ipsum corrumpendum'.

[91] *Lect*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 167: 'Neutrum tamen sibi repugnat; et ideo est in potentia neutra ut sic possit moveri voluntarie aut quiescere a movente voluntarie'. The 'neutrality' of the angel's passive power in respect to its place is what ultimately distinguishes angels from corporeal creatures, whose passive power is not neutral but determined towards their natural place.

What can we conclude from this comparative study on the location of spiritual creatures? Mainly two statements: (1) just as in any other creature, in the angel there is a passive power which founds its location; (2) the angel is located in a determinate place because it cannot be everywhere.[92] Thus, among the conditions for the location of bodies, only one is fulfilled by angels, namely that they occupy a determinate place. This conclusion is central, as it synthesizes the Scotist solution to the initial question. Against the thesis of angelic location according to operation, Scotus opts for location '*per se*' and grounds it on the neutral passive power which characterizes the angel's relation to its place. He thus follows the directives of the 1277 condemnation, while refraining from identifying the foundation of location.[93] Finally, what is important for Scotus is that the angel be located, since it is wholly compatible not only with its condition as a creature, but also with its finiteness.

The significance accorded to created finiteness brings the Scotist position in connection to that of his Franciscan predecessors, who understood angelic location as hinging on the condition of finiteness of all creatures.[94] Scotus's position remains however distinct in its denial of the necessity of the location of angels: from their location *de facto* we cannot infer a necessity *de iure*. Scotus is here proceeding according to his general philosophical approach, as he first seeks the conditions of possibility before examining the fact. This allows him to reject, by appealing to divine omnipotence, any claim of necessity when it comes to the physical world.

Scotus's approach results in the thesis that angelic location is a pure possibility. But how is this thesis consonant with the notion that an angel occupies a determinate place? What brings about the passage from the mere possibility to the actual fact? Scotus is well aware of this difficulty and applies himself to solving it in order to lay solid grounds for the thesis of the location '*per se*' and '*de facto*' of angels. This difficulty is clearly formulated in the *Lectura*: 'But you would ask: if an angel has the passive potency to be in a place, what reduces this possibility to act?'[95] The passage from *de iure* to *de facto* cannot be achieved by the angel itself. In actual fact, each angel is already and always present in a place, even though its location does not represent more than a mere possibility in the ontological order. The example of the surface which is in potentiality to its colour can help to clarify this. For just as the

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[92] *Lect*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 169: 'Duo ergo affirmativa conveniunt angelo respectu loci, scilicet quod sit in hoc loco vel in illo, et habeat possibilitatem passivam essendi in loco (quae neutra est)'.

[93] Henry of Ghent also abstained from making such an identification, when in *Quodl*., II q. 9 he stated 'quod omnis creatura distat et differt a Deo per primam limitationem suam, clare video. Quomodo vero necesse est omnem creaturam differre et distare ab eo per secundam limitationem quia ipse est ubique, omnis autem creatura necessario alicubi, sed non ubique, et an prima limitatio, in natura scilicet et essentia, sit causa et ratio istius secundae limitationis, vel quodcumque aliud illud sit, dico quod penitus ignoro' (ed. R. Wielocks, p. 71).

[94] See above Olivi and Matthew of Aquasparta's comments on this point. The latter in a sense anticipated the spirit of the Scotist position as he wrote that 'certum est enim quod, eo quod limitatae sunt, [substantiae spirituales] sunt in potentia ad ubi' (*Quaestio disputata de anima separata*, q. 2, p. 33).

[95] *Lect*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 169: 'Sed quaeres: si angelus habet possibilitatem passivam essendi in loco, a quo agitur habet quod sit in loco, cum nihil reducat se de potentia ad actum?'

surface's potentiality is reduced to actuality by the surface's efficient cause – even if a wall is always endowed of some colour from the moment of its construction – in the same way the agent who creates the angel creates it from the outset as already located in a determinate place – even if an angel cannot in any case exist without being in a place. In other words, the neutral passive power to all possible places is determined and actualized by the same act of creation which from the outset locates the angel in some place.[96] The angel is thus always created *in the world*, as every other creature. *De facto* there is nothing outside the physical space except for God and all that his absolute power can produce. In contrast to the thesis of location according to operation – which appears to grant to the angel the freedom to 'enter the world' and locate itself in a place which does not pertain to it of itself – Scotus's thesis 'secularizes' angelic location as it makes of the angel another worldly creature by reintroducing it to the world by the very act of its creation. It is therefore God who performs the passage from *de iure* to *de facto* and it is God alone who can dissolve the angel's relation to its place by 'de-secularizing' the angel and creating it outside of the world.

Like his Franciscan colleagues, Scotus 'secularizes', i.e. humanizes, the angel, while at the same time freeing it from the conditions of location proper to corporeal bodies as such. On the other hand, Scotus departs from his fellow Franciscans in that for him angels are not only not located '*circumscriptive*' – what was commonly accepted – but they can also, and even according to their natural possibilities, occupy many places simultaneously, provided that none of these is adequate to the *quantum* of the angel's power.[97] Beyond its realization *de facto*, this hypothesis is conceivable also at a natural level because it does not imply contradiction.[98] Moreover, it is possible also, and *a fortiori*, by God's absolute power.[99]

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[96] *Lect*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 2, p. 170: 'Sic in proposito angelus eadem possibilitate passiva est in potentia ad "ubi" et ad "hoc ubi", et agens quod creat ipsum et facit ipsum esse in "hoc ubi" cum dat virtutem motivam (ut voluntatem vel aliam virtutem) per quam potest se facere in alio loco'.

[97] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 3, p. 270: 'De possibilitate tamen eorum naturali, videtur probabile quod non possit simul unus esse in duobus locis quorum uterque sit sibi adaequatus secundum ultimum potentiae suae: puta, si secundum ultimum potentiae suae potest esse in loco unius milliaris, non posset virtute sua propria esse in duobus locis talibus, quia tunc iste locus non videtur sibi esse adaequatus secundum virtutem suam naturalem'.

[98] *Lect*., II d. 2 p. 2 qq. 3–4, p. 172: 'Non tamen video quare non (ex quo non est in omni loco – in quo est – secundum ultimum potentiae suae) potest derelinquere medium et manere in extremis, et sic esse in duobus locis simul'. Note however that this opinion is not shared for example by Richard of Mediavilla, who denied that kind of possibility in the natural order: 'Unus angelus non potest esse simul in diversis locis saltem per operationem cuiuscumque virtutis creatae… Si autem quaeras causam dicti dico, quod talis natura existentiae rei limitatae in loco, ut res illa diffiniatur a loco: sed non diffiniretur suo loco si existens in illo simul posset esse in alio… Ponere, quod in duobus talibus spatiis simul esse possit propria virtute statim videtur includere contradictionem' (*Sent*., I d. 37 q. 3, p. 329).

[99] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 3, p. 271: 'Sed quod in duobus locis (sive adaequatis sive non) posset esse per potentiam divinam, certum puto, quia nullam contradictionem includit, ut dicetur in IV, in materia de eucharistia'. The reference is to *Ord*., IV d. 10 q. 2, in which the question of place is examined in relation to the Eucharistic presence. A similar discussion appears in *Quodl*., XI q. 4.

Following this line, Scotus considers the question whether different angels can occupy the same place, although he is somewhat ambiguous in his response. While denying an affirmative response, he believes that the opposite arguments raised against it are nevertheless unconvincing.[100] At the same time, he appears to admit its plausibility by virtue of the angelic nature alone and beyond its ever possible realization by virtue of God's absolute power.[101] This plausibility rests, among other things, on the analogy between spatial and temporal relation. Just as two temporal realities can take place at the same time, in the same way two angels can occupy the same space.[102] Thus, without categorically affirming the presence of different angels in the same place, Scotus does not consider this hypothesis as necessarily contradictory. This responds to his emphasis – in contrast to Aquinas – on the angel's freedom in the exercise of his motor faculties,[103] and to his criticism – against his Franciscan predecessors – of a rigid understanding of the angel's relation to space as a necessary connection.[104]

Space: between angelological inquiry and physical theory

The Scotist conception of the location of separate substances is significant in various respects. As way of conclusion, I will highlight some of the chief features of the Scotist contribution to angelology and the theory of physical place.

Scotus's account represents an important contribution to the discussion of angelic location, most notably in the context of the years following the condemnation of 1277. He adopts the doctrinal line enforced by the condemnation – to which he

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[100] Scotus is alluding on the one hand to Aquinas (*ST*, I q. 52 a. 3), and on the other to the arguments advanced by Richard of Mediavilla, who on the grounds of the axiom of impenetrability solves the question in the negative: 'Respondeo quod plures angeli non possunt esse simul in eodem loco virtute creata, quia quaecumque simul sunt in eodem loco oportet, quod unum penetret alium… Sed nullus spiritus virtute creata potest alium spiritum penetrare: et ideo duo angeli virtute creata in eodem loco proprio non possunt simul esse' (*Sent*., I d. 37 a. 2 q. 4, p. 329b). The editors of Scotus's *Lect*. also suggest William of Ware as a possible reference. I was unfortunately unable to find access to the unedited text.

[101] *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4, p. 276: 'Quidquid sit de facto et de possibili potentia naturali eorum, de possibili tamen respectu potentiae divinae non videtur impossibile quin per ipsam possint simul esse'. In *Quodl*., XI q. 4 in an Eucharistic context, Scotus formulates a similar hypothesis on the presence of many bodies in the same place, by resorting to the idea that place is an accident signifying an extrinsic relation. On account of this, Scotus believes that we can assume that different bodies may hold such a relation to the same place (see *Quodl*., XI q. 4, ed. Alluntis-Wolter, p. 268).

[102] *Lect*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4, p. 177: 'Similiter, duo temporalia sunt in tempore simul; quare non sic in proposito?' For a similar argument, see *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4, pp. 277–8. For the Scotist conception of time, see R. Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, pp. 214–56 and O. Boulnois 'Du temps cosmique à la durée ontologique? Duns Scot, le temps, l'*aevum* et l'éternité', in P. Porro (ed.), *The Mediaeval Concept of Time* (Leiden-Boston-Köln, 2001), pp. 161–88.

[103] See Aquinas, *ST*, I q. 52 a. 3 and Scotus's criticism in *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4, p. 277 and *Lect*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4, p. 177.

[104] See Richard de Mediavilla, *Sent*., I d. 37 a. 2 q. 4 and Scotus's criticism in *Ord*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4 p. 277–8 and *Lect*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 4, p. 177.

incidentally attributes universal import – and defends the thesis of the location '*per se*' of angels. In this respect, and like his fellow Franciscans, he reintroduces the angel in the physical space and locates it in a determinate place. Thus located, the angel can neither be nowhere nor everywhere. Although sharing a common horizon with the heirs of 1277, the Scotist account follows its own distinctive path, a path which – at least to my knowledge – can be characterized as original.

Its originality lies first of all in Scotus's particular preoccupation – here as in other instances – with identifying conditions of possibility before explaining a given fact (unverifiable in the case of angels!) to which he does not accord any *a priori* necessity. Now, there is only one condition of possibility for angelic location, namely their 'neutral passive power' in relation to place.

Consequently – and this constitutes the second new element in Scotus's approach – the angel is not located in the physical space by virtue of a natural capacity or an intrinsic necessity, but only because God so chose at the moment of its creation.[105] The angel's location thus results from God's will, who comprised it as a feature of its created being. The relation to a place thus becomes an indication of the dependence and the finiteness which characterize the angel's created condition.

The third new element in the Scotist conception lies in the twin hypotheses of the simultaneous occupation of different places by one and the same angel, and the presence of different angels in one and the same place. As we saw, Scotus is cautious with regards to the second hypothesis, but he clearly affirms the non-contradiction of the first. On this point, the Scotist view is innovative both in relation to Aquinas and to his fellow Franciscans of the time succeeding the 1277 condemnation. Scotus's acceptance of the hypothesis in question results from the priority he accords to the examination of the conditions of possibility. From this perspective, non-contradiction suffices to render a hypothesis acceptable before and beyond its actual realization. As for its significance and consequences, this hypothesis seems to allow a consideration of the relation to place in terms of non-equivalence. Furthermore, it leads Scotus at least on this occasion to dissolve the strong affinity between the angel and the human soul, usually underlined by the Franciscan tradition.[106] Indeed, whereas the human soul has to be present as a whole in each and every part of the body and cannot do otherwise, the angel 'can abandon the middle while remaining in the extremities, and by the same token be in two places simultaneously'.[107] As these features reveal, the Scotist conception of the location of separate substances represents a significant contribution to medieval angelology, which Scotus steers in the direction of 'secularization' and humanization of the angel, while at the same

[105] As I hope was made clear above, Olivi and Matthew of Aquasparta hold a different opinion. According to these authors angelic location results from the angel's necessary presence to the beings forming part of the world. In the same spirit, Henry of Ghent attributes angelic location to the finiteness of the angelic nature. See *Quodl*., II q. 9, ed. R. Wielocks, p. 68.

[106] See for example Olivi, in my study 'Pierre de Jean Olivi': 297–303. For Matthew of Aquasparta, see *Quaestio disputata de anima separata*, q. 2 p. 30.

[107] *Lect*., II d. 2 p. 2 q. 3, p. 172: 'Non tamen video quare non [possit esse in duobus locis] (ex quo non est in omni loco – in quo est – secundum ultimum potentiae suae) potest derelinquere medium et manere in extremis, et sic esse in duobus locis simul'.

time drawing from the angel's *sui generis* status in the formulation of hypotheses novel to human experience.

Furthermore, the theory of place developed in an angelological context also contributes to the theory of physical place. Since the import and the novelty of the Scotist conception of place has already been exhaustively elucidated elsewhere,[108] I will limit my task to highlighting three points concerning angelic location which complete or confirm the Scotist theory of physical place.

(1) The first concerns the necessity of location. As has been made clear, bodies, by their nature as bodies, are necessarily present in a place, their removal from all place being only possible by virtue of God's absolute power.[109] By contrast, angels are not necessarily present in a place, not even from the point of view of their nature – although *de facto* they have always and from the outset been created in a place. This angelic prerogative allows to conceive location as the determination of a condition (that of creatures) and not of a nature. From this perspective, '"*per se*" location' means 'location by the being of a nature already in existence'. Moreover, to the extent that there is a (transcendental) priority of the 'pure nature' with respect to its existence, the nature will not be necessarily affected by local determination. The latter has an impact only, and inevitably, on created actual existence.

(2) The second point has to do with the naturality of the relation to a place. Whereas bodies, in their nature as bodies, relate to a place as something natural to them, the angel relates to a place in a neutral way, in that all places pertain to it equally. This detachment with respect to a natural place contributes to the break from the Aristotelian theory of place. The case of angelic location thus allows us to consider the relation to a place no longer in terms of natural suitability, but in terms of an existential condition. Therefore, as a determining factor of all created existence, place does not have to be necessarily conceived as a relation of suitability or pertinence. On the same grounds, and in a broader perspective, the cosmological reference – essential for the Aristotelian theory – is radically put in question.

(3) The third point of rupture lies in the thesis that angels are located in a determinate place 'in an indeterminate manner'. This prerogative grants a 'manoeuvring margin' to spiritual substances with regard to the quantity of the occupied place. In other words, the angel's location is not restricted to a quantitative equivalence (not even virtual) with the place it occupies. This factor, like the previous one, questions the adequacy between the located reality and the containing place, and by the same token levels a criticism against the notion of contiguity characteristic of the Aristotelian theory.

The theory of angelic location not only confirms, therefore, but also emphasizes the rupture between the Scotist conception of place and the Aristotelian doctrine. The three points highlighted above underpin the idea of space as independent from cosmic coordinates (centre and poles of the universe) – the idea of place as a pure system of reference. The dissolution of the natural link prepares the ground for the

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[108] See R. Cross, *The Physics of Duns Scotus* and O. Boulnois, 'Du lieu cosmique': 325–31.

[109] The hypothesis on the 'non ubietas' of bodies formulated in *Quodl*., XI q. 4, pp. 269–70, does not imply 'non-location' but rather results from the distinction between 'ubietas' and 'locus' which does not feature in Scotus's discussion on angelic location in *Ord*., II d. 2 q. 2.

homogenization of space, just as the given fact of the location of angels operates in favour of the homogenization of created reality.

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Chapter 7

Late Medieval Debates on the Location of Angels after the Condemnation of 1277

Henrik Wels

On 7 March 1277, the Bishop of Paris Stephen Tempier condemned 219 propositions and threatened anyone who asserted the named errors or listened to their propagation, unless this be disclosed within seven days, with excommunication and other punishments. A number of these propositions deal with where angels dwell and what the nature of their dwelling places is. How and in what form are angels, separate substances and souls separate from the body, in a place? According to standard Aristotelian understanding, only that which possesses matter can be located in space. On this definition, angels cannot be subject to material conditions such as spacial location.

In compiling and formulating the 219 propositions to be condemned, Tempier was assisted by a commission of 16 theologians, or, as he himself wrote, counsel was taken from teachers of the Holy Scriptures and other astute men.[1] Despite this esteemed counsel, the commission's sessions leading to the condemnation decree were most likely everything but ordered and calm. Instead, we can imagine that they were chaotic and confused, an impression confirmed by the haphazard arrangement given to the list of 219 propositions. Up to the present day, the decree has defied all forms of systematic ordering, whether thematic, methodological or on the basis of the condemned writings and authors. That soon after their formulation attempts were undertaken to impose some kind of order on the articles is another fact underlining the impression of a relatively random compilation.

With regard to the question of angelic location, two propositions stand out as being particularly significant. According to Article 204, it is erroneous to claim that separate substances are in a place by their operations and that thus inactive substances are not in any place. On the other hand, Article 219 condemns the tenet that separate substances are essentially nowhere. In what follows I intend to examine how certain medieval authors tried to resolve or avoid the apparent contradiction of these statements. I shall argue that the debates on the location of angels took shape

[1] See *La condamnation parisienne de 1277*, texte latin, traduction, introduction et commentaire par D. Piché (Paris, 1999), p. 74: '… nos tam doctores sacre pagine quam aliorum prudentium uirorum communicato consilio, districte talia et similia fieri prohibemus et ea totaliter condempnamus …'.

in accordance with these two propositions and that this pattern is discernible even in some early modern authors. As will become clear, however, the incongruity of these propositions also served as a criterion for restricting the validity of the condemnation right up to the Renaissance period.

Already Thomas Aquinas's famous follower Giles of Rome reported that the obstinacy of just a few theologians had prevailed on many points.[2] This reproach is most certainly not devoid of bitterness, for Giles himself was soon to become a target of the Bishop's censorship. Only a few days after the condemnation, Tempier summoned Giles and confronted him with 51 suspicious statements taken from his commentary on the first book of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. He was condemned despite his defence and forced to leave Paris. It was not until 1285, after his theses were re-examined upon the insistence of Pope Honorius IV, that he was able to resume his teaching activities in Paris.[3]

Giles thus experienced personally what posthumously befell some of the teachings of Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas probably died on the same day, on 7 March, three years to the day before the condemnation was issued.[4] For all the general approval Thomas Aquinas enjoys today, one aspect is frequently forgotten, namely that his teachings and innovations were anything but undisputed in his day. Just how great an impact the condemnation of 1277 had on Aquinas's teachings is revealed by the 1325 revocation that was necessary in the proceedings following his canonization in 1323: all articles concerning Aquinas's teachings were revoked.[5] Unfortunately, the revocation does not go beyond this general formulation and avoids naming any specific article.

There can be no doubt that those propositions concerned with the location of angels affect the teaching of Aquinas. Article 204 condemns the view that separate substances are in a place due to their operation and are able to move from one point to another or continually in space in so far as they will to be in this place and

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[2] See Giles of Rome, *In secundum librum Sententiarum quaestiones*, d. 32 q. 2, art. 3 (Venetiis, 1581 [reprint Frankfurt/Main, 1966]), p. 471: '… nam nos ipsi tunc eramus Parisiis, et tamquam de re palpata testimonium perhibemus, quod plures de illis articulis transierunt non consilio Magistrorum sed capitositate quorundam paucorum …'. See also Edward P. Mahoney, 'Reverberations of the Condemnation of 1277 in Later Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy', in J.A. Aertsen, K. Emery, Jr., and A. Speer (eds), *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277: Philosophie und Theologie an der Universität von Paris im letzten Viertel des 13. Jahrhunderts. Studien und Texte*, Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 28 (Berlin and New York, 2001), p. 908, and Luca Bianchi, *Il vescovo e i filosofi: La condanna parigina del 1277 e l'evoluzione dell'aristotelismo scolastico* (Bergamo, 1990), p. 33.

[3] See Giorgio Pini, 'Being and Creation in Giles of Rome', in J.A. Aertsen, K. Emery, Jr., and A. Speer (eds), *Nach der Verurteilung von 1277*, p. 390, with further literature on Giles of Rome and the condemnation.

[4] See Marie-Dominique Chenu, *Das Werk des Hl. Thomas von Aquin* (2nd edn, Graz, Vienna and Cologne, 1982), p. 5: '… macht er sich im Januar 1274 auf den Weg, stirbt aber am 7. März in der Zisterzienserabtei Fossanuova.'

[5] See Anneliese Maier, 'Der Widerruf der Articuli Parisienses (1277) im Jahre 1325', in her *Ausgehendes Mittelalter* (3 vols, Rome, 1977), vol. 3, p. 601: 'quantum tangunt vel tangere asseruntur doctrinam beati Thomae.'

are active during the movement. If this proposition is understood in the sense that inactive separate substances are not in essence in a place or move from one place to another, then this statement is an error, according to this Article.[6] Articles 218 and 219 condemn the general statement that intelligences, angels, souls separate from the body or separate substances are nowhere. With regard to separate substances, the Articles are more precise: if the statement is taken in the sense that their essence is not at any place, then this view is false. However, if it is understood as meaning that the essence is the reason for being in one place, then it is – according to these Articles – correct to say that they are nowhere in essence.[7]

The condemnation of the above mentioned articles has a great impact on subsequent speculation about angelic location. In what follows I shall attempt to show how medieval theologians and philosophers tried to develop solutions which would escape the criticisms held against these articles.

Not only Hissette[8] in his attempt to trace these propositions to contemporary positions refers some of them to Thomas Aquinas. In the early apologies of Thomist teaching in the context of the *Correctoria* controversy, the position taken by Aquinas is also associated with some of the condemned articles and is defended accordingly. In the sixteenth and – since incomplete – final section of his *Apologeticum veritatis contra corruptorium*, Rambert de Primadizzi of Bologna (d. 1308) addresses the question whether it pertains to an angel to be in a place in any way ('*Utrum angelo aliquo modo conveniat esse in loco*'). At the very start of the *quaestio* Rambert emphasizes that according to brother Thomas an angel is not in a place, except for when it is active in applying its power (*virtus*) to a place or a thing existing at that place. Some commentators, however, see this statement as a violation of Articles 218 and 219 of the condemnation, for it would then follow that whenever angels are inactive they are nowhere.[9] Rambert makes reference to other authors who agree with Aquinas that angels are in a place on account of their operation. Yet, because spiritual substances are always active in some way in relation to some body, they can

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[6] See *La condamnation parisienne de 1277*, p. 140: '204. Quod substantie separate sunt alicubi per operationem; et quod non possunt moueri ab extremo in extremum, nec in medium, nisi quia possunt uelle operari aut in medio, aut in extremis. – Error, si intelligatur sine operatione substantiam non esse in loco, nec transire de loco ad locum'.

[7] See *La condamnation parisienne de 1277*, pp. 144 and 146: '218. Quod intelligentia, angelus, uel anima separata nusquam est. – 219. Quod substantie separate nusquam sunt secundum substantiam. – Error, si intelligatur ita quod substantia non sit in loco. Si autem intelligatur ita quod substantia sit ratio essendi in loco, uerum est quod nusquam sunt secundum substantiam.'

[8] See Roland Hissette, *Enquête sur les 219 articles condamnés à Paris le 7 mars 1277*, Philosophes médiévaux, 22 (Louvain and Paris, 1977), pp. 104–10.

[9] See Rambert de' Primadizzi de Bologne, *Apologeticum veritatis contra Corruptorium*, ed. J.P. Muller, Studi e testi, 108 (Città del Vaticano, 1943), pp. 186–7: 'Et quia frater Thomas dicit, quod angelus non est in loco nisi quia applicando virtutem suam ad locum vel ad rem existentem in loco operatur circa locum, aliqui volunt dictum istud reducere ad articulum. Quia cum angeli possint aliquando non operari circa corpora sive in aliquo loco, sequitur, quod angeli nusquam sint, quod est damnatum expresse et in ultimo et in penultimo articulorum damnatorum.'

never be nowhere, such that this opinion does not necessarily incur the condemned error.[10] Rambert explains this interpretation of Aquinas's view in greater detail in order to completely refute it on the following grounds: first, it rests on inadequate presuppositions; secondly, it is self-contradictory; and thirdly, this interpretation of the view does not escape the condemned articles. For although, Rambert goes on to say, it avoids the error condemned in Articles 218 and 219 by stating that the substance of an angel is always somewhere and never nowhere, it cannot evade Article 204, for according to this position an inactive angel would not be in a place in substance.[11] Here I would only briefly sketch Rambert's own solution of the problem, based on the distiction between a conditioned necessity (*necessitas conditionata*) and an absolute necessity (*necessitas absoluta*). Resorting to Anselm's authority, he emphasizes that it is not absolutely necessary that the substance of an angel be in a place, such that it could not be otherwise.[12] For Rambert, this means that an angel's relationship to a place is not that of being contained in a place but of containing.[13] According to conditioned necessity, that is, on the presupposition that visible and invisible creatures alike are contained under heaven, it is necessary that an angel be always somewhere. But this does mean that the angel is subject to the laws of the place, such that would be contained in the place or correspond to its measures or receive something from it; rather, this 'being always somewhere' is solely meant to obtain according to a certain determination to a specific place, yet not to this or that place, but generally in relation to any place.[14] Of itself and according to its nature, an angel has no determinate inclination towards a place, but, according to Rambert, one says that it is in a specific place because it is neither nowhere nor everywhere.[15] Later authors will characterize this manner of being in a place as 'definitive', distinguishing it from 'repletive' or 'circumscriptive' modes. At the end of this argument and after a swipe at Scotus's position,[16] Rambert confronts an objection he had raised himself:

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[10] See Rambert, *Apologeticum*, p. 187: 'Semper ergo quaelibet spiritualis substantia circa aliquod corpus aliquam operationem habet.'

[11] See Rambert, *Apologeticum*, p. 191: '… quia ex dictis istorum manifeste et patenter et de necessitate sequitur, quod sine operatione substantia angeli non est in loco nec transit de loco ad locum.'

[12] See Rambert, *Apologeticum*, p. 193: 'Ex auctoritate ista Anselmi potest haberi, quod substantiam angeli esse in loco vel tempore, non est necessarium necessitate absoluta, ita quod aliter esse non possit.'

[13] See Rambert, *Apologeticum*, p. 193: 'Constat autem, quod angelus non comparatur ad locum ut contentum, sed potius ut continens.'

[14] See Rambert, *Apologeticum*, p. 195: '… tamen loquendo de necessitate, quae est ex suppositione, videtur necessarium angelum semper esse alicubi, non quidem secundum leges loci, ita quod contineatur a loco vel commensuretur vel aliquid recipiat ab eo, sed solum secundum quandam determinationem ad certum locum, non quidem ad hunc vel illum, sed ad aliquem. Supposito, sicut dicit Damascenus, quod caelum sit continentia visibilium et invisibilium creaturarum, et quod angeli sunt in universo et non extra universum …'.

[15] See Rambert, *Apologeticum*, p. 195: '… ita angelus quamvis de se et secundum naturam suam non habeat determinationem ad locum, dicatur tamen in loco determinato, quia non est nusquam neque ubique.'

[16] See Rambert, *Apologeticum*, p. 196 supra.

that this interpretation does not follow the intention of Aquinas. It is of little interest, Rambert responds, whether this follows Thomas's intention, for he has not taken on the task with a view to apologetic justifications, but rather to prevent it from leading to adulterated interpretations.[17]

Later Thomists are far less clear in their defence of Aquinas's teachings on the location of angels and separate substances. I know of no other text that so vigorously undertakes the attempt to escape the philosophical dilemma provoked by the condemnation of Articles 204, 218 and 219. Neither in the work of William Estius, who wrote one of the last comprehensive commentaries on the *Sentences* in the spirit of Aquinas, nor in that of the most famous commentator of the *Summa theologiae*, Thomas de Vio Cardinal Cajetan, to name but two authors, can we find direct connections between the teaching of Aquinas and the Paris condemnation. When dealing with the seventh question on the mode of angelic location ('*Quomodo angeli sint in loco*'), in the second distinction of the second book of the *Sentences*, Estius makes no mention of the condemned articles at all,[18] while Cajetan only briefly mentions Article 219 in his commentary on the first part of the *Summa*, first article of question 52.[19] One possible reason for this omission may be that explicit reference to the condemned articles had become superfluous and unnecessary after the revocation of 1325. But it should be noted that the revocation itself found little resonance and that references to it in the contemporary literature are extremely rare.[20] By contrast, the Paris articles are mentioned frequently by other authors and were added as appendices to a number of editions of the *Sentences*. For instance, Pico della Mirandola, well-read in scholastic authors, shows knowledge of the condemnation of 1277, but not of the 1325 revocation of those articles which refer to Aquinas. Another reason, and in my view a more probable one, is that the distinction between '*definitive – circumscriptive – repletive*' was taken up as a kind of third way, whose

[17] See Rambert, *Apologeticum*, p. 196: 'Et si dicatur, quod ista non fuit intentio fratris Thomae, dico, quod utrum fuerit vel non fuerit, non curo, quia non suscepi ad excusandam intentionem, sed ad excludendam a dictis eius calumniantium depravationem.'

[18] See Guilielmus Estius, *In secundum librum sententiarum commentaria: quibus pariter S. Thomae summae theologicae partes omnes mirifice illustrantur* (Duaci, 1615), pp. 22–5.

[19] See Thomas Aquinas, *Pars prima Summae theologiae cum commentariis Thomae de Vio Caietani*, in *Opera omnia* iussu edita Leonis XIII (Rome, 1889), vol. 5, pp. 20–25.

[20] The only remark on the revocation of 1325 I found is in the commentaries of Franciscus Sylvius (d. 1649) on the first part of the *Summa theologiae*. See Franciscus Sylvius, *Opera omnia* (Anvers, 1698), vol. 1, p. 379 A: 'Neque refert, quod inter articulos Parisiis damnatos iste unus circumferatur, quod Deus non potest facere plures intelligentias ejusdem speciei, contra fratrem Thomam, In primis enim istorum articulorum condemnatio neque a Pontifice neque ab ullo legitimo Concilio est approbata. Secundo, in quantum tangere potest doctrinam S. Thomae, fuit revocata et annullata anno 1325. per Stephanum Episcopum Parisiensem, idque de consilio Decani et Capituli, aliorumque plurimorum Virorum doctorum, quemadmodum in dicta nostra Apologia ostendimus. Tertio, illa condemnatio valde suspecta est, ut ibidem late probavimus; cum eo anno, quo dicitur per Episcopum Parisiensem, Stephanum nomine, facta, nimirum 1276. neque ullus fuerit Parisiensis Episcopus istius nominis; neque B. Tho. Potuerit quidquam docuisse; non enim vixit plus quam annos quinquaginta, mortuus autem est anno 1274.'

weaknesses in avoiding the philosophical impasse presented by Articles 204 and 218 and 219 were willingly neglected.

In the most significant and courageous critique directed at Bishop Tempier, Godfrey of Fontaines expresses the difficulties emerging from the three propositions, and notes that a third way which could escape the condemned articles is hardly possible. In *Quodlibet* 12 (1296/97), Godfrey addresses the question 'whether the Bishop of Paris sins by refraining from correcting certain propositions condemned by his predecessor'.[21] Godfrey mentions how the condemnation undermines the teachings of Aquinas with special reference to the two articles concerning angelic location. The condemnation could induce students to avoid the teaching of Aquinas, which is not only a disservice to his doctrine but also of very little benefit to those who refrain it.[22] In a previous passage, Godfrey draws attention to a contradiction in Articles 204 and 219, which should present sufficient reason for the present Bishop of Paris to correct the Articles:

> On the one hand, one may not say that separate substances are essentially nowhere, if we take this in the sense that the substance of the angel is not in any place. On the other hand, the same substance is supposed to be the reason for its being in a place. This is contradictory, since it is not really possible to determine an intermediate position between these extremes: namely, that neither the angel's essence nor its operation is the reason for the angel's being in a place. Because if the essence of an angel is not the reason for its being in a place, then, for the very same reason, neither the power of the angel nor any other quality of it, which formally exists in the angel, can be the reason for its being in a place. In the same vein one can say of many of the other mentioned articles that they are implicitly incompatible in themselves or in relation to one another.[23]

It is, however, precisely this middle way between the extremes, described by Godfrey as 'not really possible', that most authors seek to establish.

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[21] See Godfrey of Fontaines, *Quodl.*, XII q. 5, in *Les Quodlibets onze et douze (texte inèdit)*, ed. J. Hoffmans, Les Philosophes Belges, tom. V, fasc. I–II (Louvain, 1932), p. 100: 'Utrum episcopus Parisiensis peccet in hoc quod omittit corrigere quosdam articulos a praedecessore suo condemnatos?'

[22] See Godfrey, *Quodl*., XII q. 5, pp. 102–103: 'Sunt etiam in detrimentum non modicum doctrinae studentibus perutilis reverendissimi et excellentissimi doctoris, scilicet fratris Thomae quae ex praedictis articulis minus iuste aliqualiter diffamatur. Quia articuli supra positi et quam plures alii videntur sumpti esse ex his, quae tantus doctor scripsit in doctrina tam utili et solemni. … Propter quod plures possent habere occasionem retrahendi se a studio in tali doctrina, in quo non solum ipsa doctrina laederetur, sed ipsi studentes vere damnum maximum sustinerent.'

[23] See Godfrey, *Quodl*., XII q. 5, p. 102: 'Item in illis dicitur quod dicere quod substantiae separatae nusquam sunt secundum substantiam est error, si intelligatur ita quod substantia angeli non sit in loco; si autem intelligatur ita quod substantia sit ratio essendi in loco, verum est. Hic etiam apparet contradictio quia non bene potest assignari medium inter ista duo, scilicet quod nec substantia angeli sit angelo ratio essendi in loco nec etiam eius operatio, quia si substantia angeli non sit ratio essendi in loco, eadem ratione nec potentia angeli vel quaecumque proprietas eius in ipso formaliter existens poterit esse ratio essendi in loco. Consimiliter etiam de pluribus aliis articulis praedictis potest dici quod in ipsis et inter ipsos videntur incompossibilia implicari.'

At the end of the first half of the fourteenth century, Thomas of Strasbourg, who was later to become head of the Augustinians, addresses the question of angelic location in the first book of in his commentary on the *Sentences*. His discussion of this question is also determined by the condemned articles. His attempt to solve the problem follows the insights of the *doctor noster*, who in his case is naturally Giles of Rome. Everything is in a place on account of its quantity. The *virtus* of the angel, not absolutely but in relation to the object and to the operation, is its quantity. It can therefore be said that the angel is in some place or body, according to how it applies its *virtus* actually in such a place through its operation.[24] By speaking of '*virtus*' rather than of 'quantity' through which something is in a place, Thomas of Strasbourg avoids the unwelcome implication that the angel owes its location to a quantity residing in its substance. He therefore further elaborates the minor premise: 'the *virtus* is not called quantity in reference to the substance, for this would then be a quality or disposition of the one who possesses it, because *virtus* is something that perfects whoever possesses it; therefore, it has a quantitative being only in relation to the object or in accordance with the operation with regard to the object.'[25] Because the *virtus* as quantity is not related to the substance, it cannot be understood as the quantitative matter which is the reason for the physical things' being in one place. Only with this strategic move can Thomas avoid that quantitative being is attributed to the angel in substance or in essence.[26] In response to a objection levelled from Article 204, namely that the angel may not be in a place solely because of its operation, Thomas states: 'our teacher [Giles of Rome] does not deny that it is not the angel's essence that is in a place, but rather says that the essence of the angel is not directly the reason of its being in a place, and therefore the article is no way disagreeing with Giles.'[27] In his proposed solution, which I can only present briefly here, Thomas mentions all three of the condemned articles,[28] and his objections clearly verify why the operation as *ratio essendi in loco* does not suffice and why the separate substances have to be in a place but not according to their essence. Strictly speaking, his claims probably amount to the view that an angel can only be located according to its operation. But irrespective of the value we may wish to accord to

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[24] See Thomas de Argentina, *Commentaria in IV libros Sententiarum*, I d. 37 q. 1 a. 2 (Venetiis, 1564 [reprint Ridgewood and New Jersey, 1965]), fol. 107rb: 'Conclusionem primam probat doctor noster sic. Vnumquodque est in loco per suam quantitatem; sed virtus angeli non quomodocunque accepta; sed per comparationem ad obiectum, & operationem est quantitas angeli, ergo angelus potest dici uere esse in aliquo loco, uel corpore, secundum quod per operationem suam uirtutem suam uere, & realiter applicat circa talem locum.'

[25] See Thomas, *Sent*., I d. 37 q. 1 a. 2, fol. 107rb: 'Minor declaratur: nam uirtus non dicitur quantitas in ordine ad substantiam, nam ut sic dicitur qualitas, & bona dispositio habentis; nam uirtus est, quae habentem perficit, ergo esse quantum ei competet ut dictum est, scilicet in ordine ad obiectum, siue secundum operationem circa obiectum.'

[26] See Thomas, *Sent*., I d. 37 q. 1 a. 2, fol. 107vb: 'sed esse quantum non conuenit angelo secundum essentiam suam, ut de se patet.'

[27] See Thomas, *Sent.*, I d. 37 q. 1 a. 2, fol. 107va: 'Ad nonam dicendum, quod non negat doctor noster, quin essentia angeli sit in loco; sed dicit, quod essentia angeli non est angelo immediata ratio essendi in loco, & ideo articulus ille in nullo est contra doctorem.'

[28] See Thomas, *Sent.*, I d. 37 q. 1 a. 2, fol. 107va; 107vb; 108ra.

this solution, it is clear that with it Thomas intended to escape the philosophical dilemma raised by the condemned articles.

John Baconthorpe, a Carmelite who read the *Sentences* in the first quarter of the fourteenth century in Paris and later received the deceptively honourable name of *princeps Averroistarum*, is another example of an author who adopts what I would now like to call the 'application theory'. If we take into account Rambert de Primadizzi and Thomas of Strasbourg, Baconthorpe's teaching would represent a third version of this theory, designed to spare Aquinas's and Giles's positions from the scope of the condemned articles. This is exactly the point Duns Scotus makes when in his *Lectura* he criticizes the representatives of the application theory in general. When these authors (Rambert, Thomas, Baconthorpe), he claims, state that angels are in a place *per applicationem ad locum*, they are only using another word for '*per operationem*'. And they only do this because the other manner of speaking was condemned in Paris.[29] At the same time, Duns Scotus takes a very dogmatic and uncritical attitude towards the condemnation decree in his *Ordinatio*. When someone objects to the article that 'its excommunication does not cross the seas or extends its reach beyond the boundaries of the diocese', then this simply cannot have any weight, for: 'if an article has been condemned as heretical, then it appears not only to be condemned through the authority of the diocese as a heretic article, but also through the authority of the Pope, according to the *Liber Extra*'. And even if one prefers not to recognize this: 'the view concerned is at least suspicious because it was solemnly condemned in a university.'[30] A number of Franciscan authors followed Scotus's acknowledgement of the obligatory power of the condemnation decree.[31]

Baconthorpe, however, presents a rather independent interpretation of the 'application theory'. His treatment of this complex issue also makes direct reference to Articles 204 and 219, which are quoted immediately at the beginning of the section concerned. He mentions three positions which are to be rejected, due in part to the condemned articles themselves. A fourth position represents a synthesis of the other three. Baconthorpe defends this fourth way as his own. This position claims 'that the first reason why an angel is in a place resides in the limitation of its essence (*essentia*). God is therefore in no place *circumscriptive* or *definitive*, because he possesses

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[29] See Duns Scotus, *Lectura in librum secundum Sententiarum a distinctione prima ad sextam*, d. 2 pars 2 q. 2 n. 176, in *Opera omnia*, ed. C. Balic et al. (Civitas Vaticana, 1950– [= ed. Vat.]), ed. Vat. XVIII, p. 156: 'Ad quaestionem primam dicunt aliqui quod angelus est in loco per operationem circa aliquod corpus. Sed quia iste articulus est excommunicatus Parisius, ideo utuntur alii alio verbo, dicentes quod est in loco per applicationem ad locum.' On Scotus and the condemnation cf. also Mary E. Ingham, 'The Condemnation of 1277: Another Light on Scotist Ethics', *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 37 (1990): 91–103.

[30] See Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio: Liber secundus a distinctione prima ad tertiam*, d. 2 pars 2 q. 2 n. 201, ed. Vat.VII, pp. 244–5: 'Quod si dicatur quod 'excommunicatio non transiit mare vel dioecesim', – si tamen fuerit articulus damnatus ut articulus haereticus, videtur esse damnatus sicut haereticus non solum auctoritate dioecesani sed etiam auctoritate domini Papae, Extra "*De haereticis*", cap. "Ad abolendam". Vel saltem sententia est suspecta, quia in aliqua universitate sollemniter est damnata.'

[31] See L. Bianchi, *Il vescovo e i filosofi*, pp. 36 and 58, n. 177.

boundless being.'[32] A second reason for the angel's being in a place is, according to Baconthorpe, 'the existence of the angel, for its specific essence as such does not determine it to one place, but this occurs solely through the fact that it exists.'[33] The background for this assertion is that, except for God himself, in all other beings, including angels and separate substances, essence (*esse essentiae*) and existence (*esse existentiae*) are distinct. In order to pass directly to the matter at hand, we will not concern ourselves now with the question, widely discussed in medieval times, whether essence and existence are different *realiter*, *formaliter* or in thought. At the end of his argument, Baconthorpe states: 'the main reason and the most direct cause for [an angel's] being in a place is its application (*applicatio*) to a place or the contact with a place.'[34] When Scotus, for instance, objects that 'this contact is operation, and therefore an angel is in a place through its operation', Baconthorpe replies that '"contact" is not "being active", but prior to it.'[35] After explaining that a being's operation in and access to a place necessarily presupposes contact,[36] Baconthorpe attempts to illustrate the nature of this contact with an example:

> When the intellective soul as separate from matter can enter into and be unified in natural contact [namely as form] with the organic body, so that it forms with it an essential entity, then it appears all the more likely that an angel, which is something separate, can be unified in natural contact with a place, so that only an accidental entity arises due to the coexistence with the place.[37]

Prior to this argument, Baconthorpe had drawn a distinction between natural and mathematical contact: according to the former, contact comes about as a form; according to the latter, like something that is in a place, such as water in a bucket.[38]

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[32] See John Baconthorpe, *Quaestiones in quatuor libros Sententiarum et quodlibetales*, II d. 3 q. 2 a. 3 (Cremonae, 1618 [reprint Farnborough, 1969]), p. 488b C: 'Sunt igitur alij quasi conflantes vnam opinionem ex istis tribus. Dicunt enim, quod causa prima Angeli essendi in loco est limitatio essentiae suae: ideo enim Deus non est in loco circumscriptiue, nec diffinitiue, quia habet esse non limitatum.' Baconthorpe is obviously quoting the articles according to the *Collectio errorum in Anglia et Parisius condemnatorum*, because they are numbered as art. 24 and 26. See *La condamnation parisienne de 1277*, p. 299.

[33] See Baconthorpe, *Sent*., II d. 3 q. 2 a. 3, p. 488b D: 'Sed causa magis propinqua Angelo essendi in loco est suum existere, quia essentia limitata absoluta non determinat sibi locum, sed solum vt existat.'

[34] See Baconthorpe, *Sent*., II d. 3 q. 2 a. 3, p. 488b D: 'Causa omnino, et vltimate proxima essendi in loco est sua applicatio ad locum, vel contactus cum loco.'

[35] See Baconthorpe, *Sent*., II d. 3 q. 2 a. 3, p. 488b D: 'Si dicatur, quod iste contactus est operatio: ergo est in loco per operationem. Dico quod tangere non est operari, sed est prius ea.'

[36] See Baconthorpe, *Sent*., II d. 3 q. 2 a. 3, p. 488b E: '… tactus ergo iste erit aliquid praeexigens operationem exercitam in loco, et consequens accesionem ad locum …'.

[37] See Baconthorpe, *Sent*., II d. 3 q. 2 a. 3, p. 489a A: 'Quia si anima intellectiua vt abstracta a materia posset quodammodo contactu naturali vniri corpori organico, vt fiat vnum per essentiam cum eo, a maiori videretur, quod Angelus, qui est aliquid abstractum contactu naturali potest vniri loco, vt fiat vnum per accidens, et per coexistentiam cum loco.'

[38] See Baconthorpe, *Sent*., II d. 3 q. 2 a. 3, p. 488b–89a: '… contactus est naturalis, non mathematicus, licet differant suo modo, quia illud tangit vt forma, id autem vt locatum …'.

Another strategic move to avoid the dilemma of the condemned articles was to focus less on explaining the nature of angelic location but rather on determining a specific mode of their being in a place. To be sure, it is not the determination as such but rather the details of its respective explanation that provide the yardstick for judging the extent to which a type of location clashes with the condemned articles – which is probably why many authors did not give any detailed explanation in the first place. Let me illustrate this with an example. In an anonymous commentary from the second quarter of the fifteenth century, which I edited in the course of my dissertation, the author states the following as he refutes Article 204:

> [T]he angels or intelligences are definitively in a place (*definitive in loco*) and not so that they are limited by the place (*circumscriptive*) or fill up this place (*repletive*). Definitively being in a place means that an angel who is in a place (for example in a school building) is not in another place (for example in a cemetery) at exactly the same moment. Hence, separate substances can be in a place without having to exercise any of their operations.[39]

In the commentary on Article 219 the anonymous author refers to what is said about Article 204 and claims that 'when the Article is taken in the sense that separate substances are not *circumscriptive* in a place, then it is true.' This means that it is not erroneous to say that separate substances are *circumscriptive* nowhere. 'If the article is understood in the sense, however, that separate substances are also definitively nowhere, then the article is condemned by the holy university of Paris.'[40] It is clear that the value of this solution depends on how the distinctions between '*circumscriptive*, *definitive* and *repletive in loco*' are drawn and understood, and what '*definitive*' means precisely. As the author explains in both commentaries, he has taken this distinction from the pseudo-Albertinian *Summa naturalium*, which clarifies the distinction as follows:

> [I]n a threefold way it is said that something is in a place, namely *circumscriptive*, *definitive* and *repletive*. Something is called *circumscriptive* in a place when a spacial beginning, middle and end can be attributed to it, or when its parts are conmesurate to the parts of the place; and in this sense only a body is in a place. Something is said to be *definitive* in

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[39] Henrik Wels, *Aristotelisches Wissen und Glauben im 15. Jahrhundert: Ein anonymer Kommentar zum Pariser Verurteilungsdekret von 1277 aus dem Umfeld des Johannes de Nova Domo. Studie und Text*, Bochumer Studien zur Philosophie, 41 (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2004), p. 111: 'Ratio falsitatis illius articuli est, quia dicit venerabilis Albertus, quod angeli seu intelligentiae sunt definitive in loco et non circumscriptive nec repletive, sic angelus, qui est hic in schola, non est in eodem instanti naturae in cimiterio. Et ergo substantiae separatae possunt esse in loco aliquo, sic tamen, quod non exercent operationes earum, et ergo dicit articulus: si intelligatur sine operatione.'

[40] See Wels, *Aristotelisches Wissen*, p. 117: 'Ratio falsitatis illius articuli patet ex ratione illius articuli: quod substantiae separatae non sunt alicubi; quia, si articulus intelligitur, quod substantiae separatae non sunt in loco circumscriptive, verus est. Si autem articulus intelligitur, quod substantiae separatae non sunt in loco definitive, tunc a sacrosancta universitate Parisiensi reprobatur, quia tales substantiae separatae possunt esse in loco definitive, ut patet per venerabilem dominum Albertum magnum in primo libro Summae naturalium capitulo de loco.'

> a place when it is here in such a way that it is not anywhere else; and this is the way in which angels are in a place. Since an angel is there where it operates, as John Damascene says, and so are the souls detached from the body. I say the 'detached' souls because the soul unified with the body is in the same place with the whole body. Something is said to be *repletive* in a place because it fills the place; and in this way it is said that God is in every place because he fills every place.[41]

A closer look at the source quoted by the anonymous author shows, however, that he has not yet escaped the condemned articles and the implicit dilemma by sole recourse to the distinction. Worse still, the reference to John Damascene, who held that an angel is in the place in which it operates, effectively contradicts Article 204. Only a precise interpretation of the authority of John Damascene, as Duns Scotus gives in his *Lectura*,[42] could prevent him from slipping into the trap. But he refrains from doing so, preferring to pass over the problem in silence.

At the end of the fifteenth century there are several attempts to revive the validity of the Paris condemnation, mainly in Rome. In 1490 John Pico della Mirandola wanted to discuss the pressing issues of the day with any scholars who wished to travel to Rome at his expense. As is well-known, this meeting never took place. Four years prior to issuing his invitation, Pico had advanced 900 theses, or as he called them, *conclusiones*, which were to form the basis of the proposed disputation. The only result was that a commission was appointed by Pope Innocence VIII to examine Pico's theses.[43] The commission censored 13 theses and reproached Pico with, amongst other things, contradicting the Paris Article 204.[44] It was not, however, the usual issue of the location of separate substances that earned the commission's charge of heresy, but Pico's view on the Descent into Hell. For Pico had claimed

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[41] See Albertus de Orlamunde, *Summa naturalium*, lib. 1 cap. 11, in Albertus Magnus, *Opera omnia*, ed. A. Borgnet (Paris, 1890), vol. 5, p. 455b: 'Et nota, quod tripliciter dicitur aliquid esse in loco, scilicet circumscriptive, diffinitive, et repletive. Circumscriptive dicitur aliquid esse in loco, cui potest assignari principium, medium et finis in loco: vel cujus partes commensurantur partibus loci, et sic solum corpus est in loco. Diffinitive dicitur aliquid esse in loco, quod sic est hic quod non alibi: et sic Angeli sunt in loco. Angelus enim ibi est ubi operatur, sicut dicit Damascenus, et animae exutae. Dico exutae, quia anima unita corpori est in eodem loco cum suo toto. Repletive dicitur aliquid esse in loco, quia replet locum: et sic dicitur Deus esse in omni loco, quia replet omnem locum.' Although this distinction is not found literally in the authentic works of Albert the Great, we can find the same insight. See for example Albertus Magnus, *De causis et processu universitatis a prima causa*, lib. 2, tract. 4, cap. 11, in *Opera omnia* 17,2, ed. W. Fauser, (Münster, 1993), p. 164:60–74.

[42] See Duns Scotus, *Lectura in librum secundum Sententiarum a distinctione prima ad sextam*, d. 2 pars 2 q. 2 n. 176, ed. Vat. XVIII, pp. 156–7 and 159–60. See also Wels, *Aristotelisches Wissen*, pp. cxv–cxvi.

[43] See A. Biondi's introduction to Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Conclusiones nongentae. Le novecento Tesi dell'anno 1486*, ed. Albano Biondi (Firenze, 1995), especially pp. 3–5.

[44] See Ioannes Picus Mirandulanus, *Apologia*, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 1, with a preface by E. Garin (Basel, 1572 [reprint Torino, 1971]), p. 129: 'Exercitij tamen gratia adducam quaedam argumenta, quae audivi contra istam opinionem. Primo, arguitur per articulum Parisien. 204 qui dicit dicere, Substantiam angeli non esse in loco sine operatione. Error.'

that in the three days between Christ's death and resurrection Christ had not dwelled truly and in real presence in Hell, but only in terms of effect. Or as he himself specifies in his *Apologia*: 'because Christ descended into Hell in his soul and because the soul, like every separate substance, does not appear to be able to be located or locally movable, except through its own operation, for that reason I say that it was probably not pertinent for Christ to descend into Hell or to have been located in Hell, except through operation.'[45] After a lengthy interpretation of how this conclusion is to be understood, and supporting this explanation with scholastic authorities, Pico turns to the accusation of having violated Article 204. Here, too, he distinguishes between several ways of understanding the article, before attacking it in general. The *doctor solemnis*, a title Pico uses to refer to Godfrey of Fontaines and not to Henry of Ghent, had already said that these articles require correction because some are false and others contradictory. For Pico it is thus necessary to interpret Article 204 according to his solution, for otherwise it would contradict Article 218.[46] Pico then quotes Henry of Ghent and Giles of Rome, who had stated that not all the doctors had wished to condemn the Paris articles but were rather pressed to do so by some obstinate peers, which is why one should not worry about these articles.[47] For this reason the Paris articles do not have obligatory value for all believers, but only in so far as they directly refer to the Holy Scriptures or the decrees of the universal Church. Paraphrasing the English saying that the articles do not travel across the seas (*non transeunt mare*), Pico declares that the articles do not travel over the Alps (*non transeunt alpes*), but adds that he is not sure whether it is permissible to joke about such a serious issue.[48] Now turning to his interpretation of the two articles, Pico attempts to avoid the contradiction. The proper understanding of the two articles, he says, is as follows: as far as the operation mentioned in Article 204 is concerned, this must be taken in the sense that upon suspension of this operation the finiteness and limitedness of the detached nature still suffices as a reason for the fact that it is not everywhere, or serves as a reason for the claim that if it is in a place, it is not entirely

[45] See Ioannes Picus Mirandulanus, *Apologia*, p. 126: 'Summarius sensus conclusionis meae est iste. Quia Christus secundum animam tantum descendit ad inferos, et animae sicut cuicumque substantiae separatae, videtur non competere locari, vel moveri localiter, nisi ratione operationis. Ideo dico, quod descendisse ad infernum, vel fuisse in inferno localiter, videtur non competisse Christo, nisi ratione operationis.'

[46] See Ioannes Picus Mirandulanus, *Apologia*, pp. 129–30: 'Item dicit solennis doctor Gotfredus de Fontibus, quòd isti articuli indigent magna correctione, quia nonnulli sunt falsi, nonnulli ad inuicem sibi contradicunt, et profecto in ista materia necesse est, aut quod articulus exponatur modo immediatè praeposito, aut quòd in ipsis articulis sit contradictio manifesta. quod sic probo. Est enim articulus 218. qui dicit …'.

[47] See Ioannes Picus Mirandulanus, *Apologia*, p. 130: 'Aegidius autem et multi alij dicunt, quòd de illis articulis nihil est curandum, quia fuerunt facti non convocatis omnibus doctoribus Parisiensibus, sed ad requisitionem quorundam capitosorum.'

[48] See Ioannes Picus Mirandulanus, *Apologia*, p. 130: 'ipsi etiam Parisienses hoc fatentur, quòd illi articuli non obligant omnes fideles, nec tenemur illis credere, nisi inquantum scripturae sacrae innituntur, aut determinationibus universalis Ecclesiae. unde solent dicere Anglici. Quòd illi articuli non transeunt mare: quare et nos si in re tam graui licet iocari, possumus dicere, Quòd non transeunt alpes.'

in another at the same time and in both according to its nature. By contrast, Article 219 emphasizes that the substance or the finiteness of the substance is not the reason for an angel to be in a place, according to Pico. With the terms 'finiteness' (*finitas*) and 'limitedness' (*limitatio*), Pico alludes to terminology which he had previously qualified as Scotist. For Pico, interpreting the articles in this way not only rids them of their contradictions, but expressly reinforces his view of Christ's Descent into Hell.[49]

Pico's defence of his conclusions and his attempt to prove their conformity was not left unanswered. In 1489 Petrus Garsia, the Bishop of Sardinia, published his *In determinationes magistrales contra conclusiones apologales Ioannis Pici Mirandulani*, a work dedicated to Pope Innocent VIII, in Rome. This work was certainly one factor in Innocent's decision to condemn Pico's *Apologia* in its entirety. After explaining the meaning of Pico's conclusion on the Descent into Hell, Petrus Garsia, displaying no less erudition than Pico, moves on to prove that it is correct to suspect it of espousing erroneous views and heresy. He puts together five opinions on the place and movement of angels. The first is that of the philosophers: they claim that the intelligences are both in themselves as well as *per accidens* completely immobile and incapable of being located.[50] The second view states that angels and separate souls are in a place and can move locally of themselves and according to their substance. This location occurs, however, not *circumscriptive*, but *definitive*, because an angel is determined towards one place through its *natura intrinseca*. Thus, when it is in one place, it is not in another at the same moment. This position is said to be taken by the Scotists and the Nominalists.[51] According to the third view, the operation of an angel or a separated soul with regard to a place or a body located

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[49] See Ioannes Picus Mirandulanus, *Apologia*, p. 130: 'Videtur autem mihi uerus intellectus illorum articulorum hic esse, quòd in articulo 204. si in eo sit sermo de operatione communiter accepta, modo praedicto hoc intendatur, quòd etiam seclusa quacunque operatione, adhuc finitas vel limitatio naturae separatae, erit ei ratio non essendi ubique, aut ratio, quòd si sit in uno loco non est simul in alio totali, et in utroque per naturam. In articulo autem 218. credo quòd intendatur, quód substantia vel finitas substantiae, non est ratio angelo essendi simpliciter in loco, isto modo exponendo in articulis nulla est contradictio, et articuli sic intellecti, non solùm non sunt contra positionem meam, sed ipsam totaliter ex utraque parte confirmant, ut patet ex declaratione positionis supra posita.'

[50] The book is printed without pagination. In the copy I have used, a handwritten pagination can be found that begins with the first page of the text after the *prooemium*. The following quotations are given according to this pagination. See Petrus Garsia, *In determinationes magistrales contra conclusiones apologales Ioannis Pici Mirandulani* (Romae, 1489), fol. 9r: 'Philosophi nanque tenent quod intelligentie sunt omnino immobiles et illocabiles tam per se quam per accidens.'

[51] See Petrus Garsia, *In determinationes*, fol. 9r–v: 'Secunda opinio est quorundam theologorum qui probabiliter tenent quod angelus et anima separata sunt in loco et mouentur localiter secundum se et secundum propriam substantiam adeo quod non est intelligibile angelum et animam separatam esse et non esse in loco supposita existentia loci. Dicunt tamen quod angelus non est in loco circumscriptiue. Sed diffinitiue tantum: quia determinatur ex sua intrinseca natura ad locum aliquem: sic quod existens in vno loco non est in alio. Hanc autem opinionem tenet scotistarum et nominalium schola.'

in a place is the reason why an angel is in a place.[52] The fourth position is that an angel is in a place only in so far as it dwells in a body located in a place and that it is there not *secundum se*, but only in its effect.[53] The fifth position, which corresponds to Pico's, is that the substance of an angel is nowhere. Left at that, it coincides with the fourth position, but the difference lies in the following:

> [C]orresponding to an angel being nowhere in terms of place, it is present in any body it can move. This is a presence of an ordering towards or of a state, irrespective whether it moves the body or not. When it does move the body, however, this means it is there in a special way (*specialiter*), where it moves according to a certain convergence, because its *virtus* manifests itself there in a special way. The real presence of an angel in a place precedes, however, its operation in the place.[54]

In Garsia's judgement, the first view, that of the philosophers, is to be rejected as downright heresy. The second view is the most probable and most in line with the authorities of the Holy Scripture and the testimonies of the saints. Views three to five arouse suspicion of heresy, in particular the last two. These three views are suspicious because they were condemned many times in Paris, in 1241 by William of Auvergne and in 1277 by Stephen Tempier. Upon listing the relevant articles, Petrus Garsia states:

> [A]nd if it is asserted that such an excommunication or condemnation of the articles does not go beyond the sea or the diocese, then Scotus correctly answers in the second book of the *Sentences* that when such articles are condemned as heretical, they are not only damned with the authority of the diocese but also with that of the Pope according to

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[52] See Petrus Garsia, *In determinationes*, fol. 9v: 'Tercia vero opinio est aliorum theologorum dicentium quod angelus et anima separata non sunt in loco: sic quod essentia et limitatio virtutis sit ratio essendi in loco vt precedens opinio dicit: sed operatio eius circa locum vel circa corpus existens in loco.'

[53] See Petrus Garsia, *In determinationes*, fol. 9v: 'Quarta opinio aliorum theologorum est quod angelus et anima separata nec per essentiam nec per operationem nec per aliquod extrinsecum vel intrinsecum sunt in loco: sic quod eis conueniat locus vel situs vel vbi secundum propinquitatem et distantiam: aut moueri localiter formaliter et subiectiue: vt precedentes opiniones tenent: sed solum dicuntur esse in loco et moueri localiter in quantum sunt in corpore locato non secundum se sed secundum effectum …'.

[54] See Petrus Garsia, *In determinationes*, fol. 9v: 'Quinta vero opinio cui innititur defensor predicte conclusionis est: quod substantia angeli nusquam est: nec mouetur localiter ratione sui aut alicuius existentis in ipso: neque ratione operationis transeuntis extra: sic quod ei formaliter et subiectiue conueniat motus vel locus vel situs diffinitiue cum substantia separata talium accidentium corporalium non sit susceptiua: in quo concordat cum precedenti opinione. differt tamen in hoc quod hec opinio tenet quod sicut angelus nusquam est secundum locum sic est praesens cuilibet corpori quod potest mouere: presentia tamen ordinis vel situs siue moueat corpus siue non. sed quando mouet dicitur esse ibi specialiter vbi mouet secundum quandam appropriationem: quia ibi manifestatur specialiter sua virtus: presentia tamen realis angeli ad locum precedit eius operationem in loco.'

the *Liber extra*, or such a proposition must be suspected of heresy at least when it is condemned ceremoniously at a famous university, like that of Paris.[55]

Three decades after Pico ran aground in Rome, Tiberius Russilianus, portrayed as a reincarnation of Pico at the time of Pomponazzi, does not even attempt to give the impression that he is searching for a third way between Articles 204, 218 and 219 of the condemnation. In his *Apologeticus adversus cucullatos*, he opts for the obvious solution to the dilemma, namely 'that the reason for the location of the separate substances lies in their operation alone, as in physical substances it is the physical quantity and extension'.[56] But this would open the door to another chapter.

[55] See Petrus Garsia, *In determinationes*, fol. 10v: 'Et si dicatur quod talis excommunicatio vel damnatio articulorum non transit mare vel diocesim. Respondet Scotus in. ij. sen. et bene: quod tales articuli sunt articuli condemnati sicut heretici sunt damnati non solum auctoritate diocesani tantum: sed etiam auctoritate pape extra de here. c. ad abolendam vel saltem sententia talis est habenda suspecta de heresi: quando in aliqua vniuersitate famosa: qualis est Parisiensis solemniter est damnata. Patet igitur quod predicta conclusio in sensu pro quo sit a defensore: est suspecta de errore et heresi.'

[56] See Tiberius Russilianus, *Apologeticus adversus cucullatos*, in Paola Zambelli, *Una reincarnazione di Pico ai tempi di Pomponazzi*, *con l'edizione critica di Tiberio Russiliano Sesto Calabrese* Apologeticus adversus cucullatos *(1519)* (Milano, 1994), p. 208: 'At nos secus opinantes diversoque calle a communi tramite secedentes, in hocque viam communem renuentes, dicimus quod ratio locationis substantiarum separatarum est operatio ipsa solum, quemadmodum substantiarum corporearum est corporea quantitas et dimensio …'.

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PART III
Angelic Cognition and Language

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Chapter 8

The Language of Angels: On the Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity of Pure Spirits

Theo Kobusch[1]

It is still valid today what Jean-Luis Chrétien wrote in an article more than 25 years ago: there seems to be nothing more outdated or absurd which philosophers of all times have trusted to paper than the scholastic speculations about the language of angels, that is, the ability of purely spiritual beings to communicate with one another. And yet, at the same time the most relevant, the always relevant, is at stake here, namely the fate of human co-existence. For the question whether a spiritual substance can be communicated involves the twofold issue of the mutual transparency established by communication and the obscurity and impenetrable opacity of the person.[2] Succinctly put: the scholastic discussion on the language of angels conveys insights into the weal and woe of the phenomena of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in general and into the conditions of the possibility of human subjectivity and intersubjectivity in particular. In order to elaborate the full implications of the scholastic theories of angelic language for the constitution of the essence of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, I shall proceed as follows: first of all and under the heading 'Mental Language', I will examine its development in ancient philosophy, after which, secondly, I shall focus on the scholastic distinction between thought and speech. Finally, in a third section, I hope to show, with the help of scholastic authors, that freedom and subjectivity cannot be considered without the idea of opening and overcoming something that is originally hidden.

Mental Language in Ancient Philosophy[3]

Spiritual being is language. Already Plato is said to have defined language as a spirit that makes its way from the inside through the mouth, and as percussion of

[1] I would like to thank Thomas Dewender and Jörn Müller for the co-operative translation of my text.

[2] J.-L.Chrétien, 'Le Langage des Anges selon la Scolastique', *Critique*, 35 (1979): 674–89, here: p. 674.

[3] The heading of this section alludes to a famous and seminal article by W. Theiler, 'Die Sprache des Geistes in der Antike', in his *Forschungen zum Neuplatonismus* (Berlin, 1966), pp. 302–12, the findings of which will be made explicit in what follows.

the air reaching the soul. Thus, language in its strict sense can only be used for articulate speech, whereas only improperly for the utterances of animals lacking reason.[4] According to another tradition, Plato assigned a proper language both to the gods, as is evident from the oracles and the possessed who do not speak in their own languages, and to the animals that are evidently able to communicate with one another, or at least within their own species.[5] This idea appears already fully developed in ancient philosophy. Even though the sensible world (κόσμος αἰσθητός) and the intelligible world (κόσμος νοητός) are two distinct worlds, they are nevertheless so closely connected that the traces of the spiritual reach the seemingly unspiritual matter. In this way the phenomenon of language can be found even in beings devoid of reason. In this sense, Porphyry will say that the fact that we do not understand animal language because it is not articulate cannot be used as an argument against its existence. For we, the Greeks, Porphyry adds, do not understand the language of the Indians either, even though it is articulate, and the language of the Syrians seems to be as inarticulate as that of the animals for us.[6] Moreover, since there are animals that are capable of uttering articulate sounds, as for example, the ravens, the parrots and the jays, the Stoics maintain that it is not the exterior, but the inner word which distinguishes man from animal.[7] Generally speaking, however, animal sounds are regarded as inarticulate. As John Damascene points out, it is characteristic of the inarticulate that it cannot be put down in written form, like a concept. Among the inarticulate sounds we can distinguish those which have no meaning at all, like the sounds brought about by a stone or by wood, from those which are meaningful, like the barking of dogs. In the same way we can draw a distinction among the articulate sounds: the articulate meaningless sounds are those concepts that signify nothing, as, for example, the notion of a goatstag, or those expressions which bring

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[4] Plutarch, *Placita Philosophorum*, in *Plutarchi moralia*, ed. J. Mau (Leipzig, 1971), vol. 5.2.1., p. 902 B: Πλάτων τὴν φωνὴν ὁρίζεται πνεῦμα διὰ στόματος ἀπὸ διανοίας ἠγμένον καὶ πληγὴν ὑπὸ ἀέρος δι᾽ ὤτων καὶ ἐγκεφάλου καὶ αἵματος μέχρι ψυχῆς διαδιδομένην. λέγεται δὲ καὶ καταχρηστικῶς ἐπὶ τῶν ἀλόγων ζῴων φωνὴ καὶ τῶν ἀψύχων, ὡς χρεμετισμοὶ καὶ ψόφοι · κυρίως δὲ φωνὴ ἡ ἔναρθρός ἐστιν ὡς φωτίζουσα τὸ νοούμενον.

[5] See Clemens Alex., *Stromata* I 21, ed. O. Stählin, GCS, 15 (Berlin, 1960), p. 143: ὁ Πλάτων δὲ καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς διάλεκτον ἀπονέμει τινά, μάλιστα μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν ὀνειράτων τεκμαιρόμενος καὶ τῶν χρησμῶν, ἄλλως δὲ καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν δαιμονώντων, οἳ τὴν αὐτῶν οὐ φθέγγονται φωνὴν οὐδὲ διάλεκτον, ἀλλὰ τὴν τῶν ὑπεισιόντων δαιμόνων. οἴεται δὲ καὶ ἀλόγων ζῴων διαλέκτους εἶναι, ὧν τὰ ὁμογενῆ ἐπακούειν. ἐλέφαντος γοῦν ἐμπεσόντος εἰς βόρβορον καὶ βοήσαντος παρών τις ἄλλος καὶ τὸ συμβὰν θεωρήσας ὑποστρέψας μετ᾽ οὐ πολὺ ἄγει μεθ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ ἀγέλην ἐλεφάντων καὶ σῴζει τὸν ἐμπεπτωκότα.

[6] See Porphyry, *De abstinentia* III 3, ed. J. Bouffartigue and M. Patillon (Paris, 1979), vol. 2, p. 15.

[7] See Chrysippus, *Fragmenta logica et physica* 135 (Sextus Emp., *Adv. math.* VIII 275), in *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*, ed. J. von Arnim (Leipzig: Teubner, 1903 [reprint Stuttgart, 1968]), vol. 2: φασὶν ὅτι ἄνθρωπος οὐχὶ τῷ προφορικῷ λόγῳ διαφέρει τῶν ἀλόγων ζῴων (καὶ γὰρ κόρακες καὶ ψιττακοὶ καὶ κίτται ἐνάρθρους προφέρονται φωνάς) ἀλλὰ τῷ ἐνδιαθέτῳ, … – According to Philoponus, *In Aristotelis libros de anima comm.*, ed. M. Hayduck, CAG, XV (Berlin, 1897), p. 377:8, the word ‘lexis’ can only be used in a metaphorical sense with respect to the aforementioned animals.

nothing specific to our mind, as is the case with the examples regularly used by the Stoics, namely 'Knax', 'Skindapsos' or 'Blityri'. Finally, to utter articulate, meaningful sounds means to speak in a proper sense, because these originate from the interior, that is, they presuppose an inner word and, at the same time, signify real things.[8] And, as Gregory of Nyssa points out, even if it is written in the Psalms that the heavens praise the glory of the Lord, this is not to suggest articulate language, according to the interpretation of Christian philosophy, but rather that God himself appears as a 'silent voice' to those who understand.[9] Gregory, however, qualifies the divine speech heard by Moses as an articulate sound, produced without vocal organs by means of the air alone to form a word that is not an accidental expression, but one of divine command.[10] Thus, even the wisdom expressed in creation is a kind of word, though an inarticulate one.[11] God's first words in the Genesis 'There it be light!' are not a sound produced by vocal organs, as Basil explains in a similar context, nor are they a sound in the sense of the Stoic percussion of the air, but they are rather an expression of the inclination of the divine will.[12]

Likewise, the language of the separated soul, the *anima separata*, is a philosophical puzzle. How should the communication between these separated souls be conceived, since they lack vocal organs such as the tongue, the bronchial tube and the lips that are indispensable for producing speech? According to Plutarch, the disembodied souls communicate with each other without language. This is not difficult to imagine, as men themselves in their earthly existence do not communicate everything by means of language, but also by using pictures, by touching or by a

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[8] See David, *In Porphyrii Isagogen Comm.*, ed. A. Busse, CAG, XVIII 2 (Berlin, 1904), pp. 83:32–84:11; John Damascene, *Institutio elementaris. Capita philosophica* (*Dialectica*) 5, 2, ed. B. Kotter (Berlin, 1969). For the barking of dogs as a meaningful sound see also Philoponus, *In Aristotelis libros de anima comm.*, CAG XV, p. 379:11. The difference between what can be written and what cannot be written is also mentioned by Origen, *Scholia in Apocalypsem* 36, 11, in *Der Scholien-Kommentar des Origenes zur Apokalypse Johannis*, ed. C.I. Dyobouniotes and A. von Harnack, Texte und Untersuchungen, 38.3 (Leipzig, 1911). For the meaningless expressions of the Stoics see T. Kobusch, *Sein und Sprache* (Leiden, 1987), p. 437.

[9] Gregory of Nyssa, *Contra Eunomium* II 221, ed. W. Jaeger, GNO, I (Leiden, 1960), pp. 289–90: ὅτι τὸ διήγημα τὸ οὐράνιον καὶ τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ παρὰ τῆς ἡμέρας βοώμενον φωνὴ μὲν ἔναρθρος οὐκ ἔστιν οὔτε λαλιὰ διὰ στόματος, διδασκαλία δὲ τῆς θείας δυνάμεως γίνεται τοῖς ἐπαΐειν ἐπισταμένοις σιωπώσης φωνῆς;

[10] Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Moysis* I, ed. H. Musurillo, GNO, VII/I (Leiden, 1964), p. 21:9: Ἡ δὲ φωνὴ αὕτη ἔναρθρος ἦν, θείᾳ δυνάμει δίχα τῶν φωνητικῶν ὀργάνων τοῦ ἀέρος διαρθροῦντος τὸν λόγον. Ἦν δὲ ὁ λόγος οὐκ εἰκῇ διαρθρούμενος, ἀλλ᾽ ἐνομοθέτει θεῖα διατάγματα.

[11] Gregory of Nyssa, *Hex.*, PG 44, p. 75 C: ἔναρθρος.

[12] Basil, *Homiliae in Hexaemeron* II 7, in *Basile de Césarée. Homélies sur l'hexaéméron*, ed. S. Giet (2nd edn, Paris, 1968), p. 29: Ὅταν δὲ φωνὴν ἐπὶ Θεοῦ καὶ ῥῆμα καὶ πρόσταγμα λέγωμεν, οὐ διὰ φωνητικῶν ὀργάνων ἐκπεμπόμενον ψόφον, οὐδὲ ἀέρα διὰ γλώσσης τυπούμενον, τὸν θεῖον λόγον νοοῦμεν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἐν τῷ θελήματι ῥοπὴν διὰ τὸ τοῖς διδασκομένοις εὐσύνοπτον ἡγούμεθα ἐν εἴδει προστάγματος σχηματίζεσθαι. Cf. also ibid. III 2, p. 39: Ὅπου δὲ οὐκ ἀὴρ, οὐχὶ γλῶσσα, οὐχὶ οὖς, οὐ πόρος σκολιὸς ἐπὶ τὴν ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ συναίσθησιν ἀναφέρων τοὺς ψόφους, ἐκεῖ οὐδὲ ῥημάτων χρεία, ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ αὐτῶν, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, τῶν ἐν καρδίᾳ νοημάτων τοῦ θελήματος ἡ μετάδοσις.

mere glance.[13] Plotinus advances similar arguments. As long as the soul dwells in the realm of the purely intelligible, it does not need language. 'Over there' we find no discussion, no command, no disguise, no delusion, but as soon as one soul wants to communicate something to another, the recipient would understand immediately. The communication of separate souls with each other takes place by means of a silent understanding of each other, 'for here below, too, we can know many things by the look in people's eyes when they are silent' (*Enn*. IV 3 18, 13).

In his commentary on the *Politeia*, Proclus attempts to show that the *anima separata* is able to speak.[14] His argument is drawn from his complex doctrine of the chariots of the soul which he describes in this context as 'having the form of speech' and which let the soul, to a certain degree, become an eye or an ear so that it may see and speak. Indeed, it would be absurd to suggest that in its existence on earth the tongue is able to produce an articulate sound by beating the air pressed out by the lungs, whereas the chariots of the soul would be unable to move the air around them in order to form various sounds from it. In fact, the separate souls are able to communicate their thoughts to each other by movements of the air much simpler than the sounds produced by the tongue.[15] The language of the gods is a similar case. The gods do not need physical vocal organs, but instead they use the air shaped according to their will to transport their utterances, and they communicate with each other only spiritually, not sensually.[16] Finally, in demons and angels we

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[13] Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum*, in *Plutarchi moralia*, ed. W. Sieveking (Leipzig, 1929), vol. 3, p. 431 C: οὐδὲν οὖν ἄλογον οὐδὲ θαυμαστόν, εἰ ψυχαὶ ψυχαῖς ἐντυγχάνουσαι φαντασίας ἐμποιοῦσι τοῦ μέλλοντος, ὥσπερ ἡμεῖς ἀλλήλοις οὐ πάντα διὰ φωνῆς ἀλλὰ καὶ γράμμασι καὶ θιγόντες μόνον καὶ προσβλέψαντες πολλὰ καὶ μηνύομεν τῶν γεγονότων καὶ τῶν ἐσομένων προσημαίνομεν.

[14] Proclus, *In Rem publicam* II, ed. W. Kroll (Leipzig, 1901), p. 166: Καὶ μὴν καὶ τὸ διαλέγεσθαι ψυχὰς οὐ γλῶτταν ἐχούσας οὐκ ἀρτηρίαν οὐ χείλη, δι' ὧν ἐν τῷ τῇδε βίῳ διαλέγεσθαι μόνως δυνατόν, ἀπιστεῖν οὐ προσῆκεν·

[15] Proclus, *In Rem publicam* II, p. 166: ἔστι γὰρ αὐτῶν τὰ ὀχήματα γλωσσοειδῆ ὅλα καὶ ὄμματα καθ' ὅλα ἑαυτὰ καὶ ὦτα, καὶ ἀκούειν δυνάμενα καὶ ὁρᾶν καὶ φθέγγεσθαι. καὶ γὰρ ἄτοπον, εἰ ἡ μὲν γλῶσσα τὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ πνεύμονος ἀέρα πλήττουσα δύναται διηρθρωμένην ποιεῖν τὴν φωνήν, τὰ δὲ τῶν ψυχῶν ὀχήματα μὴ δύναται τὸν περὶ ἑαυτὰ κινεῖν ἀέρα καὶ διὰ τοίας ἢ τοίας κινήσεως σχηματίζειν εἰς φθόγγους διαφόρους· πρὸς τῷ καὶ τὸν τρόπον τῆς διαλέξεως μὴ ἐξ ἀνάγκης εἶναι ποικίλον οὕτως καὶ πολυκί νητον ὡς τὸν τῶν ἐνταῦθα ψυχῶν, ἀλλὰ διά τινων ἁπλουστέρων κινήσεων δύνασθαι σημαίνειν τὰς ἐννοίας αὐτῶν ἀλλήλαις. For Proclus's teaching of the (two) chariots of the soul and its history see J. Halfwassen, 'Seelenwagen', in J. Ritter and K. Gründer (eds), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, 9 (Basel, 1995), pp. 111–17, here: pp. 113–15.

[16] Proclus, *In Cratylum* LXXVII, ed. G. Pasquali (Leipzig, 1908), p. 36: Ὅτι οἱ θεοὶ σημαίνουσι τὰ πράγματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις οὐκ ὀργάνων δεόμενοι σωματικῶν, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἀέρα σχηματίζοντες κατὰ τὴν ἑαυτῶν βούλησιν κηροῦ γὰρ εὐπλαστότερος ὢν τύπους παραδέχεται τῶν θείων νοήσεων προιόντας μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν ἄνευ κινήσεως, καταντῶντας δ᾽ εἰς ἡμᾶς διὰ ἠχῆς καὶ φθόγγου καὶ μεταβολῆς· οὕτω γὰρ καὶ τὰς φήμας ἐνδίδοσθαι παρὰ θεῶν φαμεν, οὐ φθεγγομένων ἐκείνων ἀλλὰ τοῖς μὲν <ἀερίοις σχήμασιν> ὡς ὀργάνοις χρω-μένων, πληρούντων δ᾽ ἁπλήκτως καὶ ἀναφῶς τὴν ἀκοὴν τῆς οἰκείας γνώσεως· καὶ γὰρ ἀλλήλοις αὐτοὺς συνεῖναι διὰ νοήσεων καὶ γινώσκειν τὰ ἀλλήλων νοητικῶς, ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ αἰσθητικῶς.

encounter the same problem. Can they speak and communicate with one another? As Plutarch explains in a famous passage, Socrates had such a pure and dispassionate mind that he was able to perceive the voice of the demon (δαιμόνιον). What he encountered there, however, was not an articulate sound, but the word of a demon that brought him into a voiceless contact with the divine by its absolute clarity.[17] The mutual communication of thoughts by means of phonetic language is like a groping in the dark, whereas the thoughts of demons are light and do not need the nouns and verbs that the human language uses as symbols or images to make communication possible.[18] The voiceless words of demons are able to penetrate all human beings, but they fall on fertile ground only with those who lead undisturbed lives, the holy and self-contained. According to later Neoplatonists, the necessity of using phonetic speech is brought about by the fall of the soul into the world of becoming, the physical world.[19] Nevertheless, even communication by means of phonetic speech can be clarifying, insofar as, in this way, the thoughts hidden in the mind are brought to light. Indeed, this is suggested by the etymology of phonetic speech, as we learn from Elias, a later commentator on Aristotle: φωνή is that which leads to light (φῶς).[20] Ancient philosophy in general teaches that angels, demons and separated souls do not speak phonetically. A famous statement transmitted by Nonnos, which Goethe

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[17] Plutarch, *De genio Socratis*, in *Plutarchi moralia*, ed. W. Sieveking (Leipzig, 1929), vol. 3, p. 588 E,: τὸ δὲ προσπῖπτον οὐ φθόγγον ἀλλὰ λόγον ἅν τις εἰκάσειε δαίμονος ἄνευ φωνῆς ἐφαπτόμενον αὐτῷ τῷ δηλουμένῳ τοῦ νοοῦντος. See also Calcidius, *In Platonis Timaeum* (n. 288), ed. J.H. Waszink (London and Leiden, 1975), p. 264:4: 'Vox porro illa quam Socrates sentiebat non erat, opinor, talis quae aere icto sonaret, sed quae ob egregiam castimoniam tersae proptereaque intellegentiori animae praesentiam coetumque solitae divinitatis revelaret, siquidem pura puris contigua fore miscerique fas sit. Atque ut in somnis audire nobis videmur voces sermonumque expressa verba, nec tamen illa vox est sed vocis officium imitans significatio, sic vigilantis Socratis mens praesentiam divinitatis signi perspicui notatione augurabatur.'

[18] Plutarch, *De genio Socratis*, p. 589 B: τῷ γὰρ ὄντι τὰς μὲν ἀλλήλων νοήσεις οἷον ὑπὸ σκότῳ διὰ φωνῆς ψηλαφῶντες γνωρίζομεν· αἱ δὲ τῶν δαιμόνων φέγγος ἔχουσαι τοῖς δυναμένοις <ἰδεῖν> ἐλλάμπουσιν, οὐ δεόμεναι ῥημάτων οὐδ' ὀνομάτων, οἷς χρώμενοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους οἱ ἄνθρωποι συμβόλοις εἴδωλα τῶν νοουμένων καὶ εἰκόνας ὁρῶσιν, .

[19] See Ammonius, *In Aristotelis Categorias*, ed. A. Busse, CAG, IV 4 (Berlin, 1845), p. 15:4: Εἰ μὲν αἱ ψυχαὶ ἄνω ἦσαν χωρὶς τοῦ σώματος τούτου, πάντα ἂν ἐγίνωσκον ἑκάστη οἴκοθεν μηδενὸς ἑτέρου προσδεόμεναι, ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ κατεληλύθασι πρὸς τὴν γένεσιν καὶ συνδέδενται τῷ σώματι καὶ τῆς ἐξ αὐτοῦ ἀχλύος ἀναπιμπλάμεναι ἀμβλυώττουσι καὶ οὐχ οἷαί τέ εἰσι τὰ πράγματα γινώσκειν ὡς ἔχει φύσεως, διὰ τοῦτο τῆς ἀλλήλων ἐδεήθησαν κοινωνίας διακονούσης αὐταῖς τῆς φωνῆς εἰς τὸ διαπορθμεύειν ἀλλήλαις τὰ νοήματα. Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Cat*., ed. C. Kalbfleisch, CAG, VIII (Berlin, 1907), p. 12:25: πεσοῦσα δὲ εἰς γένεσιν καὶ λήθης ἀναπλησθεῖσα ἐδεήθη μὲν ὄψεως, ἐδεήθη δὲ ἀκοῆς πρὸς ἀνάμνησιν· δεῖται γὰρ τοῦ ἤδη τεθεαμένου τὴν ἀλήθειαν διὰ φωνῆς ἀπὸ τῆς ἐννοίας προφερομένης κινοῦντος καὶ τὴν ἐν αὐτῇ τέως ἀπεψυγμένην ἔννοιαν .

[20] Elias, *In Porph. Isagogen*, ed. A. Busse, *CAG,* XVIII 1 (Berlin, 1900), p. 37:1: κοινωνοῦμεν δὲ ἀλλήλοις διὰ φωνῶν, ὅθεν καὶ φωνὴ εἴρηται ὡς εἰς φῶς ἄγουσα τὰ τοῦ νοῦ γεννήματα, διὸ καὶ φὼς μόνος ὁ ἄνθρωπος λέγεται ὡς πολὺ τὸ φωτιστικὸν ἔχων καὶ ἐξαγγελτικόν·

wrote on the back of the title page of the second volume of his 'Zur Morphologie' of 1823, tells us that the voices of the demons are inarticulate.[21] In this respect, however, already Porphyry issues a warning not to make an inference from a being's phonetic silence to a lack of reason, because then the gods, which express themselves silently, would be perceived as irrational.[22] Rather, one has to distinguish between two kinds of *logos*, the phonetic and the spiritual.[23] The spiritual logos is nothing but thinking itself, insofar as it is an inner dialogue of the soul with itself, already described by Plato as having a non-phonetic nature.[24] This inner speech of the soul is placed on the same level as angelic speech in ancient philosophy, both pagan and Christian. In this sense, we can say that angelic speech is a kind of inner speech.[25]

Thinking and Speaking

The starting point for medieval speculations concerning the language of angels is the conviction deriving from antiquity that there is a close relation between the inner word in man and the language of angels.[26] In this respect, Hugh of St. Victor says that the exterior man is what we have in common with animals, whereas the interior

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[21] Ps.-Nonnus, *Scholia mythologica*, or. 5, hist. 17, 4, ed. J. Nimmo Smith, CCG, 27 (Turnhout 1992): εἰδέναι γὰρ χρὴ ὅτι αἱ τῶν δαιμόνων φωναὶ ἄναρθροί εἰσι διὰ τὸ μὴ ἔχειν ὄργανα φωνητικά, ὅπως διατυπώσωσι τὴν ἐξερχομένην φωνήν.

[22] Porphyry, *De abstinentia* III 5, p. 158: ἀλλὰ μήποτε ἄτοπον ἐκ τῆς εὐσυνέτου φθέγξεως ἢ μὴ ἢ τῆς σιγῆς καὶ φωνῆς τὸ λογικὸν κρίνειν καὶ τὸ ἄλογον· οὕτως γὰρ καὶ τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι θεὸν καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους τῷ μὴ φθέγγεσθαι φαίη ἄν τις μὴ εἶναι λογικούς. ἀλλ' οἵ γε θεοὶ σιγῶντες μηνύουσι, καὶ συνιᾶσιν αὐτῶν ὄρνιθες θᾶττον ἢ ἄνθρωποι καὶ συνέντες ἀπαγγέλλουσιν ὡς δύνανται καὶ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις εἰσὶ κήρυκες ἄλλοι ἄλλων θεῶν·

[23] See for example Simplicius, *In Aristotelis Categorias Comm.*, ed. C. Kalbfleisch, CAG, VIII (Berlin, 1907), p. 124:8: ἐπειδὴ δὲ καὶ τὸν λόγον τοῦ διωρισμένου ποσοῦ φησιν εἶναι, λόγον ἀκουστέον οὐ τὸν ἐν διανοίᾳ, ἀλλὰ τὸν ἐν τῇ φωνῇ·

[24] Plato, *Sophistes* 263 e: Οὐκοῦν διάνοια μὲν καὶ λόγος ταὐτόν· πλὴν ὁ μὲν ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς αὑτὴν διάλογος ἄνευ φωνῆς γιγνόμενος τοῦτ' αὐτὸ ἡμῖν ἐπωνομάσθη, διάνοια; … – See also Theon of Smyrna, *De utilitate mathematicae*, ed. E. Hiller (Leipzig, 1878), p. 72:24: ... ὁ ἐνδιάθετος καὶ ὁ ἐν διανοίᾳ κείμενος ἄνευ φθόγγου καὶ φωνῆς …

[25] Ps.-Athanasius, *Liber de definitionibus*, PG 28, p. 549: Τί ἐστι λόγος, καὶ ὁσαχῶς ὁ λόγος; Εἴρηται μὲν ὁ λόγος τριχῶς· λόγος ἐνούσιος, ὁ Θεὸς Λόγος, λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, ὁ τῶν ἀγγέλων, καὶ ὁ ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ διανοίᾳ λαλούμενος λόγος· καὶ ὁ προφορικὸς, ὁ διὰ τῆς γλώττης, ὃς λέγεται ἄγγελος νοήματος. Λόγος δὲ εἴρηται ἐκ τοῦ λέγειν. Elias, *In Porph. Isagogen*, *CAG* XVIII 1, p. 95:28: ὁ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος καὶ λόγῳ κέχρηται καὶ λογικός ἐστιν ὡς ἔχων καὶ ἐνδιάθετον λόγον καὶ προφορικόν. ὁ μέντοι ἄγγελος λόγῳ οὐ χρῆται ὡς ἐνδιάθετον μόνον ἔχων λόγον, οὐ μὴν καὶ προφορικόν. Elias, *In Arist. Categorias Comm.*, ed. A. Busse, *CAG,* XVIII 1 (Berlin, 1900), p. 191:15: Ὁ λόγος διάφορα σημαίνει· λέγεται γὰρ λόγος καὶ ὁ ἐνδιάθετος, καθὸ καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους φαμὲν λογικούς, καὶ ὁ προφορικός, περὶ οὗ ὁ λόγος ὁ προκείμενος.

[26] For the general background of medieval philosophy of language see T. Kobusch, 'Grammatica Speculativa (12.–14. Jahrhundert)', in T. Borsche (ed.), *Klassiker der Sprachphilosophie. Von Platon bis Noam Chomsky* (Munich, 1996), pp. 77–93.

man is what we share with the angels.[27] The Middle Ages adopted the ancient idea of mental language, transmitted partly by John Damascene and partly by Augustine and others. The real innovation of the medieval contribution lies in the distinction between thinking the inner word and speaking in the sense of communicating. Both Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure distinguished between two kinds of mental speech in angels in this regard, focusing, however, on the second kind, namely on their speaking to each other (*ad invicem*). As Bonaventure, who gave a particularly clear explanation of this distinction, says, one form of speech is nothing else but the formation of the word, which occurs in God, in angels and in man in the same sense. In this univocal sense the first form of mental speech is thinking itself. By contrast, there is speaking in the sense of communicating with one another. The word that is not only formed when one communicates with others, but also 'expressed', has the character of a 'nod' (*nutus*). Considered in itself, and ever since Augustine gave a definition of it, the nod is the visual counterpart of the sound and is itself nothing else but 'visual speech'.[28] Since angels do not have bodily organs, Alexander of Hales qualifies the word of angels as a 'spiritual nod'. It is a nod insofar as it makes apparent what was previously hidden. In this regard the angel's nod shows a certain similarity to the exterior word of man, as the nod, in a certain sense, is the vehicle of the angel's inner word.[29] The idea that the language of angels is like a nod is a very widespread view shared by nearly all schools in medieval philosophy.

According to Thomas Aquinas, we necessarily have to assume a language for angels because angels cannot come to know the 'secrets of the hearts' in a direct and specific manner. Language is the manifestation of thought towards others.[30] Since angels lack all sensual knowledge and organs, their language can only exist as an 'inner speech' which nonetheless can be understood by others. It contains two

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[27] Hugh of St.Victor, *Quaestiones in Epistolas Pauli*, PL 175, p. 547 C: 'Homo vero exterior dicitur, quidquid habemus commune cum brutis: homo interior, quod nobis commune est cum angelis.' For the Patristic doctrine of the 'inner man' see T. Kobusch, *Christliche Philosophie. Die Entdeckung der Subjektivität* (Darmstadt, 2006) (in print).

[28] Augustine, *De Trin*. XV 10, 80, ed. W.J. Mountain and Fr. Glorie, CCSL, 50A (Turnhout, 1968): 'Et plerumque sonus, aliquando etiam nutus, ille auribus, ille oculis exhibetur ut per signa corporalia etiam corporis sensibus uerbum quod mente gerimus innotescat. … nam et innuere quid est nisi quodam modo uisibiliter dicere?'

[29] Alexander of Hales, *Summa Theologica* (n. 149) (Quaracchi, 1928), vol. 2, p. 198: 'Concedimus tamen quod ibi est nutus spiritualis … Item, ista species, … prout est in actu manifestandi, dicitur nutus, ut intelligamus ibi verbum habere similitudinem nostri verbi interioris, nutum autem similitudinem nostri verbi exterioris sive vocis, quia sicut vox nostra est vehiculum verbi interioris ad alium, ita ibi nutus quasi vehit ad alium suo modo ipsum verbum exterius, … et sic quasi exterius suo modo vehit se ipsam prout erat interius sub voluntate manifestandi.' Cf. Bonaventure, *Sent*. II d.10 a. 3 q. 1, ed. Coll. S.Bonavenurae (Editio minor) (Florence, 1938), p. 271: 'Et sicut illa species, dum eam sibi et in se contuebatur intellectus, erat verbum interius, sic, dum eam protendit ad alterum, efficitur quasi nutus et verbum exterius.'

[30] Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 9 a. 4, Editio Leonina XII.2 (Rome, 1972): '… oportet quod unus alteri manifestet suum conceptum ; et haec est locutio angelorum.' *STh* I 107,1, Editio Leon. V (Rome, 1899): 'Nihil est enim aliud loqui ad alterum, quam conceptum mentis alteri manifestare.'

elements which constitute it as inner speech. First, the language of angels which consists in a purely intellectual activity has the nature of a sign – not because it points to something different but insofar as the intelligible form of a thing stands as a sign for it and makes the thing intelligible. Secondly, the language of angels has the nature of a nod, insofar as one angel is directed towards the other by means of it. The language of angels is the basis of these two possibilities.[31] Although Thomas does not use the term 'nod' in his later work to designate the relation of one angel towards another, but restricts its use to a sensual sign, it is evident that Thomas is here still distinguishing between the inner conception of thought and the voluntary relation towards one another (*ST*, Ia q. 107 aa. 1 and 5). The notion of nod here stands somehow for the voluntary inclination itself. This function has its roots in traditional usage according to which the nod is closely connected with a voluntary movement.[32] Speaking is more than pure thinking, it means to turn to somebody else, and not to anybody but to somebody in particular. While the concept produced by theoretical thinking is universal in the sense that it can be valid for everyone, speaking in the sense of 'nod' is the particular action of turning to somebody else in order to arouse his or her attention. Thus, Thomas says that there are as many nods as there are actions of turning to somebody.[33] One objection that can be levelled against this use of the term 'nod' in the context of angelic language attempts to show that the nod has this exclusive nature because it is based on a voluntary action and is

[31] Thomas, *De veritate*, q. 9 a. 4: 'Nutus autem et signa hoc modo possunt in angelis distingui, ut signum dicatur ipsa species, nutus autem ordinatio ad alium. Sed possibilitas haec faciendi dicitur lingua.'

[32] See for example Gerhoh of Reichersberg, *Epistolae Gerhohi*, PL 193, p. 615 B: 'quoniam per tacitum voluntatis nutum et mala cogitatio fugatur, et bona advocatur, atque corporis pene tota motio regitur nutu mentis voluntario sine quolibet internuntio.' Gerhoh of Reichersberg, *Comm. aureus in Psalmos et cantica ferialia*, PL 193, p. 1397 A: 'Et sicut coelestis angelus aut etiam ipse Deus permanet libere bonus, propria videlicet voluntate, non aliqua necessitate: sic profecto diabolus aeque libere in malum corruit, et persistit suo utique voluntario nutu, non alieno impulsu.' Richard of St. Victor, *Benjamin maior*, PL 196, p. 129 C: 'sicut in hoc mundo Deus solo voluntatis nutu omnia regit, qui eodem voluntatis nutu omnia creavit.' John of Salisbury, *Polycraticus*, PL 199, p. 699 B: 'quidpiam offert ad nutum propriae voluntatis.' Rupert of Deutz, *Comm. In Cantica Canticorum*, PL 168, p. 925 B: 'Hic autem solo nutu, sola voluntate, solo imperio interdum et taciturnus quod voluit operatus est.' Rupert of Deutz, *In Ioannem*, PL 169, p. 284 A: 'hic autem solo nutu sola voluntate sedens et tacens in vinum bonum convertit illas.' Hugh of St. Victor, *De sacramentis*, PL 176, p. 317 A: 'hoc vero membrum in quo concupiscentia praecipue regnat, quia nutum voluntatis non sequitur; …' Abaelard, *Sic et Non*, PL 178, p. 1503 C : 'ad nutum enim voluntatis non obtemperat illis fragilitas corporis …'

[33] Thomas, *De veritate* q. 9 a. 7: '… quod angelus fit in actu alicuius speciei, non solum secundum seipsum sed etiam in ordinem ad alium ; et hoc fit per propriam voluntatem angeli loquentis. Ea autem quae sunt voluntatis, non oportet quod eodem modo se habeant ad omnes, sed secundum modum a voluntate praefixum ; et ideo locutio praedicta non aequaliter se habebit ad omnes angelos, sed secundum quod voluntas angeli determinabit.' Ibid., ad 2: '… sed in speciali sunt tot nutus, quot sunt conversiones ad diversos; …' *ST*, Ia q. 107 a. 1: 'Sicut ergo per signum sensibile excitatur sensus, ita per aliquam virtutem intelligibilem opotest excitari mens angeli ad attendendum.'

therefore practical. Dietrich of Freiberg explicitly criticizes the transfer of the notion of nod to the spiritual realm in Bonaventure, Thomas and Henry, even though none of these authors stated exactly this position according to which the nod is necessarily something different from the language of angels. But Dietrich's main criticism aims at something else: what the nod means for angels cannot be reduced to what the nod means for us – that is, a manifestation destined only for its recipient, because everything manifested by means of the nod is already present to the angels in virtue of their very existence. Therefore, the mutual communication of their secrets by speech in the hierarchical acts of purgation, illumination and perfection is sufficient.[34]

The language of angels has to do with the will to address and to reveal thought to somebody else. In this respect, Henry of Ghent also distinguished between thinking and speaking: thinking is the production of concepts, whereas to speak means to give a nod towards someone. Nods of this kind are founded on an operation of the intellect because speaking belongs to both intellect and reason. But if thinking and speaking are different, the nod must be regarded as something independent which is produced intellectually but also voluntarily in addition to the act of cognition. Thus, a concept really has the nature of a 'word' which reveals thought to somebody else.[35]

Language and Freedom

What Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Henry of Ghent and others actually meant with their doctrine of the nod as a way of speaking with one another without sound has not yet been considered in its philosophical significance. Thinking and speaking are different acts of the mind. In the act of thinking, which as such is hidden, the mind turns to itself and its content; in the act of speaking the mind turns to somebody else, opens and offers itself to a hearer.[36] An act of the will is required to turn to somebody else. The manifestation of the hidden content of the

[34] See Dietrich of Freiberg, *Tractatus de cognitione entium separatorum et maxime animarum separatarum* 54 (4) / (5), in *Opera omnia* II, ed. H. Steffan (Hamburg, 1980), p. 218; cf. 51(1) 215.

[35] Henry of Ghent, *Quodl*. V q. 15 (Paris, 1518), fol. 180 P: 'Sed si angelus loquatur angelo nutibus huiusmodi, necesse est quod sint aliquid operatum ab angelo operatione intellectuali, quia loqui intellectus est et rationis. Si igitur loqui non est intelligere nutus huiusmodi ets aliquid operatum ab intellectu praeter actum intelligendi …' Ibid. Q: 'Et huiusmodi verbum sive conceptus patens indicativus alterius latentis, qui dicitur verbum locutionis, ut in intelligente absolute consideratur, dicitur conceptus, ut vero ordinatur ad alium conceptum alteri indicandum, dicitur nutus.' Ibid., f. 181 S: 'Hoc enim intelligere quod est loqui, est novus conceptus formatus ab angelo voluntarie secundum illud quod est ei revelatum ad illud indicandum. Et secundum hoc nutus eius proprie dici potest. ... Sed loqui dicitur ut in se accipit rationem nutus ad illum conceptum indicandum.'

[36] Bonaventure, *Sent*. II d. 10 a. 3 q. 1, pp. 270–71: '… quia in anima alius est actus conversionis supra se, et alius actus conversionis ad alterum; et in cogitatione convertitur anima supra id quod habet in se, in locutione vero offert alteri … [271]: '… cogitatio quantum est de sui natura est secreta; et ideo nunquam fit manifesta, nisi ipse cogitans aliquid tamquam audienti offerat, et aperiendo se, quodam quasi nutu mediante, quod in se habet ad intellectum alterius quasi ad aurem pertingere faciat.'

mind cannot be compared with the manifestation of light (*lumen*) by a source of light (*lux*) or by a mirror because these are natural manifestations. By contrast, the transition from thinking to speaking in an angel belongs to the will. By introducing the will into their reflections on the language of angels medieval thinkers wanted to suggest that speaking with one another is a moral matter. This hints at the scholastic notion of a moral being, which – in contrast to the natural being – is connected with freedom.[37] In their communication with each other angels are understood as free beings. Speaking, in the sense of a nod, is a voluntary action which differs on a vital point from natural operations. While a natural operation or a natural substance can only manifest itself as it is and is incapable of hiding anything of itself, a voluntary action reveals itself only insofar as it wills to do so: in this sense, it can effectively hide something of itself. Thus, concerning the standard comparison of the angel with a mirror Bonaventure remarks that we ought to distinguish between a natural mirror which reflects everything and a voluntary mirror which does not reflect everything in a natural manner but reveals only what it wills. Bonaventure appeals to Augustine to support this idea, although Augustine's teaching does not seem to be consistent in this respect. For while angels are able to hide their thoughts, in a 'godly society' nothing can be hidden from one another.[38] The will of the angel is in this respect similar to the human will which can reveal as well as hide itself. On this basis it is called a 'voluntary mirror' by both Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas.[39] This notion states more explicitly the uniqueness of the scholastic doctrine of the language of angels in its contrast with ancient and late ancient thought. The portrayal of angels as a mirror originally stems from the tradition of the Pseudo-Dionysius and is still present in Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia*, in which the idea of angelic language is rejected on the grounds that they are 'transparent mirrors' which communicate by simple intuitions.[40] By inventing the notion of the 'voluntary

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[37] For the history of the concept of 'moral being' (ens morale) see T. Kobusch, *Die Entdeckung der Person* (2nd edn, Darmstadt, 1997).

[38] Bonaventure quotes Augustine as follows (*Sent*., II d. 10 a. 3 q. 1, p. 271 – see also *Sent*. II 8, 6 ad 6, p. 232): 'Dum ipsi angeli cogitationes suas ad nutum voluntatis modo occultant, modo communicant, quibusdam spiritualibus obstaculis positis vel remotis, sicut sensibiliter videmus circa corpora', referring implicitly to *De Genesi ad litteram* XII 22,48 (BA 49, 1972), 408/410. On the other hand, Augustine states in *Epist*. 95, §8, ed. A. Goldbacher, CSEL, 34,2 (Vienna, 1898), p. 513:3: '… sed siue habeant angeli corpora siue quisquam possit ostendere, quem ad modum corpora non habentes gerere illa omnia potuerint, in illa tamen ciuitate sanctorum, ubi etiam per christum redempti a generatione hac in aeternum coniungentur milibus angelorum, uoces corporales non latentes animos indicabunt, quia in illa societate diuina nihil cogitationis proximo poterit occultari, sed erit consonans in dei laude concordia non solum spiritu uerum etiam spiritali corpore expressa.'

[39] Bonaventure, *Sent*. II d. 8 p. 2 a. un. q. 6 ad 5, ed. Coll. S.Bonavenurae (Editio minor) (Florence, 1935), p. 234; Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent.*, d. 11 q. 2 a. 2 ad 4, where the 'speculum voluntarium' is opposed to the 'speculum materiale'.

[40] See Pseudo-Dionysius**,** *De divinis nominibus*, in *Corpus Dionysiacum I: Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita. De divinis nominibus*, ed. B.R. Suchla, Patristische Texte und Studien, 33 (Berlin, 1990), p. 169:20: … ὁ ἀγαθοειδὴς ἄγγελος ἐκεῖνο ὢν κατὰ μέθεξιν δευτέρως, ὅπερ κατ᾽ αἰτίαν τὸ ἀγγελλόμενον πρώτως, «εἰκών» ἐστι τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἄγγελος, φανέρωσις τοῦ ἀφανοῦς φωτός, «ἔσοπτρον» ἀκραιφνές, διειδέστατον, ἀλώβητον,

mirror' Bonaventure and Thomas show their critical attitude towards the traditional usage of the metaphor of the mirror in this context. Alexander of Hales shares the idea that the self-manifestation of the angel is rooted in its will. 'Therefore, it can reveal itself whenever it wants and hide itself whenever it wants.'[41] The possibility of hiding itself seems to be a constitutive element of created, finite freedom. Thomas also accounts for the opacity of the secrets of the heart (choices of will, thoughts) by pointing to another order to which they belong: the order of freedom. Certainly, an angel can know in a natural manner everything inside the natural order of things, but free thoughts and inclinations of will do not belong there. As with Bonaventure, the real contrast to the notion of the natural order is not the supernatural, but the moral order and the order of freedom. But the order of freedom is superior to the order of nature.[42] In this sense, the real reason why an angel cannot know the free thoughts and inclinations of will of another one is freedom itself, that is, the will of the other who 'keeps its secrets closed in itself' (*claudens sua secreta*). Giles of Rome expresses this idea in a clearer fashion than Thomas by pointing out that the order of freedom in one angel is necessarily unknown to the other and that it can only become manifest if the former reveals it.[43] Even if the angels know each other in a perfect manner, they still remain for each other 'like a closed book' as long as they do not reveal their thoughts and inclinations of will, that is, as long as they do not 'speak' or give a 'nod' to one another.[44] In this respect, T. Suarez-Nani has rightly claimed for the philosophy of Thomas: 'The secret of the angel remains the initial condition – for if there were nothing to show, language would be superfluous – but from the moment when there is something to say, the act of speech is absolutely free.'[45] But is it possible to think of this freedom in terms of total transparency? Duns Scotus seems to have something like this in mind: he rejects the theory of Alexander of Hales mentioned above according to which an angel can hide or reveal its knowledge by an act of will such that the revelation of it is nothing else

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ἄχραντον, «ἀκηλίδωτον», ... Cf. Dante Alighieri, *De vulgari eloquentia* I 2, in *Opere minori* II, a c. di P.V. Mengaldo, B. Nardi, A. Frugoni, G. Brugnoli, E. Cecchini, F. Mazzoni (Milano and Napoli, 1979), p. 34.

41 Alexander of Hales, *Summa Theologica* (n.142) (Quaracchi, 1928), vol. 2, p. 191.

42 Quoted by Schlössinger (see note 44): 'Angelus ea sola cognoscere potest naturaliter quae ad naturae ordinem pertinent. Sed liberae cordium cogitationes et affectiones, nisi manifestentur, non pertinent ad ordinem naturae, quia non procedunt a causa naturali et ex hoc habent, ... quod naturaliter ab angelo cognosci non possunt. Ordo enim voluntatis excellentior est atque perfectior quam ordo causarum naturalium.'

43 Giles of Rome, *De cognitione angelorum* (Venice, 1503 [reprint Frankfurt a. M., 1968]), fol. 111 ra: 'Sed constat quod ordo voluntatis in uno angelo est ignotus alteri angelo; unde et hoc modo dicimus cogitationes unius angeli esse ignotas alteri angelo, quia subiacent solum ordini voluntatis.'

44 This is clearly elaborated by W. Schlössinger, 'Die Erkenntnis der Engel', *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und spekulative Theologie*, 23 (1909): 45–84, here: pp. 61–2.

45 T. Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et Langage des Anges selon Thomas d'Aquin et Gilles de Rome* (Paris, 2002), p. 203: 'Le secret de l'ange reste la condition de départ – s'il n'y avait rien à montrer, le langage serait superflu –, mais à partir du moment où il y a quelque chose à dire, ce dire est totalement libre.'

than speaking.[46] In fact, the angels are transparent to each other in a natural way.[47] 'For him', says J.-L. Chrétien, 'the angelic world is a world of perfect transparency where no secret can exist … One angel is capable of knowing everything of the other.'[48] The language of angels does not thereby become superfluous, but it does not have a constitutive function in the self-manifestation which is always a kind of self-revelation. J.-L. Chrétien recognizes in this the possible basis for true angelic intersubjectivity, even for a new philosophy of intersubjectivity 'in rupture with the ideas of the other scholastics'. But is true intersubjectivity ever possible without true subjectivity and freedom? For, as I would like to emphasize in accordance with Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas and Giles of Rome, true intersubjectivity includes the voluntary overcoming of a mutual obscurity which we call 'speaking'. Thus both, the mysterious and the manifest, the hidden and the revealed, the dark and the light, the opaque and the ideal of transparency have to be regarded as elements of true freedom.

We consequently have to think of the *societas angelorum*, which the Latin tradition borrows from the idea of the angelic society (ἀγγελικὴ πολιτεία) of the Greek fathers, and of the 'intelligible society', which Thomas mentions just once (*ST*, Ia q. 51 a. 2 ad 1), as a realm of freedom in which communicating with each other is the first act of freedom. The transparency which rules in this realm of spirits is therefore not given by nature but is tied to the conditions of subjectivity.

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[46] John Duns Scotus, *II Sent*. d. 9 q. 2, in *Opera omnia* XII, ed. Vivès (Paris, 1893), p. 501b.

[47] Ibid., p. 502a: '… quia ista cogitatio est naturaliter visibilis.'

[48] J.-L.Chrétien, 'Le Langage des Anges', p. 686: 'Le monde angélique est pour lui un monde de parfaite transparence où aucun secret ne peut exister … Un ange peut tout connaître d'un autre.'

Chapter 9

Thought Experiments: The Methodological Function of Angels in Late Medieval Epistemology

Dominik Perler

I

Even the most superficial glance at late medieval texts reveals that angels occupied a prominent place in philosophical debates. A large number of problems concerning the metaphysical status of angels, their cognitive capacities, their linguistic skills, and their actions were being discussed throughout the thirteenth and the fourteenth century. Scotus, Ockham and many other philosophers eagerly debated the questions of how angels are individuated, how they can have knowledge of themselves and of other creatures, and how they can communicate with each other. In their attempts to answer these questions, scholastic authors developed sophisticated explanatory models that were significant not just for their theology, but also for their metaphysics, their epistemology, and their philosophy of language.

The sheer quantity of texts dealing with angels inevitably raises the question of why medieval authors granted so much attention to these fleshless creatures. Why were angels considered to be of *philosophical* interest? There are a number of reasons to be cited. First, it is useful to remember that most scholastic philosophers were trained as Christian theologians and therefore tackled philosophical problems within an all-embracing Christian conception of the world. Since angels were taken to be a distinct type of creature, they were to be included in a comprehensive explanation of the world. Second, angels were considered creatures bridging the gap between the celestial and the terrestrial spheres. Any explanation of the relationship between these spheres needed to take the mediating function of angels into account. Therefore, in a complete cosmological picture of the world, angels could not be missing. Third, angels played a decisive role in the explanation of the specific status of human beings. In the medieval context, an anthropological investigation was not possible without distinguishing human beings from brute animals on the one side and from angels on the other. It was in fact the comparison with angels that elucidated the specific features of human beings.

A careful analysis of all these facts, thoroughly examined in recent literature,[1] helps us to understand the significance of angels in late medieval debates. Yet there is still another reason for the vitality and importance of angelology in philosophical contexts. Discussions about angels often had the status of thought experiments in which basic problems were posed and discussed under idealized conditions. When asking how angels can have cognition or how they are able to communicate with each other, medieval philosophers intended to analyze how cognition and communication work in general. The best way to start the exploration was to spell out the necessary conditions in an ideal situation for successful cognitive and communicative processes. For once one had achieved a clear description of all the entities and mechanisms required for these processes under ideal conditions, it was possible to depict their general structure – the very same structure that was also to be found in human beings, albeit under non-ideal conditions.

This methodological function of thought experiments is often referred to in contemporary analytic philosophy. Timothy Gooding neatly summarizes it as follows: 'A thought experiment is an idealization which transcends the particularity and the accidents of worldly human activities in order to achieve the generality and rigour of a demonstrative procedure.'[2] Today, of course, philosophers hardly speak about angels. They prefer talking about brains in the vat, brains separated from the body and sent to another planet, zombies, or people living in a black-and-white-world.[3] What I intend to show in this paper is that the methodological function of angels in medieval debates is very similar to the function assigned to these odd cases quoted in contemporary debates. Of course, one needs to make a crucial distinction when talking about thought experiments. They can be understood either as scenarios involving purely fictitious entities (e.g., brains in the vat), or as scenarios appealing to entities that have real existence or could in principle have real existence, but are considered under ideal conditions (e.g., the scientist Mary who has all knowledge about colours). Since medieval authors took angels to be real entities, endowed with real causal power and interacting with other real entities, they were certainly not interested in thought experiments in the first sense.[4] They were rather focusing on thought experiments in the second sense, analyzing angels as real creatures that transcend the material world and therefore enable us to examine cognitive activities in its purest and most ideal form, which is not subject to material constraints. I intend to illustrate this methodological interest in angels by presenting a case study: the debate

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[1] For a comprehensive account, see T. Suárez-Nani, *Les anges et la philosophie* (Paris: Vrin, 2002) and her *Connaissance et langage des anges* (Paris: Vrin, 2002).

[2] D. Gooding, 'Thought Experiments', in E. Craig (ed.), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London and New York, 1998), vol. 9, p. 394.

[3] For a detailed analysis of these and other thought experiments, see R.A. Sorensen, *Thought Experiments* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); H. Ganz, *Gedankenexperimente* (Weinheim: VCH, 1999).

[4] To be sure, they did not neglect these thought experiments, but examined them in physical and logical contexts when discussing cases *per impossibile*. For a close analysis of these cases, see P. King, 'Medieval Thought-Experiments: The Metamethodology of Mediaeval Science', in T. Harowitz and G.J. Massey (eds), *Thought Experiments in Science and Philosophy* (Savage: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991), pp. 43–64.

between Scotus and Ockham on the structure of angelic cognition. A closer look at this debate enables us to understand why it was not simply a theological interest or a strange taste for fancy creatures that motivated late medieval philosophers to pay so much attention to angels, but a genuinely philosophical interest.

II

In all the versions of his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Duns Scotus extensively discusses the question of how angels can have cognition of things in the world.[5] This problem arises because angels clearly lack sensory access to simple things such as trees and stones, but also to their fellow angels. That is why they are not able to acquire cognition by abstracting information from sensory data. Nor do they have cognition by simply grasping eternal ideas or archetypes of all things. Unlike God, they do not have such ideas in their minds eternally. They rather need some cognitive devices to make things cognitively present to them. But what are these devices? Henry of Ghent tried to answer this question by claiming that angels cognize things in the world by means of an all-embracing cognitive disposition, a so-called 'scientific habit' (*habitus scientialis*).[6] This habit, which is somehow built into their minds at the moment of their creation, gives them access to all things, without any need for specific information about particular items. Henry emphasized that there is just one single habit for each angel, and in actualizing it each angel grasps all things immediately, or to be more precise: he grasps the essence of all things at once. It is not necessary for an angel to undergo the painstaking process of acquiring information about this or that particular thing. Nor does he need to abstract various essences from detailed information. All the essences are immediately and fully present to him once the habit is actualized.

This account clearly assigns a cognitive device to angels without appealing to any sensory process. However, it raises a crucial problem, as Scotus is quick to point out. How can the use of a single habit make all the essences cognitively present? Scotus denies this possibility, claiming instead that 'one created device (*ratio*) cannot be the principle of cognition for an infinite number of essences …'[7] In his view, an angel needs to make use of a whole set of devices. This claim can easily be illustrated. Suppose that archangel Gabriel intends to have cognition of his fellow angel Raphael, but also of human beings, trees and other things in the material world. To do so, he cannot simply activate a single habit as if he were switching on some kind of cognitive light. For, even if there was such a light, Gabriel could not see or grasp all things right away. He would still need to focus on each thing, and to do so he would need a cognitive device that would help him to grasp

[5] My analysis will be based upon the most elaborate version to be found in the *Ordinatio*. All references apply to the *Opera Omnia*, ed. by the Commissio Scotistica (Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950– [= ed. Vat.]).

[6] See Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibeta*, ed. I. Badius Ascensius (Paris 1518 [reprint Louvain: Bibliothèque S.J., 1961]), V, q. 14, fol. 175 G.

[7] *Ordinatio* II, dist. 3 pars 2 q. 3 n. 367, ed. Vat. VII, p. 579: 'Probo igitur primo quod non potest una ratio creata esse principium cognoscendi infinitas quiditates …'.

Raphael as an entity that is distinct from human beings and trees: different cognitive objects require different cognitive devices. Scotus endorses this crucial thesis by appealing to the general principle that 'no single created device can be a device for distinctively cognizing many essences'.[8] That is, an angel does not simply need a general cognitive attitude towards essences, but various devices that make their specific features cognitively present. To give a modern example, one could say that a movie maker does not simply need bright light to make all the things he intends to show in his movie visible and distinguishable. He or she also needs a large number of pictures representing the specific features of all the objects.

In light of this objection, Scotus rejects the thesis that a single device suffices to make all essences cognitively present. Instead, an angel needs a multitude of cognitive devices. Each makes a distinct essence cognitively present by representing its specific features. In Scotus's view, these cognitive devices are nothing but the intelligible species (*species intelligibiles*) that exist in the angelic mind and are used whenever an angel performs a cognitive act.[9]

But why, someone may reply, should we assume that intelligible species play the decisive role? Why could we not say that an angel cognizes various essences by simply performing mental acts that are directed towards these essences? It seems quite superfluous to posit additional intelligible species, because the acts themselves can be directed towards essences, and they can make their distinctive features perfectly accessible. In his appeal to intelligible species, Scotus seems to posit a large number of cognitive entities without any necessity.

Tempting as this appeal to the principle of parsimony may be, Scotus clearly rejects it. In his view, there is a necessity to posit intelligible species as cognitive devices, because the acts themselves do not make various essences cognitively present. There is a need for special entities that *precede* mental acts and pave, as it were, the way to a multitude of essences.[10] Without these entities, mental acts could not have any distinct content. Let me explain this crucial point by returning to the example of the movie maker. As we have seen, it does not suffice to have bright light to make various objects visible. Nor is it enough to turn the camera toward various objects, because the mere directedness of the camera does not help us see this or that object. We rather need detailed pictures that pick out various objects. As soon as we have these pictures, each of them representing a specific object with specific features, we can focus on various objects. Likewise, an angel does not cognize anything if he simply directs his mental 'gaze' towards a multitude of essences. For the mere directedness does not endow his acts with a specific content. The angel

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[8] *Ordinatio* II, dist. 3 pars 2 q. 3 n. 369, ed. Vat. VII, p. 580: '… nulla una ratio creata potest esse ratio distincte cognoscendi plures quiditates.'

[9] This appeal to species is, of course, not original. It can be found in many thirteenth-century authors. For a discussion of the origin and the presence of this theory in late medieval debates, see L. Spruit, *Species Intelligibilis: From Perception to Knowledge* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), vol. 1. On Scotus's use and justification of this theory, see my 'Things in the Mind: Fourteenth-Century Controversies over "Intelligible Species"', *Vivarium*, 34 (1996): 231–53.

[10] *Ordinatio* II, n. 390, ed. Vat. VII, p. 591, he explicitly holds that 'species primi obiecti (quod non est praesens naturaliter per essentiam) praecedit naturaliter actum cognoscendi illud.'

rather needs a device to select a specific essence, thus making it cognitively present. Only then does the angel's act become focused, and only then does it receive a well-defined content.

Now one could still argue that it is superfluous to posit intelligible species as cognitive devices that exist in addition to mental acts. Why should they determine the content of mental acts? Is this content not determined by the essences themselves? If, for instance, Gabriel pays attention to Raphael, it is Raphael's essence that immediately triggers Gabriel's intellectual act, thus providing it with a specific content and distinguishing it from other acts. No intelligible species mediating between Gabriel's act and Raphael's essence seems to be required. One could even point out that it is quite misleading to posit such a species. For, if it is this species and not Raphael's essence that determines the content of Gabriel's act, this act is not immediately directed towards Raphael. It is instead directed toward him insofar as he is represented by the species. Positing intelligible species seems to make an immediate cognitive relationship with extra-mental objects impossible. As soon as one admits these 'spooky' things, one opens the door to representationalism and to all the problems that inevitably go along with it.

Scotus would indeed give up direct realism and introduce representationalism, if he were claiming that intelligible species are the immediate objects of mental acts, i.e., if he were affirming that the angelic intellect primarily grasps intelligible species and only secondarily the essences represented by these species. Yet he does not make this dangerous claim. He rather defends the view that species are nothing more than *rationes cognoscendi*, i.e., the devices by which objects become cognitively accessible, not the objects themselves. As such devices, they are indispensable because they enable the angelic intellect to reach out to various objects and assimilate them. In fact, their primary function consists in making an assimilation possible. For when an angel has a species of a certain object, this object is somehow absorbed and intentionally present in the species – or as Scotus says, using metaphorical language: the essence of that object 'shines up' (*relucet*) in the species.[11] Thus, when Gabriel cognizes his colleague Raphael by means of a species, Raphael himself is present in the species with a so-called 'intentional existence'. And it is this intentional existence that determines the content of Gabriel's intellectual act.

It is obvious that this appeal to intentional existence presupposes a sophisticated ontology that distinguishes various types of existence an object can have. For the moment, I do not want to go into the details of this theory,[12] but confine myself to emphasizing the points that are relevant for an understanding of the methodological function angels have in Scotus's analysis. This analysis is not concerned with details that are relevant to angels exclusively. It spells out the *general* structure a cognitive process must have, be it a process occurring in an angel or in a human being. Three basic facts are characteristic of that process:

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[11] See *Ordinatio* I, dist. 3 pars 1 q. 3, n. 386, ed. Vat. III, p. 235.

[12] For a detailed discussion, see my *Theorien der Intentionalität im Mittelalter* (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 2002), pp. 217–30.

1. Every cognition requires a cognitive act and a cognitive object. The appropriate object for an intellectual act is the essence of a thing.
2. To make the essence of a thing cognitively accessible, the intellect needs a cognitive device: the intelligible species. This species precedes the intellectual act.
3. The intelligible species determines the content of an intellectual act by presenting a certain essence with 'intentional existence'.

It is an analysis of angelic cognition that makes these basic facts clearly visible. For in the case of angels, we do not have to deal with the sensory foundation of intellectual acts. Nor do we need to ask what kind of cognitive devices there could be outside the intellect (e.g., phantasms) or what kind of objects there could be besides essences (e.g., individual forms and properties). Angels provide the model for *pure* cognition, without any material constraint.

III

How does William Ockham react to Scotus's analysis? He shares his view that a detailed account of angelic cognition is philosophically important because it provides a model for pure intellectual cognition. And he also subscribes to the thesis that this model should make clear how an intellectual act can be focused on an object and have a well-defined content. Yet in his explanation of this model, Ockham widely disagrees with Scotus. In fact, he rejects Scotus' basic claim that intelligible species are required as cognitive devices. Ockham's first and most fundamental thesis is 'that to have intuitive cognition, one does not need to posit anything besides the intellect and the cognized thing – no species at all.'[13] In his view, angels *directly* grasp various objects and thereby *directly* fix the content of their intellectual acts. Species are superfluous entities that do not play any role in the cognitive process.

But why are species superfluous? Has Scotus not shown that they enable the intellect to assimilate a multitude of objects by making them intentionally present? It is precisely in his answer to these questions that Ockham spells out his disagreement with Scotus. He unmistakably claims that there cannot be any assimilation, understood as a process in which the intellect somehow absorbs the essence of various objects and produces special cognitive entities to make objects intentionally present. If there is assimilation at all, it is nothing more than a causal relation. Ockham states that 'the assimilation of something passive to something active occurs in such a way that the passive thing receives an effect, which is caused by the active thing. It is in this way that the intellect is sufficiently assimilated through an act of intellection, which is

[13] *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, qq. 12–13, *OTh* V, p. 268: 'Prima est quod ad cognitionem intuitivam habendam non oportet aliquid ponere praeter intellectum et rem cognitam, et nullam speciem penitus.' All references to Ockham's works apply to the *Opera theologica* (= *OTh*) and *Opera philosophica* (= *OPh*), ed. by G. Gál et al. (St Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1967–1988).

caused by the object and received in the intellect. Therefore, no species is required.'[14] If we apply this general principle to the case of archangel Gabriel, we can say that Gabriel cognizes his fellow Raphael simply by performing an intellectual act that is caused by Raphael's presence. This presence alone suffices to trigger an act; no mysterious transfer of an essence and no intentional 'shining up' of the essence is required.

But is this parsimonious solution not too simple to be convincing? Scotus already pointed out that it is not enough to have acts that are directed toward a multitude of objects, because the objects themselves do not determine the content of these acts. Therefore, devices that pick out specific objects and represent them with their specific features are required. That is why Scotus spoke about the 'representational function' of species – not because he intended to introduce inner representations that are set apart from external things, but because he wanted to emphasize that a certain object, say *x*, always needs to be presented as having the feature *F* or *G*. Ockham seems to ignore this crucial function. This leads him to make the seemingly implausible claim that the mere presence of an object suffices to have an act that is directed toward it and that picks out the specific features.

A closer look at Ockham's text reveals, however, that he is perfectly aware of this objection. He agrees that an act ought to be focused on a certain object in order to have a well-defined content. But his main point is that an appeal to species does not help to explain this fact. If one introduces species because it seems as if the objects themselves could not determine the content of intellectual acts, the most natural question to ask is: how then can the objects make the species have a certain content? Is there not a gap between object and species as well as between object and act? It does not help to answer this question by saying, as Scotus and many other defenders of the species theory do, that, strictly speaking, it is the intellect that causes the species and makes the object intentionally present in it.[15] For how can the intellect do so if there really is a gap between what is outside the intellect and what is inside? Ockham illustrates this point with a nice example.[16] If someone claims that we need a statue of Hercules in order to grasp Hercules' specific features and to cognize them, one can immediately reply that the statue, taken in itself, does not help us to do so. We first need to have an access to Hercules himself and we need to grasp his specific features; only then can we recognize the statue as representing Hercules' specific features. Likewise, we first need to have immediate access to the objects in the world and an awareness of their features – an awareness that is fixed by our causal relation to these objects. Only then can we eventually form a species and recognize that it represents this or that object. So, the intelligible species can only play the role of a

[14] *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, qq. 12–13, *OTh* V, p. 273: '… sic est illa assimilatio passi ad agens per hoc quod recipit aliquem effectum causatum ab agente. Sed isto modo assimilatur intellectus sufficienter per intellectionem causatam ab obiecto et receptam in intellectu, igitur non requiritur species.'

[15] To be precise, it is the intellect together with the object that functions as a cause. Scotus stresses that these two causes 'concur' in the process of producing a species. See *Ordinatio* I, dist. 3 pars 3 q. 2 n. 487, ed. Vat. III, p. 289.

[16] See *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, qq. 12–13, *OTh* V, p. 274.

secondary item that enables us to recognize something we already know. But it can never enable us to have cognition or knowledge in the first place.

Now a critic may still be dissatisfied with Ockham's radical rejection of species, pointing out that they are necessary, after all, as they make a special type of object accessible: the universal essence. When Gabriel, for instance, cognizes trees, he does not simply apprehend individual things with individual properties. He rather grasps their essence or nature that is the same for all trees and that constitutes them as things of a certain kind. Since angels are not bound to sensory inputs, they do not need to abstract the essence from sensory data, but immediately grasp it. However, they cannot grasp it unless they have a device that makes it cognitively present, and this device is the intelligible species.

This objection shows that an appeal to species presupposes a certain ontological thesis, namely that there are universal essences (or natures, 'quiddities') in the world and that these essences can be grasped by the intellect. Of course, Scotus concedes that these essences or natures are always individualized in the material world and that they do not exist in 'pure' universality – or as he says: natures are always 'contracted' by individual forms and properties.[17] He nevertheless defends a realist view about universals, claiming that there are universal natures in the extra-mental world, not just in the intellect, and that these natures are accessible to the angelic intellect by means of the intelligible species. It is precisely the function of species to make these natures accessible and to 'strip away' all the individual features.

Ockham is well aware of this metaphysical thesis lurking in the background of the species theory, but he clearly rejects it. As is well known, he only accepts individual substances with individual qualities in his ontological programme. According to his view, universal essences or natures are mere products of the mind, constructed on the basis of similarities between individual things. Given this strict commitment to individual entities, there is no need to introduce special cognitive devices that make universal essences or natures accessible. Opposing Scotus's distinction between universal natures and contracting properties, Ockham claims that 'there are not two aspects (*rationes*) that can be represented in a thing, one of which is represented to the imagination and the other to the intellect. For there are not two aspects, namely a contracted nature and a contracting property, in one thing, because whatever is in a thing is singular …'[18] This is an important claim that shakes the ontological fundament of the epistemological species theory: if the special type of entity the species is supposed to represent does not exist, the species itself becomes superfluous. I emphasize this point because a number of commentators claimed that Ockham rejected species on purely epistemological grounds. According to their interpretation, he intended to reject all 'spooky' inner entities that would

[17] See *Ordinatio* II, dist. 3 pars 1 q. 1, ed. Vat. VII, pp. 402–10. For a concise discussion, see P. King, 'Duns Scotus on the Common Nature and the Individual Differentia', *Philosophical Topics*, 20 (1992): 51–76.

[18] *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, qq. 12–13, *OTh* V, p. 303: '… non sunt duae rationes repraesentabiles in re quarum una repraesentatur phantasiae et alia intellectui. Quia non sunt talia duo in re, natura scilicet contracta et proprietas contrahens, quia quidquid est in re est singulare …'.

prevent the intellect from having direct access to external things.[19] A closer look at the text reveals that Ockham is not challenging a view that posits species as inner objects. He is well aware that Scotus does not consider them to be cognitive objects but merely *rationes cognoscendi*. Ockham attacks the ontological underpinnings of Scotus's theory: the unfounded claim that there are universal natures, giving rise to the equally unfounded epistemological claim that special cognitive devices are required to represent these natures.

Yet Ockham does not confine himself to making this ontological point. He also critically examines a thesis that Scotus takes to be almost self-evident, namely that there needs to be something that *precedes* the intellectual act and that endows it with a well-defined content. Ockham agrees that in some sense this thesis is self-evident, for it is clear that there needs to be an object that precedes an act and even causes it.[20] For instance, Gabriel cannot have an act directed towards Raphael if there is no Raphael activating Gabriel's cognitive power – every intentional act needs to be triggered by something. Still, this does not mean that every act needs to be preceded by a special cognitive entity representing an object. The object presents itself and causes by itself an act with a well-defined content. Ockham states: 'But when a present thing and an angelic intellect (or our intellect) are posited, then the intellect can cognize this thing intuitively, without any other previous thing, be it a habit or a species. Therefore, such a thing is the cause of that cognition.'[21]

At this point, a critic could reply that this causal relation is a mystery. How can there be a direct relation between two things that are distant from each other and that belong to two completely different realms? How can, say, a *material* tree cause an act in Gabriel's *immaterial* intellect and determine the content of an act? Ockham acknowledges that this is in fact a problem, but it is a problem for any theory that appeals to a causal relation between material and immaterial things. Defenders of the species theory have to face this problem as well, since they too, assume that the species are at least partially caused by objects in the material world. How can that be possible if the species are taken to be immaterial entities in the angelic intellect? No matter whether one adopts an act theory or a species theory, the assumption of some causal relation is inevitable. This is why Ockham states: 'In the same way as you claim that something corporeal can be the partial cause for causing a species in the spiritual realm, I claim that something corporeal is the partial cause for causing an

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[19] See, for instance, P. Alféri, *Guillaume d'Ockham: Le singulier* (Paris: Minuit, 1989), pp. 215–26. Opposing this and similar interpretations, C. Panaccio, *Ockham on Concepts* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 30, rightly stresses that Ockham had mainly an ontological motivation for criticizing the species theory: 'Parsimony, here, is his sole manifest preoccupation.'

[20] See *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, q. 14, *OTh* V, p. 313 and p. 316.

[21] *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, qq. 12–13, *OTh* V, p. 276: 'Sed posita ipsa re praesente et intellectu angelico sive nostro sine omni alio praevio, sive habitu sive species, potest intellectus illam rem intuitive cognoscere. Igitur talis res est causa illius cognitionis.'

intellectual act in the spiritual realm.'[22] In both cases it must be assumed that causal relations are not limited to one single realm. They can, as it were, straddle the material and the immaterial world and thereby determine the content of an immaterial act.

Ockham's elaborate critique of Scotus's account of angelic cognition shows that he does not simply attack some details of this account. He rather uses Scotus's angelology as a vantage point for his *general* theory of cognition. In this theory, Ockham disagrees with all three of Scotus' basic claims and replaces them with the following theses:[23]

1. Every cognition requires a cognitive act and a cognitive object. The appropriate object for an intellectual act is the individual thing with its individual qualities.
2. To make an individual thing cognitively accessible, the intellect simply needs a causal relation with that thing. No further relation or entity is required.
3. The individual thing itself determines the content of an intellectual act. No special entity that presents the thing with "intentional existence" is required.

IV

It is obvious that Ockham presents a model of cognition that deviates from Scotus's model in crucial points. But why did these two authors develop their explanatory models by discussing angelic cognition? Why did they not give a straightforward analysis of human cognition? This brings me back to the methodological dimension I mentioned at the beginning of my paper. I argued that medieval debates about angels often had the status of thought experiments in which problems were posed and discussed under ideal conditions. I hope the case study I have presented sheds some light on the structure and purpose of these thought experiments. As a conclusion, I would like to point out three particularly important features.

First, both Scotus's and Ockham's discussions of angelic cognition show that their detailed analysis was motivated by an interest in the *general* structure of cognition. Neither of them intended to explore the peculiarities of, say, Gabriel's or Raphael's cognitive achievements. They both wanted to know how cognition works in principle, i.e., what kinds of entities and relations are required in any cognitive process. An analysis of angelic cognition provides some kind of theoretical map that indicates the place and function of all the elements involved in a cognitive process.

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[22] *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, qq. 12–13, *OTh* V, p. 275: '… sicut tu ponis quod corporeale potest esse causa partialis ad causandum speciem in spirituali, ita ego pono quod corporeale est causa partialis ad causandum intellectionem in spirituali.'

[23] In addition, he also criticizes the claim that the intellect can conceive of individual things simply by having species, before producing and using mental terms. In his view, this is impossible because concepts are nothing but mental terms. This criticism, frequently discussed in recent literature, will not be analyzed here. For a detailed analysis, see C. Panaccio, *Ockham on Concepts* and M. Lenz, *Mentale Sätze: Wilhelm von Ockhams Thesen zur Sprachlichkeit des Denkens* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 2003).

Once this map is drafted, it can be used not just as a guide to angelic cognition but also – and even more so – to human cognition. That is why angels serve as 'an idealization which transcends the particularity and the accidents of worldly human activities,'[24] to repeat the crucial part of Gooding's definition of thought experiments. Transgressing the accidents of human cognitive activities and focusing on 'pure cognition' made it possible for medieval philosophers to point out the most basic features of cognition. And, of course, it also made it possible to point out the disagreements with the way previous authors had explained these features.

Second, analyzing angelic cognition enabled medieval philosophers to neglect problems that were eagerly discussed by their predecessors but concerned only some aspects of the cognitive process. They could, for instance, ignore all the thorny questions concerning the way external and internal senses are affected by material objects, or the way the intellect cooperates with the senses. Since angels are by definition pure intellects, the discussion could concentrate exclusively on intellectual acts and their objects. In this respect, the analysis of angelic cognition was not only an analysis under ideal conditions because it ignored the errors and weaknesses of human activities, but also because it investigated a single cognitive capacity, free from any external constraint. In this way, philosophers could isolate the intellect from the body and study it in an unmixed environment. This, again, represents a technique that is typical of thought experiments. For such experiments abstract from normal conditions and thereby create an environment in which the most basic features become visible. Current philosophers, for instance, ask how brains in the vat can be certain that they have thoughts about the external world. In doing so, they raise the fundamental question of how a thought can be *about* something. It is the problem of intentionality that is studied, as it were, under clean conditions. Likewise, medieval philosophers talking about angels raise the fundamental question of how a mental act can be *about* something under 'clean' conditions. It is the purely intellectual, matter-free environment that makes the most basic features visible.

Finally, the debate about angelic cognition is methodologically important because it shows what perspective late medieval philosophers chose when developing a theory of cognition. They did not adopt an experimental approach, i.e., they did not study cognitive processes on an empirical basis; there clearly is no empirical approach to angels. Nor did they appeal to introspection or to some kind of phenomenological description. Scotus, Ockham and many other medieval authors chose a *conceptual* approach. They explored and tested the basic concepts we need in order to explain cognition and asked about the consistency and the interrelation of these concepts. That is why their debates focused on the question of how we should conceive of a cognitive object and of its function for the genesis of a cognitive act. Working out a coherent theory in which all basic concepts are coherently interrelated was their primary interest. It was above all this concern, not just a curiosity about fancy celestial creatures that sparked the heated debate about angelic cognition.

[24] D. Gooding, 'Thought Experiments', p. 394.

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Chapter 10

Why Can't Angels Think Properly? Ockham against Chatton and Aquinas

Martin Lenz

Introduction

In medieval philosophy and theology angels were usually regarded as intellectually superior to humans. Accordingly, it is no surprise that debates on angelic thought and knowledge play an increasingly significant role in medieval philosophy of mind. One of the central questions that were frequently discussed was whether angelic thought is structured like human thought. In order to understand what is at stake here, it will be rewarding to look for crucial turning points in these controversies by examining how the supposed superiority is spelled out within different theories of thought. On my reading, William of Ockham proposed a new model of the mind. In contrast to Thomas Aquinas and Walter Chatton, who construed angelic thought as simple intuitions within an innate net of knowledge, Ockham defended the thesis that theories of thought have to meet the requirement of compositionality. Thus, Ockham ascribes the same kind of rationality to every thinking creature. Subsequently, I would like to address some of his reasons for endorsing such a theory of thought.

Let me begin with a somewhat crude example. Imagine that you would have an angelic mind: could I tell you anything that you did not know before? According to what Ockham calls the *opinio communis*, namely Thomas Aquinas's and Walter Chatton's position, I could not tell you anything new, since all that is naturally knowable has been put into your mind (in the form of species) at the moment of your creation: let's call this angelic nativism.[1]

[1] I owe many thanks to Irène Rosier-Catach and Jürgen Vogt for their valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper. I also would like to thank Laurent Cesalli, Maarten Hoenen and the participants of their Colloquium in Freiburg for lively and instructive discussions. Finally I wish to thank the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for the generous support of my work. – The works of Ockham are cited from the *Opera theologica* (= *OTh*), ed. by G. Gál et al. (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1967–1986). See Ockham, *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, qq. 12–13, 14 and 16, *OTh* V, pp. 251–5, pp. 312–13, p. 315, pp. 319–20 and pp. 359–61. In this early version of the *Commentary on the Sentences* (ca 1317/8), Ockham mainly refutes Aquinas's position. In his later *Quodlibeta septem* (ca 1324/5) he also quotes and attacks Chatton's views: see esp. *Quodlibeta* I, qq. 6–7, *OTh* IX, pp. 36–45. On alternative datings of the *Quodlibeta* and a thorough biography see V.

Yet, although you – as an angel – know in principle all that is knowable about the subject that I am going to address, you do not know what I am *intending* to write about, since you cannot read the *cogitationes cordium*, the thoughts of my heart (which is God's privilege alone).[2] So long as I refuse to let you know my thoughts on the subject matter of this paper, you won't actually know what I am intending to tell you. Only if you knew what I am going to introduce you to, could you claim to know everything that is knowable about it. But unlike myself in the process of writing this paper, you would not even have to go through any thought process, you would not need to reason; *sine discursu* you would know immediately everything that is deducible from any premise, in an instant you could access the whole net of knowledge-laden species, as it were.

Now, Ockham – partially following Scotus – offers an entirely different approach to angelic thought and knowledge.[3] If you had an angelic mind, you could, on his account, read my thoughts and would know what I intend to write about, but you could not know all that is knowable in an instant, and although your cognitive power would be way beyond mine, you would have to do something that seems – from Aquinas's point of view – rather un-angelic: you would have to reason.[4]

What is the crucial difference between these two accounts? On the face of it, it seems that – with regard to the acquisition of knowledge – Ockham counters Aquinas's angelic nativism with angelic empiricism. Due to the kind of thing the mind is, immaterial angelic minds have superior ways of accessing things such as other minds, unlike humans they can read thoughts. But this kind of access is not an access to an innate net of knowledge (which would then be applicable to things), it is still only an access to things from which knowledge has to be derived. In comparison to humans, then, angels are not superior with regard to the way minds *process thoughts*: they still have to reason, starting from their encounter with things. Advocating a

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Leppin, *Wilhelm von Ockham: Gelehrter, Streiter, Bettelmönch* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003).

[2] See Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 57 a. 4 resp. and ad 2. Cf. Walter Chatton, *Reportatio et Lectura super Sententias*, prol., q. 2 a. 4, ed. J.C. Wey (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1989), p. 110.

[3] As A. Maurer points out, Scotus already claimed that angels can acquire new knowledge, just as humans grasp principles by simple insight: see A. Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham in the Light of its Principles* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1999), p. 368. In his *Quaestiones in II Sententiarum*, q. 14, *OTh* V, pp. 332–3, Ockham, however, seems to challenge this particular thesis: 'Si dicas quod intellectus angeli se habet ad omnia intelligibilia sicut intellectus noster ad prima principia, falsum est, quia intellectus noster intelligit prima principia sine discursu, non sic autem intelligit angelus omnia ut prius dictum est.'

[4] See Aquinas, *ST* I, q. 58 a. 3–4. Cf. Chatton, *Reportatio super Sententias* I, d. 2 q. 3 (n. 59), ed. J.C. Wey and G.J. Etzkorn (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies 2002), p. 246: 'Et haec [sc. that, unlike Ockham claimed, mental and vocal discourses of humans are sequentially ordered in the same way] est causa quare [sc. angelus] non componit nec dividit nec discurrit, quia sic non ordinantur conceptus sui, et similiter quare potest non discurrere; nec doctores intendunt docere quin angelus posset discurrere, sed quod non necessario.' Cf. his *Reportatio in II Sent.*, d. 4 q. 5 (n. 66).

sometimes somewhat forced metaphor, one could say that, as in computers there is nothing mysterious about angelic thought, they only do it much faster than humans.

In what follows I would like to concentrate on Ockham's account of angelic thought process. I shall argue that Ockham resorts to the discussion of angelic thought to defend a new theory of thought, attempting to show what ingredients belong, not only to human thought, but to *thought in general*.

Therefore, I will begin with an outline of Ockham's idea of discourse (*discursus*) against the background of his opponents' positions; secondly, I would like to address some difficulties of his theory. Finally, I will sketch an example of a discussion in which he applies this theory of thought to the case of separated souls in comparison to human beings in this life.

The Linguistic Model: Ockham's notion of *discursus*

As is well-known, William of Ockham defended the thesis that human thoughts are compositional and constitute a mental language.[5] This mental language is common to all humans, since, unlike in conventional languages such as English or German, the parts of mental language are supposed to be naturally significative: they are concepts, not words. On the whole, however, mental language shares many of the features which occur in conventional languages: the concepts (*conceptus*) or mental terms are grammatically structured and build up syntactically ordered mental sentences (*orationes mentales*), which, in turn, can be connected and extended to syllogisms or arguments (*discursus*).[6] To put it briefly: human speech and human thoughts are compositionally structured in similar ways.

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[5] A general notion of compositionality can be summarized as the idea that the meaning of a sentence is determined by the meaning of its parts. The important aspect in the following discussion is not so much the construal of meaning, but rather the possibility of the *recurrence of semantic units within different contexts or sentences*. For an investigation of Ockham's theory of mental language see C. Panaccio, *Ockham on Concepts* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) and M. Lenz, *Mentale Sätze: Wilhelm von Ockhams Thesen zur Sprachlichkeit des Denkens* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2003).

[6] It is important to note that the formation of a sentence does not ensue 'automatically' in the process of cognition but requires an act of will. See M. Lenz, *Mentale Sätze*, p. 104 and pp. 128–9. By contrast, the way Aquinas (*ST* I, q. 58 a. 5 resp.) introduces angelic thought (namely as simple knowledge of simple quiddities), leaves no room for joining terms voluntarily and thus seems to preclude error. But although angels cannot err with regard to their cognitions, they may err with regard to their voluntary application or denial of knowledge. Accordingly, Thomas distinguishes between good angels (who will to think within the parameters of the divine plan) and devils (who have a perverse will and sometimes only take natural conditions into account): 'Angeli igitur boni, habentes rectam voluntatem, per cognitionem quidditatis rei non iudicant de his quae naturaliter ad rem pertinent, nisi salva ordinatione divina. Unde in eis non potest esse falsitas aut error. Daemones vero, per voluntatem perversam subducentes intellectum a divina sapientia, absolute interdum de rebus iudicant secundum naturalem conditionem. Et in his quae naturaliter ad rem pertinent, non decipiuntur. Sed decipi possunt quantum ad ea quae supernaturalia sunt, sicut si considerans hominem mortuum, iudicet eum non resurrecturum; et si videns hominem Christum, iudicet eum non esse Deum.'

Now the question arises whether this thesis can be extended to *thought in general*. If we look at Ockham's sources for his thesis, namely Boethius's *Commentary on De interpretatione* and particularly Augustine's *De trinitate*, we find similar if crude analogies of language and human thought. But they do not say that thought *in general* is compositionally structured; and Augustine even claims that only in humans, who are bound to the physical world, language has to be structured; thus, the workings of the mind *per se* do not depend on spatio-temporally structured items such as sentences.[7]

On this account, we would expect a negative answer to the question whether thought in general is compositional. But Ockham's view differs considerably from that of his sources. Unlike in humans, there is no connection between conventional languages and mental language in angels, since angels do not express themselves in any conventional language. But if compositionality is a feature of thought in general and not solely of human thoughts, then angels' thought would have to be compositional as well. As Dominik Perler has argued convincingly, it seems as if supposed angelic capacities are often discussed in the sense of thought experiments:[8] in our case angels could be seen as ideal thinkers, unhindered by the physical realm, and thus ideal speakers of mental language. So, the question could be refined to: do angels speak mentalese?[9] Ockham argued that they do and even that they need to do so, since, otherwise, they could not cognize one single premise without *actually*

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[7] See S. Meier-Oeser, *Die Spur des Zeichens. Das Zeichen und seine Funktion in der Philosophie des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1997), p. 107: 'On this [sc. Augustinian] account, the application of linguistic terminology to the mental sphere is by no means solely a metaphorical adaptation; quite the contrary: speech as such is *locutio mentis*.' Crathorn (*Quästionen zum ersten Sentenzenbuch*, q. 2, ed. F. Hoffmann [Münster: Aschendorff, 1988], p. 171) even accused Ockham of misrepresenting Augustine's theory of thought, insisting that Augustine took the *verba mentalia* to be *similitudines* but not *partes propositionum*. – A more serious challenge to Ockham's theory is the question of whether compositionality can be explained without resorting to the material realm at all. Ockham discusses this question at length in his *Commentary on Peri hermeneias*. See M. Lenz, '*Oratio mentalis* und Mentalesisch: Ein spätmittelalterlicher Blick auf die gegenwärtige Philosophie des Geistes', in J. Aertsen and M. Pickavé (eds), *Herbst des Mittelalters? Fragen zur Bewertung des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*, Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 31 (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 2004), pp. 105–30.

[8] See D. Perler's contribution to this volume.

[9] Ockham's theory of mental language has been convincingly compared to Jerry Fodor's conception of a 'language of thought' or 'mentalese'. See e.g. D. Perler, 'Die Systematizität des Denkens. Zu Ockhams Theorie der mentalen Sprache', *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 111 (2004): 291–311. It is interesting to note that J. Fodor (*The Language of Thought* [Cambridge/Mass.: Crowell, 1975], p. 86) uses the example of angels to illustrate his thesis that our cognitive capacities are not principally enhanced by knowing a conventional language: 'If an angel is a device with infinite memory and omnipresent attention – a device for which the performance/competence distinction is vacuous – then, on my view, there's no point in angels learning Latin; the conceptual system available to them by virtue of having done so can be no more powerful than the one they started out with.'

cognizing *infinite numbers* of conclusions following from that premise.[10] As Claude Panaccio put it, the 'linguistic model, then, has reached up into Heavens'.[11] If this is correct, then Ockham's thesis marks a central turning point in the history of philosophy of mind, regarding the nature of thought in general.

It is important to note that Ockham did not claim to have any better insights into the nature of angels as such; in fact, he insisted to have no such insights.[12] Rather, he argued from assumptions regarding the nature of any creature. For all we know, thought is compositionally structured. And if human thought is, then so is angels' thought.

To put it briefly: Ockham's model of human thought is the idea of mental language, although I hasten to add that it is a restricted view of language with hardly any insights into its pragmatic dimension. In the weakest sense, however, we can say that the language model is – in one way or another – true for many philosophers in the Aristotelian tradition. But unlike many of his predecessors, Ockham also holds that language is the model of angels' thought.[13]

However, this thesis is highly problematic: Ockham's opponent, Walter Chatton, argued – echoing Augustine, the Neoplatonists and, closer to home, Thomas Aquinas – that angels do not have structured thoughts, although they can reason. As immaterial creatures of higher order, they are endowed with a superior degree of perfection and thus closer to divine simplicity.[14] As Aquinas has it, in the first moment of angels' creation God infuses the intelligible species containing all their knowledge:

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[10] See Ockham, *Quaestiones in II Sent.*, q. 14, *OTh* V, p. 315: 'quia omnis intellectus potens apprehendere praemissas et non conclusiones et e converso potest discurrere. Patet, quia omnis talis intellectus potest virtute principiorum cognoscere conclusiones. Et hoc est discurrere: scire conclusiones aliquas prius ignotas virtute principiorum. Sed angelus est huiusmodi. Probatur, quia si non, *tunc non posset cognoscere unam praemissam nisi cognosceret omnes conclusiones sequentes ex tali principio*. Quod falsum est, quia *ex una praemissa possunt sequi infinitae conclusiones*. Maxime videtur falsum, quia angelus potest aliqua ignorare et post scire, quia non habent in principio scientiam omnium.' (italics mine) Supportive of this denial are some manuscripts cited in the apparatus of this passage which hint at the mystery of incarnation, which had to be questioned according to the bible.

[11] C. Panaccio, 'Angel's Talk, Mental Language, and the Transparency of the Mind', in C. Marmo (ed.), *Vestigia, Imagines, Verba: Semiotics and Logic in Medieval Theological Texts (XIIth-XIVth Century)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), p. 327.

[12] See Ockham, *Quaestiones in II Sent.*, q. 14, *OTh* V, p. 319: 'Tamen utrum de facto accipiat [sc. angelus] notitiam a rebus incomplexam vel complexam quamcumque, contingentem vel necessariam, nescimus. Cuius ratio est quia aliquid dependet ex sola voluntate divina contingenter et libere causante, quidquid causat extra se, illud non potest a viatore cognosci per rationem nec per experientiam. … Sed prius dicta omnia de cognitione angelorum loquuntur de possibili: si angelus esset relictus puris naturalibus.'

[13] See esp. Ockham, *Quodlibeta* I, q. 6, *OTh* IX, pp. 36–41.

[14] A concise survey of this and other debates on angels is provided in A. Maurer, *The Philosophy of William of Ockham*, pp. 339–74. See also T. Suarez-Nani, *Connaissance et langage des anges* (Paris: Vrin, 2002). In his *Quaestiones in II Sent.*, q. 14, *OTh* V, p. 322, Ockham discusses the notion of perfection with regard to angels: 'Item, si angelus posset discurrere, tunc intellectus eius esset imperfectus, quod videtur falsum.' He concludes (*OTh* V, p. 328): 'Ad aliud dico quod angelus potest discurrere et quod in prima sui creatione est

therefore they do not need to reason from the known to the unknown and, as a result of this they do not need structured thought.[15] On Chatton's and Aquinas's account, then, only in weak physical beings does thought occur in a structured way, which is why they are prone to error. Accordingly, structure is not considered an integral aspect of thought itself: beings that do not need to reason think, as it were, in a more proper way. On Ockhams account, the opposite seems to be true: without structured reasoning one cannot be said to think properly.[16]

What are we to make of these different views? A helpful illustration of the difference between complex and simple thought is the difference between writing a text on your word-processor and looking at the photocopy of a text: With the word-processor you can alter the text that you are writing, you can copy words or phrases and put them elsewhere and such like. By looking at the photocopy you get the whole text at once, but there is no way of altering the text or transporting bits of it elsewhere. This kind of simplicity is a feature of divine perfection and is therefore traditionally held to be a property of the beatific cognition: since, unlike complexity which is often associated with materiality, mutability, spatial and temporal order, simplicity precludes falsity or error.

So far, I have used the term 'thought' rather loosely. But since the medieval notion of thought is rather complex and involves various features of the cognitive process, I would like to distinguish three aspects of thought:

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imperfectus, quia caret multis accidentibus quae post potest adquirere … Tamen perfectus est in prima sui creatione quantum ad omnem perfectionem substantialem.'

[15] See Aquinas, *ST* Ia, q. 55 a. 2 resp.: 'Substantiae vero superiores, idest Angeli, sunt a corporibus totaliter absolutae, immaterialiter et in esse intelligibili subsistentes, et ideo suam perfectionem intelligibilem consequuntur per intelligibilem effluxum, quo a Deo species rerum cognitarum acceperunt simul cum intellectuali natura. Unde Augustinus dicit, *II super Gen. ad Litt*., quod *cetera, quae infra Angelos sunt, ita creantur, ut prius fiant in cognitione rationalis creaturae, ac deinde in genere suo*.' See also Aquinas, *ST* Ia, q. 58 a. 3 resp.: 'Est autem haec differentia inter caelestia et terrena corpora, quod corpora terrena per mutationem et motum adipiscuntur suam ultimam perfectionem, corpora vero caelestia statim, ex ipsa sua natura, suam ultimam perfectionem habent. Sic igitur et inferiores intellectus, scilicet hominum, per quendam motum et discursum intellectualis operationis perfectionem in cognitione veritatis adipiscuntur; dum scilicet ex uno cognito in aliud cognitum procedunt. Si autem statim in ipsa cognitione principii noti, inspicerent quasi notas omnes conclusiones consequentes, in eis discursus locum non haberet. Et hoc est in Angelis, quia statim in illis quae primo naturaliter cognoscunt, inspiciunt omnia quaecumque in eis cognosci possunt. Et ideo dicuntur intellectuales, quia etiam apud nos, ea quae statim naturaliter apprehenduntur, intelligi dicuntur; unde intellectus dicitur habitus primorum principiorum. Animae vero humanae, quae veritatis notitiam per quendam discursum acquirunt, rationales vocantur. Quod quidem contingit ex debilitate intellectualis luminis in eis. Si enim haberent plenitudinem intellectualis luminis, sicut Angeli, statim in primo aspectu principiorum totam virtutem eorum comprehenderent, intuendo quidquid ex eis syllogizari posset.'

[16] See e.g. Ockham, *Quodlibeta* I, q. 7, *OTh* IX, p. 44: 'Secundum praedicta oportet ponere discursum in angelo, quod concedo.'

1. the acquisition of species or concepts,
2. the process of thought: that is reasoning,
3. the purpose or result of thought: that is knowledge.

Although I shall focus on the second aspect, it is vital to keep these separate aspects in mind, since part of the problems that we encounter in Ockham's attacks against the views of Chatton and Aquinas are due to the fact that these aspects get mixed up at times. To recapitulate this point with regard to Aquinas's and Ockham's position, we can say that, on Ockham's reading at least, the very problem of Aquinas's position on angelic thought is that it doesn't explicitly distinguish between the three aspects: with the infusion of the species an angel does not need to reason and the purpose is already achieved by intuiting the species – it's all there, innate, as it were. Aquinas's distinction between intuition and discursion divides between intuiting angels and discoursing humans. By contrast, for Ockham intuition (*intuitio*) is not the highest form of having or acquiring knowledge, but rather the starting point of a discourse: an intuition is, as it were, the first mental term in a mental sentence, it is part of a process which terminates in drawing a conclusion, and only in getting to that conclusion we or angels can be said to achieve knowledge.[17]

The question I would like to address now is: why does Ockham attack Aquinas's position? Why doesn't he accept the idea that thought per se is not structured in the way that human thought is? What is wrong with the idea that thought is not a structured process?

Right at the beginning of the question on angelic language in his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Ockham immediately points out two blunders in the *communis opinio* held by Aquinas, who claims (1) that angels cannot see the interior acts of humans, (2) that they do not reason and (3) that they cannot get anything wrong.[18] Indeed, on Aquinas's account, angels can grasp our interior acts (thoughts and volitions) not as they are in our soul, but only by grasping exterior signs of mental states. If an angel

[17] Although Scotus already introduced a new notion of *intuitio* (with regard to the cognition of singulars), it does not have the function that Ockham ascribes to it. See on this D. Perler, *Theorien der Intentionalität im Mittelalter* (Frankfurt/Main, 2002), p. 256; J. Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy: an historical and philosophical introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 285–6 and J.F. Boler, 'Intuitive and abstractive cognition', in N. Kretzmann et al. (eds), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1982), pp. 463–4, esp. n. 13. The usage of the term '*intuitio*' is far from consistent across various later medieval theories. Vital de Four even claimed that an intuition marks the end rather than the beginning of a complex cognitive process. It also remains to be investigated what role is ascribed to the notions of perfection, rest and movement with regard to thought processes.

[18] See Ockham, *Quaestiones in II Sent.*, q. 16, *OTh* V, pp. 359–60: 'Et dicitur communiter quod non potest intuitive videre aliquem actum interiorem, sed tantum per signa extrinseca cognoscit, sicut medicus per signa exteriora iudicat de infirmo. Et mirum est de istis quare negant discursum ab angelo, cum cognitio rei per signa est cognitio causae per effectus, cuiusmodi cognitio non potest haberi per sine discursu, quia per notum adquirit notitiam ignoti; et negant angelum errare, cum tamen Deus posset talia signa facere sine signato, puta sine actu interiori, et tunc si angelus credat sic esse in anima sicut signum exterius ostendit, tunc errat.'

has an encounter with a smiling human, the angel knows that he or she is happy – with much greater subtlety, to be sure, but basically the angelic knowledge is in such cases very much like that of a human being encountering a smiling person. Aquinas adds cautiously that we cannot know how this happens in the angel. But according to Ockham this argument does not go through, since this clearly is a case of reasoning from the effect (smile) to the cause (mental state of happiness).

Can Aquinas's argument be saved? I think Aquinas could have given the reply that he gave with regard to Christ's knowledge which he likens to that of angels. There he distinguishes between (1) discourse as a means of acquisition of knowledge, which we employ to reason from the known to the unknown, and (2) discourse as a means of use of knowledge. This second way of discourse can be ascribed to angels, since they already have knowledge that they then may wish to use in a given case such as sketched above. Generally speaking, the relation between exterior effect and cause is something the angel already knows, and in this sense the angel does not need to go through any discourse to find out something unknown; yet, the angel can apply this knowledge to the case of a smiling human, which would be a discourse in use rather than in acquisition of knowledge.[19] The angel would not need to reason to learn something new, but recognize something already known and apply this knowledge discursively.

Ockham, however, rules out this counter-argument by urging the point that, unlike Aquinas assumed, the angel would have to be able to get it wrong. Obviously you cannot have it both ways: you cannot ascribe to angels discursive reasoning from exterior effects to inner states and still deny the possibility of error – even if you claim that nothing new is known by this kind of discourse. To drive his point home, Ockham refers to the possibility of God implementing outward signs without any corresponding inner states. In contemporary debates this case is often described as the 'zombie possibility'.[20] Zombies look and behave like you and me, but they have no inner mental states. If an angel concluded that my smile corresponds to a state of happiness, he could be quite mistaken, for I could be a zombie and have no conscious experience whatsoever. So, even if an angel appealed to normal conditions, according to which such a correspondence can be assumed, and even if the angel claimed that the knowledge about this correspondence is no news to him but an innate knowledge, he could be mistaken in the application of that knowledge, since even if I cannot eliminate these normal conditions, God still could. Thus, Aquinas's

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[19] See Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 11 a. 3 resp.: 'Respondeo dicendum quod aliqua scientia potest esse discursiva vel collativa dupliciter. Uno modo, quantum ad scientiae acquisitionem, sicut accidit in nobis, qui procedimus ad cognoscendum unum per aliud, sicut effectus per causas, et e converso. Et hoc modo scientia animae Christi non fuit discursiva vel collativa, quia haec scientia de qua nunc loquimur, fuit sibi divinitus indita, non per investigationem rationis acquisita. Alio modo potest dici scientia discursiva vel collativa quantum ad usum, sicut scientes interdum ex causis concludunt effectus, non ut de novo addiscant, sed volentes uti scientia quam iam habent. Et hoc modo scientia animae Christi poterat esse collativa et discursiva, poterat enim ex uno aliud concludere, sicut sibi placebat.'

[20] See R. Kirk, 'Zombies', in E.N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2003 Edition)*, URL = http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2003/entries/zombies/.

approach seems not only incoherent with some of his own claims but opens up the zombie possibility even for angels.[21]

Ockham's approach includes the possibility of error as well, but it is not vulnerable to the zombie possibility, since, on his account, the angel has direct access to human thoughts. Ockham shows, thus, that knowledge – whether innate or acquired – cannot be applied without thought processes, which in turn leave angels and humans alike prone to error. Reasoning is not – as Aquinas would have it – a process of knowledge acquisition for weak creatures bound to the physical realm, but an indispensable feature of thought that is required to make knowledge applicable.

Problems for Ockham's theory

As for the compositionality of thought in general, I think Ockham has quite convincing arguments. But behind this dispute between Ockham and Aquinas seem to lie some deeper disagreements, one of which essentially can be traced back to a dispute already present in early medieval grammatical theory. The process of communication between angels and humans can be described from two rather different angles: that of the speaker and that of the hearer. Of course, it seems best to take both perspectives into account, but the question remains whether you get a coherent theory of thought and mental communication if you invoke both perspectives. I cannot go into details here, but I suspect that theories which rely on the speaker's perspective underestimate compositionality, whereas theorists who go in for compositionality and strengthen the hearer's perspective have trouble saving the unity of thoughts.[22]

At the heart of this debate we encounter two rather different models: Aquinas favours the speaker's perspective, he defends the view that angels can only communicate with one another, if the speaker wills it. By extension this also accounts for the idea that an angel cannot read a wayfarer's thoughts; it is a single minded affair: an angel manifests his will and thus communicates. In the light of nativism this is a quite coherent position: for angels there is nothing new to be *gained* from communication, since all they can possibly know is already in them.[23]

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[21] Aquinas's postulate of simplicity appears at least muddled, namely in so far as he eventually has to admit to the discursive element in the *use* of knowledge. One might even say that this notion of simplicity amounts to lip-service. Yet the distinction between acquisition and use seems rather fruitful in that it might allow us to distinguish between intentional relations between mind and world (where knowledge of hidden causes in the world is acquired) and inferential relations between thoughts (in use). See note 25. It would have to be clarified, though, whether the latter case is not also a matter of acquisition through recognition.

[22] With regard to earlier medieval debates, this point is elaborated a bit more thoroughly in M. Lenz, 'Are Thoughts and Sentences Compositional? A Controversy between Abelard and a Pupil of Alberic on the Reconciliation of Ancient Theses on Mind and Language', in J. Marenbon (ed.), *The Traditions of Ancient Logic in the Middle Ages: Acts of the 15th European Symposium on Medieval Logic and Semantics*, Cambridge, July 1–4, 2004 (forthcoming).

[23] It could be objected, however, that angels, even if all the species required are innate and even if angels cannot access their interlocutors' mental acts, they still can be said to obtain something through communication in getting to know each others species. I am very grateful

By contrast, Ockham's empiricist model stresses the receptive aspect: knowledge is gained from things – no matter whether these things are things in the world or other minds. So whereas Aquinas sees angelic communication as a *manifestation of will*, Ockham compares angelic communication *to reflecting ones own thoughts*. This is why he stresses that angels read other angels' thoughts in the way one grasps an object (*per modum obiecti*). If an angel were to read my thoughts, he would not intuitively cognize the thing that I am thinking *about*, he would solely grasp my thought as the object, but not the very object that caused my thought. Thus, to grasp the object I am thinking about, an angel would have to reason from effect (my thought) to cause (object).[24]

In semantic terms this view of angelic thought could be paraphrased as a causal externalism: the content of thought is determined by the objects that cause the thought in the receiving angel. By contrast, Aquinas and Chatton defend a kind of internalism: the contents of thought are determined by the given net of knowledge and the will to apply it. This means that, even if an angel read the secret thoughts in our hearts or in another angel, he would not know the role of these thoughts within the other mind, unless it had access to the volitions according to which the thoughts are applied.[25]

In this sense, it is quite clear that these theories are difficult to reconcile, since discourse has rather different functions within an externalist framework, where the determination of content is not (primarily) tied to the functional role of thoughts, but to the experience of things. A general theory, however, would surely have to take both the internalist and the externalist frameworks into account as serious options.

Mental Communication Applied: Division of Linguistic Labour

Ockham's idea that thought in general is compositional is of course not without problems. But it gives rise to an intriguing thesis which closely resembles what

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to Irène Rosier-Catach for pointing this out to me. See also her 'Le parler des anges et le nôtre', in S. Carotti (ed.), *Mélanges pour Alfonso Maierù* (Rome [forthcoming]).

[24] See Ockham, *Quaestiones in II Sent.*, q. 16, *OTh* V, p. 369.

[25] Thomas Aquinas, *ST* Ia, q. 57 a. 4 resp.: 'Et ideo ea quae in voluntate sunt, vel quae ex voluntate sola dependent, soli Deo sunt nota. Manifestum est autem quod ex sola voluntate dependet quod aliquis actu aliqua consideret, quia cum aliquis habet habitum scientiae, vel species intelligibiles in eo existentes, utitur eis cum vult.' See also Aquinas, *ST* Ia, q. 57 a. 4 ad 2: '… etsi unus Angelus, species intelligibiles alterius videat, per hoc quod modus intelligibilium specierum, secundum maiorem et minorem universalitatem, proportionatur nobilitati substantiarum; non tamen sequitur quod unus cognoscat quomodo alius illis intelligibilibus speciebus utitur actualiter considerando.' One might assume that the purpose of mind-reading would be to know what someone is thinking *about*, but Thomas also notes that the thought in itself (*qua* content, as it were) does not tell us what we want to know, since we would also need to know *how* someone *actually* employs this thought (a privilige attributed to God alone). In this sense and with all due caution, Thomas might be said to favour a 'functional role account' of thought over a representational account. See on this distinction R. Brandom, *Making It Explicit. Reasoning, Representing and Discursive Commitment* (Cambridge/Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 93–4.

Putnam called the division of linguistic labour.[26] The idea is quite simple: language is not private, rather, words have their very reference because we are members of a linguistic community, which can be seen as part of a causal chain that ultimately leads back to the original naming of the things words refer to. So I can use the term 'electron' properly without knowing exactly what an electron is; I rather rely on experts who know the extension of the term. Our use of 'electron', then, depends upon a co-operation between me, other speakers and experts.

In theological debates about the status of terms such as 'god' and 'trinity' we ultimately have to rely on 'expert writings' such as the bible. But no one in this life can naturally cognize God or derive the trinity from self-evident propositions. This is part of the reason why Ockham concluded that theology cannot be a science in the strict sense. Thus, it might at first come as a surprise to the reader of Ockham's writings that he nevertheless admitted that articles of faith such as 'God is three and one' can be scientifically demonstrated.[27]

What has happened here? Ockham's answer is quite straightforward: of course we cannot demonstrate articles of faith in this life and still our theology is not scientific. But they are demonstrable in principle – and the argument for this thesis rests on a quite intriguing thought experiment. In effect, Ockham could be seen as extending the idea of the division of linguistic labour to the realm of mental language. Remember that mental language is compositional and its parts are, in principle at least, 'transportable'. Unlike Aquinas and Chatton, who believed that the innate knowledge of angels and separate souls is of a different kind from ours, Ockham has it that thoughts are caused by the objects of thought and constitute a mental language that can be received by other minds. So, in principle, the communication could go both ways and we could imagine a syllogism that contains the premises of a blessed one in heaven and the conclusion of a wayfarer in this earthly life.[28]

The interesting point of Ockham's argument is that the division of the 'mentalese labour' would have to work both ways. A scientifically demonstrable conclusion requires that the proposition be (1) necessary, that it be (2) deducible from necessary and evident propositions in a syllogistic discourse and that it be (3) doubtful (otherwise it would be self-evident, and therefore not demonstrable from other propositions). Now, the blessed one can form the required evident propositions, but the trouble is that the blessed one could not form a doubtful proposition, since articles of faith are – presumably – evident to the blessed ones. Therefore, it is required that we are in a position to form a doubtful proposition which the blessed one can access too. And this is exactly the kind of team work that Ockham suggests: we could imagine a syllogism put together by a blessed one and a wayfarer.

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[26] See H. Putnam, *Mind, Language, and Reality: Philosophical Papers. Vol. 2* (Cambridge and New York: CUP, 1975), pp. 202–3.

[27] See Ockham, *Quodlibeta* II, q. 3, *OTh* IX, pp. 117–23.

[28] Ockham's approach and the debate between Wodeham and Chatton is presented more fully in M. Lenz, 'Himmlische Sätze. Die Beweisbarkeit von Glaubenssätzen nach Wilhelm von Ockham', *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch für Antike und Mittelalter*, 3 (1998): 99–120. The blessed in heaven (*beati*) are often likened to angels, yet, it is disputable whether they have the same mental capacities. Ockham's remarks on their comparability are sparse, see however *Quaestiones in II Sent.*, q. 14, *OTh* V, pp. 325–6.

Chatton, on the other hand, argued that the blessed ones could not form a proposition of the same kind as ours, since they would immediately conclude that our propositions are true.[29] Nearly a decade later Adam Wodeham comments on this dispute and extends Ockham's thought experiment. He explicitly catches Chatton's logical error, when he argues that, firstly, in order to know that our proposition is true, the blessed ones will have to employ a form of discourse, and, secondly, that if the blessed ones could not grasp the wayfarers' propositions, how could they know that our propositions are true? Thus, Wodeham not only subscribed to Ockham's position but took his arguments even further, at a time when Ockham was already excommunicated.[30]

Conclusion

In sum we can say that Ockham ascribes the same kind of rationality to every thinking creature. The innate element of the angelic mind is not a set of concepts but the structure of rationality. In contrast to Thomas Aquinas and Walter Chatton, who construed angelic thought as simple intuitions within an innate net of knowledge to distinguish it from our weak form of reasoning, William of Ockham attempted to show that all kinds of thought are compositional and therefore communicable in principle. The difference between angelic and human minds does not lie in the ways of processing knowledge, but rather in their different epistemic situations and their different kinds of access to the world. Whereas Aquinas's and Chatton's view involves a distinction between an internalist theory of angelic thought and an externalist theory of human thought, Ockham defends an externalist approach to thought in general. Even if you had an angelic mind then, it would be possible to tell you something you did not know before.

What is true for angels is also true for the case of a blessed one. Accordingly, the difference between the knowledge of a wayfarer and of a blessed one is not a difference between types of knowledge but a difference of epistemic situations. If, for instance, I actually see something, I can form a reliable judgment about its existence and the properties belonging to the object seen. If I see God, then I can claim to have evident knowledge about him. In this life, however, the sentences I form with regard to God are expressions of faith. Thus, there is no difference with regard to the type of rationality, such as the difference between simple intuitions and complex propositions. All knowledge is processed in mental sentences which have a compositional structure and transportable parts.

Ockham's point was not to raise hopes that we might meet the odd blessed one and ask him or her to demonstrate our conclusions. His thought experiment was designed to show that we need to assume a generally consistent structure of knowledge, if we want to claim compatible criteria for identifying and assessing judgments formed under different epistemic conditions. The scope of rationality that Ockham assumed

[29] See Chatton, *Reportatio et Lectura*, prol., q. 1 a. 4, pp. 61–3.

[30] See Adam of Wodeham, *Lectura secunda in librum primum Sententiarum*, d. 2 q. 1 §4, ed. R. Wood and G. Gál (St. Bonaventure, New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1990), vol. 2, pp. 9–10.

comprises the knowledge of all thinking creatures, including humans, blessed ones and angels, creatures whose knowledge is shaped by common structures, rendering knowledge identifiable under different epistemic conditions.

I would like to conclude by drawing attention to a more general issue that arises from the discussions sketched above. Ockham's and particularly Wodeham's subtle defences against those who assumed a plurality of incompatible types of lower and higher knowledge rest on excellent arguments. But as in many construals of logical form as not merely an instrument but the actual shape of knowledge itself, there remain troubling questions, one of which I would like to sketch now: Do not many of these defences amount to transcendental arguments by means of which we proceed from supposed facts to the necessary conditions of their possibility? I think we are indeed inclined to infer from the fact that our reasonings are logically reconstructible, that it is a necessary condition of the possibility of such a reconstruction that the logical form really *is* a feature of our knowledge. Recall: Wodeham claimed that, for the blessed one to assess the wayfarer's sentence, he or she needs to entertain and demonstrate the wayfarer's sentence, and that hence their shapes of rationality have to be compatible. That seems a quite conclusive move.

If I assess a sentence S, then the necessary condition of the possibility of my assessing S is obviously that I can form and entertain S, and thus that my mental capacities and structures have to be of a kind allowing for the entertainment of S. We could not even *talk* about the blessed one doing so without implicitly or explicitly ascribing to him or her that capacity.

The trouble with such arguments is that our ascription of such capacities can be both indispensable and false: false at least in that the capacity of entertaining S might completely exhaust the blessed one's structured rationality, and that every other piece of his knowledge is indeed couched in a different, namely structureless type of rationality. On a lighter note we might urge this point as follows. When you have read this paper through and start pondering on its claims, you will certainly do so on the assumption that I have written this paper in English and that we share a common rationality. You will say: 'the fact that he has written this paper rests on the condition that he has the capacity to speak and write in English.' But maybe I have just shot my bolt and would not know how to say anything else that might look like English; perhaps this paper displays just some kind of gap in my otherwise entirely different way of thinking. To put it in terms of the illustration given above: I might not have processed words, but simply tossed out some sort of photocopy. So if I will not write any further papers in response to the objections that might be raised in the future, the reason may well be that I did not write this paper in English in the first place. The written marks that have been printed under my name may just look very much like the words of someone speaking English. But then again: how could I say that without sharing or anticipating your assumptions?

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PART IV
Demonology

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Chapter 11

Demons as Psychological Abstractions

Alexander Murray

Demons were long ago ejected from Heaven, so it may be asked what they are doing in a book on angels. The answer is, not only are they fallen angels, but we are anyway not in Heaven but on solid earth, reflecting on reality, solid and otherwise. I take it that our medieval angelologists were doing the same. That is why we in this book are joining them, to study all kinds of angel, bad as well as good.

The bad are demons. For my part I shall study them not so much in theory as in their behaviour, as sampled in a region and period when many were active and where records survive. The region is the northern Rhineland with nearby Flanders; the time, the early thirteenth century. The records will come from two witnesses, both too well known to need much introduction. One is the Cistercian, Caesarius of Heisterbach, who died soon after 1240, the other, the Dominican, Thomas of Cantimpré, who died c. 1270. Both compiled collections of *exempla*, the term for anecdotes illustrating religious or moral points. Caesarius's main collection (the one I shall use) was *Dialogus miraculorum*,[1] called that because it is cast as a dialogue between a Monk and a Novice, the latter asking the questions. Thomas's collection was called *Bonum universale de apibus*,[2] called *de apibus* ('of bees') because it

[1] Ed. J. Strange (2 vols, Cologne, 1851 [repr. Ridgewood, N.J., 1966]). References to the *Dialogus* will be given in the form 'C V, 6', meaning '*Distinctio* V, Chapter 6'. A page number in the form '[287]' will be added for references which might otherwise be more elusive. The addition of an asterisk (*) indicates that the reference is to one or more examples of a theme general to the *Dialogus*, rather than to its one definitive location). Bibliography and background: F. Wagner, 'Caesarius', in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 2 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1981), cols. 1363–6; and more extensively in the same writer's three articles: 'Der rheinische Zisterzienser und Predigtschriftsteller Caesarius von Heisterbach', *Cistercienser Chronik*, 101 (1994): 93–112; 'Teufel und Dämonen in den Predigtexempleln des Caesarius von Heisterbach', *Cistercienser Chronik*, 102 (1995): 9–18; 'Caesarius von Heisterbach: mittelalterliches Leben im Rheinland', *Cistercienser Chronik*, 103 (1996): 55–63.

[2] Ed. G. Colvenerius (Douai, 1627). References to this edition will be given in the form 'T II, 37, §2', meaning 'Book II, Chapter 37, sub-chapter 2', with a page number added as '[389]' where helpful. (For the meaning of an asterisk, see previous note). A French translation of *De apibus* has been made by H. Platelle, *Les exemples du Livre des Abeilles* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997). Orientation and literature: C. Hünemörder, 'Thomas von Cantimpré', in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, 8 (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1999), cols. 711–4; and more extensively in H. Platelle, 'Le recueil de miracles de Thomas de Cantimpré et la vie religieuse dans les Pays Bas et le Nord de la France au XIII^{e} siècle', in *Assistance et assistés jusqu'à 1670*, Actes du 97^{e} Congrès International des Sociétés Savantes, Nantes, 1972 (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1977–79), pp. 469–98.

referred back to Thomas's earlier scientific treatise, *De natura rerum*, from which he now extracted the chapter on bees and moralized every sentence in it (like 'bees obey a single ruler'), each with a clutch of illustrative *exempla*.

Caesarius began the *Dialogus* in 1219 and finished it in 1223; Thomas began *De apibus* in 1256 and added its last touches in 1271. So the two collections together span roughly the half-century 1220–70. They are comparable in form, partly because the *Dialogus* was becoming a best-seller by the 1250s and Thomas read it. As to length, the *Dialogus* has twelve books, called *distinctiones*, their titles marking the supposed stages of monastic life from 'Conversion' to 'The Rewards of the Dead'. They contain altogether about 660 *exempla*. *De apibus* has only two big 'books' (the second much bigger) respectively about characters of high and low rank. Altogether it contains about 352 *exempla*. So the two collections together have just over a thousand *exempla*. The authors say they happened mostly in their own lifetimes or shortly before; they avoid anything recycled (C VIII, 29*; T II, 29 §23; 54 §2). Where the authors' own personal knowledge fell short they relied on close acquaintances, mainly from their own religious orders. Both had pastoral experience. By the time he wrote the *Dialogus* Caesarius had spent more than twenty years as a monk, partly as novice-master, and partly as administrator of estates with tentacles reaching along the lower Moselle and lower Rhine. Thomas had spent many years acting as a confessor, chiefly to the laity, many of humble rank. Both writers, finally, had studied theology, Caesarius at the cathedral school in his native Cologne under the *scholasticus* Rudolf, Thomas at Cantimpré, the Paris-connected Augustinian house near Cambrai where he had entered religion, and later in Paris itself, where he nearly but not quite completed the course for a mastership in theology. Thomas also spent a 'long' time in the Blackfriars in Cologne, where he was on close terms with his near-contemporary Albert the Great (T II, 57 §34 [563]; II, 57 §50 [576–7]).

Before saying goodbye to the good angels who people this volume, let me start by saying how they appear in our two sources. Both say something of good angels, but much less than they do of bad ones. In Caesarius, demonic appearances outnumber angelic by a proportion of about 18 to 1; in Thomas, by about 3 to 1. Since the Gospels mention angels and demons in about equal proportions, at just over thirty times each, our *exempla* cannot have got their pro-demon bias from there. So where did it come from? Caesarius, whose demonic bias was strong enough for him to notice it, offers an explanation: the Latin Church celebrates fewer angels than does the Greek (C VIII, 47). He might have added – the distribution of his other *exempla* says it implicitly though he nowhere points it out – that the Latins made up for this by venerating a lot of saints. Elsewhere Caesarius reflects that people might anyway be too modest to boast about angelic visitations, and, conversely, that angels might hesitate to visit if it would encourage un-Christian pride (C VIII, 43, 93, 95). Thomas's demonic bias is less pronounced and he offers no comparable reflection, unless it is one implicit in his failure to find an analogy for angels in the world of bees (demons are like wasps but angels are given no counterpart). Besides these authorial explanations, we modern scholars might mention the *Schadenfreude* native to story-tellers. Horror-stories about demons make better 'copy' than goody-goody claims of angelic visions, and both our writers had a nose for good 'copy'.

On bad angels, our thousand *exempla* offer so much evidence that all a brief essay can do is sketch a few dominant features and suggest a moral, avoiding, on the whole, any high theology. Both authors knew that demons were fallen angels and that Satan was their head. They knew that demons were permitted by God to test and tempt the faithful on earth, and deliver eternal punishment to malefactors in Hell; *et cetera* (C V, 1; VIII, 41*; T II, 57 §§1 and 62*). Their basic theology of demons, in other words, was normal, as far as theology went.

The trouble was that theology did not go far. Our writers, it must be emphasized, were as much pastors as theologians. They had to get down on their hands and knees to digest the experiences of the non-theological classes. In doing so they met a range of perplexities with a different centre-of-gravity from those which occupied full-time theologians. The latters' *quaestiones*[3] on the subject may overlap with some of our pastors' questions, but only with some, and their treatment, predictably more bookish and more deliberate, lacks the fast-moving patterns of vocabulary and of emphasis which make our pastors' *exempla* a better window on general *mentalités*. It was our authors' pastoral profession, after all, which made them write so much of demons in the first place, and to write in the style they did. It was their pastoral profession, equally, which dragged them into the intellectual perplexities occasioned by demons in the lives of millions.

Demons were, as they still are, a serious subject. Neither of our authors made any mistake on this. The mere mention of the Devil's name could attract a lightning bolt (C IV, 100). To glimpse him was to court serious illness (C V, 28 and 30; T II, 57, §38), to see him face-to-face, death (C, V, 29 and 33). Yet for all the seriousness, neither author was quite sure what sort of beings the Devil and demons were. The result is inconsistency. We shall find it, in fact, the only consistent feature of their pronouncements on the subject. There is a moral in that, to be drawn at the end.

The inconsistency appears at once from our two writers' introductions to their respective sections 'On demons'. Both approach their subject in the spirit of 'divide and rule' and announce that they will divide it into categories – of one, two, three, four types of demon (or demonic action) (C V, 15 [294]; T II 57 §1). But the two schemes of categories bear no relation to each other; and neither sticks to his own scheme. The same instability will reappear throughout both collections, where (for instance) an author will break off in the middle of a story to explain a detail, on a principle which turns out, later, to clash with the principle explaining another story.

Let me start with two anomalies in the field of theory. One is arithmetical: how many demons are there? (C V, 5 and 8). Thomas, less number-minded than Caesarius, does not ask this question, but Caesarius gnaws at it like an old bone, having come on it first when telling of a monk who dozed in choir, around whose head a swarm of demons was seen. The 'Novice' here suggests that, since so large a number of demons can swarm in one little church, demons in the whole world must be *innumerabiles*. The 'Monk' agrees, recalling how Christ once drove a legion of demons from one man into a herd of pigs (implying one demon per pig) (C V, 5 [283]). When the question reappears the Monk has forgotten that answer and starts calculating from scratch. The Bible teaches that one tenth of the angels fell (Jn 8:41;

[3] Cf. Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de malo*, q. 16.

Eph. 2:2) (C V, 8; cf. V, 1 [275]). Let us give his thought the precision of modern algebra. This gives the number of demons as:

$$d = a/10$$

To get a value for 'a' we turn to Gregory the Great, who says the number of angels remaining in heaven (a^r) will equal the number of human Elect (E),[4] giving:

$$d = E/9$$

Now we need a number for E, the Elect. Cistercians were strict. So Novice and Monk agree that the Elect are extremely few, the non-Elect *incomparabiliter plures* ('N' will represent this very large number). E/9 demons therefore confront a human population of E + N, in a disproportion of many times more than one to nine. Caesarius has nevertheless told us elsewhere that each human being has one good angel and one bad angel in attendance (C V, 1 [274–5]; VII, 44). So a demon cannot escape duty for any of his charges. Nor could a demon avail himself of mass-production methods. Each victim had to be handled separately. Caesarius knew, as all experts did, that each demon has a 'thousand' ways of attacking any one victim (C V, 15).[5] And sometimes, on occasions like that one in choir, a swarm of demons attacked a single monk. That operation should strictly have left the rest of the human population demon-free. When Caesarius awoke to his impasse he met it with his usual logic, by saying that an individual demon's capacity for harm is so concentrated (*tanta contracta malitia*), its capacity for work so formidable (*tanta torquendi industria*), that a single demon can persecute *multa millia hominum* (C V, 8 [289]). Terrorists may have taught us not to despise that answer; but Caesarius's difficulties do illustrate the brambly terrain he had run into. Arithmetic had barely begun its conquest of European culture, and already demons were serving their notice on it. They did not fit.

The author of *De natura rerum* was more of an empiricist, and so was pushed harder than Caesarius (though he faced it too) against a second theoretical problem, this time an old one: how demons, as spiritual beings, could behave and look like physical bodies. This one comes in *De apibus* in several forms, concerning both good and bad angels. Thus good angels sing; but since they are spiritual beings the sound they make should in theory be neither produced nor heard physically. Yet Thomas has 'often read and heard' otherwise; so often, that he sides with this evidence despite not being able to explain it (T II, 40 §7). The same spiritual-physical question applied *a fortiori* to demons, its thorniest form touching a sort of demon which was said to make replicas (*figmenta*) of human bodies. Thomas regarded the existence of such replicas as beyond dispute. Many trustworthy people had reported instances. But explaining them was again more difficult; and this time, while allowing the

[4] *Homiliae in evangelia*, 34 §11, ed. R. Étaix, CCSL, 141 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), p. 309.260–70.

[5] Well-established: M. Schumacher, 'Der Teufel als Tausendkünstler', *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch*, 27 (1992): 65–76.

evidence, Thomas challenges its usual interpretation. He will 'neither confirm nor deny' that the *figmenta* are the work of demons. We should not despise the problem. It had troubled Thomas for years. Once, in Cologne, he had put it to Albert; and got no help: Albert made excuses (*dissimulavit*) and withheld an opinion (T II, 57 §22).

In the same boundary zone, a no less perplexing case for both authors was that of *incubi*, sexual seducers (C III, 12, cf. III, 6; T II, 57 §13 [546]). Theoretical problems about *incubi* were also age-old. But Thomas was again thrown hard against them by his work as confessor. One question especially bothered him. Reputable authority held that *incubi* could beget children by intercourse with mortal women. The question 'how?' was made harder by Thomas's acceptance that the reputable authority in question was Bede, when in fact the book was almost certainly Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*. There, the wizard Merlin persuades a royal court that his father was an *incubus*.[6] Thomas could not understand how this could happen, and eventually dares to say that he cannot see how Bede can be right, unless he means that the *incubus* makes a woman receptive to seed later received from a human agency, 'but this' (Thomas demurs) 'I am not prepared to call "generation" in a strict sense' (T II, 57 §16).

How spiritual demons performed physical mischief was a stubborn problem for both authors. Occasionally Thomas grasped at the common explanation that power comes from knowledge, saying that demons act on nature by *ingenium*, which teaches them nature's secrets (T II, 57 §§16 and 1). This did not go far; and in closing *De apibus*, Thomas knew he was still in debt, since the title of his last chapter runs: 'The source and nature of demons' power over men'. After again beating about the bush he ends 'what is certain' (we hold our breath) 'is that they act by energic operation (*per energicam operationem*)' (II, 57 §62). Caesarius had various problems in the same field (C V, 28), of which his main one arose from his own insistence that demons, albeit spiritual, could not penetrate man's soul, this being the exclusive preserve of God (C V, 15 and 52; VIII 44). Since dozens of his stories record demons' doing exactly this, Caesarius, too, is short of an explanation. The one he offers betrays the same desperation as Thomas's tautology, just quoted. He alleges that demons which *seem* to be in the soul are really as near as they can get without being in it, namely in the 'declivities' of the human body among the *stercora* (C V, 15).

The question how spirits acted on bodies had once put Saint Augustine in a similar dilemma, and drawn from him an eloquent attestation of the littleness of human understanding, in the face of nature's mysteries.[7] Thomas knew the passage, but his own expression of its sentiment is spontaneous. It is worthy of the celebrated naturalist:

> We all know perfectly well that innumerable natural laws lie hidden in the secret places of natural things, and that, of these, very few indeed are apparent to human senses [infinitas ... rationes latere humanis ingeniis in rerum secreto naturae plenissime confitemur,

[6] *The* '*Historia regum Britannie*' *of Geoffrey of Monmouth*, vol. 2: *The First Variant Version*, ed. N. Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), §107, pp. 99–100.

[7] The discussion in question is in *De Trinitate*, VII–IX (§§12–21), ed. W. J. Mountain, CCSL, 50A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1968), pp. 138–50; esp. bk VII (§13), p. 141.63–7, and bk VIII (§14), p. 142.85–8.

> et paucissimas respective hominum sensibus apparere] (T II, 57 §16 [548]). (My translation.)

Philosophical questions like these touch only the surface of the ambiguities in our authors' thought about demons. An even more eloquent giveaway is their vocabulary. Both use the word *demon* more often than any other, but not by much. Both also employ *diabolus*, sometimes (in both cases) interchangeably with *demon* in the same story. The arithmetical enigma re-emerges in respect of the Devil and demons, of which convention said there was one Devil commanding many demons. Our authors can confuse both distinctions, both by treating *diabolus* and *demon* as interchangeable, and by using the singular 'Devil' and the plural 'demons' as synonymous (C IV, 5, 33, 95; T II, 29 §21 [300]). Caesarius once notices the confusion and explains that 'one often stands for many' (C IV, 1 [276]). The word 'often' betrays him; and elsewhere he can leave the singular–plural distinction standing. As for 'Satan', he can turn up either on his own or in a humble role normally attached to a mere *demon* – making another ambiguity, about rank (C IV, 97). The variety continues. Once we read of the *antiquus serpens* (C IV, 101), and several times of the *inimicus*, 'the Enemy', used either on its own, as interchangeable with *diabolus* (C IV, 49), or with a genitive as in *inimicus gloriae* (C IV, 39 [207]). The singular *inimicus* can also appear synonymously with *daemones* in the plural (C V, 5). Throughout the mutations, the word *diabolus* clings to a certain privilege. It is bad magic. An angry husband tells his wife to 'go to the Devil' and thereby turns her into an *obsessa*, curable only by exorcism (C V, 11). The same slip can make a boy vanish (C V, 11 and 12). A villager who saw storm clouds and said 'it looks as if the *diabolus* is bringing bad weather' paid for the lexical indiscretion by seeing his son killed by lightning (C IV, 100). While Thomas's demonic vocabulary is less wide-ranging, it includes some of Caesarius's terms and adds a few of its own. A demon at a sinner's deathbed is *assessor ejus*, *scilicet spiritus*, and several demons met together are on various occasions *assessores*, *satellites*, or *ministri nigriores* (T I, 3 §4; II, 17 §2).

Varieties in nomenclature were accompanied (without the two sets' being matched) by varieties in perception. Some of these varieties were in the perceiver himself. How could a mortal perceive a spiritual being? Caesarius once refers to a kind of sixth sense, like that of a dog which knows when a wolf is near (C V, 54). Thomas can imply the same when he says it 'seemed' to a woman that the Devil was near (T II, 29 §30). But both writers usually treat the normal five senses as heavily involved; and here variety begins again. To start with, different people enjoyed different degrees of sensitivity. Thomas tells how demons invaded a nunnery in the shape of some pigs, and how some nuns saw the pigs, while others only heard the grunts; and he comments:

> It is an established fact that some people's eyes are less able than those of others to see demonic *phantasmata*, whereas others have vision so sharp that no demons, in their assumed bodies, can hide from them (T II, 30 §5). (My translation.)

Elsewhere, he fits this distinction with levels of education, by saying (ignoring *exempla* in his own collection which blur the distinction) (T II, 29 §29; cf. II, 40 §11)

that corporeal demons are seen by the 'simple' and 'uneducated (*illiterati*)', while it is the spiritual sort that target intellectuals (T II, 57 §24). Caesarius observes the same educational distinction implicitly, in that his two most prodigious demon-seers are a small girl (C V, 44) and a Cistercian *conversus* (C V, 5 [281]), both palpably illiterate.

Individual's differences in capacity were coupled with another, in time. A person could acquire or lose the gift of seeing demons. Caesarius tells of a parish priest who saw demons which his illiterate congregation could *not* see, until he prayed successfully that they should (C V, 7 [287]). One friend of Caesarius, a highly literate abbot, acted as confessor to the afore-mentioned demon-seeing *conversus*, and, in envy, prayed to have the gift himself, with a success which flooded the *Dialogus* with vivid stories (e.g. C V, 5 [282–3]). Then the abbot found the visions so depressing that he prayed for his gift to go away; which it did, but (*nota bene*) gradually. The abbot's sightings became 'less manifest', and less frequent, until they finally disappeared altogether (C V, 5 [285]).

Together with personal and temporal variations we find variations in circumstance. Often the circumstances of a demon's arrival are what anthropologists call 'liminal', on a boundary. The most obvious boundary was that between normal and abnormal consciousness. This was often crossed at night. Caesarius does refer once to the notorious 'noon-day demon' of Psalm 90/1 (and Cassian's *Institutes*) (C V, 2 [277]); but the demons which he and Thomas write about have distinctly nocturnal tastes. In those pre-Edisonian centuries, scholars on the subject tell us that nights were broken with two or more bouts of sleep, with gaps in between, a pattern only tightened by monastic night offices. This intermittency of sleep threatened the conceptual distinction between sleeping and waking. Today we make this conceptual distinction clearly. So, usually, did our two witnesses (C IV, 34 [204], 53*; T II, 43 §3*) and so indeed did some demons, who are said explicitly to have appeared in a dream, content to issue their threats through that medium (C IV, 54; VIII, 88*; T II, 57 §§5 and 31*). But acknowledging a conceptual distinction is not the same as being able always to judge whether one is awake or not, and this was especially true in the liminal phase after that 'second sleep', as also in some sorts of illness, the sort that makes patients 'see things'. Both our authors often speak of demons in these states. A demon will appear to a monk as he does in choir, or should be praying; or a demon will approach his victims when half-asleep in bed (C IV, 53), or sick (C VIII, 77*; T II, 55 §2*), especially when the sickness is leading to death (C VIII, 74 and 97*; T II, 57 §12*), an occasion doubly welcome to demons, since they not only gloat over a bad man's death, in expectation of his soul (C XI, 38* and 48*; T I, 3 §§4 and 5; II, 49 §5*), but will fall with special fury on good men on their deathbeds, from jealousy (C XII, 5 [319]). A rough count of both *Dialogus* and *De apibus* show comparable patterns of visiting hours. Nearly half (47%) of the demonic visions in *De apibus* are definitely said to have happened at night (including 'during mattins', 'after compline', 'before prime'), leaving those expressly represented as happening by day (or in the course of palpably daytime activities) as a minority (13%), with other little minorities, among the 'unspecified', linked with other half-in and half-out situations like sickness (4%), deep prayer, and on lonesome journeys. On the same

criteria, a sample from Caesarius's long *distinctio* 'On Visions' shows: 43% at night, 19% definitely by day, 7% sick.

Different people, then, and the same people at different times, were sensitive in different degrees to the presence of demons; and, whatever their sensitivity, were likely to see them in circumstances other than full daylight consciousness. To these differences in the perceiver we must add differences in the thing perceived. A schoolboy drawing a demon today would give him two horns. In our thousand *exempla* I find only one demon with this feature (T II, 49 §21). Instead, demons come in a bewildering variety of epiphanies, stretching along a continuous scale between the completely physical and completely incorporeal. Their most unmistakeably physical manifestations were aeronautical or meteorological. Four times in Caesarius a demon acts as invisible helicopter to lift his victim into the air, to his embarrassment or (once) death (C IV, 85; V, 27, 34, 35). Demons in meteorology, though known to Caesarius (C I, 15), are more characteristic of Thomas, who got around more. After one destructive thunderstorm Thomas had heard 'people saying they had seen demons rushing at each other in the air, the guise of various animals as the winds whirled together' (T II, 57 §2); after another, that people had heard demonic voices in the wind, agreeing among themselves to spare the vines of a certain usurer; and more like that (T II 57 §3; cf. §29).

Together with such public effects, demons could attack individuals physically. One tried to strangle a young Dominican in his sleep (T II, 29 §29). Several made unwanted sexual approaches, including sheer rape, by both male (C V, 32, 44) and female (C V, 33; T II, 43 §5; 57 §37) demons (always heterosexual, by the way: one more reason, in Thomas's opinion, for condemning homosexuality is that even demons do not engage in it) (T II, 30 §2). These seducer-demons suffer the same glossarial instability as the others, sometimes being called *incubi*, sometimes not. Whichever they are they announce their presence physically. Any doubt on this matter was put at rest by Thomas's case of a convent-reared woman who at night frequently felt herself physically gripped and raped by a demon. Her Franciscan brother came to be with her when the next attack was due, and at the critical hour held his sister tightly with both arms; but felt a stronger, invisible power seize her from his grip. The incident became known to Albert, who invoked it in a Paris disputation about rape (T II, 57 §18).

Among ways in which demons announced themselves two more deserve our notice: one, for its frequency, the other, for its singularity. The most frequent physical manifestation of demons was in what is today called anti-social behaviour. A demon breaks the staff of a pilgrim to embroil him with his colleague (C V, 39). A demon tricks another pair of pilgrims in the hope of stirring a quarrel (T II, 57 §35), or distracts a religious in prayer or in sacred reading – usually at night: by blowing out a candle (C V, 53), inducing sleep (C IV, 28–38; T II, 40 §11), making his voice too dry for chanting (T II,57 §38), or frustrating him when dressing in a hurry (C IV, 49). And so on.

A more singular kind of manifestation suggests what Jean Seznec called *la survivance des dieux antiques*.[8] One example is the *dusius* (or *dusio*: both forms occur). Thomas makes the *dusius* one of his four categories of demon (T II, 57 §17), and says that in ancient times *dusii* were honoured by consecrated groves, and that they still, 'in our own times', in pagan Prussia, refuse unauthorized entry to forests. Thomas is not sure how much of all this to believe. We heard his references to storm-making demons and child-conceiving *incubi*. As views, both rise no higher than uncritical reports of what others have said. Equivocation is only marginally weaker in Thomas's assertion that mermaids, 'seen frequently in pagan times', have 'grown rarer' with the spread of Christianity (T II, 57 §10). *Dusii*, however, had been seen too often for him to question them; and he describes one particular form of deception as their peculiar trademark. It is worth our attention.

When a woman is very sick or dying, a *dusius* will substitute for her a *figmentum* exactly resembling her, while the real woman is actually alive and healthy elsewhere. Thomas gives an *exemplum* from the Flemish coastlands. It tells how a man's living-in sister fell very sick, was believed to be dying or dead (*languida et mortua putata*), and was prepared for burial. Her brother meanwhile met his sister alive and well while he was walking on the sea-marshes. Realizing that the dying woman at home must be a *figmentum*, the man returned, told the mourners, and hacked the *figmentum* to pieces. As to prove the truth of the story Thomas adds that the real sister 'is still living today' (T II, 57 §21). Jean-Claude Schmitt has shone light on stories of this kind, as allowing an indigent community to reconcile itself morally with (in this case) the killing of an invalid.[9]

Quite as singular as the *dusius* is the 'undead', or corpse that gets out of its grave. Familiar in old Scandinavian circles, the undead had received in Thomas's world the relatively sophisticated explanation that a demon got inside the corpse to activate it. One of his *exempla* tells of a holy virgin who would rise each midnight to say her prayers in church. One night she saw a coffin there in preparation for a funeral next day. As she began her prayer the corpse rose from the coffin, ignoring all her holy imprecations, so she hit it repeatedly with her staff until it lay motionless on the church floor. Next morning the priest and his warden found it there, heard the virgin's account, and no doubt went away and circulated it (T II, 57 §8). We have been primed by the *figmentum* story. So let us recall that distinguishing a dead body from a living can be hard today and was notoriously hard in pre-modern times (whence the Enlightenment terror of being buried alive).[10] The moral is: at night (if at no other time), do not frighten holy virgins.

What the virgin did according to that story (if I read it correctly) is misinterpret a natural event. In the interpretation of otherwise normal human or animal behaviour

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[8] J. Seznec, *La survivance des dieux antiques*, Studies of the Warburg Institute, 11 (London: Warburg Institute, University of London, 1940). Trans. as *The Survival of the Ancient Gods* (Princeton, NJ, 1953).

[9] I refer especially to the structural reading of a myth in J.-Cl. Schmitt, *Le saint lévrier. Guinefort, guérisseur d'enfants depuis le XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 1979), esp. pp. 101–8 (c. 2: 'Le rite').

[10] See J. McManners, *Death in the Enlightenment* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 48–9.

lies another tranche of variety. Here the demon's self-manifestation is most unequivocally physical. When the demon is an animal, it is often a pig (especially black), or otherwise a bear, a dog, a cat, a cow, a calf's tail, monkey, or dragon. Even more often it is a person, occasionally undefined (C V, 43), but more often defined, who proves to be the Devil in disguise. A sick priest gets bad advice from 'a doctor, or rather, by the Devil in the person of a doctor (*imo per medicum a diabolo*)'(C IV, 101). A nun is persuaded by the Devil 'in the form of her cousin' to drown her baby (T II, 29 §21). *Et cetera* (C IV, 87). Often the demon appears as a priest (C V, 40; T II, 55 §2), even a friar-priest (T II, 57 §§34 and 35), or even a nun (C V, 44; T II, 57 §61). Most often of all the demon comes as a seductive member of the opposite sex. A priest invites 'a pretty woman' to dinner who turns out to be a disguised demon (T II, 53 §5). A woman is 'pressed' by the Devil in the form of a neighbouring serf (C V, 32). And so on (C V, 33 and 44). After telling how a certain friar was woken at dawn by a 'lovely woman', who climbed into his bed but vanished into thin air when he kicked her, Thomas says this kind of visitation has 'happened to many' (T II, 57 §37).

If the Devil can be read in otherwise familiar people, so can he in familiar thoughts. Both authors tell of demoniacs or *obsessi*, usually identified by their chronic behaviour, sometimes murderous (T II, 57 §43), sometimes just bizarre (C V, 13*; cf. C III, 2–3; V, 11–14, 26*; T II, 36 §4*). Thomas, ever the sharp observer, notes that even after *obsessi* have been ostensibly freed from their demons they never quite become 100-per-cent normal but always have strange, pale complexions (T II, 57 §19).

If an *obsessus* had his demon as a freeholder, others had them only as tenants. Caesarius's main example here is heretics. *Dialogus* accounts of heretics have long belonged to the canon of heresy historians. But let us notice, now, that nearly all of them come in the *distinctio* about demons. The heretics behave appropriately. They perform diabolical pseudo-miracles (C V, 18), use *persuasio diabolica* (C V, 22 [304]), or are *diaboli plenus* (C V, 23), *nuncii diaboli* (C V, 20), *membra diaboli* (C V, 25 [309]), or creatures of *diaboli invidia* (C V, 21 [300]). This diabolic association may be the reaction of the discreet Caesarius in mentioning heresy at all, so near the critical years of the Albigensian suppression (C IX, 52 [207]). Later in the *Dialogus*, alluding casually to heretics, he has grown less diabolically minded (C VI, 5; IX, 12 and 52; X, 47), though the Albigensians still provoke the old association (C IX, 12 [175]). Thomas is marginally less jumpy. By c. 1250, for him, the equation of heretic and *obsessus* has become a cliché (T II, 57 §68), perhaps because Dominican inquisitors had by then put enough forces on the ground to excuse them from seeing their quarry in supernatural terms (T I, 5 §2; II, 5 §3; 47 §3).

More numerous than any long-term residents were those demons who made brief visits. Of a person's bad act Caesarius often, and Thomas almost as often, will add a phrase like *diabolo instigante* (C IV, 22; T II, 1 §5; 10 §19; 13 §2), *diabolo invidente* (C IV, 84, 94; T II, 1 §5), *diabolo persuadente* (C IV, 91), *instinctu diaboli* (C IV, 88), or *immissione diaboli* (C IV, 31, 39, 85). While not all moral breaches involve the Devil, temptations to them very often do. Caesarius says the word 'demon' actually means, etymologically, 'tempter' (C V, 1 [274]), and can say casually of (say) an act

of stinginess that it was done *diabolica*, *ut patuit*, *tentatione* (C IV, 60). *Ut patuit*, 'as anyone can see': temptation, as such, bore the Devil's signature.

But variety appeared even here, in that the rule applied more to some temptations than to others. Heresy apart, demonic temptations were overwhelmingly monastic. Caesarius once says that temptation only affects monks, on the ground that laity just do whatever comes into their heads (C IV, 1 [172]; cf. IV, 36–7). He can even say the same of women: they are not tempted, he says in one place, they *are* the temptation (C I, 40 [51]). While his *exempla* can refute both rules, most confirm them. Caesarius has the Cistercian diet in mind, for instance, when he says 'the Devil tempts very many people by an appetite for meat, or for wine'; (C IV, 86), and in his *exempla* we usually find a demon behind a monk's devotional irregularities, like nodding in choir or – worst of all – thinking of leaving the order (or not joining it) (C IV, 28, 32–3, 38; 30 [200], 59, 53–6).

Although we heard Caesarius allow each demon a virtually infinite capacity for harm, the pattern of his *exempla* suggests otherwise: that his demons' concentration on heresy and monastic faults left them under-resourced elsewhere. Thus the aggressive sins of anger, rancour and impatience 'often' (he says) come from the Devil; that is, not always (C V, 45). Aggressive sins are anyway mainly the province of laymen (theoretically untempted), many of whom 'do not think anger is a sin' (C IV, 17 [179]). Again, avarice and usury are sins Caesarius rarely attributes to the Devil, until the culprit is dying or dead, when demons take his soul (C IV, 57–9, 61–73; XI, 39–43). The most glaring gap concerns suicide. Other contemporary sources often treated suicide as the Devil's speciality. Of the dozen-or-so allusions by Caesarius to this subject (whose taboo nature he nevertheless respected),[11] he brings the Devil in only once, and then the Devil is pretending to be an angel (C III, 14 [128], cf. IV, 40–45; V, 35).

Thomas's *exempla* show a similar moral profile, but tilted by his experience as confessor. Thomas's demons, too, encourage breaches of regular observance (T II, 57 §26, 33 and 48), and while Thomas, like Caesarius, despairs of the brutality and greed of many laymen (T I, 18 §2) (and of churchmen who behave like them: T I, 21 §4), he, too, usually leaves the Devil out until the culprit's day of reckoning (T I, 3 §§4–6, 7 §7, 19 §§7–10). And here too suicide is non-diabolical. Thomas was euphemistic on suicide anyway, and hence may have had even less reason than Caesarius to see the Devil behind it. Among his eight probable allusions to suicide, only one does mention the Devil, as a (in this instance frustrated) tempter to suicide.[12]

That case probably came to Thomas *via* his work as confessor; and confession influenced his experience more broadly. Thomas could never have shared Caesarius's view that laity were not tempted, least of all in the case of women; and he has far more than Caesarius on sexual temptation, which, in *De apibus*, was the Devil's Promised Land, for both men and women. The Devil will attack a woman as incubus or rapist (T II, 57 §§14 and 18), a man as seductive woman (T II, 53 §5), and both

[11] See my *Suicide in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1999), vol. 1, pp. 467–8 and 481; (Oxford, 2000), vol. 2, p. 608.

[12] See *Suicide in the Middle Ages*, vol. 1, pp. 468–9 (where the case of Agnes from T II, 29 §21, should have a 'D' [for 'Devil'] in column 9. See pp. 269–70).

sexes, often, as the bodiless proposer of illicit sex or obscene behaviour (T II, 27 §25; 30 §§3–5; 49, §§21 and 22; 57 §4).

Despite this demonic pugnacity both our witnesses try to hold to the orthodoxy that the demon's power to harm us depends ultimately on our will. Even demonic 'possession', commonly then seen as involuntary (for instance, in law courts), could reflect a flaw in the will. Caesarius tells of a man who became 'possessed' because he had previously lacked humility (C IV, 5). A nun in *De apibus* illustrated the same rule. She had for years been bothered by an *incubus*, but eventually acknowledged to Thomas that once, at the very beginning, she *had* consented to her visitor. Thomas reclassified her subsequent ordeal as a 'penance' for that initial failure (T II, 57 §11). Caesarius's self-inflicted insistence that demons cannot penetrate the soul probably has the same rationale.

If the will can be a defence against a demon, so, too, can the intellect. Recognize a demon as a demon, and you have a good chance (though no certainty) of going free. 'An unknown voice' nearly persuades a sleepy Cisterican monk not to rise for night office, but fails when the monk identifies the speaker as the *diabolus* (C IV, 28). A pretty woman tempts a priest, until his favourite saint appears and exposes her as in fact a demon (T II, 53 §5). The demons most vulnerable to this defence are naturally those whose power depends on disguise, the prime example, an age-old one, being the 'angel of light'. Thus in Thomas, a stranger *in specie et visione angelica* tries to persuade a 'simple man' to ignore confession, and vanishes into thin air when unmasked as a demon (T II, 42 §2). Caesarius, similarly, knew an *inclusa* who was regularly visited by a man whom she believed to be an angel. On her mentor's advice she tested him by putting a cross at her door. He could not pass it, and vanished (C V, 47; cf. T II, 57 §46*).

Demons, so closely associated with the vices they encourage, can just occasionally become barely distinguishable from them. Caesarius tells of a man who broke his penitential fast *excitante carne*, *vel diabolo*, *sive utroque*: 'on the provocation of his flesh, or of the Devil, or of both', as if here are two alternative hypotheses and a third (*sive utroque*) combining them (C IV, 77). Alternatively, the Devil can also be described as the 'spirit' of a vice. When another of Caesarius's monks has overcome sexual temptation we learn that the *diabolus*, *scilicet spiritus fornicationis*, *confusa fugit*: 'the Devil, that is, the spirit of fornication, left him' (C IV, 95). And when yet another monk suffers from the same affliction, the tempter whom we have met at the beginning of the story as *spiritus luxuriae*, later, when the story reaches its happy ending, has metamorphosed into a *diabolus*. From a near-abstraction, that is to say, the Devil has become a physical *persona*, who signals his new status by coiling physically down the victim's body like an invisible snake and vanishing through his feet (C IV, 96).

These accounts are as baffling as patterns in a kaleidoscope. The changes and varieties are too many to grasp, too many both for us, and apparently too many for our two writers – whence their chronic contradictions. But a kaleidoscope is essentially a simple object. Here, too, a simple principle covers all the evidence, whether about demons and their viewers, or about the mind-sets of the witnesses who report on them. It is fluidity. In alluding to demons, Caesarius and Thomas knew that reason was in tension with the evidence, and they could not give final

victory to either. The tension would occasionally drive them up for the fresh air of agnosticism, when they say they cannot decide this or that question (C VIII, 5; T II, 57 §§10, 16–17, 27); and Thomas says once that there are many things not only that he *did* not know but that he *could* not know (T II, 57 §16 [548]), a confession worthy of that celebrated student of nature. He was a student also of his own mind. One reminiscence he gives of his own reveals how puzzling his agnosticism could be. In 1256 Thomas heard reports of a miracle in which, at Mass at a certain church, the elevated Host took on the physical appearance of the wounded Christ. Thomas was doubtful, though he had heard of such things in the past; but he went along to see, and stood at the back of the church. As the priest elevated the Host Thomas heard the congregation gasp, and knew they thought they were seeing something. But he saw nothing, except the bread and altar cloth. After a few seconds, with no apparent provocation, this changed, and he suddenly saw what everyone else was seeing, and knelt in awe (T 40, §2 [400]).

There is another well-known text where changes of this kind occur: Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In Ovid we watch as living beings congeal gradually into rock, the limbs and tongue moving until the rock sets fast. Long before Darwin challenged the view, beloved by the old etymologists, that the world consists of so many isolated species, each with its name and nature, Ovid thus set up a sliding scale between one form of being and another. We have been looking at such a sliding scale. Lubrication on the slide, in the case of Caesarius and Thomas, is provided by the ambiguities which we have found at every point in our reports. The sliding scale runs from that which seems to be material and solid, to that which seems to be immaterial and spiritual; immaterial and spiritual, furthermore, not in any random way, but in ways which could, in other circumstances, be articulated in moral terms. In other quarters the same scale was often spanned by symbolism: doves are not morally good, but symbolize the Holy Spirit, which *is*. Symbolism links visible things to invisible truths of which they are analogies. Our demons sometimes have this character, in that now and then they let slip a glint of symbolism, such as when Caesarius tells of demonic pigs seen eating husks near a monk inattentive in choir; and he comments that the husks signify (*significant*) the sacred words, emptied of their fruit by the monk's inattention (C IV, 35). This ageless exegetical device could be extended among other of Caesarius's and Thomas's demons: bears and dragons endanger human lives, as demons do. That would not prove that demons are symbols; but it reminds us that they live on the jungle side of the same terrain.

The cultivated parts of the terrain stretched even further. As our two witnesses were writing, other writers, in northern France, were pioneering a genre which positioned analogy at its core. I refer to moral allegory.[13] In moral allegory, personified virtues and vices ('Jealousy', 'Patience' and so on) fight battles for the soul. C.S. Lewis explained how such allegory provided a psychological syntax to make more

[13] See H.-R. Jauß, 'Entstehung und Strukturwandel der allegorischen Dichtung', in H.-R. Jauß (ed.), *Grundriß der romanischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, 6.1 (Heidelberg: C. Winter Universitätsverlag, 1988), pp. 29–44; and P.Y. Badel, 'Le poème allégorique', in *Grundriß*, 8.1, pp. 139–60.

comprehensible, and hence more effective, the individual's moral struggle.[14] This struggle gathered momentum as lay confession spread in Europe after the Lateran Council of 1215, and moral allegory, predominantly in the vernacular, rose *pari passu*. Its cast of abstract vices and virtues may appear, at first, quite unrelated to the demons of Caesarius and Thomas. But they shared ancestry. Lewis traced some the ancestry of allegory back to the personifications of Statius's *Thebaid* in the first century AD, where personifications hide behind the names of ancient gods (when the poet's 'Mars', for instance, does nothing but fight, he has metamorphosed from a god to a personification of war). Further back, we find the same ambivalence in Roman religion as such. The Romans once erected a temple to 'Concord', and later a statue to 'Victory', as if they were gods, and their tendency to divinize abstracts was still strong enough in St Augustine's time to attract his ridicule in *The City of God*.[15] Nor was the tendency confined to Rome. It is common in early religions. Abstracts can thus become gods, just as (as in Statius) gods can become abstracts, in a two-way traffic which makes yet another area for ambivalence. It puts Caesarius's *diabolus*, *scilicet spiritus fornicationis* in venerable company.

Towards the end of T.S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party* a character claims to have seen a disembodied image which proves prophetic. To incredulous friends he says:

> I ask you only to entertain the suggestion
> That a sudden intuition, in certain minds,
> May tend to express itself at once in a picture.[16]

We might say the same in reverse to Caesarius and Thomas. Their demonic experiences might express themselves, to some minds (ours), as abstract ideas. That might be the germ of a rationale for demons. It is no more than a germ; because what we have seen is not an on-and-off switch between abstract and concrete, but rather a sliding scale, with infinite gradations. Or rather, we have seen two sliding scales, lying obliquely across each other. On one, imagery can be more or less concrete (as a toad is more concrete than air). On the other, the thing imaged could be more or less real (as a live toad is more real than a picture of one). In the formation of modes of perception, the two scales operated in tandem, accommodating responses to changes of personal need and circumstance, changes as kaleidoscopic as the demons that corresponded to them. The two sliding scales together formed – may still do (but that is not in issue here) – a syntax by which thirteenth-century populations could grope, imperfectly, towards realities otherwise inaccessible.

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[14] *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford, 1936), pp. 44–111.

[15] *The City of God*, IV, cc. 18 and 23. 'Concordia', *The City of God*, III, c. 25. On divinized abstractions, see G. Dumézil, *La religion romaine archaïque* (2nd edn, Paris: Payot, 1974), pp. 399–408 (part 3, chap. 1).

[16] (London: Faber and Faber, 1958), p. 179.

PART V
Angels in the Renaissance and The Early Modern Period

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Chapter 12

Medieval, Renaissance, and Reformation Angels: A Comparison

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In what follows I shall attempt to draw a comparison between medieval, Renaissance and Reformation theories of angels. Any comparison needs a *tertium comparationis* which in this particular case – due to the heterogeneity of the three discourses – is not easy to determine. Thus, when I choose to concentrate on the issue of angelic cognition of material particulars, this is not to suggest that the philosophers and theologians of the three periods concerned have all actually discussed it as such. It is rather the why and how they did or did not discuss this issue that will provide the basis for comparing the different views about the angels.

Medieval theories about angelic cognition of material particulars

The issue of angelic cognition in general and of angelic cognition of material beings in particular seems to have been put on the agenda shortly after the mid-thirteenth century by two authors who seemed to be predestined to this by their honorary titles: the *doctor angelicus*, Thomas Aquinas, and the *doctor seraphicus*, Bonaventure.

Why do angels have cognition of material things, and why is this issue important to theologians? The standard way of treating the question how angels are capable of cognizing material particular things in conjunction with the underlying assumption that a general cognition alone cannot be sufficient for them, appears to result from a confrontation between Dionysian Neoplatonist angelology and biblical portrayal of angels as custodians of men. For almost all scholastic authors treating the question whether angels are capable of cognizing material things ('*utrum angeli cognoscant res materiales*') reject the negative solution by claiming the authority of biblical texts such as Psalm 90 ('*angelis suis mandavit de te*, *ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis*'). According to them, the angels' duty to function as custodians of men makes cognition of singulars necessary, because, as Thomas Aquinas says: 'what is not known cannot be guarded'.[1] Thus, the position 'that claims that angels do not

[1] Thomas Aquinas, *Quodl*., VII q. 1 a. 3sc: 'nullus potest custodire quod non cognoscit.'

have a cognition of particulars … is heretical and contrary to the truth of the holy scripture'.[2]

The question how such a cognition is possible is closely connected with a number of fundamental epistemological problems, partly pertaining to both angelic and human cognition – for both cases require explanation as to how an immaterial intellect can achieve cognitive contact with material objects – partly pertaining exclusively to angelic cognition – for the fact that the angelic intellect is not bound to a material body excludes at least some of the possible answers developed for explaining human cognition.

The scholastic authors developed a great number of different approaches to this problem which cannot be exhaustively presented here – Franciscus Suárez devoted several hundred pages of his *De angelis* to gather and discuss the major scholastic positions on angelic cognition. Having said this, all I shall do here is give a rather rough sketch of the principal problems and some of the approaches in dealing with them. On a very basic level, at least two things are required for intellectual cognition, namely (1) an intellectual faculty and (2) an intelligible object. Although this seems admittedly rather trivial, it was highly controversial, especially concerning the second point: what is it that makes an object intelligible? According to Thomas Aquinas intelligibility is connected to immateriality. The less material something is, the more intelligible it is; and because immateriality is directly connected to universality it was clear for Thomas that under human conditions only universals are intelligible. By contrast, other authors, such as Durandus of St Pourçain, took intelligibility as a function of entity (*entitas*), so that individual things are the primary objects of the intellect.[3]

There is another commonly accepted condition for intellectual cognition, namely (3) the presence of the object to the intellect. In one way or another any epistemological approach, both to human and to angelic cognition, is based on this assumption. There exists, however, a great variety of ways of spelling out the mode of this presence, that is, of giving an account of what it is for an object to be present to the intellect and of giving reasons for the necessity of such a presence. In principle, one can distinguish a stronger and a weaker version of presence. Whereas the stronger version claims that the object has to be somehow present *in* the intellect, the weaker is content with the object being present *to* the intellect.

Because material things cannot be themselves *in* the intellect, the epistemological theory, assuming the first, stronger version, has to introduce a representational substitute for the object, which can be present in the intellect. For the second version,

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[2] Thomas Aquinas, *II Sent*, d. 3 q. 3 a. 3co: 'positio quae ponit angelos singularium cognitionem non habere… haeretica est, et veritati sacrae scripturae contraria.' Cf. Durandus of St Pourçain, *In II Sent*., d. 3 q. 7 n. 5 (Venice, 1571 [reprint Ridgewood, 1964]), fol. 140rb: 'Omnes [angeli] sunt administratorij spiritus, et in ministerium missi: et hoc non faciunt, nisi mediante cognitione, ergo cognoscunt singularia.' Cf. Marsilius of Inghen, *Quaestiones Marsilii super quattuor libros Sententiarum* (Strasbourg, 1501), fol. 229vb: '… angeli cognoscunt singulariter res materiales … patet quia angeli deputantur custodes hominum …: et quomodo bene custodirent id: quod non distincte cognoscerent?'

[3] Durandus of St Pourçain, *In II Sent*. d. 3 q. 7 n. 5, fol. 140va: '… illud quod magis habet de entitate, magis est cognoscibile, sed singularia plus de entitate quam universalia, ergo …'

by contrast, and bypassing several problems, it is sufficient to refer to the adequate local or approximate presence of the object to the cognizing intellect.[4]

The underlying problems bypassed by presupposing the existence of a cognitive contact are precisely what the theory of species is trying to give account of. Thomas Aquinas developed perhaps the most elaborate version of it,[5] describing the intellectual cognition of material things as some sort of complex machinery transforming the materially tainted visible species into intellectual cognition. In the case of human cognition, the material object, on being illuminated by the sun, sends out visible species (i.e. cognitive images) which are received by the sense and transformed into 'phantasms' by the imagination. These, already less material images, are illuminated again by the *intellectus agens* and are transformed into wholly immaterial *species intelligibiles* which then actualize the *intellectus possibilis* to produce a cognitive act. It is by means of this act that an intention or *verbum mentis* is finally formed as the representative medium in which (*in quo*) the essence of the thing is known intellectually. Throughout this procedure the species fulfil several epistemological functions: (1.) they provide the cognitive contact of the intellect with the object, that is, they bridge the local distance between the cognizer and the external object as well as the 'ontological distance' between the immaterial intellect and the material object. Furthermore, (2.) they provide a representational substitute of the object and, finally, (3.) trigger the cognitive act, i.e. they synchronize the intellect with the material world, guaranteeing that the right intuitive cognition is not brought about at the wrong moment.

Opponents of the species-theory, satisfied with the presence of the object *to* the intellect, denied the necessity of functions (1) and (2), believing that they could do without the assumption of such representative media. On the other hand, function (3) is guaranteed by the presence of the object, as they understood it. In attempting to give an account of the main approaches to angelic cognition of material things according to the different understandings of the object's presence towards the intellect, we can therefore distinguish between those who advocate and those who deny an epistemological function to the species:

1. through species
1.1 through innate species

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[4] Durandus of St Pourçain: *In II Sent*. d. 3 q. 7 n. 5: 'Singularia … si sint praesentia cognoscuntur infallibiliter ab Angelo, nec est alia causa quaerenda, nisi quia sunt ei praesentia.' Cf. William of Ockham, *Quaestiones in librum secundum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*, qq. 12–13, ed. Gedeon Gál and Rega Wood, *OTh* V (St Bonaventure, New York, 1981), p. 268: '… per intellectum et rem visam, sine omni specie, potest fieri cognitio intuitiva, igitur etc. Assumptum probatur: quia posito activo sufficienti et passivo et ipsis approximatis, potest poni effectus sine omni alio. Intellectus autem agens cum obiecto sunt agentia sufficientia respectu illius cognitionis; possibilis est patiens sufficiens, igitur etc.' Cf. Walter Chatton, *Reportatio et Lectura super Sententias: Collatio ad Librum Primum et Prologus*, ed. J.C. Wey (Toronto, 1989), p. 88: '… si duo sufficiant, non oportet tertium ponere. Sed ista propositio "Sortes videt albedinem" verificatur pro entibus, et ad hoc quod ipsa sit vera sufficiunt haec: entitas istius visionis et entitas illius albedinis, cum est praesens.'

[5] *ST*., Ia qq. 84–8.

1.1.1 through general species (Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Bonaventure)
1.2 through species partly innate, partly *caused* by the things (Scotus, William de la Mare)
1.3 through species partly innate, partly *occasioned* by the things (John Peckham)
1.4 through species generated by the intellect (Peter John Olivi)
2. without species
2.1 cognition is (partly) caused by the object (Scotus, Ockham, Holkot, Landulphus Caracciolo, Johannes de Bassolis)
2.2 cognition is triggered by the presence of the thing (Durandus of St Pourçain)
2.3 cognition is triggered by the existence of the thing (Marsilius of Inghen)
2.4 by a *habitus scientialis* (Henry of Ghent).

In the case of the angelic cognition it is clear that the procedure of taking in and transforming material species, which supposes a corporeal cognitive apparatus, cannot work. But as the representational function has to be provided also in this case, Thomas[6] and the Thomists, but also Bonaventure,[7] assume that angelic cognition is based on innate species (1.1), or, to be more precise, on innate general species (1.1.1). Scotus and others concede that angels may have a general or abstract cognition of material things through innate species but insist that an intuitive cognition of these things, as existing here and now, can be explained only by the assumption of species

[6] Thomas Aquinas, *Quodl*., VII q. 1 a. 3 co: '… deus, non solum producit formam, sed etiam materiam. unde rationes ideales in mente ipsius existentes non solum sunt efficaces ad cognitionem universalium, sed etiam ad singularia cognoscenda a deo. sicut autem illae rationes ideales effluunt in res producendas in esse suo naturali, in quo particulariter unumquodque subsistit in forma et materia; ita procedunt in mentes angelicas, ut sint in eis principium cognoscendi res secundum suum totum esse in quo subsistunt. et sic per species influxas sibi ab arte divina angeli, non solum universalia, sed etiam particularia cognoscunt, sicut et deus.'; *ST*., Ia q. 57 a. 2 ad 3: 'dicendum quod angeli cognoscunt singularia per formas universales, quae tamen sunt similitudines rerum et quantum ad principia universalia, et quantum ad individuationis principia.'

[7] Bonaventura, *In II Sent*., d. 3 pars 2 art. 2 q. 1: 'angelus omnia cognoscit per species innatas. … Deus intellectum angelicum possibilem tot speciebus implevit, quod per illas poterat omnia cognoscere sine omni receptione. … Deus enim in angelis concreavit species universales omnium fiendarum rerum, et per illas certum est quod potest omnia universalia cognoscere: potest etiam in singularia, sed non nisi componat ad invicem, ut patet. Si ergo habeo penes me speciem figurae, speciem nominis, coloris et temporis, et componam ad invicem, sine nova receptione speciei cognoscam individuum ut in propria natura. Sed quia talis compositio, nisi esset secundum certitudinem et correspondentiam ad ipsam rem, esset fictio et deceptio; ideo angelus huiusmodi individua et singularia non cognoscit, nisi dirigat aspectum per ipsum cognoscibile, et, secundum illud quod est re, ipse componat species in se: et tunc habet ita claram et certam cognitionem de re, sicut si speciem statim reciperet. Et hoc positio magis placet, quia concors est rationi, et philosophiae, et Sacrae Scripturae: et patet responsio ad omnia objecta, si bene intelligatur.'

caused by these things (1.2).[8] Still others, denying the possibility of such a causative influence of material things on the angelic intellect, claim that they function only as occasions (1.3)[9] or terms of a cognitive relation (1.4).[10]

A similar distinction is to be found also among the immediatist critics of cognitive species. For whereas Scotus, Ockham and others see cognition as caused or partially caused by the thing (2.1),[11] other authors, denying the possibility of such a causative co-operation, maintain that cognition is only triggered by the thing, be it by their presence, as Durandus holds (2.2),[12] or by their existence, as Marsilius of Inghen claims (2.3).[13]

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[8] See William of la Mare, *Scriptum in secundum librum Sententiarum*, ed. H. Kraml (Munich, 1995), p. 71.

[9] John Peckham, *Quodl*., IV q. 17, ed. F. Delorme, rev. G.J. Etzkorn (Grottaferrata, 1989), p. 6: ' … angelus nihil recipit a rebus corporalibus nisi tantum occasionem assimilandi se rebus particularibus. … Dico ergo, sicut Philosophus dicit quod "intellectus est quodammodo omnia", id est, assimilabilis omnibus. … Praecedit igitur quaedam experientia ex communicatione praesentiae suae, et ex illa sequitur assimilatio perfecta et in particulari cum his quae sunt in medio, conferentibus ad hoc speciebus omnium universalium quas sibi habet angelus concreatas. … Et sic cognoscit angelus per applicationem specierum universalium formando in se nihilominus similitudinem particularium; unde species earum acquirit et non recipit.'

[10] Peter John Olivi, *In secundum librum Sententiarum*, q. 35, ed. B. Jansen (Quaracchi, 1922–26), p. 646, calls it 'probabilior … et magis catholicae fidei consona, nisi esset contraria communi opinioni' to explain angelic cognition 'per species ab intellectu genitas … ad praesentiam obiecti et praevia conversione et virtuali deflexione intellectus ad ipsum, ita quod obiectum cooperatur ibi per modum terminativi.'

[11] Landulphus Caracciolo, *Liber secundus super Sententias*, d. 11 (Venice, [1480?]), fol. gg 4va: '… angelus recipit a rebus aliquam notitiam. probatio. Angelus potest habere de aliquibus notitiam intuitivam sed istam angelus accipit a rebus. ergo etc. Maior patet quia de re praesente et existente angelus potest habere intuitivam notitiam. sed minor patet quia intuitiva non est angelis concreata nec potest haberi per species concreatas ergo accipitur a rebus.' – Johannes de Bassolis, *In II Sent*., d. 3 q. 3 (Paris, 1516), fol. 40ra: '… [angelus] potest cognoscere alia a se per substantias et essentias ipsorum cognitorum eis sufficienter praesentatas in re sive materialia sive immaterialia. Materialia enim sunt actu intelligibilia ab intellectu angelico quia actu sunt entia. nec est necessaria in aliqua talis abstractio sicut in nobis pro statu isto. Et dico quod talis talem noticiam intuitivam impedit nimia distantia obiecti: sed quanta praecise et determinate nescio. Secundo dico quod alia a se distincta intuitive sic cognoscat quod tot habet rationes cognoscendi necessario quot habet cognita …'. – Robert Holcot, *In II Sent*., q. 4 a. 6: 'De sexto utrum angelus acquirat cognitione a rebus. Dicit Thomas quod non … Ockham tenet quod sic de possibili. sed quid est de facto dicit quod nescit et hoc est verum: nec aliquis homo scire potest naturaliter planum est.'

[12] See Durandus of St Pourçain, *In II Sent*., d. 3 q. 7 n. 5, fol. 140ra: 'res … quae secundum se sunt praesentes intellectui alicuius Angeli … intuitive cognoscuntur ab Angelo absque alio repraesentativo.' Cf. fol. 140va: 'Singularia … si sint praesentia cognoscuntur … ab Angelo, nec est alia causa quaerenda, nisi quia sunt ei praesentia.'

[13] Marsilius of Inghen, *Quaestiones Marsilii super quattuor libros Sententiarum* (Strasbourg, 1501), fol. 330vb: 'dicatur quod angeli a corporalibus creaturis novas singulares cognitiones recipiunt et etiam de aliis. non quia corporalia in ea agant: sed quia suo lumine intellectuali de re posita in esse singularem cognitionem in se formant: videntes eam iam

Each way of explaining angelic cognition of material beings generates further problems. So, for instance, where the explanation of angelic cognition of material particulars is based on the assumption of innate general species, the problem arises how general species can ever provide cognition of individuals. Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure each offer different – and quite inventive – solutions. According to Aquinas, the innate universal species of the formal and material conditions of all things allow the angelic intellect to cognize the particular things by, as it were, cognitively simulating the metaphysical process of individuation.[14] Underlying this solution is an interesting notion of universality which can be described as a form of 'rich universality': the general species through which the angels cognize material beings do not function like general notions but rather, expressed in technical terms, like large-scale high-resolution screens, so that the highest possible angel needs only one universal monitor showing all things to him – for the higher an angel is in the hierarchy the less species are necessary for him.[15] According to Bonaventure, on the other hand, the angelic intellect achieves the cognition of individual beings by composing and combining the general species into some sort of intellectual bricolage.[16] Not attempting to draw a thorough account of all the problems involved in the discussion of angelic cognition of particulars and the different approaches, I will leave it at this. As I hope is by now clear, is the fact that the biblical portrayal of angels as custodians opened an ample field of epistemological questions which was much nurtured by the scholastic authors.

Renaissance angels

When we compare the highly complex and varied discussion of the scholastics with the Renaissance treatment of angels we find fundamental differences. Instead of concentrating on the epistemological question, Renaissance authors such as Ficino, Pico della Mirandola and Charles de Bovelles prefer to present cosmological tableaux

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positam in esse: quae antea eos latebant an fieret. Sic enim secundum tempus in se habent alias et alias cognitiones singulares successive.'

[14] See note 6. Cf. *In II Sent*., d. 3. q. 3. a. 3 co. Cf. *In II Sent*., d. 3. q. 3. a. 3 ad 1: 'dicendum, quod intellectus humanus est ultimus in gradu substantiarum intellectualium; et ideo est in eo maxima possibilitas respectu aliarum substantiarum intellectualium; et propter hoc recipit lumen intelligibile a deo debilius, et minus simile lumini divini intellectus; unde lumen intellectuale in eo receptum, non est sufficiens ad determinandum propriam rei cognitionem nisi per species a rebus receptas, quas oportet in ipso recipi formaliter secundum modum suum: et ideo ex eis singularia non cognoscuntur, quae individuantur per materiam, nisi per reflexionem quamdam intellectus ad imaginationem et sensum, dum scilicet intellectus speciem universalem, quam a singularibus abstraxit, applicat formae singulari in imaginatione servatae. sed in angelo ex ipso lumine determinantur species quibus fit propria rerum cognitio, sine aliquo alio accepto: et ideo cum illud lumen sit similitudo totius rei inquantum est exemplariter a deo traductum, per hujusmodi species propria singularium cognitio haberi potest …'

[15] Thomas Aquinas, *In II Sent*., d. 3. q. 3 a. 3 ad 3: '… dicendum, quod … quanto aliquis angelus est superior, tanto plura una specie cognoscere potest'.

[16] See note 7.

in which angels occupy a certain position in relation to which man's position in the cosmic order is determined.

Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499)

Whereas for the Pseudo-Dionysius the hierarchy of the angelic choruses, developed from Proclus's *enads*, provides the metaphysical connection between the divine and the worldly sphere, in Ficino's *theologia platonica* this function is taken over by the *anima mundi*. Here the nature of angels is such that they do not connect or mediate anything; rather, they need to be connected to the lower metaphysical levels of substance (*substantia*) and quality (*qualitas*) by means of the *anima*.[17] Within this metaphysical system the angels obtain a privileged position: while they turn themselves solely towards God,[18] they are – always unconcerned about the corporeal world – the object of contemplation of the rational soul attempting to imitate them.[19]

Taking into account that (according to a famous dictum by Gregory the Great) 'angel' is a 'vocational' title,[20] it is clear that Ficino is talking about *intelligentiae* rather than about angels. They are described exclusively along the lines of Platonist philosophy. Indeed, Ficino's account does not echo the biblical portrayal of the angelic office within the material world, a portrayal that brought about the scholastic discussions on angelic cognition of corporeal particular things despite their pure intellectual nature. A view on angels similar to Ficino's can be found in the writings of Pico della Mirandola.

Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494)

With the list of 900 theses which he published in 1486 as material for discussion with philosophers from all over the world, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola shows his acquaintance with the issues of scholastic angelology as well as with the main

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[17] Marsilio Ficino, *Theologia platonica* (Paris, 1559 [reprint Hildesheim and New York, 1975]), fol. 43r: 'Quoniam angelus quidem, ut Platonici dicunt, vere est, id est stat semper, qualitas semper fit, id est movetur aliquando: ideo qualitas omnino differt ab angelo: tum quia haec movetur, ille manet: tum quia haec sit aliquando, ille est semper: ergo opus est medio, quod partim cum angelo, partim cum qualitate conveniat. … ideo medium erit illud quod semper fit, id est movetur. … inter illa quae sunt aeterna solum, atque illa quae solum sunt temporalia, esse animam quasi quoddam vinculum utrorunque.'

[18] Marsilio Ficino, *Theologia platonica*, fol. 43v: 'Deus et corpus extrema sunt in natura: et invicem diversissima. Angelus haec non ligat. Nempe in deum totus erigitur: corpora negligit. Iure perfectissima et proxima creatura dei, fit tota divina, transitque in deum.'

[19] Marsilio Ficino, *Theologia platonica*, fol. 42v: '… apud Platonicos anima rationalis perpetuo quodam lumine deum quoddammodo et angelum cogitat sive auguratur: seque ipsam appetit ad eorum similitudinem pingere, tum speculatione, tum moribus atque actione, sese paulatim formando, se movet.'

[20] See Isidorus of Sevilla, *Etymologiae* 7, 5, 2: 'angelorum autem vocabulum officii nomen est non naturae semper enim spiritus sunt sed cum mittuntur vocantur angeli.'

arguments on angelic cognition.[21] He seems to have had in mind a discussion with Henry of Ghent's angelo-epistemological position when, in a group of 13 'Conclusiones secundum Henricum Gandauensem', he mentions the thesis that 'angels know by an innate cognitive disposition.'[22]

As is well-known, what was intended to become the first international philosophical congress never took place, so we do not know what Pico would have made of this thesis or in which way he would have answered – as he had promised – questions such as: what is the difference between the mode of cognition of angels and the mode of cognition of rational souls? ('Que sit differencia inter modum intelligendi angelorum, et animarum racionalium'); what is the difference between the mode of cognition of God and the angels? ('Que sit differencia inter modum intelligendi Dei et angelorum'), and whether the sensible forms are intellectually in the angel ('Utrum forme sensibiles sint intelligibiliter in angelo')'.[23] On the other hand, taking into account Pico's so-called *Oratio de dignitate hominis*, written as an introduction to the 900 theses, it is likely that he would have answered these rather standard questions in quite an unusual way. For in this text Pico is assigning to man his metaphysical place within the system of the creation by contrasting human existence both with that of the animals and with that of the angels: '[as] the brutes, from the moment of their birth, bring with them … all that they will ever possess', so

> the highest spiritual beings were, from the very moment of creation, or soon thereafter, fixed in the mode of being which would be theirs through measureless eternities. But upon man, at the moment of his creation, God bestowed seeds pregnant with all possibilities, the germs of every form of life. Whichever of these a man shall cultivate, the same will mature and bear fruit in him. If vegetative, he will become a plant; if sensual, he will become brutish; if rational, he will reveal himself a heavenly being; if intellectual, he will be an angel and the son of God.[24]

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[21] See Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Conclusiones sive Theses DCCCC* (Rome, 1486), ed. B. Kieszkowski (Geneva, 1973), ch. 2 (Conclusiones secundum Thomam numero XXXIV), th. 21: 'Non est sub eodem specie angelorum plurificatio.' Cf. ch. 30 (Conclusiones philosophice secundum propriam opinionem numero LXXX), th. 65: 'Licet potencia intellectiua in nobis sit accidens, in angelis tamen est substancia.'; chap. 31 (Conclusiones paradoxe numero LXXI. secundum opinionem propriam noua in philosophia dogmata inducentes), th. 63: 'Quamuis in anima ita sit actu natura intellectualis, per quam cum angelo conuenit, sicut est natura racionalis, per quam ab eo distinguitur. Nichil tamen intrinsecum est in ea, per quod possit sine propria specie aliquid a se distinctum intelligere.'

[22] Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Conclusiones*, ch. 5, th. 7: 'angeli intelligunt per habitum sciencialem sibi connaturalem.'

[23] Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, *Conclusiones*, ch. 36 (Questiones ad quas pollicetur se per numeros responsurum), th. 28, 29, 41.

[24] G. Pico della Mirandola, *Oratio de dignitate hominis*, § 6: 'Bruta simul atque nascuntur id secum afferunt … quod possessura sunt. Supremi spiritus aut ab initio aut paulo mox id fuerunt, quod sunt futuri in perpetuas aeternitates. Nascenti homini omnifaria semina et omnigenae vitae germina indidit Pater. Quae quisque excoluerit illa adolescent, et fructus suos ferent in illo. Si vegetalia planta fiet, si sensualia obrutescet, si rationalia caeleste evadet animal, si intellectualia angelus erit et Dei filius.'

In contrast to the brutes and the angels who both – however different – are just what they are, 'man is born under the condition that he has to be what he wants to be' ('hac nati sumus conditione, ut id simus quod esse volumus.')[25] In this cosmological scenario the angel does not function as a mediator between god and man, who would therefore need to have some kind of cognitive contact with the material world. The angel functions rather as an aiming point of human existence and as a model for the self-styling of the philosopher. For, as Pico (talking about his own profession) advises his reader,

> If … you see a philosopher, … him shall you hold in veneration, for he is a creature of heaven and not of earth; if, finally, a pure contemplator, unmindful of the body, wholly withdrawn into the inner chambers of the mind, here indeed is neither a creature of earth nor a heavenly creature, but some higher divinity, clothed in human flesh.[26]

It is mainly in order to justify such an apotheosis or angelification of the philosopher that the angel is needed. For, as Pico claims, 'it is not freedom from a body, but its spiritual intelligence, which makes the angel.'[27] Instead of discussing possible ways of accommodating angels to the sphere of corporeal human beings the idea is, quite to the contrary, to invest man with an angelic mode of being. It is man's duty to 'disdain things of earth, hold as little worth even the astral orders and, putting behind (him) … the things of this world, hasten to that court beyond the world, closest to the most exalted Godhead. There, as the sacred mysteries tell us, the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones occupy the first places; but, unable to yield to them, and impatient of any second place, let us emulate their dignity and glory. And, if we will it, we shall be inferior to them in nothing.'[28]

Charles de Bovelles (after 1470 – between 1553 and 1567)

A similar yet somewhat different scenario is presented in the *Liber de intellectu* (1510) by Charles de Bovelles, a disciple of Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples and one of the leading members of his humanist circle at Paris. The philosophy of Bovelles in general and his comparison of the angelic and the human intellect in particular is structured according to a long list of complementary notions. One could even say, without doing him an injustice, that his entire doctrine – showing in this respect the

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[25] G. Pico della Mirandola, *Oratio*, § 10, n. 48.

[26] G. Pico della Mirandola, *Oratio*, § 8, n. 41–2.: 'Si recta philosophum ratione omnia discernentem, hunc venereris; caeleste est animal, non terrenum. 42. Si purum contemplatorem corporis nescium, in penetralia mentis relegatum, hic non terrenum, non caeleste animal: hic augustius est numen humana carne circumvestitum.'

[27] G. Pico della Mirandola, *Oratio*, § 8, n. 39: '… nec sequestratio corporis, sed spiritalis intelligentia angelum facit.'

[28] G. Pico della Mirandola, *Oratio*, § 10, n. 51–3: 'Dedignemur terrestria, caelestia contemnamus, et quicquid mundi est denique posthabentes, ultramundanam curiam eminentissimae divinitati proximam advolemus. 52. Ibi, ut sacra tradunt mysteria, Seraphin, Cherubin et Throni primas possident; horum nos iam cedere nescii et secundarum impatientes et dignitatem et gloriam emulemur. 53. Erimus illis, cum voluerimus, nihilo inferiores.'

influence of Raymund Lull – consists in the thorough explanation of notional pairs such as *actus/potentia*, *lux/tenebrae*, *scientia/ignoratio*, *immediatum/mediatum*, *natura/ars*, *immobilis/mobilis*, *impassibilis/passibilis*, *affirmativum/negativum*, *praesentia/distantia*, *interius/exterius*, where in each case the first notion is conceived as the perfection of the second. Because there is no internal limitation to this game of contrasting perfection and imperfection, the angelic intellect is portrayed as distinct from the divine intellect only in its attribute of being created.

The *intellectus angelicus* functions as a counterpart or contrast medium for the human intellect and at the same time as the final aim of the metaphysical development of the *intellectus humanus*. The account which follows from these premises is one of an initial radical opposition and a final coincidence. The *intellectus angelicus* is characterized as 'a pure act which contains no potentiality' ('actus purus cui nihil inest potentie'),[29] so that from the very start it *is* everything such that it can *become* nothing, whereas the *intellectus humanus* is initially nothing but is finally destined to become everything.[30] While the former is the essence of all things, the latter is in potentiality to all.[31] The angel's intellect has from the start the knowledge of all things, for as *actus purus* it is all that can ever be.[32] Whereas the angelic intellect is the affirmation of all things, the human intellect, in its primary state, is characterized by pure negativity. The angelic intellect is pure presence, the presence and actuality of all things; the human intellect by contrast means distance and future potentiality ('angelicus intellectus est ut omnium presentia / instantia / et actus. Humanus ut omnium distantia / potentia / et futurum.')[33]

In what concerns knowledge, the angel's intellect is described in a way that was normally reserved for God's omniscience.[34] The angels, totally separated from species, sense and matter, do nothing but constantly contemplate themselves or

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[29] Charles de Bovelles, *Liber de intellectu* (Paris, 1510), fol. 3v.

[30] Charles de Bovelles, *Liber de intellectu*, fol. 4r: '… ut angelicus intellectus ab initio omnia est et nichil fieri potest: ita et humanus omnia ab initio fieri potest, nichil est. Simplex purus et separatus actus / omne esse claudit: omne vero posse omnemve potentiam excludit. … creavit igitur Deus: omnia antequam fierent / in angelico intellectu, qui est actu omnia …'.

[31] Charles de Bovelles, *Liber de intellectu*, fol. 4r: 'angelicus intellectus / est omnium essentia: ita et humanus omnium potentia et nulla essentia. In fine tamen est et omnium essentia. … Perficitur enim tempore / intellectus humanus: fitque omnia aliud et aliud / quoad omnia factus est.'

[32] Charles de Bovelles, *Liber de intellectu*, fol. 3v: 'Angelicus … intellectus / simul atque factus est: omnia immobiliter didiscit. Humano autem intellectui / innata est rerum omnium ignorantia: quem necesse est actione / propria circulatione et arte: in rerum omnium pervenire noticiam. Angelicus intellectus est purus actus: cui nichil inest potentie. Is igitur ab initio est quicquid esse potest: et nichil aliud fieri natus est.'

[33] Charles de Bovelles, *Liber de intellectu*, fol. 4v.

[34] See Charles de Bovelles, *Liber de intellectu*, fol. 4v–5r: '… angelicus intellectus … antequam omnia fierent novit ipse omnia. Nam eo ipso quod est: omnia est. … Non itaque omnia evasit per omnium species. Ut qui antequam essent ulle rerum species / erat omnia … Novit igitur angelicus intellectus omnia / non per ipsorum omnium species. Sed simpliciter et per se intuitu et contemplatione sui esse / antquam omnia fierent. Est enim esse angelicum purus actus: et esse quiddam omnium / ante omne esse: primave et simplicissima omnium conceptio. … in eo ipso: idem sunt esse et scire / essentia et scientia.'

God,[35] whereas the contemplating human intellect is the *anima mundi*, in and through which the world (*mundus*) is, as it were, contemplating and becoming acknowledged with itself, thus becoming a 'universe'.[36]

The angels reformed

In examining the status of the angels in Reformation theology one must keep in mind that Reformation thought in general is characterized by an elaborate immediacy as it were, that is, a deliberate omission of all mediating entities – except for the one and only sufficient mediator: Christ. The reformers renounced the *patres* and the *traditio* in favour of their principle of *sola scriptura*; and they abandoned the necessity of good deeds and the intercession of the saints in favour of their principle of *sola fide*. Martin Luther, partly responsible for Dionysius's negative qualification as the 'Pseudo-Areopagite' has in this way drained the main source of medieval angelology. Through the second of Luther's *Smalcald articles* (1537) the veneration of the angels is explicitly prohibited. For, as Luther says, 'although the angels in heaven pray for us (as Christ Himself also does), … yet it does not follow thence that we should invoke and adore the angels …, and …, hold festivals, celebrate Mass in their honor, … and in still other ways serve them, and regard them as helpers in need [as patrons and intercessors], … as the Papists teach and do. For this is idolatry, and such honor belongs alone to God.'

The angelic vocation seems thus to be threatened with extinction. In this light, Heinrich Heine's statement (*Beiträge zur deutschen Ideologie*) that with Dionysius Luther has thrown over board 'the whole celestial crew' gains relevance. This impression appears confirmed by Philip Melanchthon's *Loci theologici*, the first and for a long time the most authoritative systematic presentation of protestant theology. Melanchthon wrote three rather different versions of it, one in 1521, a second in 1534 and a last one in 1543, published not earlier than 1559. If we look at these texts, we find that in the first version angels are totally absent; in the second version the final one or two pages are dedicated to angels, portrayed in very general traits within the context of the doctrine of God's creation; and in the third version they vanish

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[35] Charles de Bovelles, *Liber de intellectu*, fol. 8r: 'angelicus intellectus [est] interior et contemplativus: humanus vero … exterior et activus. Angelicus intellectus / a tribus separatus est et abiunctus: a specie / a sensu / et a materia. quibus humanus addictus est et coniunctus. … angelicus intellectus ... ab iis que extra se sunt / ut a creaturis: nichil capit. Habet enim et est omnia a natura … [8v] Est igitur angelicus intellectus solum contemplativus. ut cuius est simplex et unica operatio: que interna meditatio et contemplatio vocitatur.'

[36] *Liber de sapiente* (Paris, 1510), fol. 129r: 'Si Homo, precipue Sapiens, est Anima mundi: tam utique necessarius est Homo mundo quam corpori Anima. Et eo pacto Universi pars erit Homo, quo et totius Hominis pars est Anima. Et si Homo, ut Sapiens, suiipsius capax seque ipsum nosse predicatur: dicendum et Universum sui capax, semetipsum nosse seque posse intueri. Nam nosse seipsum dictitatur Homo, quod in seipsum redeat quodve pars eius altera alteri objiciatur atque presentetur. Est enim Homo mundi Anima; mundus vero et quicquid sub celo visite, Hominis est ut corpus. Et ex Homine et mundo fit id, quod dicimus Universum.'

again from the main text, to be confined to an appendix consisting in some sort of 'church glossary'.

So, was Heinrich Heine right? Did the Reformers really feel no need for angels? In a way, I think that the opposite is the case. But in order to find the new place the angels have been assigned we have to go beyond the borders of philosophical and theological historiography towards the history of mentality. Admittedly, angels are no longer the subject of legitimate philosophical or theological debate for early Protestant authors. For man does not know and does not *have* to know their precise nature. What a spiritual substance is pertains to what we will learn in eternal life, Melanchthon claims, criticizing those who go on quarrelling on topics irrelevant for salvation.[37] But the exclusion of angels from the sphere of philosophical debate is only one side of truth. The other side is their significant presence in the hymns, sermons and – above all – in everyday life. Here, Melanchthon is convinced, their acting is ubiquitously present and evident. For angels are – in sharp contrast to their portrayal in Renaissance Platonism – neither haughty nor arrogant ('non sunt superbi et insolentes'), not despising the humble works of men, but rather acting as guardians (*custodes*) of our roofs, rooms and furnaces.[38] They protect the economical, ecclesiastical and political bodies ('custodiunt corpora in oeconomia, in Ecclesia, et Politica'), such that 'in the Church they defend the good doctors' and 'in politics… the good rulers' ('in Ecclesia … defendunt bonos doctores', and 'in Politia defenduntur boni gubernatores per angelos').[39] More patent, however, is the contribution of angels to housekeeping. Our daily experience cannot fail to convince us, Melanchthon feels, about the existence of angels – good and bad. For just as the recurrence of conflagrations shows evidence of the existence of bad angels, the fact that they do not occur more frequently is definite proof of the existence of good ones.[40] More importantly: mothers could not take good care of their children without angelic assistance: 'matres non possent fovere et servare sua diligentia liberos, nisi

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[37] See Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, in *Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. C.G. Bretschneider and H.E. Bindseil (Halle and Braunschweig, 1834–60 [reprint New York, London and Frankfurt, 1963]), vol. 28, p. 573: 'Dixi, angelos esse substantiam spiritualem, in vita aeterna discemus, qualis res sit spiritus. Nunc aliud nihil scimus, quam quod angeli sint tales naturae, non sunt praeditae corporibus …'; ibid., p. 580: 'Videtis aliquos non facere finem rixarum, etiam in iis, de quibus homo potest suspendere iudicium. Tantum de iis oportet dimicare, quae ad fundamentum salutis pertinent.'

[38] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, pp. 571–2: '… non sunt superbi et insolentes. Sunt custodes, miserrimi generis humani, cum ipsi sint [572] sapientissimae et praestantissimae creaturae Dei; non fastidiunt has viles operas, ut sunt custodes nostrarum tectorum, cubiculorum, lychnorum, caminorum. Cogitate tantum, quanta sit in hoc oppido negligentia, in custotiendis et observandis lychnis: unde facile existunt pericula incendiorum. Et, si hoc nostrum oppidum non defenderetur singulari cura angelorum, non esset possibile, tam diu servatum esse, et servari posse: tanta est incuria hominum.'

[39] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, p. 597.

[40] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, pp. 587–8: 'Quoties oriuntur incendia, *dass niemand weiss*, *woher sie kommen*, illi sunt tuti, qui … defenduntur per Angelos: *sie sitzen bey dem* fornace, tegunt nostras casulas, et tuguriola.'

auxiliantibus angelis'.[41] 'No human effort, Melanchthon goes on, 'would ever be sufficient to watch over babies and children without the vigilance of the angels'.[42] It would be impossible to educate a child if God did not protect it by means of angelic assistance, for the devil is constantly laying ambush for the children.[43]

Melanchthon's touching and heart-warming image of angels has however its dark side: for the presence of angels is just the reverse of the ubiquitous presence and activity of devils, demons and spectres in everyday life. Thus, in a way, Protestant angelology is just a function of their demonology, such that belief in angels is closely connected to belief in ghosts. Indeed, in all the passages in which Melanchthon addresses the question about the existence of angels ('an sint Angeli?') he begins by giving evidence for the existence of demons and devils. Their reality is testified by the authority of the Bible as well as by common experience[44] Melanchthon presents long accounts on the activities of ghosts and the apparition of spectres[45] And Melanchthon himself assures us to have seen spectres and angels several times ('Ich habs mehr denn einmal gesehen').[46]

For him angels are not, as they were in scholastic philosophy, a subject of theoretical discussion but rather a very concrete matter and an object of experience; and they are not, as they were for Renaissance Platonists, transcendental beings with no relation to the material world, but rather an integral part of everyday life. Angels are, as Melanchthon tells us, sitting by the fire watching that it does not cause damage ('Itzt sitzen die Engel vor dem Offen, et custodiunt ignem, das es nicht schaden thue').[47] They even keep 'our frantic and wasted bodies when we are drunk, so that we will not fall into the ditch and die.'[48] Melanchthon also assures us that angels take to reading our books ('libenter legunt etiam in nostris libris').[49]

To the question, put forward by Melanchthon, 'where are angels?' ('ubi sunt Angeli?'), we can therefore answer with certainty: not in the early Protestant theological textbooks. But on the other hand, the air surrounding us is full of angels

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[41] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, p. 577.

[42] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, p. 577: 'Nulla diligentia humana sufficeret ad conservationem natorum et familiarum, sine excubiis angelorum: qui etiam sunt custodes domuncularum nostrarum, culinarum, cellularum, caminorum, lychnorum.'

[43] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, p. 587: '*Es were unmuglich*, *ein kind zu erziehen*, *wenn Gott die kindlein nicht sonderlich bewaret* per angelos; quia Diabolus insidiatur infantibus.'

[44] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, p. 581: 'Multi homines vident spectra, *das sind gemeinlich teuffel*. Multi alii viderunt etiam sanctos angelos.'

[45] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, pp. 593–4: 'Multi homines viderunt et vident spectra singulis temporibus … Historiae Ethnicarum plenae sunt illarum rerum. … Non debitis dubitare, quin sint spectra, et illa spectra sunt Diaboli. Interdum boni angeli cernuntur: sed rarius.'

[46] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, p. 595

[47] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, p. 593.

[48] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, p. 556: 'Ita Angeli sunt ordinati ad operas, *zu frohndienst*, *dass sie ... auch deinem tollen*, *vollen corpori dienen*, *wenn du truncken bist*, *dass du nicht in Graben falst und umbkommest*'.

[49] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, p. 588.

and demons ('illum totum aerem esse plenum bonorum, et malorum angelorum'). If Melanchthon is right, then, we are permanently surrounded by good and bad angels ('In isto auditorio sunt boni et mali angeli').[50] What will the angels have learned by now? Perhaps this: each tradition has the angels it needs and deserves. The scholastics needed angels as objects of subtle speculations and as elements of intricate thought-experiments. Renaissance Platonists needed them for determining the cosmological position of man. Finally, the Reformation needed the angels in order to counter the actions of the devil. In other words, and summing up rather crassly: with scholastic angelology we have philosophy plus Bible; with Renaissance authors we see Neoplatonist philosophy without Bible; and in early Reformation thought we find the Bible (spiced up with an overbearing imagination) without philosophy.

[50] Philipp Melanchthon, *Postilla Melanchthoniana*, p. 596.

Chapter 13

On Angelic Bodies: Some Philosophical Discussions in the Seventeenth Century

Anja Hallacker

Introduction

Most of us are influenced by famous representations of angels in works of art. From very early on we find angels in human form and from the fifth century onwards they are endowed with wings and nimbus.[1] Thus, whenever we think about angels we imagine them as corporeal figures. This is surely no philosophical proof for the corporeality of angels. But Joannes Argenterius, an anti-Galenic medical writer, suggests in his *De Somno et Vigilia* – published in 1556 – that people believe in a lucid, shining spirit

> because they have seen angels, and other divine numina, represented by painters with a certain splendour and light, and have heard that these are spirits and are so called by theologians; so that in consequence they think that the spirituous stuff in our bodies must be similar.[2]

Argenterius reproaches these artistic representations of angels for leading people to believe in the existence and visibility of spiritous bodies and that this spiritous matter is the very stuff the angelic body and the lively and movable part of the human body is made of. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century we find the idea of corporeal spirits frequently in the philosophical and medical discussions; for

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[1] See for instance Reinhold Hammerstein, *Die Musik der Engel: Untersuchungen zur Musikanschauung des Mittelalters* (2nd edn, Bern, 1990), p. 201.

[2] Quoted from Daniel P. Walker, 'The Astral Body in Renaissance Medicine', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 21 (1958): 119–33, here: p. 128. Reprinted in Daniel P. Walker, *Music*, *Spirit and Language in the Renaissance*, ed. Penelope Gouk (London: Variorum, 1985). Latin text: 'Qui verò spiritum substantiam lucidam, & splendidam esse statuunt, videntur mihi in hanc opinionem venisse, quòd cernerent angelos, aliaque divina numina, cum splendore quodam, & lumine à pictoribus representari, eaque audiant spiritus esse, & vocari à Theologis: adeo ut postea putent, simile esse debere, quicquid in nostro corpore spirituosum est.' Joannes Argenterius, *De Somno et Vigilia Libri Duo, in quibus continentur duae tractationes de calido nativo, et de spiritibus* (Florence, 1556), p. 279.

example in Aristotelian psychology where the notion of an *organic soul* appears,[3] as well as in alchemical and cabbalistic debates.[4]

Moreover and in contrast to early medieval debates, there are rich and abundant discussions in early modern times, questioning whether angels have bodies or are bodies, and inquiring about the sort of matter that might constitute the angelic body. Why had this become a subject of theoretical consideration? One indication might be the context which often frames the discussion about the corporeality of angels: the debate on the resurrection of human bodies. Closely connected to this is a second idea: the Renaissance theory of etherial or astral bodies, according to which these bodies are corporeal but immortal, since they are part of the human soul connecting it to the terrestrial body.[5]

In this paper I intend to offer some preliminary answers to the question of why the idea of angelic *bodies* occurs in philosophical considerations of the seventeenth century. In answering this question I shall resort to two points: (1) the definitions of *spirit* and *body* in medical and Neoplatonist philosophical theories, and (2) the descriptions of angelic bodies in works such as Jakob Böhme's *Aurora. That is the Day-Spring*, Henry More's *The Immortality of the soul* and Anne Conway's *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*.

Spiritus, aetherial body and angelic body in Early Modern Times

In the seventeenth century we encounter a puzzling mixture of several theoretical subjects: the Galenic medical *spiritus*, the Neoplatonist *astral* or *aetherial body*, the Christian *resurrected body* and the vision of *angelic bodies*. This mishmash

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[3] he discussions on the *organic soul* in sixteenth and seventeenth century are elaborated in Katharine Park, 'The organic soul', in Charles B. Schmitt, Quentin Skinner, Eckhard Kessler and Jill Kraye (eds), *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 464–84.

[4] A brief description is given by Daniel Fouke, *The enthusiastical Concerns of Dr. Henry More. Religious Meaning and the Psychology of Delusion* (Leiden, New York and Cologne: Brill, 1997), see especially chapter III: 'Thomas Vaughan and the alchemical world'. For our context see also: Allison P. Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century. The Life and Thought of Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614–1698)* (Leiden, New York and Cologne: Brill, 1999); Allison P. Coudert, 'Henry More, the Kabbalah, and the Quakers', in R. Ashcraft, R. Kroll, P. Zagorin (eds), *Philosophy, Science, and Religion in England (1640–1700)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 31–67; Sarah Hutton, 'Of Physics and Philosophy. Anne Conway, F.M. van Helmont and seventeenth-century medicine', in Ole Peter Grell, Andrew Cunningham (eds), *Religio Medici* (Aldershot and Brookfield: Ashgate, 1996), pp. 228–46; G.M. Ross, 'Occultism and Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century', in A.J. Holland (ed.), *Philosophy, Its History and Historiography* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1985), pp. 95–115.

[5] The aetherial or astral bodies were also said to protect the terrestrial body against weapons, as can be seen in the works of Johann Baptist van Helmont (fifteenth chapter of the *Aufgang der Artzney-Kunst*) and Robert Fludd (third book of the *Philosophia Mosaica*). On aetherial bodies as visible ghosts see Yvonne Wübben, *Gespenster und Gelehrte: Die ästhetische Lehrprosa G.F. Meiers (1718–1777)* (forthcoming).

provided fertile ground for all who had an interest either in blurring the distinction between matter and spirit or in denying the division between the two forms of reality: the sensible and the divine. In examining this subject I will first follow some theses which Daniel P. Walker proposed in his works on the Renaissance theory of medical spirits. He refers to Book IV of Jean Fernel's *Physiologia*, first published in *De Naturali Parte Medicinae*, in 1542. In the second chapter Fernel describes the process of emanation of a soul into the earthly world. On the occasion of its creation the soul

> put on as a simple garment a certain shining, pure body like a star, which, being immortal and eternal, could never be detached nor torn away from the soul, and without which it could not become an inhabitant of this world.[6]

This 'pure body', Fernel explains, is created by God and is an initial part of the soul and deriving from a celestial matter. As it migrates into the sublunary sphere, the soul is again surrounded with a material stuff:

> also fine and simple, but less pure, less shining and splendid than the first, not created by a supreme maker, but compounded of a mixture of the finer elements, whence it is named aerial and etherial. Clothed with these two bodies the soul, entering this frail and mortal body …, becomes a guest of the earth until, having broken from this prison and having returned, joyful and free, to its home, it is made a fellow-citizen of the gods.[7]

This second body the soul is clothed within, is named by Fernel the *aerial and etherial body*. In the seventeenth century it is very common[8] to identify this aetherial body with the corporeal or vital spirits of Galenic medicine. The different grades of the *spiritus* had been interpreted as material parts of the human soul, sometimes mortal, sometimes immortal, and had been understood as a link between the terrestrial human body and the immaterial part of the human soul.

Taking angels as purely spiritual beings, unconnected from all terrestrial body, the human soul can be distinguished from them with regard to its capability and

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[6] Quoted from Walker, 'The Astral Body', p. 119. Latin text: '… censuerunt corpore quodam illustri, puro & astro simili tanquam simplici veste indui: quod immortale & sempiternum nunquam ab animo absolvi divellique posset, & sine quo non fieret hujus mundi incola." Ioannes Fernelii Ambiani, *Medicina* (Paris, 1554), p. 104.

[7] Quoted from Walker, 'The Astral Body', p. 119. Latin text: 'Ad hoc deinde alterum corpus animo circumjecerunt, tenue illud quidem ac simplex, sed tamen impurius, minùs illustre & splendidum superiore: non ab summo it opifice procreatum, verùm, elementorum praesertimque tenuiorum permistione concretum, à quibus nomen inveniens aëreum & aethereum appelatur. Duobus disce corporibus jam stipatus animus, in tertium hoc mortale caducumque corpus …, terrarum fit hospes, donec effracto carcere alacer & liber in patriam reversus, municeps fiat & civis deorum.' Fernel, *Medicina*, p. 104.

[8] Walker refers to Melanchthon's *De Anima* (1555), Servetus's *Cristianismi Restitutio* (1553), Antonio Persio's *Trattato dell' ingegno dell' huomo* (1576), Vives's *De Anima et Vita* (1555) and Bodin's *Le Theatre de la Nature Universelle* (1597). See Daniel P. Walker, 'Francis Bacon and *Spiritus*', in A.G. Debus (ed.), *Science, Medicine and Society in the Renaissance* (New York 1972), vol. 2, pp. 121–30, esp. p. 125. Reprinted in Walker, *Music, Spirit and Language in the Renaissance*.

necessity to be embodied. On the other hand, there are biblical and theological traces of the relationship of angels to redeemed and glorified human souls: both are named *sons or children of God* (Job 38,7), sharing the same part of the cosmos (*mundus intellectibilis*, the 'divine intellectual world' in the Platonic tradition). And sometimes we even find the claim that the disembodied souls become angels (Jean Bodin, Jakob Böhme). Following this line of thought, Augustine's tenets in *De civitate Dei* do not come as a surprise. Pondering on the creation and the fall of angels (and man), he points out that man, corresponding to his first creation, had a middle position between angels and animals. By living a pious life man will finally be contained in the circle of angels without dying. Unfortunately, man lived (and still lives) a sinful life and has thus been doomed to die. But upon receiving forgiveness at the Final Judgement man regains – according to Augustine – the chance to enjoy peaceful communion with the holy angels. That man is doomed to die is not only brought about by the embodiment in terrestrial matter, it is also implied by the division of body and soul on the occasion of death. With regard to this point Augustine draws an intriguing distinction. The disembodied soul does not solely leave the prison of the terrestrial body but has to endure a certain time separated from the body that originally belongs to it. Thus, immortality means imperishable life in the sense of an eternal connection of soul and body. This – Augustine claims – is the divine gift presented to angels as well as to man in the status of paradise. Man of course lost this gift and had to suffer a death that separates the soul from the body that inherently belongs to it since creation until the Final Judgement. Augustine suggests that the souls of the pious enjoy a blissful existence during this interval, but the final reward they eagerly strive for is the final reunion with their bodies. This view on the resurrection makes it seem desirable for human beings as well as for angels to have both, a soul and a body. As was made clear, this body is not a terrestrial body but a spiritual one.[9]

Like many other authors, Augustine presupposes the Galenic conception of various spiritual grades which function like intermediaries between soul and body. In early modern times these *spirits* are interpreted as *aerial* and *etherial bodies* to support the idea that an immaterial soul could be connected to a material terrestrial body. Fernel distinguishes three types of bodies in which a soul is clothed, by appealing to theses that had been questioned in the theological resurrection-debates. As has been shown by Isabel Mackinnon, Daniel P. Walker, and recently by Fernando Vidal,[10] the resurrection of the body is quite a prevalent theme in the seventeenth century discussions on the immortality of the soul. By focusing on the Incarnation of Christ, some of the authors from the Reformation turn speculation about immortality towards resurrection. In all eternity, as Melanchthon claims, man 'shall look upon

[9] See Augustinus, *De ciuitate Dei* XII, 16: 'De philosophis, qui animae separationem a corpore non putant esse poenalem, cum Plato inducat summum Deum diis minoribus promittentem, quod numquam sint corporibus exuendi.' *De ciuitate Dei* XII, 19: 'Contra eorum dogmata, qui primos homines, si non peccassent, immortales futuros fuisse non credunt, aeternitatem animarum volunt carere corporibus.'

[10] Fernando Vidal, 'Brains, Bodies, Selves, and Science: Anthropologies of Identity and the Resurrection of the Body', *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (2002): 930–74. This study registers the recent literature on this subject and gives a thorough survey of the history of this debate.

Christ with his eyes, shall hear Christ with his ears and with his embrace he shall greet Him'.[11] The shape of the human body, with arms, legs, head, eyes, ears, nose and mouth becomes the model and likeness for the body of every rational being apart from God himself.

In what follows I shall present some examples of the concept of angelic bodies in the seventeenth century, beginning with Jakob Böhme, a German philosopher who was well known by the Cambridge Platonists Henry More and Anne Conway, whose positions I will analyze afterwards.[12] In discussing these texts, I will examine some aspects of the current school of Neoplatonist philosophy in the seventeenth century and the most influential source for the reception of Böhme's works in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century.

Jakob Böhme (1575–1624): *Aurora. That is, the Day-Spring*[13]

In response to the question which kind of body angels have, Jakob Böhme answered as follows:

> As man is created to be the image and similitude of God, *so also* are the angels, for they are the *brethren of men*, and *men in the resurrection will have no other form* or image *than the angels have*, as our King CHRIST himself testifieth [Matt. XXII. 30]. Besides, the angels *never* shewed themselves in any *other* form or shape to men here on earth, than in a *human* form and shape. Therefore seeing that in the resurrection we shall be like the angels, the angels must needs be shaped and figured like us, or else we must assume to ourselves *another* image or shape in the resurrection, which would be against and *contrary* to the first creation. … Also *when Christ went to heaven, two angels hovered in the clouds* [Acts I. 11], *and said to the disciples, Ye men of Israel, what do you look after? This JESUS shall come again, as you have seen HIM go away to heaven*. Thus it is plain and clear enough that he will come again in the same form at the last day, with a *divine* and glorified body, as a Prince of the holy angels, which will be the men-angels. The spirit also testifieth clearly that angels and men have one and the *same* image; for out of the same

[11] See Melanchthon, *Commentarius de Anima* (Vitebergae, 1540): 'Esse etiam arcanam causam cur ipse filius Dei induerit humanam naturam. Hunc in omni aeternitate tuis oculis intueberis, audies auribus tuis disserentem de sapientia divina, tuo complexu ipsum salutabis.' Revised version in Melanchthon, *Opera omnia* (Corp. Ref.), XIII; here quoted from Melanchthon, *De Anima Liber Unus* (Lugduni, 1555), p. 94.

[12] See Sarah Hutton, 'Henry More and Jacob Boehme', in Sarah Hutton (ed.), *Henry More (1614–1687)*: *Tercentenary Studies* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990), pp. 157–71. Cf. Jean-Pierre Schobinger (ed.), *Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts 3: England*, in *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie: Begründet von Friedrich Ueberweg* (Basel: Schwabe, 1988), ch. 2 § 5, pp. 75–82. The philosophical texts I selected from Böhme and More are the mainly discussed texts of these authors in the seventeenth century. Conway is an important philosophical colleague of More, her treatise deals with fascinating issues with regard to our question, but it has not been influential in her own time.

[13] The german text was written in 1612 and passed on as a manuscript. In 1647 John Sparrow started to translate the works of Böhme, and these translations were known in Cambridge. See Michael Halls: 'Böhme-Rezeption', in Schobinger (ed.), *Die Philosophie des 17. Jahrhunderts 3: England*, pp. 75–82.

> place wherein Lucifer sat, and *out of* which he was made, God hath made *another angel* instead of expulsed Lucifer and his legions, which angel was ADAM ….[14]

Adam is an angel, angels have bodies, but the difference between angelic and human bodies rests on the Fall. Man is born as an angel and becomes an angel again after resurrection. According to Böhme, the stuff that makes up an angelic body is the divine power. This power is God Himself, but in Him this power is eternal, being one power and several powers at the same time. In angels and men the same power is created, finite and individuated. As a body it belongs to an individual and enjoys a spatio-temporal dimension.

But how exactly does Böhme define 'body' in his *Aurora*? In the first chapter he states that there are two qualities (*Qualitäten*) in every created being: heat and cold. Quality is described as mutability and the power of changeableness. But every quality includes two species or possibilities, one good and one bad. The first quality, the heat, includes light (*Licht*) and fierceness (*Grimmigkeit*), and by experience we all know that heat could protect life as well as destroy it. Böhme claims the same with regard to the second quality, the 'cold', where both struggle and are yet inseparable in every individual being. This struggle is the vital force in the body as well as in the spirit. Body and spirit are bound together like organs: one can not exist without the other.[15] But Böhme is not mainly using the dualistic terms 'body' and 'spirit'. For him everything has a threefold birth: firstly, in the heart of the deity (*Gottheit*), secondly, in the spiritual nature (*Natur*) and, thirdly, in the material nature (*Begreiflichkeit*).[16] The second birth contains what is described in the medical debates as animal spirits and sensitive soul. The third birth is the birth of the perceptible body (*Leib*), that is 'rarified and transparent, lovely, pleasant and bright' (*dünne, lieblich und helle*)[17] in the heavenly state. Lucifer aroused in this birth the anger of God and his angelic body turned into a prison for his spirit. Now – Böhme states – creation comprises creatures that are absolutly bad (devils) and others that are absolutly good (angels).

> Yet both of these, the good and the evil angels, were made out of the qualities of nature from whence all things existed, only they differ in their qualifying, or in their condition.[18]

The struggling powers of creation no longer appear harmonized. Adam is created to fill the place of the fallen angel. In chapters four to sixteen of his *Aurora* Böhme discusses the creation and fall of the angelic world, whence we see the importance

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[14] Jacob Böhme, *Aurora. That is, the Day-Spring. Or Dawning of the Day in the Orient Or Morning-Rednesse in the Rising of the Sun. That is The Root or Mother of Philosophie, Astrologie & Theologie from the true Ground. Or A Description of Nature* (London, 1656), ch. 5 § 9, pp. 103–4. German text: Jakob Böhme, *Aurora oder Morgenröte im Aufgang*, ed. Gerhard Wehr (Frankfurt a. M.: Insel, 1992), ch. 5 §§1–4, pp. 119–20.

[15] Böhme, *Aurora*, chap. 12 §§106–24, pp. 292–7; German text, chap. 12 §§74–92, pp. 236–40.

[16] Böhme, *Aurora*, ch. 18 §§20–21, 24, 31–2, pp. 456–9; German text, ch. 18 §§21–9, pp. 341–3.

[17] Böhme, *Aurora*, ch. 18 §31, p. 459; German text, ch. 18 §29, p. 343.

[18] Böhme, *Aurora*, ch. 2 §10, p. 52; German text, ch. 2 §6, p. 84.'

he assigns this subject: the creation of an angel is the *typus* or model for creation in general.

> *Now observe*: Every angel is created in the *seventh* qualifying or fountain spirit, which is NATURE, out of which his body is compacted or incorporated together, and his body is given him for a propriety, and the same is *free* to itself, as the whole Deity is free. He hath no impulse or driving, without or distinct from himself; his impulse and mobility standeth *in his body*, which is of such a kind and manner as the *whole* God is; and his light and knowledge, as also his life, is generated in that manner as the whole divine being is generated. For the body is the incorporated or compacted spirit of nature, and encompasseth or encloseth the other six spirits; these generate themselves *in the body*, just as it is in the *Deity*.[19]

The seven spirits are the stuff of creation – in God, in the angelic world and in the terrestrial world. Since Böhme assumed this self-creating God, he had to defend himself against the reproach of pantheism. In another passage he describes the angelic world as differentiated from God Himself as well as from the terrestrial world. Böhme's argument against pantheism is that the triune God as the eternal fountain (*ewige Freudenquell*) contains nothing bad.[20] The angelic world on the contrary is made of struggling but harmonized forces, containing good and bad. Different from God and the angelic world is the terrestrial world in its heavenly state because the paradise is made of the matter that is formed by the fall of Lucifer. As this matter had lost all its powers, in order to bring it back to life God created the paradise and kindled the extinguished light in the heavenly bodies as a second creation. The difference between man and angels is that man is made of the matter that includes the fire of anger. Böhme emphasizes, however, that angels are differentiated generally and that man in the beginning is just one of the angels. After Adam's fall matter turned into its sensual condition again. In the terrestrial realm matter is confined to a seed out of which, in the moment of resurrection, grows again the angelic or heavenly body.[21]

What becomes clear after this short examination of the *Aurora* is that the distinction drawn by Böhme is a temporal one of matter 'before' and 'after' the Fall, but not an ontological one between spirit and body. Body is just another mode of the same stuff the spirit is made of, and both – body and spirit – are not separable from each other.

According to this account as well as to the medical-philosophical debates the human soul is seen not only as embedded in but also as originally endowed with a body made of a very light, shining and subtle but nonetheless material stuff. 'Material' here implies not a terrestrial but a spatio-temporal existence, a surface penetrable and indiscerpible. The borderline between matter and spirit has been removed. It is no longer a barrier between the sensible and intellectual world. Henceforth there

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[19] Böhme, *Aurora*, ch. 13 §§33–5, p. 316; german text, ch. 13 §§29–30, pp. 252–3.

[20] Böhme, *Aurora*, chap. 2 §29, p. 56; German text, ch. 2 §17, p. 87.

[21] Böhme, *Aurora*, chap. 17 §28, p. 448; German text, ch. 17 §26, pp. 336. See also ch. 12 §§116, p. 295: 'At the say of the resurrection from the dead there will be no difference between the angels and men, they will be of one and the *same kind* of *form* …'; German text, ch. 12 §84, p. 238.

is a new line of demarcation that distinguishes invisible, shapeless and immaterial beings from visible, corporeal and material beings. Every created, contingent, finite being has a shape, a surface, a body that allows it to exist in a spatio-temporal sense. Thus, the only being that is left as an infinite, shapeless being is God. Apart from God every being is corporeal, and this is true of angels as well as of man. It is merely a question of degree and no longer a qualitative distinction.

The transformation proceeds from theological debates about resurrection, combined with medieval medical traditions and philosophical concepts of a vital cosmos which includes all spheres apart from God, leading to a revaluation of what is meant by 'body'. One result of this is the endowment of angels with bodies.

I shall now focus on one author as an example of how to argue in this early modern context. I have chosen to concentrate on Henry More, one of the central figures of the Cambridge Platonists, because of his attempt to distinguish between spirit or soul on the one hand and body on the other by explaining how they are connected.[22]

Henry More (1614-1687): *The Immortality of the Soul*

In his treatise *The Immortality of the soul*,[23] Henry More offers some considerations on the created and finite spirits, that is the spirits of angels and man. The only division, he claims, that can be made between the spirit or soul of an angel and the spirit or soul of a man is 'that the Soul of an *Angel* may vitally actuate an *Aerial* or *Etherial* Body, but cannot be born into this world in a *Terrestrial* one'[24].

More defines *spirit* generally as '*A substance Indiscerpible, that can move it self, that can penetrate, contract and dilate it self, and can also penetrate, move, and alter the Matter*'.[25] By contrast, *body* is '*A substance impenetrable and discerpible*',[26] that is, without the power to move itself. Thus, body and spirit are distinguishable, but they are closely bound into one substance. A substance – More claims – that is created and extended and that is of it self indifferent to penetrability or impenetrability as well as to discerpibility or indiscerpibility.[27] The latter are only accidents or modes which do not properly subsist.[28] But for us they are the only

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[22] On Henry More see Robert Crocker, *Henry More, 1614–1687: A Biography of the Cambridge Platonist* (Dordrecht: Kluwer 2003); Fouke, *The enthusiastical Concerns of Dr. Henry More*; Sarah Hutton (ed.), *Henry More (1614–1687)*; Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann, 'Henry More und Knorr von Rosenroth', *Morgen-Glantz. Zeitschrift der Christian Knorr von Rosenroth-Gesellschaft*, 16 (2006): 285–322.

[23] Henry More, *The Immortality of the Soul, So farre forth as it is demonstrable from the Knowledge of Nature and the Light of Reason* (London, 1662), in *Philosophical Writings of Henry More*, ed. Flora Isabel Mackinnon (New York, 1925 [reprint New York, 1969]), pp. 57–182.

[24] More, *The Immortality of the Soul*, p. 84.

[25] More, *The Immortality of the Soul*, p. 70.

[26] More, *The Immortality of the Soul*, p. 66.

[27] More, *The Immortality of the Soul*, p. 64.

[28] More, *The Immortality of the Soul*, p. 62.

features that enable us to recognize and describe a substance that otherwise escapes our natural faculties. Why different manifestations of the same substance can take place, man cannot imagine or understand. And man cannot understand either how the immediate properties of this or that manifestation are connected to the naked substance. The only thing man can determine is that there are two manifestations of one and the same substance: one immaterial named spirit and one material named body. Both are finite, both are extended, both have a surface and appear in three dimensions: longitude, breadth and depth. Thus, the distinction between the material and immaterial as well as between body and spirit is not a question of extension. What determines the difference is whether they appear in the mode of penetrability or impenetrability, divisibility or indivisibility, endowed with self-motion or not. The questions which More subsequently tries to answer are how the two substances can appear in the same space and at the same time and how a spirit can move and alter the matter – thereby always targeting two 'adversaries': the dualist theory that there are two different entities in the world – one extended and the other unextended – and the materialist theory according to which there is no immaterial being in the world at all. The conclusion he draws – by referring to theories of the medical Galenic context – is that we are able to explain all phenomena in the world only by understanding that there are two different forms within one and the same created and extended substance working together in every being.

Following Neoplatonist theories, More enumerates four kinds of spirits: the *logoi spermatikoi* or Seminal Forms, the Souls of Brutes, the Human Soul and the Soul or Spirit which actuates or informs the vehicles of angels. 'For I look upon *Angels* to be as truly a compound Being, consisting of Soul and Body, as that of Men & Brutes.'[29] Every spirit is endowed with the power of vitally actuating a duly prepared matter, organizing it to a specific body. In this context the spirits are mainly distinguished by the degree of power they have in actuating the matter. A spirit with the intrinsic power of vegetation and sensation we call the soul of the brutes. If we add reason to vegetation and to sensation we have the soul of man. This soul More defines as:

> a created Spirit indued with Sense and Reason, and a power of organizing terrestrial Matter into humane shape by vital union therewith.[30]

Accordingly, the human soul is the most powerful spirit and clearly distinguished from seminal forms and the souls of the brutes as well as of angels. The angelic soul More defines as:

> a created Spirit indued with Reason, Sensation, and the power of being vitally united with and actuating of a Body of Aire or Aether onely.[31]

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[29] More, *The Immortality of the Soul*, p. 83. More's notion of spirit is described more thoroughly by Fouke, *The enthusiastical Concerns of Dr. Henry More*, ch. VI: 'Pneumatology and the Natural Order'.

[30] More, *The Immortality of the Soul*, p. 84.

[31] More, *The Immortality of the Soul*, p. 85.

The angelic soul has the power of actuating a body of air only. This – More emphasized – is the only distinction between angels and men. Since More wishes to argue against the theory that a spirit is not extended, so as to avoid the contradiction that there be a connection between an extended and an unextended entity, he claims that every substance that is finite is extended at the same time. Thus, he has to consider angelic spirits to be extended as well. To explain how spirit and matter can be distinguished by giving an explanation of their connection, More describes spirit and matter as two kinds of the same substance: one penetrable, indiscerpible and self-moving, the other impenetrable, discerpible and without the power of self-motion. But why should these different kinds be connected? Because the one is – according to More – created with the power and the desire to actuate the other. This is relevant of every spiritual substance, be it angelic or human. 'Actuating matter' has to be taken as actuating a substance impenetrable and discerpible. The specific appearance of this matter depends on the degree of its density. And, of course, air is a sort of matter less dense than what is generally meant by terrestrial bodies but nevertheless a substance impenetrable and discerpible. Nevertheless, the description of two kinds of substance is just a description of different accidents of the one existing substance that, although it appears, to our human understanding, in different modes, always is the same substance. Thus, it would be just as incorrect to maintain that there are only different degrees of spirit in the world, as it would be incorrect to assert that there is only matter. This one substance appears in different forms, but these two manifestations are necessarily bound together: there is no matter without spirit and no spirit without matter in the whole created world. Therefore, angels have bodies – and we could emphasize: material bodies – and human souls have bodies in the state of their terrestrial existence as well as in the state of resurrection.

In this respect, More and Böhme show remarkable affinities. Arguing in the context of a vitalized universe, referring to the analogy of microcosm and macrocosm, they remove the border between the divine and the terrestrial world by drawing a line of demarcation between an infinite God and the finite creation, extended in time and space. Here angels have bodies, and to have a body does not necessarily have the negative undertones of the Fall but connotes excellency.

Finally we will have a look at Anne Conway, a scholar and friend of More and Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont, familiar with the philosophy of Descartes as well as that of Böhme.[32]

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[32] On Anne Conway see especially the works of Sarah Hutton, *Anne Conway. A Woman Philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); 'Anne Conway', in Robert Audi (ed.), *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); 'Anne Conway: critique de Henry More: L'esprit et la matière', *Archives de Philosophie*, 58 (1995): 371–84; 'Of Physics and Philosophy. Anne Conway, F.M. van Helmont and seventeenth-century medicine' (see footnote 4). See also Jennifer McRobert, 'Anne Conway's Vitalism and Her Critique of Descartes', *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 40/1 (2000): 21–35; Marjorie H. Nicolson, Sarah Hutton (eds), *The Conway Letters*, rev. edn, with an introduction and new material by Sarah Hutton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). Richard H. Popkin, 'The Spiritualistic Cosmologies of Henry More and Anne Conway', in Sarah Hutton (ed.), *Henry More: Tercentenary Studies* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990), pp. 97–114.

Anne Conway (1631-1679): *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*

In her treatise[33] on the principles of the one perennial philosophy which is supposed to comprise the oldest wisdom as well as the latest knowledge, Conway tries to close the Cartesian gap between body and spirit by unfolding the theory of a singular substance which, although it appears to us in different modes like body and spirit, is always the one substance. Against pantheism she states that there are three different species: God Himself, the mediator and messiah Christ and creation. These three species are essentially different from each other and it is not possible for any of those to change into the other. With regard to our subject, the third species is of special interest because it includes angels and man. Within the third species we find many different individual 'species' such as plants, beasts, men and angels, yet they

> are not distinct from each other in substance or essence, but only in certain modes or attributes. And when these modes or attributes change, the thing itself is said to have changed its species. But indeed, it is not the essence or entity itself but only its mode of being which thus changes.[34]

To call 'horse' or 'man' a species including all horses or men is just an idea of the mind – Conway claims – not an essential category. The created world is one species based on one substance appearing in different modes. From this position follow some interesting theses: within the third species every individual being moves continually and infinitely towards the good through its own mutability. It is thus possible for a being to be reborn at a higher level of the same species, not as a horse, for example, but as a man. But it is impossible for such a being to 'leave' the third species and to become Christ or God Himself. We misunderstand Conway if we take her theory to imply a simple transmigration of souls or metempsychosis. A horse, for example, strives for the good with its body and spirit and both modes change into another form. It is not the soul or spirit that leaves the body to enter a new one. Body and spirit are bound together such that they reflect the image of each other. One cannot obtain without the other. It is part of divine justice – Conway states – that individual creatures could ascend or descend from one 'species' to another. But man is the highest 'species' within the terrestrial world because he comprises not only terrestrial but also heavenly spirits. This is the reason why the 'human spirit

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[33] The treatise *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* had not been published in Conway's lifetime. We have only one anonymous posthumous publication of a latin translation provided by Francis Mercury van Helmont in 1690. The treatise is the first of three, presented in a collection entitled *Opuscula philosophica* (Amsterdam). In 1692 the book was published in English, but this version is a translation of the latin text. The original manuscript was and still is lost. See 'Note on the text', in Anne Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Allison P. Coudert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. XXXVIII.

[34] Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, ch. VI §3, p. 29. Conway uses the term 'species' to mark the three essential species as well as what we call species within the created world. I will put the latter in quotation marks to indicate the difference.

ought to have dominion over these spirits, which are only terrestrial, so that it might rule over them and raise them to a higher level'.[35] What, then, happens to man if he lives a perfect life?

> For example, is it not just that if a man lives a pure and holy life on this earth, like the heavenly angels, that he is elevated to the rank of angels after he dies and becomes like them, since the angels also rejoice over him? However, a man who lives such an impious and perverse life that he is more like the devil raised from hell than like any other creature, then, if he dies in such a state without repenting, does not the same justice hurl him down to hell, and does he not justly become like the devils, just as those who live an angelic life become equal to angels? But if someone lives … a brutish or animal life, so that his spirit is more like the spirit of beasts than any other creature, does the same justice not act most justly, so that just as he became a brute in spirit … he also … changes his corporeal shape into that species of beast to which he is most similar in terms of the qualities and conditions of his mind?[36]

The external body must take the shape of what the spirit imagines. This is a well-known idea in ancient medicine as well as in contemporary Galenic and Paracelsian medicine. The background is the Aristotelian hylomorphistic theory: but what exactly is the part that ascends or descends on the ladder of being after death? In all probability it is the spirit or one part of the spirit, namely what is called the individual and immortal soul. But this would incur again a Cartesian dualism between body and spirit. Conway explains that 'in every visible creature there is body and spirit, or a more active and a more passive principle'.[37] Spirit needs a body to retain its image, idea or seed.

> Consequently, every spirit has its own body and every body its own spirit. Just as a body, whether of a man or a brute, is nothing but a countless multitude of bodies collected into one and arranged in a certain order, so the spirit of man or brute is also a countless multitude of spirits united in this body, and they have their order and government, such that one is the principal ruler, another has second place, and a third commands others below itself ….[38]

Thus, one individual being contains many bodies and spirits bound together by the wisdom and justice of a perpetual creating God who continually forms 'central

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[35] Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, ch. VI §6, p. 34.

[36] Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, ch. VI §7, pp. 35–6.

[37] Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, ch. VI §11, p. 38.

[38] Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, ch. VI §11, p. 39. Conway's theory seems to bear some resemblance to the *Monadology* of Leibniz, but her influence on Leibniz is still unclear. See Allison Coudert's *Introduction* in Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, especially pp. XXIX sqq. Cf. also Carolyn Merchant, 'The Vitalism of Anne Conway: It's Impact on Leibniz's Concept of the Monad', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 17 (1979): 255–69; B. Orio d Miguel, 'Leibniz und *die physischen Monaden* von Fr. M. van Helmont', in I. Marchlewitz and A. Heinekamp (eds), *Leibniz' Auseinandersetzung mit Vorgängern und Zeitgenossen*, Studia Leibnitiana Supplementa, 27 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1990), pp. 147–56.

spirits'[39] which rule the spirits and bodies of an individual. The two modes we call body and spirit are bound together by the retentive nature of the body, that is, firstly, by the necessity of retaining the image of the spirit, and, secondly, by the mutual love which body and spirit feel for the good contained in each other.[40] Again Conway states:

> Truly, every body is a spirit and nothing else, and it differs from a spirit only insofar as it is darker. Therefore the crasser it becomes, the more it is removed from the condition of spirit. Consequently, the distinction between spirit and body is only modal and incremental, not essential and substantial.[41]

It is misleading to talk about a spirit that is immortal and a body that is mortal. A very crass part of the third substance is 'mortal' or rather it leaves the shape of a creature once it dies. The more subtle substances just change into another mode. Thus it would not be correct to separate one part of the spiritual substance to take it as what is traditionally interpreted as the immortal and individual human soul. Conway tries to avoid any dualism within the one substance. On the other hand she avoids a plain answer to the question of immortality in her treatise.

But how does this relate to angels? Of course they have a body because they are created and part of the third species; for 'every created spirit has some body, whether it is terrestrial, aerial, or etherial', Conway claims.[42] Here we find a distinction between angels and man on the one hand and brutes on the other hand. With regard to their spirits, angels as well as men originate from fire, having an ethereal body, while brutes originate from water. Conway does not explain this any further, but we have to suppose that man and brutes took on a terrestrial body after the Fall. If the visible earth will change its present state and become paradise, everything will give up its terrestrial body but keep its aerial or etherial body. The argument is again that nature always tends towards greater perfection and this is subtlety or spirituality.[43] Up to the Final Judgement everything has to die, yet death does not mean annihilation but a change from one kind or degree of life to another. For the resurrection and regeneration of human beings happens within their own 'species'. They become angels again and are angels all the time but imprisoned in a terrestrial world.

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[39] Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, ch. VII §4, p. 55.

[40] 'We may easily understand how one body is united with another by that true affinity which one has for another in its nature. Thus the most subtle and spiritual body can be united with a very gross and dense body by means of certain mediating bodies, which share the subtlety and crassness in various degrees between the two extremes.' Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, chap. VIII §3, p. 59.

[41] Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, ch. VI §11, pp. 39–40.

[42] Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, ch. V §6, p. 27.

[43] 'In the human body, for example, food and drink are first changed into chyle and then into blood, and afterwards into spirits, which are nothing but blood brought to perfection. These spirits, whether good or bad, always advance to a greater subtlety or spirituality. Through those spirits which come from blood, we see, hear, smell, taste …'. Conway, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy*, chap. VIII §5, p. 62.

Conclusion

As has become clear from all the texts that we have examined in this paper, angels are not the central subject: the issue is rather whether angels have bodies and whether they are different from human beings. The main concern was why angels still play a role in philosophical considerations of the seventeenth century and why it seems to be necessary that they be endowed with bodies. Böhme focused on problems connected to the creation and Fall of the angelic world because this world is the *typus* of every other created world and could carry part of the guilt that man is burdened with after the Fall. On the other hand, the angelic world functions like a mediator between God Himself and the terrestrial world. In his *Aurora*, Böhme describes the developing of God as a Creator, the celestial and the terrestrial world in order to account for the history of salvation as presented in the preface to his *Aurora*. He intends to emphasize the likeness of the celestial and terrestrial world to enlighten those who are ready to recognize the truth. For Böhme the terrestrial world is more than a sinful and godforsaken place. God created this world and thus it must be possible to live a pious life in it. Böhme hopes to present a philosophical explanation without verging into gnostic dualism or pantheism: the struggle of qualities is the force that works in every created being and this force is held by the last quality (nature) to form an individual being. We can call one part of this force 'spirit' and the other one 'body' but this would not explain very much. To have a body is not a sign of sin but a necessity for every created and individuated being, for angels as well as for man. Despite all the differences, this is the major point that allows for a comparison of Böhme to More and Conway. In their works we also find the theory of the one substance constitutive of every being. Closely connected to this is the idea of a mediator or mediating steps between the two modes of this substance: body and spirit. More and Conway search for an homogeneous concept to explain the physical and metaphysical phenomena, not ready to accept the gap between body and spirit or between theology and other sciences. Here angels are just part of the traditional set of arguments, but that angels have bodies is a characteristic tenet advanced against dualism.

At the same time this is the beginning of the end of angels in philosophy. Conceived as godlike and pure spiritual beings, as guardians of man and apostles of God, they were for a long time contrasted with and seen as superior to earthly humans. By moving the border between the spiritual and the extended terrestrial world in early modern times, angels lose this rather traditional position. Now, only God himself is a pure spirit, while angels have bodies and are the brethren of men. In one of the central debates of the seventeenth century, namely the discussion about the connection of body and spirit, angels have already become marginal figures. They are invoked as one example amongst many by those who argue against dualism, defending the theory of one existing substance. Together with metaphysics, angels slowly vanish from the philosophical debates.

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Index