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Thomas Sullivan

Russell Pannier

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# GETTING A GRIP ON THE PHILOSOPHIES OF THOMAS AQUINAS: A DEFENSE OF SYSTEMATIC RECONSTRUCTION

Russell Pannier and Thomas Sullivan

Because many of Aquinas's most distinctive philosophical claims are embedded in theological works, in order to see what his philosophy comes to it is necessary to do a great deal of extracting and reconstructing. A major school of interpretation, however, cautions that such efforts are misguided, since Aquinas' philosophy and theology are inextricably bound together. We respond that some versions of this inseparability thesis are too strong to be true and the remainder too weak to stand in the way of renewed efforts to identify Aquinas' pure philosophical systems. Nonetheless, a good deal is to be learned about Aquinas (and about other religious philosophers) by pondering the inseparabilist challenge to rational reconstruction.

## I. *The Problem*

Although distinguished logicians have pointed to Aquinas as a model of rationality,<sup>1</sup> his philosophical arguments prove to be surprisingly resistive to analysis. The root of the problem is that a high percentage of Aquinas' distinctive philosophical theses are embedded in treatises devoted to sacred theology. Since the principal aim of these works is to expound Christian doctrine, Aquinas often does original philosophy the way a physicist does original mathematics – only as needed. Instead of a continuous philosophical thought, the reader finds compressed fragments inserted here and there into theological discussion. Assuming a certain background, Aquinas furthermore expects his readers to have a pretty good idea where his arguments are truncated and where to look to find supporting material. Of course at this temporal distance, much of what might have been fairly obvious to Aquinas' contemporaries may easily escape us.

To get a sense of what we are now up against we need only reflect on a line in one of the famous proofs for God's existence in the *Summa Theologiae*.<sup>2</sup> Seeking to show that there must be a necessary being, Aquinas appears just to assume that if  $x$  is a contingent entity, then at some time  $x$  will not exist. Critics correctly point out that the premise needs support. Furthermore, there is not the slightest hint in the text of the *Summa* that Aquinas realizes this. Aquinas, however, knows the proposition requires justification; in fact he argues for it at length in his *Commentary on Aristotle's De Caelo et Mundo*.<sup>3</sup> It would be helpful to us if Aquinas at least referred to Aristotle's own argument. But, then, we now talk about evolution and



non-denumerable infinities without referring to Darwin or Cantor – the learned are supposed to know.

Once started on extraction and reconstruction of Aquinas' philosophical arguments, it is natural to want to grasp his philosophy as a system or set of systems. Having reached the bottom of one argument and then another, a broader picture begins to take shape. The ultimate assumptions can be grouped in various ways, forming one or more foundations of branches of philosophy. The more reconstructing of Aquinas' philosophy one does, moving toward an ideal of grasping Aquinas' philosophy in terms of its axioms,<sup>4</sup> the easier it becomes to test a particular system for consistency, to reformulate what needs reworking, and to do whatever else it takes to make full use of what Aquinas has to offer.

Or so it seems to us. Distinguished interpreters of Aquinas, however, often talk as if attempts to extract and systematize Aquinas' pure philosophy are completely misguided. In the *Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, for example, Mark Jordan writes:

Nothing occurs more spontaneously to a modern reader of Aquinas than to ask about the relations between his philosophy and his theology, and no question is more misleading. To ask how his philosophy is related to his theology supposes that he would admit to having two separate doctrines and that he would agree that a doctrine is his in any important sense.<sup>5</sup>

After expanding a little on his theme, Jordan adds, "Aquinas chose not to write philosophy."<sup>6</sup>

And Armand Maurer tells us:

Everything [in the *Summa Theologiae*] is theological, even the philosophical reasoning that makes up a large part of it. The water of philosophy and other secular disciplines it contains has been changed into the wine of theology. This is why we cannot extract from the *Summa* its philosophical parts and treat them as pure philosophy.<sup>7</sup>

And Stephen Theron adds:

Aquinas was a theologian. He spoke of philosophers as an alien class of Greeks and heathen. He propounded indeed the distinction between truths naturally known and truths supernaturally revealed, but these are aspects or moments governing his entire outlook, not separable parts within a composite system or body of doctrine.<sup>8</sup>

And so it goes. Ever since Etienne Gilson was at the height of his influence some fifty years ago,<sup>9</sup> many experts on Aquinas have talked in ways that strongly suggest the philosophy of the Dominican theologian cannot be disengaged from his sacred theology or treated as an independent system.<sup>10</sup> Others appear to allow that while it is possible to extract pure philosophy from Aquinas' works, it is worse than useless to try.

In what follows we will be arguing against this strong current of opinion.

We agree with much the inseparabilists hold. Inseparabilists are right when they insist that interpreters of Aquinas who talk as if Aquinas' philosophy is more or less wholly contained in the commentaries on Aristotle, *opuscula*, and other non-theological works are way off the mark. Aquinas' philosophy is indeed closely bound up with his theology. And we also agree that Aquinas thought of himself chiefly as a theologian and that to understand his thought the way Aquinas understood it, we must appreciate the theological structure of his theological works. But rational reconstruction of Aquinas' philosophy is nonetheless both possible and necessary.

We propose to bring the disagreement into clearer view not by considering in any detail what particular commentators might have meant on this or that occasion but by dealing with several possible theses the earlier quoted texts suggest, beginning with the strongest and working toward the weakest.

## *II. The Unqualified Inseparability Thesis*

Taken at face value strong inseparabilist talk often suggests the Unqualified Inseparabilist Thesis:

- T-1. *No propositions in Aquinas can be extracted from his sacred theology and treated as pure philosophy.*

Well, let's see. Suppose we pick a claim C in Aquinas that is of interest to us and for which Aquinas offers some warrant. It does not matter whether C is about grass, gardens, goodness, or God. Since C finds warrant in the text, it is supported by one or more sets of premises, where a premise set is here understood to be just the statements Aquinas explicitly makes in support of C. We now separate the supporting premise sets into two classes, depending on whether or not they contain what we will call an "R-sentence." An R-sentence is any sentence made up of two distinguishable parts, a proposition and an "R-phrase" indicating the proposition is warranted by divine revelation. It does not matter whether the R-phrase indicates the divine testimony is direct, as in the case of "God said \_\_\_\_\_" or indirect, as in case of "The gospel of John has it that \_\_\_\_\_" or "The council of Nicea proclaimed \_\_\_\_\_" or "Pope Gregory wrote \_\_\_\_\_" or "Augustine, proclaiming our common faith, says \_\_\_\_\_." As long as a phrase implies that the subjoined proposition is acceptable, at least in part, because it is somehow revealed by God, the phrase is an R-phrase and the whole sentence, R-phrase and proposition, is an R-sentence. An R-set of premises, then, is any set that contains as a member at least one R-sentence. Non-R-sentences and non-R-sets are defined negatively as those sentences and premise sets that fail to meet the relevant specified conditions.

Now we put to one side for the moment R-sets for the selected claim C. This might leave us with no set at all supporting C. (We'll come back to this case shortly.) Assuming for the moment that there is at least one non-R-set of premises advanced on behalf of C, we track the inferential sequence of propositions within the set. We could go on to do the same with more than one non-R-set of premises, but one is enough for the pur-

poses at hand. It is already quite evident that T-1 is false.

For there certainly is at least one claim C backed by at least one non-R-set. In fact, there are thousands of such C's and non-R-sets. Works such as the *Principles of Nature, On Being and Essence, On the Eternity of the World*, and commentaries on Aristotle's logical, natural, and metaphysical writings abound with arguments that do not rely on Christian doctrine for their premises. A great many propositions in the *Summa Theologiae* also are justified by appeal only to non-R-sets of premises, as is obvious from even a little reflection on the most familiar material. Many arguments about God's existence and attributes, about the nature of the human soul, about the moral law, and other topics stand entirely free of revelation. It follows that it is possible to extract these arguments in the way described, and treat them as pure philosophy. This is because they simply are pure philosophical arguments. After all, there is not an R-sentence in any of the selected premise sets for the selected C.

Is there anything inseparabilists say that casts doubt on the possibility of carrying out the project as just described or renders dubious the claim that carrying out the process results in the identification of at least a part of Aquinas' pure philosophy? Well, as far as we know, no one denies that the process we have depicted can be carried out. Inseparabilists might argue, however, that even though the depicted process can be carried out, doing it does not amount to extracting Aquinas' pure philosophy.

But why should anyone take this view? Five reasons are commonly suggested.

First, Aquinas thought of himself as a sacred theologian, not a philosopher, some insist. True enough. And Michelangelo thought of himself as a sculptor, not a painter. Yet, Michelangelo finished more paintings than sculpture. Nothing at all follows about the existence or extractability of Aquinas' philosophy from his concept of himself as a theologian.

Second, Aquinas did not write systematic accounts of philosophy. Right again. One could wish that Aquinas left us comprehensive accounts of his pure philosophy, works like Suarez' *Metaphysical Disputations*. But he didn't. Instead Aquinas dispersed his philosophical thought through commentaries on scripture, Aristotle, Boethius, and Dionysius, and through theological *Summae*, disputed questions, and minor *opuscula*. Still, it does not at all follow from the fact that Aquinas did not leave us comprehensive works of pure philosophy that he "chose not to write philosophy." For obviously one can write pure philosophy in a theological work, as one can write pure mathematics in a physics book.

Third, Aquinas always worked up philosophical arguments for the ultimate purpose of explaining and defending Christian doctrine. Maybe, though it often looks as if he is taking an interest in the philosophy for its own sake. But even if all his philosophy is carried forward in service of Christian doctrine, it still does not follow that his philosophy cannot be extracted and considered on its own terms. Think of the parallel case of Bishop Berkeley. Berkeley's theological agenda comes out in the title of a work largely devoted to mathematics: *The Analyst; or a Discourse addressed to an infidel mathematician; wherein It is examined whether the Object, Principles, and Inferences of Modern Analysis are more distinctly conceived or more evidently*

deduced, than the Religious Mysteries and Points of Faith. But while Berkeley's ultimate purpose is theological, it certainly does not follow that his criticisms of the foundations of calculus cannot be extracted and treated as pure mathematics. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same goes for Aquinas.

Fourth, Aquinas would not have even conceived of certain philosophical ideas unless he had constantly been meditating on revelation. Probably. But again, nothing pertinent to the point at issue follows. For it is not generally the case that if S would not have come to believe B unless S had first believed A, that A is a warrant for B. Kepler saw our "spherical" universe as imaging the triune God.<sup>11</sup> It is quite possible that Kepler would not have made certain astronomical discoveries had he not been thinking of the universe in Trinitarian terms. Still, Kepler offered empirical evidence for his positions.<sup>12</sup> Nobody thinks Kepler's claims about the constancy of the inclination of the planetary orbital planes are inextricably bound to his theology just because he began with trinitarian ideas of the heavens and might not have made his scientific discoveries if he had not begun with those beliefs.

Fifth, Aquinas' traditional-sounding philosophical terminology is altered by reason of this contact with sacred theology.<sup>13</sup> But from this fact too nothing immediately follows with respect to the point at issue. To move from this observation about Aquinas' language to T-1 it is necessary to show that Aquinas never uses traditional philosophical terms with traditional philosophical meanings. Aquinas, however, often uses traditional philosophical terms in their traditional sense. When he says "A thing can act only if it exists," he certainly is not investing "exists" with some special meaning he may give it in other contexts as a result of meditating on the great "I am" proclamation in *Exodus*. Even when he uses the word "God" he often means (or need mean) nothing more by the term than "first mover" or "necessary being."

T-1 is thus clearly too strong.

### III. Qualified Inseparabilist Claims

Though inseparabilists often talk in terms that suggest T-1, quite possibly they really mean to assert something considerably weaker. Much of Aquinas' philosophy is developed in response to theological problems; it is *these theologically entangled ideas* that cannot be detached and integrated into a system of philosophy. And, it might be added, to systematize the philosophical material he brings on board when doing theology and dub it "Aquinas' philosophy" is grossly misleading, because the end product fails to include what is most central to Aquinas' philosophy.

In support of this idea, consider Aquinas on substance and accident. St. Thomas often writes about substance and accident in ways that suggest he is simply repeating Aristotle, but in fact Aquinas has ideas about substance and accident that Aristotle never dreamed of, ideas forced on Aquinas by theological considerations. Aquinas believes that the theological doctrine of Transubstantiation either requires or strongly suggests the remarkable idea that ontological accidents can exist apart from any underlying substance. The body, blood, soul, and divinity of Jesus Christ are somehow

really present in what appears to be bread and wine, but the color and shape before one's eyes do not reside in a subject: it is not Christ that has these appearances.<sup>14</sup> In reality, there is no *x* such that *x* looks and tastes and feels like bread; there are only free-floating appearances, sustained in existence by God. This ontology of substance and accident rests on R-premises. It follows that if we want to give an accurate account of Aquinas' ontology of substance and accident, we cannot separate his philosophical teaching from his sacred theology.

It is tempting to reply to this inseparabilist argument by denying that Aquinas' more startling claims about substance and accident are part of his philosophy. Precisely because these extraordinary claims about substance and accident rest on R-premises, they belong entirely to his sacred theology. And a reconstruction of Aquinas' philosophy cannot be faulted for excluding parts of his sacred theology. But this reply to the modified inseparabilist claim is unsatisfying. After all, philosophers today often characterize propositions as philosophical if they are general propositions about reality. If a claim is philosophical, it would seem to be so whether or not philosophical support is adduced for it. Furthermore, if not-*P* is a philosophical proposition, so is *P*. But the claim that accidents cannot exist apart from substances, often enough made by philosophers, is a philosophical proposition. It follows that the claim that accidents can exist apart from substances is equally a philosophical claim. And so in general, Aquinas' ontological claims cannot be dismissed as non-philosophical just because they rest on R-premises.

A modified inseparabilist position, then, might have something to it after all. But what, exactly?

Let's try to be more specific with this version of a Qualified Inseparability Thesis:

T-2 No proposition *supported by an R-set of premises* can be extracted and treated as pure philosophy.

This is better than T-1, but still too strong. Consider a little further Aquinas on substance and accident. As we have just seen, Aquinas offers theological support for the contention that accidents can be subjectless. But he *also* offers non-theological support for the proposition. Aquinas argues that appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, free-floating accidents are not ruled out by Aristotle's definitions of substance and accident. The starting point of his philosophical defense of the coherence of the idea of subjectless accidents is the Aristotelian contention that being does not constitute a genus. The details of the argument are here irrelevant.<sup>15</sup> What is important is that the unfolded argument is purely philosophical; the premise set is a non-R-set. Aquinas thus offers two lines of justification for believing that it is possible for accidents to exist without a subject. One line of reasoning depends on the revealed doctrine of Transubstantiation; the other does not. So, anyone trying to piece together Aquinas' philosophy can take the second and leave the first to one side. It follows that we can extract pure philosophical arguments for positions that are supported by R-sets of premises, i.e., positions deeply embedded in Aquinas' sacred theology.

The failure of T-2 leads naturally to another attempt to formulate an adequate Qualified Inseparability Thesis.

T-3 No proposition supported *only* by R-sets of premises can be extracted and treated as pure philosophy.

Examples of the unextractable might be contentions about the trinity, and about creation *ex nihilo*.

Again, this is closer to the truth, but still not exactly right. First, R-sets of premises often *contain* non-R-sets of premises. Take an R-set; strip it of R-phrases. The result may well be a non-R-set of premises. Ramanujan, the great Indian number theorist, told his friends that the lion-God Narasimha wrote mathematical formulas on his tongue.<sup>16</sup> Suppose Ramanujan introduced one of his strange theorems by saying: "Narasimha revealed the proof that since \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, therefore the sum of an infinite number of terms of the series  $1+2+3+4\dots = -1/12$ ." One disinclined to place much stock in Narasimha might nonetheless accept the allegedly revealed proof of the equation. Similarly, in the case of Aquinas, R-sets may often be read as containing both a philosophical argument for a position that stands independent of revelation, exhibited by stripping off the R-phrase, and a theological endorsement of the proof, packed into the R-phrase. Since Aquinas often tries to find religious authority to back philosophical arguments, many passages in Aquinas embed non-R-sets of premises in R-sets.

A second reason for rejecting T-3 is that even if stripping off all the R-phrases fails to yield a non-empty set of philosophical premises for C, it may nonetheless be possible to extract C and attach it to a reconstructed system of pure philosophy. Ramanujan announces "Narasimha revealed \_\_\_\_\_," filling in the blank with a hitherto unstated and beautiful equation, but no proof. Still, one might gather from other things Ramanujan said at other times just how a proof for the theorem could be constructed. Both the theorem and the (re)constructed proof would belong to the body of Ramanujan's mathematics, though the latter would do so in a broader sense. Much the same might be said of what Aquinas writes. Aquinas sometimes offers only sacred authority for a position, as for example, the claim that the world began in or with time. Furthermore, he believed the beginning of the world in or with time could not be effectively shown by relying on natural principles alone. Even so, it is possible to find support for the position, not only in the writings of modern cosmologists, but also in the works of Aquinas himself, by taking into account some things he says about the impossibility of infinite multitudes. It is worth reminding ourselves, in this connection, that even the best thinkers commonly do not see the implications of their own principles. Russell and Whitehead's *Principia* lays down as an axiom a proposition later shown to be derivable from the remaining axioms. So, even if Aquinas supports a proposition only by appealing to revelation, it may still be possible to extract the proposition from its theological context and treat it as pure philosophy, though of course the philosophical argument for it would be his only in a sense analogous to the sense in which a proof of one of the *Principia*'s axioms from the remaining axioms would be Russell and Whitehead's.



Third, even if Aquinas himself does not provide premises that might be gathered into a non-R-set, it might be possible for others to do so. Mathematicians often supplied proofs for unproved theorems Ramanujan attributed to the inspiration of the lion-god. Even if the concocted proofs relied on mathematics Ramanujan himself had not developed, at least the theorems, and in a way the proofs themselves, could still be regarded as belonging to Ramanujan's mathematics. We commonly refer to textbook accounts of geometry and classical physics as "Euclidean" and "Newtonian," even though the accounts include many supplements and corrections.

And so we arrive finally at an extremely modest Qualified Inseparability Thesis:

- T-4. If a proposition *C* can be supported only by appeal to sacred authority then *C* cannot be extracted from Aquinas' sacred theology.

This may be true, but it hardly matters. Nobody setting out to extract and systematize the pure philosophy of Thomas Aquinas has ever said that there is nothing in Aquinas but pure philosophy. Of course many of his works are filled with ideas for which no convincing, purely natural argument can be given. That fact, however, is insufficient to prevent us from going forward with rational reconstruction of those large parts of his thought that can in one way or another be understood in light of natural principles.

#### IV. *The Value of Systematic Reconstruction*

But is there really any point to extraction and reconstruction of Aquinas' pure philosophy?

Stephen Theron warns:

One cannot take the one [truths naturally known] and leave the other [truths supernaturally known] without modifying what one leaves behind, and this is clear not only in his moral thought, but in his general metaphysics, both of which allow for enlightenment from above.<sup>17</sup>

But, there is no danger of injuring what we "leave behind," since we do not literally leave anything behind. To reconstruct Aquinas' arguments for God's existence it is certainly not necessary to take a scissoring to the library's expensive Leonine edition of his works. Aquinas' theology no more suffers damage as a result of extracting the pure philosophy than does Newton's physics when his mathematical ideas are extracted from his *Principia*.

Thomas O'Meara asserts:

To view the medieval Dominican as a logician or ontologist is to begin in error and end in sterility, for the theme of his thought is life in the order of grace.<sup>18</sup>

But from the fact that grace is the theme, it does not follow that Aquinas is not a logician or ontologist; what follows at most is that he is not *only* one or both of these things. There can be no error in viewing Aquinas as a logician or an ontologist, unless he is neither. But anyone who competently argues about logical principles or ontology on the basis of principles accessible to reason is a logician or ontologist. After all, what else would it take to qualify? Since Aquinas demonstrably argues about logical and ontological principles, either he qualifies as a logician and ontologist or he is incompetent. Presumably, the latter alternative is not what his friendly critics have in mind.

It is sometimes further objected that systematization of Aquinas' pure philosophy fails to honor the theologian's intentions. Had Aquinas intended to leave us a philosophy he would have done so. But he didn't. He left us a Christian *theology*. Setting out on his behalf reconstructed systems of philosophy runs directly counter to his intentions. This too, however, is unpersuasive. First, it is far from clear that Aquinas would object to trying to see what part of his thought comes to when an effort is made to understand the part in question in terms of naturally knowable ultimate principles and derivations therefrom. But suppose he would protest this kind of scrutiny of his thought. Why should this worry paralyze us? No doubt one runs some risk of misunderstanding when ignoring an author's intentions, but often enough the risks are worth taking because we can learn things the author never explicitly intended to teach. In *Euclid Vindicated*, Gerelamo Saccheri intended to convince his readers that Euclid's was the only true geometry; but with profit we may read it with a view to seeing how Saccheri managed (contrary to his intention) to make a case for the consistency of non-Euclidean geometry. Kepler wanted to promote many notions nobody takes seriously any longer. We can ignore his charming idea that the spheres make music as we extract Kepler's three planetary laws and move on toward the construction of our own world picture. It is doubtful that Kepler frowns down on us from heaven, deeply offended by our indifference to his intention to bolster the mystical elements in his cosmology.

Then, finally, there is the sort of protest lodged by Walter Principe.

To treat him as a philosopher and to extract a 'Thomistic' philosophy from the theological contexts in which Aquinas uses philosophy is a disservice too frequently done by many professing to follow him.

The reason?

Divorced from its theological contexts, such a dessicated body of doctrine loses the force and vitality of Aquinas' thought and is at least partly responsible for the current neglect of his teachings in many quarters.<sup>19</sup>

And yet, plenty of philosophers have been intrigued by the part of Aquinas' thought he supports without any reliance on R-sets of premises. Is the natural theology in *Summa Contra Gentiles* up to Book IV really a

colossal bore? But even if all is "desiccated" and "lifeless" before we get into the truths of revelation, we must at some point do our best to get a good grip on Aquinas' pure philosophy if only to understand well his sacred theology. After all, Aquinas' theology is distinguished by extraordinary effort to bring to the aid of Christian doctrine all that the human mind can extract from the data of experience.

*William Mitchell College of Law, St. Paul, Minnesota*  
*University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota*

#### NOTES

1. Anthony Anderson has recently proposed that "Alonzo Church be taken to be the designation of the definite description 'the most rational man since Thomas Aquinas' – a designation Church himself is said to have reserved for Kurt Gödel." C. Anthony Anderson, "Alonzo Church's Contributions to Philosophy and Intensional Logic," *The Bulletin of Symbolic Logic*, Volume 4, November 1998, pp. 168-169.

2. Part I, Q. 2, a. 3.

3. *Commentary on Aristotle's De Caelo et Mundo*, Bk. 1, Lesson 26.

4. One might attempt to set out Aquinas' ontology (or ontologies) in a formalized language with an intended model. Such a language might take various forms, e.g., a first-order system with a unified presupposed quantificational domain, a many-sorted first-order system, a type-theoretic system, and so forth. But whatever the specific form such a language might take in any particular case, its nonlogical axioms would specify the ontology's foundational attributes and relations, its presupposed domain (or domains) would consist of the class or classes of posited entities, its rules of inference would articulate the ontology's permitted modes of reasoning and its theorems would consist of consequences derivable from the axioms by means of the rules of inference. An adequate axiomatic reconstruction of any of Aquinas' systems would have to be augmented in ways that might not on some views of the matter be deemed consistent with the modern concept of an axiomatized system.

5. Mark Jordan, "Theology and Philosophy," in Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1993), p. 232.

6. Mark Jordan, "Theology and Philosophy," p. 233.

7. Emphasis ours. *St. Thomas Aquinas: Faith, Reason, and Theology: Questions I-IV of his Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius*, translated with introduction and notes by Armand Mauer (Toronto, 1987), p. xv. Brian Davies cites this passage as representative of the position. While not offering unqualified agreement with these views, Davies adds "there is much to be said in defense of this reading." And, "Much of what he [Aquinas] wrote can be read either as philosophy or theology. It is perhaps most accurate of all to call him a Christian thinker though this should not be taken to mean that his thought can be divided into two: a system of philosophy founded solely on reason, and — based on and completing this — a system of revealed theology." Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), pp. 11 and 14.

8. Stephen Theron, "The Resistance of Thomism to Patronage," *Monist*, Vol. 80, October 1997, n. 4, p. 613.

9. Gilson's various pronouncements over the course of a long career are open to different interpretations, but much of what he wrote, particularly in his

later work, left the strong impression that though there was philosophy to be found in Aquinas' theological writings, it had been turned into theology. See John F. Wippel, *Metaphysical Themes in Thomas Aquinas* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1984), p. 20.

10. Note that in discussions of Aquinas' thought the word "theology" is often used in two quite different and somewhat confusing ways. Sometimes "theology" abbreviates "sacred theology" or some other expression — Aquinas favored "*sacra doctrina*" — designating a study of what God has revealed. But in some contexts, "theology" just means a study of God. Often the term is used in this sense in phrases such as "natural theology" and "philosophical theology." In these phrases, and sometimes alone, "theology" means a study of God that does not proceed on the basis of any assumption about God's having communicated a message to the human race. Commentators on Aquinas we cite use "theology" in the first of the two senses, as short for "sacred theology." As a first approximation, then, we can say our question is whether Aquinas sets out any philosophical views that can be disengaged from his theology, where "theology" abbreviates "sacred theology."

11. Job Kozhamthadam, S.J., *The Discovery of Keplers' Laws: the Interactions of Science, Philosophy, and Religion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), p. 17.

12. Kozhamthadam, *Discovery*, pp. 150-155.

13. Mark Jordan, "Theology and Philosophy."

14. *Summa Theologiae*, III, Q. 77, a. 1.

15. *Summa Theologiae*, III, Q. 77, a. 1, ad 2.

16. Robert Kanigel, *The Man Who Knew Infinity* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1991), p. 36.

17. Theron, p. 613.

18. Thomas O'Meara, *Thomas Aquinas*, p. 260.

19. W. Principe, "Aquinas, St. Thomas," *The Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, p. 84. Cited by Thomas O'Meara, *Thomas Aquinas Theologian* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), p. 29.