

Book Reviews

A Gift of Presence: The Theology and Poetry of the Eucharist in Thomas Aquinas by Jan-Heiner Tück, translated by Scott G. Hefelfinger (*Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2018*), xxiv + 379 pp.

THE FIRST ENGLISH APPEARANCE OF *Gabe der Gegenwart: Theologie und Dichtung der Eucharistie bei Thomas von Aquin* by Jan-Heiner Tück, a dogmatic theologian at the University of Vienna, gives Anglophone theologians a singular resource on Thomas Aquinas's Eucharistic theology. Originally published in German in 2009 and now in its third printing, this impressive work will appeal to a wide variety of scholars, including Thomists, sacramental theologians, liturgists, and even historians. Not only does it offer an excellent overview of Thomas's Eucharistic theology, but it may also be the most definitive English commentary on his Eucharistic hymns. Dr. Scott G. Hefelfinger, assistant professor of theology at the Augustine Institute, has done a considerable service to Thomistic research and scholarship by providing a readable yet eminently faithful translation of this work.

The work is divided into three main sections. Part A is entitled, "Systematic Reconstruction: The Eucharistic Theology of the *Summa Theologiae*." Part B considers "The Poetic Distillation of Eucharistic Theology in the Hymns." Third and finally, part C is called "Eucharistic Passages" and situates Thomas's writings in contemporary perspective. This review will briefly outline each of these three parts, concluding with some thoughts about the timely relevance of this work.

Tück uniquely challenges the critical charge against medieval and Scholastic Eucharistic theology, which holds that Thomas emphasized the somatic real presence of Christ and the words of consecration to the exclusion of other essential aspects, such as the soteriological and ecclesiological dimensions of the Eucharist. While Tück recognizes the validity to this claim, his book is an attempt to show that Thomas's Eucharistic theology needs to be understood within the whole of his doctrine of salvation history, sacraments, and soteriology—in a word, Thomas's doctrine of the Eucharist finds its deepest meaning within the Church. Thus, even though Thomas did not write a treatise *De ecclesia*, one can find elements of ecclesi-

ology throughout the *corpus* of Thomas, and specifically in his theology on the Eucharist. I will highlight elements of Tück's challenge to this critique that appear in each of the sections of the book.

Part A demonstrates that Tück's work is both systematic and historical. It takes the reader through Thomas's Eucharistic theology and poetry in an orderly fashion, but orients his thought within the appropriate historical context. The introduction included in part A recognizes that Thomistic studies have recently been in decline, despite the prominence given to Thomas's works in theology by the magisterium. Tück sees his work as providing a faithful "re-reading" of Thomas (6). This "re-reading" particularly follows Thomas's "movement of thinking," and only after this "close textual reconstruction" can the "conversation with contemporary questions" be undertaken (9). Tück further places Thomas in dialogue with recent thinkers such as Johannes Betz, Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx, and Joseph Ratzinger, among others, throughout his work, in the service of rediscovering the heart of Thomas's Eucharistic theology.

Tück's work focuses on a study of both Thomas's Eucharistic theology and his poetry. Such a study provides necessary distinctions between the science of theology and the art of praying to and with God. As such, the book shows "that the hymns can be read as a *poetic distillation of the Eucharistic theology* of Thomas Aquinas" (9). From the theological perspective, part A places Thomas's Eucharistic theology of *tertia pars* of the *Summa theologiae* in the context of the whole *Summa*. Tück does not narrow his focus to the *tertia pars*; rather, he gives the reader a thorough understanding of how Thomas's Eucharistic theology fits into the economy of salvation history, revealed in Thomas's works themselves. This background is necessary for understanding Thomas's emphasis on the somatic real presence of Jesus Christ through transubstantiation, the main principle behind chapters 2–3 of part A. Chapter 2 specifically looks at Thomas's arguments for transubstantiation, while chapter 3 places these arguments in relation to the Last Supper, which Tück describes as the "historical origin" of the Eucharist.

Even though the historical concerns of the medieval age required Thomas to focus on the somatic real presence, he *does* consider other dimensions of the Eucharist, as Tück consistently shows in this first part of the book. He offers an extensive overview of the soteriological interpretive categories of the Eucharist in Thomas's writings (112–26). Additionally, Tück considers the fact that the "juncture between Christology and general theology of the sacraments" is dependent on the reality that "the sacraments *of the Church* receive their efficacy through the *verbum incarnatum*," a sign that there is an implicit ecclesiology in Thomas's

writings (31). Moreover, if one reflects on the fact that Thomas describes the ecclesial dimension of the sacraments in the *Sentences* commentary (39) and that the minister acts *in persona totius ecclesiae* (47), then one might reconsider the common narrative about Thomas's myopic focus on somatic real presence through the helpful guidance of Tück's thoughts. Tück further draws out the theme of Christ's *self-gift*, as reflected in the title of the book. Thomas wants to show that Christ's gift of self, an act of self-sacrifice to the Father, begins at the Last Supper, is central to the Passion, and then extends to the gifts of bread and wine in the sacrament of the Eucharist handed on to the Church. The fact that Tück draws out this emphasis further challenges the idea that Thomas was strictly interested in the words of consecration and the real presence.

Part B systematically reflects on each of the hymns of the Divine Office of Corpus Christi. Pope Urban IV commissioned this Office shortly after the promulgation of his bull *Transiturus de Hoc Mundo* (August 11, 1264), which established the feast of Corpus Christi. This section begins by setting the historical perspective surrounding the feast and the hymns. Each chapter outlines one or two of the hymns, including *Pange lingua gloriosi*, *Sacris solemniis*, *Verbum supernum*, *Lauda Sion*, and *Adoro te devote* (an essential Thomistic hymn, although not part of the Office). Tück uses the following pattern throughout these chapters: he first offers a brief introduction, followed by the text of the hymn (both Latin and English) with observations about the poetic meter and structure, and finally an extensive theological interpretation of the hymn. Such thorough commentary on Thomas's hymns will open avenues of further thought about the connection between his Eucharistic theology and poetry, and further dialogue about the hymns themselves. No longer can someone accuse Thomas of simply being "only" a theologian—he is both a master of prayer and a master of theology, as Tück's expertly shows.

Within Tück's interpretation of the hymns is an implicit critique of the widespread opinion about Thomas's medieval Eucharistic theology (54). The following serves up a taste of his unique criticism:

After a reading of the hymn of *Pange lingua gloriosi*, one will be able to say that in the poetic theology of Thomas, the actual presence [*Aktualpräsenz*] of the exalted Lord (see the opening stanza) is expressed in words in the same way as the commemorative, actual presence of Jesus Christ (see the stanzas depicting his life, the last supper, and his bloody death). At the same time, the structure of the hymn follows a dynamic that tends toward the event of Eucharistic

conversion—and thus the aspect of somatic real presence. The life of Jesus consolidates itself in the Eucharistic self-gift of Jesus Christ, as the center of the hymn introduces it: *se dat suis minibus*. (193)

As revealed in this perceptive analysis, Thomas's Eucharistic theology does not exclude other essential dimensions to understanding the Paschal Mystery. Tück's careful work necessitates that one consider the *Summa theologiae* and the Eucharistic hymns together as a complete whole. Once again, Tück rightly emphasizes the aspect of *gift* within Thomas's writings and the Eucharist itself, showing that Jesus's whole life is oriented toward self-gift, emphasized in this hymn's central stanzas. Although the *Summa* carefully considers the fine distinctions of the doctrine of transubstantiation, Tück insightfully shows how this doctrine is ultimately not isolated, but rather fits within the whole doctrine of salvation through the poetry of Thomas.

In part C, the author provides a lengthy description of the Last Supper from different historical periods, recognizing the recent emphasis on the historical-critical method in theology. His consideration includes an analysis of the Last Supper, the signs of bread and wine, and transubstantiation. He begins with the Hellenistic period of the Greek Fathers, which was formed by Platonism; he then makes a study of the Germanic culture, in which there was a "crisis of the sacramental idea" (261); high Scholasticism, he describes, assumed Aristotelian concepts to explain the Last Supper; and finally the Reformation challenged the sacrificial character of the Mass because of the new theory of justification. This interlude sets the stage for understanding the current interpretation and reception of transubstantiation, particularly with regard to recent reconsiderations of the teaching in terms of "transfinalisation" and "transsignification" (270). While ultimately doubting the doctrinal value of these terms, he does not completely deny that new terms other than those rooted in Aristotelian philosophy could eventually be used to describe the Eucharistic change (268–73), although it is clear that he holds to the primacy of the term "transubstantiation."

The last chapter of part C and of the whole book considers the relevance of Thomas's Eucharistic theology to our current culture, after the systematic outline of Thomas's own thought apart from contemporary concerns. This remarkable chapter introduces a wide variety of modern situations that make it advantageous for reflecting on and entering into the Eucharistic sacrifice. Given the nature of our distracted and noisy culture, Tück writes, "*Gift*, *presence*, and *conversion* are motifs that can shape the

contours of a Eucharistic lifestyle even today" (301). Although he admits that he goes beyond "the characteristic style of the purely academic" (301) when he makes these observations, Tück shows how Thomas can assist us in responding to the longings of the people in the Church and the world. Thomas's principles underlying his Eucharistic theology and poetry can help the Church and world because they remind us of the fundamental reality of Christ's suffering through his self-gift, and the fact that he is truly present in the Eucharistic sacrifice. This real presence can relate to difficulties faced in everyday modern life, as Tück describes, including within the crisis of being present to one another, solidarity with the deceased, joy and suffering, and infidelity and betrayal, among others. Tück's manifold reflections in part C can and will serve as springboards for further discussion about how Thomas's Eucharistic theology is valuable for responding to culture and Christian life in today's world. Thus, the fact that Tück describes Thomas's Eucharistic theology in light of gift, presence, and conversion correctly places the concerns of real presence within the whole of Thomas's theology on the Eucharist.

For those interested in Thomas's Eucharistic theology and poetry, *Gift of Presence* stands as an essential work for their personal libraries, not least because the work offers an unprecedented theological and literary commentary on Thomas's Eucharistic poetry. Our present age is experiencing an exciting revival in Thomistic thought, and this work furthers that effort through an authentic outline of Thomas's Eucharistic theology and poetry, in both his historical perspective and our own contemporary context. The book additionally opens a new discussion on Scholastic and medieval Eucharistic theology: namely, how do we best understand what Thomas wrote regarding somatic real presence and the words of consecration, in view of his complete theological *corpus*? This book will also stimulate discussion on the Office of Corpus Christi, following those scholars who attribute the Office to Thomas's authorship, including its relation to Thomas's sacramental theology, and even beyond to his entire theological system. This first English translation offers a fruitful overview of Thomas's Eucharistic theology, and will be a new standard for anyone interested in this area of Thomas's thought.



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The Prophetic Church: History and Doctrinal Development in John Henry Newman and Yves Congar by Andrew Meszaros (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016*), xiv + 268 pp.

ANDREW MESZAROS'S *The Prophetic Church* is the most important genuinely theological work of the last ten years in the English-speaking world on the development of doctrine. It is indispensable study on a theological topic in urgent need of deeper theological clarification. This urgency arises because the current theological situation may fairly be characterized, at least in part, by a vehement return among Catholic theologians to modernist tenets, to the point that some, not completely unjustified, are talking about a neo-modernist crisis. For these neo-modernist theologians, committed to an ever more radicalized interpretation of the progressive post-conciliar agenda—to receive all the advances of the Enlightenment without remainder into the Catholic Church—"history" has advanced to the status of an all-encompassing, absolute reality such that "historicity" qualifies all reality. All ideas and institutions must be understood as all the way down temporally situated, and hence historically constituted. The scope of historicity is claimed to be universal—from the historicity of the unfolding of the triune identity of God and the God–world relationship to the laws that determine the unfolding of the universe from the big bang on, to the evolution of the human mind, culture and language, to the concepts of human thinking and, last but not least, to the very concept of truth itself. The one exception, of course, must be the universal principle of historicity itself that has to remain absolutely trans-historical in order to account for the historicity of all reality. This is historicism's insurmountable *πρώτον ψεύδος*, fundamental error. Apply the acid of historicism to the idea of historicity itself and the mirage suddenly disappears. As soon as historicism historicizes itself, it turns into a temporally situated and historically conditioned ideology. Historicism can be universalized (and what would be the point of a non-universal historicism?) only at the price of its own self-destruction. For this very reason (and others), philosophers have long ago abandoned historicism as a philosophically viable position. Yet Catholic theologians committed to the neo-modernist positions of the 1970s are still beholden by the purportedly radical challenges historicity seems to pose to Catholic theology and inebriated by the promises the radical application of historicist principles to the Church's doctrine seems to hold. Applied to the problem of the development of doctrine, Meszaros rightly formulates the historicist attitude among some Catholic theologians thus: "The Church and her teaching could develop in any direction. 'Development' and 'reform' are euphemisms for 'transformation' and even 'revolu-

tion” (5). The characteristic trait of this all too confident neo-modernism is, according to Meszaros, “a conspicuous hesitation, if not outright refusal to name and identify the enduring truths of Christian revelation, or for that matter, the constitutive elements of the Church” (7). At the bottom of the all too uncritical neo-modernist embrace of historicism lies the denial that revelation conveys an enduring cognitive content that can be expressed propositionally. The radical historicization of revelation and the Church is, of course, nothing but their complete naturalization—exactly the way the secular Enlightenment had already intended it.

In light of these problematic theological currents in contemporary Catholic theology, Meszaros’s book is very timely. He makes the persuasive case that two theologians who had a decisive influence on the Second Vatican Council—John Henry Newman (1801–1890), indirectly and Yves Congar, O.P. (1904–1995), directly—are of undiminished theological relevance, because both show in compelling ways how one can be historically conscious as a theologian without committing the historicist fallacy. Meszaros’s overall goal is, by way of Newman and Congar, to give “an account of doctrinal development as something both thoroughly historical and thoroughly divine” (12). Yet instead of offering some flat-footed comparison of Newman and Congar on their respective accounts of the development of doctrine, Meszaros pursues a different and much more interesting strategy: he focuses primarily on Congar’s theology of doctrinal development and discusses Newman in light of his remarkable reception into Congar’s theology. Yet this is not all. Moreover and more importantly, Meszaros presents Congar’s theology as a compelling modern instantiation of a sophisticated Thomism that admirably displays the capacity of accounting for the phenomenon of history and therefore of integrating into a principled theological account what is true about the phenomenon of historicity. Meszaros is, however, absolutely right not to try to decide whether the chicken or the egg came first. On the one hand, Congar develops his historically sophisticated and reflective form of Thomism by fully integrating Newman’s insights into it and by constantly relying on them. Yet, on the other hand, it is Congar’s historically sophisticated and reflective form of Thomism that enables him in the first place to fully integrate Newman’s insights and constantly rely on them.

Meszaros displays an impressive command of the sprawling oeuvres of Newman and Congar, as well as of the vast scope of scholarly literature on both figures. He presents Newman’s and Congar’s thought with commendable precision and nuance. In short, this work is a genuine and important contribution to the scholarship on Newman and Congar, but it is much more than that. Meszaros’s book has a helpfully transparent struc-

ture: In chapters 1 and 2, the author narrates lucidly Congar's reception of Newman and offers a fascinating account of Newman's appeal to and influence upon Congar and, by way of Congar, on Vatican II. In chapters 3 through 5, the very heart of the book, Meszaros advances a nuanced analysis of Congar's complex account of the development of doctrine, with special attention to the various subjective and historical "motors" or "causes" of development. In chapter 6, the book's crowning keystone, Meszaros adumbrates an excellent constructive outline of a theology of doctrine and doctrinal development, inspired by Newman and Congar, that is as sound as it is persuasive.

The work culminates in a concluding keystone chapter in which Meszaros shows how Congar and Newman together contribute to a sound and forward-pointing theology of development. Here Meszaros adumbrates the contours of a theological theory of the development of doctrine that is theologically as legitimate as it is historically credible. Such an account, Meszaros rightly emphasizes, must respect the following key principles: first, the unity and finality of revelation is based on and culminates in the coming of Jesus Christ; second, the homogeneity of revelation is based on the Truth that is God, who neither deceives nor is deceived; third, revelation is one, coherent, communicable, and knowable. Meszaros does not argue for or defeat, but rather presupposes these three principles. He rightly regards fundamental theology to be the field that would demonstrate the truth of these theological principles, a project that conceivably transcends the scope of his work. Yet even without the demonstrative aids of fundamental theology, it is quite obvious that these three principles are entailed in and presupposed by the witness of Scripture and Tradition, and furthermore affirmed frequently and in manifold ways and by the magisterium. Moreover, their rejection would ultimately be concomitant with the denial of the Christian faith itself. In addition to presupposing these three principles, Meszaros rightly emphasizes that any theory of development that is credible from a historical-scientific point of view as well as from an individual-existential point of view must acknowledge the profoundly historical nature of revelation's transmission in Tradition. Consequently, another principle must also be presupposed: history plays an indispensable role in the unfolding of God's providence.

Meszaros's crowning chapter 6 falls into two parts. First, in the section "Revelation and Doctrine," Meszaros situates doctrine as the intelligible and reliable means given by God to adhere to the truth of revelation. By the historical fact of Jesus Christ, revelation takes the form of a definite doctrine. The concrete actions God takes in history commence the process by which the Church proposes true propositions. Assent to these prop-

ositions serves the salvific purpose of mediating our adherence to, and clinging to God, the First Truth. The Gospel's content is determined, that is, given its specific doctrinal form, by the Church's preaching and instruction (*doctrina evangelii*). This instruction in the faith constitutes the Church's prophetic office by which she proclaims the Gospel. According to Congar, "teaching is the principal way by which God acts on us as spiritual creatures" (201) and Tradition "is the communication by God not only of what we will enjoy (God), but also of the means provided for that enjoyment (the sending of Christ and his Spirit, establishing the Church etc.);" (201). Meszaros rightly concludes that therefore, according to Congar, "doctrine as a whole constitutes a saving message to which an adhesion by humans, with the help of grace, becomes instrumental in their salvation" (201–202).

Meszaros rightly defends the intelligibility of doctrine on the basis of doctrinal realism. Doctrines are true (1) because they are proportionately adequate to the reality they express. They use analogical concepts to represent the mysteries of faith. Doctrines neither exhaust nor grasp completely these supernatural mysteries, but doctrines express them adequately and reliably. Doctrines are true (2) in virtue of their ultimate source, God, the First Truth, the formal and material object of faith. Following Aquinas, Congar emphasizes (and Meszaros with him) that not the words that make up the message but rather the realities "that are *signified* or *meant* by what is heard" pertain to faith (205). While faith terminates in the reality or truth that is being conveyed, the propositions through which the truth is communicated are capable of delivering proper, albeit incomplete, knowledge about God.

At this apposite point, Meszaros turns to the infallible character of the Church's judgment on doctrine as compellingly articulated in Congar's *The Mystery of the Temple*. According to Congar, the new and eternal covenant is a completely new, definitive, and elevated order of life that is the kingdom of God in inchoate form. God's presence effects the Church's ability to successfully exercise her offices. The Church's indefectibility (and hence her infallibility on certain select occasions) is the product of God's new proximity to his people. The reliability and intelligibility of doctrine does not preclude a consideration of the external causes of the Church's utterances and their development. The meaning of what the Church says is true on the grounds that it adequately represents reality. The fact that the Church says *this* and says it *in this way* and says it *at all* can be sufficiently explained only if one considers external causes which play out in the life of the Church that is historical.

In the second part of chapter 6, "A Theology of Doctrinal Develop-

ment," Meszaros reflects theologically on the development of doctrine. He makes a convincing case that distinct "motors" of doctrinal development are rooted in human nature and in human historical existence. Because human nature as well as history are the effects of God's creation, both fall under divine providence.

Meszaros turns first to the phenomenon of human receptive, interpretive, inquisitive, and communal agency and adumbrates a theology of the "active subject." God has created active and inquisitive subjects. The development that follows from the subject's inquiry is rooted in the human nature that God created. Because Congar conceives of the Church as the supra-personal subject and communion of the consciousness of the multiple individual subjects constituting her, he is able to situate in the life of the Church the two motors of doctrinal development related to the active subject. There is, first, the work of theological reflection and theological conclusion (Newman: formal and informal inference). For Congar, theological reflection is divino-human or theandric because the light of theology is the conjoining of the light of faith and the light of reason. It is God's agency in creation—and more precisely, his creation of a rational human nature made in his image—that is the connecting link between the mystery of God and the rational penetration of the *donné révélé* resulting in doctrinal development. There is, secondly, the reality of judgment from connatural experience of divine realities (Newman: natural inference). This affective way of connatural judgment results from the supernatural contemplation, is a cause of doctrinal development, and is caused by God who indwells the soul.

In a second step, Meszaros turns from the active subject to a theological interpretation of history. Newman's patristically inspired sacramental view of the universe allows Congar to maximize on the insight that "the Church is in the world, and the world is in the plan of God." Congar works from the premise that the Church is the mystical continuation of Christ's Incarnation and accepts Newman's thesis that the symphony between the visible and the invisible is providentially willed by God according to God's gracious design, or economy. Hence, according to Congar, the Church does not simply use the world, but learns from the world. Because both the Church and the world are willed by God and because both contribute to the kingdom that is in the making, the exchange between them is also in God's plan.

Meszaros concludes his study with a comparison of the economies of doctrine and prayer. In both, contingent, secondary causes are instrumental in bringing about an effect according to God's providential economy. Furthermore, in both prayer and the motors of doctrinal development, the

effects are not reducible to these causes (prayer and motors). The effect of doctrinal development is the outcome that God has, positively as well as permissively, disposed to be fulfilled by the motors of development. Hence, the process and the results of doctrinal development can be thoroughly historical without being reduced to the merely historical.

In *The Prophetic Church*, Meszaros has set a properly high bar for a fully fleshed out theological theory of the development of doctrine. Failing to meet this bar would mean to fail to maintain the genuinely theological nature of doctrine and its proper development (and thus to compromise the supernatural nature of revelation, the Church, and doctrine) or to fail to genuinely appreciate and integrate theologically the fact that doctrinal development is a historical process propelled forward by certain motors that call for a properly historical investigation and analysis.

Meszaros's *The Prophetic Church* points the way forward beyond the impasse between a post-conceptual historicism and an ahistorical conceptualism. Meszaros shows persuasively that, as a matter of fact, Yves Congar's theology of development is still ahead of us, because he displays—despite the current conventional wisdom to the contrary—the fruitful complementarity of Newman and Thomist theology. Meszaros has set the programmatic agenda and cleared the right path for its implementation. What remains is the challenging task to carry it out in the form of an integrated and fully developed theology of doctrinal development. N.V

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Before Virtue: Assessing Contemporary Virtue Ethics by Jonathan J. Sanford (*Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2015*), x + 280 pp.

FOR THOMISTS AND OTHER ARISTOTELIANS working within the analytic tradition, the rise of contemporary virtue ethics (CVE) in current philosophical discussion seems like occasion for rejoicing. A rejection of deontology and consequentialism in the name of virtue by top members of the field leaves one thinking: "What is not to like?" But then, when we read the literature, something seems amiss, even to the point where we wonder if CVE is a coherent approach and if it has anything in common with what Aristotle and Aquinas mean by "ethics." Jonathan Sanford has clearly pondered these same questions and given *Before Virtue* to us as a result.

Sanford has performed a great service in offering a painstaking analysis of CVE and a sober assessment of its status as a viable normative ethical theory. This is no small task. To what CVE even refers is the source of much discussion. Seeking to include the wide array of thinkers and cover their viewpoints that make up the movement, Sanford offers the following characterization: "A contemporary virtue ethicist is an academic philosopher who subscribes to some of the principles shared by some virtue ethicists and who self-identifies with this movement" (89). Due to the wide extension of this description, he treats the multitude of thinkers self-identifying according to this characterization.

In terms of Sanford's analysis of CVE, at no point does he reject the movement out of hand or fail to see the positive contributions many of its authors have made to contemporary discussion. Nonetheless, he makes a compelling case that it is a movement in disarray, in large part due to its rejection of key Aristotelian principles. Aristotle performs the central role in Sanford's case for three reasons: (1) the function G. E. M. Anscombe assigns to him in her analyses; (2) Aristotle serving as a common denominator in subsequent CVE literature; and (3) Sanford's contending that the framework of Aristotle's ethics is superior to the alternatives.

Sanford's assessment of the CVE movement begins with Anscombe's "Modern Moral Philosophy." In this article, Anscombe diagnoses the shortcomings of modern moral philosophy and suggests that it ought to be scrapped in favor of an ethics revolving around the Aristotelian virtue of *phronesis* and its place in the good life. Since subsequent virtue ethicists credit this article as the origin of CVE, Sanford thinks it legitimate to use Anscombe's principles as the standard of evaluation of the CVE movement. Against this measure, he thinks CVE ultimately fails to distinguish itself from the common framework of contemporary moral philosophy. The movement "has in many respects betrayed the recommendations of its mother" (183).

Key to the fabric of what Anscombe thinks a suitable moral theory are both an affirmation of ethical absolutes and an adequate philosophical psychology. She points to Aristotle for addressing both considerations. Sanford posits three questions, the answers to which would constitute an adequate psychology: (1) What is human nature? (2) What is the purpose of human life? (3) And by what means can we judge progress made toward achieving the goal of human life? The raising of and providing answers to these questions constitutes the heart of the book. Attempting to employ the notion of virtue as the basis of an ethical theory without addressing these questions is likely either to fail or to be rife with confusion. As I read Sanford, CVE is plagued by attempt after attempt to treat virtue as

removed from the broader context in which it is intelligible. Before virtue, we must address foundational questions of moral philosophy and understand virtue as nested within this context.

The book could stand on its own as a worthwhile critique of an important contemporary ethical movement; however, Sanford goes further by offering a second part, which I found to be the most compelling aspect of the work. He offers an overview of Aristotle and Aquinas that, while providing further notes of evaluation of CVE, aims to show that we can meet Anscombe's clarion call to reclaim key Aristotelian insights for developing a substantive alternative to the accounts that make up modern moral philosophy. Sanford addresses each of the above questions that pertain to an adequate philosophical psychology by arguing that the Aristotelian framework provides persuasive answers to them. Moreover, he gives Alasdair MacIntyre due credit for making significant contributions to this cause, both in terms of the latter's seminal *After Virtue* and even more so with his later works, particularly *Dependent Rational Animals*.

Finally, Sanford addresses the place of Aquinas and Thomistic natural law theorists both in relation to CVE and in relation to an acceptable philosophical psychology. One might expect at least a *prima facie* affinity among CVE and natural law theorists. However, according to Sanford, this is not the case precisely insofar as the former has failed to distinguish itself from contemporary moral philosophy. He compares the divide between the two approaches to a watershed: "superficially, both sides look similar, but the water flows in opposite directions" (230). Sanford argues that Aquinas performs a central role in addressing an adequate psychology, particularly in terms of the third question concerning by what means we can judge progress toward the goal of human life. Aquinas's natural law theory as a theory about practical reasoning provides a much more persuasive answer to the question than does Aristotle's account of *phronesis*.

To conclude, Sanford has provided a much-needed critique of CVE, not from the perspectives of deontology or consequentialism, but from the viewpoint of the foundational principles of the movement itself. In addition, he has offered a way forward for a viable alternative to modern moral philosophy in keeping with both the spirit and the philosophical commitments of Anscombe's call to action. N.V

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