

Desire, Knowledge, and the Origins of Self-Consciousness:
A Theological Account in Conversation
with Augustine, Aquinas, and Freud

By

Daryl Ellis

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Approved:

Date:

Paul J. DeHart, Ph.D.

Ellen T. Armour, Ph.D.

J. Patout Burns, Ph.D.

Bruce L. McCormack, Ph.D.

Bruce Morrill, Ph.D.

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*To Courtney.
Our life together is
a foretaste of the joy that awaits
when we see God face-to-face.*

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¹ Donald Hall, “The Third Thing,” *Poetry* 185, no. 2 (2004): 113-21.

² Augustine, *trin.* XIII.24.

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SOURCES AND ABBREVIATIONS

The following sources are cited by the following abbreviations and/or contractions.

When the citations occur as part of an author's collected works, reference will be given to the volume number:page number (or paragraph/note number).

Standard English translations have been used and noted when available, with the addition of silent emendations throughout when they have been justified. On the rare occasion when such emendations are directly germane to the interpretation at hand, I have noted and explained this significance in a footnote.

Groupings are arranged by the sequence of their most significant appearance in the chapters that follow.

KANT, FICHTE, NOVALIS, AND SCHLEIERMACHER

- CG Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt. Zweite Auflage (1830/31)*. In *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Hans-Joachim Birkner et al., vols. I/13,1 and I/13,2. Ed. by Rolf Schäfer. Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1980.
- CF ET of CG. Schleiermacher, Friedrich. *The Christian Faith*. Trans. by H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928.
- FS Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis). *Fichte-Studies*. In *Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy*. Ed. by Jane Kneller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. ET of *Fichte-Studien*. In *Novalis Schriften. Die Werke Friedrich von Hardenbergs*, ed. by Richard Samuel et al., vol. 2, 104-296. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1960.
- GWL Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*. In *Fichtes Sammtliche Werke*, ed. by I.H. Fichte, vol. 1, 86-328. Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1970.
- KrV Kant, Immanuel. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Ed. by Raymund Schmidt. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1930.
- SK ET of GWL. Fichte, Johann Gottlieb. *The Science of Knowledge*. Trans. by Peter Heath and John Lachs. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

AUGUSTINE

<i>civ.</i>	<i>De civitate Dei</i>
<i>conf.</i>	<i>Libri confessionum tredecim</i>
<i>div. qu.</i>	<i>De diversis quaestionibus</i>
<i>doct. chr.</i>	<i>De doctrina Christiana</i>
<i>Gn. litt.</i>	<i>De Genesis ad litteram</i>
<i>lib. arb.</i>	<i>De libero arbitrio</i>
<i>trin.</i>	<i>De Trinitate</i>

ARISTOTLE

<i>APo</i>	<i>Analytica Posteriora</i>
<i>DA</i>	<i>De anima</i>
<i>DI</i>	<i>De interpretatione</i>
<i>EN</i>	<i>Ethica Nicomachea</i>
<i>Met.</i>	<i>Metaphysica</i>
<i>PA</i>	<i>De Partibus Animalium</i>
<i>Phys.</i>	<i>Physica</i>
<i>Pol.</i>	<i>Politica</i>
<i>Rhet.</i>	<i>Ars Rhetorica</i>

AQUINAS

<i>De causis</i>	<i>Expositio super librum de causis</i>
<i>De pot.</i>	<i>Quaestio disputata de potentia</i>
<i>De ver.</i>	<i>Quaestio disputata de veritate</i>
<i>In Boet. De Trin</i>	<i>Super librum Boethii de trinitate</i>
<i>In Io.</i>	<i>Super Evangelium S. Ioannis Lectura</i>
<i>In Met.</i>	<i>Sententia libri Metaphysicae</i>
<i>In De anima</i>	<i>Sententia libri De anima</i>
<i>Sent.</i>	<i>Scriptum super libros Sententiarum</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Summa theologiae</i>
<i>SCG</i>	<i>Summa contra gentiles</i>

FREUD

GW *Gesammelte Werke*. 18 vols. and suppl. vol. Edited by Anna Freud. Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1940-1952.

SA *Studienausgabe*. 10 vols. and suppl. vol. Edited by Alexander Mitscherlich, Angela Richards, and James Strachey. Frankfurt: Fischer Verlag, 1969-1975.

SE *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. 24 vols. Edited and translated by James Strachey. London: The Hogarth Press, 1953-1974.

Introduction

The Nature and Origin of Self-Consciousness: Why Freud, Augustine, and Aquinas?

The “problem” of self-consciousness begins with the riddle that those things that are most familiar to us are often the most difficult to explain. There is likely nothing with which we are as intimately familiar than we are with ourselves. Accordingly, it should come as no surprise that it has proven exceptionally difficult to explain how each of us first comes to be consciously aware of ourselves *as ourselves* in distinction from any of the different things that we inevitably perceive as *other* than ourselves. What enables anyone to perceive that “I” am not “that”? Despite the seeming self-evidence of this distinction between an egological “self” and an objectified “object” that is at the heart of self-consciousness, our ability to perceive this distinction lies at the root of many of our most cherished activities as human beings. By enabling an awareness of our embodied and finite individuality, self-consciousness unlocks our ability to understand, love, and choose objects precisely *as objects* whose otherness we desire. In short, being self-consciously familiar with ourselves forms the basis on which we can genuinely, and even intimately, become familiar with other things as well.

But what exactly *is* self-consciousness and *how* does it arise in the first place? The difficulties of answering these questions are initially evident when beginning from the givenness of one’s own self-consciousness and trying to move even one step beyond that givenness: “I am indeed aware of myself. How did I first become so?” A hard, amnesia-like barrier to this self-reflection emerges almost immediately: “I don’t know. I wasn’t aware of myself at the time.” As we will detail shortly, the logical riddles that arise in even knowing where to start in trying to move past this barrier are notorious, despite the

frequency with which the topic has been taken up in Western philosophy and theology. As Dieter Henrich has written, “If any basic concept has played the leading role in the history of Western philosophy, it is that of self-consciousness.”¹ Similarly, theologians from across the Christian tradition, ranging from Augustine to Schleiermacher, have pointed to this primal awareness of ourselves as one of the most pivotal aspects of human experience to consider in order to situate a theological anthropology within a broader construal of the Creator-creation relation.

Put simply, the goal of this dissertation is to propose a novel way of reconceptualizing the nature and origins of self-consciousness via an unexpected hybrid of philosophical and theological sources: the philosophically marginalized metapsychology of Sigmund Freud and the theological anthropologies of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. As will become clear in this Introduction, this project has its origins in a pair of conjectures that initially emerged out my reading of the Freudian and the Augustinian/Thomist intellectual traditions. These conjectures suggested that these traditions could be resourced productively in order to address several of the most enduring riddles having to do with self-consciousness. In the chapters that follow, I have combined and deepened these conjectures in order to formulate a constructive proposal regarding the nature, origins, and theological significance of self-consciousness.

On a first impression, these intellectual traditions and figures—Freud, Augustine, and Aquinas—are admittedly unexpected choices to focus upon in a study devoted to the theme of self-consciousness. It would be much more expected to draw upon the strains of

¹ Dieter Henrich, “Selbstbewußtsein: Kritische Einleitung in eine Theorie,” in *Hermeneutik und Dialektik: Hans-Georg Gadamer zum 70. Geburtstag, Aufsätze I*, ed. Rüdiger Bubner, Konrad Cramer, and Reiner Wiehl (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1970), 257 (ET: “Self-Consciousness, A Critical Introduction to a Theory,” *Man and World* 4, no. 1 (1971): 3).

thought that have primarily shaped the modern discourse on self-consciousness such as those found in German Idealism (e.g. Kant and Hegel), Romanticism (e.g. Fichte, Hölderlin, Novalis, and Schleiermacher), or their more recent successors (e.g. Dieter Heinrich, Manfred Frank, Ned Block, or Sydney Shoemaker) and/or critics (e.g. William James, Heidegger, Sartre, or Wittgenstein). Accordingly, it is the burden of this Introduction to offer a *prima facie* case for why the conjunction of Freud, Augustine, and Aquinas might yield promising conceptual solutions that are not immediately obvious from within these expected frameworks for considering self-consciousness.

My route for presenting this case will unfold in five sections that follow. First, I offer a few important definitions that will specify more exactly what I mean by the “problem” of explaining the nature and origins of self-consciousness. Second, based upon examples taken from the genealogy above, I will outline four of the most common approaches to theorizing self-consciousness: the presuppositional, exceptional, unconscious, and theological approaches. Third, with this genealogical backdrop in mind, I will describe how this specific proposal came into focus in the form before you now. A crucial part of this section will include making explicit several open and contested questions that arise from the common approaches to self-consciousness. These questions will then function as a frame for outlining the joint promise of combining the original insights of Freud’s metapsychology with the Augustinian/Thomist theological synthesis for addressing them satisfactorily from within a rigorously systematic metaphysical and theological anthropology. Fourth, I will furnish a general statement of methodology and a corresponding chapter outline through which I intend to tie together Freud, Augustine, and Aquinas in order to develop my constructive proposal. Lastly, I will close with a couple

of more minor methodological and terminological notes that will be important to state clearly before proceeding.

I. Definitions and the Riddle of Self-Consciousness as a Primal Self-Relation

Despite some intrinsic weaknesses to the genealogy above that together open the door for our alternative inquiry, the cumulative interactions between various figures within it have gradually produced some sound definitions and distinctions that it will serve us well to make explicit at the outset.

The most wide-ranging definition serves as a basis upon which to explain how self-consciousness is a variety, as the name suggests, of the more generic experience of consciousness. According to the terminology I will employ throughout this study, the most basic kind of consciousness is something that we will call *phenomenal consciousness*.² It involves at least three baseline processes: (1) sensory experiences that make us aware of external objects (via seeing, hearing, smelling, touching or being touched by, and tasting); (2) the internal recurrence of these sensory experiences through memory and the imagination, and (3) immanent sensations corresponding to desirous urges (e.g. hunger and thirst), the pleasure of their satisfaction, and the pain of their deprivation. Most of the time, phenomenal consciousness coincides with *waking consciousness* (i.e. the state of not being asleep). However, in a point that will prove important when we turn to Freud, *dream consciousness* counts as a subspecies of phenomenal consciousness as well. In this state of phenomenal consciousness, the imagination immanently renders streams of images despite the slumbering of waking consciousness.³

² This term comes from Ned Block. Cf. Ned Block, "On a Confusion about a Function of Consciousness," *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 18 (1995): 227-87.

³ On the need to attend to dream consciousness in this regard, cf. Henrich, "Selbstbewußtsein," 260, 71-77 ("Self-Consciousness," 5-6, 16-21).

The most important difference between phenomenal consciousness and self-consciousness is that it is possible to theorize the former without the contemporaneous effects of the latter. On its own, phenomenal consciousness simply produces a bare flux—a Kantian “manifold”—of sensations in which neither the synthetic unities of “self” or “object” are necessarily perceived. At a minimum, what self-consciousness adds to this flux is an awareness that there is an intensive unity or whole—a “self”—that endures across the occurrence of these otherwise disparate sensations. As I use the term, an *intensive unity* is distinguished from what we will call an *extroverted unity* because it is constitutive of an individual organism alone.⁴ Extroverted unities, on the other hand, involve a union between an individual and another external object.

Accordingly, *self-consciousness* can be defined as a differentiated awareness of ourselves as an intensive, bodily, and diachronic unity that endures alongside the immediate flux of phenomenal consciousness. This self-conscious unity manifests itself in a kind of *quality*⁵ that is added to certain first-order processes such that these processes themselves are differentiated from the *one who does them or experiences them*. As Fichte writes:

I cannot take a step, move hand or foot, without an [...] intuition of my self-consciousness in these acts; only so do I know that *I* do it, only so do I distinguish my action, and myself therein, from the object of action before me. Whoever ascribes an activity to himself, appeals to this intuition.⁶

⁴ My adoption and employment of the term “intensive” can ultimately be traced to how it is used in Elizabeth Brient, *The Immanence of the Infinite: Hans Blumenberg and the Threshold to Modernity* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2002). See pp. 450-52 below for more on how Brient employs the term and on the potential convergence between this project and her line of inquiry.

⁵ My description of this as a “quality” comes from Freud and Bernard Lonergan. Cf. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:2/SE 19:13 and Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, vol. 3, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 3:344-46.

⁶ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, “Zweite Einleitung in die Wissenschaftslehre,” in *Fichtes Sammtliche Werke*, ed. I.H. Fichte (Berlin: W. deGruyter, 1970), I:463 (ET: *SK*, 38). Emphasis in original.

Schleiermacher speaks of this same qualitative addition to other processes in terms of how self-consciousness “appears as an *accompaniment* of the state itself [*als den Zustand selbst begleitend*].”⁷ This qualitative accompaniment does not accrue to all aspects of human life (e.g. growing hair or digesting food), which remain at every point “unconscious” to both phenomenal and self-consciousness. Nonetheless, the multitudinous instances in which this accompaniment does occur represent some of our most reliable glimpses into the nature of self-consciousness.

In addition to this accompaniment, perhaps the most important effect of self-consciousness is that it grounds the subject-object distinction. By intensively founding the “subject” side of that relation, self-consciousness opens up a differentiated “distance” through which other phenomena—i.e. those that are *ipso facto* “not-self”—can be “accessed”⁸ as differentiated *objects*. This differentiated “access” stands at the center of our ability to “subject” these objects to any number of mental (e.g. understanding, willing, comparing, resisting or pursuing desires) or extra-mental activities (e.g. grasping, using, eating). Through the emergence of self-consciousness, what was once only a bare flux of sensitive data becomes the accessible field through which the individual can purposefully synthesize and enact the higher-level dramas of human *subjectivity*.

The crux of the compound riddle that self-consciousness presents arrives in trying to specify the exact relation between phenomenal consciousness and self-consciousness. There are two closely intertwined aspects of this riddle. First, there is a question of *definition*: what exactly are the terms of the relation—the *relata*—that self-consciousness enables? One of these *relata* is clear: the relevant data of phenomenal consciousness. But is

⁷ Schleiermacher, *CG*, 13.1: §3.2, p. 23 (*CF*, 6).

⁸ This is Ned Block’s apt term. Cf. Block, “On a Confusion about a Function of Consciousness,” 229-36.

self-consciousness itself the other *relata*?⁹ If so, then this seems to suggest that self-consciousness is a unified “entity” or “process” unto itself before it “adds” the accompanying quality of experience to another process. If one endorses this option, then one must give some account regarding what constitutes self-consciousness “on its own.” Various answers, as we will see in a moment, have been offered in response to this question. For example, self-consciousness could be a kind of primal self-knowledge, self-feeling, or self-acquaintance. Another possibility is to deny that self-consciousness is one of the *relata* at all. Rather, it could be theorized as something that is “produced” through the combination of two other *relata*. As will become clear, it will be a version of this second possibility that I will ultimately set forth and defend. One of the key elements of this proposal will depend on an extension of the jointly Aristotelian and Thomist insistence that “primal” self-knowledge is impossible. By extending the metaphysical principles underlying this insistence, I will argue that self-consciousness is an effect produced through a

⁹ Some (e.g. Brentano, Schmalenbach, and Sartre) have tried to explain this problem away by arguing that self-consciousness emerges simply as the incidental combination of various stimuli (e.g. seeing, hearing, thinking) at a giving moment. This argument fails on two accounts. First, as Chalmers has persuasively shown recently (and in a manner that repeats conceptual territory already covered by thinkers such as Fichte and Schleiermacher), the stimuli and the experience of the stimuli simply cannot be reduced to one another. Second, as Manfred Frank and Dieter Henrich argue at length, this theorization fails to explain the diachronic unity of the self that persists through different combination of stimuli at different times. Cf. David J. Chalmers, “Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 2, no. 3 (1995): 200-04; Henrich, “Selbstbewußtsein,” 261-63 (“Self-Consciousness,” 6-9); “Über die Einheit der Subjektivität,” *Philosophische Rundschau* 3 (1955): 28-69 (ET: “On the Unity of Subjectivity,” in *The Unity of Reason: Essays on Kant’s Philosophy*, ed. Richard L. Welkley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 17-54); *Identität und Objektivität: Eine Untersuchung über Kants transzendente Deduktion* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1976) (ET: *The Unity of Reason*, 123-208); Manfred Frank, “Fragmente zu einer Geschichte der Selbstbewußtseins-Theorien von Kant bis Sartre,” in *Selbstbewußtseins-Theorien von Fichte bis Sartre* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991), 413-599 (Partial ET: “Fragments of a History of the Theory of Self-Consciousness from Kant to Kierkegaard,” *Critical Horizons* 5, no. 1 (2004): 53-136); and “Subjektivität und Individualität: Überblick über eine Problemlage,” in *Selbstbewusstsein und Selbsterkenntnis: Essays zur analytischen Philosophie der Subjektivität* (Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 1991), 9-49 (ET: “Subjectivity and Individuality: Survey of a Problem,” in *Figuring the Self: Subject, Absolute, and Others in Classical German Philosophy*, ed. David E. Klemm and Günter Zöllner (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 3-30).

relation between phenomenal consciousness and an immanent capacity—primary identification—that Freud seminally discovers and describes.

The second aspect of the riddle of self-consciousness can be expressed as a question of *origin* or *causation*. Most of the time we answer questions of origin by reducing phenomena to objects to be investigated in order to determine the functional effects of their causes. This method ties together the search for all scientific knowledge. For example, to borrow an example from David Chalmers, the inquiry into the origin of observable traits passed from generation to generation gradually focused on the function of genes. How do genes pass these traits on to the next generation of offspring? Well, it turns out that “DNA performs this function.”¹⁰ However, there are two reasons that this approach will not work for explaining the origins of self-consciousness. First, self-consciousness is not a generic object open to examination in the way that genes are. I cannot examine your self-consciousness and you cannot examine mine. This non-observable and non-transferable quality of self-consciousness has led to the so-called “zombie hypothesis”—the idea that everyone else could theoretically be a zombie devoid of self-consciousness and simply “programed” to interact with me in recognizable ways—that has proven exceptionally difficult to logically disprove because the self-consciousness of others (if they have any!) cannot in fact be scientifically “inspected.”¹¹

Second, even though we can reflectively examine our own self-consciousness as a kind of immanent “object,” we cannot explain its origins through such inspection for the simple reason that we must presuppose its existence in order to engage in the act of reflection. Failing to see this has led to the repeated fallacy of what Dieter Henrich has

¹⁰ Chalmers, “Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness,” 203.

¹¹ Cf. Block, “On a Confusion about a Function of Consciousness,” 229-36.

helpfully coined as the “reflection-theory” of self-consciousness. As he writes in a seminal essay:

[R]eflection can only mean that an item of knowledge which is already at hand is properly apprehended and thereby made explicit! However, the reflection-theory of the self wants to explain the origin, not the clarity, of self-consciousness. Because this is what it claims to do, it is circular.¹²

Despite this intrinsic circularity, the temptation to try to ground self-consciousness through reflection is so strong that, as Henrich further remarks, the preponderance of the reflection theory is likely not an historical accident rooted in the particular methodologies of figures like Descartes or Kant. Underlining this point even at this juncture will prove essential because we will appeal to the pull of the reflection theory across intellectual eras as a chief way of tying together Augustine, Aquinas, and Freud. Instead of being an historical accident, the attraction of the reflection theory, as Henrich declares, “probably has its grounds in the structure of consciousness itself.”¹³ What Henrich means by this is that the phenomenon of self-consciousness is so closely related to the kind of intellectual knowledge that necessarily entails the subject/object relation, that attempts to explain the origins of self-consciousness almost inevitably slip into modes of query and discourse that presuppose the self-knowing, objectifying subject as part of its own logic. Guarding against this slippage will be of chief importance in all that follows in this project. For self-reflection can only confirm the existence and character of self-consciousness; it cannot *on its own* explain the conditions of its existence in the first place. Instead, as the Romantic philosopher Novalis once wrote: “What reflection *finds*, *seems to be there* al-

¹² Dieter Henrich, “Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht,” in *Subjektivität und Metaphysik*, ed. Dieter Henrich (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1966), 193-94 (ET: “Fichte’s Original Insight,” trans. David R. Lachterman, in *Contemporary German Philosophy*, ed. Darrel E. Christensen (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982), 15).

¹³ “Selbstbewußtsein,” 274 (“Self-Consciousness,” 19).

ready.”¹⁴ If it were not, there would neither be anything to find nor a subject capable of reflectively inquiring.

II. From Kant to Schleiermacher: Four Approaches

As we turn to consider four common approaches to theorizing self-consciousness, much of the varying conceptual terrain between these approaches come into view on the basis of differing answers to the questions of definition and origin just outlined. I am summarizing these four as the *presuppositional*, *exceptional*, *unconscious*, and *theological* approaches to self-consciousness. By identifying only these four, I am acknowledging the futility of attempting to give anything approaching a thorough overview of all the relevant historical figures to the theme at hand. However, the primary figures I have chosen to illustrate these approaches—Kant, Fichte, Hölderlin/Novalis, and Schleiermacher—all have a recognizably prominent place in terms of their influence upon the contemporary philosophical discourse on self-consciousness.¹⁵

In addition to their overall importance, these figures also have a relatively close historical connection to one another, as they are all clustered around the heights of Ger-

¹⁴ Novalis, *Fichte-Studien*, ed. Richard Samuel, Novalis: Schriften (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1960), II:112, no. 14. (FS, 12).

¹⁵ The key roles that they play in Henrich’s and Frank’s indispensable genealogical work on the topic are enough to substantiate this point. On Kant: cf. Dieter Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel: Lectures on German Idealism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 15-63; “Über die Einheit der Subjektivität,” 28-69; *Identität und Objektivität: Eine Untersuchung über Kants transzendente Deduktion*; Frank, “Fragmente,” 415-49 (“Fragments,” 54-78); and *Auswege aus dem Deutschen Idealismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2007), 160-93. On Fichte: cf. Henrich, “Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht,” 188-232; *Between Kant and Hegel*, 157-277; Frank, “Fragmente,” 449-55 (“Fragments,” 78-84); *Unendliche Annäherung: Die Anfänge der philosophischen Frühromantik* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1997), 152-98, 690-753 (Partial ET: *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, trans. Elizabeth Millan-Zaibert (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 23-76); *Präreflexives Selbstbewusstsein: Vier Vorlesungen* (Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2015), 7-52. On Hölderlin and Novalis: cf. Dieter Henrich, *Der Gang des Andenkens: Beobachtungen und Gedanken zu Hölderlins Gedicht* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1986) (ET: *The Course of Remembrance and Other Essays on Hölderlin*, ed. Eckart Förster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997)); *Between Kant and Hegel*, 279-97; Manfred Frank, *Selbstgefühl: Eine Historisch-systematische Erkundung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2002), 8-51, 234-59; “Fragmente,” 456-76 (“Fragments,” 84-100); and *Unendliche Annäherung*, 648-60, 715-882 (ET: *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, 39-190). On Schleiermacher: cf. “Fragmente,” 482-92 (“Fragments,” 110-116); *Selbstgefühl*, 190-98; and *Auswege aus dem Deutschen Idealismus*, 236-70.

man Idealism and early Romanticism (~1775-1850) that were at least partially spawned by Kant and the profusion of critics and/or supporters that rose up in his wake. Furthermore, the last four figures have a particularly close historical association, with Hölderlin and Novalis attending Fichte's lectures in Jena and Novalis and Schleiermacher enjoying some degree of mutual influence.¹⁶ These direct connections between them will enable us to narrate these approaches less as atomistic alternatives and more as options that have an organic and even narrative relation to one another.

Finally, it might well be asked: why these figures and not more contemporary thinkers? I have chosen to focus on the sequence between Kant and Schleiermacher in large part because in the twentieth-century the discourse on self-consciousness has tended to fragment under the weight of philosophers who tried to dismiss the nub of the riddle described above by attempting to negate self-consciousness as a meaningful concept for describing an immanent state of awareness. For example, there were attempts to reduce self-consciousness to an occurrent relation between external events (e.g. James and Russell),¹⁷ the given, external conditions of *Dasein* or the supposed concreteness of “*Existenz*” (e.g. Heidegger),¹⁸ or the differential play of signifiers (e.g. Lacan and Derrida).¹⁹ Given the fact that Henrich and Frank have produced exhaustive responses for why these

¹⁶ Cf. *Unendliche Annäherung*, 715-68, 88-920 (ET: *The Philosophical Foundations of Early German Romanticism*, 39-126, 151-190).

¹⁷ E.g. Williams James, “Does ‘Consciousness’ Exist?,” *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* 1 (1904): 477-91 and Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Mind* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1921).

¹⁸ Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1977), 2:§1-38 (ET: *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010) and *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie (1927)*, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, Gesamtausgabe (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1975), 24:§15 (ET: *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

¹⁹ E.g. Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire, Livre II: Le moi dans la théorie de Freud et dans la technique de la psychanalyse, 1954-1955* (Paris: Seuil, 1978) (ET: *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954-1955*, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York: Norton, 1991)) and Jacques Derrida, *La dissémination* (Paris: Seuil, 1972) (ET: *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

reductive gestures only bracket the real question of self-consciousness—*viz.* the intensive and differentiated awareness that grounds our “experience” of events, *Dasein*, or the play of signs in the first place—instead of genuinely addressing the matter directly,²⁰ my strategy here is to simply heed their direction that the most enduringly relevant expressions of the hard knot that is self-consciousness were formulated a while back in Königsberg, Jena, and Berlin.

a. The Presuppositional Approach: Kant

The hallmark of the presuppositional approach is the supposedly necessary affirmation of self-consciousness as the unexplainable prerequisite for a subject’s intellectual knowledge. In this regard, this approach’s basic shape was established by Descartes’ search for an irrefutable foundation for the knowing subject. As he famously wrote in his *Principles of Philosophy* (1644):

[W]e can easily indeed suppose that there is no God, no sky, no material bodies; and even that we ourselves have no hands, or feet, in short, no body; yet we do not on that account suppose that we, who are thinking such things, are nothing: for it is contradictory for us to believe that that which thinks, at the very time when it is thinking, does not exist. And, accordingly, this knowledge [*haec cognitio*], I think, therefore I am [*ego cogito, ergo sum*], is the first and most certain to be acquired by and present itself to anyone who is philosophizing in correct order.²¹

If everything else can be doubted, the only foundation that suggests itself is our knowledge of ourselves as subjects who carry out certain activities. Accordingly, so the

²⁰ The definitive source of responses that touch upon all of these figures, and which Frank articulates by extending several of Henrich’s central insights is, Manfred Frank, *Was ist Neostukturalismus?* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983) (ET: *What is Neostructuralism?*, trans. Sabine Wilke and Richard Gray (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989). Of more focused importance is Henrich’s response to Heidegger’s reading of Kant in, Henrich, “Über die Einheit der Subjektivität,” 28-69 and Frank’s response to Lacan in, Manfred Frank, “Das ‘wahre Subjekt’ und sein Doppel. Jaques Lacans Hermeneutik,” *Sondernummer des Wunderblock. Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse* (1978): 12-37 (ET: “The ‘True Subject’ and its Double: Jacques Lacan’s Hermeneutics,” in *The Subject and the Text. Essays on Literary Theory and Philosophy*, ed. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 97-122).

²¹ René Descartes, *Principia philosophiae I*, §7. (ET: *Principles of Philosophy*, trans. Valentine Rodger Miller and Reese P. Miller (Boston: Reidel, 1983)).

logic goes, I must presuppose myself as the one doing the very thing I am doing—in this case thinking. The resonance of Descartes’ approach with the notion of the reflection theory is a rather obvious judgment to make and indeed Henrich and Frank have made it repeatedly.²² The reflective “gaze” that Descartes describes above purportedly secures the very thing that is likewise necessary for the reflective act itself: the self-aware and knowing ‘I’. As Frank concludes, Descartes “was so preoccupied with the foundational function which he attributed to the ‘I’ in his philosophy that he never really paid attention to the structure of this principle itself.”²³

For his part, Kant’s version of this presuppositionalist approach is a good bit more nuanced and cognizant of its own limits. Part of its nuance is due to his attentiveness to the British empiricists—especially Locke and Hume—and the particular shape of their arguments regarding the cognitive limits of sensory (or sensitive) experience. Kant accepted their general observations that sensitive experience, or intuition (*Anschauung*) as Kant calls it, cannot furnish the principles needed for intellectual, synthetic cognition of phenomenal objects encountered within that experience. However, he criticized Locke and Hume for not considering the possibility that there is an *a priori* ground for synthetic judgments of sensory data within self-consciousness itself that can be deductively affirmed on the basis of all true propositions.²⁴ On the basis of arguing for the deductive rationality of this affirmation, Kant equates self-consciousness with what he calls, in a phrase taken from Leibniz, the transcendental “synthetic unity of apperception,” which is

²² E.g. Henrich, “Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht,” 188-232 (“Fichte’s Original Insight,” 15-53) and Frank, “Subjektivität und Individualität,” 9-49 (“Subjectivity and Individuality,” 3-30).

²³ “Fragmente,” 415 (“Fragments,” 55).

²⁴ Kant, *KrV*, A94-95/B127-129.

the “supreme principle of all use of the understanding.”²⁵ This synthetic unity of apperception then combines with the equally *a priori* categories (e.g. unity, possibility, reality, existence, necessity) in order to produce epistemic judgment.²⁶

Despite this additional layer of analysis in Kant, his view that this unity of apperception exists *a priori* as the condition for all understanding entails that we must simply “presuppose”²⁷ self-consciousness. It (and the categories) can be indirectly deduced—*a posteriori*—through the experience of epistemic judgment, but in itself it simply must be presupposed. As he writes in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787), “Self-consciousness in general is the [...] condition of all unity, and yet is itself unconditioned [...] I cannot cognize as an object itself that which I must presuppose in order to cognize an object at all.”²⁸ In passages such as this one, Kant shows a general awareness of the lacuna inherent to the reflection theory. Nonetheless, in his own theories he could only reinforce the presuppositional logic intrinsic to Descartes’ emphasis on self-reflection. Indeed, as Frank concludes, Kant was so convinced of the self-evidence of this inner limit to synthetic knowledge that it was a “surprise” to him that examining the exact constitution and origin of the self-conscious ‘I’ “was to become a chief preoccupation of his pupils and successors.”²⁹

b. The Exceptional Approach: Fichte

Following Kant’s influential wake, the first thinker who made explicit the explanatory lacuna in Kant’s theory of self-consciousness was Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Fichte’s seminal contributions can be described by summarizing two related insights that first thema-

²⁵ Ibid., B136-139.

²⁶ Cf. Ibid., A70/B95-A93/B109.

²⁷ Ibid., A366 and A402.

²⁸ Ibid., A401-402.

²⁹ Frank, “Fragmente,” 415-16 (“Fragments,” 55).

tized what I described above as the questions of definition and origin regarding self-consciousness. First, whereas Kant was content to presuppose self-consciousness as the always already synthesized ground of the subject-object relation and therefore of cognitive understanding as well, Fichte endlessly interrogated this presupposition as something that must be adequately explained if a theory of self-consciousness is to be logically satisfying at all.

The initial step of this critical interrogation begins, however, with a deepening of what can easily be recognized as a variation of one of Kant's chief insights: that in order to ground the subject-object division, self-consciousness must itself be theorized as an unqualified and spontaneous *unity* that eludes reduction to the division that it illuminates. As he states in *Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre* (1797/1798) in what he calls an "incontrovertible" (*unwidersprechlich*) proposition regarding self-consciousness:

Every object comes to consciousness only under the condition that I am also conscious of myself as a conscious subject [...] There is a consciousness in which the subjective and the objective cannot be separated, but rather are absolutely one and the same [*absolut Eins und ebendasselbe*]. Thus it is this kind of consciousness that would be needed to explain consciousness at all.³⁰

In his most well-known treatise, *The Science of Knowledge*, Fichte repeats this principle of differentiation through which self-consciousness grounds consciousness of objects (*viz.* object consciousness) in a formulation was not only seminal itself, but which will prove be decisive for our own proposal as well: he attributes self-consciousness as arising from a primal, unconditioned, but nonetheless contingent and embodied, *act* through which the self posits (*setzt*) itself and *thereby* the not-self as well. As he writes, "The self

³⁰ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, "Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre," in *Fichtes Sammtliche Werke*, ed. I.H. Fichte (Berlin: W. deGruyter, 1971), I:526-27.

and the not-self are both products of original acts of the self [*Das Ich sowohl, als das Nicht-Ich sind beides Producte ursprünglicher Handlungen des Ich*], and consciousness itself is similarly a product of the self's first original act, its own positing of itself."³¹ In short, the intensive unity of the self-conscious subject emerges, or "posits" itself, in the same "original act," that posits the finite "not-self" as an "object" that can thereby be known "*qua* object." On its own however, the act that posits self-consciousness eludes this division; it consists in an qualified, pre-reflective, "*immediate* unity of being."³²

Most crucially to note here is how Fichte's classification of self-consciousness as arising from a kind of contingent "act," a concept Fichte may have modeled after Aristotle's ancient notion of "act" (*energeia*) to which we will return,³³ decisively separates his theorization from any philosopher that preceded him. As the eminent Allen Wood writes,

[It was] Fichte, of all modern philosophers, who first offered a conception of the mind or subject that is decisively different from Descartes. Fichte was the first to understand the subject as necessarily *embodied* and also necessarily *intersubjective*—standing in an interdependent communicative relation to other subjects. Fichte's conception of subjectivity is, in these ways, fundamentally anti-Cartesian, anti-Lockean, even anti-Humean. Fichte would not permit the inference from *cogito* to *sum res cogitans*, and even denies the latter proposition in the sense that Descartes meant it. The Fichtean I is not a *thing* at all, it is only an *act*—the act, Fichte thinks, which lies at the ground of all consciousness whatever, and necessarily precedes any "giving" of ideas, perceptions, representations, things, or objects, or any *facts* about these, however immediate and self-evident they are supposed to be.³⁴

Despite the additional requisite concepts that we will end up gathering from Augustine, Aquinas, and Freud, this basic Fichtean insight regarding self-consciousness as arising from a kind of embodied act will remain with us for the length of our study.

³¹ Fichte, *GWL*, I:107 (*SK*, 107).

³² Fichte, "Erste Einleitung," I:435 (*SK*, 17).

³³ Cf. Heath and Lachs, "Preface," in *SK*, xv.

³⁴ Allen W. Wood, *Fichte's Ethical Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 49. Emphases in original.

Second, as one might expect given his critical stance vis-à-vis Kant, Fichte was not content with simply *stating* the necessity of this pre-reflective act that grounds self-consciousness. Indeed, the terms of his critique virtually required him to continuously inquire into the origin of this primal unity, *viz.* the nature of the “original acts” through which the self “posits” the self/not-self division, and how it is related to its embodied and intersubjective situatedness. The most promising and enduring of his ideas on this front is that the unitary nature of self-consciousness arises on the basis of the division and derivative determination of a primal “drive” (*Trieb*) through which the original activity of the “self” is carried out. Through the notion of a drive, which he—along with other contemporaries such as Hegel and Schelling—likely took from the Lutheran mystic Jakob Böhme (1575-1624),³⁵ Fichte attempts to name the spontaneous (i.e. unconditioned, uncaused, and thus undivided) activity that grounds self-consciousness. Throughout *The Science of Knowledge* Fichte characterizes this drive-based activity as a kind of “striving” (*Streben*) or “longing” (*Sehnen*) to “be infinite” (*unendlich*).³⁶ In itself, as Fichte declares:

[This drive] is an activity *that has no object at all*, but is nonetheless *irresistibly driven out towards one* [*getrieben auf eins ausgeht*], and is merely *felt* [*gefühlht*]. But such a determination in the self is called a *longing*; a drive towards something totally unknown, which reveals itself only through a *need*, a *discomfort*, a *void*, which seeks satisfaction, but does not indicate from whence [*nicht andeutet, woher*].³⁷

According to Fichte, self-consciousness emerges on the basis of this insatiable and unitary drive to be infinite and, in particular, its modulation in connection with one’s sensitive or empirical perceptions.

³⁵ Cf. Paola Mayer, *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy, Hagiography, Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999); Ariel Hessayon and S. L. T. Apetrei, *An Introduction to Jacob Boehme: Four Centuries of Thought and Reception* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 162-79, 224-43; and S. J. McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit: Schelling and the Unconscious* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1-43.

³⁶ Fichte, *GWL*, I:270 (*SK*, 238).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, I:302-303 (*SK*, 265). Emphases in original.

Fichte describes this modulation in terms of an original unity between what we later experience as a split between ideal and real activity. In its primal unity, as Fichte writes, “the original striving of the self [*ursprüngliche Streben des Ich*] is founded, as a drive, solely in the self as such [*im Ich selbst*] as both *ideal* und *real* at once.”³⁸ It is *real* because this drive thrusts the “self” *out* into reality such that the self is opened up to the external influence received through one’s “empirical existence” (*emprischen Dasein*).³⁹ It is *ideal* because this “proce[ssion] outward” is determinative solely of the *self*, not of the external “force” (*Kraft*) that is empirically encountered—through what we would call phenomenal consciousness—and thus must be said to be “existing independently” (*unabhängig vorhandene*).⁴⁰

According to Fichte, self-consciousness emerges as that primal drive splits under the external force of empirical existence that inevitably stands as a “check” (*Anstoss*) and “limitation” (*Begrenzung*) to the self’s intrinsic drive to be infinite. The conflictual result is that there is still a thrust outward—real activity—that seeks to expand the self unrestrictedly vis-à-vis this external force, but that this momentum is blunted as a portion of the drive is diverted back—ideal activity—to the self’s own bounded finitude. In Fichte’s own words, “Through limitation [...] this original force is as it were divided [*getheilt*]: and the remainder which reverts back to the self is the *ideal* force.”⁴¹ Out of this tension between real activity, the external force of empirical existence, and the resulting diversion of ideal activity back onto the self, there arises in the self a pre-egological “feeling”

³⁸ Ibid., I:294 (*SK*, 258-259). Emphasis in original.

³⁹ Ibid., I:279 (*SK*, 246).

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., I:294 (*SK*, 259).

(*Gefühl*) of itself as a finite self with “its own power within itself” in distinction from the external force whose independent existence splits the primal drive outward.⁴²

This derivative “feeling,” which emerges through the division of the primally unitary drive, thus points to the coterminous positing of the boundary between self and the not-self that is constitutive for self-consciousness.⁴³ As Fichte concludes in a summary passage worth quoting at length:

[T]he ultimate ground of all reality for the self is an original interaction between the self and some other thing outside it, of which nothing more can be said, save that it must be utterly opposed to the self. In the course of this interaction, nothing is brought into the self, nothing alien is imported; everything that develops therein, even out to infinity, develops solely from itself, in accordance with its own laws; the self is merely set in motion by this opponent [*das Ich wird durch jenes Entgegengesetzte bloss in Bewegung gesetzt*], in order that it may act; without such an external prime mover [*erstes bewegendes ausser ihm*] it would never have acted, and since its existence consists solely in acting, it would never have existed either. But this mover has no other attribute than that of being a mover, an opposing force [*eine entgegengesetzte Kraft*], and is in fact only felt to be such [*wird geföhle als solche*].⁴⁴

In addition to pointing out that this is the second instance (in addition to the notion of “act”) in which a well-known Aristotelian concept (i.e. the prime mover) that significantly influences Aquinas as well makes an appearance in an important passage in *The Science of Knowledge*, the most crucial aspect of this summary to note is the way that it establishes Fichte’s subtle logic for preserving that complete spontaneous ideality of the self’s emergence into reflective consciousness. In one sense, as Fichte immediately observes in the next sentence, self-consciousness is entirely “dependent” (*abhängig*) upon the opposing force of the empirical for its development. For without the external force of this “opponent,” the self “would have never acted” in the first place. However, in another,

⁴² Ibid., I:299 (SK, 263).

⁴³ Cf. Ibid., I:313 (SK, 274).

⁴⁴ Ibid., I:279 (SK, 246).

even more important sense for Fichte, this external force of the empirical does not *determine* the self in any specific sense (*viz.* “nothing more can be said” about this force) and therefore the spontaneous, primal unity of the self’s development can still be affirmed: “in the determinations [*Bestimmungen*] of [the self’s] existence it is absolutely independent [*schlechthin unabhängig*].”⁴⁵

What makes Fichte’s theory characteristically “exceptional” is the way that he connects the primal drive to be a self to the actual occurrence of intellectual knowledge. According to Fichte, even though the subjective and the objective “cannot be separated” and thus are “absolutely one” in the self’s primal drive to be itself, that identity is genuinely a *unification* of the “subjective” and the “objective” such that those words still name something conceptually meaningful in the nature of that union. By insisting on this point, Fichte claims a primal element of self-knowledge within self-consciousness that arises through an *exception* to the epistemic law whereby knowledge *bridges* a prior division between subject and object. Incidentally, we will see Augustine make a very similar plea for the exceptional status of self-knowledge. The terms of Fichte’s plea includes the affirmation that even though, and only in this case, knowledge arises prior to any division between subject and object, this “immediate self-knowledge”⁴⁶ is still *knowledge* because it is an identity between the subjective and objective. In this way, Fichte explicitly affirms that which Kant denied: a specifically intellectual form of what Kant assigns only to the senses, namely a direct intuition. As Fichte declares openly, the “act whereby the self arises [...] I refer to as [an] *intellectual intuition* [*intellektuelle Anschauung*]⁴⁷ that

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ This is Henrich’s summarizing phrase for this element in Fichte’s theory of self-consciousness. Cf. Henrich, “Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht,” 212-13 (“Fichte’s Original Insight,” 36-37).

⁴⁷ Fichte, “Zweite Einleitung,” I:463 (*SK*, 38). Emphasis in original.

thereby grounds all other acts of intellectual knowledge. Thus Fichte ends up blending his theorization of pre-reflective “feeling” and intellectual “intuition” such that the immediacy of self-consciousness entails a primal “unification, a synthetic connection, between feeling and intuition [*eine Vereinigung, ein syntehtischer Zusammenhang des Gefühls und der Anschauung*].”⁴⁸ For Fichte, self-consciousness is ultimately grounded in a primal simultaneity of a pre-egological feeling and an exceptional self-knowledge that thereby grounds all other knowledge that depends upon an awareness of the subject/object distinction.

c. The Unconscious Approach: Hölderlin and Novalis

Despite Fichte’s rhetorical adamancy regarding this primal identity between the subjective and objective, and therefore of feeling and self-knowledge, two of his students in Jena, Friedrich Hölderlin and the pseudonymously named Novalis,⁴⁹ were not, as Frank remarks, “gullible” enough to be convinced by Fichte’s special pleading regarding the character of human knowledge.⁵⁰ In their view, either knowledge requires a preexistent division or it does not. In order to register this criticism, they rightly pointed out that as soon as one reimports the conceptual outline of the subject/object distinction in order to furnish a primal ground for an *intellectual* self-knowledge inherent to self-consciousness, then, no matter how much one insists on their “identity,” one has recreated the very *apor-ia* that Fichte set out to remedy: the inconsistencies characteristic of the reflection theory. Hölderlin makes this criticism explicit in a fragment entitled, “Urteil und Sein,” in which he argues that self-consciousness must emerge from a prior, non-intellectually self-aware state which, drawing upon terminology that he and Novalis derived from Spinoza, he

⁴⁸ Fichte, *GWL*, I:319 (*SK*, 279).

⁴⁹ His given name was Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg.

⁵⁰ Frank, “Fragments,” 450 (“Fragments,” 80).

calls “absolute being.” Unlike Fichte’s theorization of a primal identity between the subjective and objective, the preceding intensive state of “absolute being” *completely* eludes the subject/object division itself, despite the fact that it remains the necessary ontological ground for that division:

If I say: ‘I am I,’ the Subject (‘I’) and the Object (‘I’) are not so united such that no division (*Trennung*) between them can be made without a misunderstanding [*lit*: a misreading, *verlezen*] of the being [*das Wesen*] that should be divided in this way. On the contrary, the ‘I’ is only possible through this division within the ‘I’. Can I even say ‘I’ without self-consciousness? How then is self-consciousness possible? Through the I opposing myself from myself, distinguishing myself from myself, and yet recognizing the identity of the opposed self in spite of the distinction. But to what extent the same? I can, I must inquire this way; for in another respect [the ‘I’] opposes itself. Therefore, identity is not a unity of object and subject that would merely take place [*schlechtin stattfände*], therefore identity is not equivalent to absolute being [*die Identität nicht = dem absoluten Sein*].⁵¹

The most important facet of this passage to underline is Hölderlin’s insistence that the synthetic function of the self-consciousness “I” *always* presupposes a division in some kind of primal unity that forms the vital basis for self-consciousness. Like Hölderlin, Novalis names this primal unity as “being” or “mere-being.” In itself, mere being has no opposition or division; in order to enter the determined sphere of self- and other-awareness—Novalis calls this sphere that of “reference” (*Beziehen*)—a differentiation must be posited within ourselves and thus “outside” ourselves as well. The actual occurrence of that division does not, however, abolish the originary intensive unity of being; it simply renders it inaccessible to the inquiring “I” that is formed on the basis of the division and on which its enduring possibility continues to rest. As Novalis concludes in his study on Fichte, “In order to determine the I we must refer it to something. Reference oc-

⁵¹ Friedrich Hölderlin, “Urteil und Sein,” in *Hölderlin: Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Friedrich Beissner (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1962), IV:227.

curs through differentiation – Both [occur] through the thesis of an absolute sphere of existence. This is mere-being [*dis ist das Nur Sein*].”⁵²

The terms of the subsequent division then form the immanent *relata* that self-consciousness synthesizes as a higher unity (i.e. genuine synthesis) that is nonetheless a unity-in-distinction (i.e. “an identity in spite of the separation”). Despite furnishing the ground for this division and subsequent synthesis, the primal unity of “absolute being” is itself—according to Hölderlin and Novalis—cognitively inaccessible to anything (i.e. self-consciousness, intellectual intuition, reflection, or self-knowledge) that presupposes separated *relata*. As Henrich summarizes, Hölderlin and Novalis force “one [to] conceive, prior to the distinction between subject and object that constitutes all consciousness, a whole that always remains *unknowable*”⁵³ precisely because it does not conform to the conditions required for self-consciousness and/or intellectual self-knowledge. As Novalis writes, the “unknown is the prototype of the I.”⁵⁴ Like Fichte, Novalis affirms that the only trace of this unknown ground that enters into self-consciousness is that of a pre-reflective “feeling” of the self’s fundamental “dependence” on something else. Unlike Fichte, however, Novalis is insistent that this feeling is completely devoid of intellectual intuition: “Feeling proceeds from the undetermined, which it is without knowing it.”⁵⁵

If one searches in Hölderlin and Novalis for further thematizations of this unknowable ground of self-consciousness in addition to that of “absolute being,” one will find references to “absolute spirit,”⁵⁶ the “One,”⁵⁷ and a mutual embrace of Fichte’s own

⁵² Novalis, *Fichte-Studien*, II:106, no. 3 (*FS*, 6).

⁵³ Dieter Henrich, “Hölderlin über Urteil und Sein. Eine Studie zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Idealismus,” in *Konstellationen: Probleme und Debatten am Ursprung der idealistischen Philosophie (1789-1795)* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1991), 74 (ET: *The Course of Remembrance*, 86). Emphasis added.

⁵⁴ Novalis, *Fichte-Studien*, II:145, no. 83 (*FS*, 43).

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, II:126, no. 32. (*FS*, 25).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, II:273, no. 568. (*FS*, 170-71).

theorization of a primal conflict between, as the metrical version of Hölderlin's *Hyperion* reads, a "drive to stride forth toward the infinite [*Trieb unendlich fortzuschreiten*]" and a "drive to be limited [*beschränkt*]."58 Nonetheless, the accent on the unknowability of our pre-reflective unity runs deep in both figures. Accordingly, they tend to insist that the only way that this pre-reflective unity from which our "feeling" of self-consciousness emerges can be truly depicted is through the poetic excess of meaning—in comparison to the limits of theoretical speculation—made possible through aesthetic representation.⁵⁹ Hence Novalis's famous declaration: "The limits of feeling are the limits of philosophy. Feeling cannot feel itself."⁶⁰

d. The Theological Approach: Schleiermacher

There were admittedly several important figures in this milieu other than Schleiermacher (e.g. Hegel and Schelling) who associated the unfolding of self-consciousness, and especially its apparent affinity with a drive to infinity and a germinal self-knowledge, with the question of God. However, among these thinkers Schleiermacher stands out as one of the only figures who incorporates the burgeoning discourse on self-consciousness into a classically Christian account of the God-world relation, *viz.* one that unambiguously affirms a qualitative divide between the Creator and creation, including the affirmation of *creatio ex nihilo*.⁶¹ In contrast, for Hegel the unfolding of self-consciousness inevitably entails a dialectical sublation of the illusion of God's otherness so that a recognition of the singu-

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, II:296, no. 662. (*FS*, 194).

⁵⁸ Friedrich Hölderlin, "Die metrische Fassung des Hyperion," in *Hölderlin: Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Friedrich Beissner (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1957), III:195, lines 46-51.

⁵⁹ C.f., for example, "Über die Verfahrungsweise des poetischen Geistes," IV:253-54 (ET: "On the Operations of the Poetic Spirit," in *Friedrich Hölderlin: Essays and Letters on Theory*, trans. and ed. Thomas Pfau (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988), 72-73) and Frank, "Fragmente," 465-67 ("Fragments," 92-93).

⁶⁰ Novalis, *Fichte-Studien*, II:114, no. 15 (*FS*, 13).

⁶¹ Cf. Schleiermacher, *CG*, 13.1:§40-41, pp. 230-240 (*CF*, 149-156).

larity between “God” and the community’s self-consciousness is the fulfillment of the so-called “absolute idea.”⁶² Or similarly for Schelling: God is attributed something like an unconscious drive for self-realization that results in the act of creation.⁶³ On these fronts, Schleiermacher is clear and resolute: “Creation [...] must, indeed, be traced entirely to the divine activity, but not in such a way that this activity is thought of as resembling human [or] temporal activity.”⁶⁴

Schleiermacher’s groundbreaking integration of classical Christian doctrine with the themes of self-consciousness regnant in his intellectual setting reflects a number of insights that can be traced back through Fichte, Hölderlin, and Novalis. For example, Schleiermacher endorses Fichte’s seminal distinction between object-consciousness and the immediate unity of self-consciousness that necessarily precedes object-consciousness as a “feeling” that, as we referenced above, “accompanies” states that can be associated with object-oriented consciousness.⁶⁵ Similarly, he echoes Novalis and Hölderlin in distinguishing the immanent givenness of “feeling” (*Gefühl*) from the object-oriented domains of intellectual “knowing” (*Wissen*) and, in addition, practical “doing” (*Thun*).⁶⁶ In order to express this point, Schleiermacher formulates what can be interpreted as a variation on Fichte’s account of the immanently and externally-oriented drives. Schleierma-

⁶² Cf. G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Religion, III: Die vollendete Religion*, ed. Walter Jaeschke, vol. 5, *Vorlesungen: Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1984), 233-70 (ET: *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, Volume III: The Consummate Religion*, ed. Peter C. Hodgson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 310-347).

⁶³ Cf. F.W.J. Schelling, *Die Weltalter. Fragmente. In den Urfassungen von 1811 und 1813*, ed. Manfred Schröter (Munich: Biederstein, 1979) (ET: *The Ages of the World*, trans. Jason M. Wirth (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände*, ed. Thomas Buchheim (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1997) (ET: *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), and Slavoj Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder: An Essay on Schelling and Related Matters* (London/New York: Verso, 1996).

⁶⁴ Schleiermacher, *CG*, 13.1:§41, p. 234 (*CF*, 152).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.1:§3.2, p. 22-24 (*CF*, 6-7).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 13.1:§3.3, p. 24-26 (*CF*, 7-8).

cher argues that all of human life occurs as a vacillation between two elemental modes: the mode of *receptivity* in which we are influenced and causally conditioned by other objects and the mode of *freedom* in which we reciprocally exercise influence and causal conditioning upon other objects.⁶⁷ Or as he expresses the same point through alternative terminology: “Life, then is to be conceived as an alternation between an abiding-in-self (*Insichbleiben*) and a passing-beyond-self (*Aussichheraustreten*) on the part of the subject.”⁶⁸ Doing is clearly an activity of freedom that passes-beyond-self. However, his description of the relation between feeling and knowing from within this framework nicely encapsulates Hölderlin and Novalis’s objection to Fichte’s insistence on a primal identity between feeling and (self-)knowing. As Schleiermacher summarizes the relation:

But while Knowing, in the sense of possessing knowledge, is an abiding-in-self on the part of the subject, nevertheless as the act of knowing, it only becomes real by a passing-beyond-self of the subject, and in this sense it is a Doing. As regards Feeling, on the other hand, [...] it is not effected by the subject, *but simply takes place in the subject, and thus, since it belongs altogether to the realm of receptivity*, it is entirely an abiding-in-self; and in this sense it stands alone in antithesis to the other two—Knowing and Doing.⁶⁹

By precisely delineating this distinction, Schleiermacher further solidifies a conceptual trajectory in which the chief clue that points to the unitary, pre-reflective ground of self-consciousness—namely, *Gefühl*—is clearly differentiated from the subject/object relation inherent to acts of knowledge *per se*.

Undoubtedly, however, Schleiermacher’s most decisive and enduring insight consists in his argument that the dependent feeling that pervades self-consciousness—or as he calls it the “feeling of absolute dependence” (*das Gefühl schlechthinniger Abhängigkeit*)—finds its ultimate causative source not in the limiting force of an empirical

⁶⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 13.1: §4.1-2, pp. 33-37 (*CF*, 12-15).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 13.1: §3.3, p. 25 (*CF*, 8).

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.1: §3.3, pp. 25-26 (*CF*, 8). Emphasis added.

“check” (Fichte) or the unknowable simplicity of one’s absolute being (Hölderlin/Novalis), but rather in our radical dependence upon the all-pervading causality of God as the Creator of the world. In other words, our self-conscious feeling of ourselves as finitely “absolutely dependent” ultimately points to our intrinsic “relation to God”⁷⁰ as part of the divine creation. God is the felt “*whence* of our receptive and active existence [*Woher unseres empfänglichen und selbsttätigen Dasein*]⁷¹ whose creative causality cannot be reduced to any single cause in creation. Rather, God is the “whence” for all of creation and thus in relation to this Creator all things are primally *receptive* as “implied by [our] self-consciousness.”⁷² Our feeling of absolute dependence is the causative trace of God’s pure and eternal *freedom* and *activity* within which there is no trace of reciprocal conditioning. It must be emphasized that at this point Schleiermacher in *no way* lapses into a merging of feeling into knowing. He is adamant that the feeling of dependence is in no way “conditioned by a previous knowledge of God.”⁷³ Instead, short of the revelatory appearance of God within the confines of creation itself (i.e. in Jesus Christ),⁷⁴ God remains very much like something Hölderlin and Novalis described with slightly different rhetorical connotations: the unknown origin of being from which my feeling of myself mysteriously emanates, but upon which—precisely because *feeling* is not a *knowing*—I cannot epistemically *reflect*.

III. The Origins of this Project: Two Conjectures and Finding a Midwife

Broadly speaking, the proposal that follows can be understood as a blending of the unconscious and theological approaches to self-consciousness that also incorporates Fich-

⁷⁰ Ibid., 13.1: §4.4, p. 38 (CF, 16).

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 13.1: §4.4, p. 39 (CF, 17).

⁷⁴ Cf. esp. Ibid., CG, 13.2: §94-96, pp. 52-70 (CF, 385-398).

te's key insight that self-consciousness arises from a kind of embodied "act." For his part, Freud's metapsychology reflects the joint Romantic commitment to the developmental centrality of an unconscious, pre-reflective wholeness and the existence of a drive whose fulfillment or frustration is primally decisive to the emergence of self-consciousness. In Freud, as we will see, these go by the name of "the id" (*viz.* the pre-reflective wholeness) and the "libido" (*viz.* the drive). Similarly, despite writing several centuries earlier, Augustine and Aquinas stand in the same mainstream Christian theological tradition as does Schleiermacher in affirming that human nature—and the passive and active activities that are thereby concretely made possible—reflect the all-pervasive causality of the divine Creator.

However, the detailed shape of the constructive trajectory that follows has been determined by much more than these initial resonances with the genealogically connected approaches just outlined. Instead, as I signaled at the outset, my constructive trajectory emerged out of two initial conjectures regarding how specific aspects of Freud's metapsychology and a fortuitous sequence between Augustine and Aquinas can together be leveraged in order to clarify unaddressed and/or contested issues that endure within the initial promise of the unconscious and theological approaches to self-consciousness.

The first conjecture began with Freud and had interrelated positive and negative aspects. Positively, it seemed possible to me that Freud makes a decisive clinical and theoretical discovery regarding the origin of egoic self-consciousness. As I will describe it in detail in Chapter 4, this discovery arrives in his original theorization of a mechanism—what he calls *primary identification*—that accounts for how our egos self-consciously emerge from the id's infantile state characterized by the flux of phenomenal conscious-

ness and the immediacy of an extroverted, libidinal drive. According to Freud, primary identification names a capacity to bond with certain sense-perceptions that engender either intense pleasure or pain (e.g. a mother's breast or traumatic events) in such a way that they are perceived by the individual in terms of a pre-reflective wholeness that eludes the subject/object division. Instead, those sensations are immediately perceived in terms of the "subject." For example, for the infant the presence of the breast is *immediately* and *unconsciously* coterminous with the infant as an extension of "itself." Even though the infant does not in any way think of itself as an "I," Freud evocatively suggests that our only way of illustrating this fusion of primary identification is through the phrase, "I *am* the breast."⁷⁵ In other words, the breast is perceived as a "part" of the infant such that its presence pleausurably completes an intensive, pre-reflective wholeness. Only later, after the dawn of self-consciousness and thus an awareness of its own embodied boundaries, does the infant differentiate itself and thus interact with the breast in ways that can be illustrated by the phrases, "'I have it,' that is, 'I am not it.'⁷⁶

As we will see, the decisive factor that triggers this subsequent awareness of the object *qua* object is that the initial pleasure of those sensations (e.g. those associated with the breast) inevitably gives way to the helpless and recurring pain of its unexpected absence. Given the nature of primary identification, this absence is inevitably perceived not as the painful lack of the breast *qua* object, but rather as a distressing deprivation or "hole" in the infant's own pre-reflective wholeness. According to Freud's train of thought, the cumulative crisis of this pain forces a coping process that culminates in a coalesced identification with our own finite bounds—over against that which Fichte would

⁷⁵ "Freud, "Findings, Ideas, Problems," GW 17:151/SE 23:299. Emphasis added.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

have called the sensible “not-self”—that marks the beginning of self-consciousness. In this way, Freud furnishes a framework in which we can theorize that the dawning of self-consciousness coincides with the disengagement of primary identification from the presence/absence of vacillating sense-perceptions in order to identify *with the enduring presence of our own sensing and enfleshed bodies*. The result of this identification is the intensive and pre-reflective wholeness that we later nominally signify as “me” or “my/self.”

Even upon an initial canvassing of Freud’s account of primary identification, some similarities to Fichte and the Romantics should already be evident. Like the Fichtean drive “to be infinite,” the Freudian drive to identify is determinative only of the “self” and in no way yields intelligent knowledge of any sensed object *qua* object. All that is sensitively perceived is the painful “limitation” and “check” of its vacillating presence and absence. Likewise, the pre-reflective wholeness of an identificatory fusion broadly fits the Romantic demand for a non-cognitive wholeness prior to an awareness of the subject/object division.

If these similarities were to tempt us to minimize the originality of Freud’s contributions, there is nonetheless another layer of promise in addition to the mere presentation of the mechanism of identification. By setting primary identification within a broader metapsychological context, Freud situates it alongside other phenomena that either seem to be other instances of identification (e.g. archaic fusions with parents, trauma, hallucinations, and hypnosis) or closely adjacent phenomena (e.g. sexual desire, transference, and the self-criticism of conscience). Furthermore, Freud also gives sustained attention to a phenomenon that rarely captures systemic consideration in either Idealism or Romanti-

cism: the pathological disruption and/or complete breakdown of the synthesized ‘I’ under pressure from various stimuli. The net result of this broader Freudian context is that it seems increasingly possible for self-consciousness to be described more accurately in relation to other sets of anthropological data. In other words, in Freud’s metapsychology self-consciousness loses some of its seductive status as something truly exceptional and completely *sui generis*; rather, one gains the sense that it might indeed be a *species* of effect, though a central one to be sure, of a certain capacity for identification for which other instances can be plausibly described.

To this *prima facie* promise of Freud’s metapsychology we must nonetheless immediately add two potentially insuperable weaknesses. First, as I will show in Chapter 4, in his metapsychology Freud actually falls prey to a psychoanalytic version of the reflection theory. The result is that he vacillates between two separate and ultimately irreconcilable theories regarding the origins of egoic self-consciousness. In addition to the one that relies upon identification (*viz.* the “identification theory”) he also includes another theory (*viz.* the “sexual theory”) that insists on the etiological centrality of sexual desire for every facet of psychic development. In the places in Freud’s metapsychology in which the sexual theory has a dominating influence, the result is a marginalization of the idiosyncratic fusions of primary identification. Instead, when working with the sexual theory Freud assumes an always already egoic subject such that the intrinsic self-differentiation of sexual attraction becomes attributable to the infant (i.e. I am not that object/I do not have that object/I want that object). In this vacillation, Freud recreates a version of the reflection theory’s quintessential circularity: the temptation to reinsert the self-conscious subject—in this case the sexually self-aware subject—into the very expla-

nation for how this subject supposedly emerges in the first place. In light of this internal inconsistency, if we are to capitalize on the promise of primary identification for a theory of self-consciousness, then we will need to find a framework that enables us to differentiate it clearly from sexual desire in a manner that Freud consistently fails to do.

Second, the negative inverse of Freud's theoretical uniqueness is that his metapsychology lacks the conceptual resources to make the leap from its distinctive psychoanalytic preoccupations to the conceptual precision necessary for philosophical and/or theological explanation. Even though he was clearly influenced by Romantic philosophy and poetry, most obviously Goethe and Schiller⁷⁷ as well as secondary sources such as Eduard von Hartmann's *Philosophie des Unbewussten* (1869)⁷⁸ and the Nietzschean-inspired Georg Groddeck,⁷⁹ by the time derivative themes show up in his metapsychology they are mostly shorn of their philosophical connotations and/or refashioned in terms of the peculiar thematic concerns of psychoanalysis. Freud often redoubles this problem by exhibiting an explicit hostility toward being interpreted as a philosopher—he always identifies as a doctor dedicated to the ideals of scientific and clinical observation—to the point that he even openly decries any demand that he produce a metapsychology that is thoroughly theoretically or conceptually consistent.⁸⁰ When one combines all of these fac-

⁷⁷ Cf. Peter Gay, *Freud: A Life for Our Time* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1988), 3-151 and Patricia Cotti, "Hunger and Love: Schiller and the Origin of Drive Dualism in Freud's Work," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 88, no. 1 (2007): 167-82.

⁷⁸ Cf. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, SA 2:151/SE 4:134 and Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind: Beyond the Psychoanalytic Legend* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 253.

⁷⁹ Cf. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:292/SE 19:7,23.

⁸⁰ E.g., Freud "The Unconscious," SA 3:149/SE 14:190 and "On Narcissism: An Introduction," SA 3:44-45/SE 14:77.

tors, the task of trying to make a link between Freud's metapsychology and any constructive explanation becomes a notoriously fraught affair on which to set out.⁸¹

Unbeknownst to me when this initial evaluation of Freud's metapsychology first occurred to me, Manfred Frank had come to a similar compound conclusion regarding Freud about a decade earlier. In his essay, "Subjectivity and Individuality: Survey of a Problem," Frank echoes the positive aspect of my conjecture by remarking that Freud's theorization of a self-awareness that only emerges out of a prior "unconscious history" rightly displaces the self-conscious "I" as someone (or something) who is in fact "not the master in its own house."⁸² Instead, our sense of being a unified "I" depends, much to our chagrin, on immanent, lower-level processes that constantly elude our attempts to bring them into our own reflective gaze. As such we remain paradoxically, as the Romantics pointed out, unconscious of the very ground of our self-consciousness. Similarly, Frank also immediately adds the negative aspect as well. As he writes, "If indeed [our] knowing self-relation were only a tiny light spot on the dark map of the unconscious or if it were a place of delusion, the structure of this light spot or of this delusion would have to be described intelligibly."⁸³ Unfortunately, as Frank incisively concludes, "Freud's theory—like that of [fellow psychoanalytic theorist Jacques] Lacan—is not advanced far enough to provide this description with its own means."⁸⁴

If, however, one remains convinced of the promise of Freud's metapsychology for describing the origins of egoic self-consciousness, then the dilemma that opens up in light of the two weaknesses described above is analogous to what Socrates famously de-

⁸¹ Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud* (Paris: Seuil, 1965), 13-63 (ET: *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 3-57).

⁸² Frank, "Subjektivität und Individualität," 30 ("Subjectivity and Individuality," 15).

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

scribes in Plato's *Theaetetus* as the need to find an "intellectual midwife" in order to ferret out and retranslate Freud's insights into a form that is conceptually portable and therefore more philosophically/theologically usable.⁸⁵ If we were to take Frank's cue on where to look for finding an intellectual midwife for Freud, we would inevitably be led back into the heart of the above genealogy, drawing upon Kant, Fichte, the Romantics and their direct contemporary successors in theorizing self-consciousness. My reason for opting for an alternative strategy to this expected route stems from the fact that the weakest and most contested aspects of that genealogy coincide with the very conceptual sites at which a good translator for Freud's metapsychology would need to provide the greatest degree of clarity.

Three such conceptual sites of weakness stand out most prominently. First, making sense of Freud's account of the ego's formation requires a maximal degree of precision regarding the *interrelation between different human capacities* (e.g. sense-perception, desire, knowledge, and identification). Unfortunately, much of the internal confusion and disagreement between the four approaches described above stems from a complete lack of clarity about how to describe this type of immanent relation between capacities. To be sure, the particular capacities that we end up associating with self-consciousness are the ones that loom largest here, but disagreement and confusion regarding a whole constellation of other capacities, nearly every one of which is potentially relevant to Freud, consistently hampers and mars attempts to gain clarity about this primary relation. The most obvious and enduring example of this lack of clarity can be traced to the way that, Kant (via Descartes, Locke, and Hume) bequeaths to those after him what is in my judgment a deeply confused assumption of a *division* between sensi-

⁸⁵ Cf. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 150b-50d.

tive data and the synthetic acts of understanding such that an *a priori* epistemic quality must be attributed to self-consciousness.

Second, translating identification's developmental role in the origins of egoic self-consciousness demands a careful delineation of *several different types of intensive and extroverted unity* that define human existence from its most primal inception and then at every point of its life thereafter. The importance of this delineation is underlined because Freud's interrelated notions of the id as the originary unity of the psyche and the pre-reflective fusions of primary identification inevitably raise the knotty question of how to relate different kinds of unity that intensively occur within a human being (e.g. self-consciousness) or are mediated to it as the extroverted interiorization of something external to it (e.g. the senses). If one turns to the four approaches above on this question, one is immediately faced with the lack of consensus illustrated by Kant's *a priori* "synthetic unity of apperception" and its *a posteriori* synthesizing of cognitive unities, Fichte's "immediate" identity of the subjective/objective and the subsequent unity forged through the self's originary acts through which it posits itself, and Hölderlin and Novalis's primal unity of "absolute being" and the dependent, derivative unity-in-distinction that is self-consciousness.

Third, if we are to re-render Freud's proposed link between libidinal desire and self-consciousness then we will need a consistent account for how to relate the supposed infinity of the self's striving to the teleological status of the objects *qua* objects that the self-conscious subject can thereby perceive, know, reflect upon, or and/or produce. This compound relation elicits some of the most divergent answers among the approaches de-

scribed above. For Fichte,⁸⁶ the infinitely desirous “whence” of self-consciousness endlessly propels the subject toward an infinity for which no object could possibly satisfy. For Hölderlin and Novalis, the self is forced to direct its desire to the production of poetic means in order to express the absolute unity of its dependency. Lastly, for Schleiermacher the dependent “whence” of self-consciousness ultimately points to the Creator whose infinity grounds and causes the totality of all finite things.

If only one of these weaknesses were to be found in the above genealogy, it would likely not derail an attempt to resource such figures for translating and appropriating Freud’s insights. When taken all together, however, one begins to wonder whether heading back into Freud’s own direct and indirect Idealist and Romantic sources might be a strategy better suited for explaining more exhaustively *how* Freud arrived at his brilliant, albeit conceptually challenged, metapsychology than it would be for finding conceptual resources that are, in the end, precise enough for actually explaining the anthropological phenomena under investigation.

At this point, the relevance of my second conjecture finally comes into view. This conjecture grew out of my reading of Bernard Lonergan’s landmark transposition of the Thomist metaphysical framework in order to recover its relevance as a resource for critiquing the Kantian assumption that there must be an *a priori* structuring of sense-perception in order to synthetically “produce” knowledge. As an extension of Lonergan’s trajectory, I suspected that, if it is appropriately resourced, Aquinas’s metaphysics and theological anthropology could similarly open up novel ways for describing the nature and origin of self-consciousness that are not initially obvious when working solely within the expected genealogy. On the surface, I was attracted to the fact that Aquinas’s theolog-

⁸⁶ And we could analogously add Hegel, Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche.

ical anthropology has several areas of strength that overlap with the three problematic clusters outlined above. For example, as I will show in detail in Chapters 2 and 3, Aquinas furnishes (1) precise descriptions of how distinct human capacities dynamically relate to each other by expanding upon the ancient idea of distinct “parts” or “layers” of the soul (e.g. the vegetative, sensitive, and intelligent), (2) a complete typology of different kinds of intensive and extroverted unities supported by a metaphysical account of being, activity, and the soul that ties them all together coherently and teleologically, and (3) an exhaustive account of the systematic way that different types of knowledge can be correlated with corresponding types of desire, with the highest kind of knowledge (i.e. intelligible knowledge) being correlated with a natural desire for a parallel kind of infinity (i.e. the infinite good).

Even more intriguing is the combined Augustinian and Aristotelian backdrop against which Aquinas formulates these crucial elements of his theological anthropology. We will start with the Augustinian background. For our purposes, as I mentioned above, there is a fortuitous sequence between Augustine and Aquinas that can be promisingly resourced for clarifying a number of the pitfalls characteristic of the reflection theory. In his seminal treatise on the Trinity, *De Trinitate*, Augustine touches upon a number of themes familiar from the genealogy outlined above: the notion of a primal, epistemic self-awareness and its relationship to the extroverted unities of sense, knowledge, and desire. For our purposes, however, what is most important about *De Trinitate* is the vacillation that one witnesses in Augustine between two conflicting affirmations. First, the entire framework that he establishes for the interrelated character of creation and the nature of human desire promisingly suggests three distinct intensive unities that tie together human

existence from its beginning to its intended conclusion in in union with God: a *primal* unity given in the soul, an *epistemic* unity that occurs in self-knowledge, and a *teleological* unity that occurs as a result of being unified with God. Secondly, however, at many of the most important junctures of *De Trinitate* Augustine ends up conflating these three intensive unities into a single type of intensive unity: a reflective self-knowledge always already natively given in the soul. As we will see, there are a number of reasons that Augustine feels pulled toward the second affirmation. However, the most decisive factor comes down to how he understands the Creator-creature relation and therefore the nature of *imago Dei* in human beings. If, as Augustine believes, God is an eternally simple intensive unity of reflective self-knowledge, so the reasoning goes, then there must be an epistemic parallel in human beings by which they always already know themselves.

However, by insisting on construing the *imago Dei* in this manner, as I will show in Chapter 1, Augustine gets caught in a dilemma that is again characteristic of the temptation inherent to the reflection theory. The result of this confusion results in the now familiar circular trap. On the one hand, he attributes a primal intensive unity to a human being based upon a natively given self-knowledge in the soul. On the other hand, he simultaneously describes self-knowledge as something contingently forged through particular acts of self-reflection. The result is that Augustine, just like we saw in the genealogy above, conflates and confuses a number of different types of intensive unity—including a primal self-awareness—that need to not only be properly distinguished, but also placed in some sort of explanatory order in relation to one another.

The latter part of the sequence is found in turning, as we will do in Chapters 2 and 3 to Aquinas's theological anthropology in the *Summa Theologiae* in which one finds an

elegant and precise solution to Augustine's dilemma in a manner that ends up capitalizing on the three types of intensive unity—primal, epistemic, and teleological—that Augustine glimpses and yet is unable to coherently explain on his own terms. Aquinas formulates this solution by transposing several of Augustine's overall insights regarding the nature of desire, knowledge, and the *imago Dei* into an Aristotelian metaphysical framework. In particular, as we will see, Aquinas appropriates Aristotle's theory of the soul and the intellect, both of which serve to deny that any primal (or *a priori*) self-knowledge is possible at all for a human being. Instead, according to this theorization, self-knowledge is only derivatively possible on the basis of the extroverted unities of sense-perception and the intelligent knowledge of external objects. The result of this transposition is a theological anthropology precise enough not only to solve Augustine's dilemma, but also to fully furnish a promisingly ordered account of the different types of intensive/extroverted unities that occur in conjunction with the variety of capacities (e.g. the senses, knowledge, and desire) within a human individual.

IV. Chapter Outline: Leveraging Aquinas's Solution to Translate Freud

Based upon these two conjectures, what I propose to do in this study is to leverage Aquinas's solution to Augustine's dilemma in order to solve Freud's analogously circular problem and thereby formulate a reconceptualized blending of the unconscious and theological approaches to egoic self-consciousness. In order to accomplish this, the initial wager of this project is that drawing upon the metaphysics of Aquinas's theological anthropology will furnish us with the conceptual precision necessary in order to address both of the weaknesses that I cited above that hinder the relevance of Freud's theorization of primary identification vis-à-vis the riddle of self-consciousness from coming into full

view. On a broad scale, the precision of Aquinas's theological anthropology will allow us to translate Freud's metapsychology into a form in which the crucial distinctions between different human capacities, the variety of intensive/extroverted unities characteristic of existence, and the ground and *telos* of infinite desire can be drawn with promising clarity. Following this translation, we will then be able to (1) separate out the idiosyncratic function of identification in order to distinguish it adequately from sexual desire and (2) illuminate its significance as a member of the active relation (*viz.* a *relata*) out of which egoic self-consciousness emerges. The result will be a constructive proposal regarding the nature, origin, and—in something of a Thomistic tribute to Schleiermacher's seminal insights—the theological significance of self-consciousness.

As a way of executing this basic plan, the route toward formulating this proposal will take us through five chapters. The first three chapters will re-narrate Aquinas's approach to solving Augustine's dilemma in a manner that simultaneously successfully transposes his original insights regarding desire and (self-)knowledge into an Aristotelian metaphysical framework. In Chapter 1, I will engage in a close reading of the second half of *De Trinitate* in order to outline the shape of Augustine's circular dilemma. Along the way, we will also touch upon his seminal insights into the nature of desire, knowledge, and the central analogy that he draws between the Creator's simplicity and the intensive unity of human beings. As we will see, this analogy gives creation, and human nature in particular, an *exitus-reditus* structure, which means, to borrow and extend some terminology from above, that God is the *whence* and *whither* of creation and every creature therein. Despite the specific critique that we will formulate based upon Augustine's dilemma, what we will also find is that in our constructive trajectory we will end up endorsing

many of his overarching theological insights regarding desire and the Creator-creation relation in the revised form that they are found in Aquinas. Accordingly, giving balanced attention to these seminal insights in *De Trinitate*, and not just the aspects of it with which we level a critique, will prove important for us in understanding Aquinas's anthropology and then extending them later in conversation with Freud as well.

Following this reading of *De Trinitate*, in Chapters 2 and 3 I will present Aquinas's multi-level solution to Augustine's dilemma that simultaneously maintains—and even explanatorily expands upon—several of his most important insights regarding the nature of desire, knowledge, the intensive unity of an individual, and their created relation to God. Most crucially, I will detail the way in which Aquinas draws upon Aristotle's metaphysical framework, especially his theory of the soul, the hierarchical (or vertical) relation of the soul's sensitive and intelligent layers, and the corresponding ontological and epistemological significance of intelligible and sensible forms, in order to transpose Augustine's insights into a theological anthropology that denies that the human soul has any primal knowledge at all, much less something as specific as self-knowledge. Instead, the intellect is characterized by a native extroversion that can only pivot “inward” in reflection *after* coming to know external objects *qua* objects. Based upon this transposition, Aquinas is able to successfully resituate the three forms of intensive unity in human beings that Augustine had suggested within a much more metaphysically precise theological anthropology. According to the terms of Aquinas's solution, these forms of intensive unity are re-rendered as an absolutely primal unity attributable to the *soul*, an epistemic unity characteristic of reflective *self-knowledge*, and a unity of *desire* that comes when all of our desires are aligned, penultimately by reason and ultimately in un-

ion with God. There is, however, one weakness, which I will point out right at the end of Chapter 2, that is created by the elegance of Aquinas's solution. By resituating self-knowledge as the basis of the intellect's native extroversion, Aquinas unintentionally vacates Augustine's (and, as history turned out, Kant's, Fichte's, Hölderlin's and Novalis's) concern to articulate a kind of immanent awareness that intensively grounds the "subject-side" of the subject-object divide that is then *bridged* by the extroverted unities of intelligent knowledge. His reasons for doing so are clear and justified, in my judgment, as the Aristotelian/Thomist account of cognition is simply too convincing in terms of its grasp of the order of human knowledge. However, the vacated place that it leaves behind does point to how I will end up situating egoic self-consciousness as a fourth type of intensive unity in conversation with Freudian primary identification in Chapters 4 and 5.

Before moving on to discuss the shape of the chapters on Freud, however, it should be noted that Chapters 2 and 3 are divided in a manner that reflects a central structural feature of Aquinas's theological anthropology. According to Aquinas the two highest layers of the soul—the sensitive and the intelligent—are each made up by *paired* powers of knowledge (i.e. the "apprehensive powers" of the senses and the intellect) and desire (i.e. the "appetitive powers" of the sensitive and intellectual appetites). Inasmuch as these powers are paired in the same layers of the soul, they respond to different aspects of reality: broadly speaking, the senses and the sensitive appetite respond to the sensible qualities of reality, while the intellect and the intellectual appetite (or, the will) respond to the intelligible qualities of reality. However, inasmuch as these powers are analogous powers of knowledge (i.e. the senses and the intellect) or desire (i.e. the sensitive and intellectual appetites), they can be described according to the same metaphysical principles

that jointly govern them as apprehensive or appetitive capacities. Based upon this classification, my chosen route of presentation will be to consider first the apprehensive powers and especially Aquinas's reconceived understanding of self-knowledge vis-à-vis Augustine's (Chapter 2) and then the parallel operations of the appetitive powers (Chapter 3).

Based upon this presentation of Aquinas's solution to Augustine's dilemma and the metaphysically precise theological anthropology that it engenders, in Chapter 4 I will turn to the analogous dilemma that Freud produces for himself in working out the ego's developmental relation to primary identification. The first half of the chapter will be devoted to outlining the irreconcilable circularity that arises in Freud's vacillation between the identification theory and the sexual theory for how egoic self-consciousness emerges out of the pre-egological immediacy characteristic of the "id." Following this descriptive and diagnostic task, in the second half of the chapter I will attempt to reapply the shape of Aquinas's solution to Augustine in the specifically psychoanalytic context. The dual purpose of this reapplication will be (1) to solve Freud's circular dilemma by untangling the developmental effects of identification from those tied to sexual desire and (2) to simultaneously translate the promise of primary identification into a new philosophically portable form—i.e. one that broadly conforms to the Aquinas's metaphysical synthesis of Aristotle and Augustine—from which we can analyze its significance for the debates regarding the origins of self-consciousness and also re-render it in terms of its theological significance. As will become clear at that point, the proposal that I will set forth through this act of translation is that in primary identification Freud stumbles upon a human capacity that can be plausibly theorized as a distinct "layer" of the soul—complete with an

apprehensive and appetitive power—that stands vertically between the sensitive and intellectual layer of the soul. Given that this is the juncture at which all of the intellectual streams upon which we are drawing flow together for the first time, the latter half of Chapter 4 represents the conceptual linchpin upon which my entire constructive trajectory rests and can be subsequently extended.

Finally, in Chapter 5 I will bring all of these threads of argumentation together. By drawing upon the Augustinian/Thomist theological anthropology developed in Chapters 1-3 and expanded in conversation with Freud in Chapter 4, I will defend the proposal that egoic self-consciousness emerges as the product/term of an act of primary identification with one's own en fleshed and sensing body. In itself, this act is unconscious such that the pre-reflective wholeness that it produces between the power of identification and "my" body cannot itself be "known" or "inspected." Our only two clues to its preceding and ongoing occurrence are to be found in (1) the feeling of *whence* that constitutes self-consciousness and the corresponding qualitative *accompaniment* that accrues to the first-order processes of phenomenal consciousness; and (2) the pathological effects—i.e. the collapse of the synthesized "I" as Freud observes so acutely—that can be observed when our power of identification produces a pre-reflective fusion with an object other than our body.

Near the end of this chapter, as briefly suggested above, I will furnish a final extension of this proposal by situating the fused unities of identification, including that one which produces self-consciousness, in relation to the three others forms of intensive unity that Aquinas enumerates (e.g. the soul, self-knowledge, and the intelligent alignment of desires). The resulting argument will be that egoic self-consciousness "rests" on two pre-

ceding types of pre-reflective intensive unity (i.e. the soul and that of primary identification). Furthermore, in its successful formation and operation, egoic self-consciousness derivative unlocks, as we discussed above, all of our intelligent capacities (e.g. the intellect and the will) precisely because its coalesced intensive unity founds the subject side of the subject-object divide. As such, self-consciousness is a necessary key for forging both of the other two types of intensive unity: reflective self-knowledge and the alignment of our desires in relation to both reason (penultimately) and God (ultimately). In this precise connection, the relation between egoic self-consciousness and our longing for the infinite will finally come into light. By unlocking our intelligent capacities, the dawning of self-consciousness really does thrust us toward that “object”—unknown as of yet—from whom our *longing* for infinity originates and in whom alone it can find utter satisfaction: the God who, as Aquinas affirms following Augustine, is genuinely an *infinite* unity of truth and goodness.

V. Some Methodological and Terminological Notes

Before launching into this itinerary there are three additional methodological notes and one terminological note to make clear before proceeding. The first two methodological notes stem from my intent, illustrated by my broad alignment with Schleiermacher’s theological approach to self-consciousness, my main sources in Augustine/Aquinas, and my goal to situate self-consciousness within the overall Creator/creation relation, that what follows be a work in constructive Christian theology. This is further reflected in my conviction, which I will expand upon in the overall Conclusion at the end of this study, that the theological anthropology set out here has a number of contributions to make in broader theological, and even pastoral contexts (e.g. a theology of desire that grounds deriva-

tive theologies of marriage, sexuality and soteriology) beyond the scope of this particularly project. In fact, one of the immediate impetuses of this project was an increasing frustration with cumulative points of incoherence surrounding topics such as desire/marriage/sexuality in contemporary theological discussions stemming from the confusions that inevitably follow from trying to make constructive theological, pastoral, and moral judgments without possessing a maximally coherent theological anthropology on which to base such reasoning and reflection. From my perspective, reconstructing such a theological anthropology from within the confusing and fractured terrain of contemporary theology simply takes time, a patient stepping-back from the trendiest theological figures, and usually a kind of piecing together of resources from unconventional sources from the past. Obviously, those that I have found most helpful in this overall reconstruction are pre-modern theologians like Augustine/Aquinas and philosophically-maligned voices like Freud.

However, this mix of philosophical and theological resources, and here is the first of the notes on methodology, suggests that I should offer some description for how I understand the relationship between philosophy and theology. My approach to the disciplinary distinction between philosophy and theology is unapologetically defined from the “theological” direction of that distinction. In its specifics, my intent is to calmly practice a version of how Augustine and Aquinas seemed to approach this relation. Given how remote this approach seems from the modern university these days, I might simply add that they thought this understanding of philosophy and theology was imminently defensible and thus relatively uncontroversial.

The easiest way to grasp this approach is to begin with the affirmation that the truth of creation (or being, the world, or reality) is *unitary* and *vertical*. Because of its unitary nature, all attempts to explain phenomena encountered in creation according to their causes are organically related to one another and arise from a common (and God-given) desire for truth. Because of its vertical nature, human knowledge is ordered in “successive, distinct autonomous sciences” that can be noncompetitively unified and ordered by placing them in relations of “successively high[er] viewpoints”⁸⁷ each of which includes the true explanations of the lower science even as it expands upon them in a more complex sphere of phenomenal “data.” For example: physics (subatomic and classical) gives way to the higher viewpoint of chemistry (inorganic and organic), chemistry gives way to the higher viewpoint biology, and biology gives way to the higher viewpoint of psychology.⁸⁸ According to this vertical integration, I ascribe to the classical view that philosophy, especially that of the metaphysical variety, and theology stand at the “top” of this integration such that they aim at the widest possible integration of all human knowledge in explanations that have a maximum degree of application across the diversity of phenomena.

Still, from the theological point of view, theology is indeed a “higher” science than philosophy for the simple reason that it takes into account certain “data” (i.e. divine revelation) that philosophy does not, even as it incorporates all genuine truths that philosophy uncovers.⁸⁹ This means, of course, that—when viewed from the theological perspective—philosophy and theology vertically merge together with all the other sciences into a trajectory in which the seamless, unitary character of truth converges upon its source in

⁸⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 3:464-65.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 3:280-81.

⁸⁹ Cf. *ST* I.1.1 and I.1.5.

God. In contrast, from the philosophical perspective certain claims of theology that draw upon the data of revelation remain the opposite of seamless and unitary: inexplicably unintelligible and/or ideologically scandalous.

In terms of what this means for this study, there are large portions of each of the chapters that follow that would be indistinguishable from a strictly philosophical reading of Augustine, Aquinas, or Freud. This will likely include certain parts of these chapters that endorse general affirmations about the existence of God, since I subscribe to Aquinas's argument that human reason unaided by grace can rationally affirm the existence of God as the first efficient cause of nature.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, in every chapter—except perhaps Chapter 4—there will aspects of the exposition and/or proposal that forge ahead into the portions of Augustine and Aquinas that are more strictly theological, especially in their respective descriptions of the trinitarian *imago Dei* as perceptible in the acts of intelligence, the nature of *creatio ex nihilo*, and eschatological *telos* of human desire/knowledge in union with God. In every instance in which this crossover occurs, I will simply press ahead with these theological themes. This is first and foremost because Augustine and Aquinas do so and thus an accurate reading of them demands that we do as well. However, as a Christian theologian, I also simply take it to be true that a fully intelligible explanation of the world and of human nature, of the kind that Frank so exactly demands of Freud in the passage above, finds its fullest expression when an eminently intelligent God is included in the explanation as the beginning of all things, as that which sustains every moment of creation's existence, and, perhaps most importantly, as the infinite end that all human beings were created to desire as their own highest and final end.

⁹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, I.2.1.

Second, many theological readers will inevitably notice how rarely I deal with matters of grace, faith, sin, soteriology, and christology, in my reading and constructive extension of Augustine and Aquinas. This decision is intentional, even though I am aware that in some readers' eyes this will likely disqualify my methodology as legitimately "theological." Obviously, a full rebuttal to such an objection cannot be made in such a brief context. What I can say, however, is that I take it for granted that a Christ-centered grace, faith, and salvation are required to reach the eschatological *telos* of desire and knowledge that Augustine and Aquinas affirm is coincident with knowing the Creator "face-to-face" (1 Cor. 13.12). I make this central affirmation not only on the basis of theology's proper revelatory sources, but also on the empirical grounds of how tragically scarred by sin our world is because of our distorted "knowledge" and disordered desires. Moreover, I fully expect that this theological anthropology can and will be extended to include more explicit discussions of grace, faith, soteriology, and christology.

Nonetheless, what I reject is the stipulation that every attempt to make sense, even *theological* sense, of human beings *must* begin with a prolegomena in which all of those revelatory doctrines are made the explicit conceptual basis for one's theological anthropology. In one sense, this rejection simply follows from affirming that all rational inquiry (which includes *all* forms of theology) is dialectical and thus mutually influencing in terms of conceptual development. However, in a more personal sense this rejection is also due to my experience in witnessing fights over revelation, soteriology, and the doctrine of God that end up inhibiting theologians that start there from ever actually getting around to the difficult task of formulating an equally robust theological anthropology. The pastoral and ecclesial implications of this bad habit, which has been particularly

damaging in Protestant theological circles, is immense and enduring. Hence: the rhetorical and methodological movement of this theological project moves in the opposite direction.

In addition to these two interrelated notes, a third emerges because a constructive project that engages with as many figures and themes as this one does must address the criteria according to which its claims should be measured. Even though my goal in each chapter has been (obviously) to provide an accurate and detailed reading of Augustine, Aquinas, and Freud, it should also be clear that the accuracy of those readings cannot be substituted for the successful persuasiveness of my overall constructive thesis regarding the nature and origin of self-consciousness.⁹¹ In terms of identifying a relevant standard for that thesis, I ultimately can only appeal to the reader to draw upon the data of their own consciousness and accompanying self-consciousness in order to test the degree to which the proposal set forth in these pages chimes with their self-conscious, synthetic experiences of sensing, desiring, and knowing—in addition to the fragility and potential collapse of this synthesized “I” under the pressures of what Freud describes as its threats such as melancholia and trauma. In appealing to this self-referential standard, however, I am tying myself to another common thread that holds together Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, and Freud. For these figures are some of the only intellectual voices that are still heeded (to one degree or another) that defend the idea that within the flux of one’s own phenomenal consciousness there are repeating patterns of effects—beyond the external senses themselves—that can be plausibly described and causally categorized according to

⁹¹ This also means that in each chapter I have limited my engagement with secondary sources to a degree that is minimally necessary to justify my readings. As much as I can, I have steered clear of engaging in secondary debates among Augustinian, Thomistic, and Freudian scholars that stretch beyond the scope of my immediate purpose in reading and resourcing them.

names such as the “intellect” and the “will” (Aristotle/Augustine/Aquinas) and/or the “unconscious,” the “id,” the “ego,” and the “super-ego” (Freud). To the significant degree that my constructive proposal relies upon this common intellectual insistence between these figures, then I am simply content to cast my lot in with theirs and rely upon the evaluations, objections, and proposed clarifications that emerge from the reader’s own investigation of the data of consciousness to which they uniquely have access (i.e. their own).

Lastly, I close with one brief but exceedingly important terminological note. As I noted above, one of the chief challenges before us will be to try to find concepts with which to describe pre-reflective states prior to and/or unconsciously “beneath” our self-conscious awareness of ourselves. One way that I will attempt to successfully steer clear of the circular pitfall that we have repeatedly witnessed above of reinserting the latter into the explanation of the former is to limit my use of words like “self,” “self-conscious,” or “subject” to instances when I clearly mean it to refer to fully self-conscious states and/or human capacities that require the prerequisite of self-consciousness and thus an awareness subject/object distinction (e.g. acts that yield intelligent knowledge). In all other instances, I will employ generic words like “individual,” which is to be taken simply as denoting the organic/physical unity of a living being (*viz.* what Aristotle and Aquinas call an “indivisible”), or “perceiver,” which is to be taken as the nominal form of a human individual (usually an infant) whose existence is dominated by a pre-reflective flux of phenomenal consciousness devoid of any accompanying quality of self-consciousness.

Chapter 1

Desire, Knowledge and the Varieties of Intensive Unity: Augustine's Dilemma in *De Trinitate*

As I outlined in my Introduction, by engaging in a close reading of the second half of Augustine's *De Trinitate* in this chapter, I will seek to accomplish a twofold purpose in relation to my overall constructive trajectory. First, I will describe in detail Augustine's seminal insights regarding the dynamic connection between desire, knowledge and the varieties of intensive unity in human beings as understood within his broader construal of the Creator-creation relation and the *imago Dei*. Second, within the context of these insights I will show how Augustine gets caught between affirming three different types of intensive unity—primal, epistemic, and teleological—and conflating these unities into a single type found in an always already realized reflective self-knowledge. The result is a circular dilemma that represents an Augustinian version of the reflection theory. Based upon accomplishing these two purposes, we will then turn to Aquinas's solution to this dilemma (Chapters 2 and 3) and its promise for translating Freud (Chapter 4) and reconceptualizing self-consciousness as a fourth type of intensive unity (Chapter 5).

An initial analogy might help us find a rhetorical route into *De Trinitate*: if Kant strikes upon the theme of self-consciousness in the search for what grounds the synthetic unities of intelligence in the first place, then it might be said that Augustine stumbles upon a very similar theme because of the question of God's eternal identity as the most absolute intensive unity of all. Indeed, *De Trinitate* is first and foremost a defense of the coherence of the Christian claim that the eternal God is both an absolutely simple unity

(i.e. there is one divine essence) *and* a “trinity” of three “persons:” Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As Augustine states his purpose at the opening of the treatise:

We shall undertake to the best of our ability to give [reasons] to account for the one and only and true God being a trinity, and for the rightness of saying, believing, [and] understanding that the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are of one and the same substance or essence.¹

He unfolds this defense through two strategies that define the treatise’s two halves. In the first half (Books I-VII), he sets forth an exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity in conversation with biblical and patristic authorities. In the second half (Books VIII-XV), he employs the preceding exposition in an extended search for identifying an analogy of the divine trinitarian unity in the intelligence of the human mind.

The framing logic for his search stems from his particular version—which he largely shares with Aquinas—of the biblical and Christian confession that humans are uniquely created in the image of God (i.e. the *imago Dei*). Augustine’s version of the *imago Dei* grows out of a theological appropriation of the Neoplatonic and specifically Plotinian *exitus-reditus* scheme, in which God is the unitary, infinite, immaterial, and intelligent principle of things both as their creative origin (i.e. *exitus*) and the final end to which each creature is designed to “return” (i.e. *reditus*). We will touch upon some further details of this scheme, and particularly how Augustine integrates it with the doctrine of the Trinity, in a moment. However, at a minimum, what this scheme entails for Augustine is that God creates (i.e. *exitus*) through dispersing certain repeating, or intelligible, patterns (i.e. “forms” or “ideas”) into the materiality of creation. These forms either de-

¹ Augustine, *trin.* I.4. Henceforth all citations to *trin.* in this chapter will be included parenthetically with book and paragraph numbers.

fine the truth of a particular thing's "whatness" (e.g. a mineral, animal, or human being, cf. VIII.3, X.13) or some aspect of what Augustine calls a thing's "excellence" or "greatness" (e.g. its degree of goodness or justice, cf. V.11, VIII.5).

Generally speaking, Augustine refers to the defining forms as a substance (*substantia*) or an essence (*essentia*), although for living things he also speaks of them as their respective "soul" (*anima* or *animus*).² Each of these substances gives a thing a degree of deficient similarity (i.e. participation) to the Creator and thus is in a certain sense an ontological trace of the divine. In God, these forms are immaterially united in an intelligent mode of life eminently unique to God as the simple unity of all truth—the eternal and unified "pattern" of all other formal patterns. As Augustine writes in a seminal passage that Aquinas often cites as well:

For ideas are the principal forms or the fixed and unchangeable reasons of things that have themselves not been formed and consequently are eternal, always constituted in the same way and contained in the divine intelligence. And although these neither come into existence or perish, nonetheless everything that *can* come into existence and perish and everything that *does* come into existence and perish is said to be formed in accordance with them.³

In particular, in creation these forms are dispersed into a materially-mediated metaphysical hierarchy of beings that differentiates between those things that merely participate in existence (e.g. a gold nugget or a carcass), those things that participate in existence *and*

² Briefly described, Augustine uses three terms that overlap between a thing's metaphysical principle (i.e. its soul) and its corresponding degree of life (e.g. existence, living, and/or intelligence). *Anima* refers to the animating principle of life (i.e. soul) "in" any living being, including all animals. *Animus* is closely related to *anima*, but tends to refer to the rational soul and capacities for discursive reasoning and ordering of temporal matters (i.e. the "lower reason"). *Mens*, by contrast, refers to the fully intelligent capacities (i.e. the "higher reason") for making judgments of truth and, ultimately, is "capable [*capax*]" (XIV.11) of contemplating divine wisdom and participating in its eminent intelligence. Cf. Gerard O'Daly, *Augustine's Philosophy of Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 7-8 and Edmund Hill, *The Trinity: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 1991), 258-65.

³ Augustine, *div. qu.* 46.

life (e.g. animals or “beasts”), and those things that participate in existence, life, *and* intelligence (e.g. human beings) (VIII.3, X.13).⁴ In this regard, a living thing’s soul gives that being an absolutely primal intensive unity that bears a deficient similarity to God: as God is one substance, so a living thing’s soul makes it a single instance of one *type* of thing.

The decisive difference that intelligence makes in this hierarchy consists in the greater degree of *reditus* back to God that it makes possible for human beings. For intelligence gives humans a mind (*mens*) that is capable of epistemically grasping (i.e. understanding or knowing) the truth of intelligible forms in creation. In fact, in one of his most influential insights, Augustine asserts that human beings are created with an intense *desire to know* the truths found in understanding. When such understanding occurs, there exists a formal mode of extroverted union between the knower and known: that which is ontologically “in” the known object is simultaneously epistemically “in” the mind of the knower who grasps its truth (IX.6, XV.22). In its own way, this epistemic union represents another kind of deficient God-likeness, since such knowledge of truth is a dim and incomplete participation in that which is God’s fully and eminently. The ultimate culmination of this *reditus* back to God will occur in knowing, not any of the participated truths in creation, but rather in fully knowing God “face to face”⁵ and thus in being intelligently united with “truth itself” (VIII.3 and 13). For by knowing God, as Augustine often appropriates 1 Jn. 3.2 (cf. XII.22, XIV.25, and XV.21), “[W]e shall be like him be-

⁴ Augustine also enumerates these three levels of being in *lib. arb.* 2.3.7.

⁵ This is Augustine’s beloved appropriation of Paul’s language from 1 Cor. 13.12. Cf. VIII.3, IX.1, XII.22, XIV.5, and XV.3-6.

cause we shall see him as he is.” While all created beings bear the generality of a similitude to their Creator, only in intelligence—so Augustine argues—does such a similitude rise to the specified level of an *image* of the eminently intelligent God. Only on this level of creation, is there “no other nature,” save our own disastrous introduction of the barrier of sin, that is metaphysically “interposed between [God] and [the mind]” (XI.8; cf.

XIV.11 and 15).⁶ Given this metaphysical hierarchy in creation ordered toward intelligence, Augustine reasons that if an analogy of the God who is a trinitarian unity is to be found anywhere in creation, it will be found in the inner workings of human intelligence.

If this *exitus-reditus* shape of creation frames Augustine’s search for the *imago Dei*, his dilemma, as we will see, is found in trying to tie together human existence as something that is always already made in the image of God and yet also genuinely teleologically structured to become *more like* God in and through our contingent *reditus* back to the Creator. As referenced above, the answer that the rhetoric of his own overarching theological framework suggests is that there is a threefold variety of intensive unity (primal, epistemic, and teleological) in human existence that are each deficiently similar to God’s singular unity in differing ways. In the end, however, he is unable to capitalize on the promise of this nascent insight. Instead, he functionally conflates these three into the single form of a primal reflective self-knowledge always already given in the soul. In this regard, the result of Augustine’s dilemma is strikingly similar to Kant’s presuppositional approach and Fichte’s exceptional approach to self-consciousness in that it circles back

⁶ Rowan Williams expresses this point well: “It is possible for human minds to be free for God, because there is nothing in the order of creation that intrudes between the mind and God’s self-communication.” Cf. Rowan Williams, “*Sapientia* and the Trinity: Reflections on the *De Trinitate*,” in *Collectanea Augustiniana: Mélanges T.J. Van Bavel*, ed. B. Bruning, J. van Houtem, and M. Lamberigts (Leuven: Peeters, 1990), 320.

into grounding intelligence in the presupposition/exception of a primal self-knowledge. As we will show below, the two chief culprits for this conflation are (1) Augustine's epistemology, which forces him to affirm that all intelligent knowledge occurs through reflection, and (2) his insistence that the fulfillment of the *imago Dei* must not depend in any way on objects outside of an individual—*viz.* it must be “non-adventitious” just like God's own eternal self-knowledge. Tellingly, as we will see in Chapters 2 and 3, Aquinas denies both of these assumptions in order to undo Augustine's conflation and fully capitalize on the unfulfilled promise of his nascent insight regarding a variety of intensive unities.

The road for deepening and demonstrating these initial judgments vis-à-vis Augustine's *De Trinitate* will run through two primary sections below. First, I will expand our initial description above regarding Augustine's understanding of the metaphysical structure of creation's *exitus* from the trinitarian God and the analogous constitution of human nature that naturally includes a desire for knowledge. Second, I will detail the ascent of *reditus* that Augustine plots for this desire as it passes through unities with sensible things, knowable things in general, and finally the mind's reflective epistemic unity with itself as the highest penultimate fulfillment of the trinitarian *imago Dei*. At the end of this path of ascent in the culmination of self-knowledge we will find the crux of Augustine's circular dilemma. However, as we will see, the terms that define this dilemma are foreshadowed and determined by the entire trajectory that he sets for himself in describing the ascent of desire through which we were created, so Augustine argues, to increasingly resemble the trinitarian simplicity of our Creator.

I. The Eternal Simplicity of the Triune God and the Exitus of Temporal Desire

By the time that Augustine arrives in Book VIII, he has already established the basic terms through which he describes the simplicity of the triune God's singular substance that stands as the eminent analogue of creation. His usual way of expressing this unity is to insist that most formal appellations of God (e.g. wise, true, good, just, loving) are to be attributed, strictly speaking, to God essentially, *viz.* "the Father is good, the Son is good, the Holy Spirit is good" (VIII.1). Moreover, in God there is no real distinction between these forms such that any plurality could be imagined in God's being. Augustine explicates this point in VIII.2 in terms of the convertibility of God's "being" (*esse*), God's "being" true (*verum*), and God's "being" great (*magnum*):

Where things are intelligible and unchangeable [*viz.* in God] one is not truer than another [*viz.* among the divine persons], because each is equally unchangeably eternal; and what makes a thing great in this sphere is simply the fact that it truly is [*vere est*] [...] [I]n the essence or being of truth to be true is the same as to be, and to be is the same as to be great; so to be great is the same as to be true.

Nor—*pace* Plato⁷—do any of these forms have any existence apart from God, and their derivative participations among created beings, that could be imagined as the basis for God's "participation" in them. As Augustine writes in V.11, again with the example of greatness:

True greatness is that by which not only is a great house great or any great mountain great, but by which anything at all is great that is called great, so that greatness is one thing and things that are called great by it another. This greatness of course is primally great [*primitus magna*] and much more excellently so [*multo que excellentius*] than the things that are great by partaking of it. God however is not great with a greatness which he is not himself, as though God were to participate in it to be great. Otherwise this greatness would be greater than God, but

⁷ Cf. Plato's formally perfect "place above the heavens [*hyperuranion topon*]" (*Phaedrus*, 247c).

there is nothing greater than God. So he is great with a greatness by which he is himself this same greatness.

In the rest of Book VIII, Augustine extends this basic insight in several directions, with a particular emphasis on truth, goodness, justice, and love: God is “truth itself” (VIII.3 and 13), the “good of every good” (VIII.4), the measure of all justice (VIII.9), and, of course, “God is love” (VIII.11-12). The only major exception to this descriptive unity in the Trinity pertains to language that expresses the distinctiveness of the intra-trinitarian relationships themselves: i.e. “the trinity is not Father, the trinity is not Son, nor is the trinity Gift [or Spirit]” (VIII.1). Of course, because these names denote the terms of specific, intra-divine relationships (*viz.* the Son is the Son *of* the Father and only because of this necessary relationship can the Father be described as “Father”),⁸ these appellations are still intrinsically bound up with the divine unity even in their linguistic exclusivity.

The primary way that Augustine compliments this unyielding defense of divine simplicity with an explicitly trinitarian doctrine of God arrives in his distinctive appropriation of the broadly Hellenic, but for Augustine particularly Plotinian, emphasis on the metaphysical superiority—even “divinity”—of a separate (i.e. non-bodily) intelligent mind that knows itself such that it is constituted as a simple unity of thinking/being⁹ and knower/known. A simple reflective unity such as this would be metaphysically superior precisely because all that it “is”—i.e. its knowledge—is not dependent on any other be-

⁸ Similarly, the Spirit is the Spirit/Gift *of* the Father and the Son.

⁹ Plotinus seems to directly appropriate the idea of theorizing a unity between thinking and being from its original articulation in Parmenides. Cf. Giannis Stamatellos, *Plotinus and the Presocratics: A Philosophical Study of Presocratic Influences in Plotinus' Enneads* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007), 59-79.

ing: it always already knows everything it knows simply by intensively knowing itself.

As Plotinus writes in his *Enneads*, in a mind such as this:

All together are one, Intellect, intellection, the intelligible [*nous, noēsis, to noēton*]. If therefore Intellect's intellection is the intelligible, and the intelligible is itself, it will itself think itself: for it will think with the intellection which it is itself and will think the intelligible, which it is itself.¹⁰

By appropriating this philosophical idea of the essentially self-knowing unity into his doctrine of God, and expanding Plotinus's dyadic Intellect into the expected threeness of the Trinity, Augustine argues that the *same* understanding of God as described above as the eminent unity of all formal truth can be rhetorically formulated in terms of a trinitarian perfection of self-knowledge and self-love.

In this formulation, the Father is the eternal "source" of all truth and the Son is the fullness of God's knowledge of that truth (i.e. God's "self-knowledge"). In order to express this eternal relationship between the Father and the Son, Augustine incorporates the verbal (e.g. word, uttering) and natal (e.g. conceive, beget, born, offspring) metaphors found in Scripture and endorsed by the Nicene Creed. As he declares in XV.23:

So the Word of God, the only-begotten Son of the Father, like the Father and equal to him in all things, God from God, light from light, wisdom from wisdom, being from being, is exactly and absolutely what the Father is, and yet is not the Father because this one is Son, that one Father. And thus he knows everything that the Father knows, but his knowing comes to him from the Father just his being does. For here knowing and being are one and the same. And thus just as the Father's being is not from the Son, so neither is his knowing. Hence it is as though himself that the Father begot the Word equal to himself in all things.

In short, the Father eternally begets the perfection of divine self-knowledge—the eminent form of truth—in the Son/Word, which thereby represents the immanent and eminent

¹⁰ Plotinus, *The Enneads*, V.3.5.44-50.

ground through which the derivative truth of creation was originally spoken forth (cf. Jn. 1.3, I.9-12, IV.3, and XV.20). Or, as Augustine writes in XV.23:

[The] Father knows all things in himself, knows them in the Son; but in himself as knowing himself, in the Son as knowing his Word which is about all these things that are in himself. Likewise the Son too knows all things in himself, that is to say as things that are born from the things that the Father knows in himself, and he knows them in the Father as the things from which are born all the things that he as Son knows in himself.

Similarly, Augustine adopts the close biblical affinity between the Spirit and God's volitional love in order to theorize the Spirit as the eternal bond of love between the Father and the Son: the "charity common to them both" (XV.10, cf. VI.7 and XV.29). Based upon this trinitarian elaboration of the divine essence, Augustine argues that God—precisely as the triune perfection of self-knowledge and self-love—is the amorous unity of truth.

On the basis of this trinitarian conceptualization of divine simplicity, Augustine draws two closely related conclusions regarding the metaphysical relation of creation to the Creator that combine to establish the terms on which his "search" for the trinitarian *imago Dei* is based. First, as a deficient metaphysical reflection of God, creation is constituted as a province of *dispersed*, *derivative*, and *changeable* reflections of the unified and eternally unchangeable fullness of truth in God. In this very specific manner, creation occurs as an *exitus* from God. Accordingly, creation's truth is *dispersed* in a materially-mediated hierarchy of formally defined beings that differentiates between those things that merely exist, those things that exist and live, and those things that exist, live, and are intelligent. In God, all of those appellations are unified and singular; in creation, they constitute the very ground of nature's diversity. As *derivative*, creation's truth has a qual-

ified integrity unto itself—*viz.* gold can be known as gold (VIII.3), houses and food as good (VIII.4), a man as just (VIII.9), and a mind as a mind (X.5)—despite the fact that the exhaustive truth of all things is only apprehended by “gaz[ing] upon the truth itself which they were created by” (VIII.2). Later, Augustine thematizes this distinction as the difference between knowledge (*scientia* or *notitia*), which pertains to created things, and wisdom (*sapientia*), which pertains to divine “things” (XIII.24). As *changeable*, creation’s truth is subject to a divide, totally foreign to God, between the truth of a thing’s substance and a thing’s vacillating and idiosyncratic forms of excellence. In VIII.3, Augustine states this contrast by extending the example of truth and greatness into the created realm of bodies and souls:

But with bodies it can happen, for instance, that this gold is as equally true as that, and yet this is greater than that, because here greatness is not the same as truth and it is one thing for it be gold, another to be great. So too with the nature of the human soul it is not called a true spirit by the same kind of token as it is called a great spirit. A man who is not great-spirited [*magnanimus*] still has a true spirit. In both cases the reason is the essence or being of body and of spirit is *not* the being or essence of truth; but the trinity *is*, which is the one, only great God, true, truthful, truth [*verus, verax, veritas*].¹¹

In this suggestive passage, Augustine seems to be working with a kind of distinction that Aquinas formalizes through his correlation of *essence* with a thing’s formal truth—its whatness—and existence with a thing’s relative forms of goodness. The former category is a binary state of given truthfulness and intelligibility (e.g. gold is either gold or not gold); the latter category admits to ongoing, open-ended vacillation (e.g. a thing’s goodness can “diminish or increase,” VIII.5). Both types of forms are, however, creatively rooted in the simplicity of God’s intelligent self-knowledge and, precisely as such, are

¹¹ Emphasis added.

capable of being understood by the human intellect and its corresponding “judgments of truth” (VIII.4; IX.10 and 11).

The second corollary stemming from God’s triune simplicity establishes the metaphysical ground of desire as that which propels human beings in their intended *reditus* back to the Creator. According to Augustine, the open-ended character of creatures’ excellence engenders in them a natural desire, an *appetitus*, for the *telos* of their own perfect happiness. Whereas God definitively does not “look for” (X.10) that which God already perfectly and simply is—i.e. the most desirable “object” of all—human beings are created with a pulsing “desire to find [*appetitus inveniendi*]” (IX.18) something that will finally make them happy. “All [people],” as Augustine writes, “want to be happy, and they yearn [*appetant*] for this one thing with the most ardent love they are capable of, and yearn for other things simply for the sake of this one thing” (XIII.18). Ultimately, of course, according to Augustine the “one thing” that genuinely brings happiness is the eschatological fullness of being epistemically and amorously united with God “face to face.” As he declares succinctly, “[I]f you cling to [God] in love, you will straightaway enter into bliss” (VIII.5). Or as he later defines love in VIII.10: “True love then is that we should live justly by cleaving to the truth.”

However, as Augustine describes in vivid detail throughout his *oeuvre*, the path of ascent from the inborn desire for happiness to its possible eschatological culmination “in God [*in deo*]” (IX.13) is a fraught one, to say the least. Some of this difficulty is simply tied to creation’s constitutive (i.e. structural) metaphysical distance in comparison with God, while another dimension of challenge is due to the added complexity of our sinful

embrace of objects that we mistakenly thought would make us happy. For the moment, let us stay with the structural conditions that contribute to the drama of our desire finding its way “home” in union with God.¹² The most important structural hurdle to this culmination can be described succinctly: whereas in God there is no temporal division between that which God perfectly knows and loves (i.e. God eternally knows and loves Godself), in human beings there is an open-ended differentiation between the power that chiefly directs our desire for happiness (i.e. the will), various powers that procure different types of desirable “objects” in search of that happiness (i.e. the senses and the mind/intellect), and the power that loves or delights in those objects that have thereby been secured (i.e. the will). Similarly, the participated character of creation entails that there is a structural tension intrinsic to the placement of our desire for happiness in the middle of a world populated by other, much more proximate, potential objects of our desire in comparison to God. On the one hand, our desire for these objects is always due, to one degree or another, to the fact that every created thing reflects a certain similitude of the ultimate desirability and goodness of God. On the other hand, the challenge is always to guard against the “mistake” (X.11) of confusing of these derivatively desirable objects as something that could really and finally satisfy our desire for happiness.

These structural aspects of creation form the metaphysical background for two of the more experiential elements that define Augustine’s account of desire’s *reditus* and/or ascent back to God. First, they establish creation as a region characterized by a certain benign multiplicity in comparison with God’s simplicity. This multiplicity is experienced

¹² Cf. Augustine, *doct. chr.* I.xi.

both immanently, in the open-ended plurality of our powers, and externally, in the diversity of goods that somehow resemble the desirability and goodness of God. Aquinas would later pick up on this Augustinian principle governing the Creator-creation relation and reformulate it as an oft-repeated metaphysical axiom: “Whatever is divided and multiplied in creatures exists in God simply and unitedly.”¹³

Second, Augustine often counsels his readers that the ascent of desire can only be successfully negotiated when we engage with the diversity of created goods with a degree of restraint that signals our lived awareness that ultimately our desire for happiness can be satisfied in God alone. Augustine first articulated his most famous collection of metaphors for this dynamic in *de doctrina christiana*. There he speaks of a “trek” or “voyage” back to our “homeland” with God in which some things are to be “used” (*uti*)¹⁴ and others to be “enjoyed” (*frui*):

There are some things which are to be enjoyed (*fruendum*), some which are to be used (*utendum*), and some whose function is both to enjoy and use. Those which are to be enjoyed make us happy; those which are to be used assist us and give us a boost so to speak, as we press on towards our happiness, so that we may reach and hold fast to the things which make us happy.¹⁵

¹³ Aquinas, *ST I*.14.1.ad2. Cf., as well, *ST I*.13.4.ad3.

¹⁴ Some commentators have used the unfortunate semantic overlap between *uti* and our modern sense of “being used” in order to lodge criticisms that Augustine is hereby affirming some kind of depersonalized “instrumentalization” of human relationships. In my judgment, nothing could be further from an accurate reading of Augustine on this point. Rowan Williams is one of the few readers who has stayed with the language long enough to accurately highlight that Augustine is actually advocating a kind *restraint* for desire that is readily amendable to warning against the violence that can often ensue when we expose other people to the full force of our desire and/or wounded/angry desire. As Williams writes, “The language of *uti* is designed to warn against an attitude towards any finite person or object that terminates their meaning in their capacity to satisfy my desire, that treats them as the end of desire, conceiving my meaning in terms of them and theirs in terms of me. ‘If you settle down in that delight and remain in it, making it the end and sum of your joy, then you can be said to be enjoying it in a true and strict sense’ (I.xxxiii); and no such cessation of desire is legitimate in relation to finite objects of love. It is painfully absurd, as well as destructive of self and others, to conclude our exploration when we are in reality still *in via*, still being formed and transformed by what we receive (I.xxxiii).” Cf. Rowan Williams, “Language, Reality and Desire in Augustine’s *De Doctrina*,” *Journal of Literature & Theology* 3, no. 2 (1989): 140.

¹⁵ Augustine, *doct. chr.* I.iii.

As he suggests in this passage, there are indeed created goods that can be “enjoyed” in a certain qualified sense as penultimate goods. However, Augustine tends to reserve the technical sense of something to be “enjoyed” as that which we finally identify as the source of our ultimate happiness. “If you settle down,” as he writes in *doct. chr.* I.iii, “in that delight and remain in it, making it the end and sum of your joy, then you can be said to be enjoying it in a true and strict sense.”¹⁶ Or as he repeats the point in *De Trinitate*, “We enjoy [*fruimur*] things [...] when the will reposes in them because it is delighted by them for their own sakes; we use [*utimur*] things when we refer them to something else we would like to enjoy” (X.13). Every created object is intended by God as a sign-post, a “refreshment, or even a night’s lodging for a traveler” (XI.10),” after which we were created to “press on” (IX.1; Phil. 3.13) in our journey back to God. If we successfully situate these other goods as simply one juncture along this journey, some of which are more decisive than others, but all of which are still merely penultimate ends, then we successfully “refer them” to our ultimate end and thus “use” them in the precise manner that Augustine advocates as central to the ascent of our desire.

II. Ascending to the Trinitarian Imago Dei and the Crux of Augustine’s Dilemma

The influence of this overarching Augustinian theme of the *reditus* ascent of desire shapes the entire organization of the second half of *De Trinitate*. In Books VII-X, Augustine makes an initial foray into identifying the trinitarian *imago Dei*, at the end of which—in the conclusion of Book X—he seems to settle on memory/intelligence/will

¹⁶ Ibid., I.xxxiii. This is Rowan Williams’s translation. Cf. Williams, “Language, Reality and Desire in Augustine’s *De Doctrina*,” 140.

(X.17-18) as the most promising triad in the mind in comparison to several others that he variously considers, such as lover/loved/love (VIII.14 and IX.2) and the mind/its knowledge of itself/its love for itself (IX.8). However, at the beginning of Book XI Augustine takes a rhetorical step backward in order to consider several “lesser” trinitarian analogies that can be deciphered in the so-called “outer man,” which is typified by the material operation of the senses instead of the “inner man” that is typified by the immateriality of intelligence (XI.1). These lesser analogies then preoccupy him for the length of Book XI. In Books XII-XIII, he then analyzes how desire gets sinfully “stuck” in the sensible and how Christ remedies this condition by reenabling an ascent from the sensible, to a knowledge of creation’s penultimate intelligibility, and finally, by grace, to the eschatological fullness of divine wisdom (XIII.24). Following this detour, Augustine then returns in earnest to the left behind trinitarian analogies of the “inner man” in Books XIV-XV.

The primary reason that Augustine steps back to consider the lesser trinitarian analogies of the outer man is that he wants to allow the reader’s mind more “practice” (IX.17) and “exercise” (XV.10) by analyzing the operations of the senses before attempting the much more difficult task of analyzing the inner workings of the mind itself. Even though he remains convinced that the fullness of the *imago Dei* can only be found in the higher operations of the mind, there is something about visible and external things—and the way our senses forge extroverted unions with them—that are “more familiar to deal with” in comparison with “intelligible things” (XI.1). Accordingly, because everything “bear[s] a likeness [*similitudinem*] to God after its own kind and fashion” (XI.8), Augustine suspects that the senses might provide an aptly paced primer for the reader to begin

grasping the contours of how he is applying the subtleties of trinitarian doctrine to an explanation of anthropological phenomena.

Augustine intends the pedagogy of this strategy to be applicable well beyond the straightforward goal of grasping his argument in *De Trinitate*. In this sense, his “search” for a trinitarian analogy should never be confused with some bald apologetic campaign for displaying the “logic” of the Trinity. Instead, he intends the cumulative ascent from the “lesser” analogies of the senses to the “higher” analogies of the mind to mimic the ascent of desire itself. As such, Augustine hopes that the cumulative rhetorical path of his treatise will stand as a practicing ground and roadmap for the reader’s own steady rise from the mere desire of the sensible to the more admirable desire of the intelligible that runs through the truth of knowing created things and, by grace, eschatologically passes into wisdom.¹⁷ By rhetorically walking the reader through this direction of desire’s ascent, Augustine hopes that the path of his search for the *imago Dei* will double as a spiritual path—a *via*—through which this same image is gradually renewed in us as we learn to “[transfer our] love from temporal things to eternal, from visible to intelligible, [and] from carnal to spiritual things” (XIV.23).

For our purposes, this roadmap is fortuitous because it furnishes a detailed account of the progressive line of reasoning that Augustine follows in relating the senses’ extroverted unities and the mind’s intelligent unions between knower-known before zeroing in—problematically as it turns out—on the unique status of self-knowledge as the intensive unity that most closely resembles God’s own eternal unity. Tracking this line of

¹⁷ Cf. Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. 120-54.

reasoning consistently can easily produce consternation among first-time readers of *De Trinitate*. Part of the reason for this frustration can be attributed, as Rowan Williams rightly observes, to “[Augustine’s] diffuse exposition and reluctance to settle on a single technical vocabulary.”¹⁸ On a deeper level, however, Augustine is constantly drawing upon his version of the Creator-creation analogy that we outlined above—especially the centrality of God’s supreme simple unity—in order to interpret the various extroverted and intensive unities found in anthropological phenomena in a manner that seemed self-evident to him, but which has grown out of favor in both philosophical and theological circles to an extent that Augustine’s application of it can induce conceptual dizziness among modern readers.

Accordingly, it will help us to state at the outset some of the logic behind how Augustine applies this analogy in the ascent from the sensible to the intelligible that he describes in Books XI-XV. Most crucially, Augustine interprets the adequacy of each kind of trinitarian similitude according to four vectors (or gradients) that he understands as governing desire’s movement upward through different unities into an increasing resemblance to the Trinity’s own simplicity. When combined, these vectors portray an ascent of desire that gradually migrates (1) from the materially sensible to the immaterially intelligible, (2) from the temporally changeable to the eternally unchangeable, (3) from the adventitiously external to the non-adventitiously interior; and (4) from the multiple to the supremely singular. Even upon an initial glance, one can see how each of these vectors reflects different aspects of God’s triune simplicity. However, things are not as al-

¹⁸ Williams, “Sapientia and the Trinity,” 318.

ways straightforward when Augustine reads them into the complexity and multiplicity of anthropological phenomena.

By drawing upon these initial observations, my goal from here is to explain how the terms through which Augustine explicates the ascent of desire through an increasing resemblance to the Trinity's simplicity sets the stage for his dilemma regarding self-knowledge that ends up causing him to conflate the primal, epistemic, and teleological instances of intensive unity suggested by his *exitus-reditus* scheme. I will do so in three subsections that follow. First, I will consider the lesser trinitarian analogies drawn from the senses and the corresponding perils that Augustine perceives when we turn our desire for happiness "onto" the temporality of sensible things. Second, I will turn to the more exact analogies to be found in the mind's grasping of knowledge as an extension of desire's "long[ing] open-mouthed to know a thing" (IX.18). Lastly, I will consider the crux of Augustine's dilemma when he focuses on endorsing the reflective act that yields self-knowledge as the clearest instance of the *imago Dei* short of our actual eschatological union with God face-to-face.

a. Practicing with the Perils of Sensible Unities

As I have just signaled, what we find in examining Augustine's consideration of the "lessons" (*documenta*) that can be gathered from the trinitarian analogies in the "outer man" (XI.1) is that he threads into this discussion a concomitant expansion of his oft-repeated warning regarding the ease with which our desire becomes "stuck" (X.11) in loving the material delights of sensible things. Taking note of this accompanying commentary will be important for us because, as we will see, Augustine's resulting leeriness regarding

sensible things significantly shapes the way that he ends up elucidating the nature of both knowledge and self-knowledge.

Upon analyzing how the senses' work, Augustine proposes two trinitarian analogues that are perceptible in how they enable an individual to become united to the sensible object at hand. Each of these triads is taken from the faculty of external sight and its internal analogue, the "mental vision" of the imagination (XI.1). This choice is largely due to Augustine's endorsement of the ancient Hellenic judgment that sight is the "most excellent of the body's senses" (XI.1) because it is seemingly the most immaterial. He does, however, indicate that comparable phenomena could be found in the other senses since "[w]hat one tells us will go for the others" (XI.1.).

The first triad comes from the common experience of simply seeing an external object. Within this act, he identifies a triad made up by (1) the external bodily thing, (2) the internalized image (*phantasia*) of that thing such that it can thereby be "seen," and (3) the will's "intention joining the two together" (XI.2). The first two elements are relatively straightforward in their relation. The internalized image is a dematerialized impression (*impressa*)¹⁹ of the bodily thing such that it is virtually rendered in the individual through

¹⁹ Augustine likely imports this Stoic term through Cicero. In his *Academica*, Cicero cites both the Greek, *phantasia* (as Augustine employs here in *trin.*), and his own Latin translation, *visum*, while discussing Zeno's thought that founded Stoicism, even while he consistently translates the Greek term (*tuposis*) appropriated from the actual wax impression of a signet ring into the Latin verb *imprimo* and its conjugated participle *impressa*. Cf. *Academica*, I.6.18-19, I.11.40-42. Sarah Catherine Byers confirms this line of thought by arguing persuasively in detail that Augustine's employment of "impression" language seems to reflect the Stoic version of a "cataleptic impression" (Gk. *katalēptikē phantasia*). Cf. Sarah Catherine Byers, *Perception, Sensibility, and Moral Motivation in Augustine: A Stoic-Platonic Synthesis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 23-54. To fill out the terminology, the adjective *katalēptikē* comes from the verb *katalambanein*, to grasp or get a grip on, meaning that it is through the sensitive impression that the mind "gets a grip on reality." Cf. R.J. Hankinson, "Stoic Epistemology," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. Brad Inwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 60, n.1.

the power of sight. Like many of his Platonic and Stoic influences, Augustine cites the example of a signet ring as a metaphor for this process. As a signet ring *impresses* the wax into its own shape, so does whatever is sensed impress its form onto the senses' inherent formability and then subsequently appear to the sensing individual in the form of *phantasia* (IX.10, XI.3).²⁰ The resulting union between the enduringly material object and its immaterial image “in” the seer attracts Augustine as an analogy to the Father and Son in the Trinity precisely because the seen object and internalized image appear so united to the point that we usually forget that this redoubling of objects occurs at all.²¹ Short of a rational analysis of what occurs in the act of sight (XI.5), “we cannot tell the form of the body we see apart from the form which it produces in the sense of the seer—not at least

Despite the unquestionably remarkable contribution that Byers makes in *Perception, Sensibility, and Moral Motivation in Augustine*, it remains a conundrum for why she entirely leaves out any consideration of *impressa* and *imprimo* in her rather detailed account of Augustine's incorporation of the Stoic notion of impression into his anthropology and psychology (e.g. pp. 23-54). Instead, she repeatedly only refers to passages in Augustine's *corpus* in which he translates impression as *phantasia*, which reflects the wider practice in Stoic secondary literary (e.g. *Ibid.*, 60, n.1.), or Cicero's translation of *visum*, which is interestingly a term that does not appear *at all* in *trin.* in contexts even remotely related to Stoic impressions. Undoubtedly, this lacuna is at least partially due to the fact that *trin.* is of little direct relevance to her thesis, which is much more heavily focused on *conf.*, *civ.*, and his sermons. My primary purpose in making this observation is not to push too hard on what would likely end up being a (very) minor question mark over her genealogy of the Stoic influence on Augustine's psychology. Rather, it is to underline the fact that the *phantasia/visum* and the *tuposis/impressa* terms do in fact name logically distinct elements in Augustine's psychology that should not be too quickly elided together in light of the fact that, as I will argue when I turn to consider Augustine's epistemology in the next subsection, he extends the notion of *impressa* past the point in which there is any corresponding *phantasia* (or *phantasmate*) doing the *impressing*. Instead, the soul itself is *impressed* by God the “form(s) of truth” (IX.11) or a “notion of goodness” (VIII.4) from which we are able to *express* judgments of truth (cf. IX.18).

²⁰ Cf. Victor Caston, “Augustine and the Greeks on Intention,” in *Ancient and Medieval Theories of intentionality*, ed. Dominik Perler, *Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 35-37.

²¹ James F. Ross represents one of the few contemporary philosophers who rightly defends the philosophical and scientific coherence of insisting that the intellect in fact *needs* dematerialized virtualizations in order to attain to understanding. Cf. James F. Ross, “Immaterial Aspects of Thought,” *The Journal of Philosophy* 89, no. 3 (1992): 136-50 and “Adapting Aquinas: Analogy and Forms,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 78 (2005): 41-58.

by the same sense, because the two coincide so exactly that there is no overlap to tell them apart by” (XI.3).

To these two central elements of thing and image, Augustine describes the will’s intention (*intentio*) as that which makes the sensitive union possible in the first place. If in God intelligently knowing and volitionally loving are eternally one in the divine essence, then Augustine conceptualizes the will’s act of intention in human beings as a preliminary “coupling [*copulandam*]” (XI.7 and 12) between the desiring individual and a specific object to be subsequently sensed, known, and/or loved. In this way, intention is the will’s desiderative act of directing various powers (e.g. the senses and the intellect) to pay attention to a certain object (cf. X.10). As Augustine writes in XI.7 in regard to the senses, “[W]hen the will stretches out [*intenditur*] to [sensible] things in desire [*cum appetendo*] [...] the vivid images [of sight] are impressed on the attention.” Consequently, it can be affirmed that this intention of the will not only joins the sensible thing and its image together in the first place, but that they remain together only for as long as the will continues “holding the gaze” of the eyes in that direction (XI.3).

The second trinitarian similitude takes another step inside the seeing individual beyond the initial visual image and into the way that traces of those images are stored up in our memory (cf. X.11). Following this storage, the will can draw upon those mnemonic traces in order to “fabricate images [*ficto phantasmate*] with which to think about those things” again (IX.10). In order to describe this process, Augustine inverts the notion of an image’s “impression” on the senses and the memory. Accordingly, the act of recall does not produce the original image, but rather *expresses* a new image that is “off-printed [*ex-*

primitur] from the one held in the memory” (XI.6). This off-printed image then serves as the intended object toward which the will can reflectively “form the attention in the act of recall” (XI.6). Hence we have the three terms of Augustine’s second triad: (1) the memorial trace of a sensible body, (2) its derivative, “off-printed” image to inner sight, and (3) the will that directs the “attention here and there and back again to be formed, and once formed keeps it joined [*conjungit*] to the image in the memory” (XI.7). “Just as it is the will,” as Augustine writes in XI.15 to fill out volitional analogy between the two similitudes, “which fastens [*adjungit*] sense to body, so it is the will which fastens memory to sense and thinking attention [*cogitantis aciem*] to memory.”

As measured by the four vectors outlined above, the overall deficiencies of these two similitudes in comparison to the ideal of God’s simplicity are fairly easy to enumerate. Given that both triads are thoroughly bound up with the vacillating temporality of sensible things, neither of them makes any progress toward the eternally unchangeable. Likewise, the dematerialization that takes place in the formation of sensible images denotes a small progression toward the immaterial, but obviously neither analogy involves the immateriality of the intelligible forms that the intellect alone can grasp. However, when measured according to the other vectors (multiplicity/simplicity and external/internal), the verdict is of a more mixed variety. If one compares the two analogies, there is a noticeable progression from the extroverted multiplicity of beings involved in external sight to the relative intensive unity involved in the act of recollection. Whereas in external sight there are two different beings involved (i.e. seer and seen), in recollection all the powers belong to one being (i.e. its memory, an immanently off-printed im-

age, and its will). In addition, as we already noted, there is an act of immanent reduplication involved here that is distantly reminiscent of the eternal begottenness between Father and Son (cf. XI.9). Similarly, an evaluation according to the standard of externality/interiority points in the same direction: in comparison with the kind of sight that sees an external object, the triad of memory, recollective “sight,” and internal intention occurs completely “inside and there is nothing in it apart from the nature of the soul itself [*ipsius animi naturam*]” (XI.12). There are, of course, still deficiencies with these two levels of progression (e.g. the memory still originated from the outside and the off-printed image is still *of* another being, cf. XI.16), but these similarities of singularity and interiority are enough that, as Augustine declares, they “suggest points which may help us to see truer and more inward things with a surer and more practiced eye” (XI.11).

When one turns to consider the degree of desire’s ascent that can be traced from these two different kinds of acts related to the senses, it is immediately evident that Augustine is moving along the same vectors toward singularity and interiority in order to articulate what he considers to be the perils of lingering too long with sensible things. We should make clear that in setting forth this warning Augustine is under no illusion that the human life in fact *requires* some attention to the “the utilization of changeable and bodily things” (XII.12, cf. XII.17). In fact, he even advocates the necessity of the mind “deputizing” its rational capacities for the sake of “governing [*gubernandis*]” (XII.2) these arenas of life. The point is of some importance to Augustine because it underlines the mind’s essential unity despite its varying preoccupations (cf. XII.4): the intelligence that we use

to negotiate our daily lives is the exact same faculty “capable of recognizing God [*potest esse agnitio dei*]” (XII.12) and thus fully reflecting the image of God.

Nevertheless, as Augustine sees it, the risk of this deputization is that an individual’s intelligent powers will “forget” (cf. X.7) the *telos* of its desire in knowledge/wisdom and thus fail to return from the sensible realm in order to consider that which is “non-bodily and everlasting” (XII.3).²² Instead, sin arises when our desires become habitually attached to sensible things (and their delights) such that we “[twist] our appetite for happiness onto them” (XII.21) and even mistakenly think that the mind is itself a material thing with a correspondingly material and external *telos* (cf. X.7-16). In this way, disordered desire becomes “stuck” in the sensibly exterior and, as Augustine memorably writes of himself in the *Confessions*, “lost in multiplicity.”²³ The inverse of this sin points to the teleological intensive unity, which we will elaborate upon in a minute, that would accrue to us if we would desire to enjoy God alone. For if we had stayed on the path toward pursuing the singularity of God’s wisdom, we could have “enjoy[ed] the whole universe of creation” via its their eminent unity “in God.” Instead, in sin we transform the benign multiplicity of our powers and creation’s participated goods into the fully pathological multiplicity of serially fastening our desire for happiness onto sensible thing after sensible thing. Augustine describes this dynamic in detail in XII.14, in a passage that combines the rhetoric of interiority and the *uti/frui* shape of desire’s ascent:

And so [the soul] finds delight in bodily shapes and movements, and because it has not got them with it inside, it wraps itself in their images [...] In this way it

²² Augustine compares this forgetfulness to Adam’s forgetfulness of his vassal-like charge in Genesis 1.28-30. Cf. XII.17.

²³ Augustine, *conf.* 2.1.1.

defiles itself foully with a fanciful sort of fornication by referring all its business to one or other following ends (*finēs*): curiosity, searching for bodily and temporal experience through the senses, swollen conceit, affecting to be above other souls which are given over to their senses; or carnal pleasure, plunging itself in this muddy whirlpool.

Despite Augustine's qualification that there is a certain extent to which we must engage with sensible things in order to carry out the daily responsibilities of our lives, what we find in following the continued trail of his search for the *imago Dei* is that the association of the senses' inherent extroverted multiplicity with the nature of sin ends up shaping his entire line of reasoning long after he has finished considering the analogies from the "outer man." As one might already see, the desire for self-knowledge is a prime candidate for naming a comparatively virtuous progression towards non-adventitious interiority and singularity (*viz.* the immanence of reflection and the singularity of knowing oneself). In many ways, the terms that make up the trajectory of his forthcoming dilemma regarding self-knowledge are already nascently present within his comparison of these lesser trinitarian analogies.

b. The Promise of Intelligible Unities between Knower and Known

Before proceeding to consider the specific case of self-knowledge, however, we must first attend to the higher trinitarian analogy that Augustine finds in the intellect's knowledge of truth in general and the will's subsequent love of that knowledge. Despite the promise that Augustine unquestionably associates with the union between knower and known, it is important to note at the outset that even here Augustine continues to warn his readers about the trap of desire's getting sinfully "stuck" in a vain pursuit of knowledge apart from "referring" it to final end of divine wisdom. Augustine names this temptation

as that of aimless intellectual “curiosity,” which occurs with the penultimate “loveliness” of knowledge can so “inflamm[e]” our desire for happiness that we are “carried away by the mere love of knowing unknown things for no known reason” at all (X.2-3). When we engage in this type of learning, knowledge becomes an end in itself and thus falls sinfully short of the true image of God being fulfilled in us. Accordingly, even in seeking—and analyzing the nature of knowledge—Augustine is insistent that we must always intentionally press forward (and upward) in the “desire to know what remains” (X.2).

With this qualification in place, we can proceed to observing that at the heart of the promise that he encounters in considering the nature of knowledge stands one of Augustine’s most original philosophical and theological contributions. This contribution is his analysis of the mental phenomenon that he names as the “inner word” (*verbum interius*). Briefly defined, the inner word is what emerges in the intellect when it comes to know (or understand) something for the first time. There is a certain analogy to be made between the sensitive *phantasia* and the inner word: as the former is the interiorized image of a sensible thing, so is the latter the interiorized knowledge of any given thing. The decisive difference, of course, is that the knowledge that an inner world yields entails grasping, not any of the endlessly vacillating sensible qualities of a thing, but rather one of the intelligible forms that characterizes a thing’s substance (e.g. gold, an animal, or a human being) or one of its forms of excellence (e.g. goodness or justice).

According to Augustine, when the mind understands these forms, the knowledge that it thereby secures emerges in the intellect as a preverbal and prelinguistic “word” that

forms the immanent, signifiable basis for any subsequent external words that we utter in order to explain our understanding to others. As Augustine writes in IX.12:

We conceive true knowledge of things [...] as a kind of word that we beget by uttering inwardly [*habemus et dicendo intus gignimus*], and that does not depart from us when it is born. When we speak to others we put our voice or some bodily gesture at the disposal of the word that abides within, in order that by a kind of perceptible reminder the same sort of thing might happen in the mind of the listener as exists in and does not depart from the mind of the speaker.

As one probably expects, Augustine imports the verbal (i.e. word, utter, speak) and natal (i.e. conceive and beget) metaphors to describe the nature of knowledge from the biblical and trinitarian discourse that we noted above regarding the Son's (or Word's) eternal "begottenness" from the Father. As the Father "utters" the Word (or "begets" the Son) as the eternal form of all truth, so too does our intellect "utter" a word when we understand any created form. For the moment, however, what is most important to underline here is to recall that this inner word implies a formal unity between the knower and the known. Hence, Augustine can affirm that it is in the word that the knower is "most like the thing known and most its image" (XV.22).

In order to complete the trinitarian analogy centered on the inner word, Augustine needs to pair this phenomenon with two other elements in the "inner man:" (1) some kind of created analogue in the mind for the eternal fullness of the Father as that "from which" the Son/Word is begotten/uttered and (2) a description of the will's act of love that ties together this analogue of the Father with the knowledge of the inner word. Finding and articulating the first element is by far the more difficult task and Augustine's rhetoric reflects this fact. Its difficulty parallels the entire problematic that Kant inherited from Locke and Hume regarding the relationship between the senses and intellectual

knowledge. What is the preceding intensive unity within the knower that makes the subsequent union between knower and known possible in the first place? From Augustine's perspective, of course, that question makes no sense to ask of God: all there is "between" Father and Son is the eternal fullness of "wisdom from wisdom" (XV.23). However, what are the preceding conditions in humans—*viz.* in beings who do not always already "know" all truth—that makes them capable of grasping intelligible forms amidst the endlessly oscillating conditions of creation? For example, to cite Augustine's formulation of the conundrum, how is the mind capable of judging one thing as not good, a different thing as good, and yet another as even better (VIII.4-5)? Or how is it capable of judging a particular man as "just" or another man as unjust according to an "abiding" form of justice (VIII.9; IX.11)?

Amidst the seeming diversity of philosophical opinions that have been formulated in response to questions like these, it remains the fact that there are two basic and inherently juxtaposed starting-points between which one must initially choose. The first option—as diversely advocated by Plato, Kant, and Fichte—begins with the assumption that there is an operative division between the interiorized images of the senses and the intellect's judgments of truth. Once a thinker adopts this starting-point, they are forced to presuppose some kind of epistemic root of knowledge "in" the intellect or the soul that functions as the foundation for all other subsequent knowledge. Plato identifies this root as the eternity of formal knowledge in the soul, which each reincarnated person of that soul has "forgotten" and must progressively "reclected."²⁴ As we outlined in the Intro-

²⁴ Cf. Plato, *Meno*, 86a-86b.

duction, Kant and Fichte connect this root with the *a priori* (Kant) or pre-reflective (Fichte) structure of self-consciousness, which includes a structuring epistemic element (Kant: self-consciousness and the categories; Fichte: self-knowledge) that can be deductively presupposed in all other knowledge. The second option—the most eloquent advocates of which have been Aristotle and Aquinas—begins with the opposed assumption there is a positive operative association that can be described between the senses’ extroverted unions and the intellect’s subsequent acts of understanding. This assumption frees one from looking for a specifically *epistemic* root for knowledge in the mind. However, it forces you to describe persuasively—as we will discuss at length next chapter—how the intelligible forms are somehow “included among,”²⁵ as Aristotle writes in *De anima*, the dematerialized *phantasia* delivered to it by the senses to the intellect.

Overall, it is undeniable that Augustine, especially under the influence of the Plotinus’s Neoplatonic emphasis on the metaphysical supremacy of the “inwardness” of self-reflection and self-knowledge,²⁶ generally opts for the first of these options as an extension of his corresponding conceptualization of divine simplicity. However, before proceeding down that road of interpretation too hastily, an initial qualification might help us to refrain from an overly simplistic portrayal of Augustine’s epistemology in *De Trinitate*. Despite not having access to Aristotle’s metaphysics, there are definitely moments in *De Trinitate* when Augustine seems to be having what Edmund Hill has called “good aristotelian [*sic*] doubts” about the Platonic theory of intelligible forms/ideas being in-

²⁵ Aristotle, *DA* III, 8, 432a3-7.

²⁶ Cf. Phillip Cary, *Augustine’s Invention of the Inner Self: The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 20-44.

cluded in the soul itself.²⁷ This is most obvious when he explicitly rejects Plato's combined theories of recollection and reincarnation (XII.24). It seems "unlikely," as Augustine concludes in alluding to the famous scene in Plato's *Meno* in which Socrates questions a slave boy regarding the nature of geometry until he finally gives the correct answers,²⁸ "that everybody was a geometer in a previous life, seeing that they are such a rarity in the human race that it is a job even to find one" (XII.24). Similarly, he seems to hypothesize in the same discussion about the possibility of the mind grasping the "unchanging" intelligible forms of a "square body" through the visual medium of a "spatial image" or the "arithmetic of a beautiful piece of music" through the audible medium of hearing that music being played (XII.23). On the basis of these observations, Augustine argues that it would be wrong to conclude that all of these forms were simply in the soul based upon "men [who] had lived here ever before they wore these bodies" (XII.24). Rather, as he continues in a remarkable passage that serves as an indication for the route that Aquinas will take in integrating Augustine with Aristotle:

The conclusion we should rather draw is that the nature of the intellectual mind has been so established by the disposition of its creator that it is subjoined to intelligible things in order of nature, and so it sees such truths in a kind of non-bodily light that is *sui generis*, just as our eyes of flesh see all these things that lie around us in this bodily light, a light they were created to be receptive of and to match.

In response to this passage and others, Hill concludes with the more moderate evaluation that Augustine's Platonism at times seems counterbalanced by an emerging Christian

²⁷ Hill, *The Trinity*, 341.

²⁸ Plato, *Meno*, 82a-86b.

conviction—hard-won from his early days as a Manichean—regarding the “real truth value of the material temporal world”²⁹ in relation to the triune Creator.

Nevertheless, these passages remain on the rhetorical margins of *De Trinitate* in manner that do not influence the main lines of Augustine’s epistemology, especially as it is expressed in the ascending trinitarian analogies of the mind. Instead, as one would expect given the trajectory that he has already established, Augustine much more often follows the vector of interiority “inside” in order to affirm that God includes intelligible forms in the primal unity of the soul. This is the first step of Augustine’s conflation of the unity of the soul with the intensiveness of a reflective, epistemic unity. In order to formulate this affirmation conceptually, Augustine blends this broadly Platonic epistemological assumption with an extended use of the Stoic terminology of “impression” that he uses throughout to describe the operation of the senses. Accordingly, Augustine speaks of formal *regulae* (VIII.7 and 9) that God has “impressed” on the soul that enable the mind to accurately make judgments regarding—to take Augustine’s main examples—a thing’s truth, goodness, and justice. Thus, in VIII.4 Augustine writes that our ability to “make a true judgment” between different instances of goodness would be “impossible unless we had impressed on us [*nobis impressa*] some notion of good itself by which we both approve of a thing and also prefer one thing to another.”³⁰ In order to know a thing truly, therefore, we must reflectively “consult”³¹ these inwardly impressed forms and apply

²⁹ Hill, *The Trinity*, 341.

³⁰ In VIII.8, there is also a negative example that reflects the same meaning. There Augustine explicitly denies that there is “standard of likeness impressed [*regulam similitudinis impressam*]” on our soul that would make possible a purely rational judgment (and thus apprehension) of the Trinity *qua* Trinity.

³¹ This rhetorical evaluation—*viz.* a “consultation” of the eternal forms—of Augustine’s epistemology is originally Bernard Lonergan’s. Cf. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed.

them outwardly to any given perceived object. In this way, Augustine affirms a primal unity of the soul in which true knowledge has been divinely “rolled up and [has] to be unrolled in order to be perceived and enumerated” (IX.5). Augustine completes this blending of Platonic epistemology and with the Stoic notion of impression by drawing upon the inverse notion of “expression,” which, as we have already seen, has its most natural meaning in describing how the mind “off-prints” an image in the act of recollection, in order to specify the relation between the emergence of the inner word and the primal impression of forms in the soul. Hence, knowledge is “squeezed out and formed [*quasi expressa formantur*]” (IX.18) when the mind reflectively consults these forms in order to make an intelligent judgment. Knowledge only comes to “be” when it is “squeezed out” in the mind or, as he mixes his metaphors in this passage in an obvious allusion to trinitarian terminology, when it “com[es] to birth” in and as the inner word (IX.18).

In the wake of this immanent birth of knowledge, the third element finally comes into view: the embrace of this knowledge such that it becomes “loved knowledge [*amata notitia*]” (IX.15). If Augustine attributes desire/intention to the will and the inner word to the intellect, then in the matter of love the action returns again to the will. It is perhaps only here when the question of love comes on the scene that the clear progression of the desiderative search for knowledge towards a teleological intensive unity within oneself that mimics (and culminates in) God’s essence as the amorous unity of truth comes into sharpest relief. This teleological unity occurs as a result of the will’s amorous embrace of

Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, vol. 2, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 2:192.

true knowledge. It is thus an immanent unity of love. This third form of intensive unity occurs penultimately in loving creation's participated truths and ultimately in loving God "face-to-face." Augustine attributes this amorous capacity to the will as an implication of his observation that the will's potential for loving includes, in addition to a terminal relation to the originating desire to know, a kind of estimative and assimilative function vis-à-vis the conceived and begotten inner word.³² As he writes at the end of Book IX:

The same appetite with which one longs open-mouthed to know a thing becomes love of the thing known when it holds and embraces the acceptable offspring, that is knowledge, and joins it to its begetter. (IX.18)

As this passage makes clear, the initial emergence of an inner word of knowledge in the mind is itself a preliminary affair. Everybody has experienced that what can be initially taken as the most profound "Aha!" can quickly degenerate into little more than a momentary mistake or a hypothesis that should have been rejected outright from the very start (cf. IX.15). That deliberative gap between provisional understanding and convinced assimilation of the knowledge proposed by an inner word as part of the mind's habitual constitution moving forward is exactly the space that Augustine reserves for love. As Augustine writes in IX.13: "So love, like something in the middle, joins together our word and the mind it is begotten from, and binds itself in with them as a third element in a non-bodily embrace, without any confusion." In this embrace, the initial intentional bond between knower and known blossoms into the volitionally tied union between lover

³² The Stoic notion of voluntary assent would seem to be behind this estimative function, which Augustine then synthesizes with Christian and Platonic emphases on love. According to Cicero (*Academica*, I.9.40), this voluntary character of assent to impressions was one of Zeno's innovations. Cf. Hankinson, "Stoic Epistemology," 64-66 and Brad Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* (Oxford: Clarendon/Oxford University Press, 1985), 42-102.

and loved: the known *as known* has now become part of the knower. In the wake of this embrace, the desire to know is fulfilled in the amorous pleasure of finding and cleaving.

The summative trinitarian analogy that Augustine sets forth on the basis of these three elements is the analogy pertaining to the inner man that he speaks of most regularly: memory (*memoria*), intelligence (*intelligentia*), and will (*voluntas*). It is noteworthy, as we will expand up in the next section, that Augustine names the first term as “memory,” as opposed to, for example, a term drawn from the semantic range of the impression/expression conceptual pair. Nonetheless, “memory” not only has a long attested connection with the Platonic theory of recollection, but it also, and probably more importantly, chimes with his moral admonition for the mind’s intellectual powers to “return” from its engagement with sensible things in order “remember” its intellectual nature and the corresponding source of its ultimate happiness. As we will see, the choice of memory within this triad contributes significantly to the terms of the dilemma that he faces when he applies it in connection with the special instance of self-knowledge.

Before finally turning to consider this dilemma, we should note the two deficiencies with the general analogy of mind/intelligence/voluntas that can be articulated in terms of the ascent toward the most transparent instance of the *imago Dei*. The most obvious deficiency—drawn from the vector of multiplicity/singularity—is intrinsic to the nature of human knowledge and will not be solved short of the eschatological teleology of our knowledge and love passing into the union with the utter simplicity of divine wisdom: whereas the human intellect must accumulate knowledge “bit by bit” (XV.23) through a multiplicity of inner words, God simply “knows all things in himself” in the

eternal singularity of the divine Word (XV.23). However, the second deficiency—drawn from the vector of exteriority/interiority—directly contributes to Augustine’s affirmation of the uniqueness of self-knowledge: even though it requires an “inward” consultation, the act of intelligibly knowing an exterior object still results in an enacted trinitarian analogy that involves two distinct beings (*viz.* the intelligent knower and the known object). Therefore, as Augustine admonishes the reader in a final turn in the “*gradual* ascension toward the interior” (XII.13),³³ “Let the mind [...] turn on to itself the intention of the will [*intentionem voluntatis*], which had it straying about through other things, and think about itself [*se cogitet*]” (X.11) in the desiderative search for self-knowledge.

c. The Uniqueness of Self-Knowledge and the Crux of Augustine’s Dilemma

Given the trajectory that Augustine has set for himself, it is not difficult to explain his attraction to self-knowledge (and its completion in self-love) as the centerpiece of the highest penultimate fulfillment of the *imago Dei*. Not only does it resonate with the Plotinian emphasis on the metaphysical superiority of self-knowledge and Augustine’s own version of the simple analogue of God’s triune essence, but it also addresses the shortcoming noted above in the analogy found in knowing an adventitious object. In contrast to when the mind secures knowledge of an exterior object, “[W]hen the mind knows itself it is the sole parent of its knowledge, being itself the thing known and the knower” (IX.18). Whenever the mind understands itself, it begets a true word about itself that is genuinely identical with itself (XIV.10, 13), *a la* the eternal relationship between the Fa-

³³ This translation is Gilles Emery’s. Cf. Gilles Emery, “Trinitarian Theology as Spiritual Exercise in Augustine and Aquinas,” in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, ed. Michael Dauphinais, Barry David, and Matthew Levering (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 14.

ther and the Son. Likewise, the mind can then embrace itself in love, thus “[coupling together] begetter and begotten” (Ibid.), *a la* the Spirit’s eternal bond of love in the Trinity. In these moments of reflective epistemic self-identity and self-love, so Augustine’s reasoning goes, we analogically embody as far as we can in this life—enigmatically as through a mirror (*per speculum*; 1 Cor. 13.12; XV.14) to be sure—the unchangeable and infinitely simple intensive identity of the Trinity.

However, the crux of Augustine’s dilemma—as with Kant’s and Fichte’s analogous difficulties—arises when he tries to conceptualize the relation between the preceding, pre-reflective conditions for self-knowledge and the nature of the reflective act itself. In addition to his overarching commitment to the necessity of drawing the analogy between divine simplicity and self-knowledge in terms of them both being completely non-adventitious, the contours of Augustine’s proposed solution to this immanent relation is determined by two incompatible factors that Augustine is forced to try to reconcile in his completed account of self-knowledge. As I will argue below, the terms of this forced reconciliation end up producing the circular incoherence characteristic of the reflection theory: the very intensive unity that he is trying to explain (*viz.* the mind’s self-knowledge) ends up being presupposed (*viz.* the mind has “always” known itself) as the basis for the reflective act that supposedly teleologically (re)secures the mind’s knowledge of itself. As a result, Augustine is forced to conflate all three types of intensive unity that his theological framework suggests—the primal unity of the soul, epistemic unity of self-knowledge, and the teleological unity of love—into a single unity that is always already given in the soul.

The first of these factors is that Augustine acknowledges the phenomenological weight of what would seem to be the common experience of realizing—coming to “know”—something about oneself “for the first time.” Accordingly, at various points he is willing to apply to the mind the same terms that he uses to describe something external that it is possible to know (i.e. a “knowable”) and “is not known [yet]” (IX.18). Thus, in this type of context he can vividly describe self-knowledge as a process that progresses from that which is knowable to that which is in fact known. For instance, in an initial consideration of self-knowledge in IX.18, Augustine makes the point explicit immediately after observing that when the mind knows itself it is simultaneously “knower and known:”

[The mind] was however knowable to itself [*sibi ipsa noscibilis*] even before it knew itself [*antequam se nosset*], but its knowledge of self was not in it while it did not know itself [*notitia sui non erat in ea cum se ipsa non nouerat*]. Therefore, as it gets to know itself [*cognoscit se parem sibi notitiam sui*] it begets a knowledge of itself that totally matches itself, since it does not know itself less than it is, nor is its knowledge different in being from itself, not only because it is doing the knowing but also because what it is knowing is itself.

This commentary is striking because it occurs in a context in which he is addressing the nature of knowledge in general. As an extension of this general discussion, he then elucidates here an account of self-knowledge that denies that it is—to recall our terminology from the Introduction—something *exceptional* in comparison to other instances of knowledge specifically in regard to its passage from a latent state of knowability to one of being known. Just as there are many other things that are in principle knowable to the mind—and that become known through the emergence of an inner word of knowledge—so too does he seem to consider that the mind might progressively become known to it-

self as well. Despite encountering conceptual problems that cause him to backtrack from this initial explanation of self-knowledge, Augustine remains committed to explaining what exactly occurs when the mind epistemically “realizes” something about itself and thereby begets an auto-referential inner word.

In addition to this general observation, Augustine is also committed to attributing a certain soteriological significance to an analogous “self-recognition” (*se recognoscit*, XIV.8) that occurs when a person whose desire for happiness had become “stuck” in sensible delights (re)turns to itself (cf. X.11)—by grace and through faith in Christ (cf. XIII.13-24)—to intend intelligible things and thereby “remembers” (cf. X.13, XIV.9) its intelligent nature that bears the image of God. The specific point of analogy of this “remembering” with the kind of self-knowledge described above in which we pass from being merely knowable to being known is found in not only its reflective character, but also in its inherently *contingent* nature. The contingency of this reflective act of remembering is punctuated by Augustine’s repeated use of the subjunctive jussive in Book X.11 and 12 in an attempt to incite his readers toward the reflective act: “Let the mind then recognize itself [*cognoscat ergo semetipsam*] [...] and think about itself [*se cogitet*]” and “Let the mind then not go looking for a look at itself [*se quaerat cernere*] as if it were absent, but rather take pains to tell itself apart as present.” At any given moment, our “reason or the intellect [...] may appear [...] to be in a coma, at another to be small, at another to be great,” indeed they might be “so worn away as to be almost nothing, or faint and distorted,” but nevertheless the “human soul is never anything but rational and intellectual” (XIV.6). Accordingly, Augustine repeatedly urges his readers to return to

and thus remember themselves by directing their minds toward considering that which is “more inward”(X.11)—their own intellectual powers—than any of the sensible things they may have been inordinately desiring. The contingency of this reflective act is unmistakable in *De Trinitate*; it stands at the very heart of the spiritual and pastoral concerns that periodically shine through Augustine’s often diffuse exposition of self-knowledge. For in turning inward to form the intensive unity of self-knowledge we not only turn away from our sinful forgetfulness of our intellectual nature, but we also—so Augustine reasons—gradually turn toward the Creator whose impression is found therein (XII.16) and who is in this precise sense, as Augustine seminally writes in the *Confessions*, “more interior to me than I am to myself” (*interior intimo meo*).³⁴

As I have already suggested, the second factor that influences Augustine’s account of self-knowledge is juxtaposed with this commitment to the importance of a contingent reflective act. This factor can be described as Augustine’s commitment to conceiving of the mind as a simple intellectual and immaterial unity that thereby grounds its knowledge of everything else. More specifically, it can be described in terms of his stout defense of this notion when faced with the familiar enigma of how to describe the *relata* of self-knowledge (i.e. what is known and what is doing the knowing?) and its relation to the subject/object division. Obviously, Augustine does not use the phrase self-consciousness or even “subject” and “object.” However, the problem he is trying to solve here is uncannily similar with that which we described in the Introduction as whether the pre-reflective unity of self-consciousness involves a kind of primal self-knowledge. Ex-

³⁴ Augustine, *conf.* 3.6.11.

pressed in Augustine's terms: if the mind is simultaneously characterized by something knowable, knowing, and known, "what are we to say then? That the mind knows itself in part and does not know itself in part?" (X.6).

One of the surest signs that Augustine is wrestling with some of the same mental phenomena as those that are analytically interrogated in the genealogy from Kant to Schleiermacher can be found in the fact that he lingers over one of the key qualitative effects—namely the "presence" of a synthesized "I" that accompanies certain first-order processes—that we have thematized as being associated with the relation between phenomenal consciousness and self-consciousness. For example, when trying to make more precise sense of what it would mean to speak—as he did in the passage quoted above—of the mind "not know[ing] itself," Augustine repeatedly cites the evidence of the mind "knowing" that "itself" is doing something else: "it knows itself knowing something" (X.6, 13), "it knows that it lives" (X.6, 13), and, in a Cartesian-like catch-all list in X.14, "all minds know for certain" that they have the "power of living, remembering, understanding, willing, thinking, knowing, judging, [and doubting]." When he glimpses this implied relation, Augustine is faced with that same moment of conceptual decision that is determinative for whether a thinker successfully avoids the trap of the reflection theory. Either one can describe the primal pre-reflective unity that makes this immanent awareness possible as itself a form of self-*knowledge* (e.g. Kant/Fichte) or one can try to avoid associating any epistemic connotations with it at all (e.g. Hölderlin/Novalis and Schleiermacher). In this sense, the crux of the dilemma that we have arrived at in Augustine is a very familiar one indeed.

There are certainly moments when Augustine uses rhetoric that could be leveraged in the direction of the latter option. For instance, he can speak of these acts as being characteristic of an immanent “presence” that is always “present to thinking [*cognitioni adest*]” (X.10). Similarly, at one point he talks of the mind always being “present” and “available” to itself, “ready to be understood by itself by its thought about itself” (XIV.14). However, as the passages above illustrate, he almost always chooses instead to conflate such “presence” into a self-relation that is always already epistemic. As he asks and answers in X.5, “How [could it be] that a mind which does not know itself knows itself knowing something else? It is not that it knows another mind knowing, but itself knowing. Therefore it knows itself. And then when it seeks to know itself, it already knows itself seeking. So it already knows itself.”

In the end, as I have suggested throughout, the cumulative force of the metaphysical assumptions that define his trajectory of ascent to focusing on self-knowledge as the *imago Dei* make it nearly impossible that he would opt for an explanation other than the one implied in this conflation and the insistence of a primal epistemic self-relation that goes along with it. There is, of course, another plausible way of answering Augustine’s question above: “How [could it be] that a mind which does not know itself knows itself knowing something else?” It could be that the mind only comes to know itself strictly speaking—and the specific nature of its intellectual powers—*through* the very act of knowing other things. In fact, as we will see next chapter, this is precisely the type of explanation that Aquinas, via Aristotle, ends up defending. However, for this answer to appear plausible to Augustine he would have to reconsider, first, the role of the senses’ in-

herent extroversion in securing knowledge in general. This is because Augustine's epistemology includes in itself a reflective act in order to consult the intelligible forms "within." This assumption already inhibits a theorization of knowledge in general from becoming the necessary preamble for *subsequent* acts of self-reflection. In addition, this answer would also violate the non-adventitious ideal that Augustine repeatedly uses to draw the analogy between created self-knowledge and the simplicity of divine self-knowledge because it necessarily links self-knowledge with *preceding* acts of knowing external, adventitious objects. Such an idea that the acts through which we know external objects could somehow "include" the intelligible forms that subsequently lead to self-knowledge is completely foreign to Augustine's thought in *De Trinitate*. It was foreclosed to him both by the Neoplatonic epistemological resources available to him and by his own formulation of the Creator-creature analogy and conceptualization of divine simplicity.

The resulting dilemma that Augustine faces is the difficulty of affirming the undivided unity of the mind as the prerequisite for knowledge (and all sorts of other activities) with the contingent emergence of its self-knowledge. The threat of the latter to the former is that it introduces a division between that which knows (i.e. a knowing subject) and that which passes from a state of knowability to one of being known (i.e. a known object). The degree to which Augustine is aware of this tension is reflected in, for instance, the rhetoric involved in his response to his own question cited above as to whether or not we should say that the mind "knows itself in part and does not know itself in part" (X.6). In response to this theoretical description, Augustine offers a rousing defense of the mind's indivisible wholeness, the tone of which, both in its passionate conviction and strained

rhetoric, prefigures the Romantics' own spirited advocacy of a non-cognitive version of such an "absolute unity:"

But it is absurd to say that the whole of it does not know what it knows: I am not saying "it knows the whole," but "What it knows, the whole of it knows." And so when it knows some of itself, which only the whole of it can do, it knows its whole self [*totam se scit*]. For it knows itself knowing something, and only the whole of it can know something; so it knows the whole of itself [*scit se igitur totam*]. Again, what is so known to the mind as that it is alive? It cannot both be mind and not be alive, particularly as it has in addition the fact that it is intelligent; even the souls of animals live, though they are not intelligent. So just as the whole mind is, in the same way the whole mind lives. But it knows that it lives; therefore it knows its whole self.

The decisive logic of this passage turns on his initial distinction between the incorrectness of saying that the mind "knows the whole" versus the accuracy of saying that "what it knows, the whole of it knows." The crucial difference between the two formulations for Augustine is that the former phrase introduces a division—the mind (subject) knowing the whole (object)—into the mind's simple unity with itself that Augustine tries to defend throughout *De Trinitate* in deference to the analogy he is trying to draw with the Trinity's eternal simplicity. The latter phrase instead strains to maintain the affirmation that the mind is a simple intellectual unity—"what it knows, the whole of it knows."

Augustine expands upon this concern in Book XIV.8. In that context, he writes at length about the absurdity of trying to distinguish between the mind as "one thing" and its epistemic "view" (*conspectus*) of itself as "another thing" (*aliud*):

Does it then see one part of itself with another part of itself when it gets a view of itself by thinking, just as with some parts of our bodies which are the eyes we get a view of the other parts of our bodies which can be in our view? What an absurd idea! [...] [I]f it has changed places in order to be viewed, where will it stay in order to view? Does it double up, as it were, in order to be both there and here, that is both where it can view and where it can be viewed, so that in itself it is viewing and in front of itself it is viewable?

This passage is remarkable in its acuity regarding the conceptual traps that inevitably appear in trying to theorize the mind's epistemic reflection upon "itself." It suggests that Augustine is generally aware of the specter of circularity that he is nonetheless not entirely able to escape in the end. This is because he still must formulate some kind of answer to this question: if one cannot find any coherent way of describing the mind coming to know itself based on a concern for affirming the mind's essential unity, how then should we describe the preceding ground for the mind's self-knowledge? Given his metaphysical commitments, Augustine is left with no other choice but to affirm that the nature of the mind's intensive unity somehow includes within itself a primal, reflective self-knowledge always already given in the soul. Once the outlet of adventitious knowledge is excluded, "where" else could the mind epistemically "find" itself except in and "through itself" (XV.22)? Accordingly, as he writes following the passage above regarding the absurdity of introducing a subject/object division into the mind's "view" of itself, "[T]he only alternative left is that its view is something that belongs to its own nature, and that when the mind thinks about itself its view is drawn back to itself not through an interval of space, but by a kind of non-bodily turning around [*incorporea conversione revocetur*]" (XIV.8).

What does the mind thereby "find" in this turning around on itself: a "secret kind of knowledge [*arcana quadam notitia*]" (XIV.8) of itself that Augustine—understandably given its Platonic precedents—labels as a special kind of "memory." Hence, the mind always "knows itself by being somehow its own memory of itself [*sibi memoria sui*]" (XIV.8). Elsewhere in *De Trinitate*, he tries to distinguish this self-memory from any

memories contingently received from sensible *phantasia* by predictably adding modifiers that emphasize its primal interiority. Thus he speaks of the “inner memory of the mind with which it remembers itself [*interiorem mentis memoriam qua sui meminit*]” (XIV.10), the “the hidden depths [*abstrusior profunditas*] in our memory” (XV.40), and our “primordial memory [*memoriae principali*]” (XV.41). Like Fichte long after him would do as well in positing an exceptional self-knowledge (*viz.* a self-consciousness in which everything is “absolutely one and the same”), in declarations such as these Augustine strains to bring together the *relata* involved in self-knowledge into the closest possible primal relation to the point that the supposition of there being any meaningful distinction (or division) between is eventually excluded in order to salvage the mind’s primal intensive unity: “What it knows, the whole of it knows.” Or put differently: the whole of it “already knows itself” (X.5).

There are, as one might expect, significant conceptual costs to pay for embracing this solution. At an initial level, this solution vitiates any meaningful application of his former talk of the mind “get[ting] to know itself.” Similarly, it conflates the soteriological/teleological call to “return” and “remember” oneself into the broader affirmation that the mind always already knows itself. Hence, to “remember” oneself in this regard is literally to recall something that you *really* and *fully* had known before. In order to describe this dynamic, Augustine leans heavily on the distinction that it is “one thing to know oneself [*non se nosse*], [and] another not to think about oneself [*non se cogitare*]” (X.7, cf. XIV.9). Thus even though we can “forget” our true intelligent nature (and corresponding *telos*) by misdirecting our desires onto sensible things, Augustine affirms that somewhere

in the “recesses of the mind [*abdito mentis*]” (XIV.9) there endures a self-knowledge (and here self-love as well) such that that he believes that this affirmation is true: “the mind always remembers, always understands and loves itself [*semper sui meminisse semperque se ipsam intellegere et amare*], even though it does not always think about itself as distinct from things are not what it is” (XIV.9).

More troubling, however, is the explicit circularity that Augustine is forced to endorse when he tries to explain the relevance and virtue of the contingent reflective act in terms of it being the highest penultimate analogy of the *imago Dei*. The best example of this explicit circularity occurs in an extended passage in XIV.13.³⁵ In the lead-up to this passage, Augustine is attempting to clarify the difference between adventitious knowledge of temporal things and the mind’s non-adventitious knowledge of itself. As one would expect, he designates the decisive difference as lying in the fact that in adventitious knowledge there is a gap—ontological and temporal—between knowables [*cognoscibilia*] and our knowledge [*cognitione*] of them. In these cases, the knowables preexist and partially ground the knower’s knowledge of them: “the knowables beget the knowledge, not the knowledge the knowables” (XIV.13).³⁶ However, as Augustine states

³⁵ A parallel example can be found in XIV.10: “For if we refer to the inner memory of the mind with which it remembers itself and the inner understanding with which it understands itself and the inner will with which it loves itself, where these three are simultaneously together and always have been simultaneously together from the moment they began to be, whether they were being thought about or not, it will indeed seem that the image of the other trinity belongs only to the memory. But because there can no word in it without thought—we think everything we say, including what we say with the inner word—that is not part of any people’s language—it is rather in these three that this image is to be recognized, namely memory, understanding, and will.”

³⁶ It is just the reverse with God, i.e. “knowables” (from our perspective) exist in the first place precisely because God always already knows them: “It is true of all [God’s] creatures, both spiritual and corporeal, that he does not know them because they are, but that they are because he knows them” (XV.22).

succinctly, “in the case of the mind it is not so” (Ibid.). The entire passage that follows is crucial enough to be quoted at length:

The mind, after all, is not adventitious to itself, as though to the mind which already was came from somewhere else the same mind which was not yet; or as though it did not come from somewhere else, but in the mind which already was should be born the same mind which was not yet, just as in the mind which already was arises faith which was not before; or as though after getting to know itself it should by recollection see itself fixed in its own memory, as if it had not been there before it had got to know itself. The truth of course is that from the moment it began to be it never stopped remembering itself, never stopped understanding itself, never stopped loving itself, as we have already shown. And therefore when it turns to itself in thought, a trinity is formed in which a word too can be perceived. It is formed of course out of the very act of thought [*formatur quippe ex ipsa cogitatione*], with the will joining the two together. It is here more than anywhere that we should recognize the image we are looking for.

The circular dissonance in this passage is found when we try to specify exactly what occurs in the mind’s acts of turning back onto itself in “remembrance.” On the one hand, it appears—and this is precisely the point of contrast to adventitious knowledge—that the trinitarian unity of self-knowledge and self-love has always been and has “never” ceased to be since the mind “began to be.” On the other hand, and in the sentences immediately following, Augustine wants to maintain that the reflective act itself of “recollection” and “turn[ing] to itself in thought” actually generates this intensive unity through the temporal begetting of an inner word and the coupling action of the will. In Augustine’s version of the reflection theory, the mind’s epistemic self-unity is depicted both as something that is always already realized *and* something that is contingently forged through the mind’s recollective reflection upon itself, which is an act—and here is the nub of its circularity—paradoxically based on a preceding epistemic self-unity.

There will likely be some readers of Augustine who object to my virtually unqualified criticism of this circular inconsistency, which I take to be insoluble based upon the metaphysical assumptions regarding desire, knowledge, the senses, and the Creator-creature relation that combine to determine the trajectory that leads him here in *De Trinitate*. For example, in his commentary on the extended passage cited above, the venerable Edmund Hill admits that there is a “certain uncertainty or haziness” involved in Augustine’s juxtaposed affirmations that the mind “never stopped remembering, understanding and loving itself” and that this very same “trinity” really does “emerg[e] when the mind actually thinks about itself.”³⁷ However, Hill quickly attempts to ameliorate this “haziness” by suggesting that the difficulty Augustine encounters here is “more a matter of vocabulary than substance.”³⁸ His elaboration of this argument is illuminating both in its content and in its preliminary references to the comparative conceptual clarity that Aquinas accomplishes through his modified Aristotelianism:

Augustine seems to lack that very convenient sliding-scale terminology of potency and act which Aristotle bequeathed to the scholastics. But what in fact he is saying is that the mind is always the triune image of God potentially, but that this image is only activated by an act of thought. This is one respect, of course, in which the image falls infinitely short of its exemplar, where in Aquinas’s language there is no potentiality but pure act, and where therefore in this case the Word is eternally being begotten by an eternal divine act of thought or generation.³⁹

Hill is entirely right in his judgment that the specific inconsistency in the passage above could be solved—and indeed Aquinas *does* solve it—through this kind of distinction between the potentiality and actuality of the image of God.

³⁷ Hill, *The Trinity*, 393.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

However, he is altogether too optimistic in suggesting that Augustine's circular inconsistency can be covered over by simply claiming that he really "meant" something like the potency/act distinction that Aquinas would make explicit. In fact, it is worth noting that Augustine had several conceptual pairs at his disposal that would have captured this kind of nuance if only he had employed them more exhaustively in specifying the higher instances of the trinitarian analogy. For example, his own terminology that he uses in passing in *De Trinitate* could have allowed him to say that the image's pre-reflective latency was "impressed" on (*imprimitur*, XII.16) or "subjoined" to (*subjuncta*, XII.24)) or was "formable" (*formabilis*, XV.26) within the soul, but had to be "expressed" (*exprimitur*, XI.6) or "put together" (*adjungit*, XI.15) or "formed" (*formata*, XV.26) in the act of reflection. However, to opt for any these formulations explicitly in describing the realization of the trinitarian image would have required a wholesale reconsideration of his epistemology, particularly his construal of the senses' relation to knowledge and his parallel insistence that the triune image had to be as non-adventitious as God's own self-knowledge. For, as I have tried to show in this chapter, once these metaphysical assumptions define the vectors involved in Augustine's desiderative ascent, he is left no other choice but to affirm that what the act of reflection finds "in itself" is not the *potency* to know itself, but rather the always already secured—and thus truly non-adventitious—knowledge of oneself. For, according to Augustine's epistemological and soteriological presuppositions, the mind simply *cannot* find any knowledge of itself that is dependent on its preceding "straying about" with any non-adventitious perceptions. Rather, all it knows about itself must be known in and "through itself" alone. Aquinas, as we will see

next chapter, solves this conundrum by insisting not only that the senses play a much more positive role in our process for intelligently knowing things (including ourselves), but that this reliance on our senses is part of a native and morally benign extroversion that simply reflects another aspect of our metaphysical deficiency in comparison with God's utter and eternal simplicity.

In this regard, the most troubling implication of Augustine's dilemma regarding self-knowledge and the image of God goes beyond its logical inconsistencies. Rather, in the end, the larger question that emerges out of this dilemma has to do with the ascent of desire itself. As I have suggested throughout, the entire structure and methodology of *De Trinitate* leads one to expect that the highest penultimate instance of the trinitarian image of God would occur in a contingent act of self-knowledge and self-love that yields an intensive teleological unity that presages our eschatological union with God. All of the vectors that define his ascent of desire point in this direction, especially his sustained affirmation that the more we desire and love God, the more we hasten toward our perfect happiness in union with God, the more intensively unified (i.e. not "lost in multiplicity") we become. However, when we finally arrive at Augustine's description of this teleological unity what we find is that he has undermined the integrity of that contingent desiderative process that virtually defines the course of a human life. This undermining occurs because the primal, epistemic, and teleological intensive unities all end up getting conflated into a single affirmation: we have always already known and loved ourselves. The net effect is a lingering concern that Augustine empties the ascent of desire toward an increasing intensive unity of much genuine significance at all. For if, as Augustine sug-

gests, we have always already wholly known ourselves such that we only have to “remember” this prior understanding, does this not at least risk implying that every other aspect of this desiderative life (e.g. exterior, sensible, material) is structured—not as a progressive ascent—but rather as a quite regrettable “straying about”? As we will turn to consider next chapter, this is yet another front on which Aquinas’s affirmation of a native extroversion in human knowledge will help to solve a conceptual inconsistency that results from Augustine’s strained attempt to hold together his overarching theological framework and the fundamental shape of his epistemology. Thankfully, however, as we will see shortly, Aquinas formulates this comparative conceptual clarity even while simultaneously salvaging and even extending the explanatory reach of Augustine’s seminal insight regarding human desire. In and through the conceptual precision Aquinas’s transposition of this insight, the promise of Augustine’s overarching framework finally shines through: desire really does thrust us into what is intended to be a genuine *ascent* of desire through a world of lesser goods “back” to our Creator as “the most high good” (XIII.10) in relation to whom we were created for an eschatological *telos* in which we will experience the fullest intensive unity of all. For in knowing and loving God “face to face,” “[W]e shall be like him because we shall see him as he is” (XV.21).

III. Summary and Conclusion

As we stated at the outset, the aim of this chapter has been to engage in a close reading of the second half of Augustine’s *De Trinitate* in order to accomplish two purposes in relation to our overall trajectory of resourcing the theological anthropologies of Augustine and Aquinas in order to resituate the intensive unity that is self-consciousness. First, we

have established the basic shape of Augustine's seminal insights into the interrelated nature of desire, knowledge, and the corresponding varieties of intensive unity (i.e. primal, epistemic, and teleological) that diversely characterize human existence. As we saw, these insights are shaped by his overarching *exitus-reditus* framework for understanding the Creator-creation relation. In terms of knowledge, this relation entails that creation is constituted as a realm of forms (or essences or souls), each of which bears a deficient similitude to the divine essence, that function as the hierarchical ontological organization of reality and the mediating condition for understanding the intelligible patterns of its truth. In terms of desire, this relation entails that all creatures desire their perfect happiness, which in intelligent beings manifests as a desire to know truth. This desire to know finds penultimate satisfaction in the participated truths of creation secured in inner words of understanding and ultimate satisfaction in knowing God "face-to-face." When combined with the terms that establish the shape of his search for the trinitarian *imago Dei*, this overarching framework suggests a threefold diversity of intensive unity that each bear a different similitude to the singularity of the divine essence as the self-reflective unity of truth: (1) a *primal* unity given in the soul itself; (2) an *epistemic* unity that contingently arises in self-knowledge; and (3) a *teleological* unity that occurs in an individual as the multiplicity of one's temporal desires/loves eschatologically converge upon God as one's highest good and perfect happiness.

Second, however, we also described an Augustinian version of the reflection theory that we witnessed in the Introduction as characteristic of the Kantian and Fichtean explanations of self-consciousness. The allure of this theory, which attempts to circularly

ground the self-knowing individual through reflection, ends up leading Augustine into a dilemma that forces him to conflate the three intensive unities into a single reflective unity always already epistemically given in the soul. The predictable circular result arrives when Augustine asserts that this primal and exceptional self-knowledge is—in the form of a “primordial memory” of ourselves—the causal ground for knowledge in general and in particular of reflective acts in which the intensive unity of self-knowledge (and self-love) is supposedly contingently forged as well. As we have seen, the twin conceptual culprits of this conflation are the terms of Augustine’s general epistemology, which asserts that all knowledge requires a reflection on forms (*regulae*) impressed upon the soul, and his insistence that the *imago Dei* must be as non-adventitious as God’s own self-knowledge. The result of the conflation stemming from these assumptions not only prevents the promise of a diversity of deficient intensive unities from coming into view, but also threatens to undermine the integrity of the ascent of desire as something that has its own climactic teleological intensive unity both penultimately in this world and ultimately in union with God.

My strategy from here, as I have signaled throughout, will be to turn to the way that Aquinas’ explanatorily expands Augustine’s account of the Creator-creature relation, even as he solves the latter’s dilemma by transposing his insights into an Aristotelian metaphysical and epistemological framework. As we will see, the most decisive elements that Aquinas adopts in this act of translation are Aristotle’s account of the soul and his unique way of construing a “vertical” (i.e. positive) relation between the senses and intellect. This vertical relation then enables Aquinas to affirm that both the senses and intel-

lect are characterized by a native *extroversion* that precedes any reflective act “within.” This revised epistemology thus allows Aquinas to capitalize on that which Augustine conflates. In Chapter 2, we will show how he successfully separates out the soul as the cause of our most primal intensive unity *devoid of any self-knowledge*. Similarly in Chapter 3, we will show how he extends this solution by precisely articulating the anthropological capacities that are actualized in the soteriological/teleological alignment of our desire/love in relation to God. The terms of this Thomist solution to Augustine’s dilemma will then form the conceptual basis for translating Freud’s discovery of primary identification (Chapter 4) and reframing the riddle of self-consciousness as a fourth type of divinely-deficient intensive unity (Chapter 5).

Before turning to Aquinas, however, I want to close with one concluding observation regarding the seminal way that Augustine formulates the Creator-creation relation. As will become clear, Aquinas fully embraces the connection that Augustine assumes between God as the triune perfection of self-knowledge/self-love and the created shape of the *imago Dei*. Given the preceding critique of Augustine’s application of this understanding of God in specifying the *imago Dei*, a perceptive reader might fairly inquire, “Don’t the logical inconsistencies involved in the reflection theory apply to this doctrine of God?” The answer is found by recalling that all the inconsistencies that result when analyzing the act of reflection in the human mind arise because of the temporal gap between some kind of pre-reflective unity that underlies reflection and the contingent unity that is somehow forged in the act of reflection itself. In God, however, there is no such temporal gap at all between what we have called primal, epistemic, and teleological in-

tensive unities; God truly *does* always already know and love the divine essence and the divine essence truly *is* the eternality of that act of self-knowledge and self-love. There is, quite simply, nothing pre-reflective in God. What Aquinas helps to clarify vis-à-vis Augustine is how to explain the metaphysical deficiency of a human being in whom there is much that is primally pre-reflective and yet is no less always already created in the image of God.

Chapter 2

Aquinas's Solution I: The Aristotelian Soul and the Verticality of Knowledge

Last chapter I accomplished two tasks in conversation with Augustine's *De Trinitate* in relation to my overall attempt to reframe the riddle of self-consciousness and redescribe its theological significance. First, I detailed Augustine's Christian appropriation of the Neoplatonic *exitus-reditus* scheme in order to explain creation's analogical origin in God and its teleological return to God. According to Augustine, creation's *exitus* from God occurs through a dispersion of deficient intelligible forms into a materially-mediated hierarchy of beings. Similarly, its *reditus* back to God occurs, in the highest degree, in the ascent of human beings as they are propelled by a desire to know the truth mediated by those forms. This ascent finds its ultimate fulfillment in union with God as the eminent unity of all truth. I also argued that one of the promises of this overarching Augustinian framework is that it suggests that human existence is characterized by three types of intensive unity—the primal unity of the soul, the epistemic unity of self-knowledge, and the teleological unity of desire/love—that are each analogically similar to the supreme unity of the divine essence in different ways.

Second, I identified a version of the reflection theory operative in Augustine's search for the *imago Dei*. The resulting pitfalls of this theory were evident in a dilemma that ends up forcing Augustine to conflate the three types of intensive unity suggested by his own framework into a single epistemic one always already given in the soul. As a result, he circularly vacillates between affirming, on the one hand, a primal self-knowledge

(and self-love) in the human mind and, on the other hand, a contingent realization of this epistemic unity as forged through discrete acts of self-reflection and self-love. As I have argued at length, it is this Augustinian version of the reflection theory that justifies his inclusion in an overall inquiry regarding self-consciousness. Just as—broadly speaking—Kant, Fichte, Hölderlin/Novalis, and Schleiermacher were all trying to explain the immanently given conditions that furnish the necessary self-differentiated conditions requisite for intelligent knowing, so too was Augustine wrestling with the same phenomenon out of the conviction that such a primal intensive unity represents a deficient *imago* of divine simplicity, a trace of the eminently intelligent Creator who is always already *interior in timo meo*.

Against the backdrop of this Augustinian framework and dilemma, the next two chapters will be devoted to showing how Thomas Aquinas solves Augustine's dilemma and, in doing so, finally capitalizes on the initial promise of affirming a diversity of intensive unities as tying together the trajectory of human existence, the interrelated capacities of knowledge and desire, and the corresponding extroverted/intensive unities that they thereby make possible. As will become clear, Aquinas accomplishes this by creatively transposing Augustine's seminal insights into a more precise, largely Aristotelian, metaphysical and epistemological framework. The result of this transposition is an Augustinian-Aristotelian theological synthesis, punctuated by Aquinas's own seminal contributions, that actually ends up expanding the explanatory reach of Augustine's basic approach to the Creator-creation analogical relation. By articulating the metaphysical framework that makes this transposition possible, and the theological anthropology that

issues from it, we will simultaneously find a more coherent Augustinianism and an intellectual tradition robust enough to serve as a midwife for translating Freudian identification (Chapter 4) and resituating self-consciousness as a fourth type of intensive unity (Chapter 5).

The organization of this chapter and Chapter 3 can be understood in a couple of different ways. Most centrally, in this chapter we will see how Aquinas draws upon Aristotle's metaphysical account of the soul and the intellect in order to undo Augustine's conflation of the first two types of intensive unity: the soul and self-knowledge. The result is that he successfully separates out the soul as the cause of the most primal type of intensive unity in an individual—the indivisible and always already defined unity of its existence—in a manner that denies any kind of primal self-knowledge in the human intellect. In Chapter 3, we will then see how Aquinas accomplishes something similar by reformulating the nature of Augustine's teleological/desiderative/amorous intensive unity via Aristotle's metaphysics of appetite.

This basic organization also reflects a key feature of Aquinas's account of the soul that allows him to escape the conceptual traps that Augustine sets for himself by insisting on the “inwardness” of knowledge (via God's *impressio* of forms upon the soul) and a corresponding disjunction between the senses and intelligence. This feature, which I briefly touched upon in the Introduction, holds that one of the chief ways that the capacities (or “powers” or “faculties”) of sensitivity and intelligence are related is that they are both constituted by a generic power of “knowledge” and a correlative power of “desire.” Or in Aquinas's nomenclature: each “part” or “layer” of the soul (i.e. a sensitive layer

and an intelligent layer) is constituted by a power of apprehension (*apprehensio*) and a power of appetite (*appetitus*). Generally expressed, the difference between an apprehensive and an appetitive power is the difference between the cognitive interiorization of a patterned form and a derivative response of attraction or repulsion to that interiorized form. Or as Aquinas puts it: “[I]t belongs to one faculty to have within itself something which is outside it, and to another faculty to tend to what is outside it.”¹

More specifically, an apprehensive power makes possible the interiorization of a form—whether as a sensible or intelligible “pattern”—that is thereby “in” the individual as the known is in the knower. Thus for Aquinas there are two types of knowledge (i.e. sensitive and intelligent) that correspond respectively with the sensitive and intelligent apprehensive powers. Hence the sensitive apprehensive power (i.e. the senses) makes sensible forms (e.g. the visible, the audible, etc.) interior to an individual as phantasms (Aquinas’s term for *phantasia*),² while the intelligent apprehensive power (i.e. the intellect) renders intelligible forms (e.g. plant-ness, bear-ness, triangle-ness) immanently present as inner words of understanding. Already one can see how this analogy allows Aquinas to tie together that which Augustine tends to separate: the analogous unions of sensitive phantasms and intelligent inner words are brought together under the generic banner of apprehension as a union between knower and known.³

Conversely and derivatively, an appetitive power then responds to that interiorized form as a good (and therefore attractive) or an evil (and therefore evil) from the in-

¹ Aquinas, *ST I.59.2*

² In the Latin: *phantasmata*.

³ Cf. Aquinas, *ST I.16.1*.

tentional perspective of the individual. Even though we will have to add some nuance to this declaration based upon Aquinas's metaphysical understanding of appetite, the nature of these responses generally fits under the banner of what we normally consider as manifestations of desire and/or emotion. Accordingly, appetitive responses of attraction can include love, desire, and pleasure, while parallel responses of repulsion include hate, aversion, and pain. Based upon this general framework, Aquinas affirms that there is both a sensitive appetite (i.e. the "passions" of the soul) and a distinctive intellective appetite (i.e. the will) that are each correlative to their respective apprehensive power.⁴ To state a point to which we will return often, one of the immediate results of this account of apprehension and appetite is that our overall interest in the interrelation between knowledge and desire is placed within a metaphysical framework precise enough to explain their distinctive operations, even while also expanding our notion of each by enumerating several different types of knowledge (described in this chapter) and desire (described in Chapter 3) that are nonetheless metaphysically analogous as powers of apprehension and appetite.

If this is the formal organization that shapes the course of this chapter and Chapter 3, what will become increasingly clear is that these chapters are also held together by a theme implicit throughout Aristotle's metaphysics that Aquinas expands upon and that we will end up constructively extending at length in Chapters 4 and 5. Concisely stated, this theme is connected with Aristotle's inclination to relate all human capacities (e.g. the senses, desire, the intellect, and the will) in a *vertical* (i.e. non-disjunctive) manner such that each of these capacities end up making some *positive* contribution to the overall tele-

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, I.80.2.

ological perfection of that being. In light of this intrinsic link to teleology, we will also, following the lead of Bernard Lonergan, refer to this metaphysical insight as “vertical finality.”⁵ For an Aristotelian and a Thomist, the multifaceted explanatory relevance of such a vertical continuum between human capacities serves as the conceptual bulwark for remedying any proposed disjunction between the powers of the soul such as Augustine perpetuates between the senses and the intellect.

Obviously, the idea of a hierarchy existing between different human capacities, with intelligence being the most noble and “divine,” was not at all foreign to Augustine’s anthropology. However, the difference between a mere hierarchy of capacities and Aristotle’s distinctive emphasis on their vertical interrelation is precisely the notion that all these capacities are interrelated to one another in the sense that the lower powers can all secondarily contribute to the perfection of a human being’s singular *telos* as primarily accomplished through the higher capacities of intelligence.⁶ As we will see, Aquinas relies upon this Aristotelian theme in order to affirm the created and teleological goodness

⁵ For Lonergan, vertical finality names an idea implicit in both Aristotle and Aquinas that ties together the multilayered isomorphism between ontology and epistemology that is bridged in the union of knower and known and also points to the absolute unity of ontology/epistemology in the divine essence. Ontologically, which is the aspect of it being described here, it names the way that reality (and the living creatures that populate reality) is organized such that lower-level entities have horizontal ends in themselves, but can also combine with other entities/processes in order to produce a fertility that realizes a higher end. One of Lonergan’s favorite examples is the way that oxygen has certain essential ends and characteristics on its own. However, when is joined together with the fertile plurality of other elements and processes, it often vertically participates in a much more excellent end, namely, sustaining human life. Epistemologically, vertical finality then names the way that intelligent knowledge similarly proceeds from lower level insights (e.g. addition) to a higher-level insights (e.g. calculus) that necessarily incorporate the former. As the chapter proceeds, we will touch upon both of these aspects of vertical finality again. For Lonergan’s writing on vertical finality, cf. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “Finality, Love, and Marriage,” in *Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 4:17-52 and *Insight*, 3:470-76.

⁶ As I employed the term above, I intend the word “positively” as the opposite of disjunctively. In other words, as I discuss at length below, the type of disjunction that Augustine maintains between the senses and the intellect is unthinkable for an Aristotelian. Instead, the senses must somehow, as we will see below, positively contribute to the intellect’s vertically “higher” operations of grasping intelligible forms.

of *all* human capacities as potentially aligned in our (re)union with God. Similarly, we will also draw upon the explanatory relevance of vertical finality in making our constructive proposal in conversation with Freud that there is a distinctive power of identification in human beings that explains the origins and fragile perpetuation of egoic self-consciousness.

For the moment, however, we must first become more acquainted with the basics of Aristotle's metaphysical framework and Aquinas's derivative account of the soul and the apprehensive powers as a means for reformulating a more internally coherent and maximally explanatory Augustinianism. Our itinerary toward accomplishing those ends will run through four sections. First, I will begin with a primer on Aristotle and Aquinas's Aristotelianism as centered on two conceptual cornerstones of Aristotelian metaphysics: the four-fold theory of causation and the relation of passion to action (and potency to act). This primer will pay dividends in the following chapters not only because Aquinas's account of the appetitive powers (Chapter 3) presupposes this Aristotelian background, but also because our constructive proposals in Chapter 4 and 5 will assume the broad validity of these concepts as well. On the basis of this foundation, in the second section I will turn to the way that Aquinas appropriates and extends Aristotle's understanding of the soul as the first actuality of a living being. Thirdly, I will describe the way that Aquinas derivatively formulates the interrelation between sensitive and intelligent apprehension in a manner that successfully resituates the intensive unity of self-knowledge as strictly dependent upon the extroverted unions of the senses and the intellect. Fourthly, I will draw these threads together in order to show how Aquinas constructively synthesizes his Aris-

totelianism with Augustine's joint emphases on (a) creation's analogical participation in the truth and perfection of God's triune self-knowledge and (b) human intelligence, and particularly the occurrence of the inner word, as the chief site of the *imago Dei*. Lastly, I will close by summarizing our findings and also outlining a crucial conceptual gap that is opened up by Aquinas's otherwise successful solution to Augustine's dilemma. As we will see, the nature of this gap, and its relation to the two intensive unities of the soul and self-knowledge that Aquinas metaphysically clarifies and distinguishes, points to the exact conceptual space into which we will situate egoic self-consciousness as a fourth type of intensive unity.

I. A Primer on Aristotelian Metaphysics: Causation and Passion/Action

Aristotle's theorization of the fourfold character of causation and the relation of passion to action stand as central pillars of the Aristotelian scientific ideal: the explanatory analysis of being and beings according to their causes. The desired culmination of this pursuit is the distinctive *telos* of philosophy, wisdom (*sophia*), which in its epistemic dimension consists in the knowledge of the "first causes and [...] principles of things."⁷ Especially given the fact that each of these basic metaphysical concepts pass into Aquinas rather directly, we will examine each of them in more detail before moving onto their convergence in an account of the soul.

As a method of inductively proceeding toward the knowledge of causes and principles, Aristotle identifies four types of causes—material, formal, final, and efficient (or moving)—that guide his analysis of being and beings. Aquinas likewise adopts this four-

⁷ Aristotle, *Met.* I, 1, 981b25-26.

fold typology of causation,⁸ although, as we will see later on, he notably expands Aristotle's general conception of efficient causality in order to include theology's affirmation of *creatio ex nihilo* as an eminent occurrence of this type of causality. Aristotle takes these four causes to be exhaustively applicable across all types of things, from inanimate objects of nature (e.g. rocks and minerals), to living beings (e.g. plants, animals, and humans), to products of human artifice (e.g. statues and houses). Given that the themes before us are mostly bound up with the composition and nature of living beings, most of the examples that follow will be drawn from the application of this typology to that realm of being that has life. Or as both Aristotle and Aquinas define life: those beings that are capable of self-movement.⁹

Basically defined, a cause "is that on which the being of something else follows."¹⁰ In the case of living beings, that "something else" is the concrete living thing considered as an indivisible whole (i.e. a particular human, a brown horse, a geranium). According to Aristotle, the material and formal causes of living things in nature are what constitute them as composite, or hylomorphic, beings: a compound of matter (e.g. the actual "stuff" of which it is made) and two types of intelligible form (e.g. substantial and accidental). A living thing's substantial form is the principle that accounts for the arrangement of a given "parcel of matter"¹¹ (i.e. a pack of flesh and bones or a clump of wood and leaves) into an intelligible whole made up of organized parts (i.e. a human or a

⁸ Cf. Aquinas, *ST* II-II.27.3.

⁹ Cf. Aristotle, *DA* II, 2, 413a21-31 and Aquinas, *ST* I.18.1-2. See also: Aristotle, *Phys.*, VIII, 4-6, 254b8-260a19.

¹⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 2:144. This is Lonergan's apt summary of Aristotle, *Met.* V, 1-2, 1012b33-1014a25.

¹¹ This phrase comes from Michael J. Loux, "Form, Species and Predication in Metaphysics Z, H, and Θ," *Mind* 88, no. 349 (1979): 1-23.

tree).¹² As we will expand upon next section, the decisive link between Aristotle’s metaphysics and his anthropology arrives in that he strictly identifies a living being’s substantial form with its soul (Gk. *psuchē*, Lat: *anima*). The same basic concept is also referred to as a thing’s substance (Gk: *ousia*), *species*, essence, definition, formula, nature, or *quiddity*.¹³ Spoken of in the abstract, a substantial form is the universal pattern that has been concretized—or *enmattered*—in a particular member of that *species* whose being can thus be described as “following,” or caused by, this form. In Aquinas’s phrasing, “form [is] that by which something subsists [*quo aliquid est*].”¹⁴ On the other hand, accidental forms, or accidents, are the patterned qualities (e.g. size, color, state, location) by which a real member of a species concretely *is* (or subsists as) that type of thing *in a certain way* (e.g. a brown horse, Socrates’ white hair, a knowledgeable human).¹⁵ As an addition to these two causes, a living thing’s efficient (or moving) cause and final cause can be split into its biological origins and teleology. An organism’s proximate efficient cause, the movement that gave rise to its own life as self-moving, can be identified with the fertile agency of its biological progenitors. Likewise, its final cause—that towards which its development is teleologically ordered—is a mature individual of its respective species (e.g. an adult human, horse, or tree).¹⁶

If the four-fold typology of causation describes different angles of explanation vis-à-vis a given thing’s particular qualities, the paired concepts of passion (Gk: *pathē*;

¹² One obvious *locus classicus* is *Met.* VII. See, for example, 1034b20-1036a13 for a discussion of substance as that which accounts for the definitional whole of a living thing apart from which the parts can only be spoken of “homonymously” (e.g. the finger of a corpse).

¹³ This last term being a distinctly Latinate, and thus exclusively Thomist, term.

¹⁴ Aquinas, *ST* I.13.1.ad2.

¹⁵ Cf. Aristotle, *Met.* VII, 4, 1029b10-1013a17 and VII, 6, 1031a15-1031b27.

¹⁶ *PA*, I, 1, 639a-640b4.

Lat: *pati*) and action (Gk: *poiêsis*; Lat: *actio, operatio*) are employed to describe a certain relation¹⁷ between different things entirely (“in another thing”) or between different aspects of a single thing (“in itself *qua* other”).¹⁸ The relation between passion and action is caused by the occurrence of movement and/or change. As a relation between entities, to be active (i.e. to be an agent) means to enact movement or change (i.e. to be a *mover*); to be passive (i.e. to be a patient) means to be that which receives the movement or change (i.e. to be *moved*) and thus is moved to action in a manner consistent *in ratio* with the action of that which moved it. Aristotle’s standard example, which Aquinas adopts repeatedly,¹⁹ is drawn from the simple relations of heating or cutting:

The active [*poiêtika*] and the passive [*pathêtika*] imply an active and a passive capacity [*dunamis*] and the actualization [*energeia*] of the capacities, e.g. that which is capable of heating is related to that which is capable of being heated, because it *can* heat it, and, again, that which is heating is related to that which is being heated and that which is cutting to that which is being cut, because they are actually doing these things [*energounta*].²⁰

As this passage illustrates, something can only be passively *moved* by something actively *moving*. As Aquinas writes echoing Aristotle:

Now whatever is in motion [*movetur*] is put in motion by another, for nothing can be in motion except [as] it is in potentiality [*potentia*] to that towards which it is in motion; whereas a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act [*est actu*]. For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality [*potentia in actum*]. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality [*aliquid ens in actu*].²¹

¹⁷ According to Aristotle, things can be related according to quantity, action and passion, and measure to the measured (as knowledge and perception are a kind of measuring). Cf. *Met.* V, 15, 1020b26-1020b31.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, IX, 1, 1046a9-10.

¹⁹ E.g., Aquinas, *ST* I.18.3.ad1, I.27.1, I.85.2.

²⁰ Aristotle, *Met.* V, 15, 1021a15-20.

²¹ Aquinas, *ST* I.2.3.

“Thus,” as Aquinas concludes in a manner that brings the connection to Aristotle full circle, “that which is actually hot, as fire, makes wood, which is potentially hot, to be actually hot, and thereby moves and changes it.”²²

As a subset of this broad category of passion and action, and as the above passages already suggest, the more specific concepts of potency (Gk: *dunamis*; Lat: *potentia*; Eng: capacity) and act (Gk: *energeia*, *entelecheia*;²³ Lat: *actus*, *operatio*) come into focus when this line of analysis is imported into the description of the intrinsic constitution of an individual or being.²⁴ Accordingly: the capacity that enables the agent to move or change the patient is known as an active or efficient potency (Gk. *dunamis poiêtikê*; Lat. *potentia activa*). Likewise, the capacity that enables the patient to be reduced to act is a passive or receptive potency (Gk. *dunamis pathêtikê*; Lat: *potentia passiva*).²⁵ Potencies

²² Ibid.

²³ As he states explicitly in *Met.* IX, 8, 1050a21-23, Aristotle defines *energeia* in connection with its semantic origin in the word *ergon*, meaning “work,” which deepens the metaphor of “movement” as imported into the broader concept of “act” as Aristotle employs it. As for *entelecheia*, Aristotle invented the word, in the description of Joe Sachs, “by combining *entelês* (ἐντελής, ‘complete, full-grown’) with *echein* (=hexis to be a certain way by the continuing effort of holding on in that condition), while at the same time punning on *endelecheia* (ἐντελέχεια, ‘persistence’) by inserting ‘telos’ (τέλος, ‘completion’).” As Sachs concludes, “This is a three-ring circus of a word, at the heart of everything in Aristotle’s thinking.” Cf. Joe Sachs, *Aristotle’s Physics: A Guided Study*, Masterworks of Discovery (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1995), 245.

²⁴ Carrying out this analytical strategy of course involves a necessary analogical expansion of our natural conception of “movement,” which is typically connected with bodily movements (i.e. locomotion or *kinêsis*).

²⁵ E.g. Aristotle, *Met.* V, 15, 1021a15-18 and Aquinas, *ST* I.25.1. As Lonergan explicates at some length (cf. *Verbum*, 121-128), there are instances in which Aquinas applies a slightly difference account of active/passive potency drawn from Avicenna. In these instances, the recognizably Aristotelian focus on the “other” or self “*qua* other” is dropped in favor of simply speaking of a potency as a principle of action without reference to an other. The Avicennist version tends to show up more often in Aquinas’s early writings (e.g. *Sent.* and *De pot.*), whereas in the later *Summa Theologiae* the Aristotelian version tends to be more predominant despite the fact that the Avicennist application is still present as well. For example, in *ST* I.25 Aquinas appeals to the Aristotelian version in the body of the article, but the Avicennist version shows up in the third objection. Due to the fact that I am mostly focused on the *Summa Theologiae* in this chapter, I will exclusively speak of active/passive potencies in the Aristotelian sense.

and acts are therefore related to one another as principles (or origins) to terms (or ends). That which is latently “present” in a potency is made real or actual in its proper act.²⁶

Analyzing the *existence of* and the *difference between* active and passive potencies in any specific type of being requires steadfast attention to one of the cardinal rules of Aristotelian metaphysics: as potencies are ordered to acts, so are acts ordered to their respective objects.²⁷ Thus the difference between active and passive potencies can be concisely stated in terms of the relevance of their respective objects: active potencies *produce* a movement or change vis-à-vis their respective objects; passive potencies *are moved* by their respective objects. As Aquinas echoes:

Now the nature of an act is diversified according to the various natures of the objects. For every act is either of an active power or of a passive power. Now, the object is to the act of a passive power, as the principle and moving cause: for color is the principle of vision, inasmuch as it moves the sight. On the other hand, to the act of an active power the object is a term and end.²⁸

For example, the proper object of the active potency of house-building is an actual house, which is made actual through cumulative movements and changes—i.e. the “act of building”—made to a lump of building materials.²⁹ Similarly, the generic object of the passive potency of sight is that which moves it to its proper act (i.e. seeing), namely that which is visible.³⁰

²⁶ Aristotle expresses the formula for this relation as, “A is in B or to B,” and illustrates the formula through a list of paired examples in which the first term is actuality in relation to the second term’s potentiality: a building vs. a pile of materials capable of being built together, waking vs. sleeping, seeing vs. eyes that are shut but that possess the power of sight, and something shaped out of matter vs. matter itself. Cf. *Met.* IX, 6, 1048a37-1048b9.

²⁷ Aristotle, *DA* II, 4, 415a14-21.

²⁸ Aquinas, *ST* I.77.3.

²⁹ Aristotle, *Met.* IX, 8, 1050a24-29.

³⁰ *DA* II, 7, 418a26-418b3.

Three other distinctions that will prove important in what follows can be enumerated at this juncture in part because they share similar concepts in their definitions to that of active/passive potencies and their proper acts, despite not being coterminous with this primary relation. First, Aristotle distinguishes sharply between (a) potencies whose acts realize their proper ends progressively over time and only completely once the act itself has ceased and (b) those potencies whose acts are coincident with their ends. Aristotle names the former as “imperfect” or “incomplete”—*atelês*, lit. without an end³¹—acts and associates them with specifically bodily movements, or *kinêsis*. The latter he names as “complete” or “perfect”—*tetelesmenou*³²—acts and associates them with *energeia* properly speaking. These acts are what Aquinas usually speaks of as operations [*operationes*] such as the respective acts of the senses and the intellect.³³ As Aristotle writes:

Of these processes, then, we must call the one set movements [*kineseis*], and the other actualities [*energeia*]. For every movement is incomplete [*atelês*]—making thin, learning, walking, building; these are movements, and incomplete movements. For it is not true that at the same time we are walking and have walked, or are building and have built, or are coming to be and have come to be—it is a different thing that is being moved and that has been moved, and that is moving and that has moved; but it is the same thing that at the same time has seen and is seeing, or is understanding and has understood [*noei kai nenoêken*]. The latter sort of process, then, I call an actuality, and the former a movement.³⁴

Aquinas adopts this typology directly and consistently describes the difference as that

³¹ *Met.* IX, 6, 1048b18-23 and *DA* III, 7, 431a6-8.

³² *Ibid.*, III, 7, 431a6-8.

³³ Cf. Aquinas, *De pot.*, 10.1.

³⁴ Aristotle, *Met.* IX, 6, 1048b26-34. As Lonergan notes (*Verbum*, 196), many modern translations have translated *nous* and its verbal forms, *noêsis* and *noein*, in terms commensurate with a more conceptual interpretation of Aristotle that reflects, in part, the influence of Scotus on modern philosophy and theology. Accordingly, the Oxford translation here has “is thinking and has thought.” I have amended the translation to reflect what I take to be the more faithful intellectualist interpretation of Aristotle (and Aquinas). The entirety of Lonergan’s *Verbum* is pretty much an extended defense of this interpretation of Aristotle and Aquinas. See n. 155 below for another instance of this translation.

between imperfect acts (i.e. *actus imperfecti*) and perfect acts (i.e. *actus perfecti*).³⁵ Regardless of the terminology employed, Lonergan's summary of the metaphysical point can hardly be surpassed: "A movement becomes in time; one part succeeds another; and a whole is to be had only in the whole of the time. On the other hand, an operation such as seeing or pleasure does not become in time but rather endures through time; at once it is all that it is to be; at each instant it is completely itself."³⁶

Second, Aristotle distinguishes between potencies whose proper acts reach their term, their culminating movement or change, by extending into external matter (i.e. an external act) versus those that reach their term while remaining within the agent (i.e. an immanent act).³⁷ "The difference between the two," as Aquinas writes while citing Aristotle as an authority, "is that the first kind of action is the perfection not of the agent that produces the movement, but of the thing moved; whereas the second type is the completion or perfection of the agent [e.g. understanding, sensation, willing]."³⁸ For example, the act of house-building, like all acts of human artifice, realizes a potential perfection immanent to a pile of building materials that could not have been realized apart from the intelligent agency of the architect and builder. On the other hand, and as Aquinas notes, the immanent acts of the senses and the intellect represent the relative perfection and goodness of the agent because in and through these acts—precisely as *immanent* and *perfect* acts—the agent actualizes and thus realizes the proper ends latently embedded within the principles of her natural potencies. Such ends are set apart as good ends from priva-

³⁵ E.g. Aquinas, *ST* I.14.2.ad2.

³⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 2:112.

³⁷ E.g. Aquinas, *ST* I.27.1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, I.18.ad1.

tions (e.g. blindness or deafness), which while technically actualizations of a sort, serve as a deprivation of a potency that is nonetheless defined by its “positive principle [*archê*].”³⁹ Thus, as Aristotle writes, “[T]hings which have attained a good end are called perfect [*teleia*]; for things are perfect in virtue of having attained their end.”⁴⁰

Third, there is a final distinction to be made between natural potencies and habitual potencies. Natural potencies, as we will explore in detail in a moment, are those embedded in the species-wide faculties and powers characteristic of a given kind of living thing. On the other hand, habitual potencies are those that are progressively acquired by individual members of that species as residual effects of particular, contingent acts of their natural potencies. The result of acquiring these potencies is that specific acts—which represent a subset of those made possible by natural potencies—become easier for that individual to repeat. For instance, Aristotle applies this distinction to the emergence of knowledge in *De anima* II and III. To epistemically apprehend a truth for the first time is the proper act of a natural potency (i.e. called, as we will see, the “passive intellect”).⁴¹ To subsequently recollect knowledge depends on a derivative habitual potency (i.e. knowledge possessed, but not currently in act). Both epistemic potencies, however, are ordered to the comparative perfection of knowledge *in act*, of *presently* contemplating a given object of knowledge.⁴²

The definitional, generative, and ontological priority that the entire Aristotelian metaphysical scheme accords to act over potency is difficult to overemphasize in grasp-

³⁹ Aristotle, *Met.* V, 12, 1019b6-12.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, V, 16, 1021b20-25.

⁴¹ Cf. *DA* III, v, 430a10-25.

⁴² *Ibid.*, II, 1, 412a23-24; II, 5, 417a22-417b2; III, 5, 430a10-25 and Aquinas, *ST* I-II.49.1 and 3.

ing the overall metaphysical logic that passes from Aristotle into Aquinas. It influences nearly every aspect of the way that Aquinas assimilates this metaphysical framework with Augustine's doctrine of God, along with its themes of divine simplicity, the analogical relationship between Creator and creation, and the intimate connection between divine self-knowledge, God's triunity, and the *imago Dei*. For the moment, though, we must see how Aristotle's account of causation converges with the concepts of potency/act in his, and by extension Aquinas's, reenvisioning of the soul in general and, subsequently, in the vertical relation between the senses and the intellect.

II. Aristotle and Aquinas on the Soul as the First Actuality of a Living Being

Having outlined his account of causation and the relation of potency to act, the analogy that serves as the linchpin of Aristotle's account of the soul's relation to matter can be stated clearly: the soul (=substantial form) is to matter as actuality is to potentiality.⁴³

What this analogy means for the constitution of particular living things is that their individual lives come to pass through a two-part actualization and determination, the first through a living being's soul and the second through its accumulated accidental forms.

The first actualization generates their actual life through the fecund actuality of a substantial form in and through an *informed* arrangement of matter. The result of this actuality is a particularized mode of life. A mode of life, the general types of which we will turn to in a moment, is defined by the natural potencies or powers found among the members of a *species*⁴⁴ and thus analytically traceable to the soul as the unitary and uni-

⁴³ Aristotle, *Met.* IX, 6, 1048b7-9 and *DA* II, 1, 412a6-11.

⁴⁴ With the exception of privations.

versal “cause and first principle [*archê*]” of all parts of life manifested in an individual.⁴⁵ Accordingly, Aristotle defines the soul as “the first actuality [*entelecheia*] of a natural body which has life potentially [*dunamei zōên echontos*].”⁴⁶ Aquinas expresses the same metaphysical point through his distinctive vocabulary of essence (*essentia*), act of existence (*esse*), and subsistence. Thus: a thing’s essence “gives actual existence [*dat esse actuale*] to the matter and makes it subsist as an individual.”⁴⁷

Here we have the initial metaphysical basis upon which Aquinas will separate out the soul from Augustine’s conflation of it with self-knowledge. The soul is the efficient cause of an individual’s most basic and primal intensive unity, i.e. their existence as an indivisible, organic whole with a specific mode of life. Without it, no/thing exists because the soul is the universal “whence” of every contingent act of existence and thus of every subsequent intensive or extroverted unity as well. Following this primal actualization, the second actualization occurs gradually as a particular living thing contingently accumulates accidental forms or qualities through the actualization of their natural potencies in and through their distinctive operations and derivative habitual potencies. From the perspective of the first actualization, the potencies of life are themselves *already* an actuality. This is what makes them *real*. From the perspective of the second actualization(s), these potencies are but principles that are either still to be actualized and/or are in a constantly vacillating mix of potency and act. This is what makes them *imperfectly* in act.

⁴⁵ Aristotle, *DA* II, 2, 413b4-13 and II, 4, 415a14-416b31.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 1, 412a27-28.

⁴⁷ Aquinas, *ST* I.29.2.ad5.

To fill out this account, then, we come to outlining the hierarchical classification of souls that both Aristotle and Aquinas set forth. For his part, Aristotle speaks of at least five groupings of natural potencies that are “parts” of the soul: vegetative (e.g. nutrition, growth, and reproduction), sensitive (e.g. the inner and outer senses), rational or intelligent (e.g. reasoning and knowing), locomotive (e.g. walking or running), and desiderative (e.g. appetites). From these Aristotle, and Aquinas following him, identifies the first three groupings (vegetative, sensitive, and intelligent) as connected to distinct types of souls.⁴⁸ Vegetative (or nutritive) souls, usually associated with plants, furnish potencies for nutrition, growth, and reproduction.⁴⁹ Sensitive souls, associated with non-rational animals, furnish potencies for the external senses (touch, sight, smell, hearing, taste),⁵⁰ the inner senses (e.g. imagination, memory, and common sense),⁵¹ and the sensitive passions (e.g. love, anger, fear, pleasure).⁵² Finally, intelligent or rational souls, associated with humans and any immaterial substances (e.g. Aristotle: God, prime movers; Aquinas: God, angels), furnish the potencies necessary for the intelligent acts of knowing and willing.

Aristotle and Aquinas jointly explicate the hierarchical relationship between these three types of souls in a few different ways that are relevant to us. First, each comparatively higher type of soul includes within it the potencies of the previous level without sacrificing the intrinsic intensive unity of a substantial form. Aristotle draws his favorite analogies for this dynamic, both of which Aquinas likewise employs,⁵³ from the mathe-

⁴⁸ Aristotle, *EN*, I, 13, 1102a27-1103a10.

⁴⁹ *DA* II, 2, 413a21-413b13 and II, 3-4, 414a29-416b29.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 5-12, 416b32-424b19.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, III, 2-3, 425b11-429a9.

⁵² *Ibid.*, I, 1, 403a3-403b19.

⁵³ Cf. Aquinas, *ST* I.76.3

matics and geometry-loving Pythagorians. Thus each type of soul is a unity unto itself, as if it were a number (i.e. an integer) to which another can be added or subtracted in a way that yields another indivisible unity.⁵⁴ Similarly, a higher soul is like a “pentagon” that implies a quadrilateral just like “triangle is implied by the quadrilateral.”⁵⁵ Accordingly, all sensitive animals possess the capacities for nutrition and growth, despite the fact that in plants these vegetative potencies are “divorced from the sensitive faculty.”⁵⁶ Likewise, humans, as rational animals, possess the capacities and faculties intrinsic to both vegetative and sensitive souls. However, the higher organisms still only have a single soul that furnishes all of their given potencies. Therefore, as Aquinas writes, “the intellectual soul contains virtually whatever belongs to the sensitive soul of brute animals, and to the nutritive souls of plants”⁵⁷ despite the fact that in animals and plants their respective potencies exist apart from intellectual potencies. Thus, the “capacity to absorb food may exist apart from all other powers [e.g. in plants], but the others cannot exist” apart from the nutritive potency of absorbing food.⁵⁸ In the same way, in a metaphysical foregrounding of the vertical relation to which we will turn shortly, the capacity for sensitive apprehension is a prerequisite for intelligent apprehension.

Second, just as we found in *De Trinitate*, there is a progression from mere materiality to an increasing immateriality. Aquinas nicely describes this progression in terms of a correlation between whether the faculty itself has a materiality to it (*viz.* a “corporeal organ”) and whether its mode of union with its moving object is material or not (*viz.* a

⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Met.* VIII, 3, 1043b33-1044a14.

⁵⁵ *DA* II, 3, 414b20-32.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 3, 415a2-4.

⁵⁷ Aquinas, *ST* I.76.3.

⁵⁸ Aristotle, *DA* II, 2, 413a 31-33.

“corporeal quality”).⁵⁹ The vegetative operations are material in both regards such that their acts are “performed by a corporeal organ [...] by virtue of a corporeal quality”⁶⁰—e.g. the intestine digesting food through mechanical and chemical digestion. Next, according to Aquinas, the sensitive operations each have a corporeal organ, but are moved by sensible forms in a manner that does not require an accompanying corporeal quality—e.g. the eye seeing visible forms from which the pupil is obviously physically separated. Finally, the intellectual powers are entirely immaterial, as they do not have any kind of organ or corporeal quality to their mode of union.⁶¹

Third, and lastly, the respective potencies associated with the three types of souls are hierarchically ordered toward one another according to their diverse capacity for incorporating a multiplicity of forms into their own existence. Or, as Aquinas puts it, the higher the power, the more general and universal is its object. At the bottom of this hierarchy, an organism with a vegetative soul only “has” their *own* substantial and accidental forms, which they do not in fact “know” at all. All it has, as Aquinas writes, is the “being [*esse*] proper to it.”⁶² Expressed in another manner, the vegetative powers’ “object [...] is only the body that is united to that soul.”⁶³ However, organisms with sensitive and/or intelligent potencies—i.e. those with *some* epistemic power—are capable of receiving forms beyond their own ontological form via form’s gnoseological significance as a principle for the epistemic identity between knower and known. The cognitive powers of the

⁵⁹ Cf. Aquinas, *ST* I.78.1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ “For,” as Aristotle famously expresses this contrast between the senses and the intellect, “the faculty of sense-perception is not independent of the body, whereas the intellect is distinct.” Cf. *DA* III, 4, 429b3-4.

⁶² Aquinas, *De causis*, prop. 18.

⁶³ *ST* I.78.1.

sensitive soul are capable of receiving the patterned data of sensible forms that are commensurate with each of the requisite senses. In other words, the sensitive apprehensive powers have as their generic object “every sensible body [*omne corpus sensibile*], not only the body to which the soul is united.”⁶⁴ This hierarchical placement of sensation lies behind one of Aristotle’s most influential dictums: “actual sensation is of particulars, while knowledge is of universals.”⁶⁵ Lastly, as this dictum suggests, the potencies of intelligence enable these beings to grasp the substantial and accidental intelligible forms that cause and explain particular sensible occurrences. To a certain extent, as we will explore in a moment, these potencies also enable intelligible beings to reproduce intelligible forms through the typical externality of the practical arts. The generic object of these powers is thus the highest and most general of all: it is “all being” (*omne ens*)⁶⁶ according to the universality of its intelligible causes. Accordingly, in one of the Aristotelian phrases that shows up most often in Aquinas, the intellect gives beings the capacity of potentially “becoming all things” (Gk: *panta ginesthai*; Lat: *posse omnia fieri*) in and through its proper act of knowing because “actual knowledge is identical with its object” formally speaking.⁶⁷ Aquinas expresses the same point through the expected Augustinian terminology of knower and known. As he writes in his commentary on the *Liber de Causis*, the highest form of life is capable of having “other things in itself [...] since knowledge is accomplished because the known is in the knower, not materially, but formally.”⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Aristotle, *DA* II, 5, 417b21-24.

⁶⁶ Aquinas, *ST* I.78.1.

⁶⁷ Aristotle, *DA* III, 5, 413a10-17.

⁶⁸ Aquinas, *De causis*, prop. 18.

III. The Apprehensive Powers and the Verticality of Knowledge

On the other side of outlining the Aristotelian metaphysical background for Aquinas's account of the soul, we are now in a position to see how Aquinas creatively employs this framework in order to remedy Augustine's dilemma regarding the inwardness of intelligent knowledge and the character of self-knowledge. As I suggested at the outset of the chapter, the key to Aquinas's positive theorization of the relation between the senses and the intellect lies in his appropriation of Aristotle's multifaceted inclination to *vertically* relate all the powers of the soul as somehow capable of making a secondary contribution to the singular *telos* of a human being as primarily accomplished through the intelligent powers. In what follows in this section, I will set out how Aquinas describes the vertical relation between the apprehensive powers (i.e. the senses and the intellect). Chapter 3 will then expand upon this line of interpretation in order to describe the analogous vertical relation that Aquinas theorizes between the sensitive and intellective appetites as part of his redescription of the teleological/eschatological intensive unity made possible by the will's capacity to love.

Specifically expressed, the crucial insight furnished by Aristotle's emphasis on a vertical continuum of powers in the soul is that he provides the resources for affirming that the different generic "parts" or "layers" of the soul (e.g. sensitive, intellectual) function both "on their own" (i.e. *horizontally*) and positively in relation to one another (i.e. *vertically*). For example, as I will describe in more detail in a moment, the five external senses (i.e. touch, sight, smell, hearing, taste) have their own horizontal functions defined by principled operations (i.e. to feel, see, smell, hear, and taste) that interiorize sensible

forms as phantasms. However, according to Aristotle, in the rational/intelligent soul of a human being the external senses' active term (i.e. phantasms) also vertically contribute to the higher operations of the intellect and thus to an end that surpasses the ends intrinsic to their own acts (i.e. vertical finality). This vertical contribution, as we will explore further in a moment, is found in that phantasms are a necessary "preamble," a *condicio sine qua non*, without which the human intellect cannot be moved to its own act of apprehending intelligible forms. As Aristotle writes in *De anima*, "[N]o one could ever learn or understand anything without the exercise of sense-perception."⁶⁹ Here we have *in nuce* the Aristotelian insight that Aquinas appropriates in order to affirm that the human intellect is characterized by a native extroversion that precludes—*pace* Augustine—the possibility that an individual always already possesses intelligent self-knowledge. Instead, what we will find is that the intensive unity of self-knowledge is strictly derivative from the extroverted apprehension of intelligible forms as "presented" by the external senses and interiorized, to foreground one of Aquinas's most decisive transpositions of Augustine, as an *inner word* through the intellect's acts of understanding and judgment.

My strategy for explicating how Aquinas articulates this vertical relation between the senses and the intellect in conversation with Aristotle will pass through two subsections. First, I will set forth Aquinas's understanding of the "horizontal" principle of sensitive apprehension and its specific division into external and internal sensitive powers. Included in this discussion will be a brief constructive emendation of Aquinas's list of the internal senses in order to include two additional internal senses—proprioception and

⁶⁹ Aristotle, *DA* III, 8, 432a7-8.

equilibrioception—based upon the findings and terminology of modern physiology and neuroanatomy. These additions, which I will argue are commensurate with Aquinas’s metaphysical principles, will prove to be crucial from the perspective of our overall trajectory vis-à-vis egoic self-consciousness and primary identification. Second, I will turn to Aquinas’s account of the vertical dependence of the intellect upon sensitive phantasms, the nature of the intellect’s primary acts of understanding external objects presented by the senses, and its derivative acts of self-knowledge and practical knowledge.

a. Sensitive Apprehension: The External and Internal Senses

In enumerating the specific powers that together constitute the generic power of sensitive apprehension, Aquinas makes a strict division between external and internal senses. The five external senses—sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste as embedded within their respective organs—are passive potencies that are moved to their proper acts of sensing by externally present sensible forms (i.e. that which is visible, audible, olfactory, tactile, gustatory).⁷⁰ Once moved, these acts render the sensible forms immanently as dematerialized phantasms. Aquinas is repeatedly clear, based upon the Aristotelian dictum just cited above, that sensitive forms themselves are caused by accidental intelligible forms that account for the patterns that exist between their particular sensible occurrences (e.g. greenness, hotness, wetness, bitterness, high-pitchedness). The senses themselves, however, cannot “know” anything of these intelligible causes or the resulting patterns that exist beyond the particular. Instead, sense-knowledge is *only* of the particular, which is thereby rendered within the undifferentiated flux of phenomenal consciousness.

⁷⁰ Aquinas, *ST I.78.3*.

To these five external senses, Aquinas adds four internal senses: the estimative power (*aestimativa*), memory (*memoria*), imagination (*imaginatio*), and the common sense (*sensus communis*).⁷¹ In order to promote brevity and a lack of duplication in discussion, I will delay treating the estimative power at length until Chapter 3 because, as will become clear at that juncture, its acts are closely bound up with determining the operations of the sensitive appetite. Since this is the case, bracketing our discussion of it for the moment will not jeopardize our primary trajectory of understanding the horizontal and vertical interrelation of sensitive/intellectual apprehension.⁷² Furthermore, and as I referenced above, based upon the findings of contemporary physiology and neuroanatomy, we will add two further internal senses—proprioception and equilibrioception—that Aquinas does not describe, but which I consider to be fully reconcilable with the Aristotelian/Thomist account of sense-cognition. Accordingly, there are five internal senses for us to presently consider: memory, imagination, proprioception, equilibrioception, and the common sense.

Following our discussion of *De Trinitate*, grasping the memorative and the imaginative powers is not overly difficult. The former is the habitual potency that stores sensible forms once they have been received; the latter is that through which they can be reactualized and thus immanently re-rendered. The only thing to note in passing is that Aquinas combines the Aristotelian concepts of habitual potencies and the distinctive layers of the soul in order to affirm clearly that each layer of the soul in which there is apprehen-

⁷¹ Ibid., I.78.4.

⁷² Briefly summarized, the estimative power explains how animals are capable of evaluating certain sensible forms as pleasurable or useful (or not) on the basis of non-sensible criteria (e.g. the way a bird knows a stick is useful for building a nest). Cf. Ibid.

sion also has a distinct memorative power that stores those forms once they have been apprehended and from which they can be recalled. Accordingly, Aquinas's affirmation of a diversity of epistemic powers—i.e. sensitive and intelligent—leads him to affirm a parallel diversity of memorative powers within each of those layers of the soul.⁷³ As we will see a bit further on, this precise metaphysical account of memory, both in its diversity and its intrinsic habitual relation to a specific apprehensive power, significantly contributes to how Aquinas revises Augustine's *imago Dei* triad of memory, intelligence, and the will.

This leaves us with considering what is a close and, from the perspective of our overall trajectory vis-à-vis self-consciousness, important interrelation between proprioception, equilibrioception, and the common sense. If, as Aquinas affirms, the sensitive powers are differentiated from the vegetative powers because their generic object reaches beyond the merely material reactions within the bounds of an organism's corporeal body, then proprioception and equilibrioception can be described as the sensitive potencies that can sense an individual's own embodied position *within the rest of sensible reality*. Proprioception does this by sensing the relative position and state of different muscles (i.e. stretched, relaxed, and the speed with which it is proceeding from one state to the other). The primary organs responsible for these acts of sensation (i.e. the proprioceptors) have been identified as the muscles spindles and tendon organs that, for example, can be found in the arms, legs, and neck. Similarly, equilibrioception senses the body's rotational movements (i.e. the head moving) and linear acceleration (i.e. going up or down, forward

⁷³ Cf. *Ibid.*, I.79.6.

or backward) via the vestibular system in the inner ear (i.e. semicircular canals and the otolith organs).

One of the characteristics that clearly sets proprioception and equilibrioception apart as internal senses is that they are both subject to ongoing habitual formation, especially as a derivative result of the will's executive agency (as we will detail next chapter) over the locomotive powers. In contrast, the exterior senses are "are not susceptible of habits, but are ordained to their fixed acts, according to the disposition of their nature."⁷⁴ In this regard, they stand in an analogous relation to memory and the imagination, which, as Aquinas writes while citing Aristotle as an authority, "admit of certain habits whereby man has a facility [*fit bene*] of memory [...] or imagination."⁷⁵ For instance, pretty much every new kinesthetic skill, whether basic (e.g. crawling, walking) or advanced (e.g. athletic or artistic), requires a gradual habituation of the relevant proprioceptors to sensing the associated coordinated muscular movements. Without that habituation, for instance, it would be impossible to maintain coordinated kinesthetic movements in environments devoid of light. Likewise, the habitual formation of equilibrioception is responsible for what is known as the vestibular-ocular "reflex," which is responsible for coordinating visual data received through the eyes with the direction of the head's movement. This learned coordination between different sensitive powers, external and internal, yields the familiar experience of a visual field that remains stable even when the head moves (i.e. our eyes "automatically" move left when our head turns to the right).⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Ibid., I-II.50.3.ad3.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ On the learned nature of this "reflex," cf. Jay M. Goldberg et al., *The Vestibular System: A Sixth Sense* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 409-26.

Lastly, according to Aquinas’s interpretation and extension of Aristotle’s brief discussion in *De anima* (and, it should be added, in all likelihood Augustine’s strikingly similarly discussion of the “*sensus interior*” in *De libero arbitrio*),⁷⁷ the act of the common sense is that which integrates all of the “incoming” sense data into a single, contemporaneous flux of phenomenal consciousness. Without this integrating act, the significance of which we will return to in subsequent chapters, this sense data would remain temporally and topographically uncoordinated. This is because there is no potency in the external senses that self-evidently has anything “in common” with the rest of senses. Thus while the eye can distinguish black from white and the tongue can do the same between bitter and sweet, each of them lacks any capacity whatsoever through which to “distinguish,” as Aquinas writes as an example, “white from sweet.”⁷⁸ Therefore, in a striking phrase to which we will return given its suggestive relevance for thematizing self-consciousness, without an additional sensitive act it would be “as though [these distinct sensations] were sensed by two different men, one perceiving sweet and another white; I this and you that [*ego sentio hoc, et ille illud*].”⁷⁹

To so distinguish is the proper act of the common sense. In order to describe this distinct act more concretely, Aquinas writes that it resembles a kind of sensitive judgment or interpretation:

There must be one single faculty which ‘says’ [*dicat*] that sweet is not white, precisely because this distinction is one single object of knowledge. [This] saying [*dictio*] is the interpretation of an inward apprehension [*interpretatio interioris apprehensionis*]; and [this] saying is a single act.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Cf. Augustine, *lib. arb.* 2.3.20-2.5.50.

⁷⁸ Aquinas, *In De anima* III, lect. 3, n. 603.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, III, lect. 3, n. 604.

The resulting synthetic term of this “saying” is that sensitive data are organized such that in individual experiences them *simultaneously* as localized sensations/phantasms “in” or “around” the various sensitive regions of the body (i.e. something is simultaneously felt as “liquidy” and tasted as “sweet” “in” in the mouth). As Aquinas continues:

[There is] a simultaneous apprehension of the two [sensations]; they are both known in the same instant as they are known to be different. Obviously, then, they are known at once and together. Hence, as one undivided faculty perceives the difference between them, so in one undivided moment both are apprehended.⁸¹

Given its decisive role within the sensitive faculty, Aquinas labels this power of common sight as the “principle and term of all sensibility.”⁸² For it stands as the “common root” from which “sensitivity flows to the organs of all five of the senses”⁸³ and to which the data of their individual acts return in order to be collated into a sensible term distinguished by its coordination of these bits of data into an integrated, phenomenal whole.

Before moving on from this summative treatment of sensitive apprehension, we should pause here to comment upon what many might consider to be a convergence between our overall inquiry into self-consciousness and the various ways that the common sense (or a general “internal sense”) has been configured by classical, late antique, medieval, and modern thinkers. Obviously, in our present context we cannot offer anything like an exhaustive account of all the potentially relevant historical and conceptual data regarding this theme. However, what we can do is make a few observations in order to justify why we are not spending more time exploring a more direct connection between

⁸¹ Ibid., III, lect. 3, n. 605.

⁸² Ibid., III, lect. 3, n. 609.

⁸³ Ibid.

self-consciousness and the common sense. Such a link would most likely be suggested on the basis of an assumed connection between similar-sounding passages found, on the one hand, in earlier sources such as Aristotle and Augustine and, on the other hand, modern sources such as Kant or Locke. The earlier sources, versions of which can be found in Aquinas as well, assign this common/internal sense with the seductively reflective-sounding function variously described as “perceiving that we see and hear,”⁸⁴ or “sensing that [the animal sees] when it sees,”⁸⁵ or “not only sens[ing] the things it receives from the five bodily senses, but also sensing *that* they are sensed by it.”⁸⁶ The modern sources then pick up the general and long-attested notion of an “inner sense” and appropriate it, within a philosophical milieu now dominated by thematizing self-consciousness, in terms that are *in fact* fully indicative of the reflection-theory. As Kant writes, “[The] inner sense [is that] by means of which the mind intuits itself, or its inner state.”⁸⁷ Locke even more explicitly equates the “internal Sense” as that through which the mind “reflect[s] on its own Operations within it self.”⁸⁸

The reason, however, that we are not pausing longer over the possibility of this convergence is simply because, in my judgment, the type of sensitive power that Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas are discussing has nothing *directly* to do with the modern riddle regarding the origins of self-differentiated egoic consciousness. In the passages in question, these thinkers are neither wrestling with how we perceive that I *qua* I (i.e. as a

⁸⁴ Aristotle, *DA* III, 2, 425b12.

⁸⁵ Augustine, *lib. arb.* 2.4.10.39.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.4.10.38.

⁸⁷ Kant, *KrV*, A22/B37.

⁸⁸ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), II.1.4.

self-consciousness subject) see or hear *that* as an object *qua* object (or a thing *qua* thing), nor are they addressing the “mind’s” reflection on “itself.” Such a misreading anachronistically reimports the terms of self-consciousness, self-differentiated intelligent knowledge, and “the mind” in a manner that creates exactly the type of conceptual confusion regarding *different types* of capacities that, as we noted in the Introduction, plagues so much of modern philosophical thought. Instead, these earlier sources are simply inquiring into how the acts of the individual senses are brought together in an integrated manner given the obvious capacitive limitations of each sense. As Augustine rhetorically asks his interlocutor in *De libero arbitrio*, “Do we also sense hard and soft by seeing?” or “Can we settle what pertains to each sense by means of any of these [five] senses?” Obviously not, Augustine assumes. Instead, we must affirm that there is a common, “‘internal sense’ to which the familiar five senses convey everything”⁸⁹ such that we thereby unitedly sense (via an internal sense) all that we diffusely sense (via our external senses). When viewed through anachronistic lenses, this integrating function of the common sense might appear to have the faint glint being a kind of “reflection” on the act of sensing, but in context it is simply a way of affirming that sensitivity has a single principle and term. In this regard, the common sense is most closely allied not with the act of intelligent *reflection*, but rather with the fact that there is a single *pre-reflective* flux of phenomenal consciousness in the first place.

One more note, however, is in order for the sake of bookmarking something that is indeed *indirectly* significant about the common sense that we will in fact return to

⁸⁹ Augustine, *lib. arb.* 2.38.27.

when explicitly reframing egoic self-consciousness in Chapter 4 and 5. The genuinely significant fact about the common sense for our purposes is that its act results in a kind of intrinsic ordering of phenomenal consciousness (i.e. its contemporaneousness, its topographical distribution around/in the body) *without itself entering into phenomenal consciousness*. Despite the fact that its effects are embedded in the resulting phenomenal consciousness, we are *never* conscious of common sense-*ing* in itself, nor can we alter its act through volitional control. In this precise sense, the act of the common sense is an *unconscious* act that nonetheless causes effects of which we are conscious in various ways. For this reason, it will prove to be of some importance in forging at least one conceptual link between our Aristotelian/Thomist anthropology and our corresponding translation of Freud and his thematization of the relation between “the unconscious” and the developmental origins of egoic self-consciousness.

b. Intelligent Apprehension and Its Vertical Dependence on Phantasms

In turning to consider the metaphysical principles of the human intellect, we have arrived at the most pivotal juncture of Aquinas’s remedial transposition of Augustine into a broadly Aristotelian metaphysical and epistemological framework. For it is here that Aquinas finds a positive account of the vertical relation between the senses and the intellect that avoids Augustine’s problematic emphasis on a primal self-knowledge that intensively grounds all other intelligent knowledge. Instead, Aristotle furnishes the metaphysical resources required for affirming a native epistemic extroversion in human beings such that the intensive unity characteristic of self-knowledge is strictly derivative from intelligently understanding external objects as presented by the senses. Based upon this order-

ing, the intensive unities of the soul and self-knowledge can be strictly separated and differentiated as well. As we will begin to describe in this section and then expand upon in the next section, Aquinas then moves beyond Aristotle in order to creatively integrate Augustine's insights regarding the inner word and the deficient, participatory character of the *imago Dei* into a fully *theological* anthropology.

The cornerstone of Aquinas's explication of this ordered relation between sense-knowledge, the intellect's native extroversion, and the strictly derivative nature of self-knowledge can be found in his adoption of Aristotle's affirmation that there are two specific operations that constitute the generic power of intelligent apprehension: speculative acts and practical acts.⁹⁰ The intellect's speculative acts are immanent acts the terms of which yield an understanding of intelligible truth. In contrast, its practical acts are external acts that "reproduce" those intelligible patterns onto/into external objects in order, so to speak, to *in/form* them (e.g. an artist shaping a stone into the shape of a human). Since one cannot externally reproduce that which one has not already speculatively grasped, this basic distinction, when combined with the derivative nature of self-knowledge, leads to an overarching three-fold ordering among the intellect's operations that will serve as our outline moving forward in this section: (1) sensory-based speculative knowledge of external objects, (2) the specific case of speculative self-knowledge, and (3) practical knowledge. As just indicated, the order of these three is not accidental: the first operation serves as the basis for the second and third operations without which they could not occur. On the basis of sensory-based speculative knowledge of external objects, the intellect

⁹⁰ Cf. Aristotle, *DA* III.10.433a14-15 and Aquinas, *ST* I.14.16.

can pivot, so to speak, either “inwardly” in acts of reflective self-knowledge or “outwardly” in intelligibly patterned acts of embodied, practical performance.

1. The Speculative Intellect

Generally speaking, the object of the speculative intellect is being (Gk: *ὄν*; Lat: *ens*) *qua* intelligibly knowable. As just stated, the immanent term of its act, and its relative perfection, is a knowledge of truth. Its ultimate perfection, the culmination of the natural desire to know, is the knowledge of all intelligible truth. Since being’s intelligibility is caused by forms, it follows that the intellect is moved to act through some appearance or representation of these intelligible forms as its moving object. To say this however is only to formulate the crux of the analytical problem connected with intelligence: given the tension between, on the one hand, the enmattered particularity of forms and, on the other hand, the universality of knowledge *and* the intellect’s inherent immateriality, how is the intellect moved by intelligible forms to its act of knowledge? What is the mode of its “receiving the form”⁹¹ of the known object?

In contrast to Augustine’s approach to this question based upon the reflective consultation of forms in the soul,⁹² Aristotle and Aquinas steadfastly hold that the similitude through which intelligible forms are apprehended, what they call the intelligible *species*,⁹³ is somehow “included among the sensible forms”⁹⁴ such that phantasms can be affirmed as the necessary vertical contribution of the senses to the higher acts of the intellect. To repeat Aristotle’s declaration cited above, without the preceding sensitive acts that pro-

⁹¹ Aristotle, *DA* III, 4, 429a15-17.

⁹² This rhetorical evaluation—*viz.* a “consultation” of the eternal forms—of Augustine’s epistemology is originally Lonergan’s. Cf. Lonergan, *Verbum*, 2:192.

⁹³ Aquinas, *ST* I.14.2, I.55.1, I.85.2.

⁹⁴ Aristotle, *DA* III, 8, 432a3-7.

duce phantasms, “no one could ever learn or understand anything.”⁹⁵ Indeed, the fact that all intelligent knowledge is dependent on phantasms seems self-evident to Aquinas: “Anyone can experience this of himself, that when he tries to understand something, he forms certain phantasms to serve him by way of examples, in which as it were he examines what he desires to understand.”⁹⁶ From this starting point, the intellect somehow abstracts the universal from its presentation in the sensibly-presented (or imagined) particular.

In order to articulate a theory for how the intellect does this, Aristotle sets the parameters for an approach that Aquinas adopts and expands via the Augustinian inner word. This begins by positing that the intellect’s relative perfection occurs through two sequential operations—understanding and judgment—that are related as first act to second act. I will offer a preliminary definition of each before proceeding to explore each of them in more detail below. *Understanding* accomplishes the initial abstraction of the intelligible species, which Aristotle and Aquinas most often associate with the known thing’s formal unity or definition, from the phantasms. Thus, its operation yields an insight of understanding that answers the question: “What is it?” (Gk: *ti estin*,⁹⁷ Lat: *quid sit* or *quod quid est*). *Judgment* follows upon understanding by taking this presumed formal and indivisible unity and, by returning to the particularity of sensible data, testing its validity in detail through a cognitive process known as composition and division (Gk: *synthesin kai diaipessin*,⁹⁸ Lat: *composition vel divisio*). Judgment thereby answers the question of truth (or falsity) strictly speaking: “Is it?” (Lat: *an sit?*), viz. “Is this understanding

⁹⁵ Ibid., III, 8, 432a 7-8.

⁹⁶ Aristotle, *ST I*.84.7.

⁹⁷ Aristotle, *APo*, II, 2, 89b33-35.

⁹⁸ *Met.* VI, 4, 1027b17-22.

true?” or “Does this understanding correspond with reality?” One of Aquinas’s decisive philosophical and theological contribution occurs, as we will see in a moment, in identifying the term of *each* of these operations as coinciding with what Augustine describes as the emergence of an inner word.

At the heart of Aristotle’s solution to the problem of how the intellect successfully abstracts intelligible species from phantasms is his assertion that there is both an active potency *and* a passive potency—each of which actualize as *immanent* acts—within the selfsame intellect. In *De anima* III.5, the *locus classicus* for this assertion, Aristotle semi-nally—if notoriously enigmatically—compares the intellect’s active potency to a kind of shining light and its passive potency with that which is capable of potentially becoming all things formally. The grounding logic for this comparison is that everything in nature has an active and a passive principle related to forms, the most common example being the composite union of form (active) and matter (passive). So too in the intellect is there similarly an active and a passive principle, albeit in this case without matter:

Since in the whole of nature there is something which is matter to each kind of thing (and this is what is potentially all of them), while on the other hand there is something else which is their cause and is productive by producing them all—these being related as an art [*technê*] to its material—so there must also be these differences in the soul. And there is an intellect which is of this kind by becoming all things [*tō panta ginesthai*], and there is another which is so by producing all things [*tō panta poiein*], as a kind of positive state, like light does: for in a way light too makes colors which are potential into actual colors. And this intellect is distinct, impassible [*apathês*], and unmixed, being in essence activity [*tō ousia òn energeia*].⁹⁹

This crucial distinction passes directly into Aquinas in what he describes as the dynamic relation of the active (or agent) intellect (*intellectus agens*) and the passive (or possible)

⁹⁹ *DA* III, 5, 430a10-17.

intellect (*intellectus possibilis*). The trick to following the connection between this distinction and the two operations of understanding and judgment is to see that the interrelation between the intellect's active and passive potencies occurs *twice*—once in the operation of understanding and again in the operation of judgment. In each case, the *terminal* object of the active intellect coincides with the object that *moves* the passive intellect to its proper act of understanding. This single object (both *terminal* and *moving*) is the intelligible *species* as it has been illuminated—and thus successfully abstracted from phantasms—by the active intellect. As Aquinas writes, the active intellect “throws light on the phantasm” and thereby “abstracts the intelligible species from the phantasm.”¹⁰⁰ Just as illuminated colors thereby naturally move the passive potency of sight, so does the illuminated intelligible species thereby move the passive intellect to its proper act of knowledge. Accordingly, understanding and judgment are, properly speaking, *perfect* acts of a *passive* potency with *immanent* terms—thereby fulfilling a relative perfection of the agent (i.e. the knower).

In understanding, this two-fold process between the active and the passive intellect begins with the flux of sensible data rendered in phantasms and the inquiring mind discursively reasoning its way towards the unifying insight that is understanding.¹⁰¹ Even though there are many things that intelligent beings might take for granted after the cumulative force of multiple insights of understanding, there is, as we noted in our discussion of self-consciousness and the subject/object distinction in the Introduction, nothing

¹⁰⁰ Aquinas, *ST* I.85.1.ad4.

¹⁰¹ Lonergan summarizes the point well: the “process of reasoning ends, not in the multiplicity of the process, but in a synthetic view of the whole” (*Verbum*, 24, n. 51). On the relation of the process of reasoning to its terminus in understanding, see Aquinas, *ST* I.14.7 and II-II.8.1.ad2.

automatic in grasping why a certain set of sensible data should be considered as a single intelligible object and thus, causally speaking, as an object that is explanatorily more basic than the aggregate of its sensible accidents. Accordingly, like a light shining in the dark until it strikes upon the form of an object that reflects back its light, the active intellect enacts its terminal movement or change “on” the phantasms themselves: no longer simply a flux of accidental sense data, now they shine with the indivisible unity of formal intelligibility, universality, and definition. Lonergan memorably correlates the palpably experiential character of this qualitative change with the impulse to shout, “Eureka!” when the intellect hits upon a newfound intelligible unity.¹⁰²

In effecting this qualitative change, the active intellect illuminates the intelligible species *by which* the passive intellect is moved to its act of understanding.¹⁰³ It thereby apprehends the universal form of whatever enmattered particular is under consideration and, in fact, is now known by way of the similitude of this form now being in the intellect of the knower by way of its illuminated intelligible species.¹⁰⁴ In this operation of understanding, the ontological and epistemic function of form comes full circle in their decisive convergence within the intellect of the knower. Lonergan succinctly states the significance of this convergence in the precise coherence of the analogy that comes into focus as just this point: “insight is to phantasm as form is to matter.”¹⁰⁵ Aquinas’s preferred nomenclature is to forthrightly state, in a manner that is disarming in its lack of Kantian

¹⁰² Lonergan, *Verbum*, 2:25, 45.

¹⁰³ Aquinas, *ST* I.85.2.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, I.85.8.ad3.

¹⁰⁵ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 2:38.

anxiety, that the intellect's proper object "is the quiddity of a material thing."¹⁰⁶ Or in more detail: "[T]he active intellect abstracts the intelligible species from the phantasm, forasmuch as by the power of the active intellect we are able to disregard the conditions of individuality, and to take into our consideration the specific nature [of the thing known], the similitude of which informs the passive intellect."¹⁰⁷

There are two key epistemological and metaphysical features of the intelligible form *as understood* that are important to note before proceeding to the nature of judgment. First: the intelligible form as understood is *detachable* as an object of rational inquiry, as an idea or definition, from any enmattered and particular instance of it. This is what makes intelligible forms universal. This detachability results despite the fact that the human intellect requires sensible instances of these forms for their initial apprehension. As one would expect, Aquinas' chief examples of these intelligible forms are the substances of living things. Thus, for example:

Humanity understood [*quae intelligitur*] is only in this or that [human being]; but that humanity be apprehended without conditions of individuality, that is, that it be abstracted and consequently considered as universal, occurs to humanity inasmuch as it is brought under the consideration of the intellect, in which there is a likeness of the specific nature, but not of the principles of individuality.¹⁰⁸

Even with the primacy of these substances noted, however, both Aristotle and Aquinas make it clear that this same intellectual operation is responsible for apprehending other abstract intelligibilities beyond the scope of formal biology: to grasp the abstract universal that causes the particular instance of any repeating intelligible pattern is the proper act

¹⁰⁶ Aquinas, *ST* I.85.5.ad3.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, I.85.1.ad4.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, I.85.2.ad2.2

of the intellect regardless of what the *type* of pattern being considered at any given moment.

Other thinkers, such as Lonergan, have extended this basic insight in order to align it with post-Enlightenment philosophical concerns and the modern proliferation of sciences. For example, when taking these sources together, understanding can be named as the operation responsible for apprehending the universal and indivisible patterns that constitute the requisite objects that organize the natural sciences (e.g. the *genera* and *species* of animals),¹⁰⁹ theoretical sciences (e.g. theorems, axioms, laws, and formulae),¹¹⁰ social sciences (e.g. paradigms),¹¹¹ medicine (e.g. diseases and cures),¹¹² and the practical arts (e.g. houses, machinery, electronics).¹¹³ Despite the fact that modern versions of these sciences and disciplines are typically ignorant of Aristotelian psychology, their contemporary practitioners still prove the metaphysical point by doing their work according to hypotheses, models, theorems, laws, and axioms.

For our purposes, however, the most important aspect of this extension for our overall inquiry into self-consciousness (and one to which we will return in due time) can be found in that it underlines the fact that grasping an object *qua* object (or a thing *qua* thing), “a unity, identity, [a] whole in data,”¹¹⁴ is itself the result of an intelligent act of

¹⁰⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 3:280-92.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3:57-125.

¹¹¹ Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972), 231-33, 48-49, and *Insight*, 3:357-59.

¹¹² Aristotle, *Met.* I, 1, 981a1-981b14.

¹¹³ See discussion below of the practical intellect for references to Aristotle and Aquinas. For a contemporary extension of the broadly Aristotelian and Thomist account of form in conversation with modern artifacts such as those found in electronics, see especially: James F. Ross, *Thought and World: The Hidden Necessities* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 129-48 and “Adapting Aquinas,” 41-58.

¹¹⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 3:271.

understanding. In fact, to grasp the intelligible *genera* of “object” or “thing” is, according to Lonergan, the insight that unlocks, propels, and grounds all other intelligent inquiry, *viz.* “the thing is the basic synthetic construct of scientific thought and development.”¹¹⁵ For by illuminating a “concrete unity [and] totality of spatially and temporally distinct data,”¹¹⁶ this insight of an a “thing” successfully parcels out sensible wholes that can successfully be isolated for further intelligent investigation: e.g. what *kind* of thing is *that* thing? When combined with the Aristotelian/Thomist insistence on the native exteriority of the human intellect, we are lead to a significant formulation that stands as an inverse to the reflection theory: we must first come to extrovertedly know external objects *qua* objects before we can ever procede to intensively grasp ourselves as an objectified thing as well. This sequence follows because the human intellect, by its very nature, requires a certain grasp of the universal whole, concretely presented to it “in the [sensible] particulars,”¹¹⁷ before it can proceed to grasp any corresponding parts of that whole, even the objectified whole that we (eventually) come to know as “myself.”¹¹⁸ This initial grasp of the universal is furnished by the operation of understanding.

Second, acts of understanding are in principle *synthetically* related to one another. The affirmation here is not that the intellect comes to understand many things simultaneously through a multiplicity of intelligible species, but rather that through a single intelligible species—and therefore a single act of understanding—it comes to know the causes and principles of being from an increasingly higher viewpoint of synthesized intelligibil-

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3:273.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Aquinas, *ST* I.85.3.ad1.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I.85.3.ad3.

ity.¹¹⁹ This possibility of synthesis is what relates speculative understanding to wisdom—the unitary grasp of principles and causes—within the Aristotelian and Thomist frameworks. The pinnacle of wisdom is to understand all things at once in a synthesized view of their proper order as determined by the hierarchy of their causes and principles. The synthetic character of understanding is the epistemic version of what Aristotle and Aquinas set forth ontologically in affirming the irreducible unity of substance in higher forms of life even though their souls incorporate the potencies of lower forms of life. Accordingly, to understand the idea of a human being (a rational animal) implicitly includes the idea of a thing, a vegetative organism, and a non-rational animal even though it includes the notion of rationality as well.¹²⁰ Likewise:

The intellect does not understand a house by understanding the foundation and then the walls and then the roof, but it understands all of these together insofar as one thing is constituted from them.¹²¹

Perhaps more clearly and consistently than either Aristotle or Aquinas, Lonergan repeatedly appeals to this synthesizing feature of understanding to make sense of how people intelligently make progress toward mastery in any given domain of knowledge. Thus in mathematics: understanding integers gives way to understanding addition, which gives way to the further universal notions of “multiplications, powers, subtraction, division, and roots”¹²² and eventually algebra, geometry, and calculus. The crucial point is this: the higher unities of understanding presuppose the lower levels of understanding *without* consciously reduplicating them or thinking about them as an included aggregate. Just as

¹¹⁹ Ibid., I.85.4.

¹²⁰ Ibid., I.85.3.ad2

¹²¹ Aquinas, *In Met.*, VI, lect. 4, n. 1229.

¹²² Lonergan, *Insight*, 3:39.

the soul of a human being *just does* include the vegetative principles of nutrition and growth, so too Newton's general binomial theorem *just does* include within it the basic understanding of integers, addition, and powers. Here again the ontological and epistemic notions of form converge at a crucial point in explaining the intellect's acts and corresponding objects.

Having outlined understanding in more detail, we can turn back to consider the nature of judgment in comparison. If understanding yields a grasp of the relevant intelligible form as universal, judgment returns to the accidental particulars to *confirm* and *perfect* the initial insight of understanding. In an especially transparent turn of phrase, Aquinas expresses the interconnected foci of understanding and judgment in terms of his distinctive emphasis on the particularity of existence: “[T]here are two operations of intellect [...] the first operation regards the quiddity of a thing; the second regards the existence [*esse*] of that thing.”¹²³ In attending thus to the concreteness of existence, in the operation of judgment the intellect in a way attempts to retrace—so to speak—the order of being as an organic unity of actual form and matter in the order of knowledge by comprehending all the “the properties, accidents, and the various relations” of the given intelligible object under consideration.¹²⁴ Just as the particular accidents of a thing depends entirely on its substance, so in judgment does the intellect try to comprehend a thing's concrete accidents on the basis of understanding's grasp of its substance.

In both its confirmatory and perfecting aspects, judgment depends upon a discursive process known as composition and division. The conceptual backdrop for this pro-

¹²³ Aquinas, *Sent.*, I.19.1.ad7.

¹²⁴ *ST* I.85.5.

cess comes from Aristotle's mapping of grammar onto the dynamics of knowledge. Accordingly, composition runs parallel to affirming a proposition—e.g., “the woman is tall”—that attaches an predicate (e.g. tallness) to a given subject (e.g. a woman). In this way, “our intellect predicates the composition of one thing with another.”¹²⁵ Similarly, to negate such a proposition is to divide that predicate from that subject. Only when such propositional conclusions come into play does the actual question of truth (or falsity) arise vis-à-vis the intellect's operations. This is because intelligible forms in themselves are never *per se* true or false. To simply grasp the ideas of, for example, the predicates signified by “tall” or “woman” or even mythical predicates such a “goat-stag”¹²⁶ or a “rational winged animal”¹²⁷ is to know nothing of truth or falsity. Only when the question of the real (or lack of) correspondence between these predicates and actual things arises does the intellect make a judgment concerning the relative truth of its insights of understanding.¹²⁸

As a confirmation, judgment applies the intelligible form from understanding and tests it as a explanation for all the relevant “accidental” points of data that are either immediately present to the senses or recalled as relevant evidence by memory and/or the imagination. If the given intelligible form fails to correspond with the object, the result will be explanatory discordance, variance, and therefore disconfirmation. This will inevitably be the result if, as Aquinas writes laconically, one tries to apply the “definition of a

¹²⁵ Ibid., I.85.5.ad3.

¹²⁶ Aristotle, *DI*, I, 16a17-18.

¹²⁷ Aquinas, *ST* I.85.6.

¹²⁸ This is why both Aristotle and Aquinas use the refrain that truth and falsehood are not “in things,” but in the intellect itself. Cf. Ibid., I.16.1 and Aristotle, *Met.* VI, 4, 1027b17-1028a8.

circle [...] to a triangle.”¹²⁹ If the intelligible form corresponds with the object, however, then the active intellect will again illuminate aspects of the phantasmic data that shine back with an intelligible species that confirms the hypothesized formal unity. For example, Aquinas is fond of the example of an approaching body that one gradually understands in increasing degrees of confirmation and precision: “when a thing is seen afar off it is seen to be a body before it is seen to be an animal; and to be an animal before it is seen to be a man, and to be a man before it seen to be Socrates or Plato.”¹³⁰ Or, if one has postulated (*a la* Copernicus and Kepler) that the solar system can most intelligibly be described in terms of a heliocentric model, then one (e.g. Galileo) will be delighted to see that Venus exhibits a full set of phases that are explainable only if it—like the earth—rotates around the sun.

As a perfecting, judgment fills out a determinate knowledge of the parts that make up the whole that has been grasped by understanding its intelligible unity. It thus seeks, following the Aristotelian ideals of science and wisdom, to reduce and resolve all aspects of data to their respective principles and elements (i.e. *resolutio in principia*).¹³¹ For example, to grasp the definition of a human being as a rational animal does not, as the burgeoning departments for human biology and neuroscience prove, give with it an exhaustive knowledge either of all the essential parts of human beings (e.g. flesh, bones, senses, a brain, organs, appendages, etc.) or the accidental qualities of any particular human being. Nonetheless, it is the grasp of the intelligible whole that lays the foundation for the

¹²⁹ Aquinas, *ST* I.85.6.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, I.85.3.

¹³¹ Aquinas, *De ver.* 15.1.ad4.

intelligible illumination for how all the parts fit together as an organic and indivisible whole. While citing Aristotle as an authority, Aquinas describes this progression from the universal to the determinate knowledge of each part in terms of the progression from incomplete (and thus imperfect) to complete (and thus perfect) knowledge:

The perfect act of the intellect is complete knowledge, when the object is distinctly and determinately known; whereas the incomplete act is imperfect knowledge, when the object is known indistinctly, and as it were confusedly. A thing thus imperfectly known, is known partly in act and partly in potentiality, and hence the Philosopher says (Phys. I, 1), that “what is manifest and certain is known to us at first confusedly; afterwards we know it by distinguishing its principles and elements.” Now it is evident that to know an object that comprises many things, without proper knowledge of each thing contained in it, is to know that thing confusedly. In this way we can have knowledge not only of the universal whole, which contains parts potentially, but also of the integral whole; for each whole can be known confusedly, without its parts being known.¹³²

Here the full parallel that Aquinas makes between essence/existence and understanding/judgment comes into focus: just as existence is the perfection of that which is nonetheless the irreducible ground of its act (i.e. essence), so does judgment perfect that which is likewise its prerequisite act (i.e. understanding).

Regardless of whether it connotes confirmation or perfection, the illuminated species of the active intellect moves the passive intellect to its proper act of judgment itself.

Aquinas also regularly regards this act of the intellect as assent (*assentire*):

For by the very act of relating the principles to the conclusions [we assent] to the conclusions by reducing them to the principles. There, the movement of the one who is thinking is halted and brought to rest. [Thus] discursive thought leads to assent, and assent brings thought to rest.¹³³

¹³² *ST I.85.3.*

¹³³ *De ver.*, 4.1.

In assent, the intellect is brought to rest—at least proximately speaking—because it has attained its proper object: the intelligible truth of being. For the act of assent is the perfection of the speculative intellect because in this terminal act it has been “perfected by the clear sight of truth [*perfecti per plenam visionem veritatis*].”¹³⁴

Finally, in preparation for next section, we can briefly note the way in which this overview of the intellectual operations of understanding and judgment brings us to the precise point of insertion for the Augustinian tradition of the inner word within the broader Aristotelian account of the intellect. The relation can, in fact, be concisely stated. “The act of the intellect,” Aquinas declares in *De veritate*, “terminates in an inner word [*terminatur ad verbum interius*].”¹³⁵ More specifically, Aquinas identifies the immanent term of *each* of the intellect’s operations, which are completed in the act of the passive intellect, with the conception of a prelinguistic—*linguae nullius*—inner word. As he writes in his commentary on the gospel of John:

[T]hat is properly called an interior word which the one understanding forms when understanding. Now the intellect forms two things, according to its two operations. According to its operation which is called “the understanding of indivisibles,” it forms a definition; while according to its operation by which it unites and separates, it forms an enunciation or something of that sort. Hence, what is thus formed and expressed by the operation of the intellect, whether by defining or enunciating, is what the exterior vocal sound signifies. [...] Hence, what is thus expressed [...] is called an interior word. Consequently it is compared to the intellect, not as that by which the intellect understands, but as that in which it understands, because it is in what is thus expressed and formed that it sees the nature of the thing understood.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ *ST* II-II.2.1.

¹³⁵ *De ver.*, 4.1.ad1.

¹³⁶ *In Io.*, 1.1.

Even though Aristotle, like many Hellenic philosophers, made the *double* distinction between spoken words and the inner mental phenomena of which they are signs,¹³⁷ only in Augustine do you find the origins of a *triple* link between a pre-reflective ground of knowledge, the pre-linguistic emergence of that knowledge in understanding, and external words as signs of that knowledge that not only chimes with the data of mental phenomena, but also forges the essential connection to trinitarian doctrine. Nonetheless, Aristotle's reinterpretation of form's relationship to materiality and the intellect's distinctive operations, both of which are tied together by the keystone of the relation between potency to act, enabled Aquinas to transport that all-important triple link onto more coherent metaphysical soil.

2. The Specific Case of Speculative Self-Knowledge

As I noted at the opening to this section, from the starting-point of the acts of the speculative intellect, the intellect can then pivot either "inwardly" or "outwardly." When it pivots inwardly, it reflectively aims at the intensive unities of self-knowledge. The mere fact that this account of self-knowledge originates on the basis of prior acts of knowing something external already marks the most important difference between the Aristotelian framework and the Augustinian insistence on the non-adventitious character of self-knowledge. In this framework, "knowledge of self is not a starting point" that secures the self's originary intensive unity, as it is for Augustine (and Descartes and Fichte), but rather something apprehended "at the very end of the process of first-order knowing."¹³⁸ Or,

¹³⁷ Aristotle, *DI*, 1, 16a4-9.

¹³⁸ Frank A. Lewis, "Self-Knowledge in Aristotle," *Topoi* 15 (1996): 39. As Lewis explicates and translates well (p. 45), Aristotle describes this incidental character of self-knowledge in *Meta* XII, 9, 1074b36

as we expressed the point above, our native epistemic exteriority requires that we must first know that something *else* is a thing before we are able to reflectively pivot in order to apprehend that we are ourselves are a objectifiable (and thus knowable) “thing” among other things as well. Despite the retrospective novelty of this position from within an intellectual milieu dominated by Cartesian and Kantian depictions of the riddles surrounding self-consciousness, for Aquinas the metaphysical logic behind his position ended up seeming rather straightforward:

Everything is knowable in so far as it is in act, and not, so far as it is in potentiality [...] Now the human intellect is only a potentiality [...] just as primary matter is a potentiality as regards sensible beings; and hence [the intellect] is called passive [*possibilis*]. Therefore in its essence the human is potentially understanding. Hence it has in itself the power to understand, but not to be understood, except [as] it is made actual.¹³⁹

“Therefore,” as Aquinas declares in a direct deviation from Augustine via Aristotelian terminology, “the intellect knows itself not by its essence, but by its act.”¹⁴⁰ The only qualified exception to this declaration are the first principles—e.g. the whole is greater than the parts and the principle of non-contradiction—that are included, not as objects of knowledge that are known in themselves prior to discrete acts of understanding, but rather are intrinsic to the active intellect and thus the “nature of intelligence as such.”¹⁴¹

Generally speaking, Aquinas explains this declaration that the human intellect does not know itself by its essence by focusing in on the intelligible species illuminated by the active intellect in speculative knowledge. The pivot of self-knowledge occurs as a

through the phrase *en parergōi*, “[K]nowledge and perception and opinion and understanding are always of something else, and of themselves only be the way [*en parergōi*].”

¹³⁹ Aquinas, *ST* I.87.1.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 2:69-70. Cf. esp. Aquinas, *ST* I-II.51.1, but also *ST* I.87.1.ad1 and *In Met.*, IV, lect. 6, n. 605.

pivot on the intelligible species themselves. Because of the formal identity that occurs in speculative knowledge between known and knower, the intelligible species—as the medium of knowledge—can double as both a principle of knowledge, a formal similitude, of both the known *and* the knower:

For as sense in act is the sensible in act, by reason of the sensible likeness which is the form of sense in act, so likewise the intellect in act is the object understood in act, by reason of the similitude of the thing understood, which is the form of the intellect in act. So the human intellect, which becomes actual by the species of the object understood, is itself understood by the same species as by its own form.¹⁴²

It is as if in illuminating the intelligible species of the object known that the agent intellect illuminates a form of its own intelligible act, which, as Aristotle notes in *De anima*, is just as intelligible as the object it illuminates.¹⁴³ Aquinas makes the analogy with visible light explicit in *De veritate*:

Physical light is seen through itself only in so far as it is the reason for the visibility of visible things and a kind of form making the actually visible [...] Similarly, we understand the light of the agent intellect, in so far as it is the reason for the intelligible species, making the actually intelligible.¹⁴⁴

Accordingly, the human intellect knows that it knows through the illuminated species of its own preceding acts of intelligible knowing, which thus—following the above analysis—simultaneously serves as the moving object of the passive intellect that actualizes self-knowledge. Therefore, as Lonergan effectively summarizes, the “soul does not know its own essence by its own essence; but in some fashion it does know its own intellectual light by its own intellectual light.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Aquinas, *ST* I.87.1.ad3.

¹⁴³ Cf. Aristotle, *DA* III, 4, 430a1-3.

¹⁴⁴ Aquinas, *De ver.*, 10.8.ad10 (2nd series).

¹⁴⁵ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 2:91.

Out of this general approach, however, both Aristotle and Aquinas crucially distinguish between two types of self-knowledge: particular and universal. Aquinas describes the difference between the two in the following passage that is worth quoting at length:

Therefore the intellect knows itself not by its essence, but by its act. This happens in two ways. In the first way, particularly, as when Socrates or Plato perceives that he has an intellectual soul because he perceives that he understands. In the second way, universally, as when we consider the nature of the human mind from knowledge of the intellectual act. [...] [The] difference between these two kinds of knowledge [...] consists in this, that the mere presence of the mind suffices for the first; the mind itself being the principle of action whereby it perceives itself, and hence it is said to know itself by its own presence. But as regards the second kind of knowledge, the mere presence of the mind does not suffice, and there is further required a careful and subtle inquiry. Hence many are ignorant of the soul's nature, and many have erred about it.¹⁴⁶

Particular self-knowledge is that by which one perceives the intelligible patterns of one's own acts and qualities both in themselves (and thus as distinct potencies) *and* as a collection of accidents that together constitute the unified existence of an individual being with a correspondingly singular soul.¹⁴⁷ This type of knowledge is possible on the basis of one's own operations and, through its actual occurrence, we forge exactly the type of reflective intensive unity—in which one being is both knower and known—so valorized by Augustine (and a whole host of others). Universal self-knowledge, on the other hand, takes the extra step of asserting the particularity of your soul as an essential principle universally “common to all souls.”¹⁴⁸ To judge this to be the case requires, like all acts of judgment, attention to all relevant data whether they are immanent or external to oneself.

¹⁴⁶ Aquinas, *ST* I.87.1.

¹⁴⁷ *De ver.*, 10.8.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

3. *The External Acts of Practical Knowledge*

If the intellect can pivot “inwardly” in self-knowledge, then it can equally pivot “outwardly” in acts of practical knowledge. Just as actual speculative knowledge serves as the basis for acts of self-knowledge, so does speculative knowledge become the efficient and final cause of the patterned acts of the practical intellect. As this comparison already suggests, the speculative and the practical acts of the intellect differ, as Aristotle writes, “in respect of end.”¹⁴⁹ The knowledge which is the term for speculative acts of the intellect becomes the starting-point for practical acts that realize a formally identical end. Whereas the end of the speculative intellect is the passive *apprehension* of formal identities, the object of the practical intellect is the active *production* (Gk: *poiêsis*; Lat: *facere*) of formal identities.

The most obvious example of the practical intellect in act can be found in the production of tangible artifacts. Both Aristotle and Aquinas commonly cite the building of houses as a stock example.¹⁵⁰ Hence, there is such a thing as the speculative knowledge of the art [Gk: *technê*; Lat: *ars*] of house-building. It would give the knower the habitual potency of conceiving a house as an organic whole, the principle parts of a house in general, the necessary ratios for building an aesthetically pleasing and useful house, and some of the required or recommended materials for such an enterprise. When the builder then turns to build an actual house, that general knowledge serves as the form for the practical intellect’s envisioning and planning the patterned activity for realizing that form in the particularities of material production. This form is the efficient cause of the pro-

¹⁴⁹ Aristotle, *DA* III, 10, 433a13-15.

¹⁵⁰ E.g., *Met.* VII, 9, 1034a9-30, XII, 4, 1070b22-35, and Aquinas, *ST* I.85.3.ad3, and I-II.95.2.

duction as the principle from which the operation proceeds and without which it would not occur; it is the final cause as the teleological form to be concretely realized. Accordingly, there is a genuine sense in which the practical arts reverse the course of the speculative sciences. As Aquinas writes, “[In the] sciences, demonstrated conclusions are drawn from the principles, while [...] in the arts, general forms are particularized as to details: thus the craftsman [*artifex*] needs to determine the general form of a house to some particular shape.”¹⁵¹

Despite being the most commonly cited example, the external artifact is not the only end of the practical intellect’s acts. There are two kinds of non-transitive acts (i.e. no house is being built, no statue is being created) that are tied to the practical intellect that are worth mentioning before proceeding. In both of these cases, instead of making another entity as an artifact *per se*, the practical intellect enables an intelligent being to become *herself* a kind of embodied work of art by realizing a given form in practical acts. The first of these practical acts is a self-referential extension of the house-building example. In this case, however, the *technê* or art is a habitual skill such as dancing, singing, or speaking in which the body, so to speak, becomes a living artifact of a habitually-learned skill. Interestingly enough, Aquinas compares the relationship of inner words to outer words along just these lines: “[J]ust as there preexists in the mind of a craftsman a certain image of his external artifice [*exterior artificii*], also does there pre-exist in the mind of one who pronounces an exterior word a certain exemplar of it.”¹⁵² The second of these self-referential practical arts occurs in and through the habits of prudence (Gk: *phronēsis*)

¹⁵¹ Ibid., I-II.95.2.

¹⁵² Aquinas, *De ver.*, 4.4.

the practical intellect sets out the means whereby a person takes up concretely virtuous acts. In this case, the form that identifies the intelligible pattern of the resulting acts is not a skill (a *technê*) *per se*, but rather—as we will discuss at length next chapter—the virtues themselves as the operative perfections of a human being.¹⁵³

IV. With and Beyond Augustine Via Aristotle: Participation and The Triune Creator

My goal in this last section is to show as briefly as possible how Aquinas takes the elements of the Aristotelian metaphysical framework just outlined—the four causes, the passion/action relation, and the reconfigured account of form’s ontological and epistemic functions—and assimilates them to Augustine’s theological emphasis on creation’s participation in that which is eminently and simply united in God. The resulting creative synthesis not only, as we have already witnessed, successfully differentiate intensive unities of soul and self-knowledge, but it also adds precision to (a) the *exitus-reditus* description of creation and (b) the inner word’s centrality as the preeminent created analogy of the Trinity. These connections back to Augustine will follow in two sequential subsections. First, we will examine Aquinas’s understanding of God as creation’s efficient and final cause. Second, we will turn to examine Aquinas’s adaptation of the Augustinian psychological analogy for the Trinity in light of Aristotle’s theorization of the intellect and the way in which this adaptation shapes his distinctive version of the trinitarian *imago Dei* as a deficient participation in God’s eminent mode of intelligent life.

¹⁵³ Cf. *ST* I-II.55.2.

a. *God as the Efficient and Final Cause of Creation*

The exigency of Aquinas's enterprise to assimilate Aristotle's metaphysics to Augustinian orthodoxy is not, of course, driven by the fact that Aristotle fails to find a place for a divine being within his metaphysics. For instance, Aristotle famously writes of the rational grounds for affirming a being who prevents an infinite regress in reducing beings' movements and changes to their efficient principles. Therefore, in *Metaphysics* XII he declares, "There is a mover which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality."¹⁵⁴ Aquinas clearly concurs with the logic of this position by including it as the first and "most manifest" of the *quinque viae* for proving God's existence in I.2.3. There he affirms God as the first mover (*primum movens*) and pure act (*actus purus*), the cause of all other acts and thus devoid of all passive potencies. Similarly, later on in the same book of *Metaphysics* Aristotle strikes a strongly Augustinian-sounding tone by musing about the self-reflective act that must define a divinely intelligent being:

The nature of the divine intellect [*nous*] involves certain problems; for while thought [*dokei*] is held to be the most divine of phenomena [*theiotaton*], the question what it must be in order to have that character involves difficulties. For if it thinks nothing, what is there here of dignity? It is just like one who sleeps. And if it thinks, but this depends on something else, then (as that which is its substance is not the act of thinking, but a capacity [*dunamis*]) it cannot be the best substance [*aristē ousia*]; for it is through intellection [*noein*] that its value belongs to it [...] Evidently, then, it thinks that which is most divine [*theiotaton*] and precious, and it does not change; for change would be change for the worse, and this would be already a movement. [...] Therefore it must be itself that the intellect understands [*auton ara noei*] (since it is the most excellent of things), and its understanding is an understanding of understanding [*estin hē noēsis noēseōs noēsis*].¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Met.* XII, 7, 1072a19-36. See also, *Phys.* VIII, 5-6, 256b13-260a19.

¹⁵⁵ *Met.* XII, 9, 1074b15-34. See n. 34 above for my translation of "noēsis noēseōs."

Again, the influence of this passage on Aquinas is evident when he, for example, cites it as an authority in his declaration that God's "act of understanding is his substance" because if this act were "other than his substance, it would follow, as Aristotle says in *Metaphysics* XII, that something else would be the act and perfection of the divine substance."¹⁵⁶

Nonetheless, the problem with Aristotle's *nous* for an Augustinian theologian like Aquinas arrives in the fact that Aristotle explicitly denies two of the most important claims inherent to Augustine's Christian emphasis on participation: (1) that there exists an immaterial, transcendent referent—a separate substance—for the analogical forms or patterns encountered in nature and (2) that this referent is identical with the creative source of being and matter *ex nihilo*. On the first front, Aristotle's critical judgment vis-à-vis the broadly Platonic theory of participation is particularly pointed. As he declares in *Metaphysics*, "[T]o say that [the forms] are patterns and the other things share in them is to use empty words and poetical metaphors."¹⁵⁷ On the second front, Aristotle asserts that matter must itself be eternal because the movements and changes observed in nature "always" presuppose "an underlying something."¹⁵⁸ For Aristotle, affirming a prime mover does not at all imply something that is axiomatic to an Augustinian theology of creation: a qualitative division in being between that which is eternal and that which is temporal. Rather, as Aristotle's position itself illustrates, the movements inherent to enmattered being could be eternally caused by the prime mover. Aristotle's positions on both of these

¹⁵⁶ Aquinas, *ST* I.14.4.

¹⁵⁷ Aristotle, *Met.* I, 9, 991a20-31. See also: XIII, 5, 1079b24-35.

¹⁵⁸ *Phys.* I, 7, 190a13-21.

fronts serve as a reminder that—even after accounting for the supporting contributions of Boethius, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Albert the Great—Aquinas’s assimilation of the Aristotelian emphasis on substantial form with the Platonic and Augustinian emphasis on analogical participation was born not from a *prima facie* self-evidence, but rather through the original and creative contributions of genius.¹⁵⁹

In order to accomplish this integration of Aristotle’s metaphysical framework with Augustine’s participatory rendering of faith’s affirmation of *creatio ex nihilo*, Aquinas expands the notion of efficient causality to include the origin of being as a *sui generis* act of efficient causality,¹⁶⁰ an act in which being itself, inclusive of form and matter, is the effect or “production” of an agent (i.e. the Creator).¹⁶¹ This expansion enables Aquinas to make the necessary distinction not found in Aristotle: whereas divine being is eternally “necessary”¹⁶² and “self-subsisting,”¹⁶³ created or universal being¹⁶⁴ came *into being* through a free act of God’s will.¹⁶⁵ On account of this, Aquinas concludes that the “being” of all created “beings,” that genus in which all actual entities in creation share, is *not* a genus in which God is also included.¹⁶⁶ Rather, *a la* Augustine, the being of created beings is a deficient participation of that which God is eminently, eternally, and necessarily. As Thomas pronounces in I.44.1, “[A]ll beings apart from God are not their own being,

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Lonergan, *Verbum*, 2:9-10, 38 and Rudi A. te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), esp. ix-xiv.

¹⁶⁰ Aquinas, *ST* I.2.3. Aquinas was clearly influenced and helped by the precedent of Avicenna in expanding Aristotelian causality to include the divine production of being itself, not just of motion. Cf. Etienne Gilson, “Notes for the History of Efficient Causality,” in *Medieval Essays* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 150-78.

¹⁶¹ Aquinas, *ST* I.44.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, I.2.3.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, I.3.2.ad3.

¹⁶⁴ *esse creatum* (e.g. *ST* I.8.1) and *esse commune* (e.g. *ST* I.2.4.ad1)

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, I.19.3, I.19.4, and I.46.1

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, I.3.5.

but are beings by participation. Therefore it must be that all things are diversified by the diverse participation of being, so as to be more or less perfect, are caused by one First Being, who possesses being most perfectly.”¹⁶⁷

From this starting-point, Aquinas then identifies the mode of creation as akin to an act of the Aristotelian practical intellect. As just outlined above, a practical act of the intellect requires an exemplary, speculative basis. Even though the metaphysical “slot” that it fills is entirely Aristotelian, Aquinas’s specification of this exemplary basis is also thoroughly Augustinian. The exemplary, speculative basis of this practical act of creation is God’s own self-knowledge whereby God knows both Godself and all other things “because his essence contains the likeness [*similitudinem*] of things other than himself.”¹⁶⁸

Therefore:

God’s knowledge stands to all created things as the artist’s to his products. But the artist’s knowledge is the cause of his products [*artificiatorum*], because he works [*operatur*] through his intellect; and so the form [*forma*] in his intellect must be the principle of his activity, as heat is of the activity of heating.¹⁶⁹

God is, in short, the “artisan of the universe”¹⁷⁰ and the “builder of all things.”¹⁷¹ There is then a certain sense, heavily qualified of course, in which Aquinas can speak of God’s essence as the “form” of creation,¹⁷² the intelligible “pattern” that eminently holds together all of creation’s intelligible patterns. Again, specifying the way in which this is so is governed by the rule of Augustine’s doctrine of divine simplicity: “Whatever is divided

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., I.44.1.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., I.14.5.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., I.14.8.

¹⁷⁰ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 2:38.

¹⁷¹ Heb. 3:4.

¹⁷² Aquinas, *ST* I.3.2.

and multiplied in creatures exists in God simply and unitedly.”¹⁷³ God’s eminence as a form is thus defined precisely in that God’s essence is not subject to the composite multiplicity of forms, nor the receptive potentiality of matter to form, encountered in nature, *even though* the perfections of all created forms are eternally and eminently found in this one self-subsisting form. As such, the divine essence is set apart as a self-subsisting form “that cannot be received in matter” and is thus supremely “individualized precisely because it cannot be received in another [*potest recipi in alio*].”¹⁷⁴

Instead, creation takes shape a deficient profusion, an emanation, of God’s intelligible perfection. Hence, the hierarchy of creation’s forms, whether substantial or accidental, is patterned as a diffuse representation of God’s perfect goodness and truth:

For [God] brought things into being in order that his goodness might be communicated to creatures, and be represented by them; and because his goodness could not be adequately represented by one creature alone, he produced many and diverse creatures, that what was wanting to one in the representation of the divine goodness might be supplied by another. For goodness, which in God is simple and uniform, in creatures is manifold and divided and hence the whole universe together participates the divine goodness more perfectly, and represents it better than any single creature whatever.¹⁷⁵

In order to add precision to this description of how a creature represents the Creator, Aquinas adopts the broad distinction—detectable in both Aristotle and Augustine—between a thing’s definitional truth and its idiosyncratic and vacillating forms of excellence (Augustine) or actualized perfection/goodness (Aristotle). He does so, as already outlined above, through his distinction between essence and existence, the detailed metaphysics of which is thoroughly Aristotelian even as Aquinas conceives the distinction as

¹⁷³ Ibid., I.14.1.ad2.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., I.3.2.ad3.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., I.47.1.

ontologically reflective of God's truth and goodness. If, in creatures, a thing's essence (=substantial form) gives a concrete thing its definitional mode of its actual existence (*dat esse actuale*) and the principled potencies for its subsequent acts, then the eminently simple basis for this crucial distinction in creatures can be found in that in God—because there is no intrinsic potentiality in the divine essence—there is no distinction between essence and existence. Rather, “God is not only his own essence [*sua essentia*],” but “also his own existence [*suum esse*].”¹⁷⁶ Therefore, *a la* Augustine, in God's being truth and goodness are strictly and absolutely convertible, despite the fact in created beings they name a logical distinction, grounded in the difference between essence as actualized definition and existence as actualized perfection,¹⁷⁷ in their analogical participation in the Creator.

In this blending of the Aristotelian substance with Augustinian participationism within Aquinas's innovative rendering of creation and essence/existence, Thomas masterfully ties together creation's intelligible *exitus* from God with the Creator's efficient causality and its *reditus* to God with the Creator's final causality. As the intelligible mode of creation's deficient emanation from God, substantial forms are not only the ontological principle that causes the existence of creatures, but they are also the intermediary cause through which *God* “properly causes existence in creatures” and is thus continually present in power to those creatures “as an agent is present to that in which its action is taking place.”¹⁷⁸ In this way, form is much more than the mode of creation's primal intelligible

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, I.3.4.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, I.16.4.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, I.8.1.

emanation from the Creator; it is also the mode of the Creator's ongoing generative and providential causation of every living being's intensive unity of existence. In expressing this ongoing presence of the Creator through the mediation of forms, Aquinas deftly incorporates Augustine's emphasis on God's intimate interiority to every creature with Aristotle's emphasis on agential causation:

Now since it is God's nature to exist, he it must be who properly causes existence in creatures, just as it is fire itself [that] sets other things on fire. And God is causing this effect in things not just when they begin to exist, but all the time they are maintained in existence, just as the sun is lighting up the atmosphere all the time the atmosphere remains lit. During the whole period of a thing's existence, therefore, God must be present to it, and present in a way in keeping with the way in which the thing possesses its existence. Now existence is more intimately and profoundly interior to things [*profundius omnibus inest*] than anything else, for everything as we said is potential when compared to existence. So God must exist and exist intimately [*intime*] in everything.¹⁷⁹

By alluding to Augustine's seminal *interior intimo meo* in a passage otherwise dominated by Aristotelian logic, Aquinas pens one of the most elegant demonstrations of his creative assimilation of one to the other.

Similarly, the principled potencies that are given existence by a thing's substantial form are all ordered toward acts that, according to their respective principles of operation, are likewise similitudes of God's intelligibility, perfection, and goodness¹⁸⁰ and together constitute the final end towards which God undertook the act of creation: a communication of divine perfection and goodness.¹⁸¹ The constant drive to reduce potency to act, which pulses through the existence of every creature, represents the coterminance of the desire for a creature's own perfection and the proportional degree of their natural desire

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., I.47.1.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., I.44.4.

for returning to God: “All things, by desiring their own proper perfection [*appetendo proprias perfectiones*], desire God himself [*appetunt ipsum Deum*], inasmuch as the perfections of all things are so many similitudes of the divine being [*divini esse*].”¹⁸² As such, God is the final cause of creation,¹⁸³ the teleological *reditus* of all creaturely desires and perfections.

Within this general framework, just as Augustine affirms as well, the teleological perfection of rational creatures has a distinctiveness unto itself. Even though all the natural ends of things are “good” in themselves and thus generally reflective of the divine goodness, only rational creatures are created with the capability of “closing the loop” back to the unity of intelligible knowledge and being that is the principle and *telos* of their existence: antepenultimately in grasping creation’s intelligible forms, penultimately in the gift of faith, and ultimately in the beatific contemplation of God.¹⁸⁴ By making progress in this “voyage” of ascent, to recall Augustine’s terminology, intelligent creatures gradually move toward a final end that coincides with the principle of their own creation: the divine essence itself.¹⁸⁵ Such is the beautiful logic through which Aquinas knits together Augustine’s *exitus-reditus* scheme with Aristotle’s conception of efficient and final causation. As he writes in the programmatic statement near the beginning of the *Summa*, God is the “beginning of things and their last end [*principium rerum et finis earum*], and especially of rational creatures.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Ibid., I.6.1.

¹⁸³ Ibid., I.47.4.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., I-II.3.8.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., I-II.3.1.ad2.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., I.2.prol.

b. Revisiting the Inner Word: Participation in the Intelligence of the Triune God

It is here in returning to the main thematics—trinitarian doctrine and the *imago dei*—in which Augustine first formulated the inner word’s significance that our inquiry in this chapter finally comes full circle. Only here does the full sweep of Aquinas’s creative transposition of Augustine’s seminal insights onto more consistent metaphysical and cognitional soil via Aristotle come into complete focus. Once again, the terms of this assimilation, even at this last stage, are multifaceted. Not only is this true on a general conceptual level, but there is the additional complicating factor of Aquinas having to account for an entire set of problems associated with the doctrine of the Trinity, along with its attendant surfeit of terminology, that is entirely foreign to Aristotle’s thought. One of the signs of this complicating factor is the ever-present influence of Augustine’s entwining of cognition (and knowledge) and volition (and love) not only because he takes this to be an accurate description of human operations, but also because of their respective analogical connections to the divine Word and Spirit in specifying the trinitarian *imago Dei*. Even though Aristotle certainly speaks of the will as a power of the soul,¹⁸⁷ he does not emphasize it—nor tie it closely to his account of the intellect—nearly to the degree that Augustine (and Aquinas following him) does. However, as was the case with incorporating *creatio ex nihilo* into Aristotle’s theory of causality, there is a refined economy to Aquinas’s reformulation of the Augustinian psychological analogy on the other side of Aristotle’s theorization of the intellect that helps make succinct description of its basic shape possible at the close of this chapter.

¹⁸⁷ E.g. Aristotle, *DA* III, 10-11, 433a9-434a22.

Because of the analogical character of the matter at hand, one can either begin rhetorically with a description of the triune character of God's eminent act of understanding and then proceed to its deficient participations in other intelligent beings (angels and humans, according to Aquinas) *or* one can travel the other way from created intelligence back to God by way of the classical analogical roads of negation, eminence, and causality.¹⁸⁸ In light of the familiarity with trinitarian doctrine established last chapter and with Aristotle's theory of the intellect in this chapter, I am going to begin with God's triune act of understanding and then proceed to its deficient participations in angels and human beings. This will allow us to close with a definitive statement regarding Aquinas's solution to the problem with which we began: the relation of the human mode of intelligent life—intensively given to it by the soul—and the derivative status of human self-knowledge in relation to the eternity of God's self-knowledge.

Two distinctive elements of Augustine's trinitarian theology that pass directly into Aquinas are important to recall at the outset: (1) God's eminent simplicity entails that all appellations of God are common to the divine essence, and thus to all three divine persons, *except* those that pertain directly to specifying the personal relationships between Father, Son, and Spirit; and (2) God knows and loves all of creation simply in perfectly knowing and loving Godself in the singularity of the divine Word and by the amorous bond of the Spirit. As we saw above, Aristotle affirms a non-trinitarian and non-participated version of the latter element by positing the metaphysical superiority of divine self-knowledge inasmuch as such knowledge does not require the apprehension of

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Aquinas, *ST* I.84.7.ad3.

another form outside of itself. As one would expect, Aquinas takes full advantage of this close point of affinity between Augustine and Aristotle in order to resituate these Augustinian distinctives regarding the Trinity, and in so doing, to reaffirm the psychological analogy as the chief “side door through which we [can] enter for an imperfect”¹⁸⁹ glimpse of the triune God. As we will see in a moment, the resulting synthesis enables Aquinas to formulate the metaphysical link between God’s perfect life of knowing and loving with its deficient participations in a more cohesive manner than Augustine was able to do.

In addition to building upon their shared viewpoint regarding the metaphysical superiority of divine self-knowledge, Aquinas crucially weaves two other concepts from Aristotle’s account of the intellect into his version of the Augustinian psychological analogy. First, and most basically, Aquinas forges a metaphysical and terminological parallel between Aristotle’s principled relation of potency and act, and the well-attested trinitarian concept of procession [*processio*], which Thomas draws from biblical,¹⁹⁰ credal,¹⁹¹ and patristic sources.¹⁹² Both are used to describe the trinitarian relations of origin of (a) the Son/Word from the Father (b) the Spirit from the Father and Son. As the Son is eternally generated by the Father, he proceeds from the Father.¹⁹³ Likewise, as the Spirit is eternally spirated by the Father and the Son, so too does the Spirit proceed from the Father and the Son.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁹ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 2:216.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. John 8:42, 15:26 as Aquinas cites them as authorities in *ST* I.27.1.sc and I.27.3.sc.

¹⁹¹ Cf. As the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed has it: the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son [*ex Patre Filioque procedit*].”

¹⁹² Especially Hilary and Augustine.

¹⁹³ Aquinas, *ST* I.27.2 and I.28.4.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, I.27.3 and I.28.4.

The terms of this parallel between the principled relation of potency/act and the traditional processional language for the Trinity allows Aquinas to import the richly analogical notion of act, no longer simply into language about the divine essence as a whole as *actus purus*, but now into the intra-Trinitarian relations themselves. Accordingly, Aquinas (re)conceives the processions of Word and Spirit in analogical terms that reflect the Aristotelian notion of perfect, immanent acts of intellect and will. The result is a reconceptualization of procession that incorporates the idea of act within its very definition even as it is analogically applied to God: “procession always supposes action.”¹⁹⁵ To be sure, Aquinas is abundantly clear that in God there is neither potency nor a multiplicity of acts corresponding respectively to the will and intellect.¹⁹⁶ Even though he employs the Aristotelian terminology of act, Aquinas faithfully follows Augustine in this insistence: God is a single, eternal act in which knowledge and love perfectly coincide.

Nonetheless, Aquinas pushes the analogical bounds of the ordered relation between principle and act to the point where the divine persons themselves are analogically compared with an eminent version of this relation. Whereas in human beings the principle of an act always presupposes some potency from which the act originates, Aquinas compares the Trinity to an eternal act of self-knowledge and self-love in which there never “was” any principled potency, but nevertheless in which the relations of principled origin are manifest even in the perfection of act.¹⁹⁷ Just as the act of a finite intellect likewise makes manifest its principled relation to its potency, so too do the principled rela-

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., I.27.1.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., I.27.3.ad3.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Ibid., I.28.2-3, I.29.4, I.40.2,4, and I.41.1.

tions of the divine act of knowledge and love subsist and it is these “subsisting relations”¹⁹⁸ that Aquinas identifies as the three divine *personae* that nonetheless share a common *essentia* as a single act. The resulting definition of “principle” is thus one that has been properly generalized—through the sieve of the *via negationis*—so as to be applicable to God and commensurate with the above parallel between procession and immanent action: “the word ‘principle’ signifies only that whence another proceeds.”¹⁹⁹

Therefore, the Father is the *principium* of the Son²⁰⁰ and the Father and Son are the unified *principium* of the Spirit²⁰¹ according to the ordered relations presupposed by the analogy of the respective acts of the intellect and the will:

Though will and intellect are not diverse in God, nevertheless the nature of will and intellect requires the processions belonging to each of them to exist in a certain order. For the procession of love occurs in due order as regards the procession of the Word; since nothing can be loved by the will unless it is conceived in the intellect. So as there exists a certain order of the Word to the principle whence He proceeds, although in God the substance of the intellect and its [Word] are the same; so, although in God the will and the intellect are the same, still, inasmuch as love requires by its very nature that it proceed only from the [Word] of the intellect, there is a distinction of order between the procession of love and the procession of the Word in God.²⁰²

According to the terms of this analogy, Aquinas reconfigures Augustine’s trinitarian *imago Deo* of *memoria*, *intelligentia*, and *voluntas* into his own triad of *principium verbi*, *verbum*, and *amor*.²⁰³ Aquinas drops *memoria* because memory, following Aristotle, is a

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., I.40.2.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., I.33.1.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid., I.36.4.

²⁰² Ibid., I.27.3.ad3.

²⁰³ Ibid., I.93.6.

habitual potency and thus totally foreign to God's pure act.²⁰⁴ By replacing it with *principium verbi*, Aquinas lands on a designation that is generic enough, despite being descriptively exact, to be applied to both God's act of understanding and the human intellect's deficient acts of understanding. The appellation holds even though the analogical distance between the *principium verbi* in God and in the human intellect could scarcely mark a greater qualitative divide: in God the *principium verbi* names the always active principle from "whence [*a quo*]"²⁰⁵ the entire glory of the Godhead eternally proceeds and thus that on which the being and existence of all things depends; in human beings the *principium verbi*, far from being the always active whence from which the universal principle of all things proceeds,²⁰⁶ is the proper designation for the pre-reflective potency of the passive intellect's capacity for being able to *become* all things (*posse omnia fieri*) by being moved to its proper act of understanding. In this way, Aquinas maintains the basic terms of Augustine's psychological analogy even while translating the Bishop's axiomatic commitment to God's triune simplicity by incorporating Aristotle's metaphysics of act into the very heart of his doctrine of the Trinity. This incorporation then enables Aquinas to utilize action as the analogical keystone between God, creation, and especially those creatures who participate in the similitude of intelligence and thus volition as well. As Aquinas writes in I.27.5.ad3, "God understands all things by one simple act; and by one act also he wills all things."

²⁰⁴ Aquinas also takes memory to be a sensitive potency, even though he allows a secondary sense in which intelligible knowledge can also be in a habitual state that can be recalled. In either case, memory is clearly an imperfect state of potency for Aquinas and thus foreign to God's act. Cf. *Ibid.*, I.79.5-6.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, I.33.1.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, I.45.2.ad1.

Second, and lastly, Aquinas imports the Aristotelian version of the axiom that the principle of an act of understanding is the similitude of an intelligible species to specify more exactly Augustine’s insight that God’s eminent intelligence is marked by the singularity of God’s Word while participated intelligence is deficiently marked by the multiplicity of inner words. When combined with the above account of procession, Aquinas’s importation of Aristotle’s account of intelligible *species* results in a reconfigured hierarchy of intelligent life that maintains Augustine’s insistence on the metaphysical preeminence of self-knowledge even while successfully reappraising the human intellect’s dependence on intelligible *species* abstracted from sensible forms. According to Aquinas, there are three forms of intelligent life—God, angels, and humans²⁰⁷—and they are ordered according to the *source* and relative *universality* of the intelligible species upon which their act of understanding is based and their inner word expresses. The more *immanent* and the more *universal* the species, the higher the form of intelligent life. Aquinas describes the criteria of immanence through a striking extension of the Augustinian rhetoric of intimacy: the higher the intelligence the more “intimate and without diversity [*intimum et absque diversitate*]²⁰⁸ is the procession of its knowledge from its principle. Similarly, Aquinas describes the criteria of universality through a reference to Aristotle’s illuminative metaphor for the active intellect: the stronger the light of any intellect’s power, the more expansive and unitary is the sweep of its knowledge.

²⁰⁷ Even though he adapts his account of angelic intelligence to fit with his Aristotelian conviction, Aquinas also clearly cites Augustine as an authority for the concept of angelic intelligence in general and also in its definition as a mode of intelligence between God and human beings. E.g. Aquinas, *ST* I.58.1-2 and Augustine, *Gn. litt.*, II.8 and IV.32.

²⁰⁸ Aquinas, *ST* I.27.1.ad3. See also, *SCG*, 4.11.

In God, there is but one “one intelligible species” and it is identical with the divine essence itself.²⁰⁹ Accordingly, there is a single Word in God that is, “perfectly one with the source from whence he proceeds without any kind of diversity.”²¹⁰ Hence the Son is the “perfect image of the Father.”²¹¹ By this Word, which is the immanent term and thus the *conceptum* (viz. that which is conceived)²¹² of God’s act of understanding, God perfectly knows Godself and all other things as well:

For God by knowing Himself, knows every creature. Now the word conceived in the mind is representative of everything that is actually understood. Hence there are in ourselves different words for the different things which we understand. But because God by one act understands Himself and all things, His one [and] only Word is expressive not only of the Father, but of all creatures.²¹³

As the eminent intelligent being with a singular act of understanding that encompasses both Godself and all of creation, God is the “*prima lux*,”²¹⁴ the first light from which every other intelligent light is “derived [*derivatum*]”²¹⁵ as a participation. For, as Lonergan writes, the divine intellect enjoys such a “summit” of intelligent “sweep and penetration” that its “act of understanding is one, yet it embraces in a single view all possibles and the prodigal multiplicity of actual beings.”²¹⁶

The next highest form of intelligent life, according to Aquinas,²¹⁷ belongs to angels. As immaterial beings, the species for their knowledge—like God’s—do not originate externally through the senses, but rather are intrinsic to their essence. Whereas the

²⁰⁹ Aquinas, *ST I*.14.2.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I.27.1.ad2.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, I.35.2.ad3.

²¹² *Ibid.*, I.34.1.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, I.34.3.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I.12.2 and *In Boet. De Trin.* I.3.

²¹⁵ *ST I*.12.2.

²¹⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 2:65-66. Cf. Aquinas, *ST I*.14.5-6 and I.15.1-3.

²¹⁷ Aquinas, *SCG* 4.11.5.

human soul only includes the power to abstract species from sensible forms, the angelic essence “is naturally complete by intelligible species, in so far as they have such species connatural to them, so as to understand all things which they can know naturally.”²¹⁸ These connatural intelligible species give angels a natural knowledge of self, knowledge of corporeal things, and a general knowledge of God²¹⁹ that does not pass from potency to actuality.²²⁰ Instead, intelligible knowledge is “not generated in the angels, but is present naturally.”²²¹ Thus, an angel, again like God, naturally “understands himself by his form”²²² and material things by that same form. “[A]s God knows material things by his essence, so do the angels know them, forasmuch as they are in the angels by their intelligible species.”²²³ If there appears to be a similarity between Aquinas’s account of angelic knowledge and Augustine’s non-adventitious ideal for human knowledge, this parallel may amount to more than an accidental coincidence. Indeed there are a few instances in which Aquinas seems to directly appropriate Augustine’s terminology from *De Trinitate* regarding non-adventitious self-knowledge and applies them to angelic knowledge instead. For example, Aquinas describes intelligible species in angels as originating in the fact that “God impressed [*impressit*] upon the angelic mind the similitudes of things which [God] produced in their own natural being.”²²⁴ Or even more strikingly: “In every-one of these spiritual creatures, the forms of all things, both corporeal and spiritual, were

²¹⁸ *ST* I.55.2.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I.56.3.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, I.54.4.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Ibid.*, I.56.1.

²²³ *Ibid.*, I.57.1.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, I.56.2.

impressed by the Word of God.”²²⁵ Similarly, in a choice of phrase that seems to pay homage to Augustine even amidst a direct critique of his predecessor in its implications for human self-knowledge, Aquinas succinctly declares in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, “In [angels] the intellect does not proceed to self-knowledge from anything exterior, but knows itself through itself [*per se cognoscit seipsum*].”²²⁶

For now, however, we must stay with Aquinas. Despite the number of striking similarities between God and angels, the chief difference between them on the level of intelligible species²²⁷ can be found in the fact that there is a multiplicity of intelligible species in angels such that they know different things by different species. In fact, Aquinas concludes that the various angelic species (in the ontological sense), all of which only have a single member (*viz.* each angel is its own species),²²⁸ are ordered according to the relative universality of the intelligible species that give rise to their understanding. The more unitary and singular their intelligible species the higher and more perfect is their essence: “Thus the higher the angel is, by so much the fewer species will he be able to apprehend the whole mass of intelligible objects. Therefore his forms must be more universal; each one of them, as it were, extending to more things.”²²⁹ The illustration that Aquinas immediately offers functions as a perfect transition to the last form of intellection: “An example of this can in some measure be observed in ourselves. For some people there are who cannot grasp an intelligible truth, unless it be explained to them in eve-

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, I.56.2.

²²⁶ *SCG*, 4.11.5.

²²⁷ Obviously, however, this is far from the only degree of deficiency that angels possess in comparison to God. For example, Aquinas denies that their understanding is their substance (*ST* I.54.1) or that all of their knowledge is always in act—*viz.* angels do not always contemplate all that they know naturally (*ST* I.58.1).

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, I.50.4.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, I.55.3.

ry part and detail; this comes of their weakness of intellect: while there are others of stronger intellect, who can grasp many things from few.”²³⁰

In “ourselves,” then, there is a final (and lowest) form of participated intellectual life. As we have already noted at length above, our intellect depends on abstracting and illuminating the required intellectual *species* for its acts of understanding from external, material forms as apprehended through the senses and virtually rendered by phantasms.²³¹ Only on the basis of these prior acts of understanding can humans come to know themselves intelligibly. Thus, even though the human intellect can in fact proceed to a closer and closer intensive approximation of principle and its processions of knowledge in its acts of self-knowledge (as knower and known hasten towards becoming one), this process does not change the fact that it is constitutively *and* naturally the lowest on the hierarchy because it always “take[s] the first beginning of its knowledge from without [*ab extrinseco*].”²³² At this juncture Aquinas’s constructive critique and transposition of Augustine’s theory of knowledge has come full circle: all the human intellect has, through its own essence, is a passive potency to intelligible things and an active potency for illuminating their species. Put differently, whereas for God and angels the intensive unity furnished by their substantial form includes the always already actualized fullness of their intelligent knowledge, for human beings their souls only furnish an intensive unity of existence that must pass through extroverted epistemic unions before they can return inward to forge the higher intensive unity of self-knowledge. As Aquinas writes clearly in I.79.2,

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid., I.85.1.

²³² *SCG*, 4.11.5.

“Therefore the angelic intellect is always in act as regards those things which it can understand, by reason of its proximity to the first intellect, which is pure act,” whereas “the human intellect, which is the lowest in the order of intelligence and most remote from the perfection of the divine intellect, is in potentiality with respect to intelligible things.”

Lastly, this created state of imperfect potentiality entails two further differences between God’s Word and our inner words of understanding. The first pertains to a difference that results from the fact that the human intellect must abstract intelligible species from particular enmattered forms. This state of affairs requires that the human intellect move through two distinct acts—which results in two types of inner words—the first of which abstracts the universal from the sensed or imagined particular (understanding) and the second of which returns to the particular in the process of composition and division (judgment). Because divine and angelic knowledge neither originates in sensed particulars nor progresses from imperfection to perfection, the sequential distinction—and thus different types of inner words—between universal and particular knowledge is completely foreign to them. “Hence the angelic and the divine intellect have the entire knowledge of a thing at once and perfectly; and hence also in knowing the quiddity of a thing they know at once whatever we can know by composition, division, and reasoning.”²³³ The second difference has stayed with us throughout last chapter and this chapter, and indeed we just encountered it again in the passage above comparing angelic and human intelligence. Nonetheless it is worth repeating because of its centrality to both Augustine and Aquinas. Whereas God understands Godself and all things in the singularity of one Word,

²³³ *ST* I.85.5.

human intelligence must proceed piecemeal through an accumulation and synthesis of inner words into increasingly more perfect and summative acts of understanding. Even at its earliest and most feeble stages, as the human intellect makes progress down this road of learning it moves toward an end (which is also its creative cause) that it does not yet know and yet was created to reach as its highest perfection,²³⁴ first by the gratuity of faith²³⁵ and ultimately by the contemplative certainty of speculative sight.²³⁶ the first truth [*prima veritas*], the always already (i.e. self-subsisting) eternal essence of the triune God.²³⁷

V. Conclusion: Summarizing and Outlining a Gap

In this chapter we have set forth the first step of Aquinas's solution to Augustine's dilemma in *De Trinitate* that forces him into circularly conflating the soul and self-knowledge into a single type of intensive unity. As just detailed, Aquinas sets out the general trajectory of his overall solution by constructively drawing upon Aristotle's metaphysical framework in a manner that not only solves Augustine's dilemma, but also ends up transposing several of the most seminal Augustinian insights into his own theological anthropology. In particular, I have drawn attention to Aquinas's decisive appropriation of two aspects of Aristotle's thought: (1) his understanding of the soul and (2) his affirmation of the intellect's vertical dependence upon the senses. The first aspect allows Aquinas to successfully separate out the soul as the formal cause of a living being's existence according to a hierarchically organized set of potencies that define a certain mode of life.

²³⁴ Ibid., I-II.3.8.

²³⁵ Ibid., II-II.1.1.

²³⁶ Ibid., I-II.3.8.

²³⁷ Ibid., II-II.1.1 and II-II.1.8.ad3.

As such, the soul is the source of a human being's most primal intensive unity: the always already indivisible wholeness of that individual's existence.²³⁸ The second aspect then allows Aquinas to further undo Augustine's conflation by denying that there is any self-knowledge primally actualized in the soul. Instead, the human intellect's native extroversion—i.e. its vertical dependence upon sensitive phantasms—allows Aquinas to fully reposition reflective self-knowledge as a derivative epistemic unity that is only possible on the basis of the preceding extroverted unities of sensitive and intelligent apprehension. In the midst of this corrective ordering of the soul's relation to self-knowledge, the key Augustinian insights that Aquinas successfully transposes, and even expands upon, include the nature of creation's *exitus* from God as a realm of deficient forms and the centrality of the inner word as the chief *locus* of the *imago Dei* and therefore of human beings' teleological *reditus* back to God.

When viewed from within the course of our overall trajectory aimed at reframing the riddle of egoic self-consciousness and reevaluating its theological significance, the importance of this chapter will end up being multifaceted and wide-ranging. Obviously, given our stated trajectory, Aquinas's metaphysically-precise and vertically-ordered categorization of the intensive unities of the soul/self-knowledge and their relation to the extroverted unities of sensitive/intellectual apprehension will serve as an essential starting-point for every subsequent chapter. This includes our forthcoming overview of his parallel clarification of the teleological intensive unity of desire/love (Chapter 3) and our con-

²³⁸ Obviously, I employ here *always already* as defined by the perspective of the individual, not from the an absolute temporal perspective from which the actualization of a soul is obviously a temporal occurrence that is not *always already* at all.

structive theorization of egoic self-consciousness as a fourth *species* of intensive unity (Chapters 4-5). As an extension of this main line of relevance, the central metaphysical elements that we set forth here in conversation with Aristotle and Aquinas—e.g. potency/act and the vertical relation between the layers of the soul as teleologically ordered toward intelligence—will be taken as explanatorily normative moving forward. This is especially important to note because our constructive proposal in translating Freud in Chapters 4 and 5 will expand upon these metaphysical elements, and the theological anthropology that issues from them, such that it would be largely incomprehensible without this framework already in place. In addition, several of the specific observations that we underlined above—e.g. the act of the common sense as unconsciously falling outside the bounds of phenomenal consciousness and the intellect’s decisive insight of a thing *qua* thing—will return in those constructive chapters as particularly illuminating for theorizing the origins of self-consciousness. For the moment, however, the most immediate relevance for many of this chapter’s central elements is to be found in their function as a necessary preamble to Chapter 3. This is because, as we will see shortly, Aquinas’s understanding of the sensitive and intellectual appetites, both in their horizontal operations and their vertical interrelation, presupposes much of the jointly Aristotelian and Augustinian foundation that we have established in Chapter 1 and 2.

However, before moving on to consider the appetitive powers’ relation to Aquinas’s reformulation of the teleological form of intensive unity, I want to critically note an important gap that opens up in Aquinas’s theological anthropology as a result of his otherwise successful uncoupling of the soul from any trace of self-knowledge. As we noted

last chapter, one of the central causes of Augustine’s dilemma was his observation—so reminiscent of analogous insights later made by the likes of Descartes, Kant, and Fichte—that there must be some sort of intensively unifying “self-awareness” that explains our self-differentiated and self-conscious sense that “I” am doing certain activities. This observation governs, for instance, Augustine’s assertion that “all minds know for certain [...]” they are “living, remembering, understanding, willing, thinking, knowing, judging, [and doubting].”²³⁹

There is, to be sure, validity in this assertion. Augustine is not wrong in asserting that there must be *some* kind of intensive unity that grounds the differentiation that is then bridged in the extroverted union of knower/known. For the act of intelligent knowledge does indeed presuppose this differentiation of the self. To combine Fichtean and Augustinian formulations via a declaration from *De Trinitate* X.6: “The mind [i.e. the self] knows itself knowing something [i.e. the not-self].” Like many after him, however, Augustine’s mistake was not in insisting that intelligent knowledge requires some sort of intensive awareness coterminous with the differentiations of self/not-self and subject/object. Rather, it simply came in trying to explain this self-differentiation in terms of reflective self-*knowledge*. To do so, as we have seen again and again, inevitably leads into the circularity of the reflection theory. Knowing oneself *qua* object simply cannot be the basis for the founding of the knowing subject in general.

Instead, as Aquinas convincingly shows via Aristotle, knowing oneself *qua* object strictly follows from the extroverted unities of knowing external things as presented by

²³⁹ Augustine, *trin.* X.14.

the senses. What then accounts for the intensive, differentiated unity of the self that precedes the intelligent union of knower-known? On this particular question, Aquinas is silent. The terms of his solution vis-à-vis Augustine are enough to firmly exclude self-knowledge as accounting for the self-conscious subject; however, Aquinas does not put anything in the explanatory gap thereby left behind. One might be tempted to simply answer that the soul accounts for this unity. But that answer will simply not hold. The soul certainly is the formal cause of the intensive stream of phenomenal consciousness that defines the vital baseline of human existence. However, it cannot account for how *that* phenomenal consciousness becomes subsequently “structured,” so to speak, according to a differentiation between an intensively coalesced self-conscious subject and the diffusively sensed “not-self” about whom, to recall Fichte’s vivid phrase, initially “nothing more can be said.”²⁴⁰

Aquinas’s silence on this front is not, in the end, all that surprising. This particular question “of the self” simply did not preoccupy him in the same way as it did Augustine. Where Augustine anxiously cycled on the self’s originary unity, Aquinas much more often calmly busied himself with the deficient wonder of the intellect’s capacity to “become all things.” I have little doubt that this difference largely accounts for why Augustine has so much more often been looked to both as a historical source of the “modern self”²⁴¹ and as an active influence upon many of its most prominent, and equally anxious, twentieth-

²⁴⁰ Fichte, *GWL*, I:279 (*SK*, 246).

²⁴¹ Cf. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 127-42 and Louis Dupré, *Passage to Modernity: An Essay in the Hermeneutics of Nature and Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 15-165.

century theorists (or deconstructionists).²⁴² Nevertheless, as I have made clear, one of the wagers of this project is that the overall precision of Aquinas's anthropology, and especially its almost surgical decoupling of self-knowledge from the fundamental unity of the human soul, will prove to be an untapped resource for re-theorizing the pre-reflective origins of self-consciousness. Even though Aquinas leaves the gap left behind by self-knowledge unfilled, our hope is to constructively fill that gap when we turn to expand Aquinas's theological anthropology in the process of translating Freud's discovery of primary identification and solving, on the basis of the Thomist solution to Augustine's dilemma, the analogous dilemma that Freud faces in theorizing identification's developmental relation to the ego. As I have foregrounded throughout, the result will be a theological anthropology that affirms *four* types of intensive unity as tying together the shape of human existence, each of which is deficiently similar to God's simplicity in its own way: a *primal* unity of the soul, an *identificatory* unity with our sensing bodies, an *epistemic* unity of self-knowledge, and a *teleological* unity of desire/love. Before proceeding to that constructive proposal, however, we must first see how Aquinas completes his remedy of Augustine's conflation by precisely reconceptualizing the teleological intensive unity as a vertical alignment of the sensitive/intellective appetites.

²⁴² See, for instance, the collected essays in John D. Caputo and Michael J. Scanlon, eds., *Augustine and Postmodernism: Confessions and Circumfession* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005).

Chapter 3

Aquinas's Solution II: The Verticality of Desire

Last chapter we witnessed how Aquinas takes the first step in solving Augustine's dilemma regarding how human beings deficiently resemble the eminent intensive unity of God's simplicity. As we saw, he accomplishes this by appropriating Aristotle's metaphysical framework in order to decouple two (*viz.* the soul and self-knowledge) out of the three types of intensive unity that Augustine conflates. Moreover, we also detailed how Aquinas was able to set forth this remedy in a manner that simultaneously incorporates Augustine's seminal insights regarding the *exitus-reditus* structure of creation and the centrality of the inner word and the desire to know as the chief sites of the *imago Dei's* fulfillment. The result of this creative synthesis in Aquinas's anthropology is a precise description of the soul as the unified principle of existence, the intellect's native extroversion as evident in the vertical relation between sensitive and intelligent apprehension, and a reclassification of human self-knowledge as a higher-level intensive unity operatively dependent upon the primal intensive unity of the soul and the extroverted unities of sensitive and intelligent knowledge.

In this chapter, we circle back in order to pick up the last type of intensive unity that Augustine conflates in *De Trinitate*: a teleological unity of desire/love. We bracketed this intensive unity at the opening of Chapter 2 as a result of treating the apprehensive powers first and leaving the correlative powers of the sensitive appetite (i.e. the passions of the soul) and intellectual appetite (i.e. the will) for this chapter. What we will find in

turning back to this dimension of Augustine's dilemma is that Aquinas's account of the appetites accomplishes something closely reminiscent to what we witnessed in his epistemology: by elaborating upon a broadly Aristotelian account of appetite, Aquinas precisely differentiates this third type of intensive unity as the result of a vertical alignment of our desire and love in relation to a single apprehended object. As will be shown below, according to Aquinas this vertical alignment occurs *penultimately* via reason's virtuous ordering of our appetites amidst the multiplicity of creation's goods and *ultimately* when our appetites find their highest good and perfect happiness in union with God. As this formulation already suggests, Aquinas's re-theorization of the teleological form of intensive unity once again serves to expand the explanatory scope of Augustine's insights regarding the nature of desire's ascent back to God.

When combined with last chapter's account of the soul and the apprehensive powers, this second half of Aquinas's solution results in a theological anthropology that finally capitalizes on the nascent and unfulfilled promise of the three forms of deficient intensive unity—primal, epistemic, and teleological—implied by Augustine's overarching theological and anthropological framework in *De Trinitate*. By specifying the appetitive basis of this vertical alignment, Aquinas coherently thematizes the teleological intensive unity that Augustine struggles to describe in a non-reflective manner. As we have repeatedly noted, the result of this struggle is that he becomes caught in the circularity of describing this teleological unity as something that is always already reflectively realized and yet is also somehow fulfilled in contingent acts of self-knowledge as well. In contrast, what we will find on the other side of rounding out the precision of Aquinas's grasp

of the link between knowledge and desire is an ordered account of the primal, epistemic, and teleological types of intensive unity in the form of the soul, self-knowledge, and the vertical alignment of desire. Based upon filling out this ordered account, we will finally be a position to turn to Freudian identification in Chapters 4 and 5. In those two chapters, I will set forth my constructive proposal that egoic self-consciousness is a fourth *species* of intensive unity, grounded in the discrete acts of an “identifying” layer of the soul, that vertically establishes the self-differentiated conditions required for the higher operations of intelligence.

As way of recalling this framing connection with my overall inquiry into self-consciousness as a species of intensive unity, it is worth remembering that we first came across the theme of desire in the Introduction: in Fichte’s seminal joining together of knowledge (*viz.* the exceptional status of self-knowledge) and desire (*viz.* the primal drive of the self) in the modern discourse of self-consciousness. His emphasis on the “self’s” object-less striving (*Streben*) and longing (*Sehnen*) to “be infinite” that only “reverts back to the self” once it encounters a “check” or “limitation” not only passes directly into Hölderlin/Novalis, but also indirectly¹ into Freud’s theorization of the drive-filled unconsciousness to which we will turn next chapter. If last chapter’s presentation of Aquinas’s epistemology established an alternative (i.e. non-exceptional and non-reflective) framework through which to reconceive the relation between self-consciousness and knowledge, this chapter’s parallel treatment of desire/appetite in Aquinas’s theological anthropology will similarly serve as the basis to reframe this crucial theme, especially as

¹ Likely through Romantics such as Schiller and Goethe and Post-Kantian Idealists such as Schopenhauer and Nietzsche.

we will re-encounter it in Freud, so closely bound up to with in the origins of egoic self-consciousness.

One of the features of Aquinas's account of the appetites that will most significantly contribute to this reframing of desire's relation to self-consciousness is that, strictly speaking, the Thomist "appetite" (*appetitus*) enables a precise accounting of much more than "desire" *per se*, if by desire we simply mean a striving/longing toward "something" or, in the Fichtean case, no/thing in particular. Instead, Aquinas elucidates each of the appetites as a single generic potency whose acts encompass a wide-range of immanent experiences (e.g. love, desire, pain, pleasure, hatred, hope, joy) that many now hastily bundle together under the banner of the "emotions."² As will become clear in greater detail below, the metaphysical principle through which Aquinas successfully organizes these experiences holds that an appetite is that through which living beings carry out two interrelated capacities: (1) *seeking* out (e.g. loving, desiring, hoping for) objects that they consider to be "good" for their own well-being and (2) *resting* (e.g. taking pleasure in or enjoying) in those goods once they have been procured. Or conversely, if an object is contrary to that well-being (i.e. it is considered to be *evil*), the appetite similarly signals a movement *away* from that object (e.g. hatred, aversion, and pain). Foregrounding this metaphysical organization of the appetites already signals one of the most pivotal differences between Fichte's (and, as it turns out, Freud's) *Trieb* and Aquinas's *appetitus*: the

² For a detailed discussion of the proximity between Aquinas's account of the appetites and the modern notion of emotions, cf. Nicholas E. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 1-19.

former presumes that it has “no object at all,” the latter attributes a generic metaphysical object to all appetitive acts (*viz.* goodness).

As this overview already suggests, Aquinas’s formulation of the natural conditions that ground the possibility of a teleological alignment of the appetites in relation to goodness relies heavily on the notion of vertical finality that we established last chapter. If the positive vertical relation between the apprehensive powers consists in the senses’ necessary contribution of phantasms to the higher end of intellection, then the appetitive parallel can be found in that Aquinas insists that the sense appetite is “born to be obedient to reason.”³ This natural inclination of the sense appetite entails that its acts can make a distinct, horizontally-definable contribution as something to be ordered to the higher goods furnished by intelligence. When it is so ordered, the sense appetite becomes, in Aquinas’s vivid phrase, “rational by participation,”⁴ such that there occur sensitive passions that “chime” on a lower level with the will’s own appetitive movements. When the appetites move with such close resonance with one another there results an intensive alignment in relation to an intelligible good as extrovertedly apprehended by the intellect and then appetitively loved/desired/enjoyed by the will: everything appetitive in *us* (intensive) is enjoying the apprehensive interiorization of *that* (extroverted). As the chapter proceeds, what we will find is that this teleologically vertical relationship between the will and the sensitive appetite includes several different aspects—e.g. the will’s power of consent over the passions and the possibility of the will’s acts “overflowing,” as Aquinas calls it (*refluentia* or *redundantia*), to the sensitive appetite—that will expand our under-

³ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.56.4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I-II.56.4.ad1.

standing of vertical finality in ways that will play an important role in the chapters to come.

In light of this impending shift to theological construction, I should also note that the rhetoric in this chapter reflects a noticeable shift away from the explicit inclusion of Augustine and Aristotle as detailed interlocutors. This shift has nothing to do with whether or not Aquinas relies on these two figures in setting forth his understanding of the appetitive powers. There is no question at all that he does.⁵ Instead, it simply signals the fact that the last two chapters have served to introduce the necessary philosophical, theological, and metaphysical backdrop for grasping Aquinas's explication of the appetites without continuously including its genealogical sources in detail. As an expansion upon the sufficiency of this background, this chapter is more squarely focused on rounding out Aquinas's solution to Augustine's dilemma, and the metaphysically-precise theological anthropology in which that solution is embedded, in preparation for the constructive proposals that follow.

On account of this, the organization of this chapter reflects a rather straightforward exposition of Aquinas's rendering of the metaphysical nature of the sensitive and intellectual appetites both in their *horizontal principles* and in their *vertical interrelation* as teleologically ordered toward their intensive alignment as a result of our extroverted union with God. Tracking their vertical interrelation will prove particularly important be-

⁵ Even though Augustine and Aristotle would likely rank as the most important influences on Aquinas's understanding of the appetites, there is no parallel in this facet of his thought to the tightness of the metaphysical relationship that we glimpsed last chapter between Aristotle's *nous* and Aquinas's *intellectus*. This is partly due to Aristotle's comparative lack of emphasis on the will. In addition, though, Aquinas incorporates a wider variety of sources in his writings on the appetites than he does when outlining the apprehensive powers. The most important of these other voices are John of Damascus and Cicero.

cause several aspects of this relation will be repeated—albeit with different nuances—in my constructive situating of a distinct identifying layer of the soul “in between” the sensitive and intelligent layers. For the moment, however, the itinerary before us will progress through four main sections. First, I begin by introducing Aquinas’s metaphysics of appetite in general, which is distinct from, and yet intimately bound up with, his metaphysics of apprehension. From this starting point, I then turn, in the second and third sections, to examine the horizontal nature of the sensitive appetite (i.e. the passions of the soul) and the intellectual appetite (i.e. the will) as generically defined by different aspects of goodness. Fourth, I describe the vertical interrelation between these two types of appetite as it pertains to their intended intensive alignment in rational/godward virtue and their tragic divergence in sin and vice. Lastly, just as I did in Chapter 2, I will close with a summary and an outline of another gap in Aquinas’s anthropology that appears in and through his account of the appetites. Once again, the nature of this gap will serve to point us to a conceptual space that will prove significant when we turn to Freud in Chapters 4 and 5.

I. The Metaphysics of Appetite in General

In order to sufficiently make the transitional link with Chapter 2, we ought to begin by specifying the precise relation between acts of apprehension and appetitive response according to Aquinas. Metaphysically expressed, the appetites stand as passive potencies to a form that has been immanently assimilated to the creature by an act of apprehension. As Aquinas succinctly declares, “[T]he appetitive power is a passive potency [*potentia passiva*], which is naturally moved by the thing apprehended: wherefore the apprehended

appetible is a mover which is not moved, while the appetite is a mover moved.”⁶ The nature of this moved movement, as I have already mentioned and will expand upon in a moment, is some sort of prompting toward that apprehended object as a desirable good or away from that object as a repulsive evil.

As we briefly touched upon at the opening of Chapter 2, Aquinas further characterizes the difference between apprehension and appetitive response as the difference between a cognitive interiorization *into* the knower and a derivative inclination *toward* (or away from) that which has been cognized. As he writes in *ST* I.16.1:

Now there is this difference between the appetite and the intellect, or any cognition whatsoever, that cognition is according as the thing known is in the knower, while the appetitive response [*appetitus*] is according as the desirer [*appetens*] is inclined toward the thing desired [*appetitam*].

Or, to repeat a declaration that we have referenced before: “[I]t belongs to one faculty to have within itself something which is outside it, and to another faculty to tend to what is outside it.”⁷ In acts of apprehension there is a reception of *another* object’s form (sensible or intelligible), whereas an appetitive response is elicited according to whether or not that received form will aid in the perfection of the creature’s *own* form. Without this initial formal assimilation of the object to the knower, however, there is no moving object for the appetite and thus it will lie in a state of dormant potency.

Once moved, however, the respective acts of an appetite are what Aquinas generally calls affections (*affectiones*) of the soul that prompt the individual toward a good or away from an evil. As Aquinas writes, “[T]he acts [...] of every appetitive faculty tend

⁶ Aquinas, *ST* I.80.2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, I.59.2

towards good and evil, as to their proper objects.”⁸ In a moment, we will turn to discuss how apprehended objects are evaluated as good or evil. For now, however, let us stay with Aquinas’s general terminology for appetitive movements. When applied to the sensitive appetite, Aquinas typically speaks of these movements as passions (*passiones*)⁹ of the soul as a species of appetitive affection,¹⁰ whereas vis-à-vis the will he is usually content to simply reference them as the affections of the intellective appetite.¹¹ As mentioned at the outset, the names of the specific affections of both appetites roughly correspond to what we might call emotions—e.g. joy, desire (or concupiscence), fear, anger, hatred, love, hope—but Aquinas maintains a metaphysical and phenomenological clarity about appetitive affections that has often eluded the contemporary reflection on the nature of “emotions.”¹²

The overarching source of this clarity can be found in the detailed way that Aquinas situates appetitive affections within his broader metaphysical understanding of substantial and accidental forms, goodness, perfection, being, existence, and actuality. In fact, Aquinas first discusses appetite in the *Summa Theologiae* in the context of defining goodness in general in the fifth question of the *Prima Pars*. According to Aquinas, good-

⁸ Ibid., I.20.1.

⁹ Aquinas uses the word *passio*, and its verbal forms such as *pati*, in three ways (cf. *ST* I-II.22.1): (1) In a general way to signify the reception of anything, (2) the reception of a quality that takes away a negative quality (e.g. health takes away sickness), and (3) the reception of a quality that takes away a positive quality (e.g. sickness takes away health). As Aquinas had received it, the concept of passion had a strong negative metaphysical connotation that owed much to the orthodox defense of God’s *impassivity* in the patristic christological and trinitarian debates. Accordingly, he affirms that *passio* “most properly” semantically applies to the loss of a positive quality (e.g. sorrow is more properly a passion than joy), despite the fact that he also crucially defends the ontological goodness of the passions of the soul as created by God and thus potentially ordered to the perfection of human nature.

¹⁰ For instances in which passions are treated as a species of affections, cf. *ST* I.81.3.ad3, I-II.22.2.sc, I-II.59.2, and III.15.4.

¹¹ E.g. Ibid., I-II.82.5.ad1.

¹² Cf. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 8-19, 224-71.

ness and being are really convertible and only differ logically (i.e. *secundum rationem*).¹³ While being signifies that which has “existence in actuality [*esse in actu*],”¹⁴ goodness signifies the perfection of that existence according to the ends specified by the principles of a thing’s substantial form. On the basis of these substantial principles, a creature’s appetite(s) propels it to seek its perfection through the accidental forms or qualities (e.g. sensitive pleasure, knowledge, virtue) that accrue to an agent through the possession of other goods: “for all things desire [*appetunt*] their own perfection.”¹⁵ Hence, Aquinas identifies a thing’s substantial form as that through which God wills not only a thing’s actual being, but its being in itself and *simpliciter* as something good and desirable, an “end” that is simultaneously the root of all other ends. As that which is the providential medium for a thing’s existence, a substantial form is the proximate source of that thing’s primal goodness: “For all being, as being, has actuality and is in some way perfect; since every act implies some sort of perfection; and perfection implies desirability and goodness [...] Hence it follows that every being as such is good.”¹⁶ As that which defines all of a thing’s potencies, that same unitary form furnishes the principles according to which a creature seeks to actualize the intensive unity of its perfection. For, as Aquinas movingly writes, “the good of each thing consists in a certain unity, inasmuch as each thing has, united in itself, the elements of which its perfection consists.”¹⁷

¹³ Aquinas, *ST* I.5.1.ad1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I.5.1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I.5.3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I-II.36.3.

Not only do we have here his Aristotelian expansion of Augustine’s dictum that “inasmuch as we exist we are good,”¹⁸ but we also begin to encounter the degree to which Aquinas is willing to ground desire, both in the sense of the one who *desires* in and through its appetites and the *desirability* of the proximate objects of one’s appetites, in the ontological goodness of creation and the intelligent ordering of the Creator. For inasmuch as all actual things thereby participate in the likeness of the God who is *purus actus* and thus that which is supremely good and desirable,¹⁹ then each of these things is thereby derivatively good and desirable in some way as well.²⁰ So often the object of theological suspicion, desire and desirability, for Aquinas at least, are goods created as intrinsically ordered to the perfection of God’s creation. This point is underlined by the fact that Aquinas defines evil—the opposite of goodness—as that which *prevents* something from an end that it was created to realize. Evil has no existence unto itself; it only frustrates the good from being realized to its most perfect extent.²¹ “For evil,” as Aquinas declares, “is the absence of the good which is natural and due to a thing.”²²

With this broader metaphysical context established, we can return to and elaborate upon our initial definition above that the appetite is the means through which beings naturally tend (1) to *seek* (*appetere*) their own perfection by assimilating other goods or, inversely, to flee from evils that hinder their perfection and (2) to *rest* (*quiēscere*) in those goods once they have been possessed or, inversely, to register the pain of evils that are

¹⁸ Augustine, *doct. chr.* I.42 and Aquinas, *ST* I.5.1.sc.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, I.6.1-2.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, I.44.4.ad3.

²¹ Aquinas differentiates two types of evil: moral and non-moral (cf. *Ibid.*, I-II.18.2). Moral evil occurs when the will chooses a created good in a disordered fashion. Non-moral evil occurs in a particular privation of a thing’s natural form (e.g. the loss of sight).

²² *Ibid.*, I.49.1.

nonetheless present despite attempts to flee or resist them.²³ At this point, it is essential to emphasize the appetitive significance of the metaphysical relationship between good and evil just referenced: good and evil are not, appetitively speaking, equal metaphysical categories for Aquinas. Instead, the appetites' essential object is always of good and only secondarily of evil. Accordingly, an appetitive repulsion to an evil always presupposes a notion of the good that it hinders and in terms of which it is defined as a derivative contrast. Thus:

[S]ince good is essentially and especially the object of the will and the appetite, [and] whereas evil is only the object secondarily and indirectly, as opposed to good, it follows that the acts of the will and appetite that regard good must naturally be prior to those that regard evil; thus, for instance, joy is prior to sorrow, love to hate.²⁴

Aquinas then concludes with the general rule that punctuates the ontological, appetitive, and definitional priority of good in comparison with evil: “what exists of itself is always prior to that which exists through another.”²⁵

In addition, when considering the second appetitive operation—to rest in a good possessed—one must keep in mind that by “rest” Aquinas does not mean anything like the cessation of the appetite's act, but rather the exact opposite: the perfection of its act that coincides with affections of delighting and enjoying a good that is now possessed. The importance of this point can be found in that it is only in connection with the appetite's operations and affections of rest that a divine exemplar for creaturely appetites can be affirmed. For inasmuch as these operations of rest are perfect acts,²⁶ they stand as a

²³ Ibid., I.19.1.

²⁴ Ibid., I.20.1.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., I-II.31.2.ad1.

deficient participation of the perfection of God's appetite, the divine will, the act of which eternally "rests" and "delights" in the eminent goodness of the divine essence.²⁷ In creatures, however, their native imperfection gives appetite its twofold function of seeking other goods and subsequently "resting therein when possessed."²⁸

From this starting point, Aquinas then subdivides these two appetitive operations into three possible phases of appetitive response—inclination, movement, and rest—that an apprehended good (or evil) can elicit from the appetite. The first two phases (inclination and movement) belong to the appetite's "seeking" out of perfecting goods and the last phase obviously belongs to the "resting" in those goods that have been possessed. The axiomatic function of this threefold subdivision can scarcely be overstated as an organizing principle of both the *Prima Secundae* and the *Secunda Secundae*.²⁹ The most

²⁷ Ibid., I.19.1.ad2.

²⁸ Ibid., I.19.1.

²⁹ This is despite the fact that several usually reliable interpreters have lodged doubts about the coherence of this threefold subdivision. Two criticisms have been most common. First, some (e.g. Nicholas Lombardo and Eric D'Arcy) have questioned whether there is any logical difference between inclination and movement. The constructive result of this criticism is the proposal to merge the passions of inclination into those of movement (Lombardo: love into desire; D'Arcy: hate into aversion). Second, others (e.g. Frederick Crowe) have resisted the idea that love can be the appetitive principle of both movement and rest. This criticism leads to the outright declaration that Aquinas's mature descriptions of love lack a basic integration to the extent that, in Crowe's judgment at least, a rather elaborate reconstruction project is in order. Both criticisms share the same fatal flaw: the mistaken assumption that *inclinatio* entails any kind motion or impulse in itself. It does not, despite what many other popular connotations of love might lead us to read into Aquinas. Instead, to borrow Michael Sherwin's phrase aimed at the same cluster of misunderstandings, "*inclinatio* primarily signifies a *principle* of motion" (Sherwin, p. 78n67) that, in created appetites anyways, follows immediately from an evaluative judgment of reason of an appetitive object. Nor is the distinction merely semantic for Aquinas. Instead, it is his brilliant avenue of affirming that affections of inclination (love) and rest (joy) can be affirmed in God, even though affections of movement are only found in creatures. This is because love regards a good regardless of "whether [it is] possessed or not" (*ST* I.20.1). Thus, God has an *inclinatio* for the divine essence that is eternally the principle of God's corresponding joy (*ST* I.26.4). This analogy depends on (a) a distinction between affections of inclination and movement and (b) love being the principle both of desire (in imperfect creatures) and of joy (in God and in perfected creatures). See: Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 57-62; Eric D'Arcy, "Introduction and Notes," in *Summa Theologiae. Vol. 19, The Emotions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 28-29 note c; Frederick E. Crowe, "Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas," *Theological Studies* 20 (1959): 1-39, 198-230,

crucial organizing effect of this subdivision of inclination, movement, and rest is to be found in Aquinas's conclusion that all appetitive affections can be categorized, and causally ordered, in reference to these three phases of appetitive response. Aquinas sequentially details these three phases in *ST I-II.23.4*:³⁰

For every mover, in a fashion, either draws the patient to itself, or repels it from itself. Now in drawing it to itself, it does three things in the patient. Because, in the first place, it gives the patient an inclination or aptitude to tend to the mover: thus a light body, which is above, bestows lightness on the body generated, so that it has an inclination or aptitude to be above. Secondly, if the generated body be outside its proper place, the mover gives it movement towards that place. Thirdly, it makes it to rest, when it shall have come to its proper place: since to the same cause are due, both rest in a place, and the movement to that place. The same applies to the cause of repulsion.

In another passage, Aquinas makes the same point by stating that the appetitive phase of movement is connected to its origin in inclination and its terminus in rest as the progressive passage from one kind of union to another: (1) an affective union [*unio affectiva*], which consists in merely "having an aptitude for and an inclination to another"³¹ and (2) a real union [*unio realis*], which consists in the actual "conjunction [*coniunctionem*] of one with the other."³² The affections of inclination (e.g. love and hate) are associated with affective unions. The affections of rest (e.g. pleasure and sadness) are associated with real unions with either desired goods or hated evils. The mode of conjunction that defines the difference between affective and real unions depends, as I will detail below, on the nature of desired object itself, but the general point to be grasped here still stands: the affections

343-82; and Michael Sherwin, *By Knowledge and By Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 76-79.

³⁰ He repeats these three again, more concisely, at *ST I-II.25.2*.

³¹ *Ibid.*, I-II.25.2.ad2.

³² *Ibid.*

of movement (e.g. desire and aversion) connote an appetitive “middle space,”³³ caused by an initial inclination toward or away from an apprehended object that terminates in the affections of rest associated with the real presence of a good or an evil.

The causal interrelation of these three phases of appetite can be spoken of in either “direction,” so to speak. In the order of intention the end of the appetitive movement—to rest in the desired good—causes both the affections of inclination and movement. Conversely, in the order of generation, or execution, the initial inclination toward an object causes the corresponding affections of movement and rest.³⁴ As we will see, and as one might expect, much of the “drama” of the appetites occurs in the second phase of movement, for in this stage a creature is dynamically impelled toward an absent good (or away from an evil). In contrast, the affections of inclination follow immediately from the evaluation of an object as good or evil and, likewise, the affections of rest necessarily follow the conjoined presence of a loved good or a hated evil.

The next to last element of Aquinas’s metaphysics of the appetitive powers to note from this general point of view has to do with exactly how any given apprehended object is evaluated, or judged, as suitable (*conveniens*) to a creature’s relative perfection and thus as good or evil. The answer to this question depends on the type of appetite under consideration and, in particular, the relative strength of the cognitive power with which that appetite is paired. In this regard, it is important to make clear that Aquinas actually enumerates *three* types of created appetite. In addition to the sensitive and intellectual appetites, his metaphysics requires him to include a “natural” appetite associated

³³ Ibid., I-II.8.3.ad3.

³⁴ Ibid., I-II.25.1.

with the vegetative soul as well. Its inclusion fills out a categorization of the appetites according to the degree to which their objects include cognition:

All things in their own way are inclined by appetite towards good, but in different ways. Some are inclined to good by their natural inclination, without knowledge [*cognitione*], as plants and inanimate bodies. Such inclination towards good is called “a natural appetite.” Others, again, are inclined towards good, but with some knowledge; not that they know the aspect of goodness, but that they apprehend some particular good; as in the sense, which knows the sweet, the white, and so on. The inclination which follows this apprehension is called “a sensitive appetite.” Other things, again, have an inclination towards good, but with a knowledge whereby they perceive the aspect of goodness; this belongs to the intellect. This is most perfectly inclined towards what is good; not, indeed, as if it were merely guided by another towards some particular good only, like things devoid of knowledge, nor towards some particular good only, as things which have only sensitive knowledge, but as inclined towards the universal good. Such inclination is termed “will.”³⁵

In light of its not having any cognitive power at all, the vegetative layer of the soul cannot “know” any object *as* good, and thus it cannot judge it to be good either. Instead, in the natural appetite there is simply the “blind”³⁶ search for the goods (e.g. water, CO₂, and light) that aid in the vegetative perfections of nutrition and growth.

In the sensitive and intelligent layers of the soul, however, the matter is a good bit more complicated. The primary cause of this complication is that Aquinas is adamant that it is not within the power of the appetite to judge an object as good or evil. To do so requires a comparative ordering of goods defined by this question: what is the relation between this creature’s relative perfection and any given aspect of goodness of the apprehended object? To make a comparative judgment of particular goods in relation to an end

³⁵ Ibid., I.59.1.

³⁶ Lonergan, *Verbum*, 2:209.

is the quintessential operative domain of discursive reasoning.³⁷ Appetites do not judge; their acts simply and naturally consist in responding to the good (or evil) as precedingly judged and “defined by reason [*bonum rationis*].”³⁸ The manner in which reason renders its judgment varies rather widely between the sensitive and intellectual appetite, as well as between different kinds of creatures. For instance, any talk of “reason” must be heavily qualified vis-à-vis animals whose souls supply them with a sensitive appetite, but with no powers of intelligence. Accordingly, in the next two sections we will specify in much more detail the respective ways that reason renders its judgment in relation to each type of appetite respectively. For now, it suffices to make clear that the movements of both the sensitive and intellectual appetites depend entirely on reason’s previous judgment of an object as good or evil, as suitable or opposed to the creature’s relative perfection.

Finally, before moving on to consider the passions and the will in particular, it should be mentioned that the perspectival element that the notion of suitability gives to Aquinas’s account of appetite has at times proven difficult for its interpreters to track consistently.³⁹ The chief reason for this difficulty seems to be tied to the fact that Aquinas requires his readers to steadfastly observe a distinction between *material* objects, *apprehended* objects, which generically includes material objects (i.e. sensed or derivatively

³⁷ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.13.1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, I-II.62.3.

³⁹ For example, Susan James judges it be “confusing” that Aquinas clearly asserts that the appetitive powers “are distinguished by their objects” and yet proceeds to enumerate the passions in such a way that they include an emotive “relation” to a creature’s perspective and needs. This confusion only arises if one does not properly distinguish between material, apprehended, and intentional objects. Cf. Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 56. For more nuanced expositions, see Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 43-47 and Mark P. Drost, “Intentionality in Aquinas’s Theory of Emotions,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 31 (1991): 449-60.

imagined) and immaterial objects (e.g. intelligible knowledge and virtue),⁴⁰ and *intentional* objects, which denote the proximate and ultimate ends that a creature seeks to realize through the means of some desirable aspect of the apprehended object. The contingent, creaturely specific, combination of the intentional object and some aspect of the apprehended object is that which a creature uses to evaluate that object as good or evil.⁴¹

Keeping track of the precise meaning of these different objects is crucial to following Aquinas's account of appetite for two reasons. First, the distinction between an apprehended and an intentional object explains, for instance, why the same material object can elicit a wide diversity appetitive responses not only by different creatures, but also from the same creature *at different times*. For example, a pear (i.e. a material object) can elicit varying appetitive responses by way of different aspects of its being (e.g. its color, taste, temperature, size, location, value in the market economy, or its scientific intelligibility) through which it might become a means for realizing an almost infinite number of intentional ends depending on the circumstances. Accordingly, the same pear that stood unappealing to me hours before because I had just eaten lunch might now elicit a strong appetitive response from me as a suitable afternoon snack in the service of the interrelated intentional ends of satisfying hunger, promoting health, and increasing energy. Without maintaining the distinctions between material, apprehended, and intentional objects, Aquinas's account of appetite would have a difficult time explaining even such a basic phenomenon of desire.

⁴⁰ Aquinas, *ST* I.80.2.ad2.

⁴¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, I.78.4.

Second, this distinction is central to explaining the lived gap that often exists between a creature's judgment that a certain apprehended object will promote its perfection and the degree to which it will actually do so in reality. According to Aquinas, it is impossible for any appetite to be attracted to an object that is judged *as evil* because its natural constitution inclines it to pursue the creature's good and to flee from something contrary to its good. Nonetheless, it is certainly possible for a creature to judge some aspect of an apprehended object as good—an “apparent good”⁴²—even though actually coming to possess that object will end up, in truth, hindering or preventing a higher good of perfection from being realized in that creature, thereby making that same object an evil in this respect.⁴³ This dynamic is, of course, the root of human sin and the vicious habits thereby derived and/or reinforced. For when we sin our appetites carry us away to that which is in reality tragically contrary to our own perfection that we nonetheless still desire.⁴⁴ In contrast, human acts that are morally good, from which virtuous habits are derived and/or reinforced, take shape as acts whose proximate objects are intentionally ordered, penultimately by reason and ultimately (and graciously) by God, to the highest good in which the perfections of all individuals share a common *telos*. For in those particular acts of goodness, human beings find their appetites gradually and vertically aligned toward the God whose universal goodness is the intelligible “good of every good”⁴⁵ and therefore the last and most perfect end of all human acts.

⁴² Cf. *Ibid.*, I-II.8.1. and I-II.9.6.ad3.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, I-II.78.1.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Augustine, *trin.* VIII.4.

II. Sense Appetite: The Passions of the Soul

As one would expect given the metaphysics of appetite just outlined, the object of the sense appetite is the sensible good. Its affections, which Aquinas consistently calls the passions of the soul (*passiones animae*), respond to the good or evil of an object presented either directly by the exterior senses or, derivatively, by the imagination. In addition to this causative relationship to sense apprehension,⁴⁶ the passions also parallel the senses' necessary connection to material transmutation and reliance upon a corporeal organ, which Aquinas somewhat vaguely assigns to the changes of "hot or cold" emanating from the heart. For example, "anger is said to be a kindling of the blood around the heart"⁴⁷ and in fear "heat abandons the heart"⁴⁸ resulting in a coldness spreading throughout one's body.⁴⁹

Within this one generic appetitive power, Aquinas identifies two specific powers, the concupiscible and irascible powers, that give rise to interrelated, and yet distinct, sets of passions.⁵⁰ The concupiscible power responds to an object simply as good (i.e. suitable) or evil; the irascible power considers an object not only as good or evil, but also in terms of a "restricted"⁵¹ subset of those goods or evils that Aquinas labels as "arduous" [*arduuum*].⁵² He defines arduous in terms of goods that are difficult to possess or evils that are similarly difficult to avoid. He makes this distinction between the concupiscible and irascible powers within the same generic appetite in order to account for a phenomenon

⁴⁶ Aquinas, *ST* I.81.1.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, I-II.22.2.ad3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, I-II.44.3.ad3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, I-II.44.1.ad1 and I-II.44.3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, I.81.2.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, I-II.25.1.sc.

⁵² *Ibid.*, I.81.2.

that cannot be reduced to a single principle. As Aquinas describes it: “[S]ometimes the soul busies itself with unpleasant things, against the inclination of the concupiscible appetite, in order that, following the impulse of the irascible appetite, it may fight against obstacles.”⁵³ In other words, sometimes a creature is faced with an object that in itself is perceived as evil—an obstacle to a desired good—but instead of fleeing from the evil as would be the impulse of the concupiscible power, the appetitive faculty instead prompts the creature to engage that evil. To take a common example, often the desire for the good of better cardiovascular health causes people to endure numerous types of pain that they would normally avoid.⁵⁴ In Aquinas’s assessment, the only way to explain this impulse is to affirm an appetitive potency, the irascible power, aimed at a slightly more specific object—the arduous good or evil—when compared with that of the concupiscible faculty, which considers good and evil “simply”⁵⁵ and “absolutely.”⁵⁶

Taken together, the concupiscible and irascible powers issue in eleven primary passions according to Aquinas.⁵⁷ The six concupiscible passions are grouped together in three pairs of contrary passions that are paired together by virtue of belonging to the same appetitive phase (inclination, movement, or rest). Their contrariety is based upon their respective connectedness to good or evil. For example, love and hate are the initial inclinations of the concupiscible power, with the former prompting an attraction to a good and

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Similarly, Aquinas movingly describes Jesus’ struggle in Gethsemane as the natural reaction of the concupiscible passions to avoid “sensible pain and bodily injury” (*ST* III.18.5), despite the fact that he ultimately endured the cross for the sake of a joy that lay on the other side of it. Cf. Heb. 12:2.

⁵⁵ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.46.2.

⁵⁶ Ibid., I-II.23.4.

⁵⁷ These eleven are “primary” because they are not exhaustively descriptive for Aquinas, but instead form the generic basis for his frequent subdivision of them into a diversity of subspecies within the primary passion. For example, in *ST* I-II.35.8 he subdivides sorrow into four subspecies: pity (*miser cordia*), envy (*invidia*), anxiety (*anxietas*), and torpor (*acedia*).

the latter an aversion to an evil. In parallel fashion, desire/repulsion (movement) and pleasure/pain (rest) are similarly paired together. To these six passions, Aquinas adds five more to be considered from the irascible power: hope, despair, daring, fear, and anger. As we will see in more detail in a moment, all of the irascible passions are variations within the movement phase of appetitive response.

Before proceeding to describe each of these passions in detail, we must first make it clear how apprehended objects are presented to the sense appetite already evaluated as good or evil. Hence, we will first consider the relationship between reason and the sense appetite before proceeding, respectively, to the concupiscible and irascible passions of the soul.

a. Particular Reason and the Sense Appetite

We begin first with a qualification. My immediate concern here is not with the dynamic relationship that exists between universal reason, the sense appetite, and the vertical manner by which the latter can become “rational by participation.” That will be treated in the last section of this chapter, on the other side of outlining Aquinas’s account of the will. Instead, the question here is how sense apprehension presents an object to the sense appetite as somehow already evaluated as good or evil vis-à-vis the creature’s perfection. To what degree can there be a kind of rational judgment *within* the sensitive layer of the soul given that fact that this comparative evaluation seems to presuppose the power of discursive reasoning?

Aquinas answers this question by making two distinctions. First, he distinguishes between intentional objects that are appetible to the senses *per se* versus those that are

appetible on the basis of ends not directly perceivable by the senses. The former kind of intentional object coincides with sensible qualities of objects that are, in a certain way, pleasurable—and thus appetible—to the senses themselves as, for instance, something pleasant to taste, beautiful to see, satisfying to hear, or enjoyable to touch (or be touched by). Accounting for the appetitive responses that are elicited by these sensed objects requires no rational judgment *per se* beyond the operative interaction between the sensitive power of memory and the senses themselves because there is no comparative abstraction in reference to ends beyond the immediacy of the sensible good.⁵⁸ However, the latter kind of intentional object, those that are based on ends not perceivable by the senses, resist this simple explanation. These kinds of intentional objects can be illustrated by Aquinas’s own pair of stock examples: the sheep who senses a wolf and evaluates it as something more, a “natural enemy,” than can be concluded directly by its color and shape or the bird who “gathers together straws, not because they are pleasant to the sense, but because they are useful for building its nest.”⁵⁹ In order to account for these types of intentional objects, Aquinas concludes that one of the interior senses must have some connection to reason for making such an evaluative judgment beyond that which can be perceived immediately by the senses.

Specifying this “connection” with reason leads to Aquinas’s second distinction: the difference in this regard between the respective sense appetites of human beings and non-intelligent animals. In non-intelligent animals, Aquinas attributes this capability of responding to sensed objects on the basis of non-sensed ends to the operation of the inner

⁵⁸ Ibid., I.78.4.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

sense that we bracketed in Chapter 2: the estimative sense.⁶⁰ Crucially, Aquinas concludes that the implicit “rationality” of the estimative sense’s acts in non-intelligent animals must be regarded as something directly imputed by the prevenient rationality of the Creator in the form of “instinct.” As Aquinas describes this link between the estimative sense and instinct, “Brute animals have a natural instinct imparted to them by divine reason, in virtue of which they are gifted with movements that are [...] similar to rational movements.”⁶¹

In humans, however, there is no estimative sense that renders judgments on the basis of instinct. Instead, according to Aquinas these sensitive judgments are issued on the basis of an interplay between memory and what Aquinas synonymously calls the “cogitative power” or the “particular reason [*ratio particularis*].”⁶² Even though Aquinas follows the demand of his metaphysics to assign this power a corporeal organ, following the best medical knowledge of his day he assigns to the “middle part of the head,”⁶³ Aquinas also argues that the *ratio* of particular reason in human beings results from its “affinity and proximity to the universal reason” in the soul, which “so to speak, overflows [*refluentia*]” into this power.⁶⁴ As we will see as the chapter unfolds, this notion of an “overflow” from a higher power to a lower power opens up another dimension of vertical finality—in addition to a lower power contributing a necessary preamble to the higher power’s acts—that will prove pivotal for us moving forward. For the moment, however, the immediately relevant result of this overflow into the cogitative power is that, just as

⁶⁰ Ibid., I.78.4 and I.81.3.

⁶¹ Ibid., I-II.46.4.ad2.

⁶² Ibid., I.78.4 and I.81.3.

⁶³ Ibid., I.78.4.

⁶⁴ Ibid., I.78.4.ad5.

the intellect “knows many things which the sense cannot perceive” in a comparatively eminent manner,⁶⁵ particular reason gives humans the ability to discursively “[compare] individual intentions”⁶⁶ that have occurred in the past in order to better evaluate the relative good or evil of a given sensed (or imagined) object in the present.⁶⁷ On the basis of this comparison, particular reason then judges the object’s relative suitability to the creature’s well-being, which thereby moves the appetite accordingly.

This vertical “overflow” of the intelligent rational power also accounts for two other features unique to the human sense appetite. First, whereas in non-intelligent animals the passions lead to immediate locomotion (e.g. fleeing from the enemy), in human beings these same passions usually, except in rare cases to be considered later, cannot of themselves control the locomotive powers in pursuit of a good or to flee an evil. Instead, the immanent promptings of the passions “[await] the command of the will, [the] superior appetite,”⁶⁸ which can execute, mitigate, or resist those impulses. The logic of this affirmation follows one of Aquinas’s general metaphysical rules that governs his description of the relation between the appetites and which is worth highlighting even at this early stage: “wherever we have order among a number of active powers, that power which regards the universal end moves the powers which regard particular ends.”⁶⁹ Even though the sense appetite has a certain degree of horizontal independence in its judgments, the higher powers of universal reason and appetite (i.e. the will) usually maintain a vertical

⁶⁵ Ibid., I.78.4.ad4.

⁶⁶ Ibid., I.81.3.

⁶⁷ Ibid., I.78.4.

⁶⁸ Ibid., I.81.3.

⁶⁹ Ibid., I.82.4.

position of executive agency in relation to those sensitive judgments and appetitive responses.

Second, the “overflow” of the rational power into the sensitive appetite also explains why the sense appetite in humans is inclined to a far greater range of objects than experienced by non-rational animals. These animals, according to Aquinas, are only attracted to what he calls “natural” objects of the sense appetite.⁷⁰ These sensible objects are those that naturally and necessarily serve the physical well-being of the creature (e.g. food and drink)⁷¹ or the species (e.g. sexual union).⁷² However, in addition to these natural objects of attraction and repulsion, human beings are also sensitively moved toward what Aquinas calls non-natural objects.⁷³ These arise because particular reason gives them the capability to “devise [*excogitare*] something as good and suitable, beyond that which nature requires.”⁷⁴ For example, this type of non-natural evaluation applies to the human capacity to develop highly nuanced preferences for food and drink and intense attractions to non-natural inventions (i.e. the products of human artifice) such as those that drive the attraction to sensible entertainment, technology, and the accumulation of wealth.⁷⁵

b. The Concupiscible Passions

As I already briefly referenced, the six concupiscible passions are ordered as contrary pairs associated with each phase of appetitive response: love vs. hatred (inclination), de-

⁷⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, I-II.30.3-4.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, I-II.30.3.

⁷² *Ibid.*, I-II.31.6.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, I-II.30.3.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, I-II.30.3. Cf. *ST* I-II.30.3.ad3 for the specific assignation of this power to the particular reason.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, I-II.30.4.

sire vs. aversion (movement), and pleasure vs. pain (rest).⁷⁶ The first member of each pair of passions corresponds with the appetitive response toward the cognition of a good object, and thus one is inclined to that object in love (*amor*), moved toward that object in desire (*concupiscentia*), and terminally resting in the conjoined presence of that object in pleasure (*delectatio*). Derivatively, since “the quest of a good is the reason for shunning the opposite evil,”⁷⁷ one is disinclined to an evil object in hatred (*odium*), moved away from that object in aversion (*fuga*), and terminally—albeit tragically—resting in a present evil in pain (*dolor*).

Aquinas’s usual method for explicating the concupiscible passions, which is a strategy which he adopts in order to prevent redundancy, is to move through each pair of passions beginning with the one oriented toward a good object and then to contrast this more primary passion with the contrary one that leads the creature away from an evil object. In what follows, I will adopt this strategy as well. Not only does this way of proceeding underline Aquinas’s assertion that the appetite’s primary object is goodness (and not evil *per se*), but it also reinforces his commitment that the appetite is good itself and thereby created by God as an intrinsic means for progressively pursuing a creature’s perfection.

We begin, then, with love. Aquinas’s most general definition of love is that it is the “first,” or principle, “movement [...] of every appetitive faculty”⁷⁸ toward a certain end considered as good. From this initial amorous inclination every other appetitive

⁷⁶ Ibid., I.23.2.

⁷⁷ Ibid., I.25.2.

⁷⁸ Ibid., I.20.1, also I-II.26.1.

phase or passion “proceeds [...] from love as from a first cause [*prima causa*].”⁷⁹ This definition is broad enough to apply to all three levels of appetite. Accordingly, at the lowest level, in the natural appetite, there is a “natural love” that consists simply a living thing’s natural inclination toward that which it needs to sustain life. Aquinas describes this lowest level of love as the “appetitive subject’s connaturalness with the thing to which it tends.”⁸⁰ To natural love, Aquinas analogously names the first movement of both the sensitive and intellective appetite as coincident with their corresponding movements of love: “sensitive love,” which he usually calls *amor*,⁸¹ and “intellectual or rational love,”⁸² which he often calls *caritas* (i.e. charity).⁸³

As the first movement of the sensitive appetite, the passion of love follows a judgment of a sensitive object as suitable to a creature’s perfection. The result is that the appetite is moved, as Aquinas describes the initial affective union of love, to a “certain complacency in that object”⁸⁴ that inclines the appetite toward some aspect of that object that thereby becomes its intentional object. By way of this amorous inclination, the “appetible object moves the appetite, introducing itself, as it were, into its intention [such that] the appetite tends toward that object as something that must really be pursued.”⁸⁵ In contrast, “hatred is [the] dissonance of the appetite from that which is apprehended as repugnant and hurtful” to a creature’s goodness, in short that which “bears the aspect of

⁷⁹ Ibid., I-II.28.6.ad2.

⁸⁰ Ibid., I-II.26.1.

⁸¹ Cf. Ibid., I-II.26-28.

⁸² Ibid., I-II.26.1.

⁸³ Cf. Ibid., II-II.23-27.

⁸⁴ Ibid., I-II. 26.2.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

evil.”⁸⁶ As one would expect, Aquinas is clear that hatred is always caused by a preceding love that is hindered by the apprehended evil. In this sense, love is always the first movement of the appetite, never hate in and of itself. For, “nothing is hated, save through being contrary to a suitable thing which is loved [and] hence it is that every hatred is caused by love.”⁸⁷

By clearly stating that love is the first movement of every appetitive faculty, Aquinas repeats vis-à-vis self-love the solution, covered at length last chapter, to Augustine’s problematic affirmation of self-knowledge (and self-love) as both a immanently realized primal fact *and* a subsequent unifying of the self that occurs through the reflective capacities of the intellect and the will. On the one hand, Aquinas is willing to affirm that the general feature of love as the seeking out of that which is suitable to one’s own good qualifies as a certain kind of “love with which one loves oneself.”⁸⁸ On the other hand, however, this self-love has no actuality in itself. It is only a passive potency—*a la* the passive intellect—to be actualized in the wake of apprehended objects *and* then subsequently perfected in the occurrence of real union and the corresponding passions of rest. Again, the nature of these self-preserving appetitive potencies are indeed attributable to a certain kind of primal intensive unity, one which Aquinas calls that of “substantial union.”⁸⁹ However, this unity is attributable, not to any realized state of self-love, but only to the singularity of a substantial form that gives human beings an intensive existence shot through with potentiality and naturally ordered to external goods initially appre-

⁸⁶ Ibid., I.29.1.

⁸⁷ Ibid., I.29.2.

⁸⁸ Ibid., I-II.28.1.ad2. See also, I.60.3.

⁸⁹ Ibid., I-II.28.1.ad2.

hended through the senses. In other words, Aquinas consistently understands self-love as that which naturally launches us towards external goods whose relative goodness we can love. In this way, the lover is always “placed outside [herself] and made to pass into the object of the beloved.”⁹⁰ By way of the principles of their substantial form, creatures desire their own good by desiring to be united with *other* goods, first through the assimilations of apprehension and then through the responses of the appetites,⁹¹ the first of which is always love.

In turning to consider the pair of contrary concupiscible passions—desire (*concupiscentia*) and aversion (*fuga*)—that Aquinas associates with the appetitive phase of movement, there are only two observations to make short of the more detailed considerations that follow in connection with the irascible passions. First, aversion is the only passion to which Aquinas does not devote at least a single *questio* in the treatise on the passions. He, and therefore I as well, is content to let the contrast with concupiscence remain, in large part, simply implied. Second, following its causation by the appetite’s initial movement of love, the passion of desire is defined by whether that loved object is “really present [...] or absent [*realiter praesens...absens*].”⁹² Crucially, the mode according to which that presence or absence is determined depends entirely on the nature of the intentional object itself. For example, the most easily grasped, and perhaps most common, example of the progression of the sense appetite can be taken from a common sequence of eating in which the intentional object (i.e. food) implies a particular mode of

⁹⁰ Ibid., I.20.2.ad1.

⁹¹ Here I am referencing the sensitive and the intelligent layers of the soul, *viz.* the layers that contain cognitive powers of apprehension in comparison to the vegetative layer.

⁹² Aquinas, *ST* I-II.30.2.

spatial, physical, and immediately sensible presence or absence: (1) there is an initial sensing (or imagining) of an object (e.g. a hamburger), which (2) arouses the inclination of an affective union of love (e.g. this is a suitable good for my hunger), which (3) causes concupiscence (e.g. I want it!), which (4) spurs directed locomotion either by instinct or the will (e.g. grabbing a sensed hamburger or proceeding to the closest burger joint), and (5) arrives at a real conjunction of the object to the animal that thereby elicits the passions of rest (e.g. Mmmm...). A similar sequence can be imagined when a person desires to do a physical activity (e.g. go for a run, rock climb, have sex) when that activity is considered as an intentional good in itself.⁹³

In contrast to these examples, however, there are other types of desiderative intentional objects (e.g. a memories, wishes, hopes) in which the mental or cognitional presence of an object is identical with the intentional object itself. In this case, merely thinking about or imagining the object is coincident with the “presence” that elicits the restful passion of pleasure (or pain),⁹⁴ despite the fact they are derivatively connected to sensible objects that “absolutely speaking, are absent.”⁹⁵ With these types of mental objects, “we take pleasure in [merely] think[ing] of” these things.⁹⁶ In this case, the interim appetitive phase of desire is usually cut short (and the locomotive powers eliminated entirely), as the intended good is attained quickly through the sensitive powers of memory and imagination. This elastic element of Aquinas’s account of the passions, which enables him to include mental intentional objects, will prove constructively significant next chapter be-

⁹³ Cf. *Ibid.*, I-II.74.8.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, I-II.32.4. See also, 32.1-3.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, I-II.32.3.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, I-II.32.1.ad1. See also, I-II.74.8.

cause it overlaps in a striking way with the affective phenomena that psychoanalysis describes as the pleasures achieved through fantasy and dreams.

Finally, we come to the final pair of contrary concupiscible passions—pleasure [*delectatio*] and pain [*dolor*]⁹⁷—that are associated with the final appetitive phase of rest. In itself, of course, pain brings no terminal rest to the appetite because its object as evil hinders the appetite from possessing and resting in its intended good. Nonetheless, pain is an analogue to pleasure in that it arises from the presence of an evil, just as pleasure follows from the presence of a good, despite the fact that the appetite still shuns this evil as repugnant.⁹⁷ Aquinas ratifies this parallelism by arguing that the passions of pleasure and pain share two conditions that are required for their emergence: (1) real conjunction with, and therefore the presence of, a good or an evil and (2) apprehension of this conjunction.⁹⁸ In sharing these conditions, pleasure and pain continue to mirror one another even in their terminal contrariety. Nonetheless, as one would expect, their contrariety is reflected in the opposite connotations that flow from their respective conjunctions: whereas pleasure flows from being truly united to one’s desired good, pain follows the conjunction of an evil because it actively separates the creature from an aspect of its goodness and perfection. In pain, the creature still has a “craving for unity [*appetitus unitatis*],”⁹⁹ in pleasure, that craving has been satisfied and therefore the appetite rests in a state of reposing in its now possessed object of love.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Ibid., I-II.35.7.

⁹⁸ Ibid., I-II.31.1, 32.1, 35.1-2.

⁹⁹ Ibid., I-II.36.3.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., I-II.31.1.ad2.

In further delving into the nuances of each of these passions, Aquinas identifies another parallel between pleasure and pain. He argues that within the genera of sensitive pleasure and pain there are distinct species within each that are differentiated by their respective externality and internality, the latter of which he assigns specific names: internal pleasure is called joy (*gaudium*) and internal pain is called sorrow (*tristitia*).¹⁰¹ The dividing line between internal and external pleasures/pains lies in whether the apprehension of the conjoined good/evil occurs through the exterior senses or through the interior senses of imagination, particular reason, and memory.¹⁰² Through this distinction, Aquinas is able to describe in moving detail the dynamic relationship between, on the one hand, the immediacy of goods (e.g. the “pleasures of the table or of sexual intercourse”)¹⁰³ and evils (e.g. something scalding to the touch or witnessing the death of a friend)¹⁰⁴ that are at some point directly conjoined to the senses and, on the other hand, the simultaneous or derivative imagining of those goods and evils that inwardly elicit corresponding joys and sorrows.¹⁰⁵ As Aquinas eloquently writes of the intimate relation between outward pains and inward sorrows: “the pains of outward wounds are comprehended in the interior sorrows of the heart.”¹⁰⁶ This connection that joy and sorrow have with the tensive flexibility of the interior senses gives them a greater universality than the immediacy of external

¹⁰¹ Ibid., I-II.31.3-4 and I-II.35.2.

¹⁰² Ibid., I-II.35.2. The explicit inclusion of particular reason as a requirement for joy, and thus the overflow from universal reason that makes particular reason possible, thereby excludes joy from irrational animals. Cf. I-II.31.3.

¹⁰³ Ibid., I-II.35.6.ad3.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Ibid., I-II.38.4, I-II.35.4, and I-II.38.1.ad3.

¹⁰⁵ According to Aquinas, joy and sorrow can accompany an externally sensed good or evil “since whatever is apprehended by sense may be apprehended by imagination and reason, but not conversely.” Cf. Ibid., I-II.35.7.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

pleasures and pains:¹⁰⁷ whereas “external sense perceives only what is present,” the interiority of joy and sorrow give them the capacity for responding to that which is “present, past, and future.”¹⁰⁸ This comparative universality predisposes joy and sorrow, as we will see, to be especially apt affections of the intellective appetite.

c. The Irascible Passions

In turning to the irascible power’s diverse responses to arduous appetitive objects, Aquinas identifies the five additional passions that I already listed above: hope [*gaudium*], despair [*desperatio*], daring [*audacia*], fear [*timor*], and anger [*ira*]. Despite being specifically different from them, Aquinas nonetheless insists that these five passions have a two-sided causal relationship to the concupiscible passions. He summarizes this causal relationship with the following phrase that he draws upon repeatedly: “[A]ll the passions of the irascible appetite arise [*incipiunt*] from the passions of the concupiscible appetite and terminate [*terminantur*] in them.”¹⁰⁹ In order to elucidate this orienting principle, Aquinas refers again to the three phases of the appetitive response (i.e. inclination, movement, and rest) and situates the irascible passions, in the order of generation, after the concupiscible passions of inclination (love/hatred) and movement (concupiscence/aversion), but prior to those of rest (pleasure/pain).

Therefore, whereas in the concupiscible passions we find something relating to all three phases of response, in the irascible passions there is “only that which belongs to

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., I-II.35.2.ad2. Note: this particular response of Aquinas’s addresses only sorrow, but the parallelism between joy and sorrow that runs throughout the entire article makes clear that the same conclusion follows for joy as well for sorrow.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., I.81.2. See also, I-II.25.1.

movement.”¹¹⁰ More explicitly, once a given object has been (1) cognized as good or evil, then (2) loved or hated, and thus (3) the object of either concupiscence or aversion, the irascible passions then respond to the arduous characteristic of the intended object: if it is an arduous *good*, then the creature faces some difficulty in coming to possess it; if it is an arduous *evil*, then the creature faces some difficulty in successfully fleeing from the evil. If the given object is not arduous in either of these ways, then the irascible passions do not arise at all and the appetite proceeds more directly from the concupiscible passions of movement to those of rest. However, if an arduous element does come into play, then the second side of the causal relationship corresponds to whether the creature is able to successfully negotiate and/or overcome the arduous obstacle: if it does, then the irascible passion terminates in pleasure and/or joy; it fails to do so, then they terminate in pain and/or sorrow.¹¹¹

Based upon this general account of the irascible power, Aquinas orders the irascible passions based upon two variables of contrariety.¹¹² First, there is the principle of contrariety that is shared between the irascible and the concupiscible passions: the opposition of good and evil terminal objects. In addition, however, the irascible power also adds a second variable of contrariety based upon whether the passion prompts the creature to move toward or away from—to “approach [*accedere*]” or “withdraw [*recedere*]¹¹³ from—the same terminal object. According to Aquinas, this “directionality” of the irascible passions is based upon a judgment made by the estimative/cogitative power as to whether or

¹¹⁰ Ibid., I-II.25.1.

¹¹¹ Ibid., I-II.25.1, 3-4.

¹¹² Ibid., I-II.23.2.

¹¹³ Ibid., I-II.23.2.

not the arduous aspect of the object can be overcome.¹¹⁴ If it judges that it can be overcome, then that evaluation elicits an irascible passion that prompts the creature to engage the arduous object. If, on the other hand, it evaluates it as something that cannot be overcome, then the resulting irascible passion will direct the creature away from the arduous object.

For the moment, let us consider these two variables of contrariety in regard to the first four irascible passions (hope, despair, daring, and fear). I will then extend the analysis to include the unique complexity of anger. The first two irascible passions—hope and despair—share in common the cognition of a good, and therefore loved and desired, terminal object that is arduous to obtain. However, according to the second variable of contrariety they are opposites. In the face of an arduous good, hope still presses the creature toward that good because it seems “possible to obtain”¹¹⁵ despite the difficulties. In contrast, despair results from a judgment that the obstacle is impossible to overcome. Accordingly, it moves the creature to shrink back from the arduous difficulty and thus abandon its pursuit of the good that is still nonetheless desired.¹¹⁶ Similarly, fear and daring are joined together as resulting from the cognition of an evil, and therefore the object of hate and repulsion, that is arduous to avoid. Between the two, daring stands analogous to hope according to the second variable of contrariety: if the arduous evil can be avoided through effort and struggle, then daring prompts the creature to “rise up [*surgit*]” and “face the evil” with boldness and courage.¹¹⁷ In contrast, fear results from the estimation

¹¹⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, I-II.40.2.ad2.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I-II.40.4.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, I-II.45.4.

that the evil will be difficult to avoid or overcome,¹¹⁸ thus causing a “contraction in the appetite”¹¹⁹ and a parallel “frigidity” of one’s heart and vital spirits.¹²⁰ As Aquinas’s vivid description of the effects of fear suggests, all four of these irascible passions tend to amplify the appetitive, motive, and emotive trajectory set by their preexisting concupiscible passions. “Thus hope adds to desire a certain effort, and a certain raising of the spirits to the realization of the arduous goods. In like manner, fear adds to aversion or detestation a certain lowness of spirits, on account of difficulty in shunning the evil.”¹²¹

The final irascible passion to consider is anger, which is the most complex of the all the passions. Anger’s initial complexity stems from the fact that it is caused, not by a single passion, but instead by the “concurrence of several passions:”¹²² the *sorrow* of a present evil, the *desire* for the good that it hinders, and the *hope* of eliminating the source of sadness by lashing out at it. In addition, anger is the only passion with two motive objects: the present evil that it seeks to eliminate and the good that it seeks to thereby possess. Somewhat curiously, Aquinas identifies the double character of anger’s motive object as one reason why it has no contrary. Since it is simultaneously moved by a present evil and a hoped for good, anger “includes in itself contrariety [...] and consequently it

¹¹⁸ Ibid., I-II.41.2.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., I-II.44.1.

¹²⁰ Ibid., I-II.44.1.ad1.

¹²¹ Ibid., I-II.25.1. In addition to their pairing according to relative contrariety, Aquinas also orders hope, despair, fear, and daring according to the causative relationship that follows from the priority of good over evil. Hence, because any given hindrance to a good is by definition an evil, in the order of generation hope and fear, respectively, possess a causative relationship to daring and despair. From this perspective, hope causes daring because the primary draw toward an arduous good motivates a derivative engagement of something that is itself evil. In the same way, fear causes despair because the difficulty of an evil thwarts the broader attraction to a good. Cf. Ibid., I-II.45.2.

¹²² Ibid., I-II.46.1.

has no contrary outside itself.”¹²³ In addition to this reason for having no contrary, the definition of an irascible passion also precludes a contrary to anger based upon either of the possible variables of contrariety. For example, based upon an opposition of terms, the contrary to anger would be an irascible passion aimed at a present good. But, as Aquinas writes, “once [a] good is obtained” there is “no longer any aspect of arduousness or difficulty” and thus no more irascible passion.¹²⁴ Likewise, there can be no contrary of anger based on approach or withdrawal from the same term since the definition of anger already specifies that the evil is already present.¹²⁵

Following Aristotle’s lead,¹²⁶ Aquinas most often discusses anger in the context of interpersonal relationships in which the present evil required for anger is furnished through an unjust “slight [*parvipensio*]”¹²⁷ enacted against an aggrieved party. Based upon this presumed context, he usually defines the two objects of anger in terms of (1) the *person* who slighted the angry person and thus is the offensive source of the present evil and (2) the *vengeance* that the person reasons¹²⁸ will remedy their slight, expunge the evil, and therefore generate pleasure:

Consequently as soon as vengeance is present, pleasure ensues, and so much the greater according as the sorrow was greater. Therefore if vengeance be really present, perfect pleasure ensues, entirely excluding sorrow, so that the movement of anger ceases.¹²⁹

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid., I-II.23.1.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.*, II, 2, 1378b-1380b.

¹²⁷ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.47.2.

¹²⁸ Based upon this description, Aquinas notes that anger has a unique proximity to the overflow of reason into the sensitive appetitive. Cf. Ibid., I-II.46.4.

¹²⁹ Ibid., I-II.48.1.

Despite usually confining his remarks to interpersonal slights, and especially those wounds that have been inflicted “on purpose [*ex industria*],”¹³⁰ Aquinas observes generally that any perceived deprivation of a perfection that a creature desires to realize vis-à-vis any particular good can “savor of a slight”¹³¹ and therefore generate anger. When placed within this broader context, anything that “frustrates desire” can become the object of anger’s prompting toward retaliatory attack.¹³²

III. Intellective Appetite: The Will

Having given an overview of the sense appetite, we are now in a position to outline the horizontal ordering of the intellective appetite, *viz.* the will, before turning in the next section to the vertical interrelation that exists between these two appetites. As one would expect, the metaphysical differences between the sense appetite and the will parallel those between the senses and the intellect. Accordingly, whereas the passions of the sense appetite are bound up with a corporeal organ and material transmutations, the will’s acts are, like those of the intellect, “absolutely incorporeal and immaterial.”¹³³ Likewise, the object of the sense appetite is the relative goodness of a sensible particular, but the object of the will is the universal (*universale* or *commune*)¹³⁴ good as understood (*intellectum*).¹³⁵ That which the intellect understands as true can then be presented to the will as an appetitive good.¹³⁶ This pairing with the intellect also entails that the will is moved by a rational power, the universal reason, that can draw upon a much more expansive body of

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, I-II.47.2.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Cf. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 65-66.

¹³³ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.9.5.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, I.82.2.ad2, I-II.1.2.ad3, and I-II.9.1.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, I.82.3.ad3 and I.82.4.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, I.59.2.ad3.

knowledge—namely all that is intelligibly necessary (including moral laws and precepts)¹³⁷—in order to make its evaluative judgments than is available to particular reason in its simple comparison of the sense appetite’s past intentions.

As that which seeks the universal good, the will is the appetitive motor through which a human being desires and intends its last (or ultimate) end of perfection that Aquinas generically identifies, following Augustine, as happiness. This desired end, precisely in its universal goodness, “entirely satisfies” the will and thus reduces it to a permanent act of resting and enjoying that goodness.¹³⁸ Without a doubt, the most difficult aspect of Aquinas’s account of the will is grasping how the will’s object can be the universal good as understood even though all of its earthly acts are carried out, as Augustine’s notion of ascent eloquently describes, amidst particular goods and penultimate truths. This difficulty lies behind many of the debates that have periodically erupted over the last two centuries regarding how to relate a human being’s natural potencies with a supernatural end.¹³⁹ This tension arises because, when seen from a theological perspective, it is obvious that there is only one good that could permanently satisfy the will’s de-

¹³⁷ Ibid., I-II.14.6.

¹³⁸ Ibid., I-II.5.8.

¹³⁹ Apart from Aquinas, the primary actors in this controversy can be grouped together as those who wrote prior to the twentieth century (Scotus, Cajetan, and Suárez) and those who wrote during and after that century (Henri de Lubac, Karl Rahner, and Bernard Lonergan). For an exhaustive bibliography, see Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2004). From my perspective, the clearest solution to the question of a natural desire to see God remains that furnished by Lonergan and his related concepts of vertical finality, obediential potency (i.e. a natural potency that only God can actualize), and a distinction between the intellect’s explicit object (i.e. being) and implicit object (i.e. God). Cf. Bernard J. F. Lonergan, “The Natural Desire to See God,” in *Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 4:81-91, “Finality, Love, and Marriage,” 14:17-52; *Insight*, 3:657-751 and *The Triune God: Systematics*, vol. 12, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 12:626-85.

sire for the universal good: the divine essence itself.¹⁴⁰ But, the question logically follows: how can we speak of a natural potency for a supernatural end that, by definition, cannot be attained apart from grace?¹⁴¹

Obviously, rehearsing these debates lies beyond the scope of this chapter. My goal instead is much more descriptive in attending to Aquinas's understanding of the natural capacities of the will, even as I take for granted the necessity of grace's justifying and perfecting work as not only theologically required, but also rather empirically self-evident. Maintaining the integrity of this descriptive task of Aquinas's account of the will itself, as well as its operative link with the intellect and reason, is essential because it establishes a crucial part of the conceptual background to be expanded upon constructively in the next two chapters. This is especially the case when I turn to discuss the diachronic links between the emergence of self-consciousness and the higher operations of the intellect and the will in Chapter 5.

There are three parts to this descriptive task. In the first subsection, I elucidate Aquinas's foundational contention that the will has a natural inclination for a last end. On the basis of this framework, I then turn to reason's judgment of any given object as good or evil in reference to this last end. Lastly, I attend to the similarities and differences between the affections of the will and the passions of the sense appetite.

a. The Will's Natural Inclination to a Last End

The will, according to Aquinas, has a two-fold act:¹⁴² (1) that which it does *in itself*, which is its proper act to will (*volo*)¹⁴³ and enjoy (*fruitio*),¹⁴⁴ when possessed, a last end

¹⁴⁰ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.5.8.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, I-II.5.5.

coincident with a creature's perfect happiness and (2) that which it does through the instrumental medium of *another* power of the soul by commanding it to pursue (or, if evil, to flee) proximate goods and ends as means to its last end.¹⁴⁵

The first act, the willing of a last end, Aquinas defines as the simple act of volition.¹⁴⁶ It stands as the final and efficient cause of all other appetitive movements of the will. Without the willing of a last end, *viz.* if one removes this principle of causation, “there will be nothing to move the appetite.”¹⁴⁷ “For,” as Aquinas exactly concludes, “in all things that have an order to another, if the first be removed, those that are ordained to the first, must of necessity be removed as well.”¹⁴⁸ Similarly, as their final cause, the last end ties together all other volitional acts as an intelligible whole as a genus ties together a diversity of species. In Aquinas's words: “[S]ince voluntary actions receive their species from the end [...] they necessarily receive their genus from the last end, which is common to them all: just as natural things are placed in a genus according to a common form.”¹⁴⁹

Due to this ordered relationship between the will's various acts, Aquinas observes precise terminological divisions for distinguishing between these acts. When describing the will's proper act in itself, Aquinas speaks of *willing* (*volens*) the last end, *enjoying* (*fruens*) that end when possessed, and *intending* (*intendens*) proximate ends in relation to

¹⁴² Ibid., I-II.1.1.ad2 and I-II.6.4 .

¹⁴³ Ibid., I-II.8.2.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., I-II.11.1, 3-4.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., I-II.17.1-9.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., I-II.8.2.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., I-II.1.4.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. See also, I-II.8.3.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., I-II.1.5.

this end.¹⁵⁰ When describing the will's instrumental acts, he speaks of *commanding* (*imperans*) the other powers, *choosing* (*electiens*) the means to the end, and *using* (*utens*) the means. The most important point to add to this initial typology is that Aquinas strictly and consistently identifies free-will (*liberum arbitrium*) solely with the act of choosing the means to an end.¹⁵¹ The will itself has a necessary, definitional relationship to a last end,¹⁵² despite the fact that it remains free vis-à-vis the means to this end.¹⁵³

Making sense of this claim of Aquinas's that the will has a definitional relationship to a last end requires attending to several nuanced arguments and comparisons that he makes regarding the will's natural constitution as a power of the soul. The first step is to remember that whenever a power of the soul is being defined, one must distinguish sharply between the generic aspect of a power's definition and the specific object(s) in which this aspect is actualized and determined. The generic aspect is shared by all members of a natural species; its specific determination is accidental to each individual.¹⁵⁴ For example, the definition of sight is the same for all (*viz.* a potency to receive visible forms), but not all people see the same objects. Likewise, the will generically tends to a last end, but not all people tend to the same last end. As to the general aspect of a last end, "all agree in desiring the last end: since all desire the fulfillment of their perfection."¹⁵⁵ Nonetheless, "as to the thing in which this aspect is realized," not all are "agreed

¹⁵⁰ Aquinas nicely summarizes this three-fold relation of the will to the end in *Ibid.*, I-II.12.1.ad4.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, I.83.3.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, I.82.1, I-II.1.1,4, I-II.8.3, and I-II.10.1-2.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, I.82.2 and I-II.13.6.

¹⁵⁴ Apart from the occurrence of privations.

¹⁵⁵ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.1.7.

as to their last end: since some desire riches as their consummate good; some, pleasure; others, something else.”¹⁵⁶

Aquinas’s metaphysical logic in defining the will as that which is inclined to a last end follows closely with the will’s pairing with the intellect in the intelligent layer of the soul. Accordingly, the will’s generic potency is the appetitive corollary, based on the metaphysical convertibility of being and goodness outlined above, to the intellect’s universal apprehensive power. As the intellect is an apprehensive potency for the unitary intelligibility of being, so is the will an appetitive potency for the unitary goodness of being, the good of every good, and thus the end of all other ends. Expressed differently, even though the will inevitably “tends to individual things,”¹⁵⁷ just as the intellect tries to understand individual beings, it “tends to them under the common *ratio* of goodness [*cognoscit universalem rationem boni*],”¹⁵⁸ just as the intellect understands things according to the common *ratio* of truth. To be sure, Aquinas affirms that there are distinguishable “series” within the will’s seeking of the last end, which thereby have penultimate intentions and ends,¹⁵⁹ but he nonetheless insists that all of these are defined in reference to the last end. For the end of one series is the beginning of another,¹⁶⁰ unless of course that end is coincident the last end in which the appetite permanently rests.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., I-II.1.7.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., I.59.3.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., I.59.3.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., I-II.11.3.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., I-II.12.2.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., I-II.11.3

On more than one occasion, Aquinas extends this parallel between the intelligent apprehensive and appetitive powers by comparing the will's intrinsic inclination toward a last end to the inclusion of the first principles within the light of the active intellect:

[A]s the intellect of necessity adheres to the first principles, the will must of necessity adhere to the last end, which is happiness: since the end is in practical matters what the principle is in speculative matters. For what befits a thing naturally and immovably must be the root and principle of all else appertaining thereto, since the nature of a thing is the first in everything, and every movement arises from something immovable.¹⁶²

As already suggested, the conclusion that follows from this parallel has significant implications for a theological account of human freedom: even though human beings can mistakenly seek their last end in something other than God, indeed this is the essence of mortal sin,¹⁶³ they *cannot* turn away from intending a last end that generically ties together all of the will's particular acts and affections. As Aquinas writes in *ST* I-II.1.6:

Everything that [a human being] desires [*appetit*], he necessarily desires for the sake of the last end [...] because whatever a [human being] desires, he desires it under the aspect of good. And if he desires it, not as his perfect good, which is the last end, he must, of necessity, desire it as tending to the perfect good, because the beginning of anything is always ordained to its completion; as is clearly the case in effects both of nature and art.

Just like the intellect's natural potency for intelligible truth, the will's natural potency for a last end is tied, not to any of the perverse and often baffling ways that human beings actualize this potency, but rather to the indelibility of the Creator's efficient and final causality. As Aquinas provocatively argues, a creature cannot alter this aspect of the will

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, I.82.1. See also, I.82.2, I.83.2,4, I-II.1.5, and I-II.10.1.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, I-II.88.1.

any more than it can change the definition of its eyes as something that apprehends the visible or the intellect as that which apprehends the true.¹⁶⁴

The subtlety of Aquinas's claim here almost invites any number of misunderstandings. For example, he is not saying that a person always "thinks about" a last end in order to adjudicate her volitional dilemmas and choices. He explicitly denies this.¹⁶⁵ Nor he is saying that everyone's will is somehow always, even unconsciously, desiring God. He denies this as well,¹⁶⁶ despite the fact that God is *in fact* the only "object" that "entirely satisfies" the human will.¹⁶⁷ Rather, what he is saying is far more perceptive in its grasp of human nature and wide-ranging in its implications. According to Aquinas, the will inherently drives toward a happiness that consists in an intensive appetitive unity defined by the genus of a last end, first through the affective union of intention and then through a real union of conjunction. In the lived interim, the "middle space [*media*]" between intention and conjunction,¹⁶⁸ the will seeks to realize this intensive unity by trying to arrange, or ordain, all of its acts toward that single last end.¹⁶⁹ Even if a human being has indeed mistakenly specified a good other than God (e.g. power, wealth, honor, or sensitive pleasures) as the source of its perfect happiness, and even if that substituted good could never permanently satisfy the will (which is inevitably the case), the will nonetheless still impels all of its acts in relation to this last end. The substantive claim is, of course, entirely Augustinian, even if Aquinas expresses it from within a much more metaphysically

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., I.82.4-5.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., I-II.1.6.ad3.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., I-II.1.7.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., I-II.5.8.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., I-II.8.3.ad3.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., I-II.1.7.ad1.

refined anthropology: whatever the will desires, it desires in reference to and as a useful means (*uti*) toward the last end, which alone is sought after and enjoyed (*frui*) for itself.

Despite the fact that Aquinas clearly affirms that the will's potency for a last end can be sinfully specified toward a created (i.e. non-universal) good, it is noteworthy that he spends almost no time analyzing *how* a person wills a mistaken last end or how another might "switch" between the intention of one last end to another. Instead, Aquinas is usually content to speak in descriptive, passive or negative terms. Descriptively, he simply states that some people do in fact desire other things as their consummate and perfect good.¹⁷⁰ Passively, he speaks, as he does in *ST* I-II.1.7.ad1, of "turning away" from the true last end and "mistakenly seeking" other ends in its place: "Those who sin turn from [*avertuntur ab*] that in which their last end really consists: but they do not turn away from the intention of the last end, which intention they mistakenly seek [*quaerunt falso*] in other things." Negatively, he is particularly adamant in insisting on that which willing a last end can never be, namely a matter of free-will and choice: "The last end is in no way a matter of choice [*nullo modo sub electione*]."¹⁷¹ This is due to the fact that the act of choosing proximate ends always presupposes a last end according to which they are ordained and judged to be desirable.¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, I-II.1.7.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, I-II.13.3.

¹⁷² This entire line of thought in Aquinas—that nothing is desired, and thus practical reason does not operate, unless a last end has already been intended—has intriguing thematic overlaps with Theodor Adorno's and Max Horkheimer's diagnosis of the collapse of reason in late modernity under the pressures of capitalism. According to Adorno and Horkheimer, one of the deepest characteristics of modernity is the "instrumentalization" of reason as solely concerned with ordering means and systematically excluding any reasoning about the ends to which those means are ordered. In their judgment, the inevitable result of this trajectory is the collapse of reason into irrationality. Or in Aquinas's terms: without a last end, rationally ordered desires come to a halt and all that one is left with is the non-rationality of sensitive desires. See Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947); Max Horkheimer and Theodor

In lieu of an explicit explanation from Aquinas on this front, two reasons for this relative silence seem likely. First, as an evil act, indeed the paradigmatic evil act, the volitional turning away from one's last end in the perfect goodness of God, and thereby replacing it with some "mutable good,"¹⁷³ is definitionally dependent on the only genuinely universal good that nonetheless still defines the potency of the will. This fact predisposes Aquinas to use only descriptive, passive, and negative rhetoric for speaking of these acts in themselves. Second, Aquinas considers the true last end of human beings, namely union with the divine essence, to be something that the human will can only intend through the preceding causation of a grace (*viz. gratia gratum faciens*) that "ordains a human being immediately to a union with their last end."¹⁷⁴ For only by grace, can the disorder of the human will be reordered to the last end in which their happiness truly consists. Again, this fact likely inclines Aquinas to consider in much more detail the fact of the human will's natural potency for enjoying our true last end, then he is in trying to explain our tragic shuffling between the imposters we set up in its stead.

Nonetheless, the essential point for us remains Aquinas's repeated contention that the will's inclination to order all of its appetitive acts in relation to the last end of perfect happiness is coincident with its natural potency and definition. Through this inclination, the will impels a human being to seek an intensive appetitive unity preliminarily defined in the intention of a last end and permanently forged in the possession of that end. Apart

W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1988) (ET: *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); and Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik* (Berlin: Surkamp, 1966) (ET: *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1983).

¹⁷³ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.72.2 and I-II.75.1.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, I-II.111.5.

from this generic potency, the will desires nothing; according to its specific determination, the will desires everything that it contingently desires as a means to that end. For everything that a human being desires, she “necessarily desires for the sake of the last end.”¹⁷⁵

b. Choosing the Means: Reason and the Will’s Proximate Objects of Desire

On the basis of its proper act of willing a last end, the will derivatively proceeds to its second act: moving all the other powers of the soul, except the vegetative powers because they operate apart from reason and apprehension, to their respective acts in the search of means to possessing its last end. The will’s capacity to move the other powers instrumentally follows the metaphysical rule briefly cited above: “wherever we have order among a number of active powers, that power which regards the universal end moves the powers which regard particular ends.”¹⁷⁶ Accordingly, as the will is the power whose object is the universal end, it is the “agent [that] moves all the powers of the soul to their respective acts, except the natural powers of the vegetative part, which are not subject to our will.”¹⁷⁷ Once instigated, this search results in a plethora of apprehended objects that are subject to the judgment of reason and free-will’s derivative choices of means to the end.

According to Aquinas, any apprehended object, regardless of whether it is sensitively or intelligently apprehended, can become the object of reason’s judgment, free-will’s choices, and the will’s affections. This is different than the movements of the sensitive appetite, in which the apprehended object must be the sensible good. The ground of

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., I-II.1.6.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., I.82.4.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

this difference is that the free-will is naturally moved by whatever object—be it material, imagined, speculative, habitual or practical—that reason ordains to the universal good. This universality necessarily entails that the free-will is capable of being moved by a much wider range of goods, since—by definition—any object that possesses some degree of goodness can generically be “included [*comprehensus*] in the universal end.”¹⁷⁸ Just as the intellect is capable of apprehending intelligible forms that includes a potentially infinite number of contingent singulars, so too can the free-will be moved by a potentially infinite number of particular goods.

This diversity of objects can sometimes be obscured by the fact that, in the *Prima Secundae* and *Secunda Secundae*, Aquinas nearly always envisions external, practical objects as his implicit and explicit examples for discussing the interrelatedness of reason’s judgment and free-will’s choices. The nature of these practical objects requires the instrumental use of the locomotive powers to either be pursued (e.g. sensitive pleasures), performed (e.g. a technical skill or a practical act of virtue),¹⁷⁹ or made (e.g. inventions of human artifice).¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Aquinas also occasionally makes it clear that he presupposes that certain immanent objects are also subject to reason’s judgment and the will’s consent and/or choice. For example, he notes that there are certain immanent goods “without which the end cannot be attained, such as ‘to be’ and ‘to live,’”¹⁸¹ as well as the inclination to self-preservation implied within those goods. For as long as the will’s last end includes these goods as necessary means, then the free-will continues to will these as

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, I-II.9.1

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, I-II.18.7.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, I-II.21.2.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, I-II.10.2.ad3.

means as well. Similarly, immaterial objects such as intelligible knowledge and the virtues fall under the purview of reason's judgment as well.¹⁸² In fact, Aquinas even explicitly notes that the intellect, which—like all the other powers—is moved by the will as to its end,¹⁸³ can stumble onto a genuine intelligible truth that is then judged as evil, and thus hated and rejected, because it “hinders [that person] from gaining the object loved.”¹⁸⁴

Regardless of the mode of apprehension, however, Aquinas describes five possible stages of the interrelated response of reason and free-will following an object's apprehension: counsel, judgment, consent and/or choice, command, and use. These stages are “possible” because not every object elicits every stage. For instance, counsel, which consists in reason's comparative inquiry into an object's suitability to the last end,¹⁸⁵ only occurs vis-à-vis objects that elicit a degree of “doubt [*dubium*]”¹⁸⁶ regarding their relevance to the end. For objects that either have a fixed relation to the end or are of little relevance to the end, reason proceeds directly to judgment because there is “no need for the inquiry of counsel.”¹⁸⁷

For objects that do elicit uncertainty, however, the will impels reason to inquire into whether an object can be ordained as a means conducive to the will's intended end.¹⁸⁸ As just suggested, the terminus of this inquiry of counsel is a judgment regarding the object as a relative good or evil. As one would expect given that it is the same operative power in the soul, reason carries out this inquiry through the same type of process that

¹⁸² Ibid., I.80.2.ad2.

¹⁸³ Ibid., I-II.9.1.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., I-II.29.5.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., I-II.14.1-2.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., I-II.14.4.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., I-II.14.4.ad1.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., I-II.14.1.ad1.

governs its pursuit of speculative truth: a discursive comparison of all data relevant to making a judgment. It draws this data from five basic sources. The first and most important of these is inherently included in every instigation of counsel: “the end which is not the matter of counsel, but is taken for granted as its principle.”¹⁸⁹ From this horizon of that which is “intended in the future,” reason analytically proceeds through the other relevant data in order to “arrive at that which is to be done at once.”¹⁹⁰ In addition to this principle of the end, reason also consults the applicable sensory data,¹⁹¹ past experiences and memories,¹⁹² circumstantial evidence,¹⁹³ and any relevant general statements drawn from the speculative or practical sciences (e.g. the precepts of divine law).¹⁹⁴ Based upon analyzing these data, reason reaches a decision regarding the relative goodness of the object in relation to the end and it declares that evaluation, just as it does in speculative matters, in the form of a judgment (*iudicium*). The substance of this judgment renders a particular good as ordered (or not) to the will’s end. In this way, reason furnishes the will with the penultimate version of its proper object: the good as intelligibly ordered and, thus, as understood.

On the basis of this judgment, reason presents free-will with its object(s) of consent and choice. I consider these two operations of consent and choice together because Aquinas describes them as sometimes distinguishable in actuality, while at others only

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., I-II.14.6.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., I-II.14.5.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., I-II.14.6.

¹⁹² Ibid., II-II.49.1 and I-II.57.6.ad4.

¹⁹³ E.g., and as Aquinas enumerates them in *ST* I-II.7.3 the answers to these question: Who? What? Where? When? By what aids? Why? and How?

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., I-II.14.6.

logically.¹⁹⁵ What they have in common is that they are both an appetitive response to the intelligible species as received from reason's judgment of an object as good or evil.

Whereas reason evaluates goods by abstracting, just as it does in the pursuit of speculative knowledge, from the accidental immediacy of an object in order to compare it with several sources of data, in consent and choice the will enacts "a certain union" with the appetitive object that affectively inclines (or disinclines) the will "to the thing itself."¹⁹⁶ The potential difference between these two operations, however, is that choice adds an additional layer of meaning in a situation when counsel has declared several means as conducive to the end. In this circumstance, choice adds a "certain relation to something to which something else is preferred," namely a preference that free-will enacts in choosing one suitable good over another.¹⁹⁷ When such a collocation of suitable goods is not available, "then consent and choice do not differ in reality, but only in our way of looking at them," consent as when "we approve of doing that thing" and choice as when "we prefer it to those that do not meet with our approval."¹⁹⁸ By definition, however, this additional layering of comparison between goods that elicits choice cannot be attributed to any such capacity in free-will *per se*, but rather represents the corresponding appetitive response to a higher level judgment *between goods* that is again furnished by reason.

Whether the response is categorized as a consent or a choice, Aquinas describes the derivative reception of the intelligibility of reason's judgment as free-will's inclina-

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., I-II.15.3.ad3.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., I-II.15.1.ad3.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., I-II.15.3.ad3.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

tion toward a particular good (or away from an evil) that is *formally* an act of reason and *materially* an act of the will. As he writes in *ST* I-II.13.1:

Now we must observe, as regards the acts of the soul, that an act belonging essentially to some power or habit, receives a form or species from a higher power or habit, according as an inferior is ordained by a superior [...] Accordingly, that act whereby the will tends to something proposed to it as being good, through being ordained to the end by the reason, is materially an act of the will, but formally an act of the reason. Now in such like matters the substance of the act is as the matter in comparison to the order imposed by the higher power. Wherefore choice is substantially not an act of the reason but of the will: for choice is accomplished in a certain movement of the soul towards the good that is chosen.

When combined with the fact that the will originally moves reason to inquiry in the first place, the occurrence of reason's judgment passing into the will forges a reciprocal loop of influence that Aquinas repeatedly draws upon to describe the close relationship between reasoning and willing:

When the acts of two powers are ordained to one another, in each of them there is something belonging to the other power: consequently each act can be denominated from either power. Now it is evident that the act of the reason giving direction as to the means, and the act of the will tending to these means according to the reason's direction, are ordained to one another. Consequently there is to be found something of the reason, viz. order, in that act of the will, which is choice: and in counsel, which is an act of reason, something of the will—both as matter (since counsel is of what man wills to do)—and as motive (because it is from willing the end, that man is moved to take counsel in regard to the means).¹⁹⁹

By a simple act of volition, the will intends an end according to which it moves all the other powers of the soul, including reason; derivatively, by its powers of abstraction and comparison, reason moves the will to desire and choose the means ordered to its end.

Aquinas extends this formal/material distinction between the will and reason in elucidating the relationship between commanding and using. Commanding and using

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., I-II.14.1.ad1.

both follow free-will's choice and jointly represent the actualization of the course of action judged to be good by reason and consented to by the will. Even though earlier in the *Prima Secundae* Aquinas also speaks of the will's capacity as first mover as a kind of commanding, in this context he explicitly assigns the act of commanding vis-à-vis the means to reason,²⁰⁰ while attributing the actual using of the means to the will's executive power over the other powers.²⁰¹ His justification for this terminology in this context is clear enough and shines through the political and military overtones of Aquinas's rhetoric throughout the *Prima Secundae*. If the will can be compared to the general that establishes the overall goal of an army,²⁰² then reason is the authorized tactician that the general employs to formulate specific commands for accomplishing that goal. Once formulated, the general then uses both the command and the officers under her power to carry out those specific commands. Or as Aquinas puts it: "[I]t is evident that first and principally use [*uti*] belongs to the will as first mover; to the reason, as directing; and to the other powers as [instruments] executing the operation."²⁰³

Finally, before proceeding to the affections of the will, we should note the importance of the virtue, namely prudence (*prudentia*), that Aquinas assigns to the rightly ordered operation of practical reason—the evidence of which stretches through counsel, judgment, consent/choice, command, and use—that yields actions that are genuinely morally good. Aquinas divides the virtues into the respective habits of the intelligent apprehensive (i.e. intellectual virtues) and appetitive powers (i.e. moral virtues) that pro-

²⁰⁰ Ibid., I-II.17.1.

²⁰¹ Ibid., I-II.16.1, I-II.16.4, and I-II.17.3.

²⁰² Ibid., I-II.9.1.

²⁰³ Ibid., I-II.16.1.

duce human acts that conform to the order of reason²⁰⁴ and, by grace, are ordained to God as their last end.²⁰⁵ As the habit that operatively produces right reasoning about things to be done,²⁰⁶ prudence is the formal link between the intellectual and moral virtues. For a human cannot rightly do anything in the pursuit of her end “unless [her] reason counsel, judge and command aright, which is the function of prudence.”²⁰⁷ Thus, just as in general the act of reason passes into the act of the will in the form of order, the acts of right reason pass into moral acts of the will in the form of prudential order. Accordingly, prudence “is included in the definition of moral virtue, not as part of its essence, but as something belonging by way of participation to all the moral virtues, in so far as they are all under the direction of prudence.”²⁰⁸

c. The Affections of the Will

Given their metaphysical similarity, it is unsurprising to find that the will’s affections share certain basic structural analogies to the passions of the soul. Like the passions, the affections of the will respond to an object as good or evil through the three appetitive phases of inclination, movement, and rest. For this reason, Aquinas does not devote a separate treatise to the will’s affections, but is instead content to interweave his commentary on them with other discussions explicitly devoted to matters such as the divine will, the passions, and a variety of virtues and vices. Their metaphysical overlap with the passions is reflected in the fact that, once one brings together these references scattered throughout the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas names all eleven primary passions of the

²⁰⁴ Ibid., I-II.19.3 and I-II.55.4.ad2.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., I-II.19.9-10.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., I-II.57.4.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., I-II.58.4.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., I-II.58.2.ad4.

soul as having homonymous analogues in the will's affections.²⁰⁹ As with the sensitive appetite, the will loves the good, desires it in its absence, rises up in hope, daring, and anger against obstacles that are in the way, and enjoys it when possessed, even while derivatively hating, fleeing, shrinking back in despair and fear, and sorrowing over its contrary evils.

Nonetheless, any metaphysical analogy is only useful to the extent that one attends to the differences between the terms under comparison as well as their similarities. For our purposes, mentioning three of these differences will sufficiently underline the uniqueness of the will's affections in comparison to the passions of the soul.

First, the will's immateriality entails that there is no accompanying bodily transmutation in its affections as there is in the passions. Instead, the will's affections are immanently concurrent with the "simple movement of the will" itself.²¹⁰ Aquinas often accents this relative simplicity of the will's affections in order to highlight not only their comparative uniqueness, but also to further delineate in what way appetitive affections can be attributed to the divine and angelic wills as well.²¹¹

Love, concupiscence, and the like can be understood in two ways. Sometimes they are taken as passions—arising, that is, with a certain commotion of the soul. And thus they are commonly understood, and in this sense they are only in the sensitive appetite. They may, however, be taken in another way, as far as they are

²⁰⁹ The following citations are representative, not in any way exhaustive: Love: *ST* I-II.6.1, II-II.23-27; Desire: I-II.1.5, I-II.30.1, I-II.30.3; Pleasure/Joy: I-II.31.4-5, II-II.28.1; Hate: I.20.2.ad4, II-II.20.3; Aversion: II-II.19.11, II-II.20.1; Sorrow: I-II.59.3; Hope: II-II.17.1; Despair: II-II.14.2, II-II.20.1-4; Daring: II-II.21.3. Fear: II-II.19.2,4, and 10; Anger: II-II.158.1-8.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I-II.31.4.

²¹¹ Only affections that do not imply any imperfection (e.g. desire) or the real relation or presence of an evil (e.g. anger and sorrow) can be properly predicated of God. Those that do imply such imperfections can only be attributed to God metaphorically. Cf. *Ibid.*, I.20.1.

simple affections without passion or commotion of the soul, and thus they are acts of the will. And in this sense, too, they are attributed to the angels and to God.²¹²

Thus, in all of its penultimate affections, the human will's immaterial simplicity evidences its created participation in the eternal simplicity of God's act of willing, as well as its teleological determination for a final object of its affection in which the universal good is finally and, by definition, simply loved and enjoyed for its own sake.

Second, in the will there is no analogous distinction to the division between concupiscible and irascible passions. The metaphysical reason for this is that the universality of the will's object necessarily means that it is only tied to a single appetitive faculty. This is because faculties are defined by their formal objects and if a faculty's object can be defined "according to a common idea [*rationem communem*], there will be no distinction of faculties according to the diversity of the particular things contained under that common idea."²¹³ Since such universality is foreign to the sense appetite, as it can never achieve any order beyond that of a serial aggregate of passions in response to particular goods, the formal diversity of its particular objects (e.g. arduous or not) become relevant in distinguishing between specific faculties (e.g. concupiscible and irascible) within the generic power. However, in the will there is such a common idea—the universal good—and thus there is no specific distinction to make on the basis of its particular objects. This not entail, however, that the notion of an appetitive object being "arduous" is irrelevant to the will's affections. For example, Aquinas explicitly identifies the respective objects of the will's affections of hope and fear as one would expect: the pursuit of an "arduous

²¹² Ibid., I.82.5.ad1.

²¹³ Ibid., I.59.4.

good”²¹⁴ and the avoidance of an “arduous evil.”²¹⁵ It only means that all such specific distinctions among the will’s contingent objects are nonetheless generically tied together by a common *ratio* of goodness.

Third, Aquinas unequivocally and eloquently argues that the will’s universality means that its pleasures are, strictly speaking, “greater” (*maiores*) than sensible pleasures.²¹⁶ He defines this superiority according to all three elements required for pleasure: “the good which is brought into conjunction, that to which it is conjoined, and the conjunction itself.”²¹⁷ As to the conjoined good, the will is capable of enjoying much higher and noble goods than any sensible good could ever be. As proof of this, Aquinas cites the logic that undergirds the classical spiritual disciplines: people will abstain from sensitive goods in order to achieve union with any number of immaterial goods, such as knowledge and virtue.²¹⁸ Second, the intellectual powers’ capacity for assimilating higher goods is directly tied to their own metaphysical superiority in comparison to the sensitive powers in terms of apprehending and enjoying goods. For instance, in its desire for truth the will is inclined to grasping the very principles through which both sensible goods *and* our contingent desire of them can be metaphysically explained. Lastly, and most movingly, there can be a greater pleasure in the will because the mode of intelligible conjunction is more intimate, perfect, and enduring. As Aquinas vividly writes regarding the superiority of the intellectual conjunctions that elicits the will’s pleasure:

²¹⁴ Ibid., II-II.18.2.

²¹⁵ Ibid., II-II.19.11.

²¹⁶ Ibid., I-II.31.5.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

[I]ntellectual conjunction is more intimate, more perfect and more firm. More intimate, because the senses stop at the outward accidents of a thing, whereas the intellect penetrates to the essence; for the object of the intellect is “what a thing is.” More perfect, because the conjunction of the sensible to the sense implies movement, which is an imperfect act: wherefore sensible pleasures are not perceived all at once, but some part of them is passing away, while some other part is looked forward to as yet to be realized, as is manifest in pleasures of the table and in sexual pleasures: whereas intelligible things are without movement: hence pleasures of this kind are realized all at once. More firm; because the objects of bodily pleasure are corruptible, and soon pass away; whereas spiritual goods are incorruptible.²¹⁹

Expressed another way: the will is intrinsically ordered to the perfection of an eternal conjunction that elicits that most intimate and intense pleasure possible for human beings.²²⁰ In comparison with this *telos*, sensitive pleasures, even at their best and most virtuous, are little more than temporary foretastes of an eminent pleasure still to come.

IV. The Vertical Dynamism Between the Sensitive and Intellective Appetites

With descriptions of the intrinsic ordering of the sensitive and the intellective appetites in place, we are now in a position to consider lastly their vertical interrelation, the nature of which points toward a distinctly teleological intensive unity found in their operative alignment with one another. As I referenced at the opening of the chapter, the overarching description that Aquinas uses to vertically link these two appetites together is found in his affirmation that the sense appetite has a natural aptitude to obey universal reason and, in so doing, to become “rational by participation.”²²¹ To recall Aquinas’s striking phrasing, the sensitive appetite was “born to obey reason,”²²² meaning that the sense appetite’s *telos* is to be vertically aligned with the command of right reason as it directs the will in

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Cf. Ibid., I-II.3.4 and I-II.4.1.

²²¹ Ibid., I-II.56.4.ad1.

²²² Ibid., I-II.56.4.

the pursuit of the universal good and the creature's highest perfection. As Aquinas explains in *ST* I-II.24.3:

For since [a human being's] good is founded on reason as its root, that good will be all the more perfect, according as it extends to more things pertaining [to her]. [...] Hence, since the sensitive appetite can obey reason [...] it belongs to the perfection of moral or human good, that the passions themselves also should be regulated by reason.

Not only does this created trajectory entail that the ordering operations of reason and the will include the vertical alignment of the sense appetite, but it also suggests, as we will explore in a moment, that the passions have their own horizontal contribution to make in the pursuit of and the conjunction with an individual's last end.

In order to describe how this vertical alignment progresses from a natural potency to a realized actuality, Aquinas gives sustained attention to the multidimensional influence that sensitive and intellectual powers mutually have on one another in this dynamic process of alignment. His entire account of this interplay is, however, framed by a single analogy taken from Aristotle's *Politics* that Aquinas draws upon repeatedly for specifying the general kind of ruling power that reason has over the sense appetite.²²³ This analogy distinguishes two powers of governance that are both present in an individual, one that is despotic (and therefore absolute) and another that is political (and therefore admits the resistance of free subjects). The example that the analogy gives of despotic rule is that of the soul's power over the body, "because the members of the body cannot in any way resist the sway of the soul." Instead, "at the soul's command both hand and foot, and what-

²²³ Cf. Aristotle, *Pol.*, I, 5, 1254b5.

ever member is naturally moved by voluntary movement, are moved at once.”²²⁴ In contrast:

[T]he intellect or reason is said to rule the irascible and concupiscible by a politic power: because the sensitive appetite has something of its own, by virtue whereof it can resist the commands of reason. For the sensitive appetite is naturally moved, not only by the estimative power in other animals, and in man by the cogitative power which the universal reason guides, but also by the imagination and sense. Whence it is that we experience that the irascible and concupiscible powers do resist reason, inasmuch as we sense or imagine something pleasant, which reason forbids, or unpleasant, which reason commands.²²⁵

Because the sense appetite has its own objects, corporeal organ, physical transmutations, and serially reinforced habitual potencies, it is often moved spontaneously to love (or hate) certain goods when they are presented to it. This horizontal spontaneity, so to speak, cannot—short of God’s grace and providence—simply be commanded away by reason instantaneously. For instance, a sense appetite that has been habitually formed to love brownies and hate spinach or, more seriously, to love money and hate giving it away, will naturally be moved with corresponding passions of love when brownies or a money-making opportunity are presented to it. Hence, in these moments the “sensitive appetite is aroused suddenly in consequence of an apprehension of the imagination or sense” without the command of reason or the consent of the will.²²⁶ This degree of horizontal freedom in the sense appetite is intrinsic to it and reason cannot despotically take it away. Moreover, if the will unilaterally tries to enforce its desired order, the passions will likely break out in rebellion. Here we have the internal principle that explains the frequent, cyclical failure of declarations that attempt to foreswear, by simple volitional fiat,

²²⁴ Aquinas, *ST* I.81.3.ad2.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, I.81.3.ad2.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, I-II.17.7.

some object of sensitive desire, only to have the corresponding passions inevitably erupt, often with new intensity, when that object is presented to it again.

Instead of such a directly despotic relationship, Aquinas envisions the intellectual powers' vertical ordering of the passions as something much more akin to an ongoing, multi-site round of political negotiation, full of habitual fits and starts and thoroughly oriented toward the long-range (*viz.* eschatological) end game. This is why Aquinas so often speaks of reason's "moderation" and "regulation" of the passions not as if it thereby represses them, but as a moderator gives much-needed direction to a meeting's diverse participants. Three interlocking fronts of this ongoing appetitive negotiation are particularly important for our purposes: (1) the will's power of consent *vis-à-vis* the passions, (2) universal reason's therapeutic use of particular reason, and (3) the overflow of virtuous acts into the passions. We will consider each of these before closing out the chapter and explicitly transitioning to the constructive work of the next two chapters. Before proceeding, however, I will repeat a proviso that has arisen at various points in this chapter, but is especially relevant when discussing the passions' gradual conformation to the order of reason: only by grace do the passions become perfectly aligned with reason and the will's virtuous affections for the highest good of God.²²⁷ Nonetheless, my concern here is not to get distracted by delineating exactly where grace begins and our natural powers end (Aquinas would reject this dichotomy anyways), but rather to steadfastly attend to the human nature that God graciously reorders²²⁸ and the interrelation of two of the natural

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, I.95.1-2.

²²⁸ On the disordering effects of sin, cf. *ST* I-II.85.3, I-II.87.1-3, and I-II.109.7. On the reordering effects of grace (i.e. justification), cf. *ST* I-II.113.1.

powers that God either directly moves (e.g. the will) or derivatively heals (e.g. the sensitive appetite) in order to bring about the effects of grace.²²⁹

a. The Will's Power of Consent

As briefly referenced above, one of the differences between human beings and non-intelligent animals is that, under normal circumstances, the sensitive passions cannot move any power outside of itself (e.g. the locomotive powers) without the consent of the will. As Aquinas writes:

For in other animals movement follows at once the concupiscible and irascible appetites: for instance, the sheep, fearing the wolf, flees at once, because it has no superior counteracting appetite. On the contrary, man is not moved at once, according to the irascible and concupiscible appetites: but he awaits the command of the will, which is the superior appetite. For wherever there is order among a number of motive powers, the second only moves by virtue of the first: wherefore the lower appetite is not sufficient to cause movement, unless the higher appetite consents.²³⁰

To his credit, Aquinas does carve out a very narrow space for describing exceptions to this operative ordering of the passions to the will's consent. Despite its narrowness, this exception will prove important for us when we turn to explaining several of the pathological states to which Freud rightly draws our attention. According to Aquinas, this exception to the will's power of consent is defined by the instances in which passions such as concupiscence, love, or anger are intense enough to "take away the use of reason altogether."²³¹ Elsewhere, he describes this experience as when someone is "totally absorbed by passion [*totaliter absorbetur a passione*]" and thereby does not "have use of [their]

²²⁹ Ibid., I-II.109.9-10 and I-II.111.1-2.

²³⁰ Ibid., I.81.3.

²³¹ Ibid., I-II.6.7 and *ST* I-II.77.7.

reason.²³² In these circumstances, Aquinas endorses a delicate operative and moral calculus.²³³ Generally speaking, Aquinas is willing to say that the passions' disabling of reason renders any resulting action involuntary and thus devoid of moral culpability.²³⁴ However, if that disablement was preceded and hastened by a voluntary act—e.g. the acts that lead to the diminished capacities of drunkenness—the resulting acts are still to be considered voluntary and thus subject to moral culpability. Nonetheless, these are the exceptions that prove the general rule that, in the vast majority of the circumstances in which human acts occur, the sense appetite waits for volitional consent before moving any other powers.

The fact of this dependence upon consent does not, however, mean that the passions fail to influence the will. For it is clear, for example, that the immanent prompting of sensitive concupiscence “inclines the will to desire the object of concupiscence.”²³⁵ Without this prompting, the will may or may not have been moved by this object at all, but once the passion has occurred the will cannot simply ignore the object. Instead, it calls upon reason to adjudicate as to whether it should consent to the inclination that results from the passion's prompting. If reason exercises prudence in its counsel, judgment, and command regarding that passion, then reason moves the will in a manner that is commensurate with the contingent actualization and habitual retention of virtue. The content of such a virtuous judgment can enact any number of responses to the passion. It can resist or repel the inclination altogether,²³⁶ mitigate its extremes in a virtuous direction

²³² Ibid., I-II.10.3.

²³³ This delicate balance is reflected in our modern notion of a “crime of passion.”

²³⁴ Ibid., I-II.6.7 and I-II.77.7.

²³⁵ Ibid., I-II.6.7.

²³⁶ Ibid., I-II.10.3.ad2.

(e.g. when immoderate anger can be refocused toward legitimate aims of justice),²³⁷ or it can concur with the passion's inclination if the good it proposes is genuinely commensurate with the order of reason.

One of the surest signs of Aquinas's commitment to the passions' teleological inclusion in human nature's perfection is his detailed linking of the passions' respective classifications (*viz.* concupiscible, irascible, contraries of good/evil and approach/withdraw) with their ordered perfection in specific virtues. As one would expect, he explicates these links between passions and virtues according to commonness of the objects implied by the passions. Accordingly, because all the concupiscible passions "follow one another in a certain order, as being directed to the one same thing, *viz.* the attainment of some good or the avoidance of some evil,"²³⁸ they all share a common virtue—temperance (*temperantia*)—as their perfection according to the order of reason. In temperate actions, the will is moved to use or abstain from the sensible pleasures of this life to the degree that they are conducive to reaching its last end of perfection.²³⁹ Since such a common ordering does not exist among the five irascible passions, Aquinas assigns a perfecting virtue to each of the contrary pairs and to anger unto itself. Therefore, to fear and daring there is the virtue of fortitude (*fortitudo*) through which the will "firmly and immovably"²⁴⁰ continues to will a good even in the face of a difficult obstacle. To hope and despair there is the virtue of magnanimity (*magnanimitas*) through which the

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, II-II.158.1.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, I-II.60.4.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, II-II.141.6.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, II-II.123.2.

will is inclined toward a good with proper confidence.²⁴¹ Finally, to anger there is the virtue of meekness (*mansuetudo*) through which the will aims at removing a present evil without overstepping the bounds of justice²⁴² or losing oneself in the vicious fierceness of immoderate anger.²⁴³

On the other hand, there is also the distinct possibility that the will enacts its power of consent by allowing itself to be led astray into a sin, which is derivatively habitually reinforced in vices. Aquinas is clear that the sensitive passions cannot ever “move the will directly.”²⁴⁴ Instead, the passions can “indirectly” move the will by weakening any resolve it might have through the “distraction” of their inordinate intensity such that eventually reason simply gives its endorsement of judgment to that which is sensitively proposed.²⁴⁵ Here we have the familiar inversion of powers that is characteristic of an Augustinian account of sin. As Aquinas writes of the particular distinction of an imagined pleasure:

[F]or [...] we observe that those who are in some kind of passion, do not easily turn their imagination away from the object of their emotion, the result being that the judgment of the reason often follows the passion of the sensitive appetite, and consequently the will’s movement follows it also, since it has a natural inclination always to follow the judgment of the reason.

In parallel fashion to the virtues described above, Aquinas similarly assigns particular generic sins to the different kinds of passions. To the natural objects of the concupiscible

²⁴¹ Ibid., II-II.129.6.

²⁴² Ibid., II-II.158.2.

²⁴³ One of Aquinas’s definitions of meekness is that which keeps a person “self-possessed [*compotem sui*]” (*ST* II-II.157.4) amidst the passionate throes of anger. On the fierceness of immoderate anger, see Ibid., II-II.158.2.

²⁴⁴ In the exceptional cases noted above, in which the passions result in immediate locomotive action, the passions still do not move the will. Instead, such actions are simply considered involuntary.

²⁴⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations in this paragraph are from Ibid., I-II.77.1.

passions, there are sins resulting from the “concupiscence of the flesh,” namely the inordinate desire for food, drink, and sex. To the non-natural objects of the concupiscible passion, there are the sins resulting from the “concupiscence of the eyes,” through which we inordinately desire “money, apparel, and the like.” And: to the arduous objects of the irascible passions, there are the sins of pride, through which we inordinately desire difficult objects solely for the sake of our own excellence.²⁴⁶

b. Universal Reason’s Therapeutic Use of Particular Reason

The last two fronts of the appetitive negotiation name the respective ways that reason and the will can actually influence and, to a certain extent, reform the shape of the passions in themselves. Again, both of these avenues of “therapeutic” influence will prove significant for us when we turn to translating the type of therapeutic “cure” that Freudian psychoanalysis touches upon and, in some sense, genuinely *discovers* for the first time. Universal reason’s avenue for initiating such therapeutic influence occurs through its capacity to instrumentally use the evaluative power of particular reason within the sensitive layer of the soul. As the higher power, universal reason can guide particular reason in an effort to reshape its intentions, and derivatively the passions that it thereby elicits, according to the order of its higher reason. Aquinas describes the grounds of this possibility in *ST I.83.1*:

Wherefore in [a human being] the sensitive appetite is naturally moved by [...] particular reason. But this same particular reason is naturally guided and moved according to the universal reason: wherefore in syllogistic matters particular conclusions are drawn from universal propositions. Therefore it is clear that the universal reason directs the sensitive appetite, which is divided into concupiscible and irascible; and this appetite obeys it.

²⁴⁶ On the link between the irascible faculty and pride, see *Ibid.*, II-II.162.1-3.

For example, universal reason's access to the intellect's knowledge of the necessity expressed in the divine law that forbids adultery might enable it to guide particular reason to reevaluate an opposing erotic passion elicited by the attractive presence of another person.²⁴⁷ Despite not often speaking about this possibility in great detail in the *Summa*, Aquinas considers this therapeutic function of universal reason to be self-evident not only on the logical basis of its superior place in the soul, but also on the experiential basis that makes an appeal like this both possible and plausible: "Anyone can experience this in [herself]: for by applying certain universal considerations, anger or fear or the like may be modified or excited."²⁴⁸

c. The Overflow of Virtuous Acts into the Passions

Finally, Aquinas reserves the last front of interaction between the appetites for the influence that the will's own acts can have upon the passions. Whereas the two fronts described above depend most obviously on reason's moderation of the passions, here we have an avenue through which the intellective appetite can cause a movement in the sensitive appetite that aligns and chimes with its own acts. The chief way that the will can affect the sense appetite in this manner is simply by being intensely and virtuously moved to a good object. Whenever it is so moved, the will's affections overflow (*redundantia*) as a kind of redundancy, as the word suggests, into the movements of the passions. As Aquinas writes, "[W]hen the higher part of the soul is intensely moved to anything, the lower part also follows that movement: and thus the passion that results in consequence,

²⁴⁷ In *ST* I-II.77.2 and 8, Aquinas vividly describes the possibility of universal reason coming to the "rescue" and the mortal sins that can result if it fails to do so.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, I.81.3.

in the sensitive appetite, is a sign of the intensity of the will, and so indicates greater moral goodness.”²⁴⁹ Aquinas punctuates this claim that ordered passions positively contribute to moral goodness by extending it to the wider claim that a volitional choice of a good that has no concomitant movement of ordered passion actually falls short a virtuous action. For example, continent actions, in which reason successfully resists inordinate passions in order to move the will toward right action, fall short of being virtuous because they are not joined by passions that are likewise perfected in being “conformable to reason.”²⁵⁰ Such actions are only made perfect in the virtue of chastity, in which no inordinate passions arise in the first place because the appetites are aligned in their inclinations.²⁵¹ Accordingly, “the more perfect the virtue, the more it causes passion.”²⁵²

In addition, this overflow from the will’s rectitude can also contribute over time to the reordering of the passions’ beyond its “downward” redundancy in a single volitional action. The result of this reordering is a gradual habitual formation of the passions toward movements in conformity with reason and virtue. In other words, virtue “produces ordinate passions.”²⁵³ Hence, even though the virtues themselves are in the reason and the will, Aquinas affirms that the overflow of these virtues make possible the passions’ derivative participation in these habits:

Because an act, which proceeds from one power according as it is moved by another power, cannot be perfect, unless both powers be well disposed to the act: for instance, the act of a craftsman cannot be successful unless both the craftsman and his instrument be well disposed to act. Therefore in the matter of the operations of the irascible and concupiscible powers, according as they are moved by reason,

²⁴⁹ Ibid., I-II.24.3.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., I-II.58.3.ad2.

²⁵¹ Ibid., I-II.70.3.

²⁵² Ibid., I-II.59.5.

²⁵³ Ibid., I-II.59.5.

there must needs be some habit perfecting in respect of acting well, not only the reason, but also the irascible and concupiscible powers. And since the good disposition of the power which moves through being moved, depends on its conformity with the power that moves it: therefore the virtue which is in the irascible and concupiscible powers is nothing else but a certain habitual conformity of these powers to reason.²⁵⁴

As this passage suggests, this ordered formation of the passions enables them to become, in a secondary sense, a principle for virtuous acts. For if reason judges a passion to be ordinate, then the will can “[choose] to be affected by a passion in order to work more promptly with the cooperation of the sensitive appetite.”²⁵⁵ Similarly, if the sense appetite is already habitually disposed toward virtuous actions, then “it helps towards the execution of reason’s command” as one eager and receptive to the order.²⁵⁶

From Aquinas’s perspective, this overflow from the will to the passions is neither random nor accidental. Rather, it is an experiential corollary of the metaphysical axiom that the operations of the higher powers of the soul generically and executively perfect the operation of the lower powers. Hence, the greater pleasures and joys of the intellectual powers inevitably redound to the sensitive appetite by either diminishing its sorrows²⁵⁷ or perfecting its pleasures through its participation in them. As one likely anticipates, Aquinas considers every temporal experience of this vertical dynamism as a penultimate taste of that which will be perfected in the intensive appetitive alignment that will redound to every power of the soul in the ultimate happiness of union with God. For, as Aquinas writes, “from the happiness of the soul there will be an overflow to the body, so

²⁵⁴ Ibid., I-II.56.4.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., I-II.24.3.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., I-II.59.2.ad3.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., I-II.38.4.

that this too will obtain its perfection.”²⁵⁸ Or, as he adds in a fitting quotation of Augustine, “God gave the soul such a powerful nature that from its exceeding fullness of happiness the vigor of incorruption overflows into the lower nature.”²⁵⁹

In specifying the exact nature of the teleological form of this intensive unity that redounds to an individual intelligently united to God, Aquinas completes his remedial transposition of Augustine’s basic insight regarding the wide-ranging character of the different ways in which human beings can deficiently reflect the eminent intensity of God’s eternal simplicity. For these similitudes frame our existence from its most primal moments (i.e. the actuality of souls), to the penultimate occurrence in self-knowledge and virtuous appetitive acts, and finally in the ultimate *telos* of our intended union with God. For just as God wills the singular good of *God’s* goodness by willing into existence the multiple goods of creation (*exitus*), so too are those who are made in God’s image created to negotiate the multiplicity of creation’s participated goods by willing the singular end of God’s goodness as their *own* highest good (*reditus*). Put differently: by loving and enjoying God forever, the *imago Dei* is finally and fully intensively fulfilled in us as well. For, “[W]e shall be like him because we shall see him as he is.”²⁶⁰

V. Conclusion: Summarizing and Outlining a Gap

As was done last chapter as well, I conclude here with a retrospective summary and the outline of a gap in Aquinas’s account of the appetites that points to the conceptual place

²⁵⁸ Ibid., I-II.4.6.

²⁵⁹ Augustine, “Letter to Dioscorus,” as cited in *ST* I-II.4.6.

²⁶⁰ Cf. 1 Jn. 3.2 and *trin.* XII.22, XIV.25, and XV.21.

into which I will describe the link between a discrete identifying layer of the soul and the theorization of egoic self-consciousness as a fourth type of intensive unity.

Drawing upon last chapter's description of Aquinas's understanding of the primal unity of soul and reclassification of self-knowledge as a derivative higher-level intensive unity, this chapter shows how he successfully distinguishes a third type of intensive unity in terms of a vertical alignment of the appetites in relation to goods apprehended by the intellect, virtuously ordered by reason, and ardently loved/enjoyed by the will. In the process, Aquinas ends up fully solving Augustine's circular dilemma by successfully ordering three types of intensive unity—primal, epistemic, and teleological—each of which bears in its own way a deficient similitude to the eternal simplicity of God as the eminent, reflective, and amorous unity of all truth. Moreover, the terms of this solution are embedded within a detailed theological anthropology in which he precisely describes a diversity of epistemic and appetitive powers that are simultaneously unique in their horizontal principles, vertically related in their ends, and metaphysically analogous in their respective operations.

In order to show how Aquinas accomplishes all of this, I proceeded by sequentially outlining the horizontal principles of the appetites and then their vertical interrelation. Accordingly, the first part of the chapter summarized Aquinas's general metaphysics of the appetite, in which he defines the appetite as that which *seeks* the creature's perfection by being moved toward apprehended goods (or away from evils) and *rests* therein when those goods are possessed. Once moved, the appetite's proper acts emerge as affections (e.g. love/hate, desire/aversion, pleasure/pain) that prompt the creature through the three

appetitive phases of inclination, movement, and rest. The second and third parts of the chapter then expanded upon this general metaphysic by describing Aquinas's account of the respective operations of the sensitive appetite, which is moved by the sensible good as judged by particular reason, and the intellective appetite, which is primarily moved to the last end of the universal good and secondarily to any good that reason judges to be useful as a means to that end. Based upon these descriptions, the fourth part of the chapter then showed how the intensive alignment of the appetites can gradually occur through the vertically-ordering capacities of the intellectual powers, specifically the will's power of consent, universal reason's therapeutic use of particular reason, and the overflow of virtuous acts into the passions.

Having finished this narration of Aquinas's multifaceted solution to Augustine's circular dilemma, along with the metaphysical framework and theological anthropology in which it is embedded, we are finally in a position to turn to Freud's analogously circular dilemma in his narration of how egoic self-consciousness emerges and particularly the role of primary identification in that process. In making this transition, however, it will again be helpful to name a gap in Aquinas's account of the appetites that will prove constructively significant moving forward. If last chapter I named a gap that endures in Aquinas's anthropology having to do the intensive unity "of the self" that precedes the intelligent unions of knower/known, here the analogous gap is related to Aquinas's underdevelopment of the role that particular self-knowledge can play in reason's therapeutic

and teleological reordering of the passions.²⁶¹ This underdevelopment is partly due to the fact that Aquinas simply does not spend much time developing universal reason's therapeutic role vis-à-vis the passions. However, in the passages when he does speak of it, he regularly pays almost no attention to the necessity of an act of self-knowledge, a judgment or insight into oneself, to proceed from reason's consultation of universal knowledge in order to make it applicable to the contingency of one's own passions.

For example, in his most sustained discussion—in *ST* I.81.3—of universal reason's influence on the passions, which I quoted at length above, Aquinas skips right from reason's consultation of universal knowledge to its (re)direction of particular reason: “[P]articular reason is naturally guided and moved according to the universal reason: wherefore in syllogistic matters particular conclusions are drawn from universal propositions. Therefore it is clear that the universal reason directs the sensitive appetite [...] and this appetite obeys it.” Presumably the type of practical syllogism that Aquinas has in mind would run like this:

1. The divine law forbids all acts of theft
2. This passion inclines my will toward an act of thievery
3. This passion should be modified and/or resisted

The second proposition is an act of particular self-knowledge and judgment, an act in which the intelligible pattern of one's own appetitive desire becomes illuminated by the backdrop of the universally necessary. The importance of this act of self-knowledge is underlined by the fact that without it universal reason's direction of particular reason would never occur. Again without pausing over it, Aquinas confirms this observation

²⁶¹ To recall, particular self-knowledge is that by which a person perceives the intelligible patterns of one's own immanent acts, both sensitive and intelligent.

when trying to make sense of the experiential fact that, as he puts it, “many [people] act contrary to the knowledge they have.”²⁶² Why does this occur? Because there is no deductive judgment about oneself, one’s passion(s), and one’s circumstance that corresponds in the intelligible particular to that which is known universally. Aquinas cites the example of fornication:

It may happen, then, that a man has some knowledge in general, e.g. that no fornication is lawful, and yet he does not know in particular that this act, which is fornication, must not be done; and this suffices for the will not to follow the universal knowledge of the reason.²⁶³

The point stands vis-à-vis any attempt to discern the shape of one’s passions in the hope of redirecting their immediacy to higher ends and unities—whether that end be theological or not. Such appetitive (re)direction logically depends on a rational self-judgment that moves the will and, derivatively—according to the terms of negotiation described above—the passions as well.

Another factor in Aquinas’s overall inattention to this function of self-knowledge can be found in his general disinclination to place much weight in particular self-knowledge at all. This is, in large part, the tail the drags behind his displacement of Augustine’s insistence on the centrality of the “self’s” primal knowledge of itself. From an Aristotelian perspective, self-knowledge comes in many different flavors,²⁶⁴ none of which are important enough to be the kind of anchor to the self that Augustine imagines it to be. Still, in addition to the experiential data that push us in the same direction, the passages in which Aquinas implicitly addresses the importance of particular self-knowledge

²⁶² Aquinas, *ST* I-II.77.2.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁴ I owe this phrasing to a personal conversation with Paul DeHart.

are suggestive enough to inspire a corresponding creative expansion without, of course, seeking to reinstate any kind of primal epistemic unity of the self. Instead, it would be yet another transposition of a basic Augustinian insight onto the refined and rich metaphysical soil of Aquinas's theological anthropology.

Perhaps the greatest hurdle in carrying out this expansion, however, is the way that the Aristotelian system predisposes Aquinas to leave behind an ambiguity between the desire for knowing the intelligible particular (including oneself) versus the desire for knowing the intelligible universal. As Pierre Rousselot suggests in his brilliant study, *L'intellectualisme de saint Thomas*, this ambiguity endures in Aquinas because the terms of Aristotle's definitions for apprehension limits knowledge of the particular to the senses and knowledge of the universal to the intellect.²⁶⁵ The Aristotelian axiom that "sensation is of particulars, while knowledge is of universals"²⁶⁶ always looms large in Aquinas's thought. The result of this ambiguity is a consistent denial that the knowledge of intelligible particulars has *any* place in the perfection of human intelligence. Rousselot does not mince words in his declaration that in this regard Aquinas allowed himself to be "duped by the ambiguity of the old formula, '*scientia est de universali*,'" solely on the basis of Aristotle's authority.²⁶⁷ To be sure, Aquinas's point is that any intelligible knowledge of an individual is an act, not of the intellect itself, but of reason's discursive judgment that presupposes some grasp of a repeating pattern that forms the universal basis from which such deductive reasoning can take place. Hence knowledge of singulars is not, strictly

²⁶⁵ Pierre Rousselot, *L'intellectualisme de saint Thomas*, Third ed. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1936), 109-32 (ET: *Intelligence: Sense of Being, Faculty of God*, trans. Andrew Tallon (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999), 91-109).

²⁶⁶ Aristotle, *DA* II, 5, 417b21-24.

²⁶⁷ Rousselot, *L'intellectualisme*, 116 (*Intelligence*, 97).

speaking, a part of the created intellect's perfection,²⁶⁸ even though it *is* necessarily part of God's eminent intelligence in which the divine grasp of the universal includes in itself exhaustive knowledge of all singulars.²⁶⁹

Still, Rousselot is right that there is a lingering gap here in Aquinas regarding the grasp of the intelligible particular and its potential therapeutic role vis-à-vis the passions. Perhaps the most glaring aspect of this gap is Aquinas's assertion that the created desire to know has no trace of interest in knowing something of the immanent qualities of an individual (whether of oneself or another):

The natural desire of the rational creature is to know everything that belongs to the perfection of the intellect, namely, the species and the genera of things and their types [...] But to know other singulars, their thoughts and their deeds does not belong to the perfection of the created intellect nor does its natural desire go out to these things.²⁷⁰

To his credit, Rousselot significantly critiques this functional gap in Aquinas's account of intelligence even while making it clear that it is nothing like a fatal flaw; rather Aquinas's accounts of intelligent knowledge and desire can be extended in order to include eloquent descriptions for how particular self-knowledge can become the apprehensive principle for a vertical reordering of desire, practical self-representation (e.g. verbal and artistic), and the intimate self-sharing between individuals (e.g. therapist/analysand, friends, and/or lovers). For in these acts, all of which are of keen interest to the aims of Freudian psychoanalysis and its putative "curing" of certain forms of desire—to which we now turn—intelligence displays the degree to which "it strives to grasp," as Rousselot rightly con-

²⁶⁸ Aquinas, *SCG* I.65.8-9.

²⁶⁹ Aquinas, *ST* I.14.11.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, I.12.8.ad4.

cludes, “as perfectly as it can—in art, in history, in life—the intimate harmony of composite individuals.”²⁷¹

²⁷¹ Roussetot, *L'intellectualisme*, 116 (*Intelligence*, 97).

Chapter 4

The Ego and the Identifying Part of the Soul: Translating Freud Via Aquinas's Solution

The last three chapters have set before us an Augustinian dilemma and a Thomist solution. As I have repeated often, the dilemma is how to relate different types of intensive unity as a way of tying together the open-ended trajectory of human existence: a *primal* unity of the soul, the *epistemic* unities characteristic of self-knowledge, and a *teleological* unity that is progressively forged as our appetites are vertically aligned toward God as our highest good and last end. The Thomist metaphysical solution to this dilemma, which I have endorsed with minor qualifications, turns on the formal unity of existence attributable to the soul and the progressive actualization, as well as the vertical perfection of, the soul's paired apprehensive and appetitive potencies. The most significant qualifications to this endorsement have come in the form of the two explanatory gaps in Aquinas' theological anthropology that emerge along with this solution: (1) the degree to which he does not directly address Augustine's concern as to what intensive unity "of the self" precedes the intelligent unions of knower/known, even as he rightly dissociates self-knowledge from this particular type of intensive unity; and (2) the lack of weight that he gives to the potential therapeutic value of particular self-knowledge in vertically ordering the passions.

As I have made clear throughout, my purpose in narrating this dilemma and solution is to use this sequence from theology's history in order to address the analogous riddle, which we first narrated in the Introduction through the examples of Kant, Fichte,

Hölderlin/Novalis, and Schleiermacher, regarding the origins and theological significance of egoic self-consciousness as a specific kind of intensive unity that precedes the epistemic unions characteristic of intelligence. Making this constructive bridge will be the enterprise begun in this chapter and concluded next chapter. The linchpin for this constructive trajectory, the link that makes this leap between intellectual eras possible, is the task that stands before us in this chapter: a constructive translation of the psychoanalytic account of the pre-reflective origins of the ego (*das Ich*) and Freud's associated discovery of what he calls "primary identification." This translation, as I have said before, will be made possible by using Augustine's dilemma and Aquinas's solution as a lens through which to retrieve Freud's genuine insights regarding human nature from his reductive presuppositions and his often glaring lack of rhetorical consistency and/or philosophical clarity. Based upon this translation, we will then make the constructive case in Chapter 5 that egoic self-consciousness contingently arises as an act of primary identification with our sensing bodies, the nature of which can be understood as a fourth type of intensive unity: one that unconsciously founds the "subject" and thereby precedes the higher operations of intelligence as a necessary vertical preamble.

The initial point of overlap between the discourses that are being bridged here takes shape in the fact that in Freud's metapsychology we find another iteration of the reflection theory that is analogous to Augustine's dilemma. This iteration occurs on the ground of Freud's distinctive theorization of the instinctual and libidinal (*viz.* erotic) origins of the ego. Where Augustine inconsistently alternates between an always already realized epistemic unity of the self and a temporal dawning of this unity in discrete acts

of reflective self-knowledge, Freud similarly oscillates between an egoic self-awareness that grounds the libidinal desire for a sexual object and an insistence that the ego's self-awareness actually emerges out of a prior period of development in which the individual and other objects are intensively fused together in what he calls a bond (*Bindung*) of identification. My primary constructive aim is not, however, to prove in detail the cogency of this parallel. Rather, its purpose is to demonstrate the conceptual clarity that accrues to Freud's original insights when Aquinas's solution to Augustine's dilemma is applied in the psychoanalytic context. As Aquinas's transposition of Augustine's insights onto different metaphysical soil served to deepen their significance, my purpose here is to carry out a similar translation of Freud's anthropological insights into a conceptual framework that actually extends the scope of their explanatory precision.

Overall, there will be three steps to this constructive translation, the first two of which will be completed sequentially in this chapter in the two sections that follow. First, I will begin by describing the contradictions that appear in Freud's theory of the ego's origins in light of the oscillation described above between a primal, egoic self-awareness and the fusions of primary identification that precede the ego's formation. In addition to this main thread of argument, I will also note an important clue for understanding the nature of primary identification that occurs in the midst of this vacillation. This clue consists in Freud's inability to discuss the origins of the ego's self-differentiation without relying on rhetoric that implies a native hypnotic capacity and suggestibility operative in every individual. Second, I turn to the specific task of applying Aquinas's theory of the soul and its powers to these contradictions in an attempt to explain more satisfactorily the

basic anthropological phenomena to which Freudian psychoanalysis rightly draws attention (e.g. the ego's fragility and the potential of its pathological "collapse," identification and its crucial relation to infancy, the unconscious and its compulsion to repeat, hypnotic states, and dreams/hallucinations).

As I have frequently signaled, the constructive proposal that emerges from this investigation is that Freud stumbles upon a set of operations that can be plausibly described as another layer of the soul, complete with its own apprehensive and appetitive powers. We will call this the identifying layer of the soul. Setting forth a description of the distinctive operations of these powers will form the conceptual foundation that I will build upon next chapter in taking the third and final step in this transposition by incorporating this discussion with the wider question of the origins and theological significance of self-consciousness and the vertically dependent operations of intelligence. As we will see shortly, the key insight that brings the identifying layer of the soul into focus arrives in the formulation of an unconscious apprehensive power of identification in which certain sensitive acts are perceived—or radically received—in an immediate fusion with the individual in a manner that eludes the subject/object division. As I will describe it later on, these sensitive acts are perceived *qua* perceiver, which is an operation most clearly glimpsed in the radical receptivity—i.e. the inability to differentiate "me" from "that"—evident in the object-relations of the womb, early infancy, deep hypnosis, and in the experience of especially traumatic events.

Before proceeding, however, two methodological notes are in order. First, although Freud will be my main interlocutor throughout the length of this chapter, in each

of these sections I will also incorporate several crucial insights from the post-Freudian psychoanalytic theorist Julia Kristeva in order to emend Freud's theory of primary identification in directions that will prove constructively important both in this chapter and the next. The most important of these insights will come from Kristeva's unrivaled insistence that the most archaic and archetypal "pre-objectal"¹ relation undoubtedly occurs *in utero*, in the pleasurable pre-reflective stasis in which "the child and the mother do not yet constitute 'two.'"² For in the womb, more than anywhere else, do we have a fused state of existence in which there is "neither subject nor object."³ For this reason, in my constructive extension of Freud, I will theorize that the most archaic identificatory bond of all inevitably occurs in relation to what Kristeva calls the "maternal body."⁴ The sudden rupture of the active stasis of this *in utero* bond marks both the dawn of post-partum life and—precisely because it separates us from a kind of intensive unity we were created to desire—the inauguration of pain as well.

Second, Freud does not systematically differentiate, as I have proposed to do since the Introduction, between *phenomenal consciousness*, made up of the first-order perceptual processes characteristic of sensitive acts (both apprehensive and appetitive), and *self-consciousness* as an immanent awareness added to those baseline processes. Instead, Freud almost exclusively works with a general notion of consciousness (and its inverse, unconsciousness) and tends to reserve references to self-consciousness to instances

¹ Julia Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur: essai sur l'abjection* (Paris: Seuil, 1980), 17 (ET: *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 10).

² *Histoires d'amour* (Paris: Denoël, 1983), 45 (ET: *Tales of Love*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 40).

³ *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*, 9 (*Powers of Horror*, 1).

⁴ Cf. *Histoires d'amour*, 225-47 (*Tales of Love*, 234-63).

when he is citing the work of other theorists⁵ and/or his inability or unwillingness to engage the philosophical distinction.⁶

However, in what follows I assume that there is a meaningful overlap between Freud's discussion of the ego's self-differentiated consciousness and what I have proposed to discuss under the conceptual banner of self-consciousness. This is primarily because it is relatively easy to detect in Freud's writings the functional distinction between phenomenal consciousness and self-consciousness. Freud seems to have in mind something coterminous with phenomenal consciousness when he speaks of certain individual processes—e.g. the external senses, pain/pleasure—that have a conscious quality to them. As we will see, Freud calls this conscious quality that of having an “internal perception” (*Wahrnehmung*).⁷ Those that do not have this quality—e.g. the instincts and the ego-ideal—are inversely considered “unconscious” in their operation, despite the fact that they may produce effects of which we *are* conscious. On the other hand, Freud seems to have in mind something coterminous with self-consciousness when he is specifically talking about the ego's self-integrating organization of mental processes *as an organized whole*. As Freud writes in *The Ego and the Id* (1923), “[I]n each individual there is a coherent organization of mental processes; and we call this his *ego*. It is to this ego that consciousness is attached.”⁸ Again, to recall a point I made in detail in the Introduction, the crucial difference between these two types of consciousness is that phenomenal consciousness can be theorized as existing apart from self-consciousness. In a pre-self-

⁵ E.g. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, SA 2:81, 103, 111/SE 4:58, 82, 90.

⁶ E.g. Freud, “On Narcissism: An Introduction,” SA 3:64, n.3/SE 14:98, n. 1.

⁷ As we have noted previously, it will be important in all that follows to distinguish carefully between a conscious operation and a conscious effect produced by an unconscious operation.

⁸ Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:286/SE 19:17.

conscious state, it would simply yield a bare flux of sensible data in which neither subject or objects are perceived/known with any degree of synthetic unity or differentiation.

Maintaining this distinction in our reading of Freud will prove rather decisive. This is because it is in this phenomenal state prior to egoic self-differentiation—generally characteristic of the earliest stages of infancy—that the fusions of primary identification produce effects within the individual that, as Freud writes in a phrase that will prove decisive, are exceptionally “general and lasting”⁹ in their subsequent habitual repetitions.

I. Freud's Dilemma: The Ego's Formation, Identification, and the Specter of Hypnosis

In this section, my goal is to trace two interrelated threads in Freud's metapsychology, both of which I referenced above: (1) the dilemma that Freud faces in theorizing the emergence of the ego in relation to his foundational commitment to the sexual etiology of all psychic development and (2) Freud's inability to make sense of the ego's contingent formation, and in addition its role in the psychoanalytic “cure,” without relying on rhetoric that implies a native hypnotic capacity and suggestibility in human beings. In my judgment, it is not a coincidence that the signs of this second thread tend to show up right at the places where Freud finds himself most conceptually challenged in theorizing the ego's origins. Most often, as we will see, this rhetoric appears in Freud's repeated employment of the concept of “identification” (*Identifizierung*) to explain the ego's formation and his descriptions of the therapeutic centrality of transference (*Übertragung*) within the analytic relation between the patient and the analyst. When traced together, these two threads jointly provide the clues from Freud's metapsychology that I will con-

⁹ Ibid., SA 3:298/SE 19:31.

structively elaborate upon in the next section in conversation with Aquinas in order to translate the seminal insight nascently contained in Freud's notion of identification.

It should be noted at the outset that the repeated appearance of themes related to hypnosis and suggestion in Freud's metapsychology is noteworthy for any number of reasons. As I have said, the most relevant reason for us is that it will point us toward the basic structure of identification as a human potency. However, it is also noteworthy within the narrower context of Freud's own *oeuvre*. For instance, Freud retrospectively declared in his *Introductory Lectures to Psychoanalysis* (1916-17) that he founded "psychoanalysis proper [*die eigentliche Psychoanalyse*]" when he "dispensed with the help of hypnosis."¹⁰ With this description, Freud sought to distance psychoanalysis itself from his earlier collaboration with Josef Breuer (~1886-95) in treating what Breuer and Freud had diagnostically termed "hysteria"¹¹ through the dual media of hypnosis and suggestion. In light of the importance of this background, I will begin my treatment of the two threads above with a brief sub-section on this partnership with Breuer, his reasons for eventually parting ways, and the comparative distinctiveness of the methodological presuppositions of "psychoanalysis proper." From this starting point, three sub-sections will follow. The bulk of my exposition regarding Freud's dilemma and the reappearance of themes related to hypnosis will come in the following two subsections in which I engage in a close read-

¹⁰ Freud, *Introductory Lectures to Psychoanalysis*, SA 1:290/SE 16:292.

¹¹ Generally speaking, the pathological phenomena that Breuer and Freud grouped together in the diagnosis of "hysteria" are now categorized under two groups of disorders: dissociative disorders (e.g. dissociative amnesia and dissociative identity disorder) and somatic symptom disorders (e.g. conversion disorder and somatization disorder). Cf. American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders: DSM-5*, 5th ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), 291-328.

ing of the last of Freud's major metapsychological works, *The Ego and the Id* (1923).¹² This reading gives special attention to the incommensurability of two theories—what I will call the sexual theory and the identification theory—that he offers for the ego's formation. Lastly, I will turn to describe how the terms of this dilemma, as well as the themes of hypnosis and suggestion, show up in an analogous manner in Freud's theorization of the central role that transference plays in the psychoanalytic cure.

a. Background: The Ego's Fragile Centrality and the Repudiation of Hypnosis

Despite the significance that Freud attributed to his break with Breuer, it was in those early clinical experiences that he first encountered two characteristics of the ego—its fragility and its therapeutic centrality—that would continue to frame his metapsychology well after his explicit disavowal of hypnosis. The ego's fragility became evident to him in the clinical appearance of psychological pathologies that manifested themselves in a symptomatic *lack* of the intensive, differentiated unity characteristic of the ego. Instead of maintaining the expected continuity of its integration of the differentiated "self," the egos of these patients were repeatedly disrupted by a "splitting" (*Spaltung*)¹³ caused by interferences such as hallucinations or uncontrollable emotional outbursts. Similarly, the ego's therapeutic significance became clear to him in witnessing the curative effects that could be brought about through its self-integrating functions. Even in those early days, in a presumption that remained remarkably consistent throughout his career, Freud identified the

¹² One of my reasons for focusing on *The Ego and the Id* is that Freud's attempts to answer these questions left his readers an *oeuvre* that is famous for large-scale revisions and overly broad generalizations. As Breuer once recounted in a 1907 letter to a friend, "Freud is a man given to absolute and exclusive formulations [...] this is a psychical need which, in my opinion, leads to excessive generalization." As cited in Paul F. Cranefield, "Josef Breuer's Evaluation of His Contribution to Psycho-Analysis," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 39 (1958): 320.

¹³ Cf. Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, GW 1:233-235/SE 2: 166-167, 220-239.

forces that can disrupt the ego's self-organization with the unexpected influence of "unconscious [*unbewußt*]" mental processes that often remain unknown to a person despite producing disorderly and pathological effects within their phenomenal consciousness and associated behavior.¹⁴

Examples of this disruptive splitting of the ego can be found throughout the case studies that Freud and Breuer co-published in their *Studies on Hysteria* (1895).¹⁵ For instance, it is in that book that Freud describes the particular disruptions that plagued one of his first patients, pseudonymously called "Emmy von N.," in the form of hallucinations and phobias:

This lady, when I first saw her, was lying on a sofa with her head resting on a leather cushion... What she told me was perfectly coherent and revealed an unusual degree of education and intelligence. This made it all the more strange whenever two or three minutes she suddenly broke off, contorted her face into an expression of horror and disgust, stretched out her hand towards me, spreading and crooking her fingers, and exclaimed, in a changed voice, charged with anxiety: "Keep still!—Don't say anything!—Don't touch me! She was probably under the influence of some recurrent hallucination of a horrifying kind and was keeping the interference of this stranger [*die Einmischung des Fremden*] at bay with this formula."¹⁶

In addition to such hallucinations and phobias, the other case histories in the book add additional symptoms that were all diagnostically grouped together under the now outmoded label of "hysteria." In Breuer's most well-known client, Anna O., they famously

¹⁴ See, for instance, the diagnostic role that the unconscious plays in Freud's case studies of "Miss Lucy R." and "Fräulein Elisabeth von R." Cf. *Ibid.*, GW 1:163-183, 196-251/SE 2:106-24, 135-81. This is in addition to Breuer's extended theoretical section on "Unconscious Ideas and Ideas Inadmissible to Consciousness." Cf. *Ibid.*, GW 18:281-99/SE 2:222-39.

¹⁵ The cracks of Freud's break with Breuer and hypnosis are evident even in the layout of *Studies on Hysteria*. The first chapter of the book, which is the only jointly written part of the book and also clearly endorses the method of hypnosis, was originally published in 1893. By the time that the entire book was published in 1895, the signs of Freud's methodological shift had already begun. Accordingly, in the fourth chapter, which is Freud's extended theoretical and practical contribution, he openly doubts the usefulness of hypnosis.

¹⁶ Breuer and Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, GW 1:100/SE 2:48-49.

included psychosomatic symptoms such as a chronic cough and even the temporal paralysis of extremities as well. Other symptoms that Breuer and Freud documented included hysterical object conversion (i.e. the perception of one object elicits a reaction as if it were another, usually terrifying, object),¹⁷ disrupted speech (e.g. clacking and stammering),¹⁸ disturbing dreams,¹⁹ and even dissociative states (“absences” as Breuer called them)²⁰ in which the “normal” disposition of a person disappeared and another disposition appeared for some length of time about which the “normal” ego had no memory or control.

Regardless of the particularities of each patient’s symptoms, Freud and Breuer concluded that together these cases furnished cumulative evidence that the unconscious can become the site of particularly traumatic “memories” (*Vorstellungen*) that have been unconsciously repressed because of their intense pain. In this unconscious state, these memories, so they theorized, function as something akin to an infectious disease, “a foreign body [*Fremdkörper*] which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work.”²¹ As a foreign intruder, these unconscious memories can trigger involuntary states—which Breuer termed depersonalized “hypnoid states”²²—that repeat elements of their contents in hallucinations, dreams, object conversions, psychosomatic symptoms, and/or excessive and unexplained emotions. These early observations would eventually crystallize into two of Freud’s most vivid descriptions of the uncon-

¹⁷ Ibid., GW 18:261-274/SE 2:203-214.

¹⁸ Ibid., GW 1:105-106/SE 2:53-64.

¹⁹ Ibid., GW 1:115-129/SE 2:62-75.

²⁰ Cf. Ibid., GW 18:223-240/SE 2:23-43.

²¹ Ibid., GW 1:85/SE 2:6.

²² Ibid., GW 18:274-281/SE 2:215-222.

scious: its characteristic “compulsion to repeat” (*Wiederholungszwang*)²³ and its parallel “timelessness” (*Zeitlosigkeit*) because it constantly awakens past “impulses as [if they are] contemporaneous and real.”²⁴

Based on their initial theorization, Breuer and Freud developed a “cure” that depended on inducing an analogous hypnotically altered state. The goal of this technique was to access the contents of the unconscious and thereby trigger the *catharsis* of bringing the repressed memories into consciousness in and through the patient’s own self-narration—the so-called “talking cure [*Redekur*].”²⁵ Once these memories were “[introduced] into normal consciousness (under light hypnosis) or [removed] through the physician’s suggestion”²⁶ the pathological repetitions “immediately and permanently disappeared” to Freud and Breuer’s “great surprise.”²⁷ Almost paradoxically, the hypnotic disunity of the patient was apparently cured by triggering an analogously depersonalized state of hypnosis that opened up the unconscious to recollection and/or the receptivity of the doctor’s suggestive intervention. By assimilating the unconscious memories (or having them suggestively removed), the ego somehow banishes the foreign intruder, regains its operative unity, and acquires a revitalized immanent freedom that had been robbed by the involuntary repetitions. As Freud concluded later in “Observations on Transference-Love” (1915), one of the axiomatic presuppositions of the psychoanalytic cure is that “conscious mental activity” is distinguished from unconscious activity by its higher de-

²³ Cf. Freud, “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through,” SA 11:210-14/SE 12:150-155. and Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SA 3:228-233/SE 18:18-23.

²⁴ “The Dynamics of Transference,” SA 11:167/SE 12:108.

²⁵ Breuer and Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, GW 18:229/SE 2:30.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, GW 1:97/SE 2:17.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, GW 1:85/SE 2:6.

gree of “mental freedom.”²⁸ In this sense, the ego’s capacity for therapeutic self-integration doubles as the site of an individual’s tenuous, and always immanently contested, potency for conscious self-dominion. Even after Freud’s break with Breuer, the broad outlines of this “cure” would always remain the same: by becoming aware of the unconscious roots of its pathological symptoms the ego is somehow able to begin disarming these processes of their disruptive power.

Nonetheless, despite such degrees of continuity Freud did eventually repudiate the therapeutic significance of hypnosis. Along the way, he offers at least three types of justifications for this renunciation. There are clinical reasons (e.g. he could not hypnotize all of his patients and the curative effects of self-narration did not seem to depend on it),²⁹ intellectual reasons (e.g. “the mechanism of hypnosis is so puzzling to me that I would rather not make use of it as an explanation”),³⁰ and even reasons of a more personal variety (e.g. “I can remember even then feeling a muffled hostility to this tyranny of suggestion”).³¹ In regard to this last set of reasons, it must be said that Freud is by no means alone. The depersonalization of hypnosis and the radical receptivity of suggestion often elicit reactions of disturbance and suspicion from its observers, critics, and counter-theorists.³² This is despite the fact that, at least according to several sociological studies,

²⁸ “Observations on Transference-Love,” SA 11:229/SE 12:170.

²⁹ Ibid., GW 1:252-312/SE 2:256-305. See n. 15 above.

³⁰ Ibid., GW 1:271/SE 2: 271.

³¹ Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, SA 9:84/SE 18:89.

³² This pattern in modern Western thought and science has a long, complicated history that is tied both to particularly bad theorizations of hypnotic/suggestive capacities and scientific suspicions of anything the mechanism for which eludes visible observation. The deeply ingrained tendency for these variables to converge can be glimpsed in, for instance, the investigation of the French Royal Commission in 1784 that denounced—with good reason—Franz Mesmer’s theories of animal magnetism, despite the linguistic vestige (i.e. “mesmerizing” and “*mesmérisme*”) of his theories that ironically continues to this day. In addition, as we are narrating in our own way in this chapter, the counter-theorizing of hypnosis/suggestion runs deeply

some form of the hypnotic “trance” can be found in nearly every human culture worldwide,³³ regardless of whether, as Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen notes, a culture tends to “reject or marginalize it” (as most Western cultures do) or ends up placing it at the “center of a cult” (as many non-Western cultures do).³⁴ In addition, and perhaps even more strangely, analogous trance-like states are scientifically observable, especially under conditions of extreme stress, among a wide-range of non-human animals.³⁵

Still, in place of the hypnotic treatment, Freud adopted the method of “free association” as the stated foundation of psychoanalysis “proper.” This method takes it for granted that the influence of the unconscious is decipherable on the basis of clues that can be observed, at least by the trained eyes and ears of the analyst, from within the dynamics

within the genealogy of psychoanalysis itself. In addition to Freud’s own methodological switch away from hypnotism, the campaign to discredit the theories of Sandor Ferenczi, to which Freud himself contributed, is another incident in this history. The importance of both of these events in relation to the contemporary question of the relation between hypnosis and psychoanalysis is documented and explored well in Léon Chertok and Isabelle Stengers, *A Critique of Psychoanalytic Reason: Hypnosis as a Scientific Problem from Lavoisier to Lacan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992)

³³ Cf. Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie: Psychoanalysis, Mimesis, and Affect* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 98-120. Borch-Jacobsen relies upon two important cultural anthropology studies, “Possession et chamanisme” and “La Folie des dieux et la raison des hommes,” by Luc de Heusch. Cf. Luc de Heusch, *Pourquoi l’épouser? Et autres essais* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971)

³⁴ Cf. Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie*, 101. The most obvious exception to the Western marginalization of the trance is the depersonalized receptivity characteristic of our cultural addiction to television, film, computers, and smart phones.

³⁵ Much of the unusual phenomena that formerly fell under the description of “animal hypnosis” now goes by the name of “tonic immobility,” which is a state of catatonic immobilization characterized, notably for our proposal regarding the relationship between waking and object consciousness, by a lack of responsiveness to external sensory stimuli. Those who replaced the notion of “animal hypnosis” with “tonic immobility” largely did so while heavily criticizing any supposed link between human hypnosis and the immobilized state witnessed among a large variety of species. An example of this rhetoric can be found in an early study that is still cited in the literature today, Gordon G. Gallup, “Animal Hypnosis: Factual Status of a Fictional Concept,” *Psychological Bulletin* 81, no. 11 (1974): 836-53. Interestingly enough, however, the concept of tonic immobility, despite being originally coined by some in order differential human and non-human phenomena is now being taken up as way of describing the depersonalized states that often occurs in human being during violently traumatic events such as rape. Cf. Murray P. Abrams et al., “Human Tonic Immobility: Measurement and Correlates,” *Depression and Anxiety* 26 (2009): 550-56. I take this development to point in the same explanatory direction that I am pursuing in this project through different disciplinary and conceptual means.

of egoic consciousness itself. Accordingly, because these clues are present within the “normal” interactions between the patient and the analyst there is no need to induce an altered state in order for psychoanalysis to help the patient. In addition, Freud also ended up displacing Breuer’s emphasis on “traumatic” memories as the most basic variable in explaining and resolving the unconscious roots of pathological symptoms that repetitively disrupt the ego’s unity. Instead, he presumes that the etiology of all pathological psychological symptoms should “be looked for,” not in traumatic events, but ultimately “in *sexual* factors.”³⁶

Nonetheless, the background of Freud’s collaboration and subsequent break with Breuer serves two purposes going forward. First, as I suggested above, the double significance of the ego—its fragile relation to unconscious disruptions and its therapeutic centrality—would frame his theoretical inquiries into the ego’s formation and function well after his break with Breuer. For if the ego’s unity is subject to the continuous influence of unconscious factors outside of its control, even to the severe degree of dissociatively suspending the ego’s self-integration entirely, then what is the operative and developmental status of these factors? Trying to answer that question forced Freud to repeatedly engage in what Paul Ricoeur rightly describes as an “archeology of the subject”³⁷ in which his metapsychology is constantly preoccupied with theorizing the problem in which the Freudian dilemma about which we are most interested arises: the contingent, archaic origins of the ego. Second, the (re)appearance of themes related to hypnosis and suggestion in his attempt to answer the above question at least raises a doubt as to whether Freud

³⁶ Breuer and Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, GW 1:255/257. Emphasis in original. See n. 15 above.

³⁷ Ricoeur, *De l’interprétation*, 407-443 (*Freud and Philosophy*, 419-58).

was able to separate his continued investigation of the ego's disruptions by the unconscious from his supposedly clear-cut "dispensing of hypnosis" and his corresponding founding of psychoanalysis as a distinct discipline unto itself. In turn, this doubt will highlight the explanatory significance of identification that Freud only on occasion seems to recognize.

b. The Ego and the Id I: The Topographical Background and the Need for a Revision

Shortly after his break with Breuer, Freud attempted to formulate a "map" of the relationship between the ego and the unconscious based upon his clinical observations of the mutual influence that exists between these "parts" of the "psyche." The result, which Freud worked out in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), was his so-called first "topography" of the psyche: the conscious (*Cs.*), preconscious (*Pcs.*), and unconscious (*Ucs.*).³⁸ His purpose in writing *The Ego and the Id*, which he describes early on in the book's initial introductory chapter, is to offer a revision of this topographical map that had been prompted by a series of recent clinical observations. However, before stating the nature of the theoretical "discovery"³⁹ that emerged out of these observations, Freud first sets out to reassure his readers of the larger continuity between his two topographies, despite the forthcoming revision.

The largest point of continuity that he singles out right at the beginning *The Ego and the Id* represents what he calls the "fundamental premise of psychoanalysis."⁴⁰ We are already familiar with the implications of this premise: that there is a "division of the

³⁸ Cf. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:284-285/SE 19:15.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, SA 3:287/SE 19:17.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, SA 3:283/SE 19:13.

psychical into what is conscious and what is unconscious [and this premise] alone makes it possible for psychoanalysis to understand the pathological processes in mental life.”⁴¹ He proceeds to delineate the boundaries of this division by defining what he means by “being conscious.” He does so on the basis of what he calls “perception” (*Wahrnehmung*). “Being conscious [*Bewußt sein*],” as Freud writes in an important early declaration, “is in the first place a descriptive term, resting on perception of the most immediate and certain [*unmittelbarste und sicherste*] character.”⁴² As descriptively and perceptually certain, Freud shows no anxiety about the dependability of using the descriptive notion of “being conscious” of some process without predetermining the inquiry into the origin of the operative distinction in the first place: “the distinction between conscious and unconscious is in the last resort a question of perception, which must be answered ‘yes’ or ‘no,’ and the act of perception [*Akt der Wahrnehmung*] itself tells us nothing of the reason why a thing is or is not perceived.”⁴³

Nor is Freud shy about offering common examples of conscious phenomena in order to establish what the unconscious inverse might be like. In fact, *a la* Augustine and Aquinas, he categorizes these examples according to whether they are derived from “external [*äußerer*]” or “internal [*innerer*]” perception.⁴⁴ He typically limits external perception to data received from the senses, i.e. sense-perceptions (*Sinneswahrnehmungen*).⁴⁵

As for internal perceptions, Freud lumps them together into what he calls “sensations

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., SA 3:283/SE 19:13-14.

⁴³ Ibid., SA 3:285/SE 19:15-16. This echoes Lonergan’s insistence that there is a given quality of (phenomenal) consciousness that can be glimpsed in the reliable distinction between certain processes that are conscious (e.g. seeing) and others that are not (e.g. growing your beard). Cf. Lonergan, *Insight*, 3:344-46.

⁴⁴ Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:288-291/SE 19:19-22.

⁴⁵ Ibid., SA 3:288/SE 19:19.

[*Empfindungen*] and feelings [*Gefühle*],⁴⁶ the most important of which are the contents of thoughts, whether imagistic or verbal,⁴⁷ and feelings of pleasure (*Lust*) or the pain of its absence (*Unlust*).⁴⁸ If any given psychical process can be perceived, then it can be said to have a conscious “quality [*Qualität*]” to it.⁴⁹ In the absence of this quality, processes—even if they produce effects of which one is immediately conscious⁵⁰—can be judged to be unconscious in themselves.⁵¹

Accordingly, if Freud does not intend to revise this fundamental premise between the operative division between conscious and unconscious processes, what is this new discovery that prompts the revision(s) set forth in *The Ego and the Id*? He had discovered a new set of unconscious processes. The distinctions of the first topography include two kinds of processes that Freud understands as “unconscious” strictly speaking. First, interestingly enough he assigns a kind of “unconsciousness” to what Aristotle and Aquinas would have simply ascribed to the normal habitual retention of memory. Hence, “an idea [*Vorstellung*] that is conscious now is no longer so a moment later, although it can be-

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ “*Das Denken in Bildern*” and “*das Denken in Worten*,” cf. Ibid., SA 3:290/SE 19:21.

⁴⁸ Ibid., SA 3:291/SE 19:22.

⁴⁹ Ibid., SA 3:283/SE 19:13.

⁵⁰ As Freud writes, “We have found [...] that very powerful mental process or ideas exist [...] which can produce all the effects [*die alle Folgen*] in mental life that ordinary ideas do (including effects that can in their turn become conscious as ideas), though they themselves do not become conscious.” Cf. Ibid., SA 3:284/SE 19:14.

⁵¹ Despite the superficial acuity that might appear on the basis of his stated distinction between inner and outer perception, Freud lacks any philosophical resources to systematize these observations regarding the potential data sources for the awareness of consciousness and/or the reciprocal relationship between them—the precise description of which as we have seen is a cornerstone for Aristotle and Aquinas—that is necessarily implied by any talk of memories or their recollection. To his credit, Freud occasionally makes observations that gesture towards the phenomena that Aristotelian metaphysics precisely explains via axioms such as “the thing known is in the knower.” For example, he observes that the act of touching an object “yields two kinds of sensations, one of which may be equivalent to an internal perception.” (SA 3:294/SE 19:25. Nonetheless, Freud’s repeated inability to theorize the relation between inner and outer perception helps to produce many of the inconsistencies that we will shortly encounter.

come so again under certain conditions that are easily brought about.”⁵² Accordingly, this sense of “unconscious coincides with [being] latent and capable of becoming conscious.”⁵³ This type of “unconsciousness” Freud typically renames as that which is typical of the *preconscious*.⁵⁴ The second type of unconsciousness, which he usually references as “the unconscious” properly speaking, is identical to the repression of memories that we already encountered in *Studies on Hysteria*. According to Freud, such repression emanates from the liminal boundary of consciousness itself, which functions as a dynamic “force” (*Kraft*) that opposes and resists the ideas [*Vorstellungen*] associated with these memories from emerging into the ego’s consciousness.⁵⁵

Now, however, Freud had stumbled upon clinical phenomena that justified “the necessity of postulating a third *Ucs*.”⁵⁶ The paradigmatic effect of this third set of unconscious processes arise in the form of what Freud calls the immanent “faculties of self-criticism and conscience.”⁵⁷ These faculties function as something like the unconscious influence of unperceived voices—“You *ought to be* like this” and “You *may not be* like this”⁵⁸—that produce the conscious effects of self-reproach, self-criticism, and unexpected guilt. In the clinical setting, these processes repeatedly caused a resistance to analytic treatment because the internal sense of guilt seemed to find “satisfaction in the illness and thus refuses to give up the punishment of suffering.”⁵⁹

⁵² Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:283/SE 19:14.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, SA 3:283/SE 19:14.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, SA 3:284/SE 19:15.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, SA 3:284/SE 19:14.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, SA 3:287/SE 19:18.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, SA 3:295/SE 19:26.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, SA 3:301/SE 19:34. Emphases in original.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, SA 3:316/SE 19:49.

From Freud's perspective, the most curious aspect of these unconscious processes is that they represent relatively "high" mental activities, which are usually associated with the ego in contrast with the "activities of the lower passions [*Leidensdkaften*]" (e.g. feelings, often erotic in origin, of immediate pleasure/pain) typically associated with the *Ucs*. He considers them high not only because of the self-differentiation inherent to them, but also because their influence can be seen as producing "effects of the greatest importance" (e.g. cultural and religious moral norms).⁶⁰ This curiosity leads Freud to the unexpected conclusion that this third unconsciousness actually represents a kind of unconsciousness *within the ego itself* that nonetheless seems to be at least analogically and probably phylogenetically related to the unconsciousness of the repressed:

We have come upon something in the ego itself which is also unconscious, which behaves exactly like the repressed—that is, which produces powerful effects without itself being conscious and which requires special work before it can be made conscious.⁶¹

If such an unconsciousness exists "in the ego itself,"⁶² then a topography based upon only the first two forms of unconsciousness is no longer viable on its own; instead a new topography that specifies some kind of distinction with the ego itself is required to explain this phenomenon. The resulting revision articulated in the chapters that follow this initial introduction represent what has become known as Freud's second topography: the ego

⁶⁰ Ibid., SA 3:295/SE 19:26.

⁶¹ Ibid., SA 3:287/SE 19:17.

⁶² To Freud's credit, he demonstrates genuine concern that by introducing a third kind of *Ucs*, he risks robbing his central concept of its axiomatic significance because it might be seen as signifying too many things to describe anything with predictable precision. Nonetheless he presses on in order to make theoretical sense of his new discovery. He does so both because he wishes to explain his clinical observations and because, despite the risks, the explanatory power of psychoanalysis rests squarely on the clue specified by the terms of its fundamental premise: "for the property of being conscious or not is in the last resort our one beacon-light in the darkness of depth-psychology." (Ibid., SA 3:287/SE 19:18).

(*das Ich*), the id (*das Es*), and the ego-ideal (*das Ichideal*) or super-ego (*das Über-Ich*).⁶³

In setting forth this topography, Freud takes up the topic that is of most pressing interest to us: a consideration of the ego's developmental relation to the respective unconscious processes characteristic of the id and the ego-ideal's idiosyncratic faculties of self-criticism and conscience.

c. The Ego and the Id II: Freud's Dilemma and the Emergence of the Ego

In outlining his revised topography, in the next two chapters Freud sequentially consider the ego's developmental relation to the id⁶⁴ (Chapter 2) and then to the ego-ideal (Chapter 3).⁶⁵ In the process, he not only unexpectedly stumbles back onto the riddles of hypnosis and suggestion, but he also finds himself caught in the crux of the decisive circular dilemma that I referenced at the outset. For in the process of trying to describe how the ego's self-organization and self-awareness emerges out of a prior developmental state, Freud discovers—like Augustine—how difficult it is to speak of the latter without circularly reinstating the former and thus vacillating back and forth between them incoherently.

Due to the fact that these conceptual inconsistencies make this text exceptionally difficult to interpret and/or present systematically, I will state the horns of Freud's dilemma at the outset for the sake of clarity. In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud ends up advocating for two theories about the ego's emergence that are, at least as they stand in the terms

⁶³ According to Freud's own usage, the ego-ideal and the super-ego are interchangeable. For the most part, unless the surrounding rhetoric makes it awkward, I will opt for "ego-ideal" in what follows because it more closely presents the intrinsic connection with the ego. In contrast, the term "super-ego" can implicitly suggest that it is a kind of higher form of the ego and therefore something else entirely.

⁶⁴ Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:288-295/SE 19:19-27.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, SA 3:296-306/SE 19:28-39.

of his theorization, irreconcilable to one another. The first, which as a shorthand I will call the *sexual theory*, aligns with his basic post-Breuer conviction that all psychological development, whether pathological or not, has psycho-sexual origins in the erotic bonds (*Bindungen*) forged by an individual's sexual libido (*viz.* erotic object-cathexes (*Objektbesetzung*)). The second, which I will call the *identification theory*, postulates that the ego emerges through the mechanism of a series of primary identifications (*Identifizierungen*) that, and here the inconsistency will already begin to come into focus, supposedly "[take] place earlier than any object-cathexis."⁶⁶

The crux of the irreconcilable inconsistency between these two theories, however, ultimately lies not just in the semantics of which is "earlier," but rather in their opposite conceptualizations of the primal *subject-object relation*. As I will argue below, the sexual theory presupposes a basic ego-like awareness of the differentiation between oneself and another object *qua* object. In contrast, the identification theory presupposes an admittedly strange identificatory fusion between "oneself" and "others," out of which the ego's self-differentiated awareness genuinely emerges as a derivative development.

On the basis of these initial summary statements, I will consider each of these two theories in more detail before moving on to show how an analogous state of conceptual affairs emerges in Freud's theorization of transference. Even though it does not hold true in every detail, it is broadly the case that the sexual theory emerges most clearly in association with Freud's initial treatment of the ego's developmental relation to the id in Chapter 2 of *The Ego and the Id*, whereas the identification theory ascends to prominence

⁶⁶ Ibid., SA 3:299/SE 19:31.

in the subsequent chapter's discussion of the ego's relation to the ego-ideal. In light of this loose logical order, we will begin with an overview of the sexual theory after which a contrast with the identification theory will follow.

Freud's sexual theorization of the ego's origins begins with his appropriation of the Nietzschean use of "*das Es*"—the *id*—to describe that which is unconsciously impersonal in human nature.⁶⁷ This broad concept allows him to assign two kinds of basic impulses to the *id*: those that arise from the dualistic instincts (the sexual and death drives) and those, which we have already discussed, are connected to repressed memories.⁶⁸ As for the instincts, the sexual instinct naturally pursues the life-promoting pleasure of erotically-driven "uniting [*zu vereinigen*] and binding [*zu binden*]."⁶⁹ In contrast, the death instinct tends towards the inverse: a "destruction directed against the external world and other organisms."⁷⁰ Although we will briefly return to reference how we would resituate the death drive into something non-dualistic, for the moment the most important facet of the *id* for us to consider here is its function as the primal seat of erotic libido. This is because Freud almost exclusively focuses on the libido in articulating the *id*'s relation to the ego's formation. This relative exclusivity is reflected in extended passages in the chapter on the developmental relation between the ego and the *id* in which he seems to set aside the death instinct altogether when discussing the nature of the *id*. For example, at one

⁶⁷ According to Freud, his most direct source for the Nietzschean concept was George Groddeck. Cf. *Ibid.*, SA 3:292/SE 19:23. On the connection between Freud, Groddeck and Nietzsche, see Herman Westerink, *A Dark Trace: Sigmund Freud on the Sense of Guilt* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), 187-94.

⁶⁸ Cf. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:292-293/SE 19:24.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, SA 3:312/SE 19:45.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, SA 3:308/SE 19:41.

point he declares without qualification, “[T]he pleasure principle [...] reigns unrestrictedly in the id.”⁷¹

Following the trajectory laid out by some of his earliest psychoanalytic categories first developed in his “Project for a Scientific Psychology” (1895), Freud uses the concept of “libido” with explicit energetic connotations. Thus, according to Freud, certain objects become the locus of sexual desire through the desiring individual mentally concentrating (*viz.* binding, cathecting) libido “around/in” them in the sense of a defined condensation of energy. Once bound, erotic libido only has two options for achieving the pleasure of “releasing,” “spending,” or “discharging” the libidinal energy properly. The most obvious option is actually achieving sexual satisfaction with that object-cathexis. The other option is the road of sublimation, which runs through the ego as we will see shortly, in which sexual libido is successfully redirected—sublimated—toward the pleasure (*Lust*) of achieving non-sexual ends (e.g. aesthetic, intellectual, cultural).⁷² Apart from these options for release, libido will simply keep accumulating and, if discharge continues to be frustrated, this accumulation will result in any number of the neurotic states (e.g. obsession, anxiety, tension) that Freud associates with the pain (*Unlust*) of unreleased libido.

However: “At the very beginning [*Uranfang*],” Freud insists, “all the libido is accumulated in the id, while the ego is still in [the] process of formation or is still feeble.”⁷³ On the basis of this assertion, Freud advances his sexual theory that holds that the id *is* in

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, SA 3:293/SE 19:25.

⁷² Cf. *Ibid.*, SA 3:304/SE 19:35-36. See also, “The Uncanny,” SA 4:241-274/SE 17:219-252 and *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SA 9:191-270/SE 21:57-146.

⁷³ *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:312-313/SE 19:46.

fact the immanent, primal ground of the psychical self out of which egoic consciousness and the ego-ideal are both derivatively formed. As Freud says clearly, the ego is not an entity unto itself, it is only a “a specially modified part [of the id].”⁷⁴ In other words: in the beginning was the id. The modification that follows occurs progressively, as we will see in a moment, under the influence of external sense perceptions and derivative inner perceptions of pain. Apart from this later development of the ego, however, the id’s libidinal impulses operate instinctually and thus without modulation or reasoned direction. Freud actually describes this instinctual condition as reflective of the fact that the id “has achieved no unified will [*einheitlichen Willen*].”⁷⁵ Left to itself, the id unconsciously and involuntarily pursues the pleasure principle by “send[ing] part of [its] libido out into erotic object-cathexes”⁷⁶ without any thought (literally) of how, where, or with whom it might actually experience the pleasure of libidinal discharge and sexual satisfaction.

Eventually, though, the impetus that triggers the ego’s development can be found in the body’s sensory experience of an external world that does not yield to the id’s erotic wishes (*Wünsche*). This dissonance causes the internal pain that arises from the immanent accumulation of libido that has not been discharged.⁷⁷ According to Freud, the ego emerges as a “reaction-formation [*Reaktionsbildung*]”⁷⁸ to the experience of this pain. In defense against this pain, the ego develops as an immanent condensation of sexual object-

⁷⁴ Ibid., SA 3:307/SE 19:40.

⁷⁵ Ibid., SA 3:325/SE 19:59.

⁷⁶ Ibid., SA 3:313/SE 19:46.

⁷⁷ Ibid., SA 3:313-314/SE 19:47.

⁷⁸ Freud typically uses this phrase to describe the formation of the ego-ideal in *The Ego and the Id*. However, given both its logic, which Freud uses elsewhere as a general feature of psychic development, and the close developmental links and operative functions between the ego and the ego-ideal this formulation seems justified. For examples of its general usage, see *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, SA 5:85, 140-141/SE 7:178, 238-239.

libido that has been desexualized and therefore sublimated into narcissistic libido.

Through this process of sublimation, the ego emerges as a kind of immanent object that offers to fulfill the id's wishes through another (i.e. sublimated) route that runs through itself:

When the ego assumes the features of the object, it is forcing itself, so to speak, upon the id as a love-object and is trying to make good the id's loss by saying: 'Look, you can love me too—I am so like the object.' [...] The transformation of object-libido into narcissistic libido which thus takes place obviously implies an abandonment of sexual aims, a desexualization—a kind of sublimation, therefore.⁷⁹

In short, the immanent, condensed unity of the ego represents a sublimated realization of Eros's main purpose of unifying and binding.⁸⁰

Out of this primary thesis, Freud then proceeds to postulate that this sublimation might not only explain the ego's formation, but also explain its ongoing function of modulating and sublimating sexual libido to successfully achieve its aims vis-à-vis the external world:

Indeed, the question arises, and deserves careful consideration, whether [the transformation of object-libido into narcissistic libido] is not the universal road to sublimation, whether all sublimation does not take place through the mediation of the ego, which begins by changing sexual object-libido into narcissistic libido and then, perhaps, goes on to give it another aim.⁸¹

Expressed in another way, the ego operates at the "frontier" between the id and the external world, trying to mediate between the former's pleasure principle and the latter as the reality principle. As Freud writes, "As a frontier-creature [*Grenzwesen*], the ego tries to mediate between the world and the id, to make the id pliable to the world and, by means

⁷⁹ *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:297-298/SE 19:30.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, SA 3:312/SE 19:45.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, SA 3:298/SE 19:30.

of its muscular activity, to make the world fall in with the wishes of the id.”⁸² Or, as Freud adds in a rare nod to traditional formulations: “The ego represents what may be called reason [*Vernunft*] and deliberateness [*Besonnenheit*], in contrast to the id, which contains the passions [*Leidenschaften*].”⁸³

As Freud indicates, if his only task in *The Ego and the Id* was to specify the relationship between the ego and the id then the above account might be relatively satisfying and indeed even suggest a relatively “simple state of things.” “But,” as Freud continues, “there is a further complication:”⁸⁴ the ego-ideal. In trying to bring the ego-ideal’s origins into the mix, Freud himself actually introduces the most complicating variable simply by way of how he frames the entire discussion. As I have indicated above, from the earliest pages of *The Ego and the Id* Freud seems to be playing out a hunch that he has that the parallel unconsciousness of the super-ego’s ideals and of the id’s unconscious instincts and repressions are phylogenetically linked. Somehow, at least according to Freud’s intuition, the unconscious “contents” of the id influence the ego from within the ego itself and therefore this unconscious material “confronts the other contents of the ego as an ego ideal or super-ego”⁸⁵ *without thereby becoming conscious*.⁸⁶ Here Freud sets before us a decidedly more complicated set of problems to solve than those posed by the comparatively simple relation between the ego and the id. This is due to the fact that in order to make this kind of psychological phenomena intelligible one would likely need to come upon a single mechanism that—by its very nature—can be responsible for two mirrored

⁸² Ibid., SA 3:322/SE 19:56.

⁸³ Ibid., SA 3:294/SE 19:25.

⁸⁴ Ibid., SA 3:296/SE 19:28.

⁸⁵ Ibid., SA 3:301/SE 19:34.

⁸⁶ Cf. Ibid., SA 3:305-306/SE 19:38-39.

effects, one “in” the id and another “in” the ego-ideal, that are simultaneously developmentally linked in a common bond of some kind (i.e. mnemic, sexual, or another type).

It is at this crucial point in his inquiry that Freud turns to the concept of identification (*Identifizierung*) as just the sort of mechanism capable of producing these mirrored effects. Freud originally had described this concept of identification in his 1917 essay, “Mourning and Melancholia.” In that context, he speculated that identification could explain the difference between the generic process of mourning the loss of a beloved object and the comparatively longer-term condition of melancholia.⁸⁷ Whereas mourning involves a process of grieving a lost object that eventually resolves into a return to a “normal attitude to life,”⁸⁸ melancholia exhibits the pathological symptoms of a “profound painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings.”⁸⁹ Briefly summarized, Freud proposes that this difference can be tied to the fact that in melancholia the ego attempts to cope with the loss of an erotic object, in a matter that is directly parallel to the above description of the ego’s formation, through forming “an *identification* of the ego with the abandoned object.”⁹⁰ The result of this attempt is that the absence of the lost object becomes introjected into the ego itself as an immanent “substitute for the erotic cathexis.”⁹¹ Perhaps the most crucial part of this theory that is easily missed is that the “object” that is

⁸⁷ There are brief precedents in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, but they are nothing like the systematic employment and development found in “Mourning and Melancholia.” Cf. *The Interpretation of Dreams*, SA 2:166, 320-321/SE 4:150, 320-323.

⁸⁸ “Mourning and Melancholia,” SA 3:197/SE 14:243.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, SA 3:198/SE 14:244.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, SA 3:203/SE 14:249. Emphasis in original.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

introjected is not the beloved object *per se*, but the object *as absent* and thus as the loved object has been ambivalently joined by feelings of hostility and hate because of the frustration of its absence. Through this identificatory mechanism, what was originally the externality of an “object-loss was transformed” into the enduring immanence of “an ego-loss” that perpetuates the abyssal, withdrawn state of melancholia.⁹² In the process, the full ambivalence of love and hate that had been connected to the object now appears as *self*-ambivalence in the mode of self-reproach and self-criticism that functions to nurse the masochistic pleasure provided by this virtual, immanent presence of the lost object. Or as Freud writes: “The self-tormenting in melancholia [...], which is without doubt enjoyable, signifies [...] a satisfaction of trends of sadism and hates which relate to an object, and which have been turned round upon the subject’s own self.”⁹³ In the dawn of this pathology, as Freud writes eloquently, “the shadow of the object fell upon the ego.”⁹⁴

On the level of an initial evaluation, is it clear why Freud is attracted to identification as a route for describing the origins of the differentiation between the ego and the ego-ideal. For if identification introduces a certain “grade [*Stufe*]” and “differentiation” in an already formed ego in the process that causes melancholia,⁹⁵ might it be possible that a similar process founded the ego by differentiating it from the id and, derivatively, the ego-ideal as well? In addition, identification’s capacity for introjection represents a promising route for theorizing how certain object-bonds endure “within” the individual and, in fact, contribute to the contingent “building-up [*herstellen*]” of the ego in its actual emer-

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., SA 3:205/SE 14:251.

⁹⁴ Ibid., SA 3:203/SE 14:249.

⁹⁵ *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:296/SE 19:28.

gence, the fruit of which Freud calls an ego's idiosyncratic "character [*Charakter*]."⁹⁶ It is in pursuing this line of thought that Freud coins his well-known declaration that the "character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and that it contains the history of those object-choices."⁹⁷

Capitalizing on this initial promise, however, proves to be an incredibly convoluted and challenging task for Freud that leads him into the heart of the dilemma we are describing. The crux of this challenge lies in Freud's continuous alternation between two types of identification—what I will call primary, object-less identification and secondary, model-based identification—that jointly represent Freud's attempt to import the insights of melancholic identification into the question of the archaic origins of the ego and the ego-ideal.⁹⁸ Quite often, Freud alternates between these two identifications within a single paragraph and, as a result, it is nearly impossible to offer a neat treatment of them separately and/or sequentially from one another.

For this reason, my strategy at this juncture will be to base my explication of these two types of identification on a single, crucial passage from Freud's most sustained discussion of identification in *The Ego and the Id*. I will, of course, reference other material for the sake of commentary and explanatory expansion, but no other paragraph illustrates the rhetorical inconsistency that results from Freud's dilemma more than the one that follows. The immediately preceding context has Freud discussing the character of a devel-

⁹⁶ Ibid., SA 3:296/SE 19:28.

⁹⁷ Ibid., SA 3:297/SE 19:29.

⁹⁸ In addition to the melancholic, primary, and secondary forms of identification, there is also a fourth type of identification, social identification, that I leave aside in this context. As Freud describes it, "Social feelings rest on identifications with other people, on the basis of having the same ego ideal." Cf. Ibid., SA 3:304/SE 19:37. See as well, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, SA 9:98-103/SE 18:105-110.

oped ego and its capacity for insulating itself from the loss of cathected objects. This explains the opening transitional clause, after which it is one sustained discussion of the role of identification in the earliest part of developmental life outside of the womb:

But, whatever the character's later capacity for resisting the influences of abandoned object-cathexes may turn out to be, the effects of the first identifications made in earliest childhood will be general and lasting. This leads us back to the origin of the ego ideal; for behind it there lies hidden an individual's first and most important [*erste und bedeutsamste*] identification, his identification with the father of his own personal prehistory [*die mit dem Vater der persönlichen Vorzeit*]. This is apparently not in the first instance the consequence or outcome of an object-cathexis; it is a direct and immediate [*unmittelbare*] identification and takes place earlier than any object-cathexis. But the object-choices belonging to the first sexual period and relating to the father and mother seem normally to find their starting-point in an identification of this kind, and would thus reinforce the primary identification.⁹⁹

The dissonance of this passage on identification with the sexual theory is immediately evident even upon an initial reading. There are clear references to a kind of identification that is explicitly earlier than any object-cathexis and even of early sexual objects that somehow start from and then reinforce this primary identification. The implications of such rhetoric leads us in the direction of a very different primal beginning for a pre-egoic individual than one that is always already dominated by the sexual libido.

It might be tempting at first to explain away such a passage as an insignificant outlier in comparison to the unquestionable primacy of the sexual theory in Freud's metapsychology. However, such an attempt would inevitably founder on sections from

⁹⁹ Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:298-299/SE 19:31. Instead of "starting-point," Strachey has the ambiguous "outcome" for *Ausgang* here. Such an ambiguity is intrinsic to *Ausgang* in German since it can signify both an ending and the route by which that ending is reached. Freud uses it with both connotations in *The Ego and the Id* (e.g. "starting-point" on SA 3:288/SE 19:19 and "outcome" on SA 3:300/SE 19:32). The sense of "starting-point" seems justified here in light of Freud's rhetoric in the next clause regarding how the sexual object-choice "reinforces" the primary identification, thus making the earlier identification the *Ausgang* of the sexual object-choice.

Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego (1921) that echo this passage in an even more adamant tone. There we encounter Freud unmistakably declaring, “Identification is known to psychoanalysis as the earliest expression of an emotional tie with another person.”¹⁰⁰ And again later on: “[I]dentification is the earliest and original [*ursprünglichste*] form of emotional tie.”¹⁰¹ Like the above passage from *The Ego and the Id*, these statements from *Group Psychology* occur in the context of Freud trying to explain the origins and dynamics of the ego-ideal in distinction from the ego alone. When faced with this problematic, and specifically when he attempts to address it by means of identification, Freud simply does repeatedly lapse into rhetoric that stands in a notable tension with the supposed primal primacy of the id’s sexual libido.

If such passages cannot be ignored, what does Freud intend to accomplish through this talk of primary identification and why might he simultaneously resist its implications? From the immediate context, and especially the framing analogy with melancholic identification, it seems clear what he is trying to accomplish. By primary identification Freud intends something like a “direct and immediate” introjection of the object into the individual, i.e. a radical receptivity to an object to the point that the object is not perceived *qua* object, but rather *qua* perceiver. In this precise sense, primary identification is “object-less,” for it precedes the subject/object distinction from the side of the developing individual. Obviously, objects remain ontologically distinct in reality, but not *as they are perceived according to primary identification*. Freud’s reasons for gesturing towards such a receptivity are clear. In order for the identificatory relation to meaningfully form the “I”

¹⁰⁰ *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, SA 9:98/SE 18:105.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, SA 9:99/SE 18:107.

of the ego—in order for the ego’s self-differentiated character to actually develop as a “precipitate” of lost objects—there must be a “time” in which there is no “I” who knows itself to be an “I” differentiated from others who are, precisely as *objects*, perceived as “not-I.” Freud signals his awareness of this implication of his line of thought through his repeated insistence that the earliest and most influential identifications occur prior to any object-cathexes. By giving primary identification such an original preeminence, Freud rightfully indicates that in order to explain the self-differentiation intrinsic to the ego—from the id, from external objects, and from the ideals of the ego-ideal—by way of the mechanism of identification that he must try to theorize a stage in human development in which the perception of the subject/object distinction is considerably blurred, even to the point of its total disappearance, in a perceived fusion between individual and object.

In something that seems like an admission that his treatment in *The Ego and the Id* did not go far enough in working out this theorization of identification, Freud’s clearest and most concrete examples of this kind of identificatory fusion occur later in his *oeuvre*. For example, in *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (1940) Freud writes clearly of the identificatory relationship between the infant and a mother’s breast that echoes his passing comment above about erotic libidinal object-cathexes originating in, and derivatively reinforcing, the “objects” of primary identification:

There is no doubt that, to begin with, the child does not distinguish between the breast and its own body; [but] when the breast has to be separated from the body and shifted to the ‘*outside*’ because the child so often finds it absent, it carries with it as an ‘*object*’ a part of the original narcissistic libidinal cathexis.¹⁰²

¹⁰² *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, GW 17:115/SE 23: 188. Emphases in the original.

The most noteworthy aspect of this passage is the illuminating way that Freud describes the inversion of an original introjection through a process that “shifts,” or even *relocates* (*verlegt*), that object to the “outside” of the individual. This results in the child being able to differentiate itself from the object now perceived *qua* object. Intriguingly, this process—a kind of “abjection,” to mention a term from Kristeva that will elaborate upon in a moment—represents the exact inverse of the introjection that had defined identification in “Mourning and Melancholia.” A year later, in “Findings, Ideas, Problems” (1941), Freud would formulate his most well-known description of the development from identificatory fusion to self-differentiation in a short note informally categorized with the tagline, “‘Having’ and ‘being’ in children:”

Children like expressing an object-relation by an identification: ‘I am the object.’ ‘Having’ is the later of the two; after the loss of the object it relapses into ‘being.’ Example: the breast. ‘The breast is part of me, I am the breast. Only later: ‘I have it,’ that is, ‘I am not it.’¹⁰³

For our constructive purposes, one of the most intriguing aspects of this passage to note in passing is the suggestive way that it speculates that this process of “abjection” that breaks the identificatory fusion simultaneously ignites the desire to *have* that which one now perceives as “not-I.”

As I foregrounded at the outset of the chapter, post-Freudian theorist Julia Kristeva picks up this theme in Freud in order to expand it in two directions that will prove important for us moving forward. First, she pushes back beyond the contingent appearance of “the breast” in order to ground the object-less relation that Freud names as primary identification. According to Kristeva, the most archaic “pre-objectal” relation always oc-

¹⁰³ “Findings, Ideas, Problems,” GW 17:151/SE 23:299.

curs “between” mother and child *in utero*.¹⁰⁴ In that relation, the individual who is not yet a differentiated egoic subject is located within what Kristeva, drawing upon Plato’s *Timaeus*,¹⁰⁵ characterizes as a “chora”¹⁰⁶ that precedes any claim to “identity”—precisely because “the child and the mother do not yet constitute ‘two’”¹⁰⁷—in which the instinctual drives constantly pulsate in an active (i.e. not static) stasis¹⁰⁸ with/in the motile rhythms of the womb/maternal body.

Second, she argues that the rupture of this choric fusion that occurs in birth establishes the archetypical instance of abjection that ties together the effects of biological birth and the birth of egoic subjectivity under the banner of a single psychological concept. For in the former birth, there occurs a primal separation, a biologically-necessitated *abjection* of one individual from another, that (echoing Freud’s comment above) is a precondition for both ontological (our own) and epistemic (of others) “objecthood” in the first place. As Kristeva writes, “Abjection preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated

¹⁰⁴ It is important to note that my constructive appropriation that creatively combines Kristeva’s talk of a “pre-objectal” state *in utero* with Freud’s account of object-less primary identification differs markedly from Kristeva’s own employment of primary identification in her own theoretical work. Kristeva herself rather exclusively appropriates primary identification in terms that follow what we have called “model-based” identification, which she can be found assigning both to the maternal body and to the later introduction of the paternal/Symbolic/linguistic order. Cf. Kristeva, *Histoires d’amour*, 27-58 (*Tales of Love*, 21-56). The closest thing to a distant inspiration for my own combination of Kristeva’s theorization of the maternal body and Freudian identification can be found in Sara Beardsworth’s explorations of how Kristeva’s theory of sublimated maternal love might provide an alternative account of the irreducibly death-driven modern subject. Cf. Sara Beardsworth, “From Nature in Love: The Problem of Subjectivity in Adorno and Freudian Psychoanalysis,” *Continental Philosophy Review* 40, no. 4 (2007): 365-87.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Plato, *Timaeus*, 48e4, 49a5-6, 52a8, and 52d3.

¹⁰⁶ Julia Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique; l’avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle, Lautréamont et Mallarmé* (Paris: Seuil, 1974), 22-30 (Partial ET: *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 25-30).

¹⁰⁷ *Histoires d’amour*, 45 (*Tales of Love*, 40).

¹⁰⁸ Kristeva expresses this juxtaposition between a static stasis and an active state of equilibrium by referring to ongoing rhythms of “stases.” Cf. Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique*, 23 (*Revolution in Poetic Language*, 25).

from another body in order to be.”¹⁰⁹ Similarly, the dawning of egoic subjectivity entails a kind of abjection that we just glimpsed in Freud as the pre-reflective ground of desire: by *abjecting* that which is “not-I,” we not only enact the circumscription that founds what we will later signify as “I,” but there is simultaneously opened up a “space” in which the “not-I” can be *desired* precisely because it can now be known as an/other object. However, the necessary catch to this concept of abjection, which we will have to carefully attend to in assimilating this psychoanalytic insight to Aquinas’s account of the appetites, is that everything that is *abjected* simultaneously bears an unconscious mark of hate and pain. As Kristeva repeatedly makes clear, we abject “things” precisely because the separation of their absence caused us pain and thereby marred the ideal pleasure of active fusion with “them.” In translating the Freudian account of primary identification, we will need to carefully account for this reactionary tendency to the pain of separation that both Kristeva and Freud associate with primary identification. We will return to this necessary implication when we discuss the nature of ambivalence below.

For the moment, however, let us return to our reading of Freud himself. Notably, despite his later suggestive comments, Freud does not choose either the mother or her breast(s) as his chief example for primary identification in *The Ego and the Id*. In fact, he only speaks of the breast as the prototype of erotic object-cathexis.¹¹⁰ Instead, as we saw above and to which we will return in a moment, Freud most often speaks, problematically as it turns out, of identification in terms of the “father” of one’s personal prehistory. It is worth noting, nonetheless, that Freud does offer one other example of primary identifi-

¹⁰⁹ *Pouvoirs de l’horreur*, 17 (*Powers of Horror*, 10).

¹¹⁰ Cf. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:299/SE 19:31-32.

cation in *The Ego and the Id* that achieves an analogous level of clarity with his later “I am the breast” aphorism. This example comes in his description of the circumstances in which the receptive mechanism of identification can break down into a pathological condition of multiplicity. As Freud writes, “If [the ego’s object-identifications] obtain the upper hand and become too numerous, unduly powerful and incompatible with one another, a pathological outcome will not be far off.”¹¹¹ Which pathological outcome? Freud’s description of the “disruption of the ego” that can follow is hauntingly evocative: “Perhaps the secret of the cases of what is described as ‘multiple personality’ is that the different identifications seize hold of consciousness [*das Bewußtsein an sich reißen*] in turn.”¹¹² Even at this point we can observe the strangeness of a mechanism that is simultaneously capable of triggering the formation of the ego’s self-integration and the collapse of that fragile intensive unity into the immediacy of unsynthesized—and, in the most tragic cases, unsynthesizable—identificatory fragments because there is no egoic self to do the synthesizing.

Instead of doggedly following this train of thought plotted by primary identification, however, Freud more often trades its idiosyncratic immediacy for a secondary identification in which the subject identifies with the object as a model for its emulation. The best way to illustrate this tendency is to unpack the conceptual imprecision reflected in Freud’s employment of the so-called “father” of one’s personal prehistory, which he acknowledges can be any beloved authority figure regardless of gender,¹¹³ as the para-

¹¹¹ Ibid., SA 3:298/SE 19:30.

¹¹² Ibid., SA 3:298/SE 19:30-31.

¹¹³ Ibid., SA 3:299, n.1/SE 19:31, n.1.

digm for identification. On the one hand, it is precisely in connection with this archaic “father” that Freud unequivocally declares that identification occurs earlier than “any object-cathexis [*jede Objektbesetzung*].” On the other hand, despite such a declaration it quickly becomes clear that Freud most often employs the concept in ways that reinstate the authoritative father as an object that the child wishes “*to be [sein]*.”¹¹⁴ Here we have an identification in which the father is “taken as a model [*Vatervorbild*]”¹¹⁵ for the child’s emulation.

Freud then bases his most prominent explanation of the ego-ideal on this very different version of identification. From this standpoint, the ego emerges as the graded differentiation between one’s self-awareness (ego) and the unconsciously introjected ideals (“*You ought to be like this*” and “*You may not be like this*”)¹¹⁶ of one’s archaic identifications (ego-ideal). Therefore, the ego-ideal’s critical agency represents the internalized “representative of our relation to our parents,”¹¹⁷ whose influence was then reaffirmed through other “authorit[ies], religious teaching, schooling, and reading.”¹¹⁸ As Freud summarizes, “When we were little children we knew these higher natures, we admired them and feared them; and later we took them into ourselves.”¹¹⁹ As a result, these original identifications repeatedly and enduringly “confron[t] the other contents of the ego as an ego ideal.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, SA 9:99/SE 18:106.

¹¹⁵ *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:321/SE 19:54.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, SA 3:301/SE 19:34. Emphases in original.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, SA 3:303/SE 19:36.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, SA 3:303/SE 19:34.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, SA 3:303/SE 19:36.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, SA 3:301/SE 19:34.

There is, to be sure, an uncanny accuracy about Freud's explanation of the ego-ideal's origins that cannot simply be disregarded. Undoubtedly, much of the critical agency of one's conscience represents a kind of reawakening of some of our most profoundly unconscious bonds. Any alteration to Freud's theorization must, at the very least, offer an equally satisfying explanation of this phenomenon. Nonetheless the weakness of Freud's heavy dependence on secondary identification in order to explain the differentiation between the ego and the ego-ideal is that it reinstates an ego-like awareness of the self into the very formation of the ego's self-differentiation. As soon as one speaks of identification in terms of the adoption of an emulative "model," one has already assumed a differentiation between self and another that makes such emulation possible—"I am not that (not-I), but I want to be that"—in the first place. Once this shift has taken place, the claim that identification takes place "earlier than any object-cathexis" is rendered incoherent. Talk of an idealized model always presupposes some kind of object-cathexis made possible by an ego's self-differentiated awareness. Just as Augustine always snaps back to positing a primal epistemic unity of the self despite the opposite direction that his own rhetoric suggests, so does Freud also lapse back in the ego's primal self-awareness despite the suggestive nature of his rhetoric concerning primary identification.

To continue the comparison: Just as Augustine's dilemma arose because of limitations in his metaphysics and epistemology that guided his convictions regarding the way the analogy between God and humans beings had to be drawn, so also can the most obvious explanation for Freud's dilemma be found in his most deeply held intellectual and clinical conviction: the primacy of sexual etiology for all psychic phenomena. From this

perspective, the sexual theory and secondary identification, despite the fact the latter concept is desexualized in its rhetoric, stand in parallel relation to one another because they both presuppose a basic egoic awareness of the subject/object distinction that makes the elemental form of their desires possible (i.e. I do not have/I want; I am not/I want to be). In a passage near the end of *The Ego and the Id* that again contradicts his earlier description of identification as prior to any object-cathexis, Freud underlines this parallel when he explicitly describes identification (in the sense of a model) as a sublimation of sexual libido: “Every such identification is in the nature of a desexualization or even of a sublimation.”¹²¹ In addition to this sublimation thesis, Freud’s deep commitment to the centrality of the Oedipus complex also repeatedly aids in this overarching tendency to assimilate the identification theory back into the sexual theory. It serves him in this end because the triangular terms of the Oedipus complex *require* a primal sexual attraction to one (or both) of the parents that then elicits an identificatory relation (of the model type) to the opposite parent (e.g. “I erotically want mom/dad has mom/I want to be (like) dad”). In both cases, the parallel between secondary identification and the sexual libido furnishes Freud with the conceptual opening for reinstating the primacy of the sexual theory.

There is, however, another possible variable in play for explaining why Freud seems to habitually work against the implications of his own rhetoric regarding primary identification. This factor is much more subtle, if not necessarily less decisive. Is it possible that primary identification too closely resembles the depersonalization of hypnotism that Freud had attempted to reject decisively in founding psychoanalysis? If primary

¹²¹ Ibid., SA 3:321/SE 19:54.

identification entails a radical receptivity such that the “object” is perceived *qua* perceiver, then there emerges at this point the outline of the aforementioned resemblance to hypnosis that is striking enough to invite further inquiry. For in deep hypnotism there occurs an immediate translation of the hypnotist’s second-person suggestions into first-person—is it too much to say?—*identifications*. As Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen writes:

The other, in hypnosis, does not appear *as other*, and if the subject does recognize himself in the other it is rather by totally *identifying* with him [...] To grasp this, we have only to think of hypnosis by verbal suggestion, as Freud [himself] described it, for example in “Psychical Treatment” [1905]. The hypnotist says, “You are falling asleep,” and *voilà*, *I* fall asleep. He says, “You are smelling a flower,” and *I* smell the fragrance. He says, “You see a snake,” and *I* see the reptile, *I* am afraid, and *I* cry out. It would be totally false to claim that an *I* is submitting or responding to another here. In reality, “*I*” am *spoken by* the other, *I* come into the place of the other—who, by the same token, is no longer an *other* but rather “myself” in my undecidable identity of somnambulistic ego.¹²²

Such a description of hypnotism conspicuously chimes with Freud’s own descriptions and examples of primary identification’s operations in the absence of an ego whether prior to its formation (i.e. *I am* the breast) or its collapse (i.e. *I am* another personality). It is also reminiscent of Freud’s early encounters with the ego’s fragility and capacity for unexpectedly “disappearing” even though the individual remains awake (i.e. not sleeping). Is it possible that Freud’s alternations on identification ran along the same habitual track as his admitted “hostility” to hypnosis, despite the fact that his clinical observations always prompted these themes to appear again in his writings? Answering that question affirmatively seems more likely when we glimpse how hypnosis and suggestion also returned—as we will see in a moment—in the crucial role played by transference in the psychoanalytic cure. In the end, however, definitively answering the genealogical ques-

¹²² Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie*, 49-50.

tion vis-à-vis Freud is not our primary concern in this chapter. Nonetheless: the dynamics that justify the question are entirely relevant for gesturing towards the direction of our main task of seeing how the fertile inconsistencies of Freud's theories might be reappropriated—via Aquinas—for a reconfigured theorization of the emergence of egoic self-consciousness from within the fertile plurality of an individual's primary identifications.

d. Transference, the Talking Cure, and the Return of Hypnotic Suggestion

As I mentioned at the outset of this section, Freud's break with Breuer and cathartic hypnotism did not end up triggering a wholesale reconstruction of his understanding of the talking cure and its therapeutic relation to psychic pathology. Even in "psychoanalysis proper," the cure continued to depend on the intentional repetition of some aspect of the unconscious within a context that allows it to be assimilated into egoic consciousness, thus breaking the involuntary repetitions of the symptoms through the dual media of the patient's self-narration and the analyst's didactic interventions. As Freud asks and answers in *The Ego and the Id*, "How does [an unconscious] thing become conscious? [...] Through becoming connected with the word-presentations [*Wortvortsellungen*] corresponding to it."¹²³ Through this process of facilitating the assimilation of the unconscious into the ego's self-integration, psychoanalysis—in one of Freud's most sweeping declarations—enables "the ego to achieve a progressive conquest of the id."¹²⁴

Nonetheless, at first glance the claim that the problems raised by Freud's dilemma regarding the ego's formation are echoed within the psychoanalytic technique itself seems unlikely since it is on this conceptual ground more than any other that Freud

¹²³ Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:289/SE 19:20.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, SA 3:322/SE 19:56.

claimed to be differentiating himself most decisively from Breuer's method of hypnosis. From this perspective, the key break between Breuer's technique and Freud's subsequent method of "free association" is bound up with their different conceptions of what *kind* of repetition of unconscious material is required to break the cycle of pathological symptoms. In Breuer's method, the goal of hypnosis was to access and trigger a repetition of the traumatic event in its "*status nascendi*,"¹²⁵ literally to reenact psychically and affectively the event as accurately as possible. In theory, this "return" to the event allowed it to be cathartically "discharged" in the way that it failed to be in the wake of the event's original occurrence.

In contrast, as I referenced above, Freud's method of free association takes it for granted that repetitions of the unconscious are decipherable within the dynamics of egoic consciousness itself and thus no altered state of hypnosis is necessary. The possible range of these clues is incredibly diverse. They can be the pathological symptoms themselves (e.g. hallucinations, hysterical triggers, or psychosomatic indications such as a tick or a cough), the affective character of the patient's speech, or (most centrally to Freud) the apparently random connections that arise in a patient's description of whatever comes into their mind. The patient, of course, remains wholly ignorant of this influence (and the clues) without the intervention of the analyst. However, a good analyst should be able to discern the pathological repetitions of the unconscious as the patient follows psychoanalysis's fundamental rule [*Grundregel*] of free association: "that whatever comes into one's

¹²⁵ Breuer and Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, GW 1:85/SE 2:6.

head must be reported without criticizing it.”¹²⁶ On this methodological basis, Freud compares the work of those following his technique to that carried out by a kind of psychological smelter: “from the raw materials of the patient’s associations,” the analyst “[extracts] the pure metal of valuable unconscious thoughts” and is able to direct the patient accordingly.¹²⁷

Of all the clues that he could cite as a sign of the unconscious’s influence, none became more decisive for Freud and psychoanalysis than the unexpected phenomenon of transference. Succinctly defined, transferences (*Übertragungen*) occur when some past psychic bond—whether a parental relation, an erotic-interest, or a traumatic event—is revived within the relation between the patient and the analyst. As Freud writes in *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* (1905):

What are transferences? They are new editions or facsimiles of the impulses and phantasies which are aroused and made conscious during the progress of the analysis; but they have this peculiarity, which is characteristic for their species, that they replace some earlier person by the person of the physician. To put it another way: a whole series of psychological experiences are revived, not as belonging to the past, but as applying to the person of the physician at the present moment.¹²⁸

Though at first bewildering, Freud’s clinical observations chime with the wider experience that our most formational relational bonds, especially our earliest familial attachments beginning in infancy, have an outsized influence upon our later habits, desirous tastes, and relational predilections. It is as if our most pivotal relational bonds are so formative that they create in us “prototypes [*Vorbilder*],”¹²⁹ which Freud also calls “infan-

¹²⁶ Freud, “The Dynamics of Transference,” SA 11:167/SE 12:107.

¹²⁷ *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, SA 6:177/SE 7:112.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, SA 6:180/SE 7:116.

¹²⁹ “The Dynamics of Transference,” SA 11:160-163/SE 12:100-102.

tile imagos [*infantile Imagines*]¹³⁰ (e.g. a father-imago, a mother-imago, a the brother-
imago),¹³¹ that can be aroused when someone or something triggers an unconscious reviv-
al of those prototypes. Based upon these ingrained prototypes, we then “approach every
new person whom [we meet]” with these imagos serving as “libidinal anticipatory ideas
[*libidinösen Erwartungsvorstellungen*]” that await being revived all over again.¹³² This is
the basis of Freud’s declaration that the “essential character of every state of being in
love [*Verliebtheit*]” consists in its being a “new [edition] of old traits” and a repetition of
“infantile reactions.”¹³³

The resulting transferential repetitions, as Freud continues within the specific
clinical example, can either be a nearly identical reproduction with the exception of sub-
stituting the analyst for the original bond *or* they can blend or attach the preceding model
with “some real peculiarity in the physician’s person or circumstances.”¹³⁴ The former
pattern Freud calls an “unchanged reprint” (*unveränderte Neuauflage*) of the same psy-
chic “model” (*Vorbild*)¹³⁵ whereas the latter occurrence constitutes a genuinely “revised
edition” (*Neubearbeitung*)¹³⁶ of the original. In addition to these variations, the underly-
ing model for a transferential relation can entail both affectionate (*viz.* positive transfer-
ence) and/or hostile (*viz.* negative transference) feelings toward the analyst.¹³⁷ This being
said, it does seem that Freud most often encountered clinical transferences that were ap-

¹³⁰ Ibid., SA 11:162/SE 12:104.

¹³¹ Ibid., SA 11:160/SE 12:100.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ “Observations on Transference-Love,” SA 11:227/SE 12:168.

¹³⁴ *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, SA 6:181/SE 7:116.

¹³⁵ Ibid., SA 6:180/SE 7:116.

¹³⁶ Ibid., SA 6:181/SE 7:116.

¹³⁷ Cf. “The Dynamics of Transference,” SA 11:164-165/SE 12:105.

parently directly amorous and erotic. Thus, he writes often on how to professionally and therapeutically manage a patient who openly declares that “she has fallen in love, as any other mortal woman might, with the doctor who is analysing her.”¹³⁸

From Freud’s perspective, the most obvious explanation for the occurrence of transference is that it is simply another of the ego’s defensive strategies to keep the truth of unconsciously repressed material from emerging into consciousness. The clinical evidence for this explanation can easily be found, and as Freud observes in detail, in the fact that patients who are caught in a transference inevitably grow more resistant to analysis and therefore to the resolution of their symptoms.¹³⁹ This resistance emerges because the therapeutic relation gradually becomes displaced in the patient’s mind as they become increasingly convinced that the transference relation is actually the defining—the “real”—relation with the analyst.

Even though he would always maintain that there is a definite defensive element in transference, two realizations eventually caused Freud to see transference as a necessary cornerstone to analytic treatment and therefore “one of the foundations [*Grundlagen*] of the psychoanalytic theory.”¹⁴⁰ First, based upon his repeated clinical experiences he realized that there are certain elements intrinsic to the analytic relation, specifically its promotion of dependent vulnerability, trust, authority, and self-disclosure, that make it inevitable that it will become a site of transference for the patient (also perhaps the analyst as well). As Freud writes, transference will occur “without fail.”¹⁴¹ Accordingly, the

¹³⁸ “Observations on Transference-Love,” SA 11:219/SE 12:159.

¹³⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, SA 11:221-229/SE 12:162-170.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, SA 11:220/SE 12:160.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

analyst must always keep in mind that such transference feelings have been “provoked by the analytic situation”¹⁴² and thus, in this precise sense, are “unreal.”¹⁴³ Second, it gradually dawned on Freud that transferences actually mark an unexpectedly “live” appearance—he is even willing to compare it the “summoning of a spirit”¹⁴⁴—of the unconscious’s compulsion to repeat that has fortuitously fertile implications for the analytic relation and its therapeutic aims. Far from being an obstacle to a patient’s treatment, it turns out for Freud that transference holds the key for “curbing the patient’s compulsion to repeat.”¹⁴⁵ “For,” as Freud continues in the paranormal motif, “when all is said and done, it is impossible to destroy anyone *in absentia* or *in effigie*.”¹⁴⁶

What is the nature of this therapeutic window that transference opens for psychoanalysis? There are two sides to answering this question that have to be addressed: the analyst-side and the patient-side. From the perspective of the analyst, transference serves the dual purpose of discovery and intervention. As discovery, by provoking the transference repetition to proceed, the analyst learns more about the patient’s unconscious than they could likely narrate on their own. To borrow Wittgenstein’s famous juxtaposition, even though the subject’s unconscious has yet to be *said* (i.e. translated into words), in transference it *shows* itself to the analyst.¹⁴⁷ As Freud writes in “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through” (1914):

¹⁴² Ibid., SA 11:228/SE 12:168.

¹⁴³ Ibid., SA 11:226/SE 12:166.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., SA 11:223/SE 12:164.

¹⁴⁵ “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through,” SA 11:214/SE 12:154.

¹⁴⁶ “The Dynamics of Transference,” SA 11:168/SE 12:108.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, vol. 1, Werkausgabe (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1984), 6.522 (ET: trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (London: Routledge, 2001).

We render the compulsion [to repeat] harmless, and indeed useful, by giving it the right to assert itself in a definite field. We admit it into the transference as a playground in which it is allowed to expand in almost complete freedom and in which it is expected to display [*vorzuführen*] to us everything in the way of pathogenic instincts that is hidden in the patient's mind.¹⁴⁸

Shortly thereafter, Freud makes it clear that this enacted display coincides with an opening for the analyst's therapeutic intervention:

The transference thus creates an intermediate region between illness and real life through which the transition from the one to the other is made. The new condition has taken all the features of the illness; but it represents an artificial illness which is at every point accessible to our intervention.¹⁴⁹

By providing "especially favorable conditions"¹⁵⁰ for transference to arise, psychoanalysis promotes a controlled space in which, almost paradoxically, a patient's unconsciousness reveals its influential compulsions even as it simultaneously opens itself up to therapeutic counter-influence.

In response to this therapeutic opening provided by transference, the intervention formally begins with the analyst breaking off or "dissolving" (*Auflösung*) the transference relation by explaining its unconsciously repetitive roots to the patient. Through the analyst's explanation, the transference is rendered perceptible to the patient's consciousness:

The transference is made conscious to the patient by the analyst, and it is resolved by convincing him that in his transference attitude he is *re-experiencing* [*wiedererleben*] emotional relations which had their origin in his earliest object attachments during the repressed period of his childhood.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Freud, "Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through," SA 11:214/SE 12:154.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ *An Autobiographical Study*, GW 14:68/SE 20:43.

Once “acquainted” with the unconscious roots of their pathology and transference,¹⁵² at least as Freud tells it, the patient’s resistance to the therapeutic effects of consciously “remembering” and narrating instead of repeating quickly ensue. As Freud summarizes, “From the repetitive reactions which are exhibited in the transference we are led along the familiar paths to the awakening of the memories, which appear without difficulty, as it were, after the resistance has been overcome.”¹⁵³

Despite the eloquent and even convincing nature of the analyst’s role of discovery and intervention, it is precisely here that Freud finds himself eerily close to realigning the psychoanalytic cure with Breuer’s hypnosis. For the patient who is caught in the involuntary repetitions of transference, and yet is simultaneously unusually open to the counter-influence of the analyst, bears a striking resemblance to the hypnotized subject who is receptive to suggestion. Strangely enough, not even Freud himself could deny the analogy between the transference intervention and hypnotic suggestion. On several occasions he seems to admit the point. As he writes in “Dynamics of Transference,” “[We] readily admit that the results of psychoanalysis rest upon suggestion.”¹⁵⁴ Or even more unsettlingly in his *Introductory Lectures*, “[It dawns on us] that in our technique we have abandoned hypnosis only to rediscover suggestion in the shape of transference.”¹⁵⁵

Faced with this rediscovery of hypnosis, Freud tries to save psychoanalysis from being assimilated to hypnotherapy by emphasizing that psychoanalysis provokes trans-

¹⁵² “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through,” SA 11:214/SE 12:155.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ “The Dynamics of Transference,” SA 11:165/SE 12:106.

¹⁵⁵ *Introductory Lectures to Psychoanalysis*, SA 1:429/SE 16:446.

ference solely in order to break it off, to dissolve it by making the patient aware of it. As he continues in his *Introductory Lectures*:

It is this last characteristic which is the fundamental distinction between analytic and purely suggestive therapy and which frees the results of analysis from the suspicion of being successes due to suggestion. In every other kind of suggestive treatment the transference is carefully persevered and left untouched; in analysis it is itself subjected to treatment and is dissected in all the shapes in which it appears. At the end of an analytic treatment the transference itself must be cleaned away.¹⁵⁶

But to simply insist that the transference is permanently “dissolved” in its conscious assimilation is in the end to simply beg the questions regarding the native suggestibility of human beings, and its relation to the ego’s formation and function, that transference raises once again. On what basis can one assume that suggestibility is ever terminated? Might the ego itself emerge simply as an epiphenomenal byproduct of this more primal state of suggestibility, the mirage of the self-aware first-person who is actually “spoken into being” by the word(s) of hypnotic powers? Or as Borch-Jacobsen pushes the point: “In the end, is psychoanalysis” really just one “long-drawn-out suggestion?”¹⁵⁷

If Freud offers any rejoinder to such an accusation, it only arrives—and indeed only in an inchoate state—when he shifts from evaluating the therapeutic window opened by transference from the perspective of the analyst to that of the patient. In these scattered comments, Freud focuses less on the suggestive role of the analyst and even the corresponding, mostly passive, “remembering” that it prompts in the patient. Instead, he speaks about the open-ended state of immanent struggle that analysis triggers in the patient. As he writes near the end of “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through,”

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., SA 1:435/SE 16:453.

¹⁵⁷ Borch-Jacobsen, *The Emotional Tie*, 57. He gets this phrase from Francois Roustang.

merely naming the transference resistance can never “result in its immediate cessation.”

Instead:

One must allow the patient time to become more conversant with this resistance with which he has now become acquainted, to *work through* it [*ihn durchzuarbeiten*], to overcome it, by continuing, in defiance of it, the analytic work according to the fundamental rule of analysis. Only when the resistance is at its height can the analyst, working in common [*gemeinsamer Arbeit*] with his patient, discover the repressed instinctual impulses which are feeding the resistance; and it is this kind of experience which convinces the patient of the existence and power of such impulses.¹⁵⁸

In this portrayal of the psychoanalytic cure, we discover the patient as thrown into a mixed state of internal conflict. On the one hand, she is still perceiving the immanent impulses that emanate from the transference. But, on the other hand, she is also bidden to contribute—in *gemeinsamer Arbeit* with the analyst—something herself: an effort to overcome these impulses, to defy them, and thereby *work through* them.

What immanent power could be responsible for this “overcoming”? In one sense, one could simply reference the ego’s consciousness itself, since the “making conscious” of unconscious impulses has always been an essential part of the psychoanalytic cure. Even so, and as the above passage attests, Freud seems cognizant of the therapeutic limitations of merely making something transparently conscious. This awareness is also evident in a small number of passages in which Freud, working against his own reductive tendencies, attributes this power to overcome, to resist the transference resistance, not with consciousness itself *per se*, but with the still higher powers of the intellectual processes. As he writes near the end of “The Dynamics of Transference:”

¹⁵⁸ Freud, “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through,” SA 11:215/SE 12:155.

The doctor tries to compel him to fit these emotional impulses [that arise from transference] into the nexus of the treatment and of his life-history, to submit them to intellectual consideration and to understand them in the light of their psychological value. This struggle between the doctor and the patient, between intellect and instinctual life, between understanding and seeking to act, is played out almost exclusively in the phenomena of transference. It is on that field that the victory must be won the victory whose expression is the permanent cure of the neurosis.¹⁵⁹

To be sure, there is no justification at all for simply taking an evocative reference to intellect in Freud and using it as a straightforward rhetorical portal in which to import all of the considerable conceptual freight that comes with Aquinas's *intellectus*. Freud's system of thought has an integrity unto itself, even if there are serious reasons to doubt its explanatory consistency. Instead, the overarching justification of the Thomist translation to follow ultimately rests in explaining the preponderance of anthropological data with which Freud was concerned in a more satisfying and coherent way than he was able to accomplish on his own terms. Nonetheless, the question of what human power might be capable of having a therapeutic effect upon desiderative impulses that have a kind of involuntary freedom of their own is certainly suggestive of the relation that we will end up theorizing as existing in the human soul between identification, transference, and the higher powers of intelligence.

II. The Identifying Part of the Soul: An Initial Step in Applying Aquinas's Solution

Having outlined the inconsistencies that emerge from Freud's dilemma in tracing the ego's developmental origins and its ongoing fragility/therapeutic significance, we can proceed now to the constructive task of translating Freud's account in conversation with Aquinas's solution to Augustine's dilemma and the theological anthropology that issues

¹⁵⁹ "The Dynamics of Transference," SA 11:168/SE 12:108.

from it. As I made clear in the opening of the chapter, what follows here is an initial step in the effort to translate Freud's insights into a Thomist framework that will furnish the conceptual materials necessary for completing this constructive proposal in Chapter 5 in conversation with the broader questions regarding the origins and theological significance of self-consciousness and its relation to the three other types of intensive unity (i.e. the soul, self-knowledge, and appetitive). Having gained a familiarity with Freud's dilemma and terminology, I can elaborate a bit more on this division of labor between the chapters.

The remaining work in this chapter is split into two subsections. In the first, my goal is to develop a way of thinking and talking about identification as a kind of apprehensive power that is paired with a correlative appetitive power analogous to the sensitive and intellectual appetites. Together these form what I have called the identifying layer of the soul. From the outset I have indicated the path along which this description will proceed: it begins with the suggestive clue of what Freud speaks of as primary identification and seeks not only to undo Freud's conceptual evasion of its implications, but also to re-render it in terms that are broadly commensurate with Aquinas's metaphysics and theological anthropology. By reformulating primary identification in this manner we will be able to separate out its distinct capacities from that of the sexual appetite—as Freud consistently fails to do—even as we will manage to incorporate several of the important developmental insights from the sexual theory without falling into its attendant circular pitfalls that we witnessed above. As will become clear both in this chapter and the next, the most decisive of these insights to retain from the sexual theory have to do with the infantile origins of ambivalence in alternations between love/hate in response to the pres-

ence/absence of beloved “objects” and the resulting crisis of pain that ultimately hastens the “defensive” formation of the ego’s self-integration. In addition to outlining what I mean by the identifying apprehensive and appetitive powers, in this subsection I will also describe how these powers vertically “fit into” the Aristotelian/Thomist tripartite soul and draw some initial clarifying gains that accrue to the varieties of consciousness and appetite based upon this account. Following the main arguments of this subsection, I will return to consider briefly how we might re-theorize the relationship between primary identification and sexuality on the other side of clearly decoupling the two capacities.

Based upon these initial descriptions, I will then proceed in Chapter 5 to put this account to work, so to speak, in offering a proposal regarding the developmental origins of self-consciousness as a fourth type of intensive unity and the multi-dimensional vertical relation that can then be described between identification and intelligence. This last step of transposition will incorporate attention to (1) the developmental process that Freud explores under the rubric of the ego’s constitution as a “precipitate” of lost “object-cathexes,” (2) post-egoic phenomena such as trauma, hypnosis, transference, and the influence of the ego-ideal, that each can be theorized as either a regression to or a derivative effect of primary identification and (3) the self-organizing, therapeutic powers that he variously assigns to the ego, self-narration, and the intellect. In light of explicitly deferring discussion of both the ego’s formation and the post-egoic phenomena cited above, I want to be clear at the outset in order to avoid some of the conceptual confusion that mars the brilliance of *The Ego and the Id*: unless otherwise indicated, all references to identification in the following subsections should be taken as referring to the archaic op-

erations of primary identification, i.e. in a pre-reflective state prior to the emergence of self-consciousness or, as Freud has it, prior to any “object-cathexis” that presupposes the ego’s consciousness.

In choosing to focus here on primary identification I am conscious that I am risking putting synthesis ahead of analysis. What I mean by this is that the postulation of primary identification depends upon the analysis of post-egoic phenomena such as those that drew the interest of Freud in the first place (e.g. hypnotic states, hallucinations, transference, and the fragile self-organization of the “ego”). Based upon observing this data, Freud’s “analysis” led him down the path of his “archeology of the subject,” which runs parallel to the Aristotelian search for causes, at the end of which he theorized the interacting mechanisms of primary identification, the instinctual urges of the id, and the modifying influence of sense-perceptions as explanations for the “later” phenomena. The results of such an analytic search can then be presented in the characteristic systematic ordering of a subject matter according to its basic causes and principles (e.g. a metapsychology, a metaphysics, a *summa* or system of theology).¹⁶⁰ By beginning with primary identification, I am in a way reversing this order.

My reasons for doing so are in part rhetorical and in part strategic. Rhetorically, we have just followed Freud all the way down his analytic trail to arrive at his suggestive, but ultimately systematically unsatisfying, conclusions, especially regarding primary identification. For the sake of brevity, it seems wise to not repeat a description of all the relevant data, but instead to build our systematic presentation from here by retracing our

¹⁶⁰ Lonergan concisely lays out the relation between analysis and synthesis in *The Triune God: Systematics*, 12:61.

path through Freud by building a cumulative case for why this modified account of primary identification explains both the formation of what Freud calls the ego and the original post-egoic data more satisfactorily. Strategically, the power that Freud hits upon in identification almost inevitably, as his own rhetoric of the paranormal reflects, evokes bewilderment and calls for dismissal. On an intellectual level, as Freud's and Augustine's dilemmas illustrate, we struggle to port our post-self-conscious language and concepts into a framework agile enough to capture imaginatively and precisely any pre-reflective stage of being. On a more personal level, the specter of anything involuntary and impersonal that precedes our self-awareness, endures "in" us without our knowledge, and that can potentially disrupt the self-unifying "I"-ness of our self-consciousness almost inevitably engenders a stout defensiveness in the name of our illusions of total self-dominion. Accordingly, my strategic intent below is to try to capitalize on the initial presentation of Freud's uneven conclusions by developing a framework to talk about identification that disarms some of these elements of resistance by beginning to normalize identification by placing it within a metaphysical setting broad and deep enough to support it. And even more than that: by speaking of identification as a power of the soul we open up the possibility—which I will begin developing next chapter—that not only is there nothing intrinsically ab- or paranormal about identification, despite its capacities for pathology (like all human powers), but it is a potency created by God as good and teleologically ordered to the vertical flourishing and perfection of human beings. I have no doubt that for some readers that this means that the end of this chapter will seem anticlimactic because what follows is more descriptive than it is dramatically exhaustive. It is closer to a thought-

experiment than it is to an airtight presentation. Its main purpose, however, is preparatory. Its real test will come next chapter as we will put this theorization of identification to work in finally addressing the riddle regarding the developmental nexus between the immediacy of a pre-reflective stage of life and the multilayered richness of self-consciousness and intelligence that blossoms out of it.

One final prefatory note is in order. I am acutely aware of the number of metaphysical and theological challenges that arise in trying to speak of another “part of the soul” in addition to the vegetative, sensitive, and intelligent layers that Aristotle and Aquinas elucidate so convincingly.¹⁶¹ My overall strategy in this particular work vis-à-vis these challenges is to make a persuasive enough *prima facie* case for the identifying powers, based upon the venerable Aristotelian axiom that powers are known by their operations and objects, that the challenges become worth addressing in detail as we go along here and in subsequent projects as well. Nonetheless, in the wake of the last three chapters, at least four questions can be flagged immediately and some comment should be made as to when and to what degree I intend to take these up explicitly:

1. What is the relationship of the identifying layer of the soul to other living creatures?
2. To what degree are the identifying powers material and/or immaterial?
3. Is there any analogous relationship between these powers and God?
4. How are these powers related to the ascent of desire into intelligent union with God?

Apart from a couple of scattered comments and footnotes, I am going to mostly leave the first question aside in this project for the sake of brevity and also due to my lack of spe-

¹⁶¹ This is in addition to the inherent challenges that come from importing such an ancient concept like the soul into a project that seeks to converse with two modern discourses such as psychoanalysis and the origins of self-consciousness. See my comments in the Introduction regarding these challenges and my approaches to them. Cf. pp. 29-51.

cially knowledge regarding non-human animal behavior, biology and development.¹⁶²

Likewise, the second question I am also going to have to delay until a full discussion can be organized in another context. The contemporary discussion around materiality and its relationship to the kind of immaterial phenomena that Aristotle/Aquinas affirm is simply too vast—and ever expanding—to try to squeeze into the main path of our trajectory before even getting my constructive account of identification off the ground, so to speak.¹⁶³

¹⁶² My suspicion, however, is that there are good reasons to think that there are identifying powers in non-human animals, especially because of the verified existence of hypnotic/trance-like behavior among them. Cf. n. 35 for citations related to this behavior.

¹⁶³ To elaborate on this bracketed point just briefly: the specific task of describing how identification fits into the Aristotelian/Thomist immaterial/material scheme would only be possible as a sub-task of the much larger enterprise of translating the Aristotelian/Thomist theory of forms in conversation with insights that stretch across the disciplinary variations of natural science (e.g. evolutionary/developmental biology, thermodynamics, neuroscience). This much larger task, and here I freely admit that I am drawing upon directions of research suggested to me by Paul J. DeHart (both in his work (cf. Paul J. DeHart, *Aquinas and Radical Orthodoxy: A Critical Inquiry* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 194-200, 24-25, n. 9) and in our personal conversations), is constituted by at least two pressing questions:

- (1) In light of modern science's analysis of the complexity and necessity of the material bases of higher human operations such as understanding and willing, what exactly do we mean by these operations being in some way enduringly "immaterial"? The point is important not only because the intellectual justifications first articulated by Aristotle's regarding the immateriality of the intellect remain entirely compelling, but also because the literal attribution of intelligence to God depends on its operations being immaterial (cf. *ST* I.14.1). In terms of the most promising thought in answering this question, I know of no better resources than the exacting thought of James F. Ross. Cf. "Immaterial Aspects of Thought," 136-50; "Adapting Aquinas," 41-58; and *Thought and World*.
- (2) How might the Aristotelian/Thomist layers of the soul be reclassified in terms of their hierarchical similarities and differences in relation to the immateriality of intelligence? *Vis-à-vis* their similarities, there is promise in thinking through the various systems that underlie the capacities grouped together by Aristotle/Aquinas in terms of energy differentials and an increasing complexity of processes that are dependent on the fertility of lower-level processes, but are equally irreducible to those lower-processes. See, e.g., Nancey Murphy and William R. Stoeger, eds., *Evolution and Emergence: Systems, Organisms, Persons* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Edward Pols, *Mind Regained* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); and Alicia Juarrero, *Dynamics in Action: Intentional Behavior as a Complex System* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999). *Vis-à-vis* their differences, the modern notion of "downward causality," which aims at describing the way in which higher-processes can effect changes in lower-level processes, bears a striking resemblance to the executive role that Aristotle/Aquinas attribute to intelligence. See, e.g., Charles T. Campbell, "Downward Causation," in *Studies in the Philosophy of Biology: Reduction and Related Problems*, ed. Francisco José Ayala and Theodosius Dobzhansky (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 179-86 and Nancey Murphy, George F. R. Ellis, and Timothy O'Connor, eds., *Downward Causation and the Neurobiology of Free Will* (Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer, 2009). Both of these aspects obviously converge quite promisingly with Lonergan's notion of ver-

I am, however, happy to say the last two questions will be addressed rather substantively toward the latter half of next chapter. For now, however, we can proceed with the first step of the aforementioned *prima facie* case for existence and distinctive operations of the identifying powers.

a. The Identifying Powers of the Soul: Identification and Its Appetitive Affections

In transitioning back to Aquinas's metaphysical framework, we are instantly faced with a conundrum: given the Aristotelian axiom that the soul's powers and acts are ordered according to their generic objects, what could it mean to speak of a generic "object" of a power of identification? If, as I have argued above and now reaffirm, primary identification has its definition in the radical receptivity of perceiving sensations *qua* perceiver—as the completion of an intensive self-unity—then we already find ourselves in a conceptual territory that is in a way quite different than Aquinas's account of sensitive and intellectual apprehension. For both of these acts presuppose that they terminally yield knowledge *qua* object, *viz.* the (sensible or intelligible) form of the known object in the knower. To be sure, describing identification metaphysically will stretch Aquinas's concepts beyond his own use of them. My intent, however, is to stretch them, not to break them, and in the process honor them by trying to expand the reach of their explanatory analysis of reality, of being and beings, according to its causes.

We can begin this stretching by making two observations that together open an initial space for considering identification as an apprehensive faculty. First, it does not take much straining of the imagination to see that primary identification has a family re-

tical finality (and its antecedents in Aristotle and Aquinas). Cf. Lonergan, "Finality, Love, and Marriage," 19-23.

semblance to other acts of apprehension. If apprehensive faculties entail having “within itself something which is outside it,”¹⁶⁴ then identification’s receptivity can be seen as an especially immediate, intimate, and lasting kind of interiorization of sensations into the individual. Second, Freud himself presupposes in his own way that identification depends on data received from sense-perceptions. This suggests that identification has an analogous relationship to intellectual apprehension: sensitive data is a necessary preamble to both of their distinctive operations. Or, to put it differently, the identifying layer of the soul is vertically higher than the sensitive layer, even though, as I will argue at length next chapter, it remains operatively lower than the intellectual layer.

But exactly how might we describe the relationship between the sensitive powers and the identifying powers? We already know that specifying the positive relationship between sensitivity and intelligence brought about one of Aristotle’s decisive contributions to Aquinas’s transposition of Augustine’s theory of (self-)knowledge: the active intellect illuminates the repeating patterns of the intelligible species as they are presented in the sensitive phantasms, which then moves the passive intellect to its proper acts understanding and judging. Where could we look for an analogous link between sensitivity and the powers of identification? If we can answer that question successfully, then we might be able to articulate something analogous to a sensible or intelligible form as that which moves the identifying faculty to its act of radical receptivity.

Based upon Freud’s insights, the most likely candidate for such a link would appear to be sensitive forms that elicit—usually repeatedly—passions of pleasure and/or

¹⁶⁴ Aquinas, *ST* I.59.2.

pain.¹⁶⁵ Furthermore, if, as my proposal presupposes, identification precedes self-consciousness and the operations of intelligence, then the only type of sensible forms that could furnish this link are those that, as Aquinas precisely describes and we outlined last chapter, are pleasurable (or painful) to the senses themselves and thus require no degree of rational judgment for discerning their goodness. However, the analytical task of refining this initial clue as to how and under what conditions the identifying faculty is moved to its act requires careful attention to several different features of identification that we have already touched upon above. For instance, identification does not follow just any given pleasurable or painful sensation. If it did, not only would it be much more difficult to articulate the differences between sensitivity and identification, but identification's active term would quickly lose its characteristic of completing and perpetuating an intensive *wholeness* because identificatory acts would end up being as numerous and diverse as the pleasurable/painful sensations themselves.

Instead, identification seems to be a power that is moved to its act through the confluence of several causes. There is a certain analogy to be made here with an eye that requires certain elements to be in place in order to see (e.g. to be open, to have a light source, to not be organically impaired).¹⁶⁶ If we look to Freud and Kristeva for insight, there are two causes that suggest themselves as particularly decisive in "opening" the identifying faculty to its receptive act: (1) a spontaneous arrangement (concomitant or sequentially ordered) of intense and/or repeatedly pleasurable or painful sensations and

¹⁶⁵ Even though most of the examples cited below will reference sensible forms that elicit pleasurable passions, in order to account later on for phenomena such as melancholia and trauma it will be necessary for us to maintain throughout that identification can be moved by painful sensations as well.

¹⁶⁶ However, as we will see further on, the relative exposure of the identifying faculty is neither as binary nor as tied to the will's direct agency as is the movement of an eyelid.

(2) the recent disruption of an active state of identificatory fusion. Expressed very broadly, the first variable furnishes the “formal content” that moves the identifying faculty to act. It also expresses, as we will see in a moment, a central aspect of identification’s vertical relation to sensitivity. Similarly, the second variable explains the ostensible contingency of the identifying faculty’s being “open” to new acts of primary identification that disproportionately occurs during the pre-egoic period of infancy.

Explicating these causes sequentially is a challenge in light of the fact that, with the sole (and illuminating) example of the identificatory state of the womb, they always occur in close interrelation to each other. To describe the formal content of a new act of identification is necessarily to describe the circumstances surrounding the disruption of another identificatory fusion. This necessary conjunction reflects what we will describe below as the idiosyncratically elastic *formality* and *ideality* of identificatory acts and their derivative habitual bonds: their natural inclination to remain in an active state of identification amidst a wide, but nonetheless finite, scope of what might be called “accidental” sensible variations perceived from within that ongoing fusion. However, as I will argue below, when such acts are finally disrupted through a decisive alteration in the sensory conditions associated with the identificatory state (e.g. the absence of the breast or the violent expulsion from the womb), the resulting disruption leaves the identificatory faculty receptively “open” to a new act of primary identification. As we will see, this natural inclination of identification toward the formal ideality of a perpetual fusion lies at the heart of so many characteristics that Freud associates with the unconscious in general—e.g. its so-called timelessness, involuntary compulsiveness, and relation to a rapid alter-

nation between love/hate—but fails to systematize under one single conceptual explanation as we are attempting to do here in terms of identification.

Nonetheless, the necessities of rhetoric force us to start with the first of these two causes and, in the wake of this initial analysis of the basic “formal” nature of identification’s movement and the vertical relation to sensitivity that it reveals, we will subsequently integrate the significance of the second cause in order to show how they jointly function to specify further the nature of the identifying apprehensive act, identification’s equivalent of a generic object, and the principles that govern its corresponding appetitive movements.

1. The Form(s) of Identification and its Verticality Vis-à-vis Sensitivity

In order to prepare for analogously applying its metaphysical principles to identification’s relation to sensitivity, let us recall the three primary dimensions that can define one layer of the soul’s verticality in relation to another, as illustrated by Aquinas’s understanding of the relation between sensitivity and intelligence: (1) the lower powers can furnish an operative preamble to the higher powers (e.g. the human intellect’s dependence on phantasms); (2) the higher powers can accomplish comparatively more perfect ends as defined by the interrelated metaphysical principles of unity and explanatory scope (e.g. the comparative perfection of grasping substantial forms vs. sensible forms); and (3) the higher powers can exercise a vertical influence on the lower powers through executive dominion (e.g. the will’s power of consent), therapeutic mitigation (e.g. the will’s use of the particular reason to ameliorate sensitive passion), and/or the downward “overflow” of appetitive movements (e.g. the will’s affections “redounding” to the sensitive passions).

I have already affirmed the first type of verticality as characterizing identification's relation to sensitivity: identification is somehow related to the preamble of sensations associated with intense and/or repeated pleasures or pains. My argument as to how identification is thereby moved—and how the term of that act is habitually retained and reactualized—will gradually draw upon the other two dimensions of verticality in order to fill out a more complete picture of identification's operative relation to sensitivity. Next chapter, in addition to describing self-consciousness as related to a specific kind of identifying act, we will also turn to complete the analogous task vis-à-vis the parallel vertical relation between identification and intelligence.

In his own way, Freud furnishes an intriguing conceptual possibility for conceiving of the “form” that moves the identifying faculty as something that is metaphysically “between” a sensible form and an intelligible form in terms of its unity and explanatory scope. As we saw above, this conceptual possibility variously goes by the name of an infantile “prototype” (*Vorbild*) or “imago” that later functions—in a post-egoic setting—as an “anticipatory” idea or bond waiting to be transferentially revived again. However, the promise of this concept as an explanatory principle for primary identification remains obscured most obviously by Freud's repeated employment of it as a support for both the sexual theory and secondary, model-based identification. When employed in this direction, the concept inevitably leads to describing a capacity through which this prototype/imago is originally received *qua* object and thus already presupposes a self-conscious subject who primally desires that which she knows herself not to have (sexual theory) or be like (secondary identification). Nonetheless, as Freud's own examples of

the breast as an “object” of primary identification illustrate, there is no reason why this concept cannot be adapted for describing the manner in which the pleasurable/painful presence of certain “objects” becomes interiorized in the act of primary identification as a “prototype” or “imago” of that which pre-reflectively completes “me.” Only later, to recall an insight we bookmarked above, once that “object” is somehow “abjected” or “relocated”—in a manner we will upon elaborate on later—outside the bounds of “me” does the habitual remnant of that act become a “prototype” for desiring that which an individual now perceives as “not-me.” In this way, to recall Freud’s important phrase from *The Ego and the Id*, the intensive fusions of primary identification can be affirmed as the “starting-point” for later, post-egoic desires for objects *qua* objects.

There is also another important way that Freud is responsible for obscuring the promise of this concept for describing the nature of identification precisely. In light of our insistence that identification is responsible for a perceived fusion that eludes an awareness of the subject/object division, naming—to continue with Freud’s example for the moment—“the breast” as a specific *object* for a given act of identification is exactly the kind of claim that needs to be highly qualified in order to successfully escape the circular pitfalls of the reflection theory. As I signaled above, this is why I repeatedly have been using qualifying quotation marks around any reference to an identificatory “object.”

An initial level of clarification can come from making explicit exactly what combined effects can be attributed to the operations of the inner and outer senses on their own *apart* from the participative, intelligent effects attributable to reason, the intellect, and the will—all of which, as we have insisted throughout, presuppose an awareness of the sub-

ject/object division and thus self-consciousness as well. If we look to Aquinas's account of the senses here for help, we find that he affirms that, following the initial acts of the external senses, the combined effects of the estimative and memorative powers are sufficient, even in non-rational animals, to perceive, recollect, and associate the particularities of repeated sense-perceptions as the "term or principle of some action or passion"¹⁶⁷ that has occurred in the past in the individual following the apprehension of those sense-perceptions. This type of sensitive association is notably different from what the intellect later makes possible when the estimative/cogitative faculty¹⁶⁸ is able to apprehend that certain sets of sensitive data are individual instances of intelligible *genera*: "a man as this *man*, this tree as this *tree*,"¹⁶⁹ and, to extend Aquinas's list via Lonergan, "a thing as this *thing*." Instead, on their own, the senses merely associate their own present and mnemically stored perceptions with an individual's "own actions or passions."¹⁷⁰ Hence, "a sheep knows this particular lamb, not as this *lamb*, but simply as something to be suckled; and it knows this grass just in so far as this grass is its food."¹⁷¹ Outside of this self-referential—narcissistic?—type of "relation to its own actions or passions it does apprehend at all."¹⁷² Even though the senses can mnemically associate certain sense-perceptions with particular actions or passions, apart from the intellect they cannot associate these actions or passions with an object *qua* object or a thing *qua* thing.

¹⁶⁷ Aquinas, *In De Anima* II, lect. 13, n. 398.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. pp. 211-13 above on the relation between estimative/cogitative faculty in non-intelligent and intelligent creatures.

¹⁶⁹ Aquinas, *In De Anima* II, lect. 13, n. 398.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*

The significance of this account for our purposes can be summarized as follows: if we are to steer clear of the reflection theory's implicit reinsertion of the unities characteristic of self-consciousness and intelligence, then we must be very intentional about not creating too strict an identity between the sensations that identification converts *qua* perceiver and any particular object that we in fact know (now) to be an intelligible whole *per se*. "The breast" can never be an identificatory "object" *qua* breast; rather, its inclusion in an identificatory act must be due to its sensible association with a corresponding pleasurable/painful "action or passion." If one takes the quintessential infantile pleasurable activity associated with the breast—breast feeding (or suckling in an interesting overlap with Aquinas)—as a chief example of an identificatory fusion, then one is left with the distinct impression that the kind of "form" that moves identification to act and is thereby received as a pre-reflective extension of the individual is constituted not by any single sensation (or object thereof), but by the contingent totality of sensations associated with the instigation and/or ongoing perpetuation of those passions of pleasure (or pain).

In other words, to single out "the breast" as *the* identificatory "object" that moves the identifying faculty to act is instead to engage in synecdochical rhetoric that is reflective of the structure of primary identification itself. For example, if we follow Freud's own logic that explains the later synecdochical associations characteristic of transference and free association, the identificatory fusion of infant/mother in breastfeeding has its origins in a collocation of apprehensive and appetitive sensations: the shape of the breast, the contours of the motherly/feminine face, the tactile and gustatory qualities of flesh, the sound of a calming voice, the taste of milk, and the derivative appetitive pleasures associ-

ated with each of these apprehensions. A similar list could be made for the identificatory—or, as Kristeva has it, “pre-objectal”—state of the womb: its tactile warmth/fluidity and the auditory rhythms of the mother’s heartbeat and voice. When laid out in this manner, the metaphysical perfection of the identificatory act can be named as the collocating conversion of all those disparate sensations into the perception of a singular intensive wholeness—“me”—that Freud synecdochically expresses in his aphorism as “‘I’ *am* the breast.”

In this regard, Freud’s alternative concept of an infantile “prototype” or an “imago” is a much more precise—i.e. non-synecdochical—way of expressing that which is received and habitually retained in identification. These terms accurately capture the delicate balance between the apprehensive/perceptual unity—an intensive whole—intrinsic to the act of identification and the diversity of “textural” qualities, reflective of the original spontaneous arrangement of apprehensive and appetitive sensations, that are thereby gathered together into the converted singularity of the prototype/imago of an intensive wholeness.

In terms of articulating a kind of “generic object” for identification, the striking thing about expressing the Freudian notion of an infantile prototype/image in this manner is that it begins to look rather remarkably like a distinct kind of “identificatory form” that simultaneously chimes with the metaphysical notion of verticality and the distinct principles of identification we have been developing. In terms of verticality, this type of identificatory form represents a supervening unity of sensible data that mimics—on a lower level—the verticality of intelligible forms vis-à-vis sensible forms. The key difference, of

course, is that in identification there is no analogue to the active intellect responsible for illuminating something “in” the sensible data; instead there is only the radical reception to the contingent arrangement of that data. Similarly, the habitual retention and derivative reawakening of this arrangement—either pre-egoically or post-egoically in transference—gives identification an explanatory scope that fits the general notion of a metaphysical form: a “pattern” that is “repeated” across several contingent instances.

In terms of the principles of identification we have been developing, the decisive characteristic of this formal unity is that it does not yield any further knowledge at all *qua* object. Or, to make an allusion to Fichte that we will return to next chapter, “nothing more can be said”¹⁷³ about this arrangement of sensible data other than it has been radically received as constitutive of “me.” Instead, the formal referent for this apprehensive unity is found solely vis-à-vis the identifying individual: it “defines” them and their intensive wholeness alone. Expressed another way, in stark contrast to the senses and the intellect, which *cannot be mistaken*¹⁷⁴ in their apprehension of sensible/intelligible forms, the categories of right/wrong and true/false do not apply to identification’s acts *in themselves* at all. This is despite the fact that the nature of identification’s acts in any given individual are derivatively open to rational “analysis” and intelligent understanding: this is the necessary presupposition of this very discourse, psychoanalysis as a whole, and, as we will examine next chapter, any plausible explanation of the Freudian talking-cure. In itself, however, the active identificatory reception of its form(s) only involves the contingent and unconscious, but nonetheless *real*, formation of the identifying individual.

¹⁷³ Fichte, *GWL*, I:279 (*SK*, 246).

¹⁷⁴ Barring organic impairment and/or another extraordinary condition.

The account of identification's act that results from this description of its equivalent of a generic form is one that helpfully illuminates its term as an *unconscious* and *immanent* perception of that sensible totality as coterminous with "oneself." It is unconscious because the entire term of its act excludes the differentiatedness of an "I" who could be "aware" of that act *qua* particular act or object. One cannot "see" that with which one is identifying *or* oneself doing the identifying at the very same moment in which the act of identification is occurring.¹⁷⁵ There is no self-differentiated "gap" within the identifying operation that could make such a "seeing" possible; instead, the intensive, pre-reflective wholeness of that which we later signify by "I" or "me" is unconsciously constituted by the identifying act itself: "'I' *am* the breast." This observation will undergird much of the work to be done next chapter in arguing for an operative link between self-consciousness and identification.

Similarly, the immanence of identification's term can be construed as analogous to the immanent and dematerialized (i.e. mental) terms of sensitive and intelligent apprehension. This observation is of some importance because there is a potential misunderstanding that looms here through which identification is robbed of its distinctive immanent term: an unconsciously perceived fusion with the identificatory form. Analogous misunderstandings have, of course, plagued both sensitive and intelligent apprehension when their immanent mental terms (i.e. phantasms and inner words) are forgotten, disparaged, and/or merged with their external referents (i.e. sensible objects and spoken words). A similar fate can easily beset identification if it is simply compared to an unspe-

¹⁷⁵ This is a rough paraphrase of a similar formulation made by Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen with the concepts of mimesis and playacting. Cf. *The Freudian Subject* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 39.

cific and unnuanced *mimesis* or mirroring in which no attention is given to what immanent power within an individual makes such receptive fusions possible in the first place. The human psyche might at times be *like* a mirror, but, unlike a mirror that simply *bounces* back preexisting light rays, in identification—and its derivative instances like hypnotism, trauma, and transference—there is a genuine immanent *conversion* of data that occurs in identification.¹⁷⁶ It is this immanent conversion that is the essence of identification's operation. One way to guard against forgetting the distinctiveness of this immanent operation is to remember that all acts of apprehension accomplish a similar conversion that ties together their principles and terms into a single, unified act. Sensitive apprehension converts sensible forms into phantasms. Intellectual apprehension converts intelligible species into inner words. Identifying apprehension converts a collated sensitive “that” into the perception of a pre-reflectively whole “me.”

Finally, before turning to how disruptions to an act of primary identification open up the identifying faculty to new bonds of identification, I can conclude this subsection with a few comments regarding how affirming the synecdochical structure of the identificatory form also explains several other idiosyncratic aspects of identification's operation while in act that are then reflected in the conditions whereby its habitual bonds can be unconsciously reactualized (or, in the psychoanalytic nomenclature, “reawakened”). For his part, Freud focuses almost entirely on the nature of the structure of an identificatory bond's habitual reawakening, whereas what is necessary for a fully compelling account is

¹⁷⁶ The implicit target of this clarification is, of course, Jacques Lacan. The *locus classicus* is Jacques Lacan, “Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je telle qu'elle nous est révélée dans l'expérience psychanalytique,” in *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), 93-100 (ET: “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,” in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, ed. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), 75-81).

an explanation of how the nature of the original act is connected with the structure of the habitual bond and the conditions for its reactualization.

While in act, identification shows a remarkable double capacity for what I will call *diachronic elasticity* and *condensive assimilation*. By diachronic elasticity, and here we begin to articulate the nature of the identifying appetite and another dimension of identification's verticality vis-à-vis sensitivity, I mean that a given act of primary identification is capable of remaining in act amidst a certain degree of "accidental" variation in its underlying sensible conditions. This is a necessary implication for affirming that the same identificatory bond, usually parental in its associations, can remain in act (or be reactualized) amidst sensible conditions that are by definition never *exactly* identical, *viz.* sensitive memory is to be able to associate the sight/sound/feel of a parental face/voice/body regardless of the surrounding "accidental" variations (e.g. what they are wearing, where they are, or what background noise is present). Furthermore, this elasticity helps to explain why certain analogous variations prove to be tolerable from *within* a single identificatory act or state. For example, an infant who is done feeding is able to endure the withdrawal of the breast without an immediate appetitive response of pain that signals that one has become separated from the conditions of one's own intensive wholeness. Instead, there seems to be an identificatory appetitive response of pleasure that redounds and redoubles the discrete pleasures of the sensitive appetite throughout the span of an identificatory act that carries the active, though unconscious, connotation of "'I' am whole, 'I' am whole, 'I' am whole"—or, cast into one of its derivative analogues, "I'm ok, I'm ok, I'm ok."

Condensive assimilation then names the parallel phenomenon through which any of the sensations experienced within that active state of identification can then become habitually assimilated into the formal content of that same identificatory bond. In this way, for example, the sight of the breast and the euphoric state after feeding signified by “flushed cheeks and a blissful smile”¹⁷⁷ can become habitually associated with a single act/bond of identification. Importantly, one of the diachronic effects of this ongoing assimilation is that, given the habitual reinforcement provided by the repetitive presence of a given parental figure, the formal content of a single identificatory bond can, and often does, in fact “condense” around a set of sensitive experiences easily associated with a single person, despite not yet knowing that person *qua* thing. The result of this assimilative process is an identificatory bond that closely corresponds with what Freud classified above as a “mother-imago” and/or a “father-imago.”

As for defining the finite boundary as to what sensible variations can or cannot be assimilated elastically, there is no way to predict ahead of time what exact degree or quality of fluctuation will cause a disruption to the active stasis of an identificatory act. The practice of caring for an infant, however, confirms this delicate balance between maintaining the elastic conditions for an infant’s identificatory pleasure and unexpectedly reaching its finite boundary. The (frequently exasperated) parental response to reaching this boundary sounds out in the endless variations of “what happened?!” uttered by the caretakers of infants. The response *within* the infant, however, to this boundary being reached is, as we will discuss in a moment, the onset of an immediate pain that emanates

¹⁷⁷ Freud, *Three Essays*, SA 5:89/SE 7:182.

from a disjunction—or an absence—appearing in “themselves:” “I’ am not whole.” One of the most reliable signs of this identificatory pleasure/pain can be found in the repetitive movements and/or physiological effects that each appetitive response tends to cause in the identifying individual. Such effects are exactly what you would expect if the identifying powers have a degree of vertical influence over the lower parts of the soul. When it elicits a diachronically continuous pleasure, identification often causes repetitive movements such as sucking, gazing, and stroking that signal an infant’s receptiveness to the identificatory form and the intensive wholeness that it completes. Analogous physiological effects include the regulation of an infant’s breathing, temperature, and heart rate.¹⁷⁸ If, and when, a pleasurable identificatory act is disrupted, not only will the active stasis of these effects cease, but they will quickly be replaced by equivalent manifestations of the resulting identificatory pain: tears, screams/squeals, and physiological signs of elevated stress. As Kristeva frequently points out in an observation that we will return to regularly, one of the primal occurrences of a disruption outside the elastic bounds of an identificatory bond occurs in birth itself. Hence: the inevitable outbreak of tears that will continue until an infant is reunited with its mother’s body.

The habitual corollary to identification’s diachronic elasticity and condensive assimilation is that the occurrence of any *single* sensation similar to one that has been elastically assimilated can synecdochically reactualize/reawaken the diachronic totality of

¹⁷⁸ Interesting enough, this phenomenon has been observed in skin-to-skin contact with fathers as well as with mothers. A few representative studies: Jan Winberg, “Mother and Newborn Baby: Mutual Regulation of Physiology and Behavior—A Selective Review,” *Developmental Psychobiology* 47, no. 3 (2005): 217-29; J. Bauer et al., “Metabolic Rate and Energy Balance in Very Low Birth Weight Infants During Kangaroo Holding by Their Mothers and Fathers,” *Journal of Pediatrics* 129, no. 4 (1996): 608-11; and Kerstin Erlandsson et al., “Skin-to-skin Care with the Father after Cesarean Birth and Its Effect on Newborn Crying and Prefeeding Behavior,” *Birth* 34, no. 2 (2007): 105-14.

that bond such that one's wholeness is once again defined by that formal arrangement of assimilated sensations. Here we have our translated version of the timelessness that Freud's assigns to the unconscious in general in its "compulsion to repeat" and especially to the later, post-egoic instances of transference in which the ideal fullness of a bond forged in the "prehistory" of one's past is reawakened on the basis of contemporaneous sensations. In infancy, this reawakening seemingly occurs, for instance, every time infantile slumbering is interrupted by the return of hunger pangs that inevitably recalls the—now lost—pleasurable fullness of identificatory union.

To be sure, some of the sensations that may end up reactualizing an identificatory bond, especially in the post-egoic occurrences of transference, will inevitably appear to be much more random than the connection between hunger pangs and a mother-imago. This apparent randomness has, of course, attracted the scholarly attention of many post-Freudian theorists. Such attention has produced voluminous commentaries on Freud's own endorsements on the "symbolic" and "condensive" nature of the unconscious's "timeless" mnemonic structure. The most influential of these commentaries is undoubtedly Jacques Lacan's grammatical extensions (e.g. metaphor and metonymy) of this Freudian theme, which we have appropriated to a certain extent in our own employment of synecdoche to describe the identificatory form and its habitual retention. One of the effects of this post-Freudian stream of theory has been an enhancement of the mystical/inexplicable connotations surrounding the unconscious and its timeless "compulsion to repeat" that

Freud himself began with the paranormal rhetoric that we witnessed above.¹⁷⁹ In the end, however, such mystification of the compulsion to repeat is, at least in my judgment, completely unnecessary.

Instead, a sufficient metaphysical account of the apparent randomness of identificatory reawakening/reactualization can be found by insisting that a distinct identificatory memorative power retains and then repeats its forms mimics on a higher level the way that Aquinas speaks of sensitive memory *apart from rationality*. As he argues in *ST* I.78.4, sensitive memory, apart from the higher operations of rationality, only enables the “sudden recollection of the past [*subita recordatione praeteritum*].” Only the vertical operation of reason, as Aquinas continues, makes possible that which we often confuse with sensitive memory itself: a “syllogistically” ordered search that yields an intentional “remembrance” of certain memories. On the basis of this insight, there opens the possibility of considering identification’s correlative memorative power as akin to non-rational sensitive memory in that it is only subject to the involuntary “sudden recollection of the past.” However, this overall similarity immediately suggests two aspects of difference between

¹⁷⁹ E.g. The worst offenders of this type of enhancement are almost certainly Cathy Caruth and Bessel van der Kolk. Caruth and van der Kolk have jointly perpetuated a Freudian-inspired, but certainly not *Freudian*, theorization of trauma that magnifies both the mystical and inexplicable aspects of Freud’s rhetoric surrounding the compulsion to repeat. For example, vis-à-vis the mystical aspect, Caruth speaks of how a traumatic event “repeated[ly takes] *possession* of the one who experiences it” and can even function like a “contagion” that is subject to “transmission” between persons (Cathy Caruth, ed. *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 4, 10-16). Similarly, vis-à-vis the inexplicable aspect, van der Kolk claims that trauma is a literal “engraving” upon the mind that *completely* eludes any at representation or symbolization even as it “continually returns, in its exactness, at a later time” (cf. *Ibid.*, 153.). The risk of such extraordinary claims is that if they are made in a context devoid of a detailed anthropology through which to actually make *sense* of such rhetoric is that, even as they promote admirable political and ethical agendas, they may also end up, as I take actually to be the case with Caruth and van der Kolk, perpetuating total conceptual confusion surrounding what trauma *is* and how it is connected to some natural human capacity for repeating decisively pivotal events in our lives. For a detailed analysis and exacting critique of Caruth and van der Kolk along these lines, see Ruth Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 229-97.

sensitive and identifying memory that are primarily due to identification's intrinsic unconsciousness and the diachronic character of its forms. First—and here we distinguish our account from Freud's notion of “remembering” in a manner that we will return to next chapter—the unconscious fusions embedded in identification's “memories” can *never* become subject to reason's *direct* inquiry and reminiscence. To “remember” in this direct way requires the concomitance of the subject/object distinction within the memory itself as the precondition for reason's self-differentiated recollection of *that*—to suppose otherwise would be a mnemonic version of the reflection theory. Even the theoretical remembrance of a sensitive “scene”—whether involuntarily or intentionally (i.e. rationally)—associated with an act of identification would not vitiate the validity of this point. For such a remembered “scene” would only be a memory of the original sensations associated with that identifying act, *viz.* it would be an operation of sensitive memory. Rationally recalling the act of identification *in itself*, however, always remains impossible. Hence, secondly, the “timeless,” involuntary, and unconscious reawakening of the totality of the identificatory form in the present simply *is* the specific mode of identification's “memory.” It is the “sudden recollection of the past” that fits the natural principles of identification's peculiar, but nevertheless not inexplicable, mode of apprehension.

2. The Disruptive Opening of Identification and the Binary Ideality of Its Appetite

Having outlined an analogous equivalent to the moving “object” of identification, we can now turn to describe the second primary cause for this act: the recent disruption of an active state of identificatory fusion. Both Freud and Kristeva presuppose, each in their own terminological way, that pre-objectal states have an intrinsic ideality to them. As I use the

term in our modified Thomist framework, I mean “ideality” to mean a natural inclination to maintain the active stasis of an identificatory fusion that inevitably comes into (painful) conflict with the vacillating conditions of external reality. As we detailed above, Freud’s version of this ideality stems from the sexual theory’s view of the id’s erotic unconscious instincts being compulsively, involuntarily, and irrationally “sen[t] [...] out into erotic object-cathexes,”¹⁸⁰ with the result that its wishes are inevitably left painfully unsatisfied. Similarly, Kristeva describes the primal, motile “stases” that characterize the womb and that are “violently” disrupted in the advent that marks the infant’s arrival *ex utero*: the biologically-forced separation through which our road to being an individual body and, later, an egoic subject is originally founded and given its trajectory through the crucible of pain(s).

For our overall purposes, the most relevant aspect of this ideality that inevitably causes pain is the derivative “defensive” coping that it prompts. This coping, so they both theorize, eventually leads to the formation of the ego’s self-integration as that which brings a sustainable, albeit still fragile, degree of stability to the individual. Even though next chapter we will draw upon this broad psychoanalytic theme in order to offer our own translated account of how the ego arises through the specific act of primary identification with our sensing bodies, at the moment my initial goal here is to show how it can explain how disruptions to the active stasis of an identificatory act can render that same faculty “open” to forging new bonds of identification and how this openness is related to some distinctive features of the identifying appetite.

¹⁸⁰ Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:313/SE 19:46.

Recall that Freud originally formulated identification as a way to explain the deep-seated sadness of melancholia. According to this melancholic version of identification, identification is an post-egoic capacity that *reacts* to the painful loss of an erotically-cathected object (i.e. a loved object). It does so by identifying with the abandoned object with the result that that object's *absence*—and the attendant pain and hate of its absence—is introjected into the ego as a masochistic/ambivalent substitute for the originally beloved object. There are, of course, a number of facets of this theorization of identification that we have already had to jettison in our critique of the sexual theory and translated account of primary identification. Most importantly, we have consistently denied the primal awareness of an object *qua* object (or self *qua* self) and identification as a *reactive* capacity to the erotic object-cathexes.

Nonetheless, once these elements have been conceptually strained away, this original context opens up an illuminating framework for describing a similar dynamic in our transposed account of identification. For instance, we can imagine an infantile scenario in which an already forged identificatory bond is reawakened/reactualization through any synecdochically related sensation: e.g. a hunger pang, a face (which may or may not be a parent's), a spontaneous memory, or a physical discomfort. The result of such a reactualization would be a contemporaneous (i.e. timeless) equation of "my" wholeness with the collated totality of sensations through which that bond was originally forged. If such a reawakening is quickly met with an accompanying and/or sequential array of sensations, apprehensive (e.g. the appearance of the breast) *and* appetitive (e.g. the discrete sensitive pleasures), sufficiently mnemically associated with that identificatory bond, the result

will be corresponding identificatory pleasure—”I’ *am* whole”—that will overflow to sensitivity.

However, what happens if such an array of sensations do not follow? We already foreshadowed the answer above. For such an individual, there appears a pain-filled absence in “themselves,” a “lack” (*manque*) as a Lacanian like Kristeva would speak of it,¹⁸¹ such that the conditions for the individual’s intensive wholeness are not met: “I’ am not whole.” Here we have a transposed version of Freud’s account of the hate/pain of losing an erotic object-cathexis shorn of both its erotic connotations and object-awareness. This identificatory “absence” could be signaled by any number of variables, such as the dissonance between the sensitive memories and whatever apprehensive sensations happen to be present at the time. What seems almost certain, however, is that the most decisive contrast for infants is the pain of hunger/thirst/physical discomfort that continues unabated without all the pleasures that the fullness of the identificatory bond originally furnished. No one has expanded upon this basic Freudian train of thought regarding what she called “the emotional situation of the baby” more effectively than did Melanie Klein. As she seminally wrote in her, “Love, Guilt, and Reparation” (1937):

In the very beginning [the baby] loves his mother at the time that she is satisfying his needs for nourishment, alleviating his feelings of hunger, and giving him the sensual pleasure which he experiences when his mouth is stimulated by sucking at her breast [...] But when the baby is hungry and his desires are not gratified, or when he is feeling bodily pain or discomfort, then the whole situation suddenly alters. Hatred and aggressive feelings are aroused and he becomes dominated by the impulses to destroy the very person who is the object of all his desires and who in his mind is linked up with everything he experienced—good and bad alike.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ E.g. Kristeva, *La révolution du langage poétique*, 86-100 (*Revolution in Poetic Language*, 90-105).

¹⁸² Melanie Klein, “Love, Guilt and Reparation,” in *Love, Guilt and Reparation: and Other Works, 1921-1945* (New York: The Free Press, 1975), 306-07.

Despite the acuity of this passage, we must immediately add an emendation that translates its insights into our framework of identification: on the level of identification, this alternation between love/pleasure and hate/pain cannot originally (i.e. pre-egoically) be directed at one's mother *qua* mother or the breast *qua* breast. Instead, they must register as a deficit within the individual's own intensive wholeness.

In other words, what we have here are genuine instances of pre-reflective and pre-self-conscious appetitive movements of love/pleasure and hate/pain. As we will discuss next chapter, the "self-referential" character of these identifying appetitive responses lays the archaic habitual foundations for their later, post-egoic expressions in narcissism (I love myself) and the self-revilings of the ego-ideal (I hate myself/I should be more like that). More importantly, however, here we have the transposed, unified root that hides behind Freud's vacillating theorization of a primary identification that precedes object awareness and a melancholic identification that *reacts* to the sensitive absence of a beloved object. Any object associated with a bond of primary identification is always already *interior meo* before the identificatory pain of its absence. In insisting on this point, we also have a perhaps unexpected convergence with one of Aquinas's most central appetitive axioms, the character of which also points to how we would constructively re-situate Freud's instinctual "death drive." As Aquinas was fond of writing, "nothing is hated, save through being contrary to a suitable thing which is loved [and] hence it is that every hatred is caused by love."¹⁸³ The hated contrary of an identificatory fusion is nothing other than the pain of its absence, the deprivation of which is signified by a host of

¹⁸³ Aquinas, *ST* I.29.2.

sensations contrary to the pleasurable fullness in which the bond was originally formed. Put differently: the “death drive” has no dualistic impulses “of its own;” its rage to destroy is always the appetitive inverse of love.

This modification of Freud’s original link between identification and melancholia leads to two final pieces of the puzzle of transposition that we are trying to fit together before turning back briefly to consider identification’s relationship to sexuality. First, the rapid oscillation between love and hate that both Freud and Klein associate with the ideality of pre-objectal states such as identification opens up the possibility that the identificatory appetitive response simply does consist in an alternation between immediately conjoined affections of inclination (love/hate) and rest (pleasure/pain).¹⁸⁴ Once actualized, whether originally or habitually, identificatory bonds immediately trigger appetitive movements of inclination and rest that correspond with the presence or absence of sensation sufficient similar enough to elastically “reconstitute” the ideality of original bond. If these sensible conditions are satisfied, then they immediately elicit identificatory love/pleasure that redounds to sensitivity; if not, the elicited appetitive response is hate/pain at the absence of that fullness. In other words, primary identification does not progress through either of the two elements of “delay” characteristic of many movements of the sensitive and intellective faculties: (1) there is no delay of evaluative judgment regarding the “goodness” of the bond; that “goodness” is already presupposed in the identificatory bond itself; and (2) there is no delay corresponding to the affections of movement (e.g. desire/aversion), all of which presuppose the self-differentiation of egoic self-

¹⁸⁴ Obviously these remain logical distinguishable.

consciousness (i.e. I am not that/I want that/I must flee that). Expressed in Aquinas's language: primary identification evokes no appetitive "moment" in which an affective union is experientially differentiated from real union. In identification there is only real union, whether that is with the pleasurable presence of identificatory fullness itself or the painful presence of its absence. As we discussed at length last chapter, in the former state there is active perfection of the appetitive in pleasure; in the latter state, the presence of painfully being separated from the conditions of goodness expresses the individual's continuing "craving for unity" with that which it has lost.¹⁸⁵

Second, through a final act of translating Freud, we can lastly redescribe the parallel defensive dynamics of the ego's melancholic coping with lost objects and the id's sublimatory formation of the ego out of the pain of its wishes being unfulfilled as jointly indicative of the identifying faculty being "opened" to new bonds whenever an identificatory act encounters sensitive conditions contrary to its original ideality. For as long as the active and ideal stasis of an identificatory act is sustained, all that it "sees" is that identificatory form as characteristic of the intensive wholeness that it enduringly converts and defines. Once that active stasis is disrupted by a decisive shift in the sensitive conditions outside of the elastic bonds of its form/bond, the identifying faculty "copes" with the resulting hate/pain by being open to a new identificatory bond. This helps to explain why infants, i.e. those who are encountering the rapidity of reality's vacillations for the first time and thus rapidly move through states of identificatory wholeness and deprivation, are so often characterized by identificatory openness. In the infant's absent eyes and vul-

¹⁸⁵ Aquinas, *ST* I-II.36.3.

nerable body we catch some of the most universal glimpses into the quintessential radical receptivity and abyssal vacancy that characterizes identification's openness to new identificatory bonds.¹⁸⁶

Furthermore, this defensive openness helps to set out the preliminary terms for our translated version of the infantile crisis of pain that, as we will discuss in more detail in Chapter 5, leads to the eventual advent of the ego's self-integration and self-consciousness. Given the vacillating conditions of external reality, it seems inevitable that every identificatory bond forged in infancy will eventually become ambivalently associated—elastically tinged, if you will—with sensitive deprivations and identificatory affections of hate/pain that permanently undermine the ideality of the original identificatory bond in a process that closely echoes that which Klein narrates in the passage above. Hence, for instance, sequential reactualizations of a mother-imago will begin to elicit identificatory appetitive responses that progressively fit the classic definition of ambivalence: the simultaneous occurrence of love/hate. Love because of the recollection of the original—in this case, pleasurable—ideality of the identificatory bond; hate because of the simultaneous recollection of the pain that was caused in its disruptive “absence.” On the level of our most infantile identificatory bonds, Lacan was entirely right: “there is no love without hate.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ My use of “vacancy” in this conceptual context is derived from Julia Kristeva and Ruth Leys. Cf. Kristeva, *Histoires d'amour*, 130 (*Tales of Love*, 134-135) and Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy*, 32.

¹⁸⁷ Jacques Lacan, “Dieu et la jouissance de femme—Une lettre d'amour,” in *Le Séminaire, Livre XX, Encore (1972-1973)*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 82 (ET: “God and the Jouissance of Woman—A Love Letter,” in *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*, eds. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), 160).

It is this inevitably accelerating conflict between identification's ideality, the binariness of its affections, and reality's endless vacillations that eventually causes the crisis of pain that forces an individual to develop different ways to make sense of the fluctuations encountered in the sensible "that." Once a certain apex of this crisis of pain has been reached, there seem to be three routes of adaptation that open up before an individual. The first two—fantasy and melancholia/masochism—dominated Freud's attention. In fantasy, identification vertically and compulsively annexes the interior senses in order to simulate the presence of the original ideality of identificatory bond in the form of fantasies, dreams, and/or hallucinations. The metaphysical logic of this adaptation follows Aquinas's observation that the intelligent powers cannot vertically rule the exterior senses because they "require exterior sensible things for action."¹⁸⁸ However, the interior senses "do not require exterior things," and thus reason can "incite [...] and form the phantasms of the imagination"¹⁸⁹ for the its own purposes. Likewise, the identificatory powers have a degree of vertical dominion over the interior senses, which is most obvious during, but by no means exclusive to, the slumbering of waking consciousness and intelligence in sleep. The result of this dominion is that sometimes an individual adapts to the pain of an identificatory bonds absence by conjuring up the illusion and pleasure of its real presence in a dream (or fantasy or hallucination), even though the associated sensible references remain "absolutely speaking, [...] absent."¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Aquinas, *ST* I.81.3.ad3.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, I-II.32.3.

In the second path of adaption, if no other bond presents itself as a coping mechanism for the pain of identificatory deprivation, then the derivative openness of the identifying faculty can result in a melancholic/masochistic act of identification with the concomitant sensitive conditions (i.e. sensitive pain, memories, any other spontaneous sensations that might be present) constitutive of the very absence that opened the identifying faculty in the first place. Even though the origins of such a resulting bond presuppose the existence, actualization, and formal content of the original identification (i.e. it is a masochistic substitute for the original bond), it functions as its own identificatory bond complete with its own synecdochical structure: “*I am this pain.*” The resulting mix of formal dependence and operative independence of such a melancholic/masochistic bond is perfectly captured by Freud’s terminology: it is a “shadow” of the original identificatory bond and functions in many ways as its unconscious substitute. Accordingly, when a melancholic/masochistic bond is reawakened and sustained in its act (either pre-egoically or post-egoically), it is quintessentially recognizable through the mixture of sensitive hate/pain/sadness and masochistic pleasure that redounds to it from the identifying appetite: “*I am (pleasurably) completed by this pain.*”

In spite of the ongoing allure of fantasy and the deep-rooted character of melancholic identifications, there remains a third, and more promising, route of adaptation that opens up before the individual. This route, which Freud notes only infrequently, is the way, as we will expand upon next chapter, that eventually leads to the vertical perfections of intelligence. By proceeding down this developmental road, an individual gains the capacity to gradually “pull out” of identification’s external fusions in order to respond to

the sensible “that” by asking a question that is as familiar to philosophers and theologians as it is to parents: “What is that? (That is, if it is not ‘me’).” Or as Aquinas has it: *quod quid est?* In order to ask that question, however, an individual must first forge what we will come to see next chapter as the most important bond of identification of all: one that is forged with our own sensing bodies. This bond, when it is in act, yields self-consciousness as its immanent term; it defines “me” in terms of a pre-reflective intensive whole in/around our bodies. As such, as I will argue next chapter, this act of identification not only forms the operative baseline for all subsequent acts of intelligence, but it also opens up the external “space” in which all that is “not-me” can, finally, be desired *qua* object.

b. A Brief Reconsideration of the Preeminence of Freud’s “Sexual Factors”

What then do we say about the instinct of Eros? Although an exhaustive response will have to be delayed for another project, a few comments are in order before turning to complete our constructive proposal. One of my chief arguments in this chapter is that Freud’s emphasis on the centrality of the erotic libido in psychic development yields a theory of the ego’s formation in early childhood that is theoretically unsatisfying in accounting for the phenomena to which it rightly draws attention. Nevertheless, one of Freud’s most oft-cited reasons for re-theorizing the developmental importance of the sexual libido was to combat contemporary theorists who claimed that the sexual instinct is entirely “absent in childhood” and only “set[s] in at the time of puberty in connection with the process of coming to maturity.”¹⁹¹ Even though the resulting libido theory is in-

¹⁹¹ Freud, *Three Essays*, SA 5:47/SE 7:135.

sufficient to explain the emergence of the ego's object consciousness, a deeper emphasis on primary identification as a non-sexual operation should not necessarily lead to a parallel rejection of the entirety of Freud's insistence on the presence and continuing influence of something that could broadly be called "infantile sexuality."

What would have to be excluded, however, is Freud's repeated penchant for reinserting a post-egoic self/object awareness in a manner that undermines the theorization of primary identification. If, as Aquinas endorses as an Aristotelian, the sexual appetite is created as a part of the sensitive layer of the soul, then there is no reason to automatically doubt Freud's claims that the "germs [*Keime*] of sexual impulses are already present in the new-born child."¹⁹² What would a pre-egoic form of these germinal impulses be like? They would follow the pattern we have already established to describe the pre-egoic operation of the senses. Pre-egoic sexual impulses would then consist in the enhanced tactile pleasure of certain sources of intense sensory stimulus. Even though he does not successfully link such emphases up with his metapsychological reflections on the sensory origins of the id's modification in a manner that could have produced a more orderly account of sexuality's developmental relationship to the ego's formation, such a sensory-limited account of infant sexuality finds deep resonances with Freud's extended comments in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) on the infantile pleasures derived from oral, anal, and genital "erotogenic zones" (*erogene Zonen*).¹⁹³

If, as we have postulated above, one variable for "opening" identification's operative capacity for receptivity is the repeated presence of sensory pleasure, then there is

¹⁹² Ibid., SA 5:84/SE 7: 176.

¹⁹³ Cf. Ibid., SA 5:76-78, 81-111, 113-117/SE 7:167-169, 173-206, and 208-212.

every reason to suspect that from an early age that there is often substantial apprehensive and appetitive overlap between sexually-tinged sensory acts and acts of primary identification. This is despite the need to continually logically distinguish between their respective—and developmentally-sensitive—operations in a way that Freud consistently fails to do. Such archaic overlaps would explain why so many arousals of identificatory bonds later in life (i.e. transferences) have erotic overtones to them. In fact, as Freud suggests in his own way, there are good reasons to think that many, if not most, experiences of “being in love” (*Verliebtheit*) represent the contemporary convergence of the sensitive and identificatory appetites. The former appetite furnishes an attraction to certain sensible qualities of another individual and a yearning for the sensitive pleasures of being physically united to them; the latter appetite furnishes the unconscious redoubling of those desires by fueling fantasies of repeating (and completing) infantile experiences of identificatory wholeness. These overlaps would also go a long way to explain why many sexual acts incorporate repetitive movements (e.g. sucking, stroking, and oral or masochistic stimulation) that can be as pleasurable as they can be regressively compulsive and addictive when they become mere substitutes, fantasmatically and unconsciously, for identificatory objects that have long since disappeared into the ever-presence of their melancholic absence. If there seems to be an implied theology (and vertical teleology) for sex emerging here, that sense is not accidental. We will briefly pick up this implication next chapter when we reconsider the perfections of intelligence vis-à-vis identification.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ An initial foray into the teleology can be made here in suggesting that it is quite rare for sexual acts (and/or “being in love”) to be completely devoid of identificatory enhancement and intensification. Sex is almost never an encounter between, as David Foster Wallace writes, “just bodies.” Wallace’s satirical and deconstructive essay on the pornography industry is an incisive non-theological commentary on the multi-

Even with such promising leads for a rapprochement between sexuality and identification, however, we must always resist the temptation to collapse identification into sexuality as Freud repeatedly does. One reason for this resistance is to insist on the logic reflected in the last few paragraphs: identification cannot be reduced to sexuality; instead, identification vertically intensifies certain movements of the sexual appetite. Another reason to resist this false reduction is to remind ourselves that there remain explanations for non-sexual, post-egoic phenomena (e.g. self-consciousness, trauma, the ego-ideal, hypnosis, transference) that await us next chapter in connection with continuing to elaborate upon the identifying powers. The veracity of such explanations depend on there being identificatory bonds that are intrinsically non-sexual and do not necessarily converge with the sexual appetite at all.

For the moment, then, we might conclude by observing that, despite its widespread modern influence and reputation for novelty, Freud's reductive gesture is only the latest repristination of a impulse that has long-endured in Western thought to place all occurrent unities between different objects under an erotically-charged *genus* of union. Ironically, this point was not lost on Freud. As he writes in the preface to the fourth edition of his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, "[A]nyone who looks down with contempt upon psychoanalysis from a superior vantage-point should remember how closely the enlarged sexuality of psychoanalysis coincides with the Eros of the divine

layeredness of sex and the reality that reducing sex to its material/physical base seems to not only debase and depersonalize the activity and its participants, but also seems to take a lot of hard work to actually (and tragically) accomplish. Augustine and Aquinas would simply have seen this phenomenon in its actuality to be the result of the inverted nature of sin. Similarly, they would have seen its relative difficulty to accomplish to be a sign of the Creator's indelibility as inscribed in the verticality of our powers. Cf. David Foster Wallace, "Big Red Son," in *Consider the Lobster and Other Essays* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2006), 3-50. The citation above is on p. 17, n. 14.

Plato.”¹⁹⁵ There is, of course, another possibility: that sexual union is a *species*, and a relatively low one at that despite its created goodness, of a *genus* that culminates in the unrivaled intimacy and pleasure of intelligible union. That, at least, is the option that we have been and will continue to pursue steadfastly in this project.

III. Conclusion: Summarizing and Looking Ahead

My goal in this chapter has been to carry out the first two steps of a three-part transposition of the psychoanalytic account of the pre-reflective origins of the ego’s self-differentiated integration through the lens of Augustine’s dilemma and Aquinas’s metaphysical and theological solution. The first of these steps began by tracing the inconsistencies that arise in Freud’s attempt to describe the ego’s archaic formation and, by extension, its therapeutic, self-organizing role vis-à-vis the disruption of unconscious processes. The main cause of this inconsistency stems from his vacillation between one explanation (i.e. the sexual theory) that presupposes an egoic awareness of the self/object distinction and another (i.e. the identification theory) that presumes that the ego emerges out of a prior developmental state in which individual and sensible objects are fused together in a pre-reflective bond of primary identification. In the process of detailing this vacillation, we also saw that Freud repeatedly backs away from the implications of his fertile theorization of primary identification by collapsing it back into the sexual theory and thus reinstating, *a la* Augustine in *De Trinitate*, an always already egoic awareness to the “prehistory” of the individual.

¹⁹⁵ Freud, *Three Essays*, SA 5:46/SE 7:134.

Based upon these observations, our next step was the just completed rehabilitation of Freud's notion of primary identification by extending the metaphysical terms of Aquinas's solution to Augustine's dilemma. The fruit of this attempt was the description of a distinct identifying layer of the soul. This layer of the soul is characterized by an apprehensive power of identification, the operation of which converts an "identificatory form" into the perception of a pre-reflective wholeness, and an appetitive power that generates affections of inclination and rest corresponding to the presence/absence of sensations associated with that form. I then showed how this theoretical framework helpfully explains several qualities of the Freudian unconscious—e.g. its timeless compulsion and the disruptive triggering of dreams, fantasies, and hallucinations—in a manner that simultaneously chimes with its vertical placement in the soul "in between" the sensitive and intellectual layers of the soul.

From here, what lies before us in Chapter 5 is the third step of transposition, which will occur by incorporating this discussion into the modern question of the origins and theological significance of self-consciousness as it is bound up with the broader Augustinian and Thomist themes surrounding the varieties of intensive unity within an individual (e.g. primal, epistemic, and teleological) and our appetitive *reditus* back to God. As I suggested above, the cornerstone of this extension next chapter will occur in arguing that egoic self-consciousness arises as the immanent term of an act of primary identification that forms the operative baseline for the higher acts of intelligence by unconsciously and pre-reflectively "apprehending" a circumscribed, embodied whole—"me"—outside

of which lies that which I can genuine intelligibly *know* precisely as that which is “not-me.”

As we will see, and as the terminology already suggests, there will be much resonance between this theorization of self-consciousness and that of the “unconscious” approach that I associated with Hölderlin and Novalis in the Introduction. However, the ultimate nexus of integration to this line of inquiry will actually occur in seeing how the overall Thomistic anthropological framework that has been developed also allows us to constructively link this unconscious approach not only with a refined account of desire that finally clarifies the relationship between self-consciousness and the “drive to stride forth toward the infinite,”¹⁹⁶ but also with a Thomistic/Augustinian version of Schleiermacher’s theological approach as well. For by describing the unconscious reception of “ourselves” in identification from within this metaphysical framework, we will find the necessary ground for forging a conceptual convergence between the two approaches: for identification is the intermediary—a causal medium within the overall intermediary of the soul as that which causes creaturely existence—through which the Creator creatively causes the finite wholeness that defines an egoic subject to be radically received and therefore always already “born” in absolute dependence as well.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Hölderlin, “Die metrische Fassung des Hyperion,” III:195, lines 46-51.

Chapter 5

Identification, Self-Consciousness, and the Vertical Perfections of Intelligence

This project began in the Introduction with an initial sketch of the riddle of egoic self-consciousness and two conjectures that I initially theorized might help to reframe that riddle. Broadly speaking, that riddle is centered on explaining how each of us first came to perceive that “I” am not “that” without presupposing that an individual is always already aware of the distinction between the egological self and an objectified object. Put differently, the goal throughout has been to establish a new framework through which to formulate an explanation of self-consciousness without making explicit or implicit use of the concept of intelligent reflection (or any variant thereof) that thereby reinserts the egoic self—as the “subject” (the one who reflects) and/or the “object” (that which is reflectively found) of that reflective act—into what was supposed to be an explanation for its emergence in the first place.

I then situated these two conjectures against the backdrop of the illuminating, but nonetheless problematic, genealogy that has seminally shaped the modern discourse on self-consciousness. I represented this genealogy by identifying four common and historically-linked approaches to explaining self-consciousness from several of the major philosophical figures from within it: the presuppositional approach (Kant), the exceptional approach (Fichte), the unconscious approach (Hölderlin/Novalis), and the theological approach (Schleiermacher). Despite the seminality of these figures and approaches, I expressed concern regarding that genealogy’s ability to furnish concepts that are precise

enough to clarify several conceptual fronts closely associated with the riddle of self-consciousness: (1) the dynamic interrelation between different human capacities (e.g. self-knowledge, knowledge of external objects, sense-perception, and desire) (2) the careful delineation of different types of intensive and extroverted unities characteristic of human existence; and (3) the causal and teleological relation between the supposed infinity of the self's "striving" to be itself and the concrete reality of the objects *qua* objects that it inevitably encounters in and through that striving.

In response to these deficiencies, the purpose of pursuing my two conjectures has been to expand the conceptual and phenomenological territory upon which this project's discourse regarding self-consciousness could be progressively unfolded with a higher degree of explanatory precision. First, based upon Dieter Henrich's observation that the tendency to root self-consciousness in reflection (i.e. the "reflection theory") is likely not an historical accident limited to the above genealogy, but rather is somehow rooted in the "structure of consciousness itself,"¹ I conjectured that a constructive extension of a fortuitous intellectual sequence between Augustine and Aquinas could plausibly furnish the metaphysical, anthropological, and theological resources precise enough to clarify the conceptual fronts described above. In Chapter 1, I began narrating this sequence by arguing that Augustine's overarching theological framework in *De Trinitate* promisingly suggests that human existence is tied together by three types of intensive unity—the primal unity of the soul, the epistemic unity of self-knowledge, and the teleological unity of desire/love—that are deficiently similar to God's eminently simple unity in different ways.

¹ Henrich, "Selbstbewußtsein," 274 ("Self-Consciousness," 19).

Unfortunately, Augustine's metaphysics and epistemology force him into the dilemma of a version of the reflection theory that results in his circular conflation of these three varieties of unity into the single form of a reflective self-knowledge always already given in the soul as the preceding ground of all knowledge of external objects. In Chapters 2 and 3, I completed this narration by describing Aquinas's multi-faceted solution to this Augustinian dilemma. He formulates this solution in and through a creative synthesis that he forges between several of Augustine's most seminal insights (e.g. the varieties of intensive unity, the *exitus-reditus* scheme, and the centrality of intelligence as the site of *imago Dei*) and the precision of Aristotle's metaphysical framework (e.g. causation, potency/act, the soul, the intellect). The fruit of this synthesis arrived in a Thomist theological anthropology that finally capitalizes upon Augustine's initial insight by naming the soul as the cause of an individual's most primal intensive unity (*viz.* its existence), reclassifying self-knowledge as only derivatively possible on the basis of the senses' and the intellect's native extroversion, and redescribing the teleological unity of desire/love as the intensive alignment of the appetites that occurs through the vertical influence of intelligence and its ultimate (re)union with God.

The second conjecture sought to augment this overall metaphysical and theological framework by incorporating Freud's promising insight regarding the crucial role that primary identification plays in the emergence egoic self-consciousness from a preceding pre-reflective state in infancy and our potential regression to such a state if that self-consciousness is pathologically disrupted. The fruit of this conjecture arrived in the just completed translation of primary identification, and concomitant untangling of Freud's

own libidinal version of the reflection theory, into terms broadly commensurate with Aquinas's metaphysics and theological anthropology. In the latter part of Chapter 4, I set forth those translated terms as a distinct identifying layer of the soul, complete—*a la* Aquinas's sensitive and intelligent layers—with an apprehensive and appetitive power. The apprehensive power of identification converts an “identificatory form” rooted in intense and/or repetitive sensations of pleasure or pain into the unconscious perception of a pre-reflective wholeness. Derivatively, its correlative appetitive power generates conjoined affections of inclination (love/hate) and rest (pleasure/pain) corresponding to the presence/absence of sensations associated with that form.

It is here in this final chapter that I will bring all these threads of argument together in order to formulate a constructive proposal regarding (a) the nature, origin, and theological significance of self-consciousness that successfully eludes the circular pitfalls of the reflection theory (b) the operative/teleological association between self-consciousness, the human desire for the infinite, and the vertical perfections of intelligence that situates egoic self-consciousness as a fourth type of intensive unity in addition to the soul, self-knowledge, and the vertical alignment of the appetites.

In order to accomplish these goals, the itinerary ahead will move through three main sections. First, I will expand the transposed account of identification in order to re-narrate the infantile “crisis of pain” that eventually leads to a decisive act of primary identification, which we will call the “egoic act,” which eventually condenses around one's own sensing (i.e. phenomenal conscious) body and thereby establishes a sustainable, albeit enduringly fragile and contested, degree of stability within the individual. The

term of this egoic act of identification, the unconscious conversion of this “identificatory form” (i.e. the sensing body) into a pre-reflective whole (i.e. “me”), is what we will argue ultimately constitutes and perpetuates self-consciousness. In this section, I will also discuss how this account of the egoic act not only successfully eludes the reflection theory, but simultaneously points to its function as a necessary condition—vertically analogous to the role of phantasms—for the higher perfections of the intellect and the will. As such, the egoic act fills the explanatory “gap” left behind by Aquinas’s repositioning of self-knowledge and thus can be affirmed as a fourth type of intensive unity. Second, I will explain how the vertical dynamism between identification and intelligence can be described in such a way as to account for the phenomena (e.g. transference and the ego-ideal) that can broadly be grouped together under the banner of secondary or post-egoic identification. Finally, in the last section I turn to address a number of interrelated issues all of which have to do with specifying the vertical perfections/influence of intelligence vis-à-vis the identifying powers. For example, in this section I will (1) describe intelligence’s limited, but nonetheless genuine, political and therapeutic dominion over the identifying layer of the soul as illustrated by the Freudian talking-cure; (2) situate, in a manner that will reflect several aspects of Schleiermacher’s theological approach to self-consciousness, the theological significance of egoic self-consciousness in relation to the three other types of intensive unity as enumerated by Augustine and Aquinas, and (3) answer the lingering question of whether the identifying powers might in any way be positively affirmed as deficiently related to the eminent simplicity of the triune God.

I. Self-Consciousness as the Egoic Act of Primary Identification with the Sensing Body

As I just referenced, the aim of this initial section is to propose a way of answering the riddle of egoic self-consciousness by drawing upon our translated account of identification developed in Chapter 4. To recall our discussion in the Introduction, this riddle is constituted by two closely interrelated questions. First, there is the question of *definition*: what are the terms of the immanent relation—the *relata*—that constitutes self-consciousness? Based upon our initial discussion, we preliminarily concluded that one of these *relata* is relatively clear: the sensitive data of phenomenal consciousness. However, what has remained unclear is whether self-consciousness is the other member of this relation *per se* (and, if so, what is self-consciousness “on its own”?) or whether something else (e.g. self-knowledge, feeling (*Gefühl*), or self-acquaintance) combines with phenomenal consciousness to “produce” self-consciousness. The second question—that of *origin* or *causation*—is closely bound up with the first: how can we describe the cause/origin of self-consciousness without reducing it to the type of object *qua* object that we can intelligently reflect upon?

For the sake of clarity, I want to state at the outset my provisional answers to these questions in a thetic manner that we can then elaborate upon in the three descriptive subsections that follow. In reference to the question of definition, my contention is that egoic self-consciousness is “produced” as the immanent term of an act of primary identification—the egoic act—with an identificatory form that progressively and habitually condenses around the sensing body. As for the question of origin/causation, our account of identification suggests two interrelated causes: (1) that which disruptively opens the

identifying faculty to a new bond, namely the infantile crisis of pain and (2) the “formal” cause itself as the identificatory form that condenses around the sensing body, *viz.* that which we thereby unconsciously perceive as “me.”

The first two subsections that follow will be given over to describing each of these two causes: our renarrated version of the Freudian and Kristevian infantile crisis of pain and then the sensitive and developmental variables that are likely collated in the identificatory form that moves the identifying faculty to the singularity of the egoic act. In each of these subsections we will also note thematic and conceptual parallels with the genealogy noted above as we come across them in order to show how our own account intersects with the problematic(s) variously described by the representative figures we have chosen to highlight. In the third subsection, we will then explain how this account of self-consciousness simultaneously eludes the reflection theory and points to the egoic act as a requirement for the subsequent operations of the intelligent layer of the soul. We will treat these two facets of the egoic act together because, as Novalis foreshadowed in his own way, they are deeply intertwined: the inward gaze of intelligent reflection cannot establish that which is its own preceding condition—“What reflection *finds, seems to be there* already.”²

a. Opening the Identifying Faculty: Renarrating the Infantile Crisis of Pain

Let us begin by recalling that Freud’s version of the infantile crisis of pain that leads to the emergence of the ego begins with his assertion, “At the very beginning, all the libido is accumulated in the id, while the ego is still in [the] process of formation or is still fee-

² Novalis, *Fichte-Studien*, II:112, no. 14 (FS, 12).

ble.”³ Out of this primal state, so Freud theorizes, the id then involuntarily “sends part of [its] libido out into erotic object-cathexes”⁴ that inevitably do not yield to its erotic wishes. The pain of these frustrated wishes then ultimately brings about the formation of the ego as that which sublimatorily assuages the pain by becoming a substitute, immanent “object” that is “always there” in a manner impossible for any external object/erotic-cathexis. Where there was once the desire for immediate sexual satisfaction (and its attendant painful frustration), the ego ultimately condenses as a replacement that is—apart from its pathological “absence”—in fact immediately “present” for sublimatory release.

As we similarly observed last chapter in our commentary on the potential relevance of Freud’s description of melancholia once it is strained of its erotic elements and its implicit reliance on a libidinal version of the reflection theory, our own renarrated account of this crisis of pain takes up and reappropriates many of these basic elements. Next to our obvious point of divergence in replacing the libido with our translated account of identification, the most significant variance for our account of the crisis of pain is drawn from one of Kristeva’s feminist emendations of Freud. On the basis of this emendation, we can offer our translated version of Freud’s quotation above: At the very beginning, there was the inevitable primary identification with the maternal body. Out of the “archaism of [this] pre-objectal relationship,”⁵ early infancy takes shape through a series of sensitive experiences that reawaken this bond and/or progressively forge other identificatory bonds that generally—albeit not necessarily—gradually condense around

³ Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:312-313/SE 19:46.

⁴ *Ibid.*, SA 3:313/SE 19:46.

⁵ Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l’horreur*, 17 (*Powers of Horror*, 10).

parental identificatory forms/bonds. The more habitually reinforced and condensively expansive such bonds become, the more “general and lasting” their effects will prove to be.

The problem, of course, is that in the “long-term” none of these external bonds can permanently satisfy the ideality intrinsic to identification that was first pleurably tasted in relation to the maternal body. This is because reality’s vacillating conditions will necessarily entail that all such primal bonds will become condensively habituated with the full ambivalence of love/hate and pleasure/pain through the momentary or extended absence of sensations associated with an actualized identificatory bond. These dissonant experiences thereby introduce a hated and painful deprivation, a *lack*, into that which we identify with our “own” wholeness. Even any masochistic substitutes that have been forged will likely develop similar ambivalence because the returning presence of what were likely originally sensitive pleasures (e.g. the return of the breast) will then ambivalently rob the infant of the pleasurable pain of its absence. Put differently, for every “bright and fragile amatory idealization”⁶ found in infancy, there always opens up, as Kristeva has it, the “somber lining”⁷ of losing that “other” who in identification I take as “myself.” Nowhere, as Kristeva repeatedly points out, are the later effects of this inevitable ambivalence more evident than in our unconsciously perpetuated and culturally reinforced hatred of the maternal body; the ideality of our first identificatory love inevitably

⁶ Julia Kristeva, *Soleil noir: Dépression et mélancolie* (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 15 (ET: *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 5).

⁷ Ibid.

becomes “contaminated” with “maternal aversion” that is the appetitive inverse for a whole “gamut of forgotten bodily relationships with [our] mothers.”⁸

The crisis that eventually develops out of this conflict between identification’s ideality and reality’s oscillations is that there occurs a law of decreasing returns that inevitably accompanies infantile identificatory bonds: where identification is inclined toward the active stasis of an identificatory fusion, it repeatedly encounters a sensible environment through its phenomenal consciousness in which original idealities are marred by the occurrence of identificatory hate/pain that opens it up again to new identificatory bonds. Every beloved/pleasurable identificatory form eventually becomes ambivalently tainted with hate/pain through the “remembrance” of its condensively-assimilated deprivations. Expressed in Kristeva’s terminology, the infant who was once surrounded by the choric fullness of the womb, now distressingly encounters sensitive “surroundings” that repeatedly elicit appetitive responses with the disruptive connotations of “‘I am *not* whole” that thereby opens up the identify faculty again. Maternal, choric fullness inescapably gives way to a world of identificatory lack.

In the onset and acceleration of this cycle of ambivalence, perhaps we could even appropriate Fichte’s seminal language productively: where there was once an “original force”⁹ to define the “self” externally in identification, in the intensification of the crisis of pain the individual encounters a “limitation” (*Begrenzung*) and “check” (*Anstoss*) that causes the locus for identification’s intrinsic ideality to “rever[t] back”¹⁰ to the sensing

⁸ *Histoires d’amour*, 243 (*Tales of Love*, 257).

⁹ Fichte, *GWL*, I:294 (*SK*, 259).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

body. This reversion eventually leads to the egoic act that circumscribes the individual as a finite, embodied self. “Nothing more can be said” about this limitation (at this juncture), but without encountering it the egoic act “would never have existed either.”¹¹ Identificatory ambivalence, in its own way, paves the road toward self-consciousness. To cite Kristeva once last time, these “inaugural *loss[es]* [end up laying] the foundations of [the subject’s] own being.”¹² For by losing the ideality of our most primal identificatory bonds, our identifying faculty is thereby opened to receiving the identificatory form that condenses around our sensing bodies: that which is indeed, by definition, “always there.”

b. The Sensing Body as the Identificatory Form of Egoic Self-Consciousness

In turning to consider how the sensing body comes into focus as an identificatory form, and in doing so ameliorates the infantile crisis of pain, we should immediately make two clarifying comments at the outset. First, we will need to avoid any trace of the idea that there is one decisive developmental moment in which the egoic act commences and after which it continues unabated. Such a fallacy would cut at the heart of our insistence that egoic self-consciousness is a fragile integrative phenomenon that is always subject to collapse and/or disruption. Instead, I take it for granted that the “identificatory situation of the baby,” to adapt Klein’s terminology, is characterized by an ongoing fluctuation—even conflict—*between* primal identificatory bonds that eventually and progressively stabilizes in the expected continuity, elasticity, and diachronically active character of the egoic act. At one point, the infant might be identifying with the sensing body—broadly speaking—only to have that fullness interrupted by the reintroduction, for instance, of the

¹¹ Ibid., I:279 (SK, 246).

¹² Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l’horreur*, 12 (*Powers of Horror*, 5).

identificatory bond that condensively includes the breast and/or another parental imago. Eventually, however, the egoic act usually becomes so habitually and condensively reinforced that such interruptions become less frequent, even though early on—”when the ego is still in [the] process of formation or is still feeble”¹³—such interruptions surely occur with a higher degree of ease and frequency. Noting such disruptive conflicts between identificatory bonds will prove important when we discuss secondary, post-egoic identification in the next section as well.

Second, recall that the definition we worked out for an identificatory form last chapter presupposes that a diversity/plurality of sensations become collated (elastically and condensively) into a single identificatory bond. The importance of this diversity/plurality for purposes is multifaceted. Most crucially, it functions as a bulwark against the constant temptation to tie egoic self-consciousness to any single sensitive variable (e.g. the sight of one’s body) in a manner that too rigidly specifies the developmental route to self-consciousness for each individual. Instead, the concept of an identificatory form is flexible enough that the specific series of intense/repetitive sensations that eventually leads to the dawning and condensation of the egoic act is likely contingently different for each individual, despite the fact that each of them eventually condenses “in/around” one’s “own” sensing body because of the interdependent associations easily forged between different parts of and sensations associated with the body. In this sense, the ontological order of creation tends to predispose and reinforce identificatory forms to condense in/around things that (in truth, though still unknown) have a single intelligible

¹³ Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:312-13/SE 19:46.

form: just as parental imagos tend to form because of the diachronic series of pleasures/pain contingently associated with them, so too we must affirm that a similar condensive process is in play in relation to the sensing body. This is just another way of expressing a claim with which we are now familiar from a number of rhetorical directions: self-consciousness does not emerge from finding any object *qua* object, it emerges through the progressive collocation of a number of different sensations that end up contingently condensed into the elastic singularity of an identificatory bond. Again, the point will prove decisive when considering how the egoic act can be disrupted. Such disruption cannot occur through the mere absence of any single sensitive factor bound up with its form, but rather through what we described last chapter as a decisive and likely multifaceted alteration in those supporting sensitive conditions.

Given these two observations, I will begin by drawing upon some insights from psychoanalysis (Freud/Kristeva/Klein) that help to explain generally how an initial identificatory bond is likely forged with some aspect/part of the body through pleasurable acts that help an infant cope with the painful absence of sensations related to another identificatory bond. From there we will draw upon several aspects of the operative relation between the external senses and the inner senses that we developed in Chapter 3 in order to lay out the different sensory factors that progressively, developmentally, and mnemically condense into what we will affirm as a sense-cognitive “feeling” of the finite bounds of one’s body. The identificatory conversion of this collated form in the egoic act then yields the pre-reflective wholeness characteristic of self-consciousness—”me.” Lastly, in light of our insistence that all identificatory acts can be disrupted if their underlying sen-

sitive conditions undergo an alteration outside the bounds of that act's diachronic elasticity, we will finally consider several examples of such disruptions taken from psychoanalysis (e.g. trauma) and cognitive neuroscience (e.g. organic impairment).

If, as we theorized above in renarrating the infantile crisis of pain, the ideality of every primal identificatory bond with external (though unknown as so) referents inevitably becomes habitually tainted with ambivalence, then the body steadily ascends as a potential identificatory locus that satisfies identification's ideality. Though Freud does not draw this exact connection, he does repeatedly draw attention to the significance of auto-referential pleasures as decisively important for how an infant copes with the absence of the breast/mom/parent. Freud's main example is the substitution of the breast with the rhythmic sucking of their thumb.¹⁴ However, to this basic example we can add the analogous pleasures, any one of which could deepen into an initial body-centric identificatory bond, that can be glimpsed when infants stroke their belly/foot/genitals, grasp their legs in order to rock back and forth, or (masochistically) bang their heads against something: "I am this bodily pleasure/activity/body part." To these primal, repetitive, and mnemically-reinforced sensitive encounters with one's body as something to be "something to be sucked/stroked/grasped"—to allude back to Aquinas's phrase last chapter—we can also add the elementary apprehensions (e.g. usually visual and tactile) of one's body parts as somehow repeatedly (and sometimes surprisingly!) "present" right "nearby" as some of the sensitive variables available for condensive assimilation into any of the initial identificatory bonds cited above.

¹⁴ *Three Essays*, SA 5:88-89/SE 7:181-82.

As just referenced, the identificatory importance of such primal sensitive encounters with one's body can only be glimpsed against the causal background of the infantile crisis of pain. For in encountering one's own body—and forging an autoreferential bond with some part of it—the identifying faculty finally finds an entry point that can be condensively expanded to include the collated sensations for something that is comparatively “always there.” This enfleshed “border” (*limites*) or “territory,”¹⁵ as Kristeva describes it, thus becomes the locus of an identificatory bond whose positive, formal content will eventually, *ipso facto*, “abject” that which elastically lies “outside” that bond as “not-me.” If life as a biological whole begins through our abjection in the birth canal, our egoic birth begins through an analogous act of *de facto* abjection. As Kristeva writes in a passage that echoes Fichte, that which is thereby abjected is not “a definable *object*” *per se*, but in fact “only [has] one quality of [an] object—that of being opposed to I [*s'opposer à je*]”¹⁶ or in our translated language: of being opposed to identification's ideality through which we are naturally and unconsciously inclined toward the active fusion of a non-ambivalent whole. Nonetheless, as we will explore shortly when we turn to consider secondary identificatory, the effects of our other infantile bonds of identification always endure even on the other side of this discovery that ends up producing the egoic act. They remain “in us,” to formulate our own convergence between Freud and Kristeva, as the habitual “history” of our “abandoned” identificatory “objects,” the remnant of our archaic and amorous “*alter egos*,”¹⁷ waiting to be transferentially revived once more.

¹⁵ Kristeva, *Pouvoirs de l'horreur*, 11-13 (*Powers of Horror*, 3-6).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 9 (*Powers of Horror*, 1).

¹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 16-18 (*Powers of Horror*, 9-10).

As to how such a primal autoreferential bond condensively expands to include the fullness of the sensing body, obviously any initial sensible forms associated with such a bond will remain crucial elements in the perpetuation of act of identification, especially since such forms are subject to accelerating mnemonic reinforcement as an infant develops. Usually these forms are visual (e.g. seeing body parts) or tactile (e.g. feeling the skin's surface and temperature). However, the contributions of the external senses in this regard might be reasonably extended (both rhetorically and condensively) to include certain patterns of sense-perceptions that make us aware of internal bodily states of either appetitive (e.g. the bodily changes associated with sensitive passions)¹⁸ or vegetative origin (e.g. hearing one's heart beat or breathing).¹⁹ All of these sensitive forms likely provide something of an initial, primal topography for the elastic bounds for an autoreferential identificatory bond that ends up defining the pre-reflective wholeness characteristic of self-consciousness. In more ways than one, they are the archaic perceptual media through which we become comfortable with/in our own skin.

Nonetheless, the fullness of the egoic act requires the collation of sensations related much more directly to the body's coordinated physicality than the external senses are capable of providing. In this regard, the progressive condensive inclusion of data received from the internal senses—particularly the ordered relation between proprioception, equilibrioception, and the common sense—would seem to be especially decisive in the

¹⁸ Obviously Aquinas's metaphysics has prepared us for this, but for confirmatory contemporary research, see, for instance, Anil K. Seth, "Interoceptive Inference, Emotion, and the Embodied Self," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 17, no. 11 (2013): 565-73.

¹⁹ Again, see, for instance, Manos Tsakiris, Ana Tajadura-Jiménez, and Marcello Costantini, "Just a Heartbeat Away from One's Body: Interoceptive Sensitivity Predicts Malleability of Body-Representations," *Proceedings of the Royal Society, Series B* 278 (2011): 2470-76.

developmental solidifying of egoic self-consciousness. As we discussed in Chapter 3, proprioceptors (e.g. muscle spindles and Golgi tendon organs in the arms, legs, and neck) and the equilibrioceptors (e.g. the semicircular canals and the otolith organs in the inner ear) are differentiated from external senses because their acts yield sensations indicative, not of sensible qualities of external objects, but rather of one's own embodied position within the world. Proprioceptors do this by collectively sensing the relative position and state (i.e. stretched or relaxed) of different muscles; equilibrioceptors analogously sense the body's rotational movements (i.e. the head moving) and linear acceleration (i.e. going up or down, forward or backward).

In addition to the different reference for their sensations, it is also crucial for our purposes here that proprioception and equilibrioception are dependent upon post-partum physiological maturation (i.e. vegetative) and habitual formation for their development in manner that again sets them apart from the external senses.²⁰ In the onset of a pattern of experience that accompanies the formation of any kinesthetic ability later in life, early infancy is marked by the gradual habitual and physiological strengthening of our muscular apparatus—including our proprioceptors—that make certain activities easier through repetition. Of all such infantile milestones that might be related to the emergence of egoic self-consciousness, none is likely as decisive as the capacity to lift and hold our heads vertically that usually progressively occurs during the first sixth months of life. For in the wake of lifting our heads, the equilibrioceptors in the vestibular system derivatively develop the habitual capacity to regulate the head's positional stability, the most important

²⁰ Cf. Aquinas, *ST* I.78.4.

extension of which is the vestibular-ocular reflex whereby the visual data received through the eyes are coordinated with the head's movement. This learned coordination between different sensitive powers, external and internal, yields the familiar experience of a visual field that remains stable even when the head moves (i.e. our eyes "automatically" move left when our head turns to the right).²¹

Once established, this stability of field and vertical-orientation would seem to yield a collation of autoreferential sensations, to be condensively added to the enfolded boundary established by external apprehensions, that form a crucial dimension in a sensitively integrated "feeling" of one's body. For in this multisensory stabilization of the head, we establish one of the key elements of what cognitive scientist Olaf Blanke and philosopher Thomas Metzinger, in something of a convergence with our own theorization, have called the "weak first-person perspective"²² intrinsic to self-consciousness. In coining this concept, they are explicitly contrasting it with so-called "strong first-person perspectives" that presuppose higher, non-sensitive (i.e. intelligent) types of self-knowing. Instead, all we have in a weak first-person perspective is the gradual establishment of a consistent "geometrical [...] point of projection" that functions as the "origin" for an individual's "sensory and mental processing."²³ In relation to this vertical orientation established by the head, we not only gain a consistent orientation for sensing our

²¹ On the learned nature of this "reflex," cf. Goldberg et al., *The Vestibular System*, 409-26.

²² Cf. Olaf Blanke and Thomas Metzinger, "Full-body Illusions and Minimal Phenomenal Selfhood," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 13, no. 1 (2008): 7-8. Blanke and Metzinger explicitly contrast this weak first-person perspective with what they call a "strong first-person perspective," which they define as a "system [that] represents itself" as a unified self that carries out various acts (e.g. the act of knowing). Cf. *Ibid.*, 8.

²³ *Ibid.*

bodies, but in relation to this “point” we also quite literally—via our proprioceptive and equilibrioceptive senses—learn to feel and maintain the *balance* of our bodies.

When ported into the terms of our modified Aristotelian-Thomist framework, such examples of multisensory integration lay the foundations for reemphasizing the decisive importance of the common sense as that which ultimately unconsciously structures all external, proprioceptive, and equilibrioceptive sensations into a *contemporaneous* flux of phenomenal and phantasmatic consciousness. As we discussed in Chapter 3, without this common sensitive act, all the discrete sensations would remain uncoordinated, atomistic *qualia* (to borrow a term from contemporary philosophy), “as though [these distinct sensations],” to recall Aquinas’s striking conclusion, “were sensed by [different people]; I this and you that [*ego sentio hoc, et ille illud*].”²⁴ Instead, the common sense, as the “principle and term of all sensibility,”²⁵ integrates all these sensations temporally—they are apprehended in “undivided moment”²⁶—and yet in a manner that is topographically distributed appropriately “in” and “around” the localizable parts of an individual’s body. In this manner, the common sense is responsible for yielding a phenomenal consciousness volumetrically conterminous with the en fleshed boundary of one’s body glimpsed by the external senses and the embodied physicality sensed/regulated by proprioception and equilibrioception.

Despite all these elements of coordination that should be attributed to a sensitive feeling of the finite bounds of the body, what none of these acts can do on their own is

²⁴ Aquinas, *In De Anima* III, lect. 3, n. 603.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, lect. 3, n. 609.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, lect. 3, n. 605.

collate all of these different elements into the pre-reflective *wholeness* of egoic self-consciousness. Even if they collectively furnish all the relevant data regarding the body's finite bounds (which they do), no sensitive power is capable of imputing the quintessential characteristic of egoic self-consciousness: integrated "mineness." That, as we have argued at length, is the metaphysical province of identification. By gradually condensing these sensitive elements into a single identificatory form, what began as an autoreferential identificatory bond borne amidst a crisis of pain progressively expands in scope to include all these sensitive elements (and others as well) associated with, and continuously mnemically reinforced by, the enduring presence of one's sensing body. When in act vis-à-vis this condensed form, the identifying faculty actively produces the pre-reflective terminal effect that defines egoic self-consciousness—"I' am this sensing body"²⁷—and thereby unconsciously and *ipso facto* divides phenomenal consciousness according to the archaic division of "me" and "not-me."

Having formulated this crucial definition, we must immediately attend to two potential misunderstandings and/or criticisms. First, one criticism to which our account would seem to be particularly vulnerable can be articulated in the form of this question: how can an act that we have insisted throughout is "unconscious" yield a variety of "consciousness," i.e. *self-consciousness*? Answering this question begins with adequately dis-

²⁷ In the course of formulating this definition on the basis of the conceptual trajectory that I had already set for myself vis-à-vis my primary conversation partners (e.g. Fichte, Schleiermacher, Augustine, Aristotle, Aquinas, Lonergan, Freud, and Kristeva), I became aware through adjacent research of the close proximity of this declaration and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), "I am not in front my body, I am in my body, or rather I am my body [*je suis mon corps*]." The origination of this overlap is merely incidental, though obviously connected to analyzing the same embodied conditions of consciousness. I simply note this overlap in passing for the sake of explanation and, perhaps, future exploration. Cf. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), 186 (ET: *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (London/New York: Routledge, 2012), 151).

tinguishing, as we showed Freud doing last chapter, different types of act-based phenomena that qualify as “unconscious” in different ways. Vegetative acts are “unconscious” simply because they are devoid of any kind of apprehensive conversion; their terminal effects are *merely* physiological and intrinsically outside of the flow of phenomenal consciousness. Sensitive acts, on the other hand, exhibit different levels of unconsciousness/consciousness. The external senses, for example, *always* produce a diversity of acts of which one is necessarily phenomenally conscious: one cannot *see* and not be aware that seeing is occurring. Similarly, as Freud argues repeatedly in his own way, appetitive affections intrinsically carry with them the quality of being phenomenally conscious.²⁸ Again, one cannot love or be in pain without that data entering into phenomenal consciousness. On the other hand, the act of the common sense is itself unconscious, despite the fact that we are phenomenally conscious of its effects (i.e. the temporal and topographical simultaneity of sensitive data), which then become the basis on which we can rationally affirm the existence of its act. Nonetheless, we are not enduringly phenomenally conscious that we are “common-sensing,” nor—interestingly enough—is it subject to volitional control.

When placed within this loose typology, the egoic act can be affirmed as “unconscious” in two senses. First, it is unconscious in a manner that is directly, albeit vertically, analogous to that of the common sense. The egoic act yields a kind of pre-reflective fusion with the sensing body “as mine” such that all the sensible data in the immanent flow of our phenomenal consciousness is “accompanied” by a diachronic wholeness elastically

²⁸ Cf. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:291-292/SE 19:22-23.

coterminous with the finite bounds of that body. This pre-reflective wholeness can be rationally and reflectively *affirmed* on the basis of its effects (i.e. a collated “feeling” of self-differentiated wholeness that accompanies all the embodied sensations collated into the egoic), but as we will discuss shortly, that reflection has its limits and certainly cannot be named as the cause of the preexistent wholeness. Second, the first element of reflection’s limit can already be glimpsed in the other aspect of “unconsciousness” associated with the egoic act. As we discussed last chapter, there is a type of unconsciousness peculiar to identification caused by the nature of identification itself: the pre-reflective fusion that identification actively forges entails that “I” cannot *be* conscious of identifying with my body in the same that I am aware that “my” eye sees; rather in identification “I simply *am* my sensing body.” Instead, the intrinsic multiplicity of the sensations relating to the topography of “my” body continues, even as they are condensed—and thereby accompanied by—the singularity of the egoic act. Here we have the unconscious mechanism of synthetic, non-reflective “recognition” that Hölderlin pointed out as necessary for self-consciousness in “Urteil und Sein,” but could not name or extrapolate. By collating these sensations into the singularity of an identificatory form, the egoic act “recognizes the identity” of the sensing body “in spite of the distinction” between phenomenal consciousness and the identifying faculty.²⁹ In this regard, the variety of consciousness that self-consciousness *is* yields an absolutely whole “mineness” that is impervious to something “else” being consciously “aware” of that act in itself because the pre-reflectively synthesized and elastically bounded egoic self simply *is* always already structured by that

²⁹ Hölderlin, “Urteil und Sein,” IV:227.

identificatory act being *in act*. Or, to allude to Novalis once more, self-consciousness as the converted, pre-reflective “feeling” of the sensing body, “cannot feel itself.”³⁰ Rather, for as long it is in in act, egoic self-consciousness is simply, to cite Lonergan, a pre-reflectively and involuntarily-forged “[given] unity of consciousness.”³¹

The second potential misunderstanding that immediately looms at this juncture is to suppose that the egoic act thereby “finds” some kind of fixed scope of the body that could be supposed as the foundation for an inviolable and static Self/Subject. To be sure, there is a certain *defensiveness* involved in both the origins and ongoing perpetuation of the egoic act, but—as with all identificatory acts—this one is also continually characterized as diachronically elastic, condensively assimilatory, and circumstantially disruptable *active* state of pre-reflective fusion. The full freight of the Aristotelian/Thomist notion of act is essential to maintain here. Just as sensitive or intellectual acts of apprehension do not *cease* just because they are united to their respective form (in fact just the opposite!), so does the identifying act that produces self-consciousness as its term remain in act unless it is disrupted by the slumbering of the sensing body in sleep, the interference of another identificatory form, or a decisive alteration in its underlying sensitive or physiological conditions.

Of all these characteristics that define the egoic act, the interrelated qualities of diachronic elasticity and condensive assimilation are jointly explanatorily responsible for one of the most classic aspects of self-consciousness that we noted in the Introduction: the “quality” of integrated mineness that is immediately added to certain first-order data

³⁰ Novalis, *Fichte-Studien*, II:114, no. 15 (*FS*, 13)

³¹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 350.

in phenomenological consciousness. To recall Schleiermacher's seminal phrase, this quality of self-consciousness thereby "appears as an *accompaniment* of the state itself."³² From within our theorization of self-consciousness, such an accompaniment signals the condensive and elastic collation of a given sensation into the diachronic unity of the egoic act. This intrinsic quality of identification's vertical relation to sensitivity yields the peculiar singularity of an act—classically characteristic of self-consciousness—that "remains," to appropriate and emend another of Schleiermacher's phrases, "self-identical *as an act* while all other *sensitive* states are changing."³³

Perhaps surprisingly, two experiments—the "rubber hand illusion" and the "full-body illusion"—carried out under the disciplinary banner of cognitive neuroscience have illustrated this dynamic of active integration that results in an elastic "boundary" around embodied "ourselves." Since the methodologies of each of these experiments require the verticality of intelligent actions such as verbal self-reporting of mental phenomena, our use of them as this juncture should be somewhat qualified. Nevertheless they are still quite useful for illustrating the way that our identifying faculty non-volitionally collates some sensations (and not others) into our unconscious apprehension of an embodied, integrated "me."

³² Schleiermacher, *CG*, 13.1:§3.2, p. 23 (*CF*, 6).

³³ Schleiermacher's original passage runs as follows: "As a consciousness of absolute dependence it is quite simple, and remains self-identical while all other states are changing. Therefore, in itself it cannot possibly be at one moment thus and at another moment otherwise, nor can it by intermission be present at one moment and absent at another. Either it is not there at all, or, so long as it is there, it is continuously there and always self-identical." *Ibid.*, 13.1:§5.2, p. 37 (*CF*, 21). Obviously, in light of our foray into Freud's insistence regarding the ego's continual fragility, we could only endorse the latter half of this passage with heavy qualification.

Both experiments accomplish this illustration by manipulating the coordinated multisensory basis upon which our embodied self-consciousness depends such that our identifying faculty incorporates, to one degree or another, non-bodily sensations into the form that participants identify with as “me.” In the rubber hand experiment (RHI), participants have their real hand hidden behind their back and then are visually directed to a fake rubber hand situated on a table in a manner properly aligned with the rest of their body. When their real hand and the rubber hand are stroked with a paintbrush at the exact same time (i.e. synchronously), participants regularly and repeatedly reported that the rubber hand “feels like my own.”³⁴ Intriguingly, however, the bounds of this illusion are demonstrably narrow and always reminiscent of the body’s actual, finite bounds and/or sensitive operations. For instance, if the stroking is done asynchronously,³⁵ or if the visual object does not look like a hand,³⁶ or if the rubber hand is placed too far away,³⁷ the illusion completely disappears and participants phenomenologically “[re]localize their real stroked hand.”³⁸ Similarly, the full-body illusion grew out of the methodology introduced by the RHI, even as it introduced a more “global” element to this experimental manipulation. By attaching a head-mounted, virtual reality display on the participant that relayed a

³⁴ Estelle Palluel, Jane Elizabeth Aspell, and Olaf Blanke, “Leg Muscle Vibration Modulates Bodily Self-Consciousness: Integration of Proprioceptive, Visual, and Tactile Signals,” *Journal of Neurophysiology* 105, no. 5 (2011): 2239. See also, Donna M. Lloyd, “Spatial Limits on Referred Touch to an Alien Limb May Reflect Boundaries of Visu-Tactile Peripersonal Space Surrounding the Hand,” *Brain and Cognition* 64 (2007): 104-09.

³⁵ Cf. Matthew Botvinick and Jonathan Cohen, “Rubber Hands ‘Feel’ Touch that Eyes See,” *Nature* 391 (1998): 756.

³⁶ Cf. Manos Tsakiris and Patrick Haggard, “The Rubber Hand Illusion Revisited: Visuotactile Integration and Self-Attribution,” *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception & Performance* 31, no. 1 (2005): 80-91.

³⁷ Cf. Lloyd, “Spatial Limits on Referred Touch to an Alien Limb May Reflect Boundaries of Visu-Tactile Peripersonal Space Surrounding the Hand,” 104-09.

³⁸ Palluel, Aspell, and Blanke, “Leg Muscle Vibration Modulates Bodily Self-Consciousness,” 2239.

video filmed synchronously from *behind* their own body, they similarly “self-identified,” to cite the experimenters’ own language, with the projected body when their own back was stroked.³⁹ Again, when such stroking was either asynchronous or applied to a non-bodily object, the illusory identification disappeared.⁴⁰

One of the implications of these experiments is that by inducing variations in the underlying sensitive data *within a certain scope*, the bounds of the identificatory form that yields egoic self-consciousness can be elastically expanded, to appropriate Blanke’s and Metzinger’s conclusion, “in a predictable fashion.”⁴¹ In this regard, these sensitive manipulations of self-consciousness actually prove the point: the sensing body is the locus of an ongoing identificatory act that terminally yields the integrated unity of self-consciousness. Something directly analogous—and similarly confirmatory—occurs in organic (i.e. neurological) impairments that can result in similar variations in the elastic bounds of self-consciousness. For instance, certain types of brain damage (i.e. lesions) can result in a pathological condition known as somatophrenia in which a person either misattributes one’s “own” hand or leg to a familiar person such as a friend, a doctor, or a nurse⁴² or identifies another person’s limb as their own.⁴³ Or, to make a parallel with the full body illusion, other neurological lesions can cause visual hallucinations of one’s entire body (i.e. an “autoscopy”). Again, however, each of these organic pathologies would

³⁹ Cf. Bigna Lenggenhager et al., “Video Ergo Sum: Manipulating Bodily Self-Consciousness,” *Science* 317 (2007): 1096-99.

⁴⁰ Blanke and Metzinger, “Full-body Illusions and Minimal Phenomenal Selfhood,” 12.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴³ Josef Gerstmann, “Problem of Imperception of Disease and of Impaired Body Territories with Organic Lesions: Relation to Body Schema and Its Disorders,” *Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry* 48 (1942): 890-913.

seem to only be disruptive in the sense that they “disrupt” the “normal” boundaries of the egoic act, despite the fact that its basic integrity, rooted in the identificatory form of one’s actual sensing body, remains intact.

There are, however, at least two lesional disorders—heautoscopy and out-of-body experiences—whose symptoms elastically stretch the collated scope of the egoic act to an extent that begins to approach what psychoanalysis would call a “break” or “absence” of embodied self-consciousness reminiscent of a schizophrenic multiplication of egos.⁴⁴

Whereas in “regular” autoscopic experiences an individual reports that their “self-location” remains centered in *this* body (not “in” that which is hallucinated), in a heautoscopy experience individuals report a “rapid alternation” between two “centers” of phenomenal/visuo-spatial consciousness: one located in their actual body and another located in the hallucination of that body.⁴⁵ Similarly, in an out-of-body hallucination an individual identifies with a disembodied perspective “from which” their actual body can be “seen.”⁴⁶

In spite of the illuminating nature of these organic impairments, each one of them—and this is how they indirectly support our overall description of the egoic act—still express some recognizable link to an original identificatory form centered on one’s “own” sensing body: autoscopic and out-of-body phenomena *always* involve some kind

⁴⁴ Although not the same as schizophrenia, both heautoscopy and out-of-body experiences are common symptoms of schizophrenia. Cf. Susan Blackmore, “Out-of-Body Experiences in Schizophrenia,” *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases* 174 (1986): 615-19.

⁴⁵ Cf. Olaf Blanke et al., “Out-of-Body Experiences and Autoscopy of Neurological Origin,” *Brain* 127 (2004): 243-58.

⁴⁶ Cf. Blanke and Metzinger, “Full-body Illusions and Minimal Phenomenal Selfhood,” 10 and Olaf Blanke and Shahar Arzy, “The Out-of-Body Experience: Disturbed Self-Processing at the Temporo-Parietal Junction,” *The Neuroscientist* 11, no. 1 (2005): 16-24.

of hallucinatory/representative connection to one's "own" body.⁴⁷ In this regard, and here we return to one of the central contributions that we have attributed to Freud throughout, the pathological data of psychoanalysis is much more indicative of situations in which the egoic act can genuinely be interrupted by the intrusion of another identificatory form totally devoid of such obvious representative links with one's sensing body.

There are other links that we could make to psychoanalytic pathologies (e.g. schizophrenia), but for the sake of brevity we will limit ourselves to that which is not only likely to be the clearest example of such a disruptive intrusion, but also happens to be the original phenomenon that attracted the attention of Breuer and Freud: trauma. For in the most extreme cases of traumatically violent experiences—e.g. sexual assault, abuse (child or partner), and torture—there often occurs what has been described both theoretically and clinically as a state of "dissociation" variously marked by "frozen" immobility, detachment, impaired consciousness and trance-like surrender. Such a state, as several theorists have commented, signals a kind of "collapse of the self"⁴⁸ and has been linked with the severest symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in which that event is "repeated" (e.g. flashbacks and nightmares).⁴⁹ Even though this phenomenon and its tragic effects have been well-documented, the question of what immanent "mechanism,"

⁴⁷ Cf. Olaf Blanke, Shahar Arzy, and Theodor Landis, "Illusory Reduplications of the Human Body and Self," in *Handbook of Clinical Neurology. Volume 88*, ed. M. Aminoff, F. Boller, and D. Swaab (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2008), 429-58 and Peter Brugger, Marianne Regard, and Theodor Landis, "Illusory Reduplication of One's Own Body: Phenomenology and Classification of Autoscopical Phenomena," *Cognitive Neuropsychiatry* 2, no. 1 (1997): 19-38.

⁴⁸ E.g. Ghislaine Boulanger, "Wounded by Reality: The Collapse of the Self in Adult Onset Trauma," *Contemporary Psychoanalysis* 38 (2002): 45-76.

⁴⁹ Cf. V. Rocha-Rego et al., "Is Tonic Immobility the Core Sign among Conventional Peritraumatic Signs and Symptoms Listed for PTSD?," *Journal of Affective Disorders* 115, no. 1-2 (2009): 269-73.

as Freud once put it and has been repeated by others more recently,⁵⁰ is responsible for how the traumatic event becomes so deeply “interiorized” into its victims remains largely unresolved and heavily debated.

When viewed from within our metaphysical framework, the intriguing possibility opens up that what occurs in these most traumatic events is that the collective intensity of sensations (apprehensive and appetitive) elicited by them are sufficient to overwhelm the egoic act, *viz.* they lie outside the elastic bounds of the identificatory form on which self-consciousness is dependent. The result? A forced *identification* with the traumatic event that manifests itself in the same radical receptivity that we have repeatedly associated with identification: “‘I’ *am* this trauma.” Once the violence ends, at some point the sensitive conditions are sufficient enough to support a “return” of the egoic act—with the tragic caveat being that the identificatory bond associated the traumatic event remains unconsciously *interior meo* waiting to be transferentially revived again. In this regard, and this conclusion is as necessary as it is unsettling, the radical receptivity of the nursing infant and the trauma victim are rooted in the exact same human capacity. The vital difference is what they are thereby being radically and unconsciously defined by: the expected and humane pleasures of the breast versus the unexpected and inhumane pain of total violation.

One last observation is in order before closing this subsection. If there is any constructively redemptive point to be taken from viewing the tragic example of trauma from within our framework of identification it might be the following. Bearing witness to the

⁵⁰ E.g. Yochai Ataria, “Trauma from an Enactive Perspective: The Collapse of the Knowing-How Structure,” *Adaptive Behavior* 23, no. 3 (2015): 143-54.

horrors of trauma, not to mention walking with and building up its victims, stands as a simultaneous reminder of something that is nearly imperceptible from “within” the egoic act itself because it is, by definition, concomitantly elicited by it for as long as it continues to be in act: the identificatory pleasure of being an embodied, self-conscious subject. By drawing attention to the conditions of its “absence,” we likewise gain a stronger appreciation for the presence of this fragile pleasure through which, as we can now turn to consider, all the higher pleasures of the intellect and the will become vertically available to us as well.

c. The Egoic Act, the Reflection Theory, and the Vertical Operations of Intelligence

As we have noted time and again, the crux of the reflection theory as described by Dieter Henrich’s reading of the genealogy from Kant to Schleiermacher is a circularity that reinserts the egoic, self-conscious subject back into what was supposed to be an explanation of its origins. It does so by problematically assuming two things: (1) that an individual always already possesses an awareness of the subject-object distinction and (2) that somehow the intelligently reflecting subject can “find” *qua* object that which is necessarily a precondition *qua* subject—i.e. a self-conscious “me”—in the act of reflection itself. As recalled at the outset of this chapter, in the Introduction I added to Henrich’s diagnosis of these two problematic assumptions by observing that the overall lack of conceptual clarity that plagues the genealogy from Kant to Schleiermacher is rooted in a poverty of metaphysical resources to distinguish precisely between different types of human capacities (e.g. sense-perception, intelligent knowledge, desire), the varieties inten-

sive/extroverted unity, and the “infinite” drive of the self and its teleological relation to objects *qua* objects.

What can be seen in the light of the entire Aristotelian/Thomist framework that we have developed and expanded by way of Freud is that the attraction of the reflection theory turns on an enduring confusion between two different types of intensive unity that are vertically related to one another: (1) an act of identification with one’s sensing body that unconsciously produces a collated, pre-reflective whole out of the myriad of our sensitive processes and (2) the derivative act of intelligent reflection that produces self-knowledge.

Without question, Hölderlin and Novalis came the closest to describing the origins of this confusion when they critiqued Fichte’s attempt to ground self-consciousness in a primal unity of “the subjective and the objective”⁵¹ that thereby can be affirmed as an exceptional form of “immediate self-knowledge.”⁵² By countering that intelligent knowledge must *always* be based on some kind of “separation” in something primally whole—which is then “reunited” in such knowledge—Hölderlin and Novalis rightly saw that intelligence, including its mode of operation in self-reflection, *must* be dependent somehow on conditions that precede and thereby elude the subject/object distinction intrinsic to intelligent operations. What their philosophical milieu could not furnish for them, however, is a way to think through that riddles of “separation,” “self-unity,” self-consciousness, intelligence, and, we can add back in at this point, “infinite” desire in a

⁵¹ Fichte, “Versuch einer neuen Darstellung der Wissenschaftslehre,” I:526-527.

⁵² Again, this is Henrich’s summarizing phrase for this element in Fichte’s theory of self-consciousness. Cf. Henrich, “Fichtes ursprüngliche Einsicht,” 212-213 (“Fichte’s Original Insight,” 36-37).

manner that allows these phenomena to be vertically related to one another such that a lower-level phenomenon can furnish essential aspects of the conditions required for a higher-level process without thereby being reduced in principle to the preceding process.

The closest that Hölderlin and Novalis came to formulating something like verticality can be glimpsed in their contention that the simple unity of “absolute being” *is not* the same kind of unity as the intellectual union of subject and object. To recall Hölderlin’s expressive formulation: “*die Identität nicht = dem absoluten Sein.*”⁵³ Despite the acuity of the critique of Fichte embedded in this formulation, what remains unclear in Hölderlin and Novalis is whether these two types of unity can be positively related in any manner other than the aesthetic route that they both propose as the most promising.

When this riddle is cast into our modified Aristotelian/Thomist framework that we have developed, however, what becomes promisingly clear is that the onto-developmental process that Hölderlin and Novalis were trying to describe is actually comprised of four vertically-related types of intensive unities: the three culled from Augustine/Aquinas (primal/epistemic/teleological), plus the addition of the egoic act. I will state these in sequence and then elaborate on how they are vertically related to one another. The most basic and “primal” kind of intensive unity is that which comes closest to what Hölderlin and Novalis called “absolute being:” the soul as the primal cause of every individual’s existence. The second type of intensive unity is furnished by the identificatory/egoic act that condenses around the sensing body and terminally yields a pre-reflectively whole “me” finitely differentiated from the remaining flux of the sensible

⁵³ Hölderlin, “Urteil und Sein,” IV:227.

“that.” On the basis of both of these intensive unities as necessary preambles to its own acts, the intellectual powers then forge the last two types of intensive unity in and through the reflections of self-knowledge and the vertical alignment of the appetites.

As to how each of these unities are vertically related to one another, we have discussed the overall dependence of all human powers upon the soul as its singular principle at great length. From this unitary principle, an individual receives not only the definitions for all of its natural powers, but also its existence as a living, individual *being*. The soul’s actualization of existence is the ultimate vertical preamble (apart from the Creator’s act itself, of which it is a causal medium). As to how the egoic act furnishes a necessary vertical preamble to the higher operations of the intelligent layer of the soul, including the intellect’s capacity for self-reflection, there are two loci of its act that seem most important in this regard.

First, by converting the various sensitive elements that make up our “feeling” of our bodies’ en fleshed topography into the wholeness characteristic of self-consciousness, the egoic act thereby furnishes the will with the integrated, finite self that it was naturally created to direct, control, and lead to its holistic teleological perfection. Or, as Blanke and Metzinger write very similarly, the advent of self-consciousness furnishes “an integrated functional state, which for the first time makes the body available for attention and global control.”⁵⁴ Notably, this integrated availability is exactly what collapses under the severest forms of trauma: one literally cannot *move* because the will’s identificatory basis has been disrupted, assaulted, and violated.

⁵⁴ Blanke and Metzinger, “Full-body Illusions and Minimal Phenomenal Selfhood,” 8.

Secondly, by pre-reflectively circumscribing the bounds of that which is radically received as “myself,” the egoic act *ipso facto* “opens up” the sensitively-received “space” required for intelligent operations. Here we are close to specifying the exact origin between the egoic act and something we have been aiming at for awhile now: the origins of the subject/object distinction. In this regard, however, it is crucial to remember that the identifying faculty does not thereby positively define any sensations irrelevant to the identificatory form of the sensing body *as anything* at all—“nothing more can be said” about them from within the metaphysical province of identification. For as long as these sensations remain in a certain range of intensity—e.g. outside of the intensity that elicits the disruptive effects of traumatic identification—then they are simply *adiaphora*, akin to the background noise that proves to be irrelevant to a nursing infant or the egoic act’s satisfied ideality as it has condensed in/around the associated topography of one’s body.

To the will, however, this adiaphoric realm of the *ipso facto* “not me” immediately opens up as the realm into which the highest level of desire—the desire to know—expands and is naturally directed: if that “that” is not me, then what is it? Lonergan was fond of remarking that children never need to be taught to ask the questions, “what is that?” and “why is that?”⁵⁵ That is, to be sure, true enough as far as it goes as any parent can gladly (or exasperatingly!) confirm. Nonetheless, and somewhat ironically for the theologian who thematized the notion of vertical finality implicitly in Aquinas and Aristotle, to simply assert this fact obscures the intense drama, the nature of which testifies to its ongoing vertical fragility, that all humans endure as infants in order to finally have

⁵⁵ Cf. Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, 12:599, 647.

their highest level of desire unleashed. Once unleashed, however, the will moves the intellect in its search for truth. As we suggested in Chapter 2, the first grasp of truth's universality that the young intellect undoubtedly hits upon is that which yields the most general of all temporal inner words that we later signify by the external words "thing" or "object, viz. "a unity, identity, [a] whole in data."⁵⁶ In this regard, one of the greatest confirmations of Augustine's seminal notion of a prelinguistic inner word of understanding—a "word of no language"⁵⁷—is that infants show every indication of grasping that something is an *object* in itself far before they can ever utter any signifying word for it. Through this most archaic insight, each of us proceeds in "desir[ing] to know what remains"⁵⁸ precisely because "the thing is the basic synthetic construct of scientific thought and development."⁵⁹

If the egoic act thereby is a necessary precondition for the unleashing of the will's desire to know and the intellect's corresponding mode of apprehending the intelligibility of objects *qua* objects, what then can we say about the intellect's capacity for self-reflection? What we can first say is that the intellect is obviously fully capable of reflecting on any piece of sensitive (i.e. phantasmatic) data, including the individual's own sensitive apprehensive and appetitive acts, in order to understanding their intrinsic intelligibility. As I referenced above, the multiplicity intrinsic to the sensitive acts *remain* as they are and must be affirmed as "accessible," to cite another effect of self-consciousness referenced in the Introduction, to the derivative analysis and use of the intelligent powers.

⁵⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 3:271.

⁵⁷ Augustine, *trin.* XV.22.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, X.2.

⁵⁹ Lonergan, *Insight*, 3:273.

Furthermore, based upon its initial judgment of other objects as *things*, it likely will not take long for it to come to the insight that “my” body is a “thing” generically like those *other things* as well. Likewise, the intellect can pivot on its own acts of understanding and judgment, through the process we outlined in Chapter 3, in order to grasp their intrinsic intelligibility as well.

However, when it comes to any attempt to reflect *directly upon*—to *objectify*—the egoic act itself, the intellect inevitably founders. It cannot *separate* itself from the very circumscribed, self-differentiated wholeness, manifested in the given, integrated unity of one’s “own” phenomenal consciousness, that is one of its necessary vertical preconditions. Expressed differently, and as Henrich’s critique of the reflection theory presupposes, there is simply no intelligent act that does not always already presuppose the egoic, embodied self. To be sure, and as I have painstakingly tried to establish, the condensive wholeness of the egoic act is *not* always already in act; but, if the intelligent operations of the soul are *in fact* in act, then they in themselves have always already presupposed the egoic act of identification. At this point one of the central aspects of the metaphysical framework of verticality that we have developed makes one of its most decisive contributions: because identification and intelligence have a vertical relation to one another, the circular loop that plagues the reflection theory is cut short. That which we come to know as “our” intelligence is in fact itself dependent on two intensive unities from *whence* its capacity for bridging the subject/object divide through intelligible unities is always already absolutely dependent: the formal unity of the soul and the identificatory unity of

the egoic act.⁶⁰ Without the actualization of either, the higher unities of intelligence and intelligent self-knowledge are, quite simply, impossible to achieve.

There are, however, two important contributions that *can* be attributed to the intellect that should be mentioned at the juncture. First, it seems clear that through the seminal understanding of other objects *qua* objects that the intellect is able not only to understand the body as an integrated sensible and sensing object *per se*, but to ultimately signify that understanding with an actually verbally uttered, “me” or “I.” To be sure, this act of understanding and signification would not at all be possible without the preceding condensation of the identificatory, pre-reflective “me.” Accordingly, they must be strictly distinguished metaphysically even as we insist on their close vertical relation and, of course, their rather exact, albeit ongoingly elastic in terms of identification, conterminance from an ontological perspective (*viz.* centered in/around this actual body). Second, despite our insistence that we cannot objectify our own egoic act *per se*, this does not of course mean that the intellect cannot grasp the intelligibility of the egoic act—and the identificatory layer of the soul as a whole—based upon other data and inquiring about the necessary causes for such data. This, of course, has been a necessary presupposition of our entire project. The most important data that we have analyzed have been the disruptions enumerated by psychological pathologies, the “feeling” (*Gefühl*) of our own finite

⁶⁰ One of the tragic confirmations of this vertical dependence is that if the egoic act is disrupted—e.g. in severe trauma, schizophrenia, or psychosis—the characteristic “self-absence” of these states is defined by a collapse of the subject/object divide that is necessary for the proper operations of the intellect and the will. In fact, to take the example of trauma again, one of the possible definitions that has been offered for trauma is an enforced state in which the conditions for intelligent knowledge collapses altogether. E.g. Dori Laub, “A Record That Has Yet to Be Made: An Interview with Dori Laub,” in *Listening to Trauma: Conversations with Leaders in the Theory and Treatment of Catastrophic Experience*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 47-80 and Ataria, “Trauma from an Enactive Perspective: The Collapse of the Knowing-How Structure,” 143-54.

bounds that we have associated with the identificatory form of self-consciousness, and the conditions necessary for explaining how the subject/object distinctions grounds, but is not caused by, the operations of intelligence and reflection.

Finally, one last remark is in order before turning to addressing the open riddle of secondary (i.e. post-egoic) identification. If we take a moment to look back over the contours of our proposal regarding the origin of self-consciousness and its operative relation to intelligence, it is hard not feel as if it represents a certain, if unexpected, vindication and confluence of different aspects of Aquinas's *and* Augustine's most basic anthropological convictions. The nature of these aspects naturally foreshadow a loop that we will complete in the third and final section below when we comment upon their relation to grasping the theological significance of self-consciousness. Vis-à-vis Aquinas, what we see is a final triumph of his axiomatic affirmation that the human soul actuates a mode of existence marked by a native extroversion that slowly migrated inward. In his own anthropology, of course, he argued for this native extroversion over against Augustine's always already epistemically unified self in order to affirm—via Aristotle—that intelligent self-knowledge is always strictly derivative from our understanding of external intelligibles upon which we can then pivot “inward” to understand ourselves. What we find above is that a directly analogous natural extroversion occurs in our most archaic identificatory acts when our first identificatory loves/pleasures are always in reality “external” to us, most notably in/around the maternal body. However, the crisis of pain/ambivalence slowly moves us “inward” toward an identification with our own sensing body, the occur-

rence of which immediately launches us back *outward* via the desire to know in the extraversion that was most obvious and interesting to Aquinas (and Aristotle).

Even so, by insisting that the desire to know is necessarily preceded by a variety of intensive unity through which we, in a way, perceive and love “ourselves” *as* our (embodied and conscious) “selves,” Augustine’s rhetoric regarding a primal unity in *De Trinitate* receives a bit of new life as well. His mistake, like Fichte’s, was to suppose that that intensive unity was itself always already intelligent. Nonetheless, this suggestive connection should not come as a complete surprise: it seems that the Thomist framework has an intrinsic tendency—wider in fact than Aquinas ever even intended, but nonetheless in line with his obvious intentions—to vindicate many of the Bishop’s insights precisely by transposing them into terms commensurate with its own metaphysical presuppositions.

II. Secondary Identification and the Vertical Overflow of Intelligence

In turning back to secondary, post-egoic identification, we are setting out again to reincorporate several of Freud’s insights regarding identification in general that we originally had to set aside last chapter following our initial exposition of the relevant portions of his metapsychology. We set it aside in order to resolve his vacillation between a pre-objectal/pre-egoic (i.e. primary) identification and a post-objectal/post-egoic (i.e. secondary) identification via our rehabilitated and translated account of identification. Now that we have completed that translated account and demonstrated its pertinence to the riddle of egoic self-consciousness, the task before us here is to show how we can successfully integrate the post-egoic and objectal phenomena associated with secondary identification—most notably transference and the ego-ideal—into our proposed framework cen-

tered on the vertical relation between the egoic act and the higher operations of intelligence.

According to our analysis last chapter, the crux of the incommensurability in Freud's attempt to relate these two types of identification (primary and secondary) could be seen in their opposite ways of rendering the subject/object distinction. Primary identification, as we have repeatedly emphasized, presupposes a pre-reflective fusion between the identifying faculty and its corresponding apprehensive form—or, in Freud's terminology, primary identification takes “place earlier than any object-cathexis.”⁶¹ Secondary identification, on the other hand, presupposes both the subject's awareness of its finite bounds and, we can now say, the vertical, intelligent insight of an object *qua* object. On the basis of this presupposed self-differentiated space, Freud theorizes secondary identification in terms of specific kinds of *desire*. For example, his two most common examples of such identificatory desire are those structured as a *having* (i.e. I am not that/I do not have that/I want to have that) or a *being-like* (i.e. I am not that/I want to be like that), the latter of which Freud equates with the rise and function of the ego-ideal.

Notwithstanding the unresolved lacuna that the juxtaposition of these two types of identification represents in his metapsychology, there still remained a thread of crucial insight embedded in a specific way that Freud attempted to connect them that we have highlighted at several points and now bring to the forefront of our discussion. This insight holds that the archaic bonds of primary identification form a mnemonic/habitual foundation that is later manifested in their transferential reawakening in a post-egoic setting as desir-

⁶¹ Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:299/SE 19:31.

ous impulses whose formal content is unconsciously archaic in origin and thus regressively repetitive in its influence. Last chapter we witnessed and bookmarked this insight in several places in Freud's writings. For example, in *The Ego and the Id*, he suggests that our earliest erotic "object-choices [...] relating to the father and mother" find their habitual "starting-point" in pre-objectal identification and thus end up "reinforc[ing] the primary identification."⁶² Similarly, in "Findings, Ideas, Problems" he makes the illuminating comment that we elaborated upon via Kristeva's notion of abjection in which he theorizes that the desire "to have" is developmentally derivative from a prior state of identificatory fusion with that which is now desired *qua* object, e.g. "The breast is part of me, I am the breast. Only later: 'I have it,' that is, 'I am not it.'⁶³ In other words, the post-egoic desire to *have* the breast, whether experienced as a child or as an adult, is formally and developmentally linked to the primary identification in which "I" and "the breast" were pre-reflectively *one*. In giving rise to such a desire *to have* that with which "I" once "was," so Freud theorizes, the archaic ideality of primary identification is unconsciously reactualized in a post-egoic setting in the form of trying to regressively reestablish the active stasis of fusion, and the intensive wholeness that it entailed, that "I" once enjoyed pre-egoically. Despite the unquestionable brilliance of this insight, which in many ways represents a psychoanalytic version of both Plato's *anamnesis* and Augustine's "primordial memory,"⁶⁴ what Freud lacked within his own intellectual framework was any ability to capitalize upon this insight coherently, i.e. without circularly reinstat-

⁶² Ibid. Cf. n. 99 on p. 297 above regarding my translation of this passage.

⁶³ Freud, "Findings, Ideas, Problems," GW 17:151/SE 23:299.

⁶⁴ Augustine, *trin.* XV.41.

ing egoic self-differentiation as something that always already existed in order to make sense of the desires characteristic of secondary identification.

Based upon our translation of primary identification into an Aristotelian/Thomistic framework, what resources might be available to us in order to more effectively integrate this insight into our proposed account of the egoic act and the subsequent vertical operations of intelligence? In my judgment, the key to answering this question within the metaphysical framework we have developed for identification is to explain the phenomena associated with secondary identification by drawing an extended analogy between intelligence's vertical relationship to sensitivity and its parallel relation to identification. In particular, what I propose is that the secondary phenomenon of transference and the ego-ideal can be explained by expanding upon Aquinas's notion of how intelligence can vertically "overflow" to other parts of the soul that can thereby become "rational by participation."

To recall our discussion in Chapter 3, Aquinas employs the notion of the intellectual powers' vertical "overflow" (*refluentia*) into the sensitive layer of the soul in order to explain at least four facets of sensitivity's operation(s) in the human soul: (1) the cognitive power (or particular reason) discursively comparing individual intentions from memory in order to evaluate a sensible object's relative suitability to a creature's well-being (i.e. whether it is good or evil), (2) the sensitive appetite's usual—apart from exceptional situations—inability to directly move the locomotive powers to act without the will's consent; (3) the sensitive appetite's attraction to non-natural objects derivative from intelligent acts of human artifice, e.g. wealth, entertainment, wine; and (4) the sensi-

tive appetite's capacity for being moved by the "overflow" of particularly strong affections vertically emanating from the will.

Why turn to the concept of intelligent "overflow" in order to explain secondary identification? The thematic overlap occurs in that Aquinas leans on the notion of overflow in order to explain acts that come from the sensitive layer of the soul, but which seem to presuppose—on a lower level—the acts of intelligence. My argument is that something directly analogous occurs in secondary identification, i.e. the operations of intelligence open up possible acts in the identifying layer of the soul that are not possible, strictly speaking, apart from the concomitant vertical acts of intelligence. We can express the key component of this overflow in the form of a thesis that we can elaborate upon in the following discussions: *once established, and for as long as it endures, the combined vertical relation between the egoic act, the will's desire to know, and the intellect's corresponding acts of insight serves to open up the familiar self-differentiated "space" quintessentially characteristic of the vast majority of our lives.* On the level of rational desire, this self-differentiated space underlies our capacity, as we have expressed it at various critical junctures in this study, to understand, desire, love, and choose objects precisely *as the objects* that the intellect apprehends. This includes, as will expand upon next section, our ability to understand ourselves in acts of self-knowledge, to share that self-knowledge through self-expression and narration, and to love, understand, and enjoy other people precisely as individuals with their own intimate intelligibility that we can thereby share in (and love) as well. Might it be possible, however, that the ongoing effects of this intelligently self-differentiated space overflows in such a way that a lower level reflection of

this perfection—*a la* the cogitative power and the sensitive desire for products of intelligent artifice—can derivatively be found in acts within the identificatory layer of the soul?

This is exactly what I take to occur in the phenomenon of secondary identification. By this I mean, to hearken all the way back to our initial engagement with Freud's earliest theories, that the forms mnemically retained in one's identificatory memory can be actualized under the self-differentiated space *presupposed by the ongoing egoic act and the vertically derivative acts of the intellect and the will*. In this sense, acts of secondary identification, whether they are derivative of infantile or post-traumatic forms, really are "reminiscences," as Breuer and Freud wrote in *Studies on Hysteria*. The doubled effect of this simultaneity could be compared to suddenly remembering seeing something *while continuing* to see something else. In secondary identification, however, this doubled effect manifests itself in that the egoic act of identification with the presently sensing body continues unabated—unless of course the reawakening is strong enough to disrupt the egoic act and thus produces the kind of "absences" of the ego that Freud and Breuer associated with schizophrenia and post-traumatic reawakenings. Up until that point of disruption, however, the ongoing identificatory presence of the sensing body is enough to defensively "protect" the identifying faculty from reaching this breaking point that causes the egoic act, the vertical operations of the intellect and the will, and the derivative self-differentiated "space" that they structure all to collapse into a pre-reflective fusion with another identificatory form. Or, to borrow a superb articulation from Kristeva, up until that point of the self's collapse, the egoic act functions as a "screen" (*un*

écran)⁶⁵ for the radical receptive vacancy—the “emptiness” (*vide*) as she calls it—implied by the identifying faculty being left wide open. Secondary, transference identification occurs as the mnemonic reawakening of an identificatory form under the operative conditions caused by the egoic act and the vertical overflow of intelligence: the immediacy of pre-reflective fusion as dispersed by the egoic screen and the intellect’s spatial and nominal differentiation between, for instance, you and me.

Postulating this type of coexistence of the self-differentiated space vertically furnished by the egoic act and intelligence immediately illuminates several intriguing explanatory directions vis-à-vis secondary, transference identification. Most obviously, it would seem to open up a promising avenue for explaining how the ideality of the original fusions of primary identification, in which there is only the appetitive alternation between affections of inclination and rest, can be reawakened in a context in which they could be affirmed as that which Freud associates with secondary identification: the archaic mnemonic ground for the type of affection that seeks to bridge (or increase) self-differentiated space, *viz.* desire (or aversion, or even, in vertical dependence upon the judgment of particular reason, the affections that Aquinas groups together under the irascible passions). By setting forth this theorization, we should be clear on what we are proposing. Claiming that identificatory affections of movement are indeed naturally possible, and in fact do occur, does not change the preceding claim that in the pre-reflective fusions of identification (i.e. that which is “seen” now) there is only the rapid alternation between love/have and pleasure/pain. Instead, the claim is that they are only possible from “within” an oper-

⁶⁵ Kristeva, *Histoires d’amour*, 27 (*Tales of Love*, 21).

ative and experiential context structured by the self-differentiated stability assumed by the vertical relation of the egoic act, the concomitant appetitive love/pleasure of one's sensing body, and the derivatively possible overflow of intelligence. If that fragile operative context collapses, then the identifying layer of the soul reverts back to the undifferentiated space characteristic of infancy and the binary alternations between love/hate and pleasure/pain.

If we are to fully elaborate this claim that secondary identification occurs as a mnemonic reactualization of another identificatory form under the vertical conditions of the egoic act and intelligence, the next step is to recall the important ways that we initially differentiated identificatory memory from sensitive memory near the end of Chapter 4. On the most basic level of distinction, we noted that remembering sensations themselves would not be the same as "remembering" the act of identification itself through which those sensations were condensed and converted into the pre-reflective fusion characteristic of identification. This insistence, as we noted in that context as well, sets our account apart from Freud and Breuer's constant search to somehow recall the "repressed" mnemonic material "in the unconscious" directly and/or literally.

By establishing this trajectory, we also made the initial point that forms retained in identificatory memory always remain, like the original act of primary identification itself, unconscious both in their mnemonic storage and derivative recollection. By remaining unconscious in its mnemonic storage, identificatory forms—unlike sensitive memory—never become open to reason's "syllogistic" search through its "store house" of retained forms. Instead, its mode of recollection always remains limited to the type of "sudden

recollections” and synecdochical associations that we correlated, via Aquinas, with a memorative power devoid of reason’s intentionality. Similarly, by remaining unconscious in its derivative recollection, identificatory forms that are involuntarily reactualized under the vertical conditions furnished by the egoic act and intelligence do not produce any conscious effect *in themselves*. Instead, they are primarily decipherable, and only on the basis of rational analysis, on the basis of two derivative effects that can and often do occur simultaneously with the egoic act: (1) the identificatory appetitive movements that they produce, which often cyclically converge with and amplify sensitive appetitive movements and (2) any phantasms (e.g. fantasies, hallucinatory, and/or traumatic flashbacks) that it vertically causes in the sensitive imagination.

The resulting experience aligns exactly with what Freud describes as the timelessness of the unconscious and the regressive repetitions of transference. When the requisite sensations unconsciously reawaken the ideality of an identificatory form from the past, the resulting appetitive and/or phantasmatic responses appear on the surface to only have their corresponding referents with objects/circumstances/people/passions that are “contemporaneous and real,”⁶⁶ i.e. timeless in the Freudian sense. This is despite the fact that they have their unconscious roots in one’s “own personal prehistory.”⁶⁷ Those contemporary sensations, and the transference objects and circumstances to which they correspond, are simply the present context in which we are appetitively prompted to project a “reprint” or “new edition” of that prehistory in the here and now. Hence the resulting transference desire that seeks to close the experienced distance with its corresponding

⁶⁶ Freud, “The Dynamics of Transference,” SA 11:167/SE 12:108.

⁶⁷ *The Ego and the Id*, SA 3:298-299/SE 19:31.

object(s) and thus (re)create the fantasized, but nonetheless deeply regressive, ideality: I want (to be) the breast (again). This same repetition can be imagined vis-à-vis either a masochistic/melancholic identificatory form—e.g. I want the pain of that object’s absence (again)—or a derivative aversion/hatred of an object/circumstance for always failing to live up to the desired ideality intrinsic even to secondary identification. The latter circumstance thus unconsciously reproduces the infantile experience of ambivalence, which ironically led to the formation of the egoic act in the first place, within the post-egoic structuring of self-differentiated space.

One of the necessary questions that arises at this juncture has to do with how to account for the contingent variations that occur in the circumstances that make up each occurrence of transference. If you will recall, Freud distinguished between what he saw as unchanged transferential “reprints” of an infantile imago and genuinely “revised editions” of that imago. He used the latter category to classify instances in which transference attraction (or aversion/hostility) in the psychoanalytical clinical setting seemed to incorporate “some real peculiarity in the physician’s person or circumstances.”⁶⁸ From within our modified account of transference, such a distinction would seem to be superfluous. Each transference reawakening naturally has *some level* of detailed variation simply because contingent circumstances are always diverse in this way; it is only necessary to affirm that some element(s) present in each circumstance is synecdochically reminiscent enough to the condensed elements of the identificatory form to trigger its reawakening.

⁶⁸ *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, SA 6:181/SE 7:116.

Nonetheless, Freud's highlighting of such contingent variations still leads us to two analogous affirmations within our own framework. First, it seems necessary to affirm that it is possible for the contingent circumstances of each transference reawakening to be incorporated and/or condensed in a new mnemonic trace (i.e. a bond) that *itself* can be subsequently reawakened in another transference recollection. Put differently, the inter-related structure between identificatory memory and secondary transference echoes one of Augustine's seminal articulations in *De Trinitate*: each subsequent reawakening is "off-printed" from the original mnemonic copy, which is thereby "left alone," and thus has an ontologically distinct and malleable character to itself: a "new edition." As was the case with pre-egoic identificatory bonds, the derivative influence of newly minted transference bonds has some direct relation to how long and in what way the transference reawakening is kept "open," and what sensitive and volitional habits are developed in reference to the desire (or aversion) that it produces in an individual. The more an idealized transference fantasy is pursued, stoked, and associated with pleasures imagined, secured, and/or lost (again), the more "general and lasting" its derivative mnemonic trace will be. The result of this mnemonic structure, in a point we will return to in our closing section, is that our infantile imagos end up derivatively causing a constantly ramifying set of transference experiences and associations in post-egoic life. Or, to borrow another phrase from Kristeva, the identificatory space of desire opened up by the egoic act and intelligence is characterized by a dynamic of "infinite transference"⁶⁹ that simultaneously

⁶⁹ Kristeva, *Histoires d'amour*, 27 (*Tales of Love*, 21).

propels an individual forward in desire even while constantly perpetuating an unconscious undertow of regression.

Second, having affirmed this constant transference ramification intrinsic to secondary identification, it would also seem that the nature of our most archaic identificatory forms and the deep rhythms of our lives make it altogether likely that we will experience transference reawakening most readily *within* and *derivative of* our most intimate and long-term interpersonal relationships. Part of this is, of course, a matter of frequency: the more time we spend with someone, the more likely transference and/or cyclical clusters of transferences will occur and be perpetuated. In addition, however, if we look back to Freud's initial theorization of transference based upon his clinical experiences, what seems reasonable is that it is also within these relationships that we are most likely to find ourselves (or put ourselves) in relational contexts most reminiscent of our infantile origins in terms of *dependent vulnerability* and the prevalence of *intense physical pleasures*. Most obviously this occurs in the many years following the solidifying of the egoic act when we find ourselves (usually) in dependent relation to those with the most numerous and direct sensitive associations with our archaic identificatory bonds: our parents. The result of this intense relational upbringing is a whole series of complex and continuously ramified secondary bonds that predispose us, as Freud documented well, to parentally-based transferences for the entirety of our life.

Almost certainly the next most frequent cluster of transference relations occurs in romantic and/or sexual relationships wherein, as we discussed last chapter, the reawakened ideality of identification so often converges with the sexual appetite. This conver-

gence results in the cyclically recurring chimerical fantasy of “falling in love” that inevitably—like the ideality of all archaic bonds apart from the one that condenses in/around the body—fragments (again) into identificatory ambivalence in the face of the reality and complexity of another person (thus pointing, as we will turn to soon, to the vertical finality of rational love and its capacity to know and love a person *as they really are*). Similar clusters of transferences can easily be found in interpersonal relationships involving authority and dependent vulnerability such as those with caregivers, counselors, (psycho)therapists, doctors, pastors, and teachers.

Finally, if we are right that the effects of the vertical operations of intelligence end up overflowing into the identifying layer of the soul, then it might be reasonable to expect that we will encounter variations in the desires elicited by secondary identification that—*a la* our sensitive desire for human artifice—presuppose the terminal effects of intelligent acts. To be sure, the most common and obvious configuration of identificatory desire is that with which we have largely been working so far—i.e. that which Freud specifies as a desire for *having* that which we unconsciously take as something we used *to be*. As Freud was fond of pointing out in his own way (rightly, in my judgment), one of the surest signs of the pre-egoic roots of this desire is how often our post-egoic pursuit of its transferentially proposed pleasures leads us toward acts in which the vertically-enabled space between “us” is bridged and/or obliterated. One might opt for “bridged” when describing consensual erotic and/or sexual acts in which the physical *copula* (of many varieties) inevitably functions as a transferential “object” of pre-egoic pleasures and fusions. However, “obliterated” is the right word for the many instances in which

identificatory ambivalence ends up fueling violence whereby the hard reality of another's space is violated to the point that we forcibly claim it/them under the quintessential indicia of identification: "mine." In both cases, however, the basic shape of identificatory desire and its climax of pleasurable union is formally the same: by assimilating "that" to "me" I regressively reestablish the ideality of identificatory fusion in a post-egoic setting. Even in these most basal manifestations of identificatory desire, however, the very space that grounds its derivative affections testifies to the preceding vertical effects of intelligence's specification of the desiderative "that" (i.e. the not-I) as that which populates the "space" outside of the pre-reflective "me."

Still, there do seem to be at least two other configurations of identificatory desire that presuppose the terminal effects of intelligent acts in a different, we might even say higher, way. First, there seems to be a predictable cluster of transference variations whereby the most archaic structure of having/being/consuming can be "revised" via both the non-consuming elements in our archaic identificatory form (i.e. touching, skin-to-skin contact, and olfactory or auditory sensations) and the "real peculiarities" of contingent transference events in order to highlight the pleasures of *being-with* instead of a *being* that must absolutely obliterate interpersonal space by *consuming* "them." The toddler who calls out for "mommy" or "daddy" in a moment of solitary freight and is then comforted through their physical presence/touch/warmth/voice almost certainly simultaneously forms a transference memory based upon a whole series of pre-egoic and/or prior post-egoic identificatory loves/hates/pains/pleasures associated with his/her parents. Through this amplification of transference, there results a pleasure actualized through the

mere presence of the one for whom the desire seeks in that moment. Moreover, that pleasure often (and again) evokes with it a post-egoic version of a familiar pre-egoic pleasure: “I’m ok, I’m ok, I’m ok.”

Second, and here we hearken back to affirm in our own way another of Freud’s most striking insights, the configuration of identificatory desire that presupposes the highest degree of intelligent activity is indeed that which lies behind the Freudian *ego-ideal*. At the center of this type of identificatory desire lies an image (or series of images) of oneself in the sensitive imagination that bears the characteristics of a transferentially desired object/person/group either directly (through physical mimicry) or indirectly as translated through the imperatival ideals—*be like this*—as received implicitly or explicitly through spoken or written words. The latter source of imaginary material requires the most obvious contributions of intelligence: grasping imperatives and vertically translating their meaning into a constructive form commensurate for the sensitive imagination. These images thereby become the sensitive triggers for reawakening our transference desires for the object/person/group from whom they were originally derived. The result is the familiar triangular variation of identificatory desire the Freud so effectively described in *The Ego and the Id* under the banner of the ego-ideal: we desire *to be like* that which we desire and thereby close the self-differentiated space between “them” and “us” in and through the idealized and sensitively encoded version of “me.” Or, in its ambivalently negated form characteristic of adolescence: we desire to *not* conform to the ideals of our authority figures precisely in order to increase that space of self-differentiation—“I just want to be ‘me.’” Even in such aversion, however, the very passion with which we push

back against such ideals reveals the degree to which we are already contingently and transferentially defined by them.

Despite their accidental differences, the formal line of similarity that ties together *having*, *being-with*, and *being-like* as all commonly rooted in the identifying faculty is that they all bear the unmistakable trace of identification's receptivity to being contingently defined as an individual that begins in our pre-egoic fusions, solidifies in the egoic act, and transferentially multiplies in the space opened up for secondary identification by the egoic act and the higher operations of intelligence. As Freud seminally discovered in his own way, this commonality is most transparently revealed in the frequency with which the pain of our transferential desires involuntarily oscillate between registering in reference to the recipients of our transferential projections (i.e. the pain of not being able to have/be with/like them) and registering in reference to our (absent) selves in the masochistic forms of melancholia and the self-revilings of the ego-ideal. Typically, the deprivations of *not having* and *not being-with* are more likely to solidify into the habitual cycle of melancholia whereby we love and take pleasure in the painful absence of someone who, in one respect we really did *know* to be other than us, but who in another respect became transferentially bound up with the identificatory forms that contingently became *interior meo*. Similarly, when there is a dissonance between ourselves and the idealized image of our transferential desires it often elicits in us an identificatory appetitive response that our intelligence sometimes actually helps us signify and verbalize (immanently or audibly): "I hate myself." The fact that such self-revilings are so often spoken in the first-person—instead of in the voice of those from whom they were trans-

ferentially derived—is one of the strongest indications that such utterances are the result of a secondary identificatory conversion whereby a sensitive “that” is unconsciously and transferentially converted into something that thereby defines “me.” This highlights the point to which we now turn: only in the vertical perfections of intelligence do we finally achieve the ability to truly know and love people (and objects) on the basis of that which really, i.e. intelligibly, defines them apart from our transferential projections onto them. And, to hearken back to Aquinas’s chief correction of Augustine: it is only through those acts in which we come to know that which is outside of ourselves that we are then derivatively capable of truly knowing ourselves through contingent acts of self-reflection.

III. The Vertical Perfections of Intelligence: Desire’s Unifying Ascent and the Imago Dei

By positioning this last section in the manner that we have foregrounded, we are in a sense combining the three main open-ended thematic threads that remain for us to address: (1) the various ways, in addition to its apprehension of objects *qua* objects, that intelligence vertically influences the identifying layer of the soul in a manner analogous to its political and therapeutic dominion over the sensitive layer of the soul; (2) the created role that identification plays in our multilayered unifying ascent of desire through four different types of intensive unity as teleologically ordered toward the source of our ultimate perfection and happiness: beatific union with the triune God “face to face;” and (3) the question as to what degree any aspect of identification might be eminently affirmed in God’s eternal simplicity and thus be incorporated into our understanding of the *imago Dei*. From a theological (i.e. Augustinian/Thomist) perspective, of course, there is a natural interconnection between these themes because they name conjoined links in our *redi-*

tus back to God that are inversely reflective of creation's causal *exitus* from that same God as the eminent principle of all things. To enumerate, as we have done in many ways in this study and in our reading of Augustine and Aquinas, the vertical perfections of human intelligence is to set out toward God's eternal—and, *via revelationis*, triune—simplicity on the well-trodden analogical roads of eminence, negation, and causality.

In offering this concluding account of intelligence's vertical relation to identification, we will draw extensively upon both the Augustinian structure of desire's ascent back to God introduced in Chapter 1 and the combined account of the soul, the intellect, and the will that we detailed in Chapters 2 and 3 in conversation with Aquinas without recapitulating their interrelation in advance. Instead, our task here is simply to integrate our metaphysical account of identification into the overarching philosophical and theological framework built upon those conceptual cornerstones that we have continued to consider axiomatic throughout our extensive excursion into the realm of desire(s) traditionally governed by psychoanalysis. Having made these initial remarks, the rhetorical path ahead of us will progress sequentially through two sub-sections below. The first will consider the intellectual powers' political and therapeutic dominion over identification, while the second will turn to the role of self-consciousness as a fourth type of intensive unity—in addition to the soul, self-knowledge, and the teleological alignment of desire, that serves a discernible purpose in the providential ordering of a deficiently (but genuinely) good creation within which intelligent creatures can ascend back into union with their Creator (i.e. their highest good and perfection).

a. Intelligence and its Political and Therapeutic Dominion over Identification

As we discussed in Chapter 3, at the heart of how Aquinas understands the intellectual powers' vertical dominion over sensitivity is an analogy that he draws from Aristotle's *Politics* regarding two types of governance that are both present in a creature. The is one type of governance one that is despotic (and therefore absolute) and one that is political (and therefore admits of an autonomy characteristic of free subjects). For instance, as we have noted before, the soul's command over the body's limbs is despotic and cannot be resisted. However, the intellectual powers' governance of, for instance, the sensitive appetite is much more political in the sense that the created, natural principles of the lower appetite give it a "horizontal" spontaneity that cannot simply be commanded away by reason or the will unilaterally. Instead, the political influence of reason and the will can vertically influence the sensitive appetite through measures such as the will's power of consent, universal reason's therapeutic use of particular reason, and the overflow of virtuous acts into the passions. The long-term *telos* of this political negotiation aims at gradually aligning the sensitive passions to the virtuous ordering of reason and the higher goods/pleasures apprehended by the intellect and intensely loved by the will. Or, as Aquinas puts it: for the sensitive appetite to become "rational by participation."⁷⁰

When we turn to applying this notion of political rule to the vertical relation between intelligence and the identifying powers' natural principles, we find a number of intriguing overlaps by way of analogy. First and foremost, Aquinas attributes the highest degree of horizontal autonomy to the sensitive apprehensive powers, especially the exter-

⁷⁰ Aquinas, *ST I-II.56.4.ad1*.

nal senses. Because the external senses are moved to their respective acts solely by external sensible forms, the intellectual powers can only vertically influence these acts through indirect means such as moving the body away from certain sensible stimuli or physically inhibiting their reception (e.g. closing eyelids or plugging one's ears). Similarly, given the principles that govern identification, not to mention its quality as unconscious, we have to deny that the will can ever directly control identification or its memorative power evident in transference. This chimes with our preceding discussion of the egoic act's necessity for the intellectual powers' vertical operations in the first place; the will cannot directly cause that which is its own preceding necessity any more than the human intellect can cause the phantasms that are its vertical prerequisite. Likewise, as we have discussed as well, neither the will or reason can directly incite (or prevent) an act of transference from identification's memorative power or any of the immediately derivative appetitive responses from an act of transference.

Nonetheless, as one might expect given the analogy with sensitivity, the intellectual powers do have a number of indirect avenues through which to politically negotiate with the identifying powers. Before enumerating these avenues of influence, however, we should first note that all of them obviously presuppose the active stasis characteristic of the self-differentiated space made possible by the egoic act and the vertically derivative acts of intelligence. Just like a particularly intense passion can overwhelm an individual to the point that they no longer "have use of [their] reason,"⁷¹ so too can the disruption of the egoic act or a particularly strong transferential reminiscence (e.g. a post-traumatic

⁷¹ Ibid., I-II.10.3.

flashback) involuntarily immobilize a person such that they are, to cite Aquinas once again, “totally absorbed”⁷² either by another identificatory form entirely or the appetitive effects of a certain act of transference. Apart from these extraordinary circumstances, however, the intellectual powers can influence the identificatory powers in a negotiation similarly oriented toward the long-range (i.e. eschatological) vertical alignment of identification with the order of reason and, ultimately, the beatific pleasure of union with God.

The most conspicuous mechanism of this influence again falls in line with the intellectual powers’ dominion over sensitivity: the will has a power of consent over any proposed locomotive or intelligent actions that could be carried out in reference to appetitive responses that an act of transference elicits. For example, one of the most common transferential affections is anger, i.e. the actions or relational characteristics of a contemporaneous person/circumstance can easily reawaken a past memory in the present regarding some prior situation in which an individual had been separated from a “good” that itself had been idealized through transference. The result would be an experience of anger toward the contemporaneous person/circumstance that has been unconsciously amplified because it includes the influence of our “past” anger as timelessly projected into the present. As is the case with sensitive appetitive responses on their own, the spontaneous eliciting of transferential affections is, strictly speaking, involuntary because it is grounded in identification’s horizontal autonomy. However, in the experience of such anger, the will still has the capacity to consent to any number of volitional responses to that anger.

⁷² Ibid.

To begin making a distinction that we will elaborate upon as we transition to consider the therapeutic effects of the intellectual powers, the possible volitional responses to this type of transference appetitive movements fall into two main categories. First, there are those volitional responses that consent to actions that express/carry out the appetitive promptings in a largely unencumbered and unrestrained manner. To stay with the example of anger, such actions might include yelling, physical hostility, imaginatively perpetuating that anger by seething internally, or passive aggressively seeking revenge. All of these volitional actions, when grounded in a transferentially amplified state of appetitive affairs, inevitably serve to perpetuate and habitually deepen the transference reawakening and underlying desire for an idealized “good.” We can find clarifying terminology in both Freud and Aquinas for what happens when the will consents to these type of actions. For Freud, what we find here is a mere *repetition* in a post-egoic setting of the underlying identificatory ideality/fantasy that has been reawakened in transference. For Aquinas, we have a classic instance of the Augustinian inversion of powers whereby the higher powers of intelligence simply become the accessories for carrying out the unfettered impulses furnished by lower powers. Analogous repetitions and inversions can be found, for instance, in transferences that condense in/around harmful relational patterns, melancholic withdrawal, masochistic self-harm (e.g. physical self-harm and/or the mental self-revilings of the ego-ideal), and addictive pleasures (e.g. alcohol, drugs, power, entertainment, sex). The more such transference reawakenings are cyclically stoked and the more volitional/sensitive habits are forged in relation to the them, the more difficult it becomes

to restore the will's freedom in relation to the regressively idealistic mnemonic traces and resulting appetitive responses at the heart of these phenomena.

The second set of volitional responses, however, are all grouped together because they share a common denominator in that they involve the will declining to simply endorse the experienced appetitive responses and instead choosing to direct reason (and, by extension, the intellect) to examine the relevant immanent and external data in accordance with this question: "Why am I feeling this way?" In drawing attention to this element of the intellectual powers' dominion over identification, we have to immediately distinguish between two different, though sometimes overlapping, trajectories toward which this intervention of the will and reason can be oriented. The more superficial trajectory aims at *circumstantial clarity*. For example, when faced with anger a person can—before authorizing any immediate responses reflective of unrestrained anger—intelligently survey the circumstances that have causally contributed to the emergence of anger. Such a surveyal might inquire into the relational dynamics at play, past experiences of anger, how to best prevent the situation from escalating, and what response(s) are appropriate/proportional given the perceived slight at hand.

Even though some of the side-effects of this intelligent inquiry might end up modifying the immanent experience of anger, and even developing the habits and virtues necessary for more in depth inquiry into its causes, for the most part the scope of this type of rational investigation and volitional intervention is oriented toward negotiating the contemporary situation wisely and well. In contrast, the other trajectory aims more specifically at *therapeutic analysis* that finally brings us back in the ambit of psychoanalysis,

hypnosis, the Freudian talking-cure, and—we hasten to add—the enhanced therapeutic role of particular self-knowledge that we bookmarked at the end of Chapter 3. Whereas the search for circumstantial clarity might *ipso facto* end up bracketing the amplifying effects of an act of transference, the trajectory of therapeutic analysis seeks to isolate and explain as far as is possible the cyclical patterns of transference that can be rationally discerned in and through the appetitive and circumstantial rhythms of our lives: e.g. what circumstances seem to predictably provoke this anger in me? Through this type of reflection, our intellectual powers can enable each of us, to recall several of Freud’s phrases that we cited last chapter, to try to “fit these emotional impulses [that arise from transferences] into the nexus [...] of [our] life history, to submit them to intellectual consideration and understand them in the light of their psychological value.”⁷³ Thus, even though such appetitive movements are still experienced and elicited, the interrelated acts of volitional intervention and reflection function as a refusal to simply *repeat* the timeless ideality prompted by transference. Instead they jointly open a vertical avenue through which individuals can “become acquainted” with a pattern of transference and thereby engage in the immanent “struggle” to “*work through* it, to overcoming it, by continuing, in defiance of it, the analytical work” that can gradually therapeutically diminish its influence in one’s life.

But, given all the different ways that we have translated and altered Freud’s general accounts of identification and transference, how now shall we describe and explain these therapeutic effects made possible by the intellectual powers? For reasons that mir-

⁷³ Freud, “The Dynamics of Transference,” SA 11:167/SE 12:108.

ror in some ways Freud's own rejection of the therapeutic framework that he first developed with Breuer, we cannot embrace any overly ambitious therapy that seeks to reduce all transferences to an archetypal "foreign body"⁷⁴ that can simply be dissected, verbally named, and thereby neatly *abjected* after the fact. The inevitable process of transferential multiplication and contingent habituation that is unique to each individual is simply too complex for the powers of human reason to grasp in such a literalistic fashion. To set out on such a search is to opt for, as Kristeva calls it, an "impossible quest for [an] absolute origin."⁷⁵ In addition, transferential memories/acts, like the infantile acts of identification from which they were derived, always remain unconscious in themselves: they are *never* open to direct *objectal* investigation, but can only be indirectly affirmed on the basis of examining the appetitive and circumstantial data at hand. Similarly, given our metaphysical separation of identification from sexual desire, we also have to deny Freud's therapeutic replacement centered on isolating the *ur*-repression of sexual desire (e.g. whether grounded in Oedipal desire or its phallic sublimation) and its resulting neurotic effects.

Instead of either of these routes, our description of the intellectual powers' therapeutic dominion over the identifying powers begins with accenting again the will's capacity for choosing to put an individual into circumstances in which instances of transference will more than likely occur to one degree or another. Usually these circumstances are characterized by either interpersonal relations of dependent vulnerability or a prevalence of intense physical pleasures (or both). Sometimes the will does so merely as an extension of a whole of host habits that have been built up around an oft-repeated trans-

⁷⁴ Breuer and Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, GW 1:85/SE 2:6.

⁷⁵ Kristeva, *Histoires d'amour*, 34 (*Tales of Love*, 28).

ferential cycle, such as those cited above in which the will becomes a subservient accessory to the impulsive repetitions of transference. At other times, though, the will seems to be capable of positioning the individual vis-à-vis another person (or group or circumstance) in a receptive, vulnerable posture that almost inevitably “opens up” that individual to the emergence of a transferential act. For instance, this would seem to be the kind of willed vulnerability characteristic of the relation between the hypnotist and the hypnotized with the result consisting in a regressive reappearance of child-like obedience.

Obviously, as we discussed at length last chapter, Freud similarly thinks of the relation between (psycho)therapist and client (or analysand) as a controlled space in which transference can “assert [and display] itself in a definite field”⁷⁶ open to the intelligent examination of both members involved in that intentionally arranged therapeutic site. To this extent, we are in agreement with Freud. One of the essential routes for vertical negotiation that the will possesses vis-à-vis the identifying powers is to intentionally arrange circumstances in which transferences can “show themselves,” not in order to merely repeat their idealistic fantasies and projections, but in order to subject them to rational analysis. Sometimes this occurs in formal therapy sessions, but something similar can occur in any rational reflection upon oneself—or, for instance, in a conversation with a friend or, to include the theological dimension, with God—in which one is trying to separate out the ideality of one’s transferences from the immediate circumstances of one’s embodied present.

⁷⁶ Freud, “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through,” SA 11:214/SE 12:154.

Where our explanation—based upon the framework of verticality that we have developed via Aquinas—goes far beyond what Freud could accomplish on his own, however, arrives in the fact that we can name the appetitive overflow of intelligent insight as the decisive metaphysical mechanism through which the intellectual powers can most effectively therapeutically (re)negotiate the identifying powers’ transference tendencies. Even more that: we can also point to this mechanism as the pivot that explains that which Freud describes as sublimation, i.e. the redirection of lower-level impulses to higher-level ends. In order to detail what I mean by this overall claim, we must be careful to delineate in what way the intellectual powers’ relation to identification is vertically analogous to its relation to sensitivity and in what ways it is not. As we discussed in Chapter 3, sensitive passions can be therapeutically influenced by the intellectual powers in two ways: (1) through universal reason guiding particular reason according to some universal proposition (e.g. the divine law’s prohibition against adultery) in a such a way as to alter particular reason’s judgment and thus the corresponding sensitive passion(s) as well; and (2) through the intense affections of the intellective appetite (i.e. the will) overflowing into the sensitive appetite in a manner that can gradually enable the habitual constitution of its passions to move more easily in accordance with the will’s rational ordering (i.e. virtue “produces ordinate passions”).⁷⁷

When ported into the question of the intellectual powers’ relation to identification, it becomes quickly clear that the first therapeutic path is simply not available to reason because there is no intrinsically rational power of judgment in the identifying apprehen-

⁷⁷ Aquinas, *ST I-II.59.5*.

sive powers. Instead, there is only the unconscious, radical receptivity typical of pre-egoic identification, the egoic act, and post-egoic transference. However, the second path suggests a promising set of connections vis-à-vis the therapeutic effects that Freud associates with the interrelated practices of intelligently analyzing transference impulses and engaging in the type of self-narration characteristic of the talking-cure. The trick to capitalizing upon this promise is to specify exactly what kind of insight most directly leads to therapeutic effects. The temptation in Freudian discourse, a temptation that began with the Breuer/Freud collaboration and continues in various forms to this day,⁷⁸ is to attribute a pathogenic literality—e.g. a “foreign body,” an indwelling “spirit,” or even a specifically repressed “memory”—to what we have called the unconsciousness of identificatory and transference forms/bonds. The telltale sign of giving into this temptation is that the therapeutic window opened up by transference always takes on a correspondingly literalized process of “removal” through the passing of this pathogen into consciousness under the “reawakening” conditions furnished by transference. If only the originating events could be “remembered” accurately enough or “relived” intensely enough to “release” the repressed emotions,⁷⁹ then, it is supposed, the “foreign body” could be expelled,⁸⁰ the indwelling spirit could be “destroyed,”⁸¹ and/or the memory could finally be “remembered” in its fullness.⁸²

There are a number of problems that always arise when someone gives into this temptation. For example, on what basis can we assume a clear distinction between the

⁷⁸ See n. 179 on p. 342 above for examples of this type of pathogenic literality.

⁷⁹ Cf. Breuer and Freud, *Studies on Hysteria*, GW 1:85/SE 2:6.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ Cf. Freud, “The Dynamics of Transference,” SA 11:168/SE 12:108.

⁸² Cf. Freud, “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through,” SA 11:214/SE 12:155.

pathogenic material and the person who it has infected/haunted?⁸³ Or, vis-à-vis Freud's later reliance on the difference between "repeating" and "remembering," what exactly is it about "remembering" that renders a therapeutic effect? As we saw last chapter, his attempts to answer this question only yielded an unexpected return to the possible power of hypnotic suggestion and inchoate references to the power of intellectual consideration. In contrast to such literality, we have clarified the conceptual confusions that perpetuate this temptation by insisting that identification and transference always remain unconscious and involuntary.

Instead, my proposal is that the most decisive therapeutic avenue that the intellectual powers have on this front can be explained as the gradual effect of an overflow of rational affections to the identifying appetite that are elicited, *in the midst of a transference act*, by intelligent insights that have as their "generic object," so to speak, the impossible and fantastical ideality intrinsic to transference affections (e.g. loves, hates, desires, aversions, anger, pains, and/or pleasures). To be sure, these insights might *specifically* become associated with various, and perhaps altogether plausible, explanations for transference cycles as discernible from the pattern of one's own "life history" as sensitively recalled from memory: e.g. one is still mourning the loss of one's father, or one has internalized ideals received from your mother, or one is still traumatically haunted by an event of violence and the involuntary "self-definition" that was thereby tragically implanted. Nonetheless, the generic form of all such insights hangs, not on the "impossible quest for an absolute origin of one's transference loves," but rather in jointly grasping the patterns

⁸³ Ruth Leys presses this critique quite devastatingly vis-à-vis most of the major figures in trauma's theorization in Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy*.

of transference idealities that repeat themselves in the appetitive rhythms of our lives *and* their regressive dissonance with finite reality as we can now intelligently understand it: e.g. no parental embrace is interminable, those internalized maternal ideals are impossible to perfectly achieve and (in addition) are open to critical examination, and the violently traumatic “self-definition” received at the hands of another is always the result of the perpetrator’s own idealized grasp at power/dominion. In other words, these intelligent insights enable us to do as adults that which we could not do as infants: to grasp and accept the finitude of a reality that will not yield to the ideality of our identificatory desire or, as Kristeva puts, to “dedramatize [the] death”⁸⁴ of our fantasies when they fail to appear (again). To gradually intelligently grasp that limit of reality is to slowly become intelligible to ourselves as subject of desire(s) within a world of temporal and transitory goods (including ourselves).

However, as Kristeva is found of pointing out, to acknowledge this finitude in the “detached” abstraction of a general rational affirmation simply will not yield any therapeutic effect.⁸⁵ Rationality, by its very vertical and defensive position vis-à-vis the identifying powers, can just as easily function as a thick “mask”⁸⁶ that prevents an individual from “opening themselves up” to the transference vulnerability necessary for intelligence to truly operate as a sublimatory balm. To enter into such vulnerability is necessary because, and here we are at the crux of our proposal, it is necessary to forge a ramified

⁸⁴ Julia Kristeva, *La révolte intime: Pouvoirs et limites de la psychanalyse II* (Paris: Librairie Arthème Fayard, 2000), 59 (ET: *Intimate Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Jeanine Herman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 32).

⁸⁵ E.g. Kristeva’s narrative of treating the rational, even academic, detachment of one of her patients, Anne, in *Soleil noir*, 64-69 (*Black Sun*, 53-58).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 66 (*Black Sun*, 55).

transferential bond that incorporates the overflow of rational affections that are elicited by truly grasping ourselves as contingently-formed subjects of transferential desire. The nature of these affections usually take on a two-fold ordering according to different aspects of therapeutic insights. In one aspect, to grasp the pattern of one's transferential desire is to apprehend an intelligible truth about oneself that rightly elicits pain and sadness in the will: for the ongoing deprivation of these desires is rightly understood as a present evil to be grieved, a facet of an individual that hinders her from realizing the fullness of the pleasurable perfection for which she was created. The rational pain/sadness that ensues from this apprehension that then intensely overflows to the appetites below corresponds exactly with what psychoanalysis classically associates with *catharsis*: the "release" of a sadness/pain that *cannot* be apprehended (or named, spoken, or aesthetically signified) via the identifying powers' own natural capacities. In another crucial respect, however, this type of particular self-knowledge is a profound *good* in itself. Put differently, that which is *known* in this type of insight is a metaphysical evil, but the act of *knowing* it, and the intelligible intensive unity between knower and known that it thereby actualizes, is a good whose immanent presence often elicits pleasure and joy that similarly redounds to the lower appetites.

It is this redounding of an intelligible pleasure/joy *in the midst of a transferential act* that opens up the road of sublimation whereby the verticality of an intelligible good can therapeutically alter the trajectory of transference's habitual cycles and repetitions. It can do so because the ramified character of transferential bonds can gradually incorporate the pleasure/joy that redounded to it via the intellectual powers' such that, over time, that

which is more likely, habitually speaking, to be transferentially reawakened in the present will bear the appetitive imprint of a metaphysically higher good. Intelligence cannot under any circumstances “remove” the unmodified ideality of our most archaic and/or transferentially reinforced identificatory forms embedded in the unconscious depths of our souls. However, the intellectual powers can, via the therapeutic window opened by transference and the higher goods that the intellect can apprehend, slowly cultivate appetitive habits in the sensitive and identifying layers of the soul that increasingly exhibit, in Aquinas’s slightly laconic phrasing, “a certain habitual conformity of these powers to reason.”⁸⁷ Even if the phrasing is laconic, the reality to which it bears witness is anything but trivial. This is because this phenomenon successfully incorporates the identifying powers into the overarching teleological trajectory that we have adopted as axiomatic from Aquinas (and Aristotle): that the vertical perfection of a creature is intensively actualized, penultimately this side of God, when all the powers of the soul move in alignment with the genuine truth(s) apprehended by the intellect and delighted in by the will as that which fulfills the creature’s own goodness.

Before turning to explicitly address the continuity of this teleological trajectory when the identifying powers are placed within the ascent of desire and the *exitus-reditus* theological framework for creation so central to both Augustine and Aquinas, one final avenue of observation vis-à-vis psychoanalysis is in order. Within psychoanalysis itself (and a whole host of other parallel professional therapeutic contexts), the therapeutic effects that we have described here vis-à-vis the intellectual powers are usually limited to

⁸⁷ Aquinas, *ST I-II.56.4*.

insights that explicitly have the individual as the chief locus of therapeutic understanding, i.e. self-knowledge is the intelligible good that therapy is structured to furnish. Indeed, the entire structure of engaging in an intentional setting in which transference is elicited in such a way that the therapist will likely become caught up in the patient's transferenceal desire depends upon breaking off the therapeutic relationship at some point: this transferenceal relation must also "die" because the goal is self-understanding through analysis, not the establishment of a long-term relationship in which the therapist becomes personally implicated in as well. Put differently: formal therapy is designed such that the therapist is neither available for transferenceal having, nor is the goodness of their intimate intelligibility—embedded in the recesses of their own self-knowledge and strictly distinguishable from any didactic data that they impart to the patient—intended to be available as a means for therapeutic sublimation.

But surely this is not the case for all human relationships. For instance, one can easily imagine many different instances of human friendship in which acts of transference are not only elicited by the dependent vulnerability experienced in friendship, but also thereby make possible therapeutic effects that can be caused by the redounding of rational affections to the lower appetites based upon coming to know and love the intimate intelligibility of another person through the mutual practices of self-narration, listening, and the interpersonal bond between knower and known that thereby arises. For in and through this type of vulnerable sharing each friend, as Aristotle writes, "shows [herself] to each as loveable and is [then] trusted."⁸⁸ Here we have a kind of "therapy" that depends not on

⁸⁸ Cf. Aristotle, *EN*, VIII, 3, 1156b25-34.

apprehending knowledge of oneself, but rather in knowing and loving the intelligible goodness of another.

Even though this intersection between transference and the therapeutic effect of an intelligible good can definitely occur in any form of friendship, it is likely to be especially prominent—both promisingly and perilously—in the context of romantic/erotic relationships in which the prevalence of intense physical pleasures are added into a context already defined by dependent vulnerability. The result is the constitution of a type of relationship, as Freud so brilliantly observed, that is particularly ripe for transference (e.g. the quixotic fantasy of “falling in love”) and its quickly ramifying and ambivalent transferential affections (e.g. I love/hate/desire/am pained by you). Even though we do not have the space to expand on the insight at the moment, there is a deep theology of marriage to be developed right at this juncture. For in and through the long-term “space” of marriage the beauty of a genuinely common work, a *gemeinsamer Arbeit* to reappropriate Freud’s apt description,⁸⁹ can gradually be nurtured in which each partner has the opportunity to therapeutically clear away the fantastical mists emanating from their own inevitable transferential projections in the process of coming to know and love the real intelligible goodness of this particular person, in all their complexity and “intimate harmony,”⁹⁰ over the course of a lifetime together.

Lastly, raising the possibility of an external good having sublimatory effects upon an individual connects up with a question that an astute reader might inquire about at this juncture: does the intellectual powers’ therapeutic dominion over the identifying layer of

⁸⁹ Freud, “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through,” SA 11:215/SE 12:155.

⁹⁰ Rousselot, *L’intellectualisme*, 116 (*Intelligence*, 97).

the soul have any relevance to the egoic act itself and the sensing body with which we thereby identify as “ourselves”? Our answer to this question might run like this: if one of the decisive therapeutic routes that intelligence can forge vis-à-vis our identificatory/transferential bonds occurs in isolating the intrinsic ideality involved in our transferential desire and the painful “death” that each of them suffers given the conditions of reality, then the climax of this line of inquiry will come in grappling with the inevitable death of one’s own sensing body and therefore our egoic self-consciousness as well. In this sense, the vertical dynamic between intelligence and identification ends up raising one of the questions at the heart of Christian theology, the themes of which to which now turn: is there a higher good, something even more “general and lasting,” to hope for if our bodies, and the active ideality of our egoic identification with them, will inescapably perish as well?

b. Intensive Unities, the Imago Dei and Desire’s Unifying Ascent Back to God

For some readers it may seem odd after such a deep exegetical and constructive dive into Freud’s metapsychology that we should conclude here with an explicit return to a set of theological themes that we first encountered in Schleiermacher’s approach to self-consciousness in the Introduction and then expounded upon at length in our chapter-length readings of Augustine (Chapter 1) and Aquinas (Chapters 2 and 3) in order to integrate our account of identification, self-consciousness, and transference with that overarching theological framework. After all, for Freud himself the question of God seems to have an obvious regressive and fantastical relation to the kind of infantile dramas the decisive importance of which we have endorsed in our own way as well. As Freud famously

declared in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1929/30) regarding the supposed infantile origins of the belief in a providentially good God:

The common man cannot imagine this Providence otherwise than in the figure of an enormously exalted father. Only such a being can understand the needs of the children of men and be softened by their prayers and placated by the signs of their remorse. The whole thing is so patently infantile, so foreign to reality, that to anyone with a friendly attitude to humanity it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life.⁹¹

Given our explicit purposes for taking up and appropriating Freud, we simply do not have the space to trace in detail the logical fallacies that drive Freud (and many after him, including Kristeva) to consider this argument to be so self-evident in its persuasiveness.

Moreover the topic has been taken up by others ably and often.⁹² For our part, as we turn our attention fully to our framing theological sources one last time, what we can simply note here is that there is a strong inverted overlap between how Freud and, for instance, Augustine/Aquinas view the “God”-world relation that is of some import for how we have chosen to resource both intellectual traditions in a single constructive project. For Freud, any phylogenetic link between our infantile desires and our desire for God necessarily indicates that the latter is “foreign to reality.” For Augustine and Aquinas, on the other hand, the same observation would simply signal another unsurprising sign that the very ordering of *reality* as it truly *is*, even down to the intimate ordering of each individual’s unconscious “prehistory,” deficiently reflects the eternal nature of its Creator.

Whereas Freudians consider this proposed link between our temporal loves and the eter-

⁹¹ Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SA 9:206/SE 21:74.

⁹² E.g. Hans Küng, *Freud und die Zukunft der Religion* (Munich: Piper, 1987) (ET: *Freud and the Problem of God*, trans. Edward Quinn, The Terry Lecture Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) and Marilynne Robinson, *Absence of Mind: The Dispelling of Inwardness from the Modern Myth of the Self*, The Terry Lecture Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 77-108.

nity of divine love to be deeply suspicious, Augustinians and Thomists would find it equally suspicious—perhaps even despairingly so—if reality was not vertically ordered as a sequence of loves that have a discernible (i.e. intelligible) relation to one another. For my part, I simply find the cumulative explanatory evidence, much of which we enumerated in the first three chapters, too strong not to cast our intellectual lot, holistically considered to include the gracious apprehensions of faith, in with Augustine and Aquinas and, as a result, to continue to allow their theological framework to fruitfully guide our reading, translation, and appropriation of Freud’s anthropological insights accordingly.

When we turn back to this overarching theological framework for rendering the God-world relation in the wake of our constructive accounts of identification, self-consciousness, and transference, the immediate question that arises is a familiar one for an Augustinian or a Thomist: is there anything in God’s triune and eternal simplicity that could be considered as an eminent perfection of the identifying powers? Given identification’s place in the soul “beneath” the intelligent powers, the most promising explanatory route for answering this question is reminiscent of how Aquinas denies (relatively obviously) that there is anything literally akin to sensitive powers in God, even while affirming that creation’s sensible forms are eminently grounded in God’s essence. Thus, in creation there is a division between universal intelligible forms and their contingent actualization in enmattered (i.e. sensible) particulars that parallels the nature of human intelligence that illuminates the intelligible *species* in and through sensitively received phantasms, whereas in God there is only the supreme unity of the divine essence that is the

eminent formal cause and “active principle”⁹³ of all created things. Hence there is no “need” for senses in God for God always already knows all things—“not only in the universal, but also in the singular”⁹⁴—by simply knowing God’s own essence.

When placed within this explanatory context, what immediately becomes clear is that identification has a vertically analogous position to sensitivity vis-à-vis the *exitus-reditus* structure of creation and its correspondingly metaphysically deficient similitude to its Creator. If sensitivity furnishes the non-intelligent basis for knowing external things intelligently, then the egoic act of identification furnishes the other required non-intelligent *relata*, the pre-reflective wholeness of self-consciousness as a fourth type of intensive unity, that opens up the “space” that intelligence then vertically bridges in the higher union between knower and known. In this regard, the identifying powers are another layer (literally) of God’s providential ordering of creation into a metaphysically deficient realm governed by that which is foreign to God, strictly speaking, but nonetheless is eminently present in the *purus actus* of the divine essence, i.e. potencies and the contingent actualization of those created potencies via the mediation of forms.

More specifically, as several aspects of this chapter have already suggested, identification and identificatory forms stand between sensitive and intelligible forms as the linchpin that in the egoic act launches an individual into the highest level of desire’s unifying ascent back to God in a manner that deficiently incorporates the metaphysical/divine superiority of self-knowledge into that ascent and yet reinforces humanity’s native extroversion such that the vertical telos of desire is found, not in any act of self-

⁹³ Aquinas, *ST* I.14.11.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

reflection, but only in an extroverted union with God “face-to-face.” In other words, the pre-reflective egoic act stands in as a created similitude of God’s eternal reflective self-unity as the intensive wholeness necessary to get human intelligence “off the ground,” so to speak, and into the extroverted, self-differentiated space required for its own deficient acts of understanding. Such a division between an initial pre-reflective, but nonetheless still self-differentiated, wholeness is unnecessary—to return again to Aquinas’s hierarchy of intelligent life enumerated in Chapter 2—for either God or angelic beings because all of their intelligent knowledge really *does* come from the reflective “within:” God’s through the divine essence and angels’ through the intelligible species natively “impressed”⁹⁵ upon their minds by the Creator. In human intelligence, however, as Aquinas (via Aristotle) rightly insists *pace* Augustine (and, as we have extended the point vis-à-vis modern figures such as Kant and Fichte), there is no primal intelligent knowledge *at all* (of self, world, *or* God) always already immanent within a human individual. Instead, this lowest form of intelligence “take[s] the first beginning of its knowledge from without [*ab extrinseco*]”⁹⁶ as the active intellect “throws light”⁹⁷ on sensitive phantasms, moves the passive intellect to its acts of understanding/judgment, and thereby provides the basis on which the intellect can then pivot “inward” in reflection for the first time. As I have argued repeatedly, without identification’s egoic act, and the pre-reflective self-consciousness that is its term, none of this would be possible; “we” would only be undifferentiated fluxes of phenomenal consciousness.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, I.56.2.

⁹⁶ *SCG* 4.11.5.

⁹⁷ *ST* I.85.1.ad4.

A very similar point regarding the role of identification in creation can be articulated in something of an Augustinian/Thomist homage to some of Schleiermacher's seminal theological insights. The heights of a human existence in which self-consciousness and intelligence are simultaneously active are strictly and "absolutely dependent" upon two acts—coincident with the first two types of intensive unity—that we so often take for granted "later on," but in relation to which every self-conscious and intelligent "I" is purely *receptive*. The first, the actuality of the soul in an enmattered body "which has life potentially,"⁹⁸ accounts for our existence as a living being *simpliciter*. The second, the egoic act with which we pre-reflectively identify with that enmattered body as "me," accounts for our existence as a self-differentiated living being that has its intellectual powers unleashed vis-à-vis "everything else." Together these two acts constitute the providentially ordered instrumental causes, the divine *interior intimo meo*, of our open-ended self-conscious and intelligence existence, the contingent "*whence* of our receptive and active existence"⁹⁹ that propels us toward the divinely eternal *whence* (*exitus*) and *whither* (*reditus*) of all of creation's derivative causality. These two acts are related to one another in the created order as forging two lower-level intensive unities within an individual (*viz.* Schleiermacher's "abiding-in-self"), the first (i.e. the soul) constitutive of an individual's ontological unity and the second (i.e. the egoic act) as a self-conscious subject. Together these lower-level intensive unities furnish the necessary conditions for intelligently knowing and loving external things, reflecting upon ourselves and thus forging self-knowledge, and—finally—the highest level of intensive unity possible for a human be-

⁹⁸ Aristotle, *DA* II, 1, 412a27-28.

⁹⁹ Schleiermacher, *CG*, 13.1: §4.4, p. 38 (*CF*, 16).

ing: that which will teleologically redound to every layer of the soul in an intelligent union with God “face-to-face.” For in that most ecstatic epistemic “passing-beyond-self” a perfectly vertically aligned “abiding-in-self” will finally be actualized—i.e. made “real”—in us as the eschatological fulfillment of the *imago Dei*: “[W]e shall be like him because we shall see him as he is.”¹⁰⁰

But, we might finally reasonably ask, what about transference? When evaluated from within the principled ordering of creation, what is “good” about the mnemonic structure of transference? Why might God create a world in which the ideality and derivative ambivalence of our infantile loves/pleasures/hates/pains are unconsciously repeated and multiplied in our post-egoic lives? Moreover, what are we to make of the infantile deprivations at the heart of these primal identificatory bonds and their seeming dissonance with the intrinsic fluctuations of created reality as we continue to encounter it? To ask questions like these is inevitably to find ourselves in the knotty context of theological themes such as evil, sin, and grace that we have, as I signaled at the outset in the Introduction, for the most part bracketed in the course of our study, not for any reason of nervous avoidance or trepidation, but only for the sake of brevity and analytical clarity given the wide-range of problems already involved in tackling the anthropological riddles that we have investigated.

Nonetheless, even amidst all the times in which either our infantile deprivations are exacerbated by parental sinfulness or we sinfully consent to actions that are grounded in appetitive impulses elicited by our unconscious transferences, I still do not think that

¹⁰⁰ 1 Jn. 3.2 and Augustine, *trin.* XII.22, XIV.25, and XV.21.

we are completely at a loss for deciphering a dint of the Creator's intended goodness in including the identifying powers in the human soul. According to Aquinas, there are two types of evils evident in creation: natural and moral. Both evils find their basic definition in the "absence of the good, which is natural and due to a thing."¹⁰¹ Their difference, however, is significant for understanding the experience of different types of evil in a world made by and resembling an all-good and all-powerful God. Moral evil, which is exclusive to creatures with a will, entails that a human being who volitionally chooses an act ordered to a last end other than God thereby "becomes evil"¹⁰² herself inasmuch as she thereby habitually separates herself from her own highest good, the (divine) good itself. These instances of evil are not, strictly speaking, caused directly by God.¹⁰³ Rather, they are efficiently caused by the free-will of the agent, which is itself a good not an evil, created by God.¹⁰⁴ Natural evils, on the other hand, result from either the failure of a being's natural powers (e.g. blindness) or the inevitable contingent conflicts between the relative goodness of living beings, inanimate things, and/or other natural phenomena. God *is* the cause of this evil, but only in the sense that the participated goodness of creation is such that, unlike God, finitely good things with a secondary causality of their own can, and in fact sometimes do, fail in their divinely intended goodness¹⁰⁵ and, unlike in the eternal simplicity of the divine essence, different finite goods can, and in fact do, come into conflict with one another. In this type of evil, neither the victim of failure, nor the parties of a conflict between genuine goods, are necessarily "evil" *per se* or thereby *made* evil. How-

¹⁰¹ Aquinas, *ST* I.49.1.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, I.48.6.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, I.49.2.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, I.49.1.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, I.48.2.

ever, they may, and often in fact do, experience the pain (*poena*) of being deprived (momentarily or permanently) of a good that is natural to them. Some of Aquinas's stock examples of natural evils include: the accidental or congenital corruption of a natural power (e.g. blindness), the corruption of air (or wood) by fire, and/or the lion's killing of an ass.

For our purposes here, one of the most salient aspects of Aquinas's notion of natural evils, especially those that arise from a conflict between the relevant goods of differing beings, is that he insists that it is possible, even necessary, to vindicate the genuine *goodness* of the created order in the face of these evils on the basis of a metaphysical concept has proven to be pivotal throughout the length of our study: vertical finality.

Thus, to take one of the examples cited above, the lion's killing of the ass, while obviously an evil for the ass, nonetheless serves the *higher good* of the lion's health. Even though Aquinas most often applies this vertical finality of natural evils to visible, external conflicts between different natural beings or phenomena, there is a strong sense in which something very similar can be found in the tensions that necessarily occur between the different natural principles of operation found in each layer of the soul and a creature's derivative intentional states of pain (*dolor*) and/or sorrow (*tristitia*). Accordingly, there is a natural tension between, on the one hand, the respective, horizontal, political autonomy of these powers vis-à-vis one another and, on the other hand, their collective vertical finality in relation to intelligence. Thus, for instance, something can be a natural good for the sensitive appetite (e.g. food, drink, sex)—and produce contingent, “horizontal” affections of love/desire—and yet from the vertical perspective of the will's natural principles pertaining to the last end be judged in a particular instance to be an evil. Despite their ul-

itimate vertical *telos* of alignment with one another, under the conditions of a creation legitimately populated by finite goods that will rightly appeal to the sensitive appetite the absence of that sensitive good will register in the interim as the painful absence of a desired good. Nonetheless, that natural evil ultimately serves the higher good(s) desired by intelligence.

My argument for the created place of the identifying powers' intrinsic ideality is that their providential goodness can be found in that they seem to be necessary for developmentally structuring an intelligent form of life with a stable, *but non-intelligent*, intensive wholeness (i.e. self-consciousness) borne from apprehensive powers that nonetheless have a natural extroverted quality to them that mimics that of the external senses (on a lower level) and of the intellect (on a higher level). Could God have created a world in which human beings identified with the finite bounds of their bodies—and thus were genuinely primally egoic—from birth onward? It seems likely, at least from a theoretical standpoint.

The question, however, is what higher good might have been sacrificed in a theoretical creation such as that one. Given the entire explanatory framework developed above, the most obvious experience that would be absent from our lives under these theoretical conditions for creation would be the profoundly moving sense in which our later, post-egoic loves/pleasures are somehow enhanced, especially when moderated and directed intelligently, by the archaic traces of our infantile loves/pleasures as reawakened and multiplied under the conditions of transference. If Freud is right on this particular matter, and I think he is, without the developmental gap between the maternal body and

the solidifying of the egoic act, it would be hard to imagine either the human phenomenon of “falling in love,” along with all of its cultural, aesthetic, philosophical, and theological domains of meaning, or the vertical capacity for intelligible goods to sublimatorily incorporate and heal past bonds into a future trajectory defined by the higher pleasures/joys furnished by the intellect. Both of these significant realms of human experience and appetitive complexity/intensity depend on a natural developmental pattern through which the native extroversion of our identifying faculty, especially when combined with the lasting influence of the maternal, *choric space* with which we all first identified, assumes a primal habituation of bonds whose ideality are associated with beings who are—ontologically speaking—outside of what we later come to identify with and (even later) know as “ourselves.”

Perhaps we could even express this in another, more theological, way. The higher good that is produced in the developmental interlude between identifying with the maternal body and identifying with our own sensing bodies can be named as a kind of inverse participationism that accrues to our lives because of it. If creation itself is structured as a realm whose deficient goods derivatively participate in God’s goodness and the intelligent creatures in that realm are on an ascent of desire “back” to this Creator, then what we find in the realm of transferential desire is a kind of inverted echo of that overarching intelligent ascent. In this contingently formed drama of transferential desire, our emergence out of the maternal body gives birth to an open-ended ramification of that singular pleasure such that our present and future loves can formally participate through transference in our past, and even most archaic, loves. There is an undeniable goodness in that

inverted participationism that gives a special dignity to the maternal body, and in addition to the vocations of all parental figures, as bearing a unique similitude to the Creator's relation to creation: from this *whence* we all came to be before we even knew ourselves as ourselves.

In this regard, the ultimate dignity of the maternal body is found in that this contingent *exitus*—and the numerous desires and pleasures that flow from it—finds its true *reditus*, its most intense transferential amplification and sublimatory convergence, in the vertically eminent good of the Creator from whom its dignity is given and to whom it bears witness. For the creation of a power in the soul whose natural principles exude an ideality for a wholeness that is “always there” stands in its own way as a lower-level version of the intellectual powers' natural straining towards an intelligible good that cannot be “found here” in creation *per se*, but can be foretasted in its penultimate truths, especially those graciously given in the inward apprehensions of faith. In other words, the developmental gap between the maternal body and the dawn of the egoic act will necessarily issue forth in painful cries indicative of the horizontal absence of a good for which they were naturally created and in relation to which the finite goodness of every parental figure will inevitably fall short. In the short-term, that cry will be satisfied in the intensive wholeness of the sensing body in an act that founds the self-conscious subject. Nonetheless, that developmental gap simultaneously furnishes a cry for something extrovertedly whole that cannot be satisfied merely horizontally by the egoic self and the fragile, perishable body upon which it is founded. For in these cries, there is articulated a deficient longing for a divine eternity—for something that is “always there”—the effects of which

have always been *interiores intimis nobis* and that genuinely lies ahead as our highest good and joy: in the intensive, sublimated perfection that redounds to a resurrected body extrovertedly united to God for all of eternity. For in relation to this eternal God we are all absolutely dependently vulnerable and from this same Creator the gift of every good pleasure flows, the greatest of which is the divine essence itself.

IV. Conclusion

In this chapter I have drawn together the three constructive threads that remained. Most centrally, I have set forth a proposal regarding the origins of self-consciousness in an egoic act of identification that slowly condenses around “our” sensing bodies following the post-partum disruption of our archaic identification with the maternal body. In setting out this proposal, I also demonstrated how this theorization successfully eludes the circular pitfalls of the reflection theory, even as it accounts many of the experiential phenomena regarding the synthetic structuration of self-consciousness as seminally described by the observations of modern figures such as Kant, Fichte, Hölderlin/Novalis, and Schleiermacher, by insisting that intelligent reflection is only possible on the basis of the preceding, pre-reflective wholeness furnished by the egoic act. I then extended this proposal, secondly, in order to explain the post-egoic, post-objectal phenomena of transference and the ego-ideal as acts of the identifying faculty’s memorative power within the self-differentiated “space” opened up by the ongoing vertical relation between the egoic act and the higher operations of intelligence such as the will’s desire to know and the intellect’s apprehension of objects *qua* objects.

Lastly, I turned to integrate this proposed link between identification and the egoic act with the overarching metaphysical and theological conviction regarding the vertical finality of intelligence as that through which all the other powers of the soul can be directed to their perfection. This perfection, so I have argued, is penultimately found in the alignment of the soul's powers with reason's political and therapeutic dominion. Ultimately, however, this perfection can only be found in union with God as the climax of a drama of desire enacted through the various movements of desire/appetite that irrigate our lives with loves, desires, and pleasures (and all of their hated and painful absences and opposites). Within the penultimate course of that drama of desire, I finally situated egoic self-consciousness as a fourth type of intensive unity that, together with the primal unity of existence furnished by our soul, vertically grounds the higher intensive unities of self-knowledge and the teleological alignment of our appetites. On this basis, I also concluded that in the ultimate scope of our ascent of desire "back" to the Creator, the combination of identification's natural ideality and the habitual ramifications of our archaic fusion with the maternal body serves to propel us vertically toward our final union with a God in whom there is, quite literally, infinitely more to know and love than we could ever find by merely reflecting upon ourselves.

Conclusion

The Theological Frontiers of Identification

The aim of this dissertation has been to offer a reframed, non-reflective account of egoic self-consciousness—its origin, theological significance, and relation to fundamental human capacities such as desire and knowledge—by synthesizing the combined anthropological insights of Augustine, Aquinas, and Freud. I have just concluded by constructively arguing that self-consciousness gradually arises as we progress from identifying with our infantile bonds (e.g. the maternal body and parental imagos) to identifying with our sensing bodies as that which we later intelligently signify as “me.” Furthermore, I also situated the resulting pre-reflective wholeness within a theologically-informed typology of four different intensive unities that tie together human existence and deficiently resemble the eminence of God’s simplicity in different ways: (1) the primal unity of the soul, (2) the egoic unity of self-consciousness, (3) the epistemic unity of reflective self-knowledge, and (4) the teleological unity of vertically aligned appetites.

Given the long road we have traveled, how shall I conclude? There are a number of options that present themselves. For instance, I could offer one last summary of the overarching argument stretching from the Kant/Schleiermacher genealogy, to Augustine, to Aquinas, and then to Freud. However, that would seem slightly redundant because the summative structure of Chapter 5 already necessitated repeating all the major rhetorical moves that established its foundation. Another option might be to haphazardly try to tie up some of the open-ended questions regarding identification that I bracketed above (e.g. its relationship to non-rational animals or its metaphysical relationship to materiality) for

the sake of setting out its *prima facie* explanatory relevance vis-à-vis a number of phenomena that have rarely been integrated into a single theological anthropology (e.g. self-consciousness, the unconsciousness of infantile/regressive desire, and the therapeutic effects of intelligence). Still, any attempt at even a suggestive return to these questions would likely fail to do justice to their complexity and the detail that they require in order to address them adequately.

Instead, what I would like to do here is to note very briefly three specifically *theological* fronts on which I think the concept of identification and its corresponding forms of desire are positioned to make constructive contributions. As I referenced in the Introduction, one of the motivating impulses behind this project was an increasing frustration I experienced in witnessing the conceptual incoherence that so often arises in contemporary theological conversations when we try to make constructive theological, pastoral, and moral judgments without possessing a maximally coherent theological anthropology on which to base such reasoning and reflection. The preceding proposal has attempted to make progress in terms of the basic task of establishing such a fundamental anthropological framework. Accordingly, by outlining these three theological fronts I am looping back in order to state where I think the most clarifying derivative reasoning and judgment might take place in the future. Concisely stated, these three theological fronts are: (1) modernity's "infinite" pursuit of knowledge and its relation to the individual; (2) sexual desire's theological relationship to other goods; and (3) feminist concerns regarding how creation, salvation and gendered God-talk are analogically related.

I. Modernity's "Infinite" Pursuit of Knowledge and Its Relation to the Individual

According to a number of convincing accounts, one of the quintessential marks of modernity's emergence was what has been called the "infinitezation of the medieval cosmos."¹ Whereas the medieval cosmos was defined by a theologically-influenced and hierarchically-ordered epistemology/ontology that supposedly pinpointed the finite boundaries of knowledge, in the modern world following the Copernican revolution there occurred a shift toward affirming what Elizabeth Brient has superbly called the "extensive" and "intensive" infinity of human knowledge. Extensively, people rapidly began to consider the advancement of human knowledge as directly analogous to the newly reoriented (i.e. non-geocentric) universe: infinitely expanding in scope. Intensively, each individual quickly began to be considered as infinitely rich in themselves and thus irreducible to the universalizing assumptions of any metaphysical hierarchy (e.g. the *exitus-reditus* scheme) that affirms the epistemological primacy of all beings as originally, ontologically, and teleologically analogous to one another.

As a matter of genealogical interest, this two-fold observation goes a long way to explain Western culture's strange authoritarian mix of endless scientific/technological progress as our defining corporate narrative (i.e. extensive infinity) and the ideals of self-expression and atomistic freedom as that which guards the sacred status of each individual's uniqueness (i.e. intensive infinity). Theologically, however, there are of course good reasons to wonder about the long-term effects of this particular ideological conjunction. Most pivotally, both emphases seem to intrinsically and systematically exclude God—

¹ Brient, *The Immanence of the Infinite*, 145. Cf. Brient's collected sources, especially her dependence upon Hans Blumenberg.

and even talk *about* God—as the one in whom the corporate pursuit of knowledge and the intensive richness of each individual converge into a common *telos* and measure. The pursuit of knowledge is not *endless*, even though it is—in a different sense—*infinite*; it *ends* in the infinity of God. Nor is every individual *endlessly* unique; lest we aid and abet a debilitating loneliness in isolation from one another and the God who has always already known and loved us. Furthermore, this concern is far from simply a matter for intellectual debate. For if Augustine and Aquinas are right that all of our natural desires flourish when they are aimed at God as their last end, then we will have every reason to suspect that the impressive frenzy that results from these deeply modern cultural impulses will also end up leaving real people plagued by an “uncanny sense of homelessness and orientationlessness in the newly infinitized universe.”²

In the midst of lodging such a critique, however, identification opens up a promising space in which to meaningfully retrieve modernity’s concern for the individual’s intensive richness. It does so by naming a God-created capacity that accounts for how the most decisive contingent events/relationships/tragedies/pleasures from our lives really do end up defining us in irreducibly unique ways. Nonetheless, identification is able to integrate this concern within a theological anthropology—not to mention hopefully real communities committed to its therapeutic embodiment—that insists that such contingent richness will eventually lose its luster the more that individuals’ self-expressive monologues are allowed to fragment because of their alienation from the unifying effects of a truth that is larger than themselves. Instead, identification serves to affirm the constitutive

² Ibid., 250.

dignity of each person's story, in all of its mixed up anguish and joy, even while steadfastly maintaining that the deepest truth of all of our stories is found on a road in which the extensiveness of the universe and intensiveness of each life intersect in the eternal singularity of God.

II. Sexual Desire's Theological Relationship to Other Goods

Sex is, of course, a much vexed theme in Christian theology. This is true both throughout its history and now in many different fronts of contemporary debate. One of the main sources of vexation stems from a deep inclination in Christian theology—which can certainly be traced to Augustine's outsized influence, but also goes all the way back to Scripture—to suspect that there is something about sexual desire that particularly predisposes its impulses to carrying us away from seeking God as our highest good. In its worst variations, this inclination has resulted in the degradation of sexual desire in general, the suspicion that it has no goodness outside of simply being “controlled,” and the marginalization of countless people who dared to question the condemnation that silenced sexual impulses into the isolated shadows of shame. In its best variations, however, this inclination has structurally cultivated two questions vis-à-vis anyone trying to formulate a constructive theology of sexual desire: (1) is there something about sexual impulses that makes them “more than” simply a seemingly straightforward matter of attraction that could help explain any extra influence that sexual desire has upon the overall course of our ascent of desire? and (2) how can we formulate the created goodness of sexual desire in terms of its holistic relation to other goods and ends with which it seems to have at

least *some* horizontal and vertical connection (e.g. marriage, children, the desire to know, the desire for God)?

Theologically speaking, the decisive contribution that identification makes is that it allows us to revisit the first question armed with Freud's insights regarding the unconscious origins of many sexual impulses in a manner that nonetheless still allows us to successfully answer the second question productively.³ If it is the case that many, if not all, sexual impulses are regressively and unconsciously amplified by repetitions of identification's past ideality, then there arises a rather urgent theological/pastoral/ecclesial concern to formulate accounts of sexual desire that do not depend on the assumption that the created goods of sexual acts can easily be made transparent *by any of us* on the illusory basis of self-analysis and self-dominion alone. At least on this need to place a question mark over the cause of any contemporaneous sexual impulse, Freud and Augustine agree. Where our Augustinian/Thomist account of identification differs from Freud, however, is in its capacity to resituate this complexity of sexual desire in relation to higher goods—especially, as I have suggested above, Christian marriage understood as a kind of embodied therapy—in which the unconscious amplifications of identification find vertical ends beyond their own horizontal tendency to merely repeat themselves over and over again.

III. Feminist Concerns Regarding Creation, Salvation and Gendered God-Talk

Over the last thirty years, feminist theologians have prompted deep reflection regarding how Christian theology has perpetuated systemic misogyny by excluding any maternal metaphors in the mainlines of its gendered God-talk. In addition to drawing attention to

³ This is, of course, in contrast to Freud, who would consider the second question of no value because all of these other "goods" are ultimately and absolutely reducible to sexual desire's fantasies.

the Scriptural and historical prominence of naming God as “Father” and referring to “him” exclusively through the employment of masculine pronouns, these criticisms have also clustered around the tendency for the intellectualist analogy of God as a divine “mind” to reinforce a masculinist mind/body dualism that denigrates bodies in general and the maternal body in particular. For example, this tendency has manifested itself in doctrinal accounts of creation that have suppressed maternal analogies for creation’s emanation from God in favor of masculinist portrayals of creation as technological production⁴ and descriptions of salvation that juxtapose mind/body by stressing the need to simply “control” the body’s desires.⁵

In relation to this overall problem, the centrality that our account of identification accords to the maternal body—and the derivative/ramified desires that flow from our archaic identification with it—opens up two routes for constructive engagement that are especially promising. First, our positioning of identification in a vertical relation to both sensitivity and intelligence raises the pivotal question as to whether many of the above criticisms too quickly bypass “traditional” resources for affirming a much more positive account of the mind/body relation than has often been presented by many feminist critics.

⁴ E.g., Sallie McFague, *The Body of God: An Ecological Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 151-59.

⁵ Two of the more pointed theological versions of this feminist critique of “masculinist” reason can be found in the voices of Rosemary Radford Ruether and Catherine Keller: Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983); Catherine Keller, *From a Broken Web: Separation, Sexism, and Self* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986) and *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2003). More recently, Wendy Farley, Eugene Rogers, and Sarah Coakley have furnished theologies of desire and the gendered body that, in my judgment, move in a more balanced and nuanced direction: Eugene F. Rogers, *Sexuality and the Christian Body: Their Way into the Triune God*, *Challenges in Contemporary Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999); Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay ‘On the Trinity’* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Wendy Farley, *The Wounding and Healing of Desire: Weaving Heaven and Earth* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005).

Furthermore, there are good—even deeply pastoral—reasons to reposition the vertical preeminence of the intellect and the will as truth-apprehending and self-ordering powers that, when rightly understood, are intrinsically necessary for many of the liberative ends so central to many feminist theologies. For it is impossible to either speak truth to misogynistic violence or apply healing balm to the wounded bodies/desires of its victims without the illuminating light of the intellect and the therapeutic effects of the will.

Second, the central positioning that identification accords the maternal body as a similitude to God’s own relation to creation suggests the outline of a way to reconstrue the analogical connection between gendered God-talk and the nature of creation and salvation.⁶ To be sure, such a reconstrual begins with the rather obvious analogical affinity—that we affirmed in several ways in Chapter 5—between creation’s *exitus* from God and the contingent birth of each one of us from our mothers. For in both cases, each of these births simultaneously give rise to desires that have their origins in an impulse to return to the absolute *whence* of our lives. Even more intriguingly, however, the vertical and therapeutic role of intelligence in sublimatorily providing a vertical “way out” of identification’s horizontal repetitions is, and this point is virtually undeniable, almost classically “paternal” from a psychoanalytic perspective. For the psychoanalytic paternal-function always serves to call us “out of” the maternal/familial fusions of infancy and into the “higher/wider” realms of culture, language, and “the law.” Such a potential rapprochement might no doubt seem counter-productive and/or anxiety-producing to many feminist theologians. Nonetheless, it certainly seems worth inquiring: what if this paternal “calling

⁶ I owe the crystallization of this insight to a conversation with Jared Bangs.

out” ultimately points us toward a *reditus* with a divine maternity from whom we originally made our *exitus* and in whom the paternal/maternal-functions find their analogical eminence? For in the unity of this divine activity, creation and salvation are tied together into a single and teleologically-ordered whole.

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