

CURRENT THEOLOGY

CREATED ACTUATION BY THE UNCREATED ACT: DIFFICULTIES AND ANSWERS

When Father M. de la Taille in 1928 formulated his "new concept of the supernatural,"¹ he did so according to St. Thomas' philosophy of act and potency. Yet objections have been raised against it, both before and after its spread in English theological literature, on the score that his idea of quasi-formal causality is incompatible with Thomistic principles.² Moreover, a number of theologians who are not disinclined to accept his teaching declare themselves unable to follow him on all points.³ The opposition and the eclectic fidelity alike raise a problem. Perhaps they suggest a possibility of distinguishing between the basic intuition that inspired de la Taille's concept of grace and the supernatural, and the application he made of his formula to three supernatural realities: the Incarnation, the beatific vision, and sanctifying grace. At any rate, they invite closer inspection and reflection.

If we may believe that the new formula for grace is the least defective of all those proposed so far,⁴ then it should be rewarding to see what flaws some

¹ M. de la Taille, S.J., "Actuation créée par Acte incréé," *Recherches de science religieuse* 18 (1928) 253-68; further, "Entretien amical d'Eudoxe et de Palamède sur la grâce d'union," *Revue apologetique* 48 (1929) 5-26, 129-45; and before these, "The Schoolmen," a lecture on the Incarnation at the Cambridge Summer School of 1925, published in *The Incarnation*, ed. C. Lattey, S.J. (1925) pp. 152-89. These three essays have recently been collected and published in English by C. Vollert, S.J., *The Hypostatic Union and Created Actuation by Uncreated Act* (West Baden, 1952). Throughout this article all page references are to this edition of Vollert; the titles of the studies have been abbreviated to "Created Actuation," "Dialogue," and "Schoolmen." Earlier presentations of the ideas of de la Taille in English: W. O'Connor, "New Concept of Grace and the Supernatural," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 98 (1938) 401-13; M. J. Donnelly, S.J., "The Theory of R. P. Maurice de la Taille on the Hypostatic Union," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 2 (1941) 510-26; on the latter, cf. W. O'Connor, "The Theory of the Supernatural: A Critique of P. de la Taille," *ibid.* 3 (1942) 403-12.

² Most criticisms of de la Taille are limited to casual remarks; one resolute statement of the opposition is that of T. U. Mullaney, O.P., "The Incarnation: de la Taille vs. the Thomistic Tradition," *Thomist* 17 (1954) 1-41.

³ For example, M. Retailleau, *La sainte Trinité dans les âmes justes* (1932) pp. 92-140; Ch-V. Héris, O.P., *Bulletin thomiste* 3 (1932-33) 877-80; F. Malmberg, S.J., "Onze eenheid met den Godmensch in de kerk," *Bijdragen der Nederlandsche Jesuïeten* 5 (1942) 371 f.; *ibid.* 6 (1943-45) 51 f.; F. Bourassa, S.J., "Dom Chambat et l'habitation des Personnes divines," *Sciences ecclésiastiques* 3 (1950) 198; *idem*, "L'Inhabitation de la Trinité: A propos d'un livre récent," *ibid.* 8 (1955) 65 f.

⁴ G. Philips, "La grâce des justes de l'Ancien Testament," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 24 (1948) 45: "l'expression . . . la moins déficiente de toutes celles que nous connaissons."

have detected in it, and what are the foundations particularly of Thomistic objections against it. Without pretending or hoping to offer a satisfactory solution to all difficulties, but rather with a view to achieving a deeper insight into this theory of the supernatural, we propose to review in as irenic an atmosphere as possible⁵ the main objections raised against de la Taille's concept of created actuation by the uncreated Act. The review does not intend to be exhaustive, nor need it to be so, even if that were possible, since many objections of detail are merely consequences of more fundamental differences. Nor do we intend it primarily as an *apologia pro de la Taille*; it is rather an effort towards a better understanding of his way of expressing the fundamental mystery of our Christian religion, that of our supernatural vocation.

DE LA TAILLE'S BASIC INTUITION⁶

The intuition basic to de la Taille's new concept of the supernatural is that the supernatural is essentially the self-gift of God to His spiritual creatures, the created gifts of grace being secondary and the necessary link of the creature with the uncreated Grace. As shown recently by Karl Rahner in connection with our sanctifying grace, this is the perspective of Scripture and patristic tradition, while the Scholastic conception takes rather the reverse standpoint: its emphasis is on the created gifts, and the indwelling of the uncreated Gift is considered as their necessary concomitant.⁷ De la Taille expressed his view of the supernatural reality in the happy if paradoxical formula which is well known today. He formulated the idea of God's self-gift in purely metaphysical concepts, as created actuation by the uncreated Act. The persuasive force of this concept—new only, its author says,

⁵ After de la Taille's own example in the "Dialogue" (p. 76), which was a friendly answer to the difficulties raised on the occasion of his article in the *Recherches*: "We shall never come to an understanding." "So much the better, my dear friend; for perhaps we shall have the pleasure of discussing the question again some time."

⁶ This presentation aims at proposing the theory with a view to the objections that have been made against it. We suppose as known the main terms and phrases of de la Taille and draw attention to such as have given rise to difficulties.

⁷ K. Rahner, S.J., "Zur scholastischen Begrifflichkeit der ungeschaffenen Gnade," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 63 (1939) 137-57, reprinted in his *Schriften zur Theologie* 1 (1954) 347-75, especially 348-53. Rahner, whose ideas coincide remarkably with those of de la Taille, was unaware of the latter's study on created actuation by uncreated Act at the time of his writing; cf. *Schriften* 1, 369, note 1. Cf. also M. J. Donnelly, S.J., "The Inhabitation of the Holy Spirit: A Solution according to de la Taille," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 8 (1947) 445-70, especially 463. For an opinion antedating both Rahner and Donnelly, see M. J. Scheeben, *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik* 3, § 169; on Scheeben, cf. M. J. Donnelly, S.J., "The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit according to M. J. Scheeben," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 7 (1946) 244-80.

in its formulation⁸—is that it harmonizes with the three key realities of the present supernatural economy which we know from revelation: Incarnation, sanctifying grace, beatific vision. In each of these the uncreated Act actuates the creature by a created actuation. Two questions then arise: What is meant by this created actuation by the uncreated Act? How do the three manners in which it actually takes place differ and cohere among themselves?

To grasp de la Taille's general idea we must ask what he means by actuation and by created actuation, and how he conceives the link between created actuation and the uncreated Act, or why and how the uncreated Act communicates Himself, by self-donation, in a created actuation.

Actuation means the self-communication of an act to a subjective potency. Actuation does not pertain to efficient causality, though it supposes an agent who effects the communication of the act. It does not formally mean, in de la Taille's mind, to make real or to actualize—though this is perhaps the more common use of the term.⁹ This pertains rather to efficient causality; such actualization goes with actuation, which means that an act unites itself as such to a potency—and this pertains to formal and intrinsic causality. By act is meant here an existing reality, being or (perfecting) principle of being.¹⁰

In the order of nature an independently existing being cannot communicate or give itself as act to a potency in the sense of intrinsic formal causality, because it is never a pure act but a composite of act and potency. Only a form or determining principle of being can, in the order of creation, communicate itself by actuation to a potency, which is then called matter or, in the case of accidental forms, subject or material cause. Such actuation is information, which means that the act here depends on the potency to which it gives itself; the act or form not only gives but also in a way receives (not a formal perfection, but the support of the subject).

Actuation can have a twofold meaning:¹¹ either active, on the side of the act that actuates, meaning therefore actuating; or passive, on the side of the potency that is actuated, meaning then being actuated. In the formula of

⁸ Palamedes considers himself "to be no more than a plagiarist" from St. Thomas and his interpreters ("Dialogue," p. 76).

⁹ On "actuate" in St. Thomas, cf. Schütz, *Thomas-Lexikon* (1895) s.v. (one reference to *Pot.*, q. 4, a. 2, ad 10m, meaning "verwirklichen"); in the Index of the Leonine edition (Rome, 1948), "actuate" is not listed in the "index rerum" or the "index elementorum." In Deferrari *et al.*, *A Lexicon to St. Thomas* (Washington, D.C., 1948) s.v., "actuo" is said to mean "to activate, realize, put in a state of reality," with reference to *Pot.*, q. 4, a. 2, ad 10m ("non actuatur intellectum quantum ad esse").

¹⁰ "Created Actuation," p. 29; compare "Schoolmen," pp. 22 f.

¹¹ Cf. "Dialogue," p. 64; in "Created Actuation" the distinction remained implicit.

de la Taille actuation is taken in the passive sense; a potency is being actuated by the uncreated Act.

In its active sense actuation can be one and the same thing as the act: the reality of the act coincides with the reality of the actuation when the act does not and cannot exist except as actuating a potency, as is the case with the soul of an animal. But when the act can exist without in fact actuating a potency, as the human soul for example, then act and actuation are not one and the same thing.¹² This latter case will evidently apply also to the uncreated Act.

When an act is also the form of a potency, actuation is information: the act or form receives (in the sense just explained) while giving. But actuation as such is not information; only such actuation as is not pure actuation but is mixed with receptivity or dependence on the potency is information. If there is an act that can actuate a potency without being dependent on it, one that can give itself without receiving—not even a support from the potency—then this actuation will not be information; it can at most be called quasi-information, which expression means that actuation pertains to formal causality but is not the self-gift of an act that is a form in the proper sense of the term. Actually no such pure actuation is found in the self-communication to a potency of created acts. All such acts are forms, and their actuation is information.¹³

It is only the pure Act that can actuate without informing, because He is absolutely free and independent of any potency, incapable of receiving in any way. But such self-communication of the pure Act does not belong to the natural order. In the order of creation,¹⁴ God as efficient cause gives, as it were, the creatures to themselves; but no self-gift of His is necessary for creatures to be what they are. And their relation of dependence on their Creator as efficient cause of being, for all its being immediate or without any

¹² "Created Actuation," p. 39.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 29. Apparently, de la Taille does not use the phrase "quasi-information" or "quasi-form" (perhaps in view of the divine *esse*, which in the hypostatic union is an Act in the existential order); Rahner does (cf. his *Schriften* 1, 358). A consequence of the difference between actuation and information is that, while the latter results in a new composite of two principles (a *tertium quid*), the former does not, and "this is the reason why the operation following on this actuation is not an operation common to the two principles that are joined together, namely potency and Act, but is exclusively an operation of the potency joined to the actuation" ("Created Actuation," p. 32).

¹⁴ De la Taille did not develop this contrast between divine efficient causality and actuation. It is inserted here with a view to forestall the difficulty that arises from the immediacy of the relation of creative dependence; this is only in the line of efficient causality.

intermediary efficient causality, does not pertain to formal causality. Efficient causality as such does not in the first place say union of cause and effect but rather distinction and separation.¹⁵ Actuation, on the other hand, of its very notion means union, or unity of distinct realities as such. It is only in the order of grace that God gives Himself to His creatures.¹⁶ And it is from revelation that we know the fact of this divine self-communication.

What is meant by created actuation? This refers, as hinted already, to the actuation considered passively in the creature that is actuated, or to which as to a potency the Act gives Himself.

If we consider actuation by the uncreated Act on the side of God or in its active aspect, then we must say that it does not mean any new reality in God, who is changeless simplicity. Yet, if the actuation is to be real and not a mere extrinsic denomination or a word, then it must entail some reality that does not exist save for this actuation. Since this new reality cannot be found in God, it must of necessity be in the creature that is actuated. And so the actuation by the uncreated Act, taken in a passive sense, designates in the creature a new reality or quality that is distinct from the pure Act—a reality, therefore, that is finite or created.¹⁷ This is an enrichment of the creature, resulting from its union with the pure Act and at the same time constituting the reality of this union.

Created actuation in the formula of de la Taille expresses, therefore, the passive change or gain that results in the creature from God's self-gift and is the real foundation of its union with God. Without it, that self-gift could not be real. Created actuation expresses both the intrinsicalness of God's self-gift, which actually and intrinsically affects the creature, and God's transcendency, since He remains altogether unaffected by this gift of Himself.

The reason, then, why God cannot unite Himself to a creature as its Act except by a created actuation is because this giving of Himself cannot be real without a change or new reality in the creature; otherwise, since there cannot be any change or newness in God, His self-donation would mean nothing at all.

But then this created actuation, enrichment and perfection of the creature, being something new, is produced by way of efficient causality.¹⁸ This means

¹⁵ It says union only in so far as union is presupposed in distinction. If, in a given instance, efficient causality entails permanent union of dependence, then this is due rather to the particular feature of this causality; such is the case of God's efficiency in creation, in which there is union of dependence of the effect on Him because He is cause of being and not only of becoming.

¹⁶ "Created Actuation," p. 17.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁸ *Loc. cit.*

that actuation by the pure Act always presupposes or entails efficient causality. God as efficient cause produces the created actuation that links the creature to Himself as actuating Act. Actuation, therefore, in the sense of self-donation of the Act, cannot stand by itself in isolation; moreover, every formal causality also supposes an agent who efficiently produces the union of matter and form or who produces the composite of matter and form. In the case of God's self-donation to the creature, the pure Act is, under different aspects, both efficiently producing the created actuation and uniting Himself as Act to the creature—while in every natural actuation or information the agent that produces the information is distinct from the form that is communicated. The self-donation of the uncreated Act cannot be real unless there be a real link of the creature with God; and this link, being distinct from God, and *ad extra* or "created," must be produced by God's efficient causality.¹⁹

With regard to the self-communication of the uncreated Act, or the actuation proper considered actively, the created actuation is, in the creature, both last disposition and effect;²⁰ and so the efficient causality entailed is logically both prior and posterior to the actuation. The uncreated Act, by communicating Himself, disposes the creature to union with Himself: the quasi-form brings about the last disposition to its "reception." But this disposition is itself, by way of quasi-material causality, the cause of the union with the uncreated Act. This reciprocal priority and causality is a well-known facet of Thomistic philosophy and theology.

But what is important to note is that the created actuation is not an intermediary link between God and the creature.²¹ Nothing stands between the uncreated Act and the creature He actuates: the union is immediate in the order of formal causality, though the Act is not form but only quasi-form. The created actuation is the reality of that union; it is the foundation of the relation of union of the creature with God; it is what makes the union real on the side of the creature (on the part of the uncreated Act, the relation of union with the creature is evidently only a relation of reason).

Yet, as indicated, God is not the form of the creature; He cannot be, of course. It is the created actuation, perfection or enrichment of the creature, that as a form or a perfection inheres in the creature.²² Though produced

¹⁹ This efficient causality of God producing the created actuation is not creation, which, properly speaking, produces substances; and it is different from natural divine efficiency, even of accidental perfections, because it is essentially dependent on the self-communication by quasi-formal causality of the uncreated Act Himself.

²⁰ "Created Actuation," p. 37.

²¹ Cf. "Dialogue," pp. 47 ff.

²² "Created Actuation," pp. 30, 32.

by God's efficient causality, this perfection is supernatural, not because and to the extent that it is so produced, but because it is of its essence a link of immediate union with God, actuating Act or quasi-form of the creature.²³ And it is such a link of its very essence, because the reason for its being produced by divine efficient causality is to give reality to the creature's union with the uncreated Act. It is because of this relative aspect, because of its being necessarily and indivisibly foundation of a real union with God as actuating Act, that a finite or created reality can be absolutely supernatural, surpassing every exigency, desert, or power of any possible creature.

Although distinct and different from the uncreated Act, yet "nothing resembles the uncreated Act more than its created communication."²⁴ It is a supernatural likeness to God; it assimilates the creature to God and makes it deiform. This is not surprising, since the created actuation, of its essence, is nothing else than the last disposition or adaptation to the uncreated Act—or, seen in another perspective, it is His effect that of necessity bears a similarity with Him.

Actuation by uncreated Act supposes a potency that is actuated, or to which the Act communicates Himself.²⁵ It supposes that the creature be in potency to the uncreated Act. Since this self-gift of the pure Act is of the supernatural order, the potency that "receives" Him is a potency to the supernatural. This is commonly called the obediential potency by which a creature is and remains open to the action of its Creator.²⁶

Scholastic theologians generally consider this potency with reference to God's efficient causality by which He produces the created supernatural perfection that is grace.²⁷ In de la Taille's view the obediential potency is related to the uncreated Act who gives Himself to the creature. The two conceptions are not opposed but complementary. The created supernatural perfection or created actuation and the uncreated Act who communicates Himself cannot be added up; they are not two things; the first is the foundation of the relation of union with the second, it is what makes the union real in the creature. By saying that a creature is in obediential potency with regard to the created supernatural gift, one expresses exactly the same thing as by saying that it is in obediential potency to the uncreated Act.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 40, and cf. p. 41.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 37: "the potency will not be natural with respect to the Act, but will be obediential"; p. 38: "It [the communication of the uncreated Act] always presupposes a subject, a natural potency, in regard to which it is supernatural."

²⁷ The supernatural reality is commonly said to be drawn from the obediential potency of the creature ("educi de potentia obedienciali creaturae"), which means to say that it is produced by God in the creature as in the subject that supports the supernatural reality—"gratia supponit naturam." It cannot be produced except in such a subject.

What is it, then, that in the spiritual creature is thus in potency to "receive" the uncreated Act? According to the different subjects of the created actuation in the creature, there are different supernatural realities, different manners in which the uncreated Act communicates Himself.

THREEFOLD APPLICATION OF THE CONCEPT

From revelation we know three manners of God's self-donation to men: the Incarnation, sanctifying grace, the beatific vision. In each of these there is a created actuation by the uncreated Act. For each of these we must state briefly what it is that is actuated by the uncreated Act, what is the reality of the created actuation, what particular union with God results from, or gives rise to, the created actuation. We follow the order of historical realization and ontological dependence between the three: the Incarnation is the source of all sanctifying grace, and this leads to the beatific vision. This order is the inverse of de la Taille's, which is one of ascending difficulty in explaining.²⁸

Hypostatic Union

The hypostatic union, in which the humanity of Christ is assumed by the Word in such manner that the one Person of the Son subsists in two distinct natures, divine and human, is a case of "substantial" actuation by the uncreated Act. The Word evidently does not inform; He merely actuates the human nature, and this nature has no material causality in regard to the divine Person. The Word gives Himself to the human nature as Act to a potency by a created actuation which is, in the humanity of Christ, the ontological foundation of its relation of union with the Word—a relation that is real on the side of the humanity and only of reason in the Word. This is a self-communication of the Word in the substantial order: "the humanity has a community of substantial act of existence with the Word."²⁹

What is it that in the humanity of Christ is thus actuated by the uncreated Act? It is the human nature, complete in itself as nature (body, soul, potencies), which is immediately united to the Word in such manner that it participates the uncreated existence or Act of the Word. That humanity has no proper existence of its own; its potency to exist is actuated, not by a proportionate connatural act of existence, but by the uncreated existence of the Word.³⁰

²⁸ At the time of his writing, when de la Taille was proposing his new idea for the first time in a brief synthesis, this order was pedagogically the more apt. Today we may suppose that his idea is sufficiently well known and give the synthesis of the supernatural order according to its objective sequence and dependence.

²⁹ "Created Actuation," pp. 34 f.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36, note 9, and "Dialogue," p. 73.

Accordingly, the actuation or quasi-formal causality is between the Word as uncreated Act of existence and the human nature as potency to existence. The union is effected, by way of efficient causality, by the Trinity as One. But the relation of union terminates only in the Person of the Word.³¹ It is inasmuch as the divine *esse* is that of the Person of the Word that it communicates itself to the human nature.

The created actuation of the human nature by the Act or *esse* of the Word, considered passively in that human nature, is a "created" reality distinct from the Word. It is the foundation of its real relation of union with the Word, that which gives reality to that union. Is this a form, change, amelioration of that humanity? Not in the line of essence; nothing is changed or added to that human nature;³² but in the line of existence it marks the unique way in which that humanity exists, namely, by the existence of the Word. The divine efficient causality which produces the hypostatic union and in this very act causes that human nature to exist, goes together with a self-donation of the Word to that nature, or the assumption of that nature by the Word, and the result is that this nature exists by the existence of the Word, not by its own connatural existence. But since this self-donation can entail no change in the Word, its reality lies in the human nature He assumes: a created actuation, distinct from the uncreated Act, and called grace of union.³³

Is this created actuation a created existence or *esse*? Yes, but not as an act, only as an actuation or created participation of the uncreated *esse* of the Word.³⁴ It has a twofold result: a negative one, in the sense that it excludes from the human nature of Christ a connatural act of existence; a positive one, by which it really unites that nature with the Word as its uncreated Act—union here meaning existence in the Word, participation of the existence of the Word. Though self-communication of an Act of existence, yet it is not by way of efficient causality only, but by way of quasi-formal causality or by communication of an act or by actuation that the hypostatic union gives existence to Christ's human nature. This twofold divine causality is mutually compenetrating. In so far as the created actuation is

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³² Yet, "that created grace of union [is] . . . the most sublime, the most august, the most divine likeness of the divinity . . . as a true and substantial communication of natural sonship" ("Created Actuation," p. 41). Sonship, however, as such, is not an "essential" perfection, but a relation.

³³ "Created Actuation," p. 35; "Dialogue," pp. 42-46: "Is the Grace of Union Created or Uncreated?"

³⁴ "Created Actuation," p. 40; "Dialogue," pp. 73 f.

produced, it refers to divine efficient causality; in so far as it unites to the Word, it refers to communication of the Act or to quasi-formal causality.

The relation of union of which this created actuation or finite participation of the *esse* of the Word is the foundation is the existence of the human nature in the Word or its real assumption by the Person of the Word. He alone, and not the three Persons who efficiently produce that created actuation, terminates this relation,³⁵ which on His side is only a relation of reason.

Why is this so, and how can this created actuation or created grace of union be the foundation of a union with the second Person only? Evidently, the inner reason of this mystery escapes us. But revelation teaches that only the Word was made flesh. The reason for this exclusiveness of the Incarnation is not that the Word produces the grace of union by efficient causality (for this He does in common with the two other Persons), but that He and He alone gives Himself to that human nature to be its Act of existence and its personality.³⁶ In the unity of His Person He unites the human nature and the divine, both of these natures existing in Him by His uncreated *esse*, Act of the divine nature by identity of *esse* and essence, actuation of the human nature by created participation of that *esse*. It is because Incarnation means, besides the divine efficient causality, an actuation or communication of the uncreated Act or *esse*, that it can terminate in one only of the Three Persons.

Sanctifying Grace

A second case of created actuation by the uncreated Act, which in the present economy of grace has its source in the Incarnation, is habitual or sanctifying grace. De la Taille has not expounded the connection of our sanctifying grace with Christ's grace of union; only in Christ Himself has he shown why His grace of union of necessity entails habitual grace, namely, because besides its divinization or sanctification as principle of being by the grace of union, His human nature needs to be sanctified as remote principle of operation by habitual grace.³⁷ Fr. Malmberg has further studied this connection. In his mind, substantial union, which is identical with the substance of Christ's human nature, of necessity entails a change in that nature,

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35. Must we point out here that Christ's concrete human nature—body, soul, potencies—derives its reality from, and includes in its concept, the existence that gives it to be? They are body, soul, and potencies only through being actuated by that existence, the existence of the Word.

³⁷ "Dialogue," pp. 75 ff.: "What is the Purpose of Habitual Grace If the Grace of Union is Present?"

which is accidental or habitual grace. The grace of union, then, cannot be understood fully without habitual grace, and without this grace in its fullness; for our sanctifying grace is only a sharing in that of Christ. Our sanctifying grace, therefore, no less than that of Christ but only because it is a participation of His, is of its essence related to the Incarnation.³⁸ But it lies outside our present scope to develop further this ontological unity of the order of Incarnation.

Sanctifying grace is, de la Taille says, a created actuation by the uncreated Act. How does it differ from that of Christ's grace of union?

In sanctifying grace the uncreated Act gives Himself to the soul. He sanctifies and by so doing also produces by way of efficient causality a change or amelioration of the soul. The Act is communicated in a created actuation. What is it in the soul that is actuated by the uncreated Act and thus changed? It is the "essence of the soul, already existing on its own account and living its own life, that presently finds itself united and henceforth wedded to the divine essence and associated with divine life, or recipient of the divine nature."³⁹

It is the very essence of the soul, not any of its potencies, that is actuated by the uncreated Act. This essence must, therefore, be in obediential potency to the uncreated Act. How can it be so, when the soul "already exists on its own account and lives its own life"? De la Taille did not ask or answer the question except indirectly when he gave the reason for habitual grace in Christ. A created nature, he says, is both passive potency for existence and a radical active potency for operations.⁴⁰ In the case of our soul, its potency for existence is actuated by its own existence; its radical active potency for operation is an obediential potency for a supernatural perfection (sanctifying grace) which "not only has the entire Trinity as its cause, but orients and unites the soul to the entire Trinity, as object of knowledge and fruition."⁴¹ Sanctifying grace, therefore, is a "union of essence with essence,"⁴² the divine essence being the Act (not the form, only the quasi-form) of the essence of the soul as potency for operation and conferring on it the radical power of sharing in the divine life by knowledge and love.

The radical power for supernatural operations is precisely the new reality that is produced in the sanctified soul. It is a transfiguration of the very

³⁸ Malmberg, *art. cit.* supra n. 3, especially 5, 371 f., and 6, 247 ff., 258 ff.

³⁹ "Created Actuation," p. 33, and cf. p. 32.

⁴⁰ "Dialogue," p. 76.

⁴¹ *Loc. cit.* Cf. F. de Lanversin, S.J., "Le concept de présence et quelques-unes de ses applications théologiques," *Recherches de science religieuse* 23 (1933) 74, note 3.

⁴² "Created Actuation," p. 33.

essence of the soul, assimilation to the divine essence—a quality that informs the essence of the soul as its subject. It is both disposition to and effect of the soul's union with the uncreated Act. It is at once a perfection of the soul and the foundation of its union with God.⁴³ Under the first aspect, it refers to divine efficient causality; under the second, it expresses, taken passively, the quasi-material causality of its union with the uncreated Act, the soul's quasi-form.

This created actuation of the essence of the soul is not of the substantial order; it is not the existence of the soul (as Christ's grace of union is the "created existence" of His human nature), since the soul has an existence of its own. It must therefore be accidental.⁴⁴ It is not, however, a new potency or proximate principle of operation, but only a radical power of operation. Theologians generally call it an entitative habit. As the foundation of a relation, it is the principle of an accidental union with the uncreated Act, not a substantial union.

This accidental union with the uncreated Act is called indwelling of God in us. "By grace He dwells in the essence of the just man."⁴⁵ Between this indwelling and the created actuation there exists a mutual causality; the indwelling is the reason and, through the efficient causality that goes with it, the cause of sanctifying grace; and grace in its turn is the last disposition or adaptation of the soul to the indwelling.

Today we cannot evade asking of this relation of union with the indwelling God whether it terminates at one of the three divine Persons, or at the Three as one or as distinct. De la Taille did not discuss the point. He only says, of the habitual grace of Christ, that it "not only has the entire Trinity as its cause, but orientates and unites the soul to the entire Trinity, as object of knowledge and fruition."⁴⁶ This certainly excludes a particular relation to one only of the divine Persons. Whether it means relation to the entire Trinity as such or to the Persons as distinct among themselves, may not be clear at once. What is worth noting is that this actuation or quasi-information is said to be the foundation of the relation of union with the Trinity as object of knowledge and fruition. The radical power of supernatural operation, therefore, conferred on the soul by its being actuated in its essence by the entire Trinity, is a principle of union with the Trinity as object of knowledge and love. We have here, no doubt, two aspects, the ontological and the intentional, of one reality; the two do not exclude, they

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁴⁵ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁶ "Dialogue," p. 76.

rather call for each other.⁴⁷ As for distinct relations to the Trinity as such, we should say they are the same in both of these aspects.

Beatific Vision

The full flowering of the life of grace, towards which we move through charity or the exercise of the community of life between the soul and God that is grace, is the beatific vision. There "we shall see God just as He is." This again is a case, and in a way the least cryptic or mysterious, of created actuation by uncreated Act. Because for us knowledge is less wrapped in darkness than the essence of the soul, the mystery of God's self-donation in the vision of Him face to face more easily reveals its characteristics.

In the vision of God, the uncreated Act, subsistent Truth, uncreated species, unites Himself to the intelligence of the blessed by self-communication in a created actuation. God as Truth is the act of the intellect, potency of knowledge.⁴⁸ Here it is not the essence of the soul, whether as potency to existence (as in the Incarnation) or as radical power for operation (as in sanctifying grace), that is actuated. It is the cognitive faculty of the soul which, anteriorly to the vital act of vision by an anteriority of nature, is united to God as its uncreated Act, not however as its form but only as its quasi-form.

This supposes that the human intellect is in an obediential potency to the reception and vision of the subsistent Truth, of the pure Act of truth. That the vision of God is beyond any created intellect's natural power is St. Thomas' constant teaching, and pertains to the faith. In the vision God gives Himself as the uncreated Act of this obediential potency.⁴⁹

He cannot do so, however, without changing, bettering, adapting, disposing the intellect. His self-donation necessarily goes together with an efficient causality that produces the created actuation: the infused adaptation of the intellect, which is a quality, a perfection, and constitutes the objective foundation and reality of its relation of union with the uncreated Truth.

This created actuation, which again is both disposition for and effect of God's self-donation, is the light of glory.⁵⁰ It is a disposition for both the Act and the operation,⁵¹ at the same time change of the potency and union of the potency with the Act. It is a quality or form of the intellect—actua-

⁴⁷ This suggests that there is no opposition between the concept of indwelling explained by quasi-formal causality and the Thomistic explanation by objective presence in knowledge and love.

⁴⁸ "Created Actuation," p. 30.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

tion—which of its essence is a link with the uncreated Act. As a form it informs the intellect on which it is dependent as on its material cause or subject. As the foundation of the relation of union it gives reality to the union that is beatifying.

This union is the immediate juncture of the intelligence with the uncreated species, the uncreated act of Truth—immediate because the light of glory is not an intermediary between intellect and Truth but that which gives reality to the intellect's union with the subsistent Truth.⁵² On the part of God, this union with the beatified intellect is a relation of reason. On the part of the intellect it is real.

The vision, therefore, is not a union of a nature with the Act of existence (hypostatic union) or of essence with Essence (sanctifying grace), but of intellective potency with its Object, God giving Himself as Act to the potency. The union is, under different aspects, both prior and posterior to the operation that is the vision; it is principle of the act of vision as the Act has the function of impressed species, and it is its result as the Act is its object or expressed species; these are two moments of reason in one indivisible reality.

The union is beatifying, because in it the blessed attain and enjoy their last supernatural End, infinite Truth and Perfection.

We should ask the question whether there are any other applications of de la Taille's concept of the supernatural besides the three he made himself, as exposed above. He said, in fact, that "everything that is connected with it [sanctifying grace] as a disposition, whether proximate or remote, whether habitual or actual, will likewise be supernatural." And he suggested that these gifts also somehow verify the concept when he wrote: "that which invests these effects of God with the quality of a supernatural work is the relationship of union found to be implied in them, either formally or at least by way of reduction."⁵³ Even when these gifts do not entail the divine indwelling, they are, by way of reduction at least, a created actuation by the uncreated Act.

Accordingly, the extension made by W. O'Connor of de la Taille's concept to actual grace⁵⁴ may well not be against the mind of the author of the theory. Nor would it then go against it to apply his formula to the habitual gifts of grace, those which supernaturalize our potencies, especially faith, hope, and charity, and go with sanctifying grace or even, in the case of faith and hope, exist without it. But this point need not detain us here.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁵⁴ O'Connor, "New Concept of Grace and the Supernatural," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 98 (1938) 411-13.

OBJECTIONS AND THEIR SOURCES

The difficulties made against de la Taille's new concept of the supernatural seem to spring mainly from two sources. First, from a difference in approach to the study of the order of grace: he starts from the self-donation of the uncreated Grace, to come then to the communication of the created gifts of grace; his objectors generally follow the reverse order.⁵⁵ Secondly, and as a consequence of the first difference, from a fidelity to St. Thomas and to Thomistic tradition which de la Taille would no doubt have called too "material," to the detriment of "formal" fidelity, clinging too much to the letter at the expense of the spirit of Thomism; for he claims that his explanation is not unfaithful to St. Thomas' teaching.

Actually, as will appear presently from the review of these objections, neither St. Thomas himself nor his traditional followers were fully and explicitly aware of the basic intuition that inspires de la Taille's theory: the priority, as it were, in our elevation to the supernatural order of uncreated Grace over created grace. St. Thomas in particular knows full well that grace in us is a link of the divine indwelling, that created grace is inseparable from God's self-gift;⁵⁶ yet his commentators cannot but agree to the obvious fact that he has not made the synthesis of his teaching on the missions of the divine Persons with that on grace, or even on the Incarnation and the beatific vision, as explicit as we should wish it today. Nor does he, in the study of grace for example, insist much on the uncreated Grace, though he is fully aware of its connection with created sanctifying grace. It is no doubt this difference in approach to the study of the supernatural that led de la Taille to explicitate the implications of St. Thomas' teaching, to draw attention to aspects that remained more or less overlooked. In doing so, he may go beyond the explicit teaching of the Common Doctor; he may even use a concept or term in a formal meaning never perhaps used before, as seems to be the case with the central concept of his theory, that of actuation in the sense of self-donation of an act to a potency in the order of formal causality and not in that of efficient causality;⁵⁷ even then he need not be, or be said to be, unfaithful to Thomistic spirit and principles. There may be differences of opinion as to the extent to which Thomism can be freer and still be a true following of St. Thomas. At any rate, an extension of, or different approach to, the problems studied by St. Thomas, necessitated by an evolu-

⁵⁵ Cf. *supra* n. 7.

⁵⁶ Cf. Malmberg, "Onze eenheid met den Godmensch in de kerk," *Bijdragen der Nederlandsche Jezuïeten* 6 (1943-45) 50.

⁵⁷ Cf. *supra* n. 9.

tion in their very problematic, can be truly and sincerely *ad mentem sancti Thomae*.

Unless we endeavor to visualize the consequences of this difference in perspective between St. Thomas and many Thomists on the one hand, and de la Taille with a number of modern or contemporary theologians on the other,⁵⁸ we run the risk of misunderstanding and condemning a teaching that in actual fact would not deserve censure in the eyes of the Angelic Doctor, less still before the tribunal of Catholic theology or Catholic doctrine. This change in approach to the study of the supernatural does not fail to raise difficulties—it is always easier and safer to follow the beaten track. Nor are we under the illusion that we shall solve the objections to everyone's satisfaction. The suggested solutions are at times inadequate. Yet, when a theologian of the stature of de la Taille proposes a theory, not just in passing but deliberately and repeatedly, and claims it to be faithful to Catholic and Thomistic tradition, it seems the proper thing to endeavor to see the reason and foundation of his claim. He may well be right, after all.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE GENERAL CONCEPT

It is apparently because he has overlooked this difference of approach to the problem of the supernatural that Fr. T. U. Mullaney was recently led to make two grave objections against the general concept of the supernatural proposed by de la Taille. The notion of created actuation by uncreated Act, he says, denies by implication the distinction between the supernatural and the natural orders; and it rests upon a confusion between being and becoming, between formal and efficient causality.⁵⁹ Frankly, when reading and rereading de la Taille's text, one remains puzzled by these statements. How is it possible that a theory whose purpose is to safeguard the essential discontinuity of the order of nature and that of grace⁶⁰ can be misunderstood as actually achieving just the opposite of its intent? And when de la Taille repeats over and over again that it is a divine efficient causality, and not the self-communication of the Act as such, which produces the created actuation,⁶¹ how can he be said to confuse these two causalities?

Actuation as such or self-communication of an act whether as form or as quasi-form is not of the order of efficient causality, but it necessarily goes together with efficient causality, that namely of the agent who causes the

⁵⁸ Cf. Scheeben, *Dogmatik* 3, § 169; Rahner, *art. cit.* supra n. 7.

⁵⁹ Mullaney, *art. cit.* supra n. 2, p. 2 and *passim*.

⁶⁰ "Created Actuation," p. 29: "In the natural order every actuation is information."

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-37.

union of potency and act. In the case of the self-donation of the uncreated Act, it is by efficient causality, not by quasi-formal causality, that the created actuation is produced. The uncreated Act, that is, God-Trinity as one, produces by efficient causality the finite perfection as an adaptation of the potency to which He gives Himself by actuation or quasi-information. The result of this twofold, indivisibly connected causality⁶² is the created actuation or perfection with its twofold aspect: it is a quality, and as such it is produced by efficient causality; it is a link or foundation of the relation of union or reality of the union with the uncreated Act, and as such it refers to quasi-formal causality.⁶³ Even in the case of actuation by created act, e.g., the self-communication of the soul as form to the body as matter, the soul does not give being or *esse* to the body by way of efficient causality, but as a form gives reality to the matter;⁶⁴ this formal causality also of necessity goes together with the efficient causality of the agent that produces the whole being; the agent it is that *influit esse in aliud*, i.e., is efficient cause.⁶⁵

If this distinction, which is explicit in de la Taille, is borne in mind, then it would seem that Fr. Mullaney's reasoning both on the example of the soul, act actuating the body by an actuation that is distinct from the act of the soul and is its communication, and on the application of this example to the hypostatic union,⁶⁶ rests on an *ignoratio elenchi*. He is arguing not against de la Taille but against a fictitious opponent.

As to the implied denial of the distinction between the supernatural and natural orders, the critic's argument for asserting it is the following: the "created actuation" is a real form with regard to which the potency that is perfected by it exerts real material causality. But matter and form are of the same order. Nature being of the natural order, the created actuation, which is either grace of union, or sanctifying grace, or light of glory, is also natural and no longer supernatural.⁶⁷ This misreading or misunderstanding of de la Taille's text comes, it would seem, from losing sight of his approach to the study of created grace. This is different from St. Thomas'. Created grace, in his mind, is the necessary concomitant to uncreated Grace—two realities

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 37 f.

⁶³ It is this relative aspect that makes grace supernatural; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 36 f.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁶⁵ Even in the case of the Word communicating His *esse* to the human nature, His function of producing the hypostatic union, which He has in common with the whole Trinity, is distinct from His self-donation: really in the human nature itself, and by a distinction of reason in the Word; cf. "Created Actuation," pp. 35 f., note 3.

⁶⁶ Mullaney, *art. cit.* supra n. 2, pp. 7-11, 11-13.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-17, 21, 23 f.

that cannot be added up but are relative to each other. Created grace is required in the supernatural order to make man's union with God (uncreated Act) real, so that it be not only a relation of reason or an extrinsic denomination. And de la Taille explicitly states that nature is only in obediential potency to the uncreated Act, whose self-communication to man is not natural but supernatural.⁶⁸ Consequently, nature is also in obediential potency to the created actuation that gives reality to its union with the uncreated Act and has no other reason for its existence. The created actuation de la Taille calls a form that perfects nature as subject or matter, in contrast with the uncreated Act who is not a form and with regard to whom nature has no material causality. The uncreated Act is only a perfective act, term of a relation. Accordingly, Fr. Mullaney's insistence that nature is "truly" material cause of grace⁶⁹ and the conclusion he draws from it—a very grave accusation indeed—seem to be a *latius hos*. De la Taille explicitly says the opposite of what his critic claims he teaches by implication.

A third objection raised against created actuation by uncreated Act is that the concept is un-Thomistic, inconsistent with Thomistic tradition.⁷⁰ What is meant here is, no doubt, that the new idea of grace is based on a departure from St. Thomas' basic principles regarding act and potency, essence and existence, nature and grace. De la Taille himself was convinced of the opposite.⁷¹ It is very delicate to judge to what extent a teaching is Thomistic or un-Thomistic. Are there not, within St. Thomas' school, rather divergent theories on some not unimportant points of doctrine? They cannot all be Thomistic in the same degree. It is not possible here, nor would it serve any real purpose, to follow up in detail the references to St. Thomas' teaching which de la Taille invokes in support of his explanation,⁷² and over against these Fr. Mullaney's criticisms of his use of Thomist authors.⁷³ Without meaning offence to anyone, and with the sincere hope of not being misunderstood, let it be sufficient simply to state in what sense de la Taille's idea of grace can be said to be Thomistic.

The idea of created actuation by the uncreated Act is not found as such

⁶⁸ "Created Actuation," p. 37.

⁶⁹ Mullaney, *art. cit.* supra n. 2, p. 15: "*in the true meaning* of material causality"; p. 21: "*material causality in the true sense*"; the italicized phrases are additions to de la Taille's text.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷¹ "Created Actuation," pp. 31 f.; "Dialogue," p. 76.

⁷² "Created Actuation," pp. 31 f., 33, 34, etc.; especially the "Dialogue" for quotations from St. Thomas' commentators.

⁷³ Mullaney, *art. cit.* supra n. 2, pp. 27–37.

in St. Thomas or in Thomistic tradition. It is un-Thomistic in the sense that it is new. Whether its newness is only one of explicit formulation or application of St. Thomas' ideas and principles, or whether it innovates in a pejorative sense of the term, is the disputed point. Its being new in the sense that St. Thomas did not teach it in so many words is no proof that it is unfaithful to his teaching; that may not be a presumption for its fidelity, but it need not imply the opposite.

What de la Taille actually did seems to come to this. In a problematic which is different from that of St. Thomas and Thomists generally and which is commanded by the perspective in which he views the whole supernatural order—taking his start from uncreated Grace to come down to the created gifts of grace—he applies notions and principles taken from St. Thomas and Thomistic tradition and obtains results which, *prima facie* and not surprisingly, appear as new. Take his central idea of the self-gift of the uncreated Act. This was perhaps not explicitly envisaged by St. Thomas; yet his principles on act and potency are not opposed to it, while data from revelation seemed to invite to it. By distinguishing act and form, de la Taille effects an extension of the field of formal causality to comprehend a quasi-formal causality⁷⁴—which is not found in the order of nature. All information is actuation, but not all actuation is information; it may happen to be only quasi-information. The concept is perhaps new; it is not as such in St. Thomas and rarely perhaps in Thomists; is it for that reason un-Thomistic? Further, de la Taille concludes to a necessary connection of created grace with the uncreated Grace, the uncreated Act that communicates Himself to men, on Thomistic principles: the supernatural union with God cannot mean any change in God and must therefore mean a change in man.⁷⁵ He calls this change created actuation, when St. Thomas and Thomists had perhaps never done so. In his perspective of the uncreated Act, he could not escape calling the new perfection in man an actuation, and he could not help expecting to find and actually seeing it in the three key graces of the supernatural order: grace of union, sanctifying grace, light of glory. Was he mistaken in doing so? St. Thomas himself and most of his interpreters did not speak of created actuation when studying these three graces; they could not have done so, because they did not see them from the side of the uncreated Grace but rather from man's side, as our connection

⁷⁴ For St. Thomas, cf. Malmberg, *art. cit.* supra n. 56, p. 54; also Rahner, *art. cit.* supra n. 7, *Schriften* 1, 358–59, notes.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Summa contra gentes* 3, c. 53: "Si aliqua duo prius fuerint non unita et postmodum uniantur, oportet quod hoc fiat per mutationem utriusque vel alterius tantum." Cf. Malmberg, *art. cit.* supra n. 56, p. 51; W. J. Hill, O.P., *Proper Relations to the Indwelling Divine Persons* (Washington, D.C., n.d.) pp. 78 f.

with God and assimilation to Him. The case is not unlike that of two men traveling on the same road in opposite directions, one moving away from the light, the other against the light. Suppose they approach the same building from opposite sides; they see the same structure but from opposite angles—one sees it on its dark side, the other in bright light; and they may be led to call the same thing by rather different names. Accordingly, de la Taille is not unjustified in finding a confirmation of his theory in the teaching of St. Thomas and Thomists, even though they did not envisage the same supernatural reality in the same light, but rather from an opposite angle.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST APPLICATION TO HYPOSTATIC UNION

Against the application of the concept of created actuation by the uncreated Act to the hypostatic union, it has been said that it involves a confusion of form and existence. Even were one to grant that the concept may help to conceive the vision of God, in the case of the hypostatic union there is a special difficulty. What the uncreated Act here does is to give existence to the human nature of Christ, not to be its quasi-form. The reception of a form or quasi-form by the matter or the potency requires the disposition of the matter, a created actuation if you wish to call it so, but the reception of existence does not require such disposition. Essence and existence are united immediately; no disposition or formal medium is required. And so there can be no room here for a created actuation.⁷⁶

The difficulty is not unreal; its solution rests on a concept of act and actuation which may not be easy to visualize, because we spontaneously reify our concepts or suppose them to designate something of the essential order; but the difficulty is not unanswerable. We should only keep in mind that the three actuations of which de la Taille speaks are analogical—as are potency and act as well.

The concept of act, in our author's mind, extends further than form. Existence is the act of the essence as potency. Actuation can mean the self-communication of the act of existence to its potency or to an essence. Actuation by the uncreated Act as *esse*, which is the case of the hypostatic union, is the communication of the existence of the Word as an Act to the humanity of Christ as potency to existence. It is in the order of formal causality, not in the sense that the *esse* is conceived or supposed to act as a form or quasi-form adding something in the essential order to the human nature, but only in the sense that it is an act that unites itself to a potency by self-donation of the *esse* of the Word to the human nature.⁷⁷ This actuation goes together with

⁷⁶ Hill, *Proper Relations*, pp. 79–81.

⁷⁷ "Created Actuation," p. 34.

a divine efficient causality that produces the union: the Trinity as one cause effects the Incarnation of the Word.⁷⁸ And since this union is real, not in the Word in whom it is a mere relation of reason but at least in the human nature, it of necessity entails a real change in that nature. This change, however, is not of the essential but of the existential order, because the Word communicates His existence or personality, not its essence as such. The new reality in the human nature is the created actuation, which is the real communication to the humanity of the *esse* of the Word and replaces as it were the connatural existence of that human nature. To produce this created actuation is the same thing as to effect the union of the human nature with the Word in one Person or to cause that human nature to exist by the *esse* of the Word. The Word here has a twofold distinct causality, distinct really in its effect in the human nature and by a distinction of reason in the Word Himself: He gives Himself, His *esse* or personality, by actuation or self-donation; and as one of the Trinity, by one efficient causality in common with the other Persons, He produces the created actuation.⁷⁹ The latter is not an existence in the sense of an act, but only in the sense of an actuation, of a finite participation of the infinite Act.⁸⁰ It is not a quality or form of the essential order; it is a reality of the existential order, that by which the humanity of Christ exists in or is united with the Word.⁸¹

This manner of conceiving the hypostatic union does not suppose that the human nature of Christ exists before its assumption by the Word. Its creation and its assumption are two inseparable elements of the divine efficient causality by which the Trinity effects the Incarnation or causes the humanity to exist in the Word. Nor is there really any confusion of form and existence. Existence (the *esse* of the Word) and essence (the human nature) are united immediately: the created actuation is no formal medium which stands between the two; it is the foundation of the reality of that union; it is that union as real; it is the expression in the humanity of the divine efficient causality that produces the union. Moreover, even in the union of form and matter no formal medium stands between; the actuation of the matter by the form, or the self-communication of the form to the matter, is what constitutes the union, and the improvement in the matter which is produced herewith owes its existence to an efficient cause, the agent that effects the union. The difference between the two kinds of self-communication is that in the case of the hypostatic union the created actuation is in the order of

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁷⁹ *Loc. cit.* and *ibid.*, note 8.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

existence, while in the case of the vision or of grace it is in the order of essence.

Accordingly, what allows the application of the concept of created actuation by the uncreated Act to the hypostatic union is the fact that the *esse* of the Word is an Act with regard to the human nature that is in potency of existence. It is not a form or a quasi-form in the sense that its self-communication would add a formal perfection to the essence of Christ's human nature. This self-communication, produced by way of efficiency by the Trinity as one, entails of necessity a created reality in the human nature, namely, its real existence by the *esse* of the Word, a reality that is distinct from that *esse* which existed before the Incarnation.

A second objection against conceiving the hypostatic union as a created actuation by the uncreated Act is that it reduces the grace of union to something created. While St. Thomas, it is said, conceives the passive immutation of the humanity implied in the unitive action of the Trinity that efficiently causes the Incarnation, not as something distinct from the humanity but as that humanity really related to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the grace of union, if conceived as a created actuation, would be a medium formally causing the union. It would be a created medium, which apparently stands in the way of the immediacy of the union.⁸²

We need not repeat here what de la Taille himself answered to this difficulty in the *Dialogue*.⁸³ The grace of union can be said to be both created and uncreated, depending on what is meant by grace of union. If what is meant is the unity of the Person or of the *esse*, then the hypostatic union is uncreated. But if one means to designate by grace of union the real union of the humanity with the Word and particularly what makes this union real, then it is a created grace. Similarly, one can speak (de la Taille explained) of one or of two existences in Christ according to the meaning given to the term: there is only one Act of existence, the uncreated *esse* of the Word, but there is, besides this, the communication of this Act to the humanity or its actuation by the Act, and if this actuation is called existence, then there is also a created existence in Christ, distinct from the subsistent *esse* of the Word.⁸⁴

But the reason given for this objection against the grace of union as created grace calls for commentary. First of all, the created actuation, in de la Taille's mind, is not a formal medium of union, however much it may sound like it. It does not offend in any way against the immediacy of

⁸² Hill, *Proper Relations*, pp. 81-83.

⁸³ "Dialogue," pp. 42-46: "Is the Grace of Union Created or Uncreated?"

⁸⁴ "Created Actuation," p. 40.

the union, since it is only what gives reality to the union.⁸⁵ Secondly, it does not seem possible to give any objective reason for the reality of that immediate union of the humanity with the Word unless one posits a created actuation or its equivalent. There must be an objective and real foundation of that relation of union if the union is to be real. It is not sufficient to say that "ultimately . . . the foundation of the relation is this operation *ad extra* common to all three divine Persons";⁸⁶ it is only what is the effect in the humanity of that operation that can be the foundation of the relation. And the effect of that operation *ad extra*, as unitive action of the Trinity, is not, according to de la Taille, an effect of the quasi-formal causality of the Word alone; it is an effect of the efficient causality of the entire Trinity. It is necessarily something distinct from the humanity itself, namely, that which in that humanity is the objective reason why "it is without its con-natural created personality," and why "it is really related to the second Person of the Blessed Trinity."⁸⁷ If there is no such effect of that unitive action, then this would be a mere extrinsic denomination; and if there is no real objective foundation for the union of the humanity with the Word in the humanity itself, then this union would not be real. The grace of union conceived as created actuation—a reality of the existential, not of the essential order—fulfils precisely this twofold function.

A minor objection must still be pointed out; it is more a question of misunderstanding a phrase of de la Taille than a difficulty against his idea of created actuation. The created actuation, in the case of the hypostatic union, is called a substantial actuation or an actuation of the substantial order. Does this involve the contradiction which Thomistic tradition is said to see, and rightly so, in the idea of a created, supernatural, substantial reality? Does it mean that "one and the same substantial principle is and is not above the created order," or that "the supernatural enters as an intrinsic constituent, as matter or form, of the creature"?⁸⁸ It does not seem so, provided we take the meaning of the phrase which de la Taille intends. His text is clear and explicit. He calls this created actuation an actuation of the substantial order, not of an accidental order, because ("it brings the human nature into existence,) and into an existence that is not of an accidental but of a substantial order."⁸⁹ And though it is "a truly substantial adaptation and conformation to the Word," it is "not a substance nor part

⁸⁵ Cf. *supra* n. 21.

⁸⁶ Hill, *Proper Relations*, p. 81.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁸⁸ Mullaney, *art. cit.* *supra* n. 2, pp. 18 f.

⁸⁹ "Created Actuation," p. 35.

of a substance, no more than the substantial existence of creatures forms part of their substance, although it actuates that substance substantially."⁹⁰ And so it is because this created actuation is of the existential, not of the essential order, that it can be a substantial actuation. Accordingly, if understood as de la Taille intends it, the phrase or idea of a created substantial actuation (that is supernatural) does not involve a contradiction, since this actuation is not a substance or part of a substance.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST APPLICATION TO SANCTIFYING GRACE

The basic difficulty against conceiving sanctifying grace as created actuation by the uncreated Act—apart from the objections raised against the general concept stated and answered above—is that it is hard for Thomists to understand an "actuation of the substance" of the soul.⁹¹ An immediate actuation of the essence of the soul is impossible, and St. Thomas rejects it.⁹² Such communication of the Act is possible only either *secundum esse* or *secundum operari*, that is, either in the hypostatic union or in the beatific vision. Nevertheless, de la Taille said in unmistakable terms that in the case of sanctifying grace we have an immediate union of essence with Essence.⁹³ The created actuation which is sanctifying grace is the link of immediate union between the essence or substance of the soul and the divine Essence. Why, then, is this actuation or self-communication of the divine Essence, uncreated Act, to the essence of the soul said to be impossible or difficult to conceive?

The self-communication of God to the essence of the soul supposes that the soul, in its essence or substance as distinguished from its faculties, is in potency to the uncreated Act. Is it or is it not? Before endeavoring to answer the question, we should first note that a similar problem arises for all those who with St. Thomas conceive sanctifying grace as having the essence of the soul for its subject or seat.⁹⁴ This concept also supposes the essence of the soul to be in potency to the accidental perfection that is sanctifying grace. What is this potency? An obediential potency, no doubt. Is it *secundum esse* or *secundum operari*? Sanctifying grace, according to St. Thomas, is a quality,

⁹⁰ *Loc. cit.*

⁹¹ H.-F. Dondaine, O.P., "Bulletin de théologie dogmatique," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 34 (1950) 638; cf. *La Trinité 2: Somme théologique, Prima*, qq. 33-43, ed. and tr. H.-F. Dondaine, O.P. (Paris, 1946) 441.

⁹² Bourassa, *art. cit.* supra n. 3, *Sciences ecclésiastiques* 3 (1950) 198; *ibid.* 8 (1956) 66.

⁹³ "Created Actuation," p. 33; also de la Taille's "Théories mystiques," *Recherches de science religieuse* 18 (1928) 303-5.

⁹⁴ *Sum. theol.* 2/1, q. 110, a. 4.

a habitual gift, which is a sort of remote principle of supernatural operations,⁹⁵ a gift that "raises the essence of the soul to a kind of divine *esse*, that it may be apt for divine operations."⁹⁶ Accordingly, in St. Thomas' conception of sanctifying grace as a quality received in the essence of the soul with a view to fitting the soul for supernatural operations, the substance or essence of the soul must be said to be in potency to this supernatural perfection. This potency is obediential, evidently. The perfection that is its act is apparently of the order of essence, not of existence. It is a form, a quality, an accidental perfection of the substance of the soul. And it is as a capacity for operation, as a remote principle of operation, that the soul's substance is so perfected. With all this Thomists agree. And they apparently see no difficulty in admitting and conceiving this accidental supernatural perfecting of the essence of the soul, though the essence is already, as a potency for being, actuated by its own connatural existence and so constituted as a remote principle for connatural operations. Sanctifying grace, accidental perfection of this essence, gives it the basic capacity for supernatural operations. It reduces to act the soul's obediential potency for being raised to that capacity. Besides this, sanctifying grace is formally the principle of the divine indwelling; it is inseparable from the uncreated Grace which inhabits the very substance of the soul. In other words, sanctifying grace is also the foundation of the relation of union with the indwelling Trinity, and it is so of its very essence. All this is St. Thomas' teaching and is commonly accepted by Thomists.⁹⁷

Does de la Taille's concept of sanctifying grace as created actuation by the uncreated Act add anything objectively to this teaching? No doubt, as noted already, it does invert the perspective in which the connection of created grace and uncreated Grace is seen. He considers in the first place God's self-donation to the soul, and secondarily the created reality or created actuation by which that self-donation of the uncreated Act is real. Accordingly, he views the obediential potency of the soul's essence, or its aptitude for being raised to the supernatural plane, with regard to the uncreated Act, instead of considering it, as Thomists generally do, with regard to the created quality that is sanctifying grace. Does this inversion of perspective create any new difficulty which is not inherent in St. Thomas' own teaching? It would not seem so; for the obediential potency of the very essence of the soul, when actuated by the uncreated Act, receives an inherent perfection or created actuation, link with the uncreated Act; and it "receives" the un-

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, a. 2; cf. q. 114, aa. 2, 4.

⁹⁶ *In 2 Sent.*, d. 26, q. 1, a. 3, sol.

⁹⁷ Cf. *In 1 Sent.*, d. 14, q. 2, a. 1, sol. 2; *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 43, a. 2, ad 2m; Rahner, *art. cit.* supra n. 7, *Schriften* 1, 366.

created Act, obviously not as an inherent form, but as the Act terminating a relation of union. Is this not substantially the teaching of St. Thomas? The two graces, created and uncreated, which intervene in the supernaturalization of the soul's essence regard the same obediential potency, and it makes no basic difference whether one starts the consideration of this elevation of the soul from either of the two correlative graces. Consequently, there should be no greater difficulty in conceiving that the essence of the soul is actuated by the uncreated Act, the divine essence—in the sense that this Act terminates a relation of union of the soul with Him, relation which is based in the created actuation or created sanctifying grace—than in conceiving that the same essence of the soul is perfected or informed by the accidental form or perfection which is sanctifying grace. If the latter concept is acceptable, then there seems to be no reason for refusing the first as unacceptable or difficult to understand. There would be a new difficulty in de la Taille's concept if the uncreated Act were said to be the form of the soul's essence, a (substantial) form that informs another substance and not only actuates it. But, according to de la Taille, the divine essence is only the Act of the soul's essence, or its quasi-form, which means nothing more than that it terminates the relation of the soul's immediate union with the divine essence, whose real foundation is the created grace or created actuation.

What de la Taille explicates by conceiving sanctifying grace as created actuation by the uncreated Act is the necessary connection of created grace and uncreated Grace. This connection is affirmed by St. Thomas and the Thomists—as it is, moreover, in the very doctrine of the faith. The reason for it is not so apparent in their theology of grace. In de la Taille's view, created sanctifying grace is both adaptation or disposition to, and effect of and union with, the uncreated Act that communicates Himself to the soul, and so it is inseparable from Him. The soul in its essence is in obediential potency to the reception of the uncreated Act as terminating its relation of union with Him, because it is in potency to receive the created perfection or created grace that links it with the uncreated Act and by which it becomes apt for supernatural operations. De la Taille, no less than St. Thomas, requires this union of essence with Essence as the presupposition of supernatural operations, whether of charity in particular,⁹⁸ or of supernatural operation in general.⁹⁹ The difference between the two conceptions lies mainly, let it be said once more, in one of perspective when considering correlative realities.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ "Created Actuation," p. 33.

⁹⁹ "Dialogue," p. 76, in connection with the habitual grace in Christ.

¹⁰⁰ Accordingly, all that St. Thomas teaches of sanctifying grace as quality, form, etc., equally applies to sanctifying grace as created actuation. But in this latter conception the

If this manner of understanding de la Taille is acceptable, then there should be no need for further maneuvering to render understandable the application of his concept of created actuation by the uncreated Act to the case of sanctifying grace. He himself apparently did not see any particular difficulty in it, no doubt because there is no more difficulty in conceiving that the uncreated Act communicates Himself to the soul's essence than there is in saying with St. Thomas that sanctifying grace is a created supernatural perfection inherent in the essence of the soul, not in its faculties. The one and the other way of conceiving the supernaturalization of the soul's essence supposes the same obediential potency.

Accordingly, it is pertinent to point out after de la Taille in what respect the soul is thus in potency to be actuated. He did so in connection with Christ's habitual grace. Though actuated already as a potency to existence by the grace of union, Christ's human soul still needs to be supernaturalized as a remote principle of activity, and this precisely is the role of His habitual or sanctifying grace.¹⁰¹ After him Fr. de Lanversin applied the distinction to the sanctifying grace of every Christian; this is an actuation of his soul's essence as radical principle of (supernatural) activity, while as a potency to exist that essence is actuated already by its own connatural existence.¹⁰²

Is this distinction, however true and well founded, insufficient, and does there remain a danger of being driven to conceive this actuation of the soul's essence by the uncreated Act as some sort of hypostatic union? Fr. Malmberg made the remark and he sought for a further reason to avert that danger.¹⁰³ It is only, he says, because our finite sanctifying grace is a sharing in the absolute fulness of habitual grace such as is necessarily connected with the hypostatic union, that is, it is only because our grace is participated from the grace of Christ that it excludes anything like a hypostatic union. Were it not such a participation in the habitual grace of the Word Incarnate but an independent actuation of the soul's essence by the uncreated Act, then the actuation of the soul's essence as radical power of activity would of necessity also be an actuation of that essence as potency to existence, and this would entail some semblance of hypostatic union. This reasoning, no doubt, averts every shadow of a hypostatic union from sanctifying grace, and it allows sanctifying grace, in the present economy of grace at any rate, to bear an indirect connection with the Incarnation: Christ is the source of all grace.

relative aspect of created grace and its union with uncreated Grace is always implicitly present.

¹⁰¹ "Dialogue," p. 76 (where de la Taille quotes from his *Mysterium fidei*).

¹⁰² *Art. cit.* supra n. 41.

¹⁰³ Malmberg, *art. cit.* supra n. 56, p. 51.

Perhaps it would be possible to show, even without this dependence of our sanctifying grace on the grace of union in Christ, that the actuation of the soul's essence by the uncreated Act remains far removed from the hypostatic union. On Thomistic principles about the connection between created grace and uncreated Grace, the divine indwelling in the essence of the soul is only an accidental union of the soul with the indwelling Persons, and in no way a hypostatic union. But exactly the same should be said when sanctifying grace is conceived as created actuation by the uncreated Act, since, as explained above, this alters nothing in the Thomistic idea of grace except that it brings out its connection with the uncreated Grace.¹⁰⁴

But then there should be no need to reduce de la Taille's concept of actuation of the soul's essence to that of actuation *secundum operationem*, in the sense that the uncreated Act is considered as object of operation only.¹⁰⁵ This explanation, according to which the actuation of the soul's essence by the uncreated Act is to be understood as an objective presence by operation, is apparently commanded by the Thomistic conception of the divine indwell-

¹⁰⁴ In this connection we may note in passing in what manner the divine indwelling, conceived as self-donation of the uncreated Act to the substance of the soul, gives rise to proper relations to the divine Persons. The Act who communicates Himself is a triune reality: one supreme reality—*summa res*—that is three Persons. This self-communication gives rise, through the attendant efficient causality common to the whole Trinity, to a created actuation, effect of the one divine essence; and this actuation is the foundation of the relation of the soul's immediate union with the triune Act. It then appears that this relation of immediate union should also be called in a way "triune." The created actuation, as a reality that is produced by God as one, is one also; yet because its very nature (in contrast with that of any natural effect of God's causality) is to be a link of immediate union with the Act that is triune (rather than threefold), the relation which is real because of this created actuation is also "triune." It is one, if it is considered with regard to the one divine essence—both as principle of the efficient causality that enters into play, and as absolute Being, source of the participated being which is the created actuation as quality or perfection. It is threefold, if it is considered with regard to the three really distinct Persons, subsisting in that one essence, and terminating this immediate union of the soul with God (in the natural order there is no such immediate union). These proper relations to the distinct Persons, reverse side as it were of the one union of essence to Essence, are made real by the one created foundation produced by the efficient causality common to the three Persons. It would seem that de la Taille's concept of God's self-communication to the soul is the most direct answer to the contemporary need for conceiving the life of grace as a sharing in the trinitarian life; he himself, however, hardly hinted at this aspect of his theory; cf. his article, "Théories mystiques," *Recherches de science religieuse* 18 (1928) 304.

¹⁰⁵ Bourassa, *art. cit.* supra n. 3, *Sciences ecclésiastiques* 8 (1956) 66, and his earlier article, "Adoptive Sonship: Our Union with the Divine Persons," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 13 (1952) 309–35, especially 330 ff.

ing through grace, namely, as presence by way of knowledge and love; but it insists that intentional presence is a real presence, in the case of grace no less than in the case of the vision. We cannot and need not enter here into the discussion of the indwelling. All that is called for is a suggestion concerning this habitual knowledge and love which is the reason for the objective divine presence by grace. This is a knowledge and love *secundum habitum* in a special meaning of the phrase: not as the residue of a preceding actual knowledge and love—in the case of infants, for example, clearly no such acts can have preceded—but rather as a habitual or potential, as opposed to actual, knowledge and love. But this implies, at the very least, the presence of the principles of that knowledge and love, namely, a supernaturalization of the principles of these acts: in the first place, of their remote principle, namely, the essence of the soul through sanctifying grace, and then also of the proximate principles, the faculties, through the infused virtues. In the conception of de la Taille, this should mean that the divine indwelling rests on a habitual and accidental actuation by the uncreated Act of the soul's essence as remote principle of activity.

It is also in connection with grace as principle of activity that M. Retailleau twenty-five years ago made a thorough criticism of de la Taille's idea of sanctifying grace as created actuation by the uncreated Act.¹⁰⁶ His objection aims chiefly at the actuation of the soul by the divine essence as a vital principle of holiness and charity. This concept, he says, is in disfavor with the Council of Trent, and it is neither traditional nor Thomistic. We shall limit our comments to the root of this objection: to be a vital principle of the soul's supernatural life, the divine essence must be form of the soul in the strict sense of the term; and since this is not possible, it cannot be such a vital principle, nor can it actuate the soul's essence in the sense of de la Taille.

We should say that "vital principle," a phrase actually used by de la Taille,¹⁰⁷ is taken by the critic in a strictness of meaning which its author did not intend. De la Taille did not overlook the truth that our supernatural life is only a participation of the divine life in a created manner, by a created actuation. The sanctified soul "is" its own sanctifying grace which is inherent in it, but it "is" not the uncreated Grace; it is only united to the uncreated Act, which is not its form but only its quasi-form or act terminating a relation of union. And the very nature of created grace is to unite the soul with the uncreated Act in order to enable it to share in the divine life.

Perhaps the happiest way of formulating this union of the soul with the divine essence in view of vital supernatural activity is that of Fr. Malmberg,

¹⁰⁶ Retailleau, *La sainte Trinité dans les âmes justes* (1932) pp. 92-140.

¹⁰⁷ "Created Actuation," pp. 32, 41: "a sort of vital principle."

who calls sanctifying grace as created actuation a "radical instrumental virtuality,"¹⁰⁸ that is, a power of activity derived from the chief Cause, the uncreated Act, as a permanent perfection. This idea shows the permanent dependence of the sanctified soul, in view of its sharing in the divine life or of its supernatural vital activity, on its chief Cause, the uncreated Act, who, we may say after St. Thomas, is "the life of the soul *per modum moventis, et non per modum formalis principii*,"¹⁰⁹ that is, the uncreated Act is not a vital principle in the strict sense of the term but only in an analogical sense. And the idea of instrumental power to vital activity also expresses well how the sharing in the divine life, for all its being an immanent activity and proceeding from the soul perfected by the form of created grace, is yet in actual uninterrupted dependence on the uncreated Act, who, to the extent that He "moves" the soul to its immanent activity, can be called a vital principle. And so there is no need to conceive the uncreated Act as a form of the soul in the strict sense of the word (which He cannot be, evidently). Consequently, there is no question of a twofold form of sanctity—a theory in disfavor with Trent—in the particular sense of inherent justice plus imputed justice of Christ. Nor is there any ground for the difficulties consequent on conceiving the uncreated Act as the form of the soul, not only as its Act or quasi-form, particularly the difficulty of a substantial deification of the just soul¹¹⁰—this would follow only were the divine essence form of the soul in the strict sense; but it has been sufficiently stressed that the uncreated Act actuates without informing.

The reason for requiring the actuation by the uncreated Act at the principle of the supernatural life is the necessary proportion between principle and object of the supernatural vital activity. If the uncreated Act is to be the immediate object of the activity of the participated divine life, then He must also be at the principle of that activity; He must actuate the radical principle of that vital activity, the essence of the soul.

This conception shows the meaning of the "participated" divine life, such as is the life of grace in the just. This life is of its nature "instrumental" or dependent activity; it is divine by virtue of the instrumental virtuality or the power received from the chief Cause, not by virtue of what the soul has of its own; and this virtuality is nothing else than the created grace, which is both perfection of the soul's essence and foundation of its union with God as Act, a union which now appears as being identically its dependence for its supernatural vital activity as instrument on the chief Cause, the uncreated

¹⁰⁸ Malmberg, *art. cit.* supra n. 56, pp. 55 ff.

¹⁰⁹ *De caritate*, a. 1, ad 1m (quoted by Retailleau, *op. cit.* supra n. 106, pp. 116 ff.).

¹¹⁰ Retailleau, *op. cit.* supra n. 106, pp. 118, 127 ff.

Act. The uncreated Act, when thus actuating the soul, does not, properly speaking, "act" as a created chief cause acts with its instrument; the supernatural vital activity is of the soul only. But this vital activity would not be supernatural, did it not proceed from the soul united to the divine essence as its Act or quasi-form. In this analogical sense of instrumental causality it is right to call sanctifying grace, as created actuation by the uncreated Act, a radical instrumental power.

Two more objections of minor importance must be pointed out. First, it is said that, according to de la Taille, the change in the soul or its amelioration, its union with the subsistent Act, which is sanctifying grace, implies a confusion about motion.¹¹¹ We need not repeat here what was said above about the distinction between the quasi-formal and efficient causality which intervene in the actuation by the uncreated Act. Must we say that the production of sanctifying grace, in de la Taille's mind, is not a motion in the strict sense (would he have overlooked the common teaching that the infusion of sanctifying grace is instantaneous?) but, as his critic says in connection with the *lumen gloriae*, a change in the broad sense, according to "a manner of speaking to which we are bound by our poverty of vocabulary"?¹¹²

Another objection is that de la Taille's idea, "first God indwelling, then grace as the communication from Him, or the created actuation which, as it were, spontaneously arises" (produced, of course, by God's efficient causality), is "an inversion" of "traditional theology and most notably of Thomistic tradition."¹¹³ We have already spoken at length of the change in perspective in the Thomistic and de la Taille's approach to our problem. We need only ask: where is the harm? Does not de la Taille explicitly state the mutual priority and causality that plays between divine indwelling and production of created grace, the latter being, he says, both disposition to and effect of the former?¹¹⁴ This concept of mutual causality and priority is familiar to Thomists.

One further remark. It may be misleading to speak of sanctifying grace as the "quasi-formal effect of the Act-God."¹¹⁵ Grace as a created reality is not an effect of the self-communication of the uncreated Act formally as actuation or quasi-information taken by itself, but of the efficient causality that of necessity goes with it and produces the created grace. And just as a

¹¹¹ Mullaney, *art. cit.* supra n. 2, pp. 21 f.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 22 f.

¹¹⁴ "Created Actuation," p. 37; cf. "Théories mystiques," *Recherches de science religieuse* 18 (1928) 304: "La réalité créée de la grâce sanctifiante qui résulte du Don incrédé et y dispose."

¹¹⁵ Mullaney, *art. cit.* supra n. 2, p. 22.

formal effect of any form is not a new objective reality distinct from that form but only an aspect of that perfection which helps us better to penetrate and understand it, so also a quasi-formal effect in the line of formal causality does not designate any reality distinct from the quasi-form; only in so far as efficiency comes in can a new reality arise.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST APPLICATION TO BEATIFIC VISION

No substantially new difficulties, not already touched above, seem to have been made against de la Taille's explanation of the beatific vision. In fact, as hinted already, this is the least mysterious of the three mysteries which his new concept of the supernatural should help to present in a rationally acceptable manner. We need not come back on the two main objections which Fr. Mullaney raised against the general concept of created actuation by the uncreated Act and which he repeats in connection with the beatific vision. The *lumen gloriae*, because it informs its subject and is dependent on it as on its material cause would involve a strict proportion between itself and the intellect, as between form and matter, and so cease to be supernatural.¹¹⁶ It is only by giving to the phrases, subject and material cause, a strictness of meaning which other explicit statements of their author exclude, and by overlooking the immediate context in which he uses them—the created actuation inheres in the subject which it perfects, in opposition to the uncreated Act, which does not inhere but only terminates a relation of union—that the critic can draw a perilous *latius hos* from his premises. Still less need we insist on the so-called confusion between formal and efficient causality which de la Taille is said to have made.¹¹⁷ The *lumen gloriae* as a created reality is an "effect produced by God"; but because it is not only produced after the manner of every natural effect of God, first Cause, but in a particular way, namely, as the disposition to or foundation of the real relation of union of the intellect with the uncreated Truth, it gives reality to the quasi-information of the intellect by the uncreated Act, as the real foundation of any relation constitutes the relation as real. The self-donation of God to the beatified intellect is in the order of formal causality, intellect and uncreated Act being united as potency and Act. But that union is effected by divine efficiency producing the *lumen gloriae*.¹¹⁸

A last objection raised by Fr. Mullaney against de la Taille's analysis of the beatific vision is not really new. We leave aside what he says about the "*lumen* as efficiently proceeding from the very presence to the mind of the

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹¹⁷ *Loc. cit.*

¹¹⁸ "Created Actuation," p. 36.

beatifying object."¹¹⁹ De la Taille rather explicitly distinguishes between the self-donation of the Act and the divine causality that produces an effect. Apparently, the misunderstanding arises partly from overlooking the precise meaning of actuation as used by de la Taille, namely, in the sense of self-giving of the act, not in the sense of realizing or actualizing by way of efficiency. As to the second part of Fr. Mullaney's objection, is there any difficulty in saying or conceiving that "the vision causes the *lumen*, which *lumen* principles the vision"?¹²⁰ There is no doubt that in de la Taille's conception the *lumen* is both disposition to and effect of the reception of the Act in the intellect; such is his way of conceiving the "ontology of the vision," as K. Rahner called it.¹²¹ But frankly, where is the difficulty, for a Thomist who is familiar with the idea of mutual priority and causality, between two constituents of one simultaneous happening or one complex reality? The vision causes the *lumen* as the last disposition to itself—every form introduces in its subject the last disposition to its own reception; and the *lumen* principles the vision as last disposition to it—every last disposition to a new form or perfection necessitates the introduction of the form. Here again de la Taille would insist that the *lumen* is no intermediary between the intellect and God, but is that which gives reality to the relation of union of the intellect and the Act. Nor is the divine species received in the intellect as a form properly speaking—it does not in any way inhere in the intellect—but only as the Act that terminates the relation of union.

These lengthy comments on the criticisms raised against de la Taille's concept of the supernatural may, it is hoped, help readers to a better insight into a theory which, in the eyes of not a few contemporary theologians, is apt to give a deeper understanding of supernatural realities. They will not, we expect, remove all difficulties. De la Taille's manner of expressing the supernatural may be new and as such not be found in St. Thomas. But this newness should be no reason for failing to essay a better grasp of our supernatural elevation. And we do believe that, if the difference in approach between de la Taille and St. Thomas is borne in mind, it is possible to see how this new concept of the supernatural does not offend against traditional Thomistic and Scholastic principles, let alone swerve from Catholic doctrine. At any rate, numerous are they who have been helped by it towards a deeper appreciation of God's self-donation to His creatures, which is the basic mystery of the supernatural.

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¹¹⁹ Mullaney, *art. cit.* supra n. 2, p. 25.

¹²⁰ *Loc. cit.*

¹²¹ Rahner, *art. cit.* supra n. 7, *Schriften* 1, 354 f.