ST. THOMAS' THEORY OF OPERATION

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IN working out St. Thomas' thought on habitual grace as operative and co-operative, it was possible to avoid speculative issues by appealing to parallel passages which sufficiently explained the analogies involved and the ideas employed. Unfortunately, now that we have to deal with actual grace, so simple a procedure can no longer be followed. St. Thomas found the idea of the habit ready made, but he had to think out for himself the analogy of nature that corresponds to actual grace; and, if in this long labor he did not draw upon absolutely all the resources of the Arabic, Platonist, and Aristotelian philosophies at his disposal, at least his interpreters have shown a marked proclivity to exploit the potentialities which he neglected. Accordingly, to discover and follow him in his thought on actual grace, we must attain some familiarity with his historical and speculative background; in particular we must have precise ideas, and precisely his ideas, on the nature of operation, premotion, application, the certitude of providence, universal instrumentality, and the analogy of operation; we must also know the development of his thought on the idea of freedom, the various ways in which at different times he conceived God to move the will, the meaning of his central theorem of divine transcendence and, to some extent, its relation to subsequent theories. Such questions naturally divide into two sections: those that deal with the theory of operation in a general way; those that refer specifically to the will and to divine control over the will. The former are the concern of the present article; the latter will be discussed in an article to follow.

I. THE IDEA OF CAUSATION

Causation is the common feature of both operation and co-operation; its nature is of fundamental importance in this in-

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quiry. But if St. Thomas certainly disagreed with Hume, who held causation to be purely subjective, it is less clear what object he considered to constitute the objective reference of the proposition, A causes B. Was causation for him something in between A and B? Or was it simply the relation of dependence of B on A? Or was it some entity added to A as actually causing? Let us take each of these three views in turn.

As to the first view, that causation is in between cause and effect, St. Thomas constantly and explicitly denied it in the case of divine activity. Avicennist biology had distinguished between a *virtus motiva imperans* and a *virtus motiva efficiens*, and St. Albert had drawn a parallel distinction between the *virtus divina increata* and a *virtus divina creata*.[1] But St. Thomas, while he used the biological opinion at least in his *Sentences*,[2] always asserted that God was His own virtue,[3] operated without any mediating virtue,[4] indeed operated *immediatione virtutis*.[5] The matter is less clear with regard to causation exercised by creatures. Even in later works there is a variety of expressions which appear to imply something in between agent and recipient.[6] Still, it should seem that these are but modes of expression or of conception; for what is in between, if it is something, must be either substance or accident; but causation as such can hardly be another substance; and if it were an accident, it would have to be either the miracle of an accident without a subject, or else, what St. Thomas denied,[7] an accident in transit from one subject to another.

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[1] The *virtus motiva efficiens* was perhaps a gaseous substance; it was "infusa in nervis et musculis, contrahens chorda et ligamenta coniuncta membris, aut relaxans et extendens" (St. Albert, *De Creaturis*, 2, q. 68 [Borgnet, 35, 360]). On the *virtus divina creata*, see Sauer, *Die theologische Lehre der materiellen Welt beim heiligen Albert dem Grossen* (Würzburg, 1935), pp. 133 ff.   [2] 2 dist. 18, q. 2, a. 3, ad 1m.

[3] *De Causis*, lect. 20 (Viv., 26, 555); 1 dist. 37, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4m; *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7, c.
[4] 2 dist. 15, q. 3, a. 1 ad 3m.

[5] This idea, based on the parallel of the real and logical orders (*Met.*, 2, lect. 2), was derived from the *Posterior Analytics* (1 dist. 37, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4m; *C. Gent.*, 3, 70) probably from Aristotle's discussion of many middle terms for one conclusion (*Post. Anal.*, 2, lect. 19, §6). It is opposed to *immediatio suppositi* (*De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7); it applies to any principal cause (1 dist. 12, q. 1, a. 3, ad 4m; 1 dist. 37, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4m; *Phys.*, 2, lect. 6, §10); it is closely related to the analogy of operation treated below.

[6] E.g., 1a, q. 45, a. 3; ad 2m; *Phys.*, 3, lect. 4, §11; lect. 5, §9.   [7] *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7, c.

On the second view, causation is simply the relation of dependence in the effect with respect to the cause. This is the Aristotelian position presented in the *Physics* and explained by St. Thomas as follows. First of all, this analysis prescinded from the case of the mover being moved accidentally; for instance, a terrestrial body acts through contact and cannot touch without being touched; but this does not prove that the cause as cause undergoes change but only that the terrestrial body as cause does so.[8] In the second place, it was argued that the emergence of a motion or change involved the actuation of both the active potency of the cause and the passive potency of the effect.[9] In the third place, the thesis was stated: one and the same act actuates both potencies,[10] and this act is the motion produced in the object moved.[11] Fourthly, there came the ground of this position: if causation, *actio*, were an entity inherent in the cause, then, since it is a motion, it would follow either that "omne movens movetur," or else that motion inheres in a subject without the subject being moved; but the latter is contradictory and the former would preclude the idea of an immovable mover; therefore, causation is not inherent in the cause but in the effect.[12] Finally, the objective difference between action and passion was explained: both are really identical with the motion of the recipient; they differ notionally, for action is this motion as from the cause, *motus huius ut ab hoc,*

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[8]*Phys.*, 3, lect. 4, §6.

[9]*Ibid.*, §9. Definitions of active and passive potency: *Met.*, 9, lect. 1.

[10]"Oportet unum actum esse utriusque, scilicet moventis et moti; idem enim est quod est a movente ut a causa agente et quod est in moto ut in patiente et recipiente" (*Phys.*, 3, lect. 4, §9).

[11]*Ibid.*, §7.

[12]*Ibid.*, lect. 5, §4. Just as motion in the cause as such implies an infinite series of movers with no first mover, so motion in the self-determining agent as agent involves an infinite regress of the self-determination. For a series of rediscoveries of this particular case of the Aristotelian argument, see De San, *De Deo Uno* (Louvain, 1894), I, 181 sqq.; Hentrich, *Gregor von Valencia und der Molinismus* (Innsbruck, 1928); Santo Santoro, *Valenzianismo o Delfinismo? Estratto della Miscellanea Francescana*, XXXVIII, f. 1, 2 (Roma, 1938); Agostino Trape, *Il concorso divino nel pensiero di Egidio Romano* (unpublished thesis 615, Pont. Univ. Greg., Roma, 1938). For the difficulties of the opposite viewpoint when it comes to reconciling divine liberty with divine immutability, see Bannez, *Scholastica Commentaria* (Romae, 1584), p. 380; he had not thought of R. P. Garrigou-Lagrange's "clair-obscur" but was in exactly the same fix.

while passion is the same motion as inhering in the effect, *motus huius ut in hoc*.[13]

It would seem that St. Thomas accepted this Aristotelian analysis as true and did not merely study it as a detached and indifferent commentator. Not only did he repeat the same exposition in commenting the parallel passage in the *Metaphysics*,[14] while in the *De Anima* he argued that sound and hearing, instances of action and passion, must be one and the same reality, else every mover would also be moved;[15] but in works that are entirely his own the same view at least occasionally turns up. In the *Summa* the definition of actual grace appeals to the third book of the *Physics* for the doctrine that "actus moventis in moto est motus";[16] the analysis of the idea of creation was based upon the Aristotelian identification of action and passion with motion;[17] and the fact that this identification involved no confusion of action with passion was adduced to solve the objection against the Blessed Trinity, namely, that since the divine Persons were identical with the divine substance they must be identical with one another.[18] Still, this is not the whole story. In his *Sentences* St. Thomas brushed aside the notion that action and passion were one and the same reality,[19] while in the parallel passage in the *Summa* a solution is found that does not compromise the authority of Aristotle.[20] This difference involves a changed attitude, prior to the *Pars Prima* and perhaps posterior to the *De Potentia*,[21] raising the question of the initial Thomist view.

In earlier works, then, the theory of causation seems to have been worked out on the analogy of the familiar distinction between the *esse ad* and the *esse in* of the relation. In action one has to distinguish between a formal content described as *ut ab agente* or *ut ab agente in aliud procedens*, and, on the other hand, a reality, substantial or accidental, termed the *principium actionis* or the *causa actionis* or even loosely *actio*. This terminology is to be found no less in the *Sentences* than in the *De*

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[13]*Phys.*, 3, lect. 5, §13.
[14]*Met.*, 11, lect. 9, §§2308-13.
[15]*De Anima*, 3, lect. 2.
[16]1a 2ae, q. 110, a. 2.
[17]1a, q. 45, a. 2, c.
[18]1a, q. 28, a. 3, ad 1m.
[19]2 dist. 40, q. 1, a. 4, ad 1m.
[20]1a 2ae, q. 20, a. 6, c., ad 2m.
[21]Cf. *De Pot.*, q. 3, aa. 2, 3; q. 8, a. 2, ad 7m, with 1a, q. 45, aa. 2, 3; q. 28, a. 3, ad 1m.

Potentia,[22] but, at least in the latter work, it also is quite clear that the formal content is no more than a notional entity. In the two passages quoted below the reader will be able to verify the following six propositions: (A) Change from rest to activity is change in an improper and metaphorical sense; (B) the reverse change from activity to rest takes place without any real change in the agent; (C) when the agent is acting there is no composition of agent and action; (D) what remains unchanged is the *principium* or *causa actionis*; (E) what comes and goes without changing the agent is the formal content, *ut ab agente;* (F) the analysis holds even in the case of a created agent such as fire:

Et ita relatio est aliquid inhaerens, licet non ex hoc ipso quod est relatio; sicut et actio ex hoc quod est actio, consideratur ut ab agente; in quantum vero est accidens, consideratur ut in subiecto agente. Et ideo nihil prohibet quod esse desinat huiusmodi accidens (B) sine mutatione eius in quo est; quia sua ratio non perficitur prout est in ipso subiecto sed prout transit in aliud; quo sublato, ratio huius accidentis tollitur (E) quidem quantum ad actum sed manet (D) quantum ad causam; sicut et subtracta materia, tollitur calefactio (F) licet maneat calefactionis causa.[23]

Quod autem attribuitur alicui ut ab eo in aliud procedens non facit compositionem cum eo, sicut (C) nec actio cum agente . . .; sine aliqua mutatione eius quod ad aliud refertur, potest relatio desinere ex sola mutatione alterius; sicut etiam de actione patet (B) quod non est motus secundum actionem nisi metaphorice et improprie sicut (A) exiens de otio in actum mutari dicimus; quod non esset si relatio vel actio significaret aliquid in subiecto manens.[24]

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[22]1 dist. 32, q. 1, a. 1; *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 9, ad 7m. St. Thomas used the term "actio," to denote: (A) the principle from which the action proceeds; (B) the effect which the action produces; (C) various aspects of the producing. In the sense (A), *actio* is the divine substance, the accidental act in the creature (*actio media intrinseca*), the accidental act in the medium (*actio media extrinseca*). In the sense (B), *actio* means perfection in general, *energeia*, or perfection produced in the agent, immanent action, or perfection produced in a subject distinct from the agent, transient action. In the sense (C), called by some later writers "transient action," we have the notional relation of the cause to the effect, the formal content of *ut ab agente*, the causal influxus of *actus ab agente in aliud*, and the Aristotelian real relation of the motion in the effect to the cause. While St. Thomas always treats each issue with sufficient clarity for the matter in hand, the ambiguity of his terminology results in mystification for a reader who demands a complete explanation of everything in each isolated text. Particularly complex is the account of the distinction between immanent and transient action (*Met.*, 9, lect. 8, §§1864, f.; 1 dist. 40, q. 1, a. 1, ad 1m; *De Ver.*, q. 8, a. 6; *C. Gent.*, 2, 1; 1a, q. 18, a. 3, ad 1m; q. 54, aa. 1, 2). Other sources of difficulty are the *actio media* from the *Liber de Causis* (cf. *supra*, notes 3-5, and 1a, q. 54, a. 1, ad 3m.), the tendency to use the term "operatio," to denote motion in the broad sense (cf. *infra*, note 81), and above all the issue treated in the text.   [23]*De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 9, ad 7m.   [24]*Ibid.*, a. 8, c.

If our interpretation of these passages is correct, then at least in the *De Potentia* St. Thomas had arrived at a theory of action that was in essential agreement with Aristotle's. Evidently the two terminologies differ completely: on the Aristotelian view action is a relation of dependence in the effect; on the Thomist view action is a formal content attributed to the cause as causing. But these differences only serve to emphasize the fundamental identity of the two positions: both philosophers keenly realized that causation must not be thought to involve any real change in the cause as cause; Aristotle, because he conceived action as a motion, placed it in the effect; St. Thomas, who conceived it simply as a formal content, was able to place it in the cause; but though they proceed by different routes, both arrive at the same goal, namely, that the objective difference between *posse agere* and *actu agere* is attained without any change emerging in the cause as such.[25]

This real agreement in terminological difference solves the problem of St. Thomas' thought on causation. John of St. Thomas listed the passages in which action is placed, now in the agent and now in the recipient; from this he drew the conclusion that action, according to St. Thomas, was inchoatively in the agent and perfectively in the recipient.[26] But in point of fact St. Thomas simply had two ways of saying that action involved no new entity in the agent; and so far was he from differing really from Aristotle that he seems to have been quite unaware of even his terminological departure from the Aristotelian position.[27] This latter fact not only solves Cajetan's

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[25]To later scholastics this seemed impossible a priori: they held that "Peter not acting" must be really different from "Peter acting." They refused to believe that St. Thomas could disagree with them on this; in fact, St. Thomas disagreed. See *Phys.*, 3, lect. 5, §15, on the analogy of the predicaments; cf. 1 dist. 32, q. 1, a. 1; *De Pot.*, q. 7, a. 8. For an apriorist attempt to eliminate this analogy, see F. X. Maquart, *Rev. de Phil.*, XXXII (1925), 142.   [26]*Phil. Nat.*, 1a, q. 14, a. 4 (ed. Reiser; I, 309 ff.)

[27]The Aristotelian *actio* of *Phys.*, 3, lect. 5, §13 is identical with the Thomist *passio* of *ibid.*, §15. In 1a, q. 45, a. 2 it is laid down that action and passion are identical with motion; also that in creation there is no motion. From this it follows that in creation there is neither action nor passion; but that is not the conclusion St. Thomas draws. Why? Because after citing Aristotle St. Thomas immediately reverts to his own different terms: his action is a relation of the agent to the patient; his passion is a relation of the patient to the agent; these relations do not disappear when the motion is eliminated.

perplexity over the apparent divergence between the *Commentary on the Physics* and regular Thomist usage but also provides the most conclusive evidence against such a position as Billuart's that a real distinction in the agent between *potentia agendi* and *ipsa actio* is one of the pillars of Thomist thought.[28]

II. Causation in Time

The previous section examined causation in the purely general case. It raised the question: What is the necessary and sufficient condition of the objective truth of the proposition, A causes B? We have now to take a further step. A cause that acts in time, acts at a given time, neither sooner nor later. We have to discover why it does not act sooner and what makes it act when it does.

This issue lies at the very foundation of the Aristotelian cosmic system in which the intermittent motions of terrestrial natures are caused by the perpetually and uniformly gyrating spheres, while this motion in its turn is caused by the immovable mover.[29] It was because Aristotle could not conceive the immovable mover as the immediate cause of the *quandoque moventia et mota* of this earth that he invented the mediatory role of the heavens and postulated a cosmic hierarchy.[30] But if Aristotle was so preoccupied with this problem, it cannot be supposed that St. Thomas never gave it a thought or even that he treated it in some obscure or merely allusive manner. In fact, in his commentaries on Aristotle he was more explicit than Aristotle himself. He argued as follows:

A motion taking place at a given time presupposes more than the existence of mover and moved, else why did the motion not take place sooner? Obviously there must have been some inability or impediment to account for the absence of motion. With equal evidence this inability or impediment must have been removed when the motion was about to take place. It is

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[28]Cajetan, In 1m, q. 25, a. 1; Billuart, *De Gratia*, Diss. 5, a. 2, §2 (Paris, 1872; III, 130).

[29]See Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, I, Introd., pp. cxxx ff.

[30]*Phys.*, 8, lect. 13, §§8, 9; *Met.*, 12, lect. 6, §§2510 ff.; *De Gen.*, 2, text. 56.

even more evident that such removal must itself be another motion, prior to the motion in question; and though St. Thomas did not use the term, we may refer to this prior motion as a premotion. Finally, the premotion necessarily involves a premover and, if the problem of causation in time is to be solved, the premover must be distinct from the original mover and moved.[31]

This Aristotelian doctrine of premotion must be carefully distinguished from the later Bannezian doctrine. The latter postulates a premotion whenever a creature is a cause; but the Aristotelian doctrine postulates a premotion whenever a cause acts in time. Though practically the two universes of discourse coincide, for the human will is included explicitly among temporal agents,[32] it remains that there is a radical difference of approach. In the second place, the Bannezian premotion is *natura prius* and not *tempore prius.* But the Aristotelian premotion evidently is *tempore prius*: it led Aristotle to infer the eternity of the world on the ground that, since every change presupposed a prior change, there could be no first change;[33] and St. Thomas refuted this conclusion, not by substituting a premotion that was *natura prius,* but by arguing that what came first was not in the category of change but creation, and that creation, so far from taking place in time, includes the production of time itself.[34] In the third place, the Bannezian premotion is constituted by a greater actuation of the agent; it gives the created agent a special participation of the pure act of being; and it tends to identify this special participation with an anti-Aristotelian and anti-Thomist *actio in agente.* On the other hand, the Aristotelian premotion as understood by St. Thomas affects indifferently mover or moved, agent or patient; explicitly it is *vel ex parte motivi vel ex parte mobilis;*[35] and what it brings about is not some special participation of absolute being but, again explicitly, some relation, disposition, proximity that enables mover to act upon moved.[36] Finally, while the

[31]*Phys.,* 8, lect. 2, §6.   [32]*Ibid.,* §8.   [33]*Ibid.,* §6.
[34]*Ibid.,* §§18-20; *C. Gent.,* 2, 31-38.   [35]*Phys.,* 8, lect. 2, §6; cf. §8.   [36]*Ibid.,* §8.

Bannezian premotion is a metaphysical mystery, the Aristotelian is as plain as a pikestaff. On the latter view an iceberg at the Pole will not be melted by the sun; to have the motion, melting, it is necessary to change the relative positions of the sun and the iceberg; and this may be done either by sending the iceberg towards the equator or moving the sun up above the Arctic circle. Nothing could be simpler or more evident.

III. Aristotelian Premotion and Thomist Application

The question now arises: Did St. Thomas have two theories of premotion, a theory derived from Aristotle in terms of time, and another metaphysical theory to correspond to the Bannezian concept of *praedeterminatio physica?* It has been thought that his theorem of God applying each agent to its activity[37] refers to such a metaphysical doctrine, and it is our immediate concern to examine this view. We beg to note that the issue here is not whether or not St. Thomas taught physical predetermination but whether or not that was his meaning when he spoke of application.

In the first place, then, it is certain that St. Thomas once used the term, *applicare,* to refer to an Aristotelian premotion. In the *Commentary on the Metaphysics* he wrote: "quando passivum appropinquat activo in illa dispositione qua passivum potest pati et activum potest agere, necesse est quod unum patiatur et alterum agat; ut patet quando combustible *applicatur* igni."[38] Here we have the verb, *applicare;* the context deals with Aristotelian premotion, as is clear both from its content and from the parallel passage in the *Commentary on the Physics.*[39] Therefore, in at least one instance, application means Aristotelian premotion.

But this is not the sole coincidence of Thomist application and Aristotelian premotion. The latter is a condition of motion which is distinct from the existence of mover and moved; in

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[37]*C. Gent.*, 3, 67, 70; *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7; 1a, q. 105, a. 5.
[38]*Met.*, 9, lect. 4, §1818.   [39]*Phys.*, 8, lect. 2, §8.

similar fashion the former is distinct from the *collatio aut conservatio virtutis activae.*[40] Next, Aristotelian premotion holds for all agents in time, voluntary as well as natural; Thomist application proves that God operates in the operation no less of the will than of natural causes.[41] Again, Aristotelian premotion is prior in time; the examples of Thomist application lead to the same conclusion, for presumably the cook puts meat on the fire to apply the fire to cooking,[42] the woodsman swings his axe before the axe is applied to chopping,[43] the man moves his knife before the knife is applied to cutting.[44] Finally, like the Aristotelian premotion, the Thomist application seems to be *vel ex parte motivi vel ex parte mobilis*: in the examples of the knife and the axe application is by moving the mover; in the example of cooking application is by moving the moved.

In the third place, St. Thomas does not merely assert but also proves that God applies all agents to their activity. In the *Contra Gentiles* this proof consists in referring the reader back to the Aristotelian demonstration of a first mover in *Contra Gentiles* I, 13. In the *De Potentia* the proof is simply a description of the Aristotelian cosmic hierarchy: the terrestrial *alterantia alterata* are moved by the celestial *alterans non alteratum*,[45] and this successive dependence does not cease until one arrives ultimately at God; therefore, it necessarily follows that God moves and applies every agent.[46] I submit that this argument is valid only on the assumption that application is an Aristotelian premotion; nothing follows necessarily from the Aristotelian cosmic scheme except the intermittent motion that the cosmic scheme was erected to explain.

In the fourth place, Thomist application is effected by some motion.[47] But according to St. Thomas, all motion is effected

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[40] *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7.   [41] *Ibid.*   [42] *C. Gent.*, 3, 67.
[43] 1a, q. 105, a. 5.   [44] *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7.
[45] By definition, alteration is change in the *sensibilia per se* (*Phys.*, 7, lect. 4, 5); it presupposes the local motion of its cause (*Phys.*, 8, lect. 14, §3); hence the heavenly spheres, the highest cause undergoing local motion, are the *primum alterans*.
[46] *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7.   [47] *Ibid.*; and *C. Gent.*, 3, 67.

according to the divine plan, and this plan calls for a hierarchic universe in which the lowest things are moved by the middle-most and the middlemost by the highest.[48]   Not only did St. Thomas at all times clearly and explicitly affirm a mediated execution of divine providence, but he even argued that there would be no execution whatever of divine providence unless God controlled the free choices of men and of angels through whom the rest of creation was administered.[49]   This position leaves no room for the theory that God gives each agent some ultimate actuation to constitute it as here and now acting.

In the fifth place, one must observe that the Thomist cosmic system does not admit the impertinence of crucial experiments. There exists an anomalous divergence between the general and the detailed affirmations of cosmic hierarchy.   In general state-ments St. Thomas always asserted a restricted hierarchy in the field of motion and change,[50] and this logically implies that every subordinate cause receives some actuation from the im-mediately higher cause.   But when one gets down to details, one has to distinguish between the instances in which the fiction of celestial influence can be carried through plausibly and the in-stance in which it cannot and is not.   Thus, the celestial spheres cause a secondary conservation of terrestrial beings,[51] a task that is as important as it is vague when one recalls that the mixture of humors that are health to a lion would be death to a man.[52] Similarly, the spheres effect the variation of the seasons and so have a large role in generation and corruption; moreover, the lower spheres each have their special influences, which have

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[48]2 dist. 15, q. 1, a. 2; *De Ver.*, q. 5, aa. 7-10; *C. Gent.*, 3, 77-83; *De Pot.*, q. 5, aa. 8-10; 1a, q. 22, a. 3; q. 103, a. 6; q. 110, a. 1; q. 115, a. 3; and *passim.*

[49]*C. Gent.*, 3, 90.

[50]Brief description of hierarchy, *Met.*, 6, lect. 3, §§1207-9; always affirmed, see note 48 *supra*; but restricted inasmuch as God alone creates, 1 dist. 37, q. 1, a. 1; 2 dist. 1, q. 1, aa. 1-3; and alone can create, *C. Gent.*, 2, 21; 3, 66; *De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 4; 1a, q. 44, a. 2; *De Subst. Sep.*, 10; also restricted in the sense that God alone produces the soul or acts on the will interiorly, 2 dist. 15, q. 1, a. 3; *C. Gent.*, 3, 84-89; 1a, q. 115, a. 4; also restricted inasmuch as God could move corporeal things directly if he chose, 1a, q. 105, aa. 1, 2; and inasmuch as angels can and do intervene directly, 1a, q. 110, a. 1, ad 2m.

[51]1a, q. 104, a. 2.   [52]*Phys.*, 7, lect. 5, §6.

given rise to the epithets of saturnine, jovial, martial, mercurial, and the like.[53]   Finally, they have a very clearly defined role to play in the speculative embryology[54] of the age, and this gives rise to the otherwise perplexing statement that "homo generat hominem et sol."

But take the instance of the substance, fire, with its accidental form, heat, and its operation, heating.   The law of cosmic hierarchy gives us the principle: "ignis quantumvis habeat calorem perfectum non alteraret nisi per motionem corporis caelestis."[55]   Now, what further perfection or actuation does the celestial body give to indefinitely perfect heat to enable it actually to warm something else?   The matter is not left either to our fancy or to our logic, for St. Thomas treated the issue in some detail; he maintained that fire is always *determinata ad calefaciendum* but this determination presupposes the activity of higher causes.[56]   In other words, the influence of the spheres is necessary not because indefinitely perfect heat needs further actuation but because, according to the assumptions of cosmic hierarchy, a lower cause has to be a lower cause and, unless it is subordinate, then it cannot be a cause at all.   To be contrasted with this position on the action of fire is the position on the instrumental action of the seed in generation: the latter besides its natural properties and the influence it receives from the generator also has *quidam calor ex virtute corporum caelestium.*[57] In this case the motion of the spheres produces something in the moved; but in the case of fire St. Thomas had every opportunity to affirm such an effect but preferred simply to affirm the logic of the cosmic system without venturing to suggest that fire cannot burn unless the heat of the spheres is added to its own heat.[58]

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[53]*Met.*, 12, lect. 6, §2511; lect. 9, §2561.   [54]1a, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3m.

[55]1a 2ae, q. 109, a. 1.   [56]*De Pot.*, q. 5, a. 8, ad 1m; cf. *De Caelo*, 2, lect. 4, §13.

[57]1a, q. 118, a. 1, ad 3m.

[58]Indeed, what is asserted with such confidence in the *De Potentia* and the *Prima Secundae* is only a probable opinion on the authority of Simplicius in the *De Caelo*: see notes 55, 56.

Now, this anomaly of the cosmic hierarchy offers a very satisfactory explanation of the divergence among even the most studious interpreters of St. Thomas. Follow the general principles, and the fact that a mover implies a motion in the moved will lead inevitably to a position resembling the Bannezian. On the other hand, study the details, distinguish principles from evident fictions, reduce principles to a logical unity, and it is equally likely that one will attempt with Fr. Stufler to make out that God moves all things merely because he conserves them. Both procedures are equally logical and, for that very reason, both are mistaken. What St. Thomas held is not a question of logic but a question of history. No doubt, logic and history would coincide were the Aristotelian cosmic hierarchy not a blunder. But it was a blunder, and the circumstances of his age forced St. Thomas to take it over. Hence the very logical attempts of later interpreters could not escape the nemesis of giving the original blunder a new form; and by the very excellence of their logic they were bound to arrive at various different forms, for "ex falso sequitur quodlibet."

IV. THE ESSENCE OF THE IDEA OF APPLICATION

In the preceding section we argued that Aristotelian premotion and Thomist application coincide. Were, however, this coincidence perfect, one might expect the idea of application to make its appearance in the Sentences; in fact, it does not appear before the Contra Gentiles. Accordingly we have now to determine what the Thomist idea of application adds to Aristotelian premotion.

In this task the first step is to grasp the difference between the views of St. Thomas and of later theologians on the certitude of providence. To the latter, providence was certain in all cases because it was certain in each, because each and every action of the creature required some special divine intervention. But to St. Thomas providence was certain in each case because it was the cause of all cases: the mover moves the moved if the

pair are in the right mutual relation, disposition, proximity; the mover does not, if any other cause prevents the fulfillment of this condition; but both the combinations that result in motion and the interferences that prevent it must ultimately be reduced to God who is universal cause, and therefore divine providence cannot be frustrated.[59] The ground of this evident difference lies in the fact that, while later theologians were preoccupied with divine control of free will, St. Thomas was preoccupied with the Aristotelian theorem that all terrestrial activity is contingent.

Aristotle had refuted determinism by appealing to the *per accidens,* that is, to the fortuitous combinations and interferences of causes and the fortuitous coincidences of unrelated predicates in the same subject.[60] He argued that the *per accidens* upset both premises of the determinist position: it showed both that, granted the cause, the effect did not necessaarily follow and, as well, that not every effect had a *causa per se.*[61] Moreover, not only did he deny the possibility of science with respect to the *per accidens,*[62] but he considered this objective lack of intelligibility to be absolute; the *per accidens* arose simply from the multi-potentiality of prime matters[63] and not at all from the plans of divine providence of which Aristotle knew nothing.[64]

Now, while Scotus looked upon Aristotle as a benighted pagan for his theory of terrestrial contingence, St. Thomas

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[59]1a, q. 103, a. 7; cf. *Met.,* 6, lect. 3; *C. Gent.,* 3, 94; 1a, q. 115, a. 6; q. 116, a. 1.

[60]*Met.,* D, 6, 7, 30; 1015b16ff, 1017a8ff, 1025a14ff and 24ff.

[61]*Met.,* E, 2, 3; K, 8; *Met.,* 6, lect. 3; *Peri Herm.,* 1, lect. 13, 14; *C. Gent.,* 3, 72, 86, 94 noting argument against Albumazar in 86 and the inconstancy of terminology; for brief and clear account, see 1a, q. 115, a. 6; q. 116, a. 1.

[62]*Met.,* E, 2; 1027a19-28; K, 8; 1064b15-65b1.

[63]*Met.,* E, 2, 1027a13; E, 3, 1027b10-16; K, 8, 1065a25.

[64]The activity of Aristotle's first mover is to contemplate himself (*Met.,* 12, lect. 8) and be the object beloved by the animated heavens (*ibid.,* lect. 7); his causality is efficient only in the sense ot "appetibile apprehensum movet appetitum" (Ross, *Metaphysics,* I, Introd., p. cxxxiv; *De Anima,* 3, lect. 15); hence Aristotle compares his universe to a Greek household in which the heavenly spheres, like sons of the family, have their course mapped out for them, while terrestrial bodies, like slaves and domestic animals, wander about at random (*Met.,* 12, lect. 12, §2633). See also note 30 *supra.*

adopted the more difficult policy of salvaging as much of Aristotle as was compatible with Christian doctrine. As one might expect, such a policy could not be executed at a single stroke. In the *Sentences*, in which Avicenna was the great philosophic influence,[65] one finds clear and unequivocal affirmations of Christian providence; still, the speculative work gets little further than basic definitions,[66] and theoretical short-comings are evident. Thus, both predestination and reprobation are in terms of divine foreknowledge with no apparent mention of divine causality.[67] Again, divine permission seems to be indifferent to opposite courses of creaturely action;[68] and one can even read the words, "Multa fiunt quae Deus non operatur."[69]

In the *De Veritate* the question of the causal certitude of providence is raised.[70] In the case of necessary causes such as the celestial spheres, it is affirmed both with respect to general results and with respect to each particular effect. In the case of contingent causes such as terrestrial agents, it is affirmed with regard to general results but denied with regard to each particular case. However, there is an apparent exception to the latter rule, for dogmatic data require the affirmation of causal certitude with regard to the predestination of the elect. Still, this exception is only apparent. Not each act of the elect but only the general result of salvation is causally certain; just as God makes certain of the perpetuity of the species by the vast number of its members, so also he makes certain of the salvation of

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[65]M. M. Gorce, O.P., *Bull Thom.*, 1930, 183.

[66]1 dist. 39, q. 2, aa. 1, 2; dist. 40, q. 1, aa. 1-3.

[67]Predestination includes *propositum, praeparatio et praescientia exitus* (1 dist. 40, q. 1, a. 2); reprobation is *praescientia culpae et praeparatio poenae* (1 dist. 41, q. 4, a. 1); cf. *De Ver.*, q. 6, a. 3; 1a, q. 23, aa. 3, 5.

[68]"Permissio respicit potentiam causae ad utrumque oppositorum se habentem" (1 dist. 47, q. 1, a. 2); cf. 1 dist. 40, q. 2, a. 1, ad 6m; *De Causis*, lect. 24.

[69]1 dist. 47, q. 1, a. 2; yet cf. 2 dist. 37, q. 2, a. 2.

[70]I use "causal certitude" to translate "certitudo ordinis" where the "ordo" is "ordo causae ad effectum" (*De Ver.*, q. 6, a. 3, c.).

the elect by imparting so many graces that either the predestined does not sin at all or, if he does, then he repents and rises again.[71]

In the *Contra Gentiles* this transitional position no longer appears. The theorem of divine transcendence was worked out, and Cicero's objection that causally certain providence and human freedom were incompatible was brushed aside as frivolous.[72] But this position will concern us in our next article; our immediate point is that simultaneously St. Thomas had achieved the higher synthesis of Aristotelian contingence and Christian providence. In Aristotle, terrestrial contingence had its ultimate basis in his negation or neglect of providence: events happened contingently because there was no cause to which they could be reduced except prime matter, and prime matter was not a determinate cause. Antithetical to this position was the Christian affirmation of providence, for divine providence foresaw and planned and brought about every event. The Thomist higher synthesis was to place God above and beyond the created orders of necessity and contingence: because God is universal cause, His providence must be certain; but because He is a transcendent cause, there can be no incompatibility between terrestrial contingence and the causal certitude of providence.[73]

It is now possible to answer the question raised at the beginning of this section: Why did not St. Thomas affirm in the *Sentences* that God applies all agents to their activity? Why did application in its technical sense make its first appearance in the *Contra Gentiles?*[74] The obvious answer is that before the latter work St. Thomas had not solved the speculative problems incident to the conception of the causal certitude of providence. In the *Sentences* and in the *De Veritate* one can find affirma-

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[71]*De Ver.*, q. 6, a. 3, c.   [72]*C. Gent.*, 3, 94.
[73]*Ibid.*; cf. *supra,* notes 59, 61.
[74]It occurs in a perfectly general sense in *De Ver.*, q. 17, a. 1.

tions both of Christian providence and of Aristotelian premotion; one can find them not only separately but also conjoined, as when the remote preparation for justification is explained by the loss of health or by a preacher's admonition or by anything of the sort that will stimulate the will, because all such things are due to divine providence.[75]   It remains that in these works divine providence cannot be associated with Aristotelian premotion in any but a vague manner.   Only when St. Thomas settled down to the vast task of thinking out the Christian universe in the *Contra Gentiles* did he arrive at the truth that divine providence is an intrinsically certain cause of every combination or interference of terrestrial causes.   By the same stroke would he arrive at the practically identical truth that God applies every agent to its activity.   Accordingly, we are led to infer that the essence of the idea of application is the Aristotelian premotion as informed by the Thomist causal certitude of divine providence: "Deus igitur per suum intellectum ominia movet ad proprios fines."[76]

V. Universal Instrumentality

We now have to take another step forward towards our goal. We have examined the general case of the meaning of causation and the particular case of the cause in time. Before we can consider the analogy between the causation of the Creator and that of the creature, it is necessary to obtain a grasp of the Thomist concept of universal instrumentality.   First of all, then, this concept is a syncretist product.   Not only did St. Thomas accept the Aristotelian cosmic system of first mover, celestial spheres, and terrestrial process, but he also accepted the Platonist idea of universal causes, that is, of causes that necessarily are the causes of any effect within a given category.[77]   Among Thomist

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[75] 2 dist. 28, q. 1, a. 4; *De Ver.*, q. 24, a. 15.

[76] *De Subst. Sep.*, 13, Mand. 1, 121.

[77] "Si esset forma ignis separata, ut Platonici posuerunt, esset aliquo modo causa omnis ignitionis" (1a, q. 115, a. 1).   See text of *De Causis* to lect. 1, 4, 6, 18.

universal causes, two were most conspicuous: God, who alone was proportionate to the production of being, whether substantial or accidental; and the *corpus caeleste,* which had the official role of causing all terrestrial change.[78] Now, this Platonist-Aristotelian syncretism could not but have the corollary of universal instrumentality; for an instrument is a lower cause moved by a higher so as to produce an effect within the category proportionate to the higher;[79] but in the cosmic hierarchy all causes are moved except the highest and every effect is at least in the category of being; therefore, all causes except the highest are instruments.[80]

So much for the fact of universal instrumentality. But, in the next place, if the instrument is to operate beyond its proper proportion and within the category of the higher cause, it must receive some participation of the latter's special productive capacity.   Such a participation is variously termed by St. Thomas an *intentio, virtus instrumentalis, vis artis, virtus artis, similitudo per modum cuiusdam defluxus, proportio per modum naturae incompletae, esse incompletum, esse spirituale.*[81]   St.

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[78]*Met.,* 6, lect. 3, §§1207-9; *De Pot.,* q. 3, a. 7, c., on instrumentality; *De Subst. Sep.,* 6 and 12, Mand. 1, 107 and 112; 1a, q. 115, a. 3, ad 2m; *Phys.,* 2, lect. 6, §3; *De Ver.,* q. 5, a. 9.

[79]Best definition of instrument, *De Ver.,* q. 27, aa. 4, 7. Origin of idea, Aristotle, *De Gen. Anim.,* 1, 21-2, 5; cited 4 dist. 1, q. 1, a. 4, qc. 2, ad 4m. Idea presented in account of generation, 2 dist. 18, q. 2, a. 3; *De Pot.,* q. 3, aa. 11, 12; *Met.,* 7, lect. 6-8, 1a, q. 118, a. 1; of magic, *De Occultis Oper. Nat.;* of instrumentality of spheres, 2 dist. 15, q. 1, a. 2; 1a, q. 70, a. 3; and in treatment of Christ's mediation, of prophecy, miracles, sacraments. On instrumentality of accidents, 1a, q. 115, a. 1, ad 5m. On limitations of instrument, 1a, q. 45, a. 5; q. 118, a. 2.

[80]This certainly is the meaning of *proprius effectus Dei.* Fr. Stufler's attempt to reduce this idea to God's exclusive role in creation and conservation is based on a narrow selection of texts and overlooks the evident Platonist element in St. Thomas' concept of the universal cause. See Stufler, *Gott der erste Beweger aller Dinge* (Innsbruck, 1936), pp. 67-83; also see the development in the premises of the analogy of operation, *infra,* notes 100 ff.

[81]*Virtus artis* is the *forma apprehensa* of the artist on its way ("per modum defluxus," *De Ver.,* q. 27, a. 7) through the tools to the artifact. The *intentio* was the inverse process of the *forma coloris* through the medium to the eye. Both are analogous to the *esse incompletum* of corporeal motion. On light and color: best passage, *De Anima,* 2, lect. 14; also 2 dist. 13, q. 1, a. 3; 2 dist. 19, q. 1, a. 3, ad 1m; *De Pot.,* q. 5, a. 8 (singular position on light); 1a, q. 67. Note that later works replace *intentio* by *esse spiri-*

Thomas explicitly affirmed the emergence of such a participation in every case of actual action by instruments of the universal principle of being;[82] but while to Fr. Stufler this is most probably just a bit of imagery,[83] to the later Thomist school it is with unlimited certitude their physical predetermination. In this case one is confronted not only with the difficulty, already mentioned, of attempting to argue rigorously from the cosmic system; there is in addition an objective obscurity to the general Thomist theory of the instrument. St. Thomas used the *virtus instrumentalis* not only to explain the universal mediation of our Lord's Humanity, to explain miracles, prophecy, and the sacraments, but also to account for the occult operations of nature, the influence of magical pictures, and, with Aristotle, the generation of animals. The latter group clearly brings the element of myth into the theory of the instrument, and the presence of such myth precludes the possibility of determining what St. Thomas must mean whenever he speaks of instrumentality.

But if we exclude the possibility of any apriorist solution, it remains that we do not consider the problem of the *virtus instrumentalis* insoluble in any given particular case; for in particular cases it may be possible to argue a posteriori from parallel passages, and fortunately there is a very convincing series of parallels to the instrumental virtue affirmed by *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 7, ad 7. This series runs from the *Sentences* to the *Summa*, and the parallel idea is the idea of fate.

The *Sentences* point out that God is an intellectual agent and that his knowledge is causal, not because it is knowledge but

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tuale; compare St. Albert, *De Creaturis*, 2, q. 21, a. 5 (Borgnet, 35, 205); Scotus, *Oxon.*, 2 dist. 13, q. 1 (Viv., 12, 616). Next, on motion in broad sense, *De Anima*, 3, lect. 12; in strict sense, *Phys.*, 3, lect. 2, 3; *Met.*, 11, lect. 9; the latter is found only in three categories, *Phys.*, 5, lect. 2-4; 6, lect. 5, §10; lect. 12; *Met.*, 11, lect. 12; on alteration, *Phys.*, 7, lect. 4, 5; on augmentation, *De Gen.*, 1 lect. 11-17; on relation of these to local motion, *Phys.*, 8, lect. 14, §3. The analogy is that as a motion is to its term, so the proportion of the instrumental cause is to that of the principal (3a, q. 62, a. 4).

[82]*De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7, ad 7m.

[83]Stufler, *Gott der erste Beweger*, pp. 66 f.; yet cf. p. 106.

only inasmuch as it resembles the plan or design or art in the mind of an artisan. Moreover, this divine plan has a twofold existence: primarily it exists in the mind of God and there it is termed providence; secondarily it exists in the created universe and there it is termed fate.[84] The parallel seems manifest: if providence is the art of the divine artisan, then fate is the *virtus artis* in his tools. Next, in the *De Veritate* one finds the following refinement: the divine ideas correspond to the essences of creatures, but providence corresponds to fate.[85] To this the *Contra Gentiles* adds that fate is impressed upon things, that it is unfolded in the course of events.[86] Hence, when in the *De Potentia* St. Thomas put to himself the crucial experiment of the cosmic system with respect to the operation of the first cause,[87] already he had in mind the concept of some real participation of the divine design that was distinct from the natural forms of things, that was impressed upon them as they entered into the dynamic order of events. Thus, the much disputed *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 7 ad 7 really presents nothing new; it asserts that, besides the natural form permanent in any given natural object, actual activity postulates some *virtus artis, intentio, esse incompletum* from the universal principle of being. Further, if we wish to know what precisely this elusive entity is, we have only to go on to the *Summa* where the idea of fate is expressed with a clarity and distinctness that defy equivocation.

The *Summa* repeats the distinction between the divine plan in the mind of God and fate which exists in the created order. It recalls the *quo actualiter agat* of the *De Potentia* by adding that by fate things are ordained to produce given effects.[88] Again, as the *De Potentia* explains that things cannot act without the *motus artis*, so the *Summa* explains in what sense they cannot but act because of fate.[89] Finally, the general theory of

[84]1 dist. 39, q. 2, a. 2, ad 5m; 1 dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1.
[85]*De Ver.*, q. 5, a. 2, ad 1m.   [86]*C. Gent.*, 3, 92.
[87]*De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7, ob. 7a.   [88]1a, q. 116, a. 2, c.   [89]*Ibid.*, a. 3.

the *intentio* advanced that this entity was a cause, not in itself but only in conjunction with other causes;[90] in the *Summa* one learns that fate is a cause, not in addition to, but in conjunction with, natural causes.[91] The parallel seems as complete as could reasonably be demanded. What, then, is fate? It is the order of secondary causes; it is their disposition, arrangement, seriation; it is not a quality and much less is it a substance; it is in the category of relation. Together such relations give a single fate for the universe; taken singly, they give the many fates of Virgil's line, "Te tua fata trahunt."[92]

Thus the *intentio* of *De Potentia*, q. 3, a. 7, ad 7, emerges into the clear light of day and proves to be but another aspect of the application mentioned in the body of the same article. Application is the causal certitude of providence terminating in the right disposition, relation, proximity between mover and moved: without it motion cannot take place now; with it motion automatically results. But the *intentio* is fate and fate is simply the dynamic pattern of such relations—the pattern through which the design of the divine artisan unfolds in natural and human history: again, without fate things cannot act; with it they do. Thus, fate and application and instrumental virtue all reduce to the divine plan, and the divergence between Aristotle and St. Thomas is a divergence in the conception of God. Aristotle held that God moved all things by being the object of love for the intelligences or the animated spheres;[93] but to St. Thomas God was more—a transcendental artisan planning history: "Deus igitur per suum intellectum omnia movet ad proprios fines."[94]

VI. The Analogy of Operation

In the first section of this article we arrived at the conclusion that St. Thomas conceived causation as a formal content in the

[90]*De Anima*, 2, lect. 14; 2 dist. 13, q. 1, a. 3; *De Pot.*, q. 5, a. 8.
[91]1a, q. 116, a. 2, ad 2m.   [92]*Ibid.*, ad 1m, ad 3m; cf. 3a, q. 62, a. 4, ad 4m.
[93]*Met.*, 12, lect. 7; see note 64 *supra.*   [94]*De Subst. Sep.*, 13, Mand. 1, 121.

cause and a real relation of dependence in the effect. The intervening sections have been preparing the way for the present question: How did St. Thomas conceive the analogy between the causation of the Creator and that of the creature? The answer would seem to be that at all times St. Thomas drew an implicit distinction between a basic and a proximate analogy. One reads in the *Sentences*: "Omnis virtus ab essentia procedit, et operatio a virtute; unde cuius essentia ab alio est, oportet quod virtus et operatio ab alio sit."[95] The dependence, *esse ab alio*, of the virtue or principle of causation gives the basic analogy; the dependence of the operation itself gives the proximate analogy.

Both the basic and the proximate analogies were derived from the *Liber de Causis*. The Arabic author of that very Platonist work had faced the Epicurean objection that the gods could not be supposed to "mix" in the trifling affairs of this world. This argument for divine indifference was refuted by a distinction between divine and created activity. In lower causes there is to be found a *habitudo, res media, additio super esse;* this intermediate—whether intrinsic or extrinsic, whether an accidental form in the agent, as brightness in the sun, or an accidental form in the medium, as brightness in the atmosphere—gives rise to the impression that activity "mixes" the agent with what he effects. But in the first cause there is no such *continuator, res media,* for God acts by his essence, the *prima bonitas* and *virtus virtutum.*[96] In this position it is easy to discern the origin of the Thomist analogy of the principle of operation. God is His own virtue; His essence, His potency, His action in the sense of principle of action—all are one.[97] On the other hand, in creatures one has to distinguish between the *ipsum agens* and the *virtus qua agit.*[98] Finally, in the *Pars Prima* the principle of

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[95] 2 dist. 37, q. 2, a. 2, c.
[96] *De Causis,* text to lect. 20-22; cf. 31 (Viv., 26, 555, 568).
[97] 1 dist. 37, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4m; *De Pot.,* q. 3, aa. 3, 7; 1a, q. 25, a. 1; q. 54, a. 1.
[98] *C. Gent.,* 3, 70; 1 dist. 37, q. 1, a. 1.

the limitation of act by potency is employed to demonstrate that in God substance and principle of action are one, while in creatures there must be the fourfold composition of essence and existence, accidental potency and accidental act.[99]

If the basic analogy is very easy to grasp, the proximate analogy involves the slightly difficult concept of "causing causation." Suppose Peter to stand sword in hand and then to lunge forward in such a way that the sword pierces Paul's heart. In this process there are only two products: the motion of the sword and the piercing of Paul's heart. But while the products are only two, the causations are three: Peter causes the motion of the sword; the sword pierces the heart of Paul; and, in the third place, Peter causes the causation of the sword, for he applies it to the act of piercing and he does so according to the precepts of the art of killing. The sword is strictly an instrument, and its very causation is caused. Now, if causation in general is a relation of dependence, a caused causation is a relation of dependent dependence. Again, if causation in general is a formal content, *ut ab agente in aliud procedens,* a procession, then to cause a causation is to make a procession proceed, to operate an operation, to operate within an operation. Such is the proximate analogy of operation.

This, too, St. Thomas derived from the *Liber de Causis.* In the first proposition of that work occurs the phrase: "Et non fit igitur causatum causae secundae nisi per virtutem causae primae." In his *Commentary* St. Thomas called upon Proclus for elucidation:

Proculus autem expressius hoc sic probat. Causa enim secunda, cum sit effectus causae primae, substantiam suam habet a causa prima. Sed a quo habet aliquid substantiam, ab eo habet potentiam sive virtutem operandi. Ergo causa secunda habet potentiam sive virtutem operandi a causa prima. Sed causa secunda per suam potentiam vel virtutem est causa effectus. Ergo hoc ipsum quod causa secunda sit causa effectus, habet a prima causa; esse

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[99] 1a, q. 54, aa. 1-3. By the parallel with essence, "virtus" here means limiting potency; it is not to be confused with the Aristotelian accidental forms, heat, cold, etc., which are also termed "virtutes" but are actually hot, cold, and in poténcy to their opposites.

ergo causam effectus inest primo primae causae, secundo autem causae secundae.

In this passage the idea of causing causation has its premise in creation-conservation: what causes the substance also causes the active potency; what causes the active potency also causes what the latter causes—indeed, causes the causation itself; for "hoc ipsum quod causa secunda sit causa effectus, habet a causa prima."

However, if we follow the development of St. Thomas' thought on God operating the operation of the creature, we readily observe that, while in the *Sentences* and in the *De Veritate* St. Thomas is ready to remain with the *Liber de Causis* and appeal only to creation-conservation,[100] in the *Contra Gentiles* he lists six premises in proof of the proximate analogy,[101] in the *De Potentia* he reduces these to four,[102] in the *Pars Prima* he sets forth three categories of premises.[103] Evidently this variation is concomitant with the developed idea of providence that emerges in the *Contra Gentiles*: once St. Thomas had grasped a theory of providence compatible with Aristotelian terrestrial contingence, he began at once to argue that the creature's causation was caused not merely because of creation and of conservation but also because of application, instrumentality, cosmic hierarchy, and universal finality. The *De Potentia* prunes this exuberance and omits the last two grounds; the *Pars Prima* restores the Aristotelian idea of God as cause according to the principle, "appetibile apprehensum movet appetitum."

Besides this positive concept of the proximate analogy, there is a corresponding negative form: "Sicut habetur in Libro de Causis, quando causa prima retrahit actionem suam a causato,

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[100]"Operationis enim naturalis Deus est causa in quantum dat et conservat id quod est principium naturalis operationis in re. . . sicut dum conservat gravitatem in terra, quae est principium motus deorsum" (*De Ver.*, q. 24, a. 15.; see 1 dist. 37, q. 1, a. 1, c., ad 4m; 2 dist. 1, q. 1, a. 4, c; yet cf. 2 dist. 15, q. 1, a. 2, c.

[101]*C. Gent.*, 3, 67; cf. 66, 70.   [102]*De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7.   [103]1a, q. 105, a. 5.

oportet etiam quod causa secunda retrahat actionem suam ab eodem, eo quod causa secunda habet hoc ipsum quod agit per actionem causae primae."[104] As is to be expected, this negative form undergoes the same variation in premises as the positive form. In the *Sentences* and the *De Veritate* we are told that lower causes cannot act without God;[105] in later works we are told that they cannot act without the divine motion.[106]

This later affirmation of the proximate analogy in its inverse form is quite clear even from a purely logical approach. When St. Thomas writes, "quantumcumque ignis habeat calorem perfectum, non alteraret nisi per motionem corporis caelestis,"[107] one can hardly suppose him to mean that the heavenly spheres add some further perfection or actuation to what already is indefinitely perfect. When he immediately adds, "quantumcumque natura aliqua corporalis vel spiritualis ponatur perfecta, non potest in actum suum procedere nisi moveatur a Deo,"[108] his meaning becomes manifest. If it is difficult to suppose that further perfection is added to what is as perfect as you please, it is absurd to fancy the substance, fire, given every actuation conceivable and yet needing two further actuations, one from the spheres and still another from God.

In conclusion one may compare the Thomist with later positions. Both argue from the known motions of this world to the existence of a first mover; again, both argue from the perfection of the first mover to further conclusions about created motions. But while later speculators affirm the existence of other motions than those already known, after the fashion of the astronomers who argued from known planetary motions to the existence of other planets, the conclusion reached by St. Thomas was simply a theorem—simply a profounder understanding of motions already known or supposed. As Newton affirmed a "law" of gravitation, as Einstein affirmed a "theory"

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[104]*De Pot.*, q. 5, a. 8, c.   [105]2 dist. 1, q. 1, a. 4, c; *De Ver.*, q. 24, a. 15, c.
[106]1a 2ae, q. 109, aa. 1, 9.   [107]*Ibid.*, a. 1.   [108]*Ibid.*

of relativity, so too St. Thomas affirmed the analogy of opera-
tion, namely, that the causation of the created cause is itself
caused; that it is a procession which is made to proceed; that it
is an operation in which another operates.

CONCLUSIONS

The fundamental point in the theory of operation is that
operation involves no change in the cause as cause. On Thomist
analysis it involves a formal content between cause and effect;
this is the procession, *ut ab agente in aliud procedens.* On Aris-
totelian analysis it involves a real relation of dependence in the
effect. The two analyses are really identical though terminolo-
gically different. The consequent difficulty in terminology is
heightened by the large variety of senses in which St. Thomas
employs the word "actio."

Operation in time presupposes a premotion. But this pre-
motion affects indifferently either the mover or the moved.
Its function is simply to bring mover and moved in the right
relation, mutual disposition, spatial proximity for motion nat-
urally to ensue. When combined with the fact that God is the
first mover in the cosmic hierarchy and that, as universal cause,
God cannot be frustrated, this law of premotion yields the
theorem that God applies all agents to their activity. This
theorem occurred to St. Thomas only in the *Contra Gentiles*
when he had worked out his theory of providence. Though in
its original form it is inseparably bound up with the Aristotelian
cosmic scheme and the Aristotelian idea of terrestrial contin-
gence, still it may readily be given an independent formulation.
Because the creature cannot act infinitely, it must have an
object upon which or with respect to which it acts. Because the
creature cannot create, it cannot provide itself with the objects
of its own activity. Because God alone can create, God alone
can provide such objects, and this provision is not by chance
but in accordance with the divine plan. Therefore God applies
all agents to their activity.

Again, the proportion of a cause is its nature; but God alone is being by nature, and so God is the sole proportionate cause of being; every other cause of being is an instrument. Further, the instrument, if it is to act, must have some participation of the proportion of the principal cause: unless the gramophone needle moves in the same dynamic pattern as did Caruso's vocal cords, the gramophone will not make you hear Caruso's voice. Similarly, without a participation of the art of the divine artisan, the creature cannot produce being, substantial or accidental. That participation is called fate; it is the dynamic pattern of world events, the totality of relations that contitute the combinations and interferences of created causes; it stands in the created order to the uncreated plan of the divine artisan as the vibrations of the ether stand to the inspiration of Beethoven.

Because St. Thomas developed this idea by combining the Aristotelian cosmic hierarchy of motion with the Platonist idea of universal causes, all terrestrial agents are also instruments of the celestial spheres. However, this conventional position breaks down when submitted to crucial experiment. Though St. Thomas was ready to credit the spheres with many marvellous influences, he was unwilling to affirm that fire cannot burn unless a celestial heat be added to the natural heat of that element; he simply asserted the logic of the cosmic scheme, that without the action of the *primum alterans* other causes of alteration could have no action.

This impossibility of having an action is but an instance of the general analogy of operation. Apart from the basic analogy which maintains that God acts by his substance while creatures act by an accidental form or act, there is also a proximate analogy. On Aristotelian analysis, the causation of the Creator is an unconditioned dependence while that of the creature is a dependent dependence. On Thomist analysis, the causation of the Creator is an unconditioned procession, an *ut ab agente* that presupposes no other action; but the causation of the creature

is itself caused;[109] this "causing causation" or making a procession proceed is regularly described by the formula of operating in the operation of another cause. In the *Sentences* and the *De Veritate* God operates the operation of creatures because He is creator and conserver; in later works other grounds are more prominently asserted, namely, application, instrumentality, finality. In parallel fashion earlier works state that the creatures cannot operate without God while later works state that they cannot operate without the divine motion.

The bearing of the foregoing on St. Thomas' theory of *gratia operans et cooperans* is threefold. First, it enables one to get behind the sixteenth-century controversy to the intellectual field in which St. Thomas did his thinking. Secondly, it stands to operative grace as general to particular. Thirdly, it is necessary prerequisite to any attempt to understand the meaning and the development in Thomist texts on actual grace as operative and co-operative.

(To be continued)

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[109]"Hoc autem est de perfectione supremi agentis, quod sua perfectio sibi sufficiat ad agendum, alio agente remoto; unde hoc inferioribus agentibus attribui non potest" (*De Pot.*, q. 5, a. 8, ad 4m).

"Virtus ignis semper est determinata ad calefaciendum, praesuppositis tamen causis prioribus quae ad actionem ignis requiruntur" (*ibid.*, ad 1m).

"Ignis est proprium calefacere, supposito quod habeat aliquam actionem; sed eius actio dependet ab alio" (*ibid.*, ad 5m).

"Sicut omnis actio naturalis est a Deo, ita omnis actio voluntatis in quantum est actio non solum est a voluntate ut immediate agente sed a Deo ut primo agente" (*De Ver.*, q. 22, a. 8).

"Non potest dici quod [Deus] aliud quam ipsa natura operetur, cum non appareat ibi nisi una operatio" (*De Pot.*, q. 3, a. 7, sed contra); cf. *C. Gent.*, 3, 70. See the texts on *immediatio virtutis, supra,* note 5.