

## Wisdom Be Attentive: The Noetic Structure of Sapiential Knowledge

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“Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?”  
T. S. Eliot, “The Rock”<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

THE PRESENT ESSAY will argue that we Aristotelians and Thomists do not always appreciate the qualitative difference which exists between the noetic character of science and that of wisdom.<sup>2</sup> While we generally assert that wisdom is defined as knowledge through first causes in a given order, it very often seems that we hold that the noetic character of wisdom is, in the end, quite similar to that of science. Thus, domains such as metaphysics, moral philosophy, natural philosophy (in its own limited

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<sup>1</sup> T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems* (New York: Harcourt, 1934), 179. I owe the pertinence of this quote to Kieran Conley, *A Theology of Wisdom: A Study of St. Thomas* (Dubuque, IA: Priory, 1963), vii. As will become obvious in notes to follow, Fr. Conley’s text is well aware of the problem at the heart of the discussions in this paper.

<sup>2</sup> I believe it is rhetorically important to note from the beginning that this essay is as much a self-reflective critique as it is a general call for a shift in how we discuss the character of *scientia* and *sapientia*. It is written in the spirit of open dialogue and not that of dogmatic proclamation. Moreover, as will be stated below in a brief methodological preamble, my focus is less exegetical than it is a kind of reflection offered within the conceptual space established by certain Thomist authors.

domain<sup>3</sup>), and acquired supernatural theology would indeed be knowledge of *conclusions* (i.e., forms of *science*, strictly speaking, as an objectively inferential kind of knowledge in contrast to *intellectus*) with the brief addition of “using principles that are first in this given order of knowledge.” In other words, it would seem that wisdom is, truth be told, a “knowledge of conclusions,”<sup>4</sup> albeit of conclusions drawn from the highest principles. This makes one wonder how the supposed distinction between science and wisdom does not collapse into a kind of Hobbesian outlook which would reduce wisdom to just a quantitatively broader sort of science, an outlook that was once perspicuously summarized by Monsignor Robert Sokolowski: “[For Hobbes, in *Leviathan* 1.5.22], wisdom is not different from science, not something else than science. [It is] just a lot of science.”<sup>5</sup> Is wisdom qualitatively distinct from science, or in the end, are they noetically and phenomenologically the same? Truth be told, we Thomists seem to talk out of both sides of our mouths on this issue. It calls for discussion—at least if we are to honestly go on claiming that they are formally distinct classes of *habitus*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> One finds the same concern regarding the reduction of theology to *scientia conclusionum* voiced in Edward Schillebeeckx, “What is Theology,” in *Revelation and Theology*, vol. 1, trans. N. D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967), 112–60. Also, see the interesting remark by M.-D. Chenu in *La théologie comme science au XIIIe Siècle*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Vrin, 1969), 39: “The distinction *scientia* and *sapientia*, which in him [i.e., Aristotle] introduces no technical heterogeneity between the two types of knowledge, here [in Alexander of Hales] bears with itself a radical structural separation” (translation mine). The issue concerning the nature of theology was very much “in the air” in the 1930s through the 1950s, and while my desire is to develop the Thomist school *from within*, I do acknowledge that even the more progressive authors of this era were not lacking insight as regards the “nerve” of the certain very important issues involved in this debate. I personally think that Aristotle and Aquinas (and even the later Thomists) sensed the need for making a noetic distinction but that a hardening of vocabulary tended to render *sapientia* ultimately homogeneous in structure with *scientia*. Obviously, as will be born out in what follows, I do not call for a radical differentiation.

<sup>6</sup> In the late days of editing this paper, I became aware of parallels to my own concerns, voiced in the mid-twentieth century in a disagreement between Fr. Marie-Rosaire Gagnebet, O.P., and Fr. Louis Charlier, O.P. (as well as the Franciscan Fr. Jean-François Bonnefoy, O.F.M). Hermeneutically, I remain on the side of Fr. Gagnebet, conservatively looking to connect my own insights back to the tradition that he and I both share, through the same Dominican masters. However, Charlier’s concerns regarding the *sapiential* functions of theology are not without merit. Fr. Henry Donneaud, O.P., has (perhaps) attempted to cast Gagnebet in a more revolutionary light than is necessary. I can only leave these historical matters to the reader, for this already-lengthy article remains *an essay* in the strict sense, not a full historical-critical treatment of the distinction of *scientia* and *sapientia*. Even if I do not share his full estimation of how to interpret Gagnebet’s own devel-

Of course, for a *host* of reasons with which the readers of *Nova et Vetera* are all too familiar, it would be unfair to claim that Thomists have, in fact, fallen prey to nominalist-Hobbesian errors in these matters. Nonetheless, even great Thomists have fallen into distortions in their understanding of the nature of wisdom, treating it as being univocally akin to science. Among such great Thomist forebears, we may arguably include the renowned and much-venerated commentator, Santiago Ramírez, O.P.<sup>7</sup> In *Science and Wisdom*, Jacques Maritain makes a passing, but quite important, critique of Ramírez’s articulation of the nature of theological wisdom, making remarks that will guide our reflections in this article. In his critique of Father Ramírez, Maritain emphasizes that beyond the drawing of “theological conclusions,” theology has a task that is loftier still: that of meditating on (and also defending) its principles. Indeed, as Maritain intimates (though all too briefly), in such activities, we find ourselves faced precisely with what gives “wisdom-knowledge” (i.e., *sapientia* in its various forms) its *uniquely sapiential character*: because of the comprehensive nature of a given sapiential discourse, it must fulfill “offices” beyond the drawing of certain *conclusions* from principles that one holds with certitude. To put it somewhat crudely, sapiential knowledge must reflectively “burrow into” the principles themselves in a way that is impossible for the limited scope of sciences *strictly so called*.

This assertion by Maritain is not uniquely his own and deserves to be

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opment of the position of the Thomist school, I highly recommend Donneaud’s recent article, as well as the relevant texts from this mid-century debate, one *closely* related to the famed *Dialogue théologique* interchange (indeed, to which Gagnebet’s thought was connected, as was openly admitted by Fr. Michel Labourdette). See: Henry Donneaud, “Un retour aux sources cache sous son contraire: Rosaire Gagnebet contre Louis Charlier sur la nature de la théologie spéculative,” *Revue thomiste* 119 (2019): 577–612; Jürgen Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie, New Theology: Inheritor of Modernism, Precursor of Vatican II* (London: Continuum, 2010), 61–82; Jean-François Bonnefoy, *La Nature de la théologie selon saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: Vrin, 1939); Louis Charlier, *Essai sur le problème théologique* (Thuillies, Belgium: Ramgal, 1938); Marie-Rosaire Gagnebet, “La nature de la théologie spéculative,” *Revue thomiste* 44 (1938): 1–39, 213–55, 645–74; Gagnebet, “Un essai sur le problème théologique,” *Revue thomiste* 45 (1939) 108–45; Gagnebet, “Le problème actuel de la théologie et la science aristotélicienne d’après un ouvrage récent,” *Divus thomas* 46 (1943): 237–70.

<sup>7</sup> I will note well, however, that Fr. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange’s own language is akin to that of the rest of his era, at times using *sapientia* and *scientia* interchangeably when speaking of *sapientia*, though in other places distinguishing tasks that only fall to *sapientia* (while noting too that such sapiential discourses *also* have tasks falling to *scientia*).

laid out in the context of the relevant Thomists of his day. (Indeed, at face value, it is backed up by a number of texts in Aquinas.) A strong and clear articulation of this point can be found in the theological works of Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrance, O.P., especially in his *De Revelatione*, as well as in several articles he wrote on the nature of acquired supernatural theology. Moreover, further explanations of this matter can be found in the work of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrance's student Father Emmanuel Doronzo, O.M.I. Let us begin, however, by first laying out the issue at hand. Then, we will consider some specific points, following in particular Father Doronzo's own clear articulation of these matters as providing important pointers for further work on this very important question of the internal structure of our knowledge. Finally, we will close with some synthetic suggestions.

### Methodological Prolegomenon

It is important that I begin this article with a kind of prolegomenon for the reader. This article truly began as an "essay," an attempt to articulate an issue that I had, in fact, only espied from a distance. (Indeed, as the reader will soon see, its first inspiration was based upon an accidental confluence of my reading of both the English and the French of a text by Maritain.) Thus, the way that the issue at hand will be approached will bear the marks of being *in fieri* rather than *in facto esse*. To put it another way, this article was indeed involved in the "way of discovery" much more than the "way of judgment." With ongoing reflection on this matter, I feel that I have reached the point of articulation *in via iudicii*, at least in part. However, this would require the complete rewriting of this essay. Stumbling along into an insight is not a useless thing for one's reader, so my intention in this article is to lead the reader along the way of the *via inventionis* that I followed in reflecting on these matters.

However, I must also note another point, one of perhaps even greater importance, and here I perhaps diverge methodologically from a number of Thomists. This study is written sincerely out of a desire to develop *in the line of Thomist thought*, but it is not written to seek out precisely what was Thomas's own thought on the nature of *sapientia*. To that end, I rely on the excellent work of Father Kieran Conley, O.S.B., *A Theology of Wisdom: A Study of St. Thomas*. This text provides a thorough study of the texts in which St. Thomas discusses *scientia* and *sapientia*. Indeed, only at the very end of my research into this topic, just prior to my initial submission of this essay to *Nova et Vetera*, did I manage to find a copy of this text. Therein, I was shocked to find an assertion akin to what I was arguing on behalf of:

“While science is interested in principles only insofar as they are related to its conclusions, wisdom not only considers conclusions in the light of principles; it also judges the principles themselves, evaluating and defending their content.”<sup>8</sup> The second half of the quote is stated frequently enough in Aquinas that it is not surprising by itself. However, the first half expresses a point of great importance. We will see why this is so in what follows.

Moreover, as I was preparing this final redaction of my work, I received an unsolicited suggestion telling me of a little text by Francisco P. Muñiz, *The Work of Theology*.<sup>9</sup> Since then, I have discovered that this work was insightfully summarized by Reinhard Hütter in his *Dust Bound for Heaven*,<sup>10</sup> and also was used in an interesting work by Mark Johnson, “God’s Knowledge in Our Frail Mind: The Thomistic Model of Theology,”<sup>11</sup> which in many ways lies within the same space of concerns as those which I articulate here, without, however, drawing some of the systematic conclusions that I propose in the present article. It is, however, well worth reading in parallel to my own investigations herein.

In Muñiz’s text, the reader will find a striking confirmation of what I will reflect on below. Though there are a number of points of great importance in his little text, several well-argued assertions are in line with what we will pursue in the body of my own investigation:

Wisdom then has two distinct functions: first, that of explaining and defending principles; and secondly, that of inferring conclusions. In the exercise of the first function, wisdom attains the object which is proper to understanding, namely, principles or truths which are *per se* and immediately evident. In the exercise of its other function, wisdom attains the object which is proper to science, namely, truths which are known mediately or by demonstration.

<sup>8</sup> Conley, *Theology of Wisdom*, 77 (emphasis added).

<sup>9</sup> See Francisco P. Muñiz, *The Work of Theology*, trans. John P. Reid (Washington, DC: Thomist, 1958).

<sup>10</sup> See Reinhard Hütter, *Dust Bound for Heaven: Explorations in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 331–40.

<sup>11</sup> See Mark P. Johnson, “God’s Knowledge in Our Frail Mind: The Thomistic Model of Theology,” *Angelicum* 76, no. 1 (1999): 25–45. This work appears to be a digest of his unpublished doctoral dissertation, “The Sapiential Character of Sacra Doctrina in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas” (University of Toronto, 1990). Further work on this topic should refer to it. Moreover, note that Johnson cites texts by Fr. Ramírez that show that he is not at all ignorant of the sapiential offices of wisdom. However, like many Thomists (and as witnessed to by his disagreement with Maritain), he still seems to think of theology primarily in terms of its *scientific, conclusion-oriented* offices.



Therefore, the object of wisdom is broader (*amplius*) than the objects both of understanding and of science taken separately.<sup>12</sup>

Second:

Hence, the concursus of natural reason with and under the light of divine revelation is evidently broader in its scope than virtual revelation.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, when one concludes that the union of natural reason and the light of revelation must equal virtual revelation, an illicit jump has been made from the whole to the part, from the unqualified (*simpliciter*) to the qualified (*secundum quid*). This very leap is made by the authors *because of the overly-restricted—and hence imperfect—concept which they have of Theology which is accepted by them only under the formal ratio of science*.<sup>14</sup>

Third, noting the incomplete position held by a number of theologians,

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<sup>12</sup> Muñiz, *Work of Theology*, 19.

<sup>13</sup> Concerning the notion of “virtual revelation,” see note 46 below. Muñiz is, however, opening up a larger problem here. He seems to hold that virtual revelation is the *lumen sub quo* only for the deduction of conclusions in theology (i.e., the scientific task of theology). However, in that case, we are lacking the appropriate formal object *quo* for theology as such, a light which traditionally has been termed “virtual revelation.” I tend to think that the very light of virtual revelation may well be nothing more than the broader attempt of reason to have some *intellectus fidei*, whether through reflection on principles or in the drawing of conclusions. However, one might say that the part–whole analysis undertaken by Muñiz would enable us to see virtual revelation, strictly so called, as being only one part of the *lumen sub quo* of theology. This would, of course, require some shifting in the discussion of these matters, at least if we are to maintain the language of the later *schola* (language which I believe is crucial to a clear articulation in these matters). Indeed, his stated position, one that I am inclined to think is of great merit (though calling for further noetic elaborations) is stated clearly in *Work of Theology*, 23: “The light *sub quo* of Theology in its total extension is the natural light of reason, exercised under the light of divine revelation, or under the positive direction of faith; it is ‘reason guided by faith,’—as our Angelic Doctor writes—or ‘reason illumined by faith,’ in the classic expression used by the Vatican Council.” Such a position seems to be implied in the presentation offered by Fr. Labourdette in the text cited in note 47 below. Muñiz’s qualification here helps to make clear how apologetics can remain clearly under the *lumen sub quo* of theology, thus providing a welcome clarification for the insights of Gardeil and Garrigou-Lagrange in this important matter. Muñiz makes important remarks concerning this point on pages 15–20. This is all of great importance for Thomistic theological methodology, and doubtlessly his study has repercussions on the understanding of philosophical wisdom as well.

<sup>14</sup> Muñiz, *Work of Theology*, 23 (emphasis added).

including no few Thomists:

What is commonly maintained by the authors concerning the nature of Theology is all true in itself, and would not be in the least reprehensible, *if it were applied to Theology as it is formally a science or under the formal notion [ratio] of science.*<sup>15</sup>

And finally:

Theology is called, in the first place, “wisdom,” which *in itself embraces simultaneously the ratio both of science and of understanding*, since it both deduces conclusions and concerns itself with [its] very principles.<sup>16</sup>

However, whereas Muñiz thinks that St. Thomas was purposefully ambiguous in his wording precisely to avoid confusing these matters, I am not convinced, upon reading his study, that St. Thomas was so intentional.<sup>17</sup> This does not mean that I think St. Thomas was wrong on these matters. Far from it! I think that he saw in a vague way something that needs to be made more distinct: What we might call the *ratio sapientiae* (the general formal character of wisdom as a kind of knowledge attained by the third operation of the intellect in its speculative operation) is distinct from the *ratio scientiae* (the general formal character of science as a kind of knowledge attained by the third operation of the intellect in its speculative operation). However, the whole problem lies in this: how *precisely* are these *rationes* distinguished? Is it a univocal distinction (i.e., according to one generic *ratio* which would apply both to science and to wisdom) or an analogical distinction (i.e., according to *multiple rationes* which are more different than they are the same)?<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Muñiz, *Work of Theology*, 12.

<sup>16</sup> Muñiz, *Work of Theology*, 28–29.

<sup>17</sup> See Muñiz, *Work of Theology*, 25–26.

<sup>18</sup> Every battle cannot be fought in one place. However, a thinker’s position on the nature and role of analogy lies at the center of his or her thought. For my part, I remain convinced of the positions articulated by Thomists who followed Cajetan and John of St. Thomas, in particular drawing my thought from Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange in this matter (e.g., in *God: His Existence and His Essence*, vol. 2, trans. Bede Rose [St. Louis, MO: B. Herder, 1949], 187–267), though as supplemented by the utterly indispensable progress made by Yves Simon in, e.g., “On Order in Analogical Sets,” in *Philosopher at Work: Essays*, ed. Anthony O. Simon (Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield, 1999), 135–71.

Reflecting on the original form that the current article took on, *this* is the problem that will be presented below as a kind of *via inventionis* in dialogue with fellow Thomists. I cannot present an *ad mentem Thomae* argument for fear of freighting an already-lengthy study with concerns that risk deflecting the point I desire to make. Indeed, as can be seen in detail in the excellent studies mentioned above (Conley, Muñiz, and Johnson), as well as in ones like the recent work of Tomáš Machula, which will be an important dialogue partner in footnotes below,<sup>19</sup> and Father Wallace's *The Role of Demonstration in Moral Theology*,<sup>20</sup> this very central question seems to have evaded those who primarily wish to ground their studies solely on the questions answered according to the terms predominantly used by St. Thomas himself.

However, the question mentioned above—how *precisely* are these *rationes* of science and wisdom distinguished?—just does not seem to have been a matter of *direct* concern for St. Thomas. In other words, the *distinct* and detailed articulation in response to this question does not seem to have been *St. Thomas's* own question, though it can be answered *from within the fraternal bonds of Thomist dialogue*, for he did articulate many aspects of the problem facing us here. I personally cannot subscribe to the attitude privately expressed by Étienne Gilson to John Deely near the end of the former's life: "A 'Thomist' of whatever brand should find it superfluous to develop a question which Thomas was content to pass over with a few words."<sup>21</sup> Without at all denigrating textual studies of Aquinas, which are the continued source of so many insights, drawn from the well of so great a master, Aquinas's text is not an outer boundary for one wishing to think in line with a sure and faithful tradition of Thomists.

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<sup>19</sup> See Tomáš Machula, "Theology as Wisdom: Renaissance and Modern Scholastic Commentaries on Aquinas," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 91, no. 3 (2019): 211–25.

<sup>20</sup> See William Wallace, *The Role of Demonstration in Moral Theology* (Washington, DC: Thomist, 1962), 57–70.

<sup>21</sup> John Deely, "Quid sit postmodernismus?" in *Postmodernism and Christian Philosophy*, ed. Roman T. Ciapalo (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 68–96, at 70. Likewise, see Étienne Gilson's further remarks to Deely: "It is very difficult to develop such a question with any certitude of doing so along the very line he himself would have followed, had he developed it. If we develop it in the wrong way, we engage his doctrine in some no thoroughfare [dead end], instead of keeping it on the threshold his own thought has refused to cross, and which, to him, was still an assured truth" (cited by Deely on 70). Of course, Deely, who is personally very dear to me, was a bit of a curmudgeon in these matters. I personally believe that his *insight* is correct in this intra-Thomist feud, though his *tone* was often a bit strident.



Granted, I do not doubt that I will be critiqued for my methods, which have their own limitations. For those looking for an excellent treatment of this topic precisely in St. Thomas's texts, all I can do is turn the reader to the other studies (especially that of Conley) and pray for clemency as a fellow searcher for the truth in such matters. The argument I am presenting is primarily the fruit of my time spent in the "tutelage" offered by the works of Maritain, Garrigou-Lagrange, and Doronzo. And yet, my goal is to present an argument that none of them were ready to make, though it seems to be one that to my eyes is *utterly necessary* in these matters—indeed, above all in light of Muñiz's work, which provides me no small confidence that my inchoate insights, while the perhaps marked by some haze, are set along the path of finding some definition in a very important matter. In any case, to put the point of methodology in brief form: my concern is not exegetical; it is primarily that of a faithful Catholic intellectual interested in a problem involving both philosophy and theology. Let it be judged on those terms—and not in a spirit of rancor, which too often is that of contemporary academic squabbings! It is not my intention to engage in such things, even if I may methodologically differ from my brethren in arms. In the language of my Latin Church brethren, I truly mean the words *procedamus in pace!*

Thus, my argument can be summarized as follows. In Thomas's own thought, we find some looseness regarding what we could call the "genus of science," or what I would rather call it, the *ratio scientiae*, "broadly speaking," as applied to both *science* and *wisdom*. Most Thomists (including those cited above, even Muñiz,<sup>22</sup> who seems to have seen this point most clearly) regularly speak of wisdom as being the loftiest form of science (even Father Garrigou-Lagrange does so on a good number of occasions, although he nonetheless at times also seems to say things quite strikingly at odds with the idea that wisdom is science in an eminent but univocal sense<sup>23</sup>), language for which they really cannot be faulted, given the fact

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<sup>22</sup> Along these lines, see the interesting accidental slurring of science and wisdom found on Muñiz, *Work of Theology*, 30. Similar terminological looseness can be found in other Thomists, even those who seem to have seen this point to varying degrees.

<sup>23</sup> To this end, the text that is associated with note 66 below is not to be overlooked, for the theme does repeat in various works by him. The implications of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange's words are not to be quickly overlooked: "Even were theology not to deduce *any* theological conclusions, properly so called, but were only to explain, through a profound metaphysical analysis, the subject and predicate *of revealed truths*, . . . even in such a case, it would have a considerable importance." In other words, theology does a considerable amount for the *intellectus fidei* precisely by

that Aquinas himself at times speaks along these same lines.<sup>24</sup>

The question with which I will be concerned in what follows is the following: is there a generic unity embracing *scientia* and *sapientia*? This is generally what is implied by many Thomist presentations of these matters.<sup>25</sup> The *ratio* (or “formal character”) of science is treated as though it were a genus in which *sapientia* would be the loftiest species. Even on its own terms, this outlook is troubling, for then *scientia* is not a species of discursive knowing distinguished from *sapientia* by way of some kind of difference. It is merely a genus. To overcome this, one could only say that there is a genus like “certain, discursive, speculative knowledge drawn from first principles” (i.e., resolute-analytic knowledge reached through the activity of the third operation of the intellect).<sup>26</sup> However, we can be quite sure that *scientia* is a *knowledge of conclusions* for Aristotelians (indeed, of many stripes). Thus, this genus (a kind of univocal “genus scientia”) would implicitly be divided in relation to the loftiness of the principles in the light of which it draws its conclusions. However, that knowledge, *precisely because of its scientific character*, would be a knowledge of conclu-

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fulfilling offices that do not fall, strictly speaking, to the *ratio scientiae*, namely, *knowledge of conclusions, objectively inferred on the basis of self-evident, first principles*. However, the project of this article is to explain just why this insight is important (even if it requires us to go beyond St. Thomas, while remaining in line with him).

<sup>24</sup> This is the upshot of Thomists like Domingo Bañez, Jean-Baptiste Gonet, and Vincent L. Gotti as discussed in Machula. Based on remarks in Muñiz, this seems to have been implied in certain passages in Thomists like Gotti, Charles René Billuart, Tomasso Maria Cerboni, Édouard Hugon, and John of St. Thomas. Below, we will see the ambiguity involved in John of St. Thomas’s articulation of the important notion of virtual revelation.

<sup>25</sup> As is well summarized by in Machula, “Theology as Wisdom,” 225: “[Bañez and Gonet] understand scientific knowledge (certain knowledge through causes) as a more universal term that can be divided into scientific knowledge in a narrow sense (knowledge through lower causes) and wisdom (knowledge through the highest cause).” He does note the fact that wisdom has “knowledge of principles in addition to conclusions,” but in the end, he seems to accept Bañez’s position, more directly articulated earlier on 222–23: “Scientific knowledge can be considered as a genus (habit acquired through demonstration) that abstracts from the type of cause through which it is acquired and that is divided into wisdom as scientific knowledge through the highest cause and scientific knowledge (as a genus) through the lower causes. In this meaning, we can understand also the sentence of Vincent L. Gotti, according to whom wisdom is not something different from science, but something added to science. It can be considered as the specific difference of wisdom added to the genus of science.”

<sup>26</sup> Or, one could say “science in a broad sense,” like Machula.

*sions grasped in light of these first principles.* It would only be a question of dividing it in terms of *highest principles* or *less lofty principles*. But it would still be *essentially and univocally a knowledge of conclusions*.

This is the very position I contest, though I must admit that I am merely exploring the possibility of my insight (one that seems to be implied by the various authors dialogued with, without them all seeing the full implications of the point). In short, my contention is that *scientia* and *sapientia* represent two properly proportional analogates within this broader analogous *ratio*: certain, discursive, speculative knowledge. By saying this is a properly proportional unity, we can be quite certain: *sapientia* does not do away with *scientia*. No, *sapientia* and *scientia* are analogates of this analogical set: certain, discursive, speculative knowledge. The analogue is predicated formally of each of its analogates, though according to a proportionality and an ordering. He who is wise has all of the intellectual perfection of the one who “knows scientifically.” However, this activity of “knowing scientifically” is performed precisely in a sapiential way, ever magnetized by the primary task of the wise man or woman: meditation upon the formal richness of the first principles of the sapiential discourse in question. In short, I mean that the *ratio scientiae* is formally and eminently embraced within the *ratio sapientiae*. He or she who “knows scientifically” is also concerned with the principles in his or her discourse. However, this interest extends only to the degree that they illuminate the conclusions drawn therein. Thus, we have Father Conley’s remark, which virtually contains everything that I wish to assert in this article: “While science is interested in principles only insofar as they are related to its conclusions, wisdom not only considers conclusions in the light of principles; it also judges the principles themselves, evaluating and defending their content.”<sup>27</sup> The *rationes* of science and wisdom are united, but not generically. Both have knowledge of principles and conclusions, but in different ways. We do not *univocally* assert what is common to them. We only do so analogically: asserting and denying *the very thing that is common to the analogates*.<sup>28</sup>

To this end, the reader will see a very important theme emerge with this paper’s development. I will contend that *sapientia*’s appreciation is primarily (but *not* exclusively) with the *formal* richness of the principles which are its light, whereas *scientia* primarily appreciates their *virtual* riches. Yes, the objectively inferential (i.e., demonstrative and *scientific*) functions of theology fill theological discourse with many discussions of great importance

<sup>27</sup> Conley, *Theology of Wisdom*, 77.

<sup>28</sup> See Simon, “On Order in Analogical Sets,” 18–26.

for a full *intellectus fidei*. However, its most precious activity is found in the articulation of the analogy of faith, illuminating one faith-held principle in light of another.<sup>29</sup> And in a philosophical discipline like metaphysics, one will indeed draw many conclusions in light of the first principles of being qua being. However, the metaphysician's loftiest task is a kind of meditation on the coherence of the principles of metaphysics. Such a meditation is not, strictly speaking, objectively inferential. In other words, it is not knowledge of a new conclusion drawn in light of given premises through a middle term. Indeed, this point of logic deserves further work, for it is something once upon a time appreciated, though no longer as well known.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, my investigations into these matters were primarily focused on humanly achieved wisdom, thus generally speaking of philosophical and (acquired) theological wisdom (which though *radicaliter* supernatural remains a true accomplishment by the theologian, and not itself an infused *habitus*). On occasion, I will (mostly in footnotes) draw on remarks made by John of St. Thomas in the context of his treatment of the Spirit's gift of wisdom. However, such comments generally bear evidence to implications for the notion of wisdom generally speaking. The particularities befalling the divine modalities of the Spirit's gift of wisdom lay outside of my concerns in this article. My concern is with trying to work out the analogous *ratio* of wisdom in light of less lofty analogates, though we most certainly should look for further illumination for this analogical notion by considering not only the Spirit's gift of wisdom but also the case wherein that analogue is realized formally and eminently in the Deity, which likewise answers (though in an "excessive" manner) to the formal character of wisdom.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> See note 73 below.

<sup>30</sup> See notes 42, 43, 64, and 71.

<sup>31</sup> Concerning the Spirit's gift of wisdom, the reader can consult, as a kind of "exhortation," Walter Farrell and Dominic Hughes, *Swift Victory: Essays on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 79–104. Likewise, see: Ambroise Gardeil, *The Holy Spirit in the Christian Life* (London: Blackfriars, 1953), 130–47; Gardeil, *The Gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Dominican Saints* (Tacoma, WA: Cluny, 2016), 92–101. A recent study of related topics can be found in John Meinert, *The Love of God Poured Out: Grace and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in St. Thomas Aquinas* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2018). For more technical discussion of this topic within the Thomist school, see John of St. Thomas, *The Gifts of the Holy Ghost*, trans. Dominic Hughes (London: Sheed and Ward, 1950), 123–47 (*Cursus theologicus* I-II, q. 70, disp. 18, a. 4, nos. 1–48). For a lengthy discussion of the problems involved in mystical knowledge, see in particular the second volume of Ambroise Gardeil, *La structure de l'âme et*

### Raising of the Issue and the “Maritain-Ramírez Affair”

The basic question, therefore, is: What differentiates the noetic character of *scientia* from *sapientia*? We can begin by making the straightforward distinction between *intellectus* and *inferential* knowledge noted above. *Intellectus* (and its speculatively practical counterpart, *synderesis*,<sup>32</sup> as well as the knowledge elicited supernaturally by faith’s assent) is direct knowledge formed by the intellect’s second operation. It is expressed in an enunciation and asserted to be true or false in a judgment.<sup>33</sup> In humans, this knowledge represents the perfection of the work first accomplished by the first operation in defining terms, now combining or dividing simple intelligibilities so as to express some essential or non-essential character (or property/accident) of a subject that was already grasped by the intellect’s first operation.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, judgment is where the being of things is fully reached by the human knower in an explicit intellectual manner.<sup>35</sup> Sometimes, such knowledge really reaches the level of first principles, in which case we are faced with *intellectus*/*synderesis* in the strict sense. Sometimes, it does not reach so high, but still indeed, we form judgments about many things that are not first principles: “Every house, as such, is a shelter.” For all of their infinite difference from us in this matter, the angels and God know in a way that must have some of the perfection of judgment, albeit without

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*l’expérience mystique* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1927).

- <sup>32</sup> It can be argued that there is ambiguity concerning whether or not St. Thomas distinguishes *intellectus* and *synderesis* from each other. For our purposes, I hold that they are distinct. On this, see: Leonard Lehu, *La Raison: Règle de la moralité d’après Saint Thomas* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1930), 144n2; Michel Labourdette, “Connaissance pratique et savoir morale,” *Revue thomiste* 48 (1948): 149–150. Yves R. Simon, *A Critique of Moral Knowledge*, trans. Ralph McInerny (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 28n2.
- <sup>33</sup> On the second act of the intellect’s enunciative and judicative operations, see: Jacques Maritain, *An Introduction to Logic*, trans. Imelda Choquette (London: Sheed & Ward, 1946) 2, 82–93; Yves R. Simon, *Introduction to Metaphysics of Knowledge*, trans. Vukan Kuic and Richard J. Thompson (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990), 136–58.
- <sup>34</sup> On the active role of *nous* in forming definitions, see: Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Sense of Mystery*, trans. Matthew K. Miner (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic Press, 2017), 23n31; Garrigou-Lagrange, “De Investigatione definitionum secundum Aristotelem et S. Thomam. Ex posteriorum Analyt. I. II, c. 12–14; lect. 13–19 Commentarii S. Thomae,” *Acta Pont. Academiae Romanae S. Thomae Aq. et Religionis Catholicae* 2 (1935): 193–201.
- <sup>35</sup> See the relevant texts associated with Joseph Owens, “The Conclusion of the Prima Via,” in *Saint Thomas Aquinas on the Existence of God: The Collected Papers of Joseph*, ed. John R. Catan (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980), 159nn109–11.



the conditions of befalling human intellection on account of the weakness of the latter's light. Judgment remains the loadstar for understanding the perfection of understanding, even if our poor human intellection involves composition and division.<sup>36</sup>

Yet, as is well known among Thomists, there is another operation involved in the human person's speculative knowledge,<sup>37</sup> and it is there that his particular perfection as a knower is achieved.<sup>38</sup> It is not enough to say that man is an intellectual creature. His particular way of having an intellect is expressed in the fact that he is rational. The mobility that affects man on account of his bodily constitution also, in a way, affects his knowing. The light of some first insight is never enough for human knowers. We must "spread out" our insights into chains of reasoning, through which we come to express (and therein know) the causal structure of things. The light of our intellect is so weak that we must, as it were, think in quasi motion.<sup>39</sup>

All by itself, the major premise of a syllogism does not provide us the full light of its irradiation. Were our intellects angelic, we would see in a single stroke all the truth contained therein. However, our intellects are not angelic, pure *intellects*; rather, they are human, and therefore *rational*, intellects. We stand in need of the discourse of reason in order to slowly draw out all of the illuminating riches of our directly attained insights. Through this discourse, we must render actual what is only potential in

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<sup>36</sup> See Jean-Hervé Nicolas, *Synthèse Dogmatique: complément, de l'Univers à la Trinité* (Fribourg, Switzerland: Éditions Universitaires, 1997), 295–97.

<sup>37</sup> It is, of course, involved in practical knowledge as well, though in that case, it is ordered to the declaration of the terminal and particularized *imperium* which will rule the will *hic et nunc* and includes as one of its conditions the virtuous (or vicious) subjective conditioning of the agent himself or herself.

<sup>38</sup> Whence, syllogistic *relationes rationis* represent the principal object studied in logic, which itself has second intentions as its formal object. On the primacy of the third act here, see John of St. Thomas, *The Material Logic of John of St. Thomas*, q. 1, a. 3, sub-question 2 (trans. Yves R. Simon, John J. Glanville, and G. Donald Hollenhorst [Chicago: University of Chicago, 1955], 26–27). On the problem of the subject of logic from a Thomist perspective, see Matthew K. Miner, "Thomism and the Formal Object of Logic," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 93, no. 3 (2019): 411–44.

<sup>39</sup> See: Armand Maurer, *St. Thomas and Historicity* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1979); Anton Pegis, *At the Origins of the Thomistic Notion of Man* (New York: MacMillan, 1963), esp. 47: "History is the signature of the soul's intellectuality, for the human soul is an intelligence living by motion at the level of intelligibility found in matter. That is why it is a man, temporal spirit, engaged in an incarnated intellectual life."

our most basic (and yet, quite often, most fruitful) insights into reality.<sup>40</sup>

From an Aristotelian and Thomist perspective, “scientific” knowledge represents knowledge *of conclusions* that are drawn in light of *per se nota* principles. In order for science to exist at all, one must base oneself on certain knowledge of judgments that are self-justified on the terms of the proposition enunciating such knowledge (e.g.: “The good is to be done and evil avoided”; “Being is not non-being”; “Knowers are beings that become the other as other”).<sup>41</sup> That is, in order for scientific knowledge to exist in its full stature, one must also have self-evident knowledge with certitude.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Technically, this strictly applies to objectively illative discourse which renders actual that which was only potential. In other forms of discourse, we render explicit that which was implicit.

<sup>41</sup> Though a topic for another investigation, it should be noted that there are many such judgments. Too often, Thomists consider only the very basic judgments given as examples by St. Thomas as being the only such knowledge reached through *intellectus* and synderesis. However, there are many *per se nota* principles in the domains of both speculative intellection and practical knowledge. Regarding the former, one need only think of the metaphysical principles reflected on at length by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange almost to the point of tiresome repetition (the principle of non-contradiction, the principle of causality, the principle of finality, etc.), though there are many such principles in all the various domains of knowledge. Moreover, in the practical domain, the moral virtues receive their ends from the knowledge grasped through synderesis, a fact that attests to a great host of practical *per se nota* judgments. On the latter topic, see Ryan J. Brady, “Aquinas on the Respective Roles of Prudence and Synderesis vis-à-vis the Ends of the Moral Virtues” (PhD diss., Ave Maria University, 2017).

<sup>42</sup> This distinction between *certitude* and *evidence* is what enables the theology of wayfarers to be a true “science,” and above all, wisdom, even though it is in an imperfect state. See John of St. Thomas (Poincot) *On Sacred Science: A Translation of Cursus theologicus I, Question 1, Disputation 2*, trans. John P. Doyle, ed. Victor M. Salas (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 2019), disp. 2, a. 3, no. 6: “In the nature of a science there is not evidence, but only certitude. For Aristotle (1.2.71b10–12), in the definition of science does not posit evidence but certitude, when he says that ‘to know scientifically is to know that the cause on account of which a thing exists is in fact the cause of that thing, and that it cannot come about that the thing be other than it is.’ And the reason is that by certitude alone, even when evidence is absent, that habit is based upon an infallible connection and relates to an infallible truth; therefore, in this it is distinct from an opinionative habit which relates to a fallible and contingent truth and is, therefore, a habit which is subject to error, which is not to be a correct or virtuous habit of an intellectual kind. A habit, however, that proceeds infallibly and certainly perfects the intellect without any danger of error and without possible failure (*indefectibiliter*).” This entire article is worth reading in relation to our present topic. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Salas, who provided me with this text, which is still awaiting official publication, being one of the last works undertaken by

However, objective certitude in *per se nota* principles provides the foundation for then having *inferential* knowledge built upon the foundation of such certain “stopping points” of reasoning. These inferentially known conclusions are precisely *what scientific knowledge is*. It is a knowledge of a concluding judgment—for, according to the maxim of *Summa theologiae* [ST] II-II, q. 8, a. 1, ad 2, “The discourse of reason always takes its beginning in an insight [*ab intellectu*] and expresses its ultimate conclusion in one as well [*terminatur ad intellectum*]<sup>43</sup>—that of its very nature is known *as inferential*.<sup>44</sup> The fact that it is inferential “colors” the very concluding insight, which is known *precisely as a conclusion*, that is, as something discursively attained through some middle term. Once again, that is what scientific knowledge is: knowledge *of conclusions* ultimately drawn in light of *per se nota* principles.<sup>45</sup>

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his much-revered mentor, Dr. John Doyle.

<sup>44</sup> Thus, John of St. Thomas is of the opinion that, although we form one kind of *verbum* for the first operation of the intellect and another through the second (a position that predates him), there is not a unique kind of *verbum* for the third operation. Rather, the propositions are themselves modified. On the earlier history of this point, see André de Muralt, “La doctrine médiévale de l’*esse obiectivum*,” in *L’enjeu de la philosophie médiévale: études thomistes, scotistes, occamiennes* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 90–167 (esp. 127–29). For John of St. Thomas’s own position, see *Cursus philosophicus thomisticus*, ed. Beatus Reiser, vol. 3 (*Naturalis philosophia*, vol. 2) (Turin: Marietti, 1930), q. 11, a. 3 (esp. 372A7–373B17). He concludes: “And thus, I concede that the third operation has a distinct *verbum* since it is a distinct operation. *However, it is modally, not really, distinct from what is represented in its own propositions.* However, when one proceeds from a simple apprehension to a composite representation [i.e., from the first to the second operation of the intellect], a distinct object shines forth in the quiddity or truth to be represented. And thus, discourse according to causality (i.e., according to illation) presupposes discourse according to succession (i.e., according to many succeeding propositions), as St. Thomas says in *ST I*, q. 14, a. 7. *However, it does not make one [concept/verbum] out of many propositions*” (translation mine; emphasis added).

<sup>45</sup> Thus, one distinguishes between “scientific intelligibility” and “mere intelligibility” precisely because of this inferential character of the knowledge. See John of St. Thomas, *Ars logica*, pt. 2, q. 27, a. 1 (823a:15–22): “*Scientific knowability [esse scibile] adds over and above mere intelligibility [esse intelligibile] such a mode of knowing, namely that something is understood not merely in a simple manner but, rather, illatively, from causes (or, premises) proceeding to conclusions, for to know scientifically [scire] is to know [cognoscere] the cause on account of which something is, etc.*” (my translation). Also, see John of St. Thomas, *Gifts of the Holy Ghost*, 132 (*Cursus theologicus I-II*, q. 70, disp. 18, a. 4, no. 21): “There are two kinds of judgment. One is a simple assent, such as is had in the judgment of first principles. Assent is made to these from the evidence of the terms. Likewise, simple assent is had in faith. In the judgment that the thing is true, there is no inquiry into

Now, let us begin our turn from science to wisdom. It is clear in St. Thomas that theology is not only a form of *scientia*, but is also, and above all, *sapientia*.<sup>46</sup> Later Thomists came to spill a great deal of ink defending the scientific status of theology<sup>47</sup> to such an extent that their brief remarks about theology as a form of *sapientia* can be lost in their noble efforts to show how it is that human intellection can have its own natural, acquired *habitus* concerned with these supernatural truths of faith. The methodological justification of an *inferential* form of knowledge of the supernatural order is indeed a difficult enough affair to explain. Once such things are justified, it understandably seems to be a minor affair to add, “Yes, indeed, theology *obviously* must judge all other sciences and hence is a form of wisdom, for it is *notitia ordinativa et iudicativa de aliis* [‘a kind of knowing which orders and judges other forms of knowledge’].”

Great light is shed upon the character of theological knowledge by John

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the causes of the thing, but merely an assent to the testimony and authority of the witness [or to objective evidential certitude in the case of natural knowledge of this kind]. The other type of judgment is analytic and scientific. When a man assents to the truth, judges of it, and even gives reasons for his judgment, investigating and defending it, he not only knows the thing, but he knows the foundation and cause of his knowledge. Such an act is proper to science. It is called wisdom when it is had through the highest causes.”

<sup>46</sup> See *ST I*, q. 1, a. 6. A study of relevant texts can be found in Conley, *Theology of Wisdom*, 59–104.

<sup>47</sup> This fact was very recently studied in Machula’s excellent “Theology as Wisdom.” Machula’s study was published just as this article was being drafted, so he is not a direct interlocutor for my discussions. However, it should be noted that, on many points, our concerns dovetail, though we do fundamentally differ, insofar as he seems to be a partisan of univocal unity of science and wisdom. Regarding Thomists of the fourteenth century, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, “Le savoir théologique chez les premiers thomistes,” in *Recherches thomasiennes: Études revues et augmentées* (Paris: Vrin 2000), 158–76. This is not the place to undertake a point-by-point study of other Thomists, but the general sense one has when looking through the treatments by Cajetan, John of St. Thomas, Billuart, and Gonet is that the topic is not of great importance. None of them are unaware of the issues at hand, as Machula in part shows (and, indeed, as a pivotal quote from Cajetan to be cited below in this article shows quite clearly). Nonetheless, the theme of *sapientia* as a unique kind of *habitus* does not play a *thematic* role for their consideration, even though their thought indicates aspects of its unique character. Alas, even in so perspicuous a theologian as Fr. Labourdette, one can find a kind of focus on the scientific character of theology to the detriment of wisdom, at least in his lucid and insightful summary in “La théologie, Intelligence de la foi,” *Revue thomiste* 46 (1946): 5–44. The fact of such a general oversight by Thomists was lamented in Fr. Conley in his decidedly Thomist *Theology of Wisdom*, 77 (see also 33–35). Also, see notes 4 and 6 above.

of St. Thomas's notion of "virtual revelation," a terminological distinction that allowed him to clearly express the character of theological knowledge as distinct from faith in what is formally revealed:

Therefore, virtual revelation includes both these features [*ratio*]. For it is taken from principles of Faith, which partake of supernatural light [*lumen*], and are consequently maximally spiritual and elevated above natural intelligibles, inasmuch as they are derived from a participation of Divine light [*lumen*]. And through this spirituality, or immateriality so elevated, it is distinguished from the light and the natural intelligibility of any natural object whatever. [However, precisely because] the principles of Faith are taken as inferential for conclusions, they constitute the formal feature [*ratio*] of theology in the character [*ratio*] of a scientifically knowable light [*lumen*], and of virtual revelation, insofar as in an inferential, and not a simple, mode, they manifest those things which are virtually contained, and can be deduced from things revealed through Faith.<sup>48</sup>

Or, as is stated with great clarity by Father Michel Labourdette, O.P., writing from this same tradition:

Therefore, what is this objective light [of acquired theology]? It is exactly this: concepts and propositions which by faith were solely held as being guaranteed by God, as pure objects of adherence, are now considered as objects of an intellectual movement that introduces (under faith and its irradiation) a rational consideration with the aim of explaining the proper intelligibility of these concepts, of manifesting the connection of these propositions, of becoming aware of the temporal and historical conditions of their revelation to man and of the progress of their successive formulations, of grouping certain ones around those which explain them, of manifesting through reasoning all of their intelligible implications, and so forth,

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<sup>48</sup> John of St. Thomas (Poinsot), *On Sacred Science*, a. 7, no. 12 (*Cursus theologicus*, q. 1, disp. 2, a. 7); see the whole of nos. 11 and 12. A pedagogical explanation of this point of Thomist doctrine can be found in Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, "Remarks Concerning the Metaphysical Character of St. Thomas's Moral Theology, in Particular as It Is Related to Prudence and Conscience," trans. Matthew K. Miner, *Nova et Vetera* 17, no. 1 (2019): 261–66 ("Translator's Appendix 1: Concerning the Formal Object of Acquired Theology").



... in short, as engaged in the characteristic movement of the human mind striving toward *knowledge*.<sup>49</sup>

The distinction between formal revelation and virtual revelation helps us to distinguish quite clearly between the noetic character of our reflective theological knowledge (which is quite appropriate to our little, discursive intellects) and the truths that we know by faith. Even though theological knowledge must presuppose faith as its root principle and as the light in which its judgments are resolved,<sup>50</sup> we assent to theological knowledge precisely on the grounds of the faith-illuminated reasoning involved. By contrast, we assent to formally revealed knowledge *precisely on account of God's authority as the First Truth who reveals*.<sup>51</sup> However, note John of St. Thomas's focus in the passage cited above. His words might lead us to believe that the primary concern of theology is drawing such conclusions

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<sup>49</sup> Labourdette, "La théologie," 22.

<sup>50</sup> Thus, Maritain rightly inveighs against the idea of a theology in which reason would merely judge revealed truths in its own natural light. See: Jacques Maritain, "The Deposition of Wisdom," in *The Dream of Descartes*, trans. Mabelle L. Anderson. (London: Poetry Editions London, 1946), 46–82; Maritain, *The Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Gerald B. Phelan et al. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), 269; Maritain, *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, trans. Edward H. Flannery (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), 103n25. See also Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione per Ecclesiam Catholicam Proposita*, 5th ed. (Rome: Desclée et Socii, 1950), prol., ch. 1, a. 1, no. 3 (pp. 8–17).

<sup>51</sup> On this, see the appendix cited above in note 46. A similar distinction can also be made for the case of the knowledge had through the gift of wisdom, whereby God is "tasted in a dark yet quasi-experiential manner." I fear, however, that, in the aforementioned appendix, I perhaps rhetorically overstated the role of human reasoning in such assent, for in fact, the supernatural roots of theology (which most certainly were affirmed in said appendix) require the motive of theology not to be purely natural. It is a matter of emphasis in that text, and the comments made there should be supplemented by the relevant comments found in Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 106n41. Likewise, authority plays an important role in such arguing, given these supernatural premises, which illuminate all of theology's discourse (cf. *ST* I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2). And yet, the insight of Labourdette on this matter seems to be a nuanced balancing of this point (care being taken, however, to note his significant focus on *scientia* in theology): "Whether the proposition thus connected as a conclusion to a revealed principle already is a truth of faith held by revelation or is one that has been learned in a completely different manner, the process remains the same: it is a purely scientific procedure using inference and, in no way, *as such*, authority. The latter is involved in the processes of speculative theology in order to assure its principles but not at all in order to then demonstrate its conclusions" ("La théologie," 38; translation mine). Note, however, that he makes some important qualifications immediately hereafter.

and coming to understand all those things that are not formally revealed but which, nonetheless, are virtually contained within the light of what is formally revealed. In other words, we would tend to think of theology as being a *science*.

To see the point I am moving us toward, let us consider a controversy in which Maritain found himself engaged. In *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, Maritain famously defends his notion of adequate consideration of moral theology,<sup>52</sup> holding that a true moral *philosophy* stands in need of data drawn from revealed sources in order to fully perform its *philosophical* tasks. According to him, the state of the human person subject to the fall, as well as our vocation to grace and glory, require us to take these data into account even to understand our action on the purely natural level as it is found in the actual world in all its singularity. In short, the activity of our human nature is that of a *fallen and* (at least potentially) *graced* human nature, thus meaning that, according to Maritain,<sup>53</sup> there can be no fully constituted moral philosophy without some form of subalternation of moral philosophy to theology, at least as regards principles to be used in the former. And here, Maritain makes it quite explicit that he has been

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<sup>52</sup> See: Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 38–43 and 61–100; Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, trans. Bernard Wall (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1944), 137–220, 231–41. For considerations on this topic, see Matthew K. Miner, “Revisiting Maritain’s Moral Philosophy Adequately Considered,” *Nova et Vetera* 16, no. 2 (2018): 489–510. For a lengthier study, see Ralph Nelson, “Jacques Maritain’s Conception of ‘Moral Philosophy Adequately Considered’” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1961). As is clear in Maritain, the *nature* of such knowledge remains philosophical and natural (that is *human acts considered under the light of the natural principles of practico-moral reason*). However, in the case of moral philosophy, the very existential state of the human person requires subalternation (not by way of subject, but by way of principles) to theology. The problem is too difficult for full treatment here and therefore must be left to the aforementioned texts.

<sup>53</sup> He was followed in this by Simon and Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. Regarding the former, see: Simon, *Critique of Moral Knowledge*, 58–62; Simon, *Practical Knowledge*, ed. Robert J. Mulvaney (New York: Fordham University, 1991), 87–96 and 112–13.

Regarding Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, see Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, “On the Relationship between Philosophy and Religion,” *Philosophizing in Faith: Essays on the Beginning and End of Wisdom*, ed. and trans. Matthew K. Miner (Providence, RI: Cluny, 2019), 376n34 and 390. As can be seen in the final citation, he prefers the term “subordination” to “subalternation.” Note, however, that he does seem to be in agreement with Maritain on the very point under discussion in this article, for Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange notes that such adequate moral philosophy would make use of “revelation *theologically explicated*.” The importance of this point will be made clear in what follows.

speaking of “theology” (and *not* faith) with good reason throughout his discussions in *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*:

In a strict manner of speaking at least, it should be said that moral philosophy adequately conceived is subalternated to theology and not to faith. In point of fact, a science is subalternate to another science, not to the principles thereof; its proper and proximate principles . . . are the conclusions not the principles themselves of the subalternant science. . . . If moral philosophy adequately considered were to resolve its conclusions in the revealed datum, and in the very principles of theology, just as they are communicated to us by faith, it would merge with theology, of which it would become a part; it would not be a science subalternated to theology.<sup>54</sup>

This passage raised concerns for the great Dominican commentator on Aquinas Father Santiago María Ramírez, who in a review of the Maritain’s text critiqued the latter’s conception of “adequate consideration” of moral philosophy on a number of fronts. Of interest to us here is the fact that Father Ramírez did not believe that an appeal to theology (instead of to faith) sufficed to save Maritain from reducing moral philosophy to moral theology:

Maritain wishes to justify and explain this adequate moral philosophy by saying that it is a philosophy that is subalternated to theology. And note that he adds a point of clarification: “to *theology* and not to faith.” Thus, moral philosophy draws its principles from moral theology’s own proper conclusions. However, at the same time, we are told [by Maritain] that the principal truths which [such an adequate moral] philosophy borrows from theology are these two: the existence of a supernatural ultimate end and the fact that human nature is fallen and redeemed.

Are the existence of a supernatural ultimate end and the fallen state of human nature, as well as its redemption, theological conclusions or truths of faith? There can be no doubt how to respond to this question: these truths are explicitly and formally truths of faith and not simple theological conclusions. Therefore, the proper principles of adequate moral philosophy are explicitly and formally truths of faith. And thus, once more, we find ourselves openly within the domain of theology, since theology has the truths of faith

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<sup>54</sup> Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 102n12.

as its proper principles.<sup>55</sup>

In the final sections of *Science and Wisdom*, Maritain responds quite directly to Father Ramírez's critique.<sup>56</sup> He notes that, in *An Essay on Christian Philosophy*, he used the expression "the truths of theology" precisely to avoid the problems that would have arisen had he used the expression "theological conclusions," which designates the body of inferential truths drawn in light of virtual revelation, that is, the faithful intellect reflecting on the intelligibility of what is held on faith. More important still than such objectively inferential knowledge is a meditation upon the very principles of theology known through faith so that their interconnections may be understood more fully, thus deepening our penetration of the mysteries of faith, though doing so in a natural manner acquired through studious reflection.<sup>57</sup> As an all-embracing body of knowledge, theology has this task as well, for no other form of acquired discursive reasoning stands "outside" of acquired supernatural theology. It alone can argue on behalf of its principles.

Thus, Maritain notes that Father Ramírez's concern regarding theological knowledge bespeaks a limited outlook concerning the tasks of theology precisely as a form of wisdom.<sup>58</sup> It is quite easy to miss this point because of a mistranslation in the English rendering by Bernard Wall, who uses "science" to translate *both* of two French terms, *sagesse* and *savoir*, in a critical passage where Maritain most certainly wishes to be exact in his wording. There Maritain says:

Theology, like every *wisdom* [*sagesse*] *simpliciter dicta*, knows its principles by turning back upon them. Even when it is a question of a truth of faith, theology *knows* it, not *inasmuch as it is a mystery of faith*, transcending theological knowledge [*savoir*], but inasmuch as it is an *object to which this knowledge* [*savoir*] *returns by scrutinizing it, explaining it, and giving it precision in the light of virtual revelation.*<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> J.-M. Ramírez, "Comptes Rendus: J. Maritain, *Distinguir pour unir ou les degrés du savoir* et *De la philosophie chrétienne*," Y. Simon, *Critique de la connaissance morale*; Th. Deman, *Sur l'organisation du savoir moral*, *Bulletin thomiste* (1935): 430–31.

<sup>56</sup> See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 236–37.

<sup>57</sup> See Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*, 236–37.

<sup>58</sup> However, as Johnson shows ("God's Knowledge," 32–33), Ramírez was forcefully aware of the sapiential nature of theology, even if he seems to have articulated it in a "scientific manner" in his debate with Maritain.

<sup>59</sup> Jacques Maritain, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 6 (Fribourg, Switzerland: Éditions Universitaires, 1984), 242–43 (my translation). Cf. Maritain, *Science and Wisdom*,

In other words, wisdom *as such* has its own offices. It is not merely concerned with the task of inferentially drawing conclusions on the basis of certain premises. Beyond that, it turns back upon its principles, defending them and reflecting upon their own intrinsic truth. It not only has direct knowledge of these principles (as occurs through *intellectus* and theological faith) but also analytically *judges* concerning these principles, as well as the principles of subordinate forms of discourse.<sup>60</sup> Thus, as Cajetan sagely observes in his only substantial remark on *ST* I-II, q. 57, a. 2, wisdom contains both science and understanding by way of eminence (as one may say that God “contains” all the formal content of being, truth, goodness, etc. but does so in an eminent manner<sup>61</sup>):

For wisdom makes use of *per se nota* principles by deducing conclusions, which is [an office] of science, and it judges, defends, and establishes that these very *per se nota* principles are true on the basis of their terms’ meanings, something that understanding sees in an absolute manner [and not through a reflective, analytical judgment upon them]. And it has both [of these offices] through the resolution that it makes to the highest cause, containing these offices in a more eminent manner.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, wisdom is not a kind of “side by side” combination of understanding and science but, rather, is formally science and understanding, though precisely by containing them *eminently in a formally richer kind of discourse*.

To consider the nature of such offices, we can turn to some very clear points raised on this very point in relation to theological wisdom. Our guides will be Fathers Garrigou-Lagrange and Doronzo, who provide us

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237: “Theology like every **science simpliciter dicta** knows its own principles by turning back on them. Even when the matter concerns a truth of faith theology *knows it*, not *in so far as it is a mystery of faith* which transcends theological **science** but in so far as it is an object to which this science returns to examine it, and explain it and make it more definite in the light of virtual revelation” (bold emphasis added).

<sup>60</sup> On the distinction between assent and analytical resolution, see John of St. Thomas, *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, 132–34 (*Cursus theologicus* I-II, q. 70, disp. 18, nos. 21–25). For Aquinas on the offices of wisdom, see *ST* I-II, q. 57, a. 2, ad 1 and ad 2. Various other relevant texts can be found in the studies by Machula and Conley noted above.

<sup>61</sup> See Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, “The Eminence of the Deity, Its Attributes, and the Divine Persons,” ch. 3. in *Sense of Mystery*, 171–97.

<sup>62</sup> Cajetan, commentary on *ST* I-II, q. 57, a. 2 (translation mine, from Cajetan’s commentary in the Leonine edition of *ST*).



with a clear articulation of the uniquely sapiential tasks of acquired theological wisdom. In light of what they say about theological knowledge, we will then draw our discussions to a close by considering the twofold manner of judging that falls to *scientia* and *sapientia*.

### The Offices of Wisdom, Supernatural and Natural

It is almost certain that in addition to several relevant passages from John of St. Thomas, Maritain owes the aforementioned insight to Father Garrigou-Lagrange's *De Revelatione*, which he cites at length elsewhere.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Maritain's citation of chapter 4 of the First Vatican Council's *Dei Filius* places him directly in continuity with the great Dominican who often appeals to this text in order to defend the "sapiential offices" of theology. The conciliar text reads:

Nevertheless, if reason illumined by faith inquires in an earnest, pious, and sober manner, it attains by God's grace *a certain understanding of the mysteries*, which is most fruitful, both from the analogy with the objects of its natural knowledge and from the connection of these mysteries with one another and with man's ultimate end. But it never becomes capable of understanding them in the way it does truths that constitute its proper object (emphasis added).<sup>64</sup>

Indeed, as Father Garrigou-Lagrange notes elsewhere, St. Thomas frequently undertakes conceptual reflection and analysis of revealed truths as the very first task of given treatises of *ST*. Such reasoning is only explanatory (or explicative) in character, not objectively inferential.<sup>65</sup> Thus, the

<sup>63</sup> For example, see Maritain, *Essay on Christian Philosophy*, 55–61.

<sup>64</sup> Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum: Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, ed. Peter Hünermann, 43rd ed., English ed. Robert Fastiggi and Anne Englund Nash (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), no. 3016.

<sup>65</sup> As Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange explains in "Theology and the Life of Faith," in Miner, *Philosophizing in Faith*, 431n19: "We use the expression 'Objectively illative reasoning' for that form of reasoning which leads *to another* [objectively new] truth. For example, from the Divine Intelligence, we can deduce the Divine Freedom through this major: every intelligent being is free. On the contrary, a reasoning is only *explicative* (or at most *subjectively illative*) when it establishes the *equivalence* of two propositions in enunciating the *same truth*. For example, there is the *equivalence* of these two propositions: 'You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell will not prevail over it' = 'the successor of Peter, when he speaks *ex cathedra* to the universal Church, in a matter of faith

theological explanation of the Word's consubstantiality with the Father *is not* a theological *conclusion*, but instead is the revealed truth itself in its profoundest sense, viewing the truth that "the Word was made flesh" immediately in light of "the Word was God." The field of theology does not grow in *extension* by seeing this connection (as it might, for instance, in understanding how it is that Christ's infused knowledge functions, or in arguing on behalf of the physical-instrumental causality of the sacraments). Rather, the believer, reflecting on the profound meaning of the divinity of Christ, then reflects on the mystery of the Hypostatic Union in a light that shines with all the greater *intensity*. The profound character of the Word drawing Christ's human nature to himself is seen all the more radiantly precisely because the meaning of "the Word" is thereby deepened through reflection: "Indeed, *the Word, He who is unchanging and eternally begotten of the Father*, was made flesh." Through the analogy of faith, our poor, discursive human intellects thus come to reflect upon the profound meaning of the Trinity, the redemptive Incarnation, the Church, the sacraments, theosis, and so forth. And this is no mean affair, as Father Garrigou-Lagrance notes:

Even were theology not to deduce *any* theological conclusions, properly so-called, but were only to explain, through a profound metaphysical analysis, the subject and predicate *of revealed truths*, and even were it only to show *their subordination* in order to make us be better aware of the depth, riches, and elevation of the very teaching of the Savior, even in such a case, it would have a considerable importance. And this is how theology prepares for the elaboration of increasingly explicit dogmatic formulations of one and the same dogma, that is, of one and the same assertion or revealed truth, before it is a question of deducing from it *other truths* through an *objectively illative* reasoning. This deepening of the meaning of a fundamental truth sometimes takes centuries, as with the deepening of this expression: "And the Word was made flesh."<sup>66</sup>

Indeed, entire domains of theological conclusions are *virtually* contained within these premises, which must be understood aright if the *scientific task* of theology (i.e., having knowledge that is "conclusion-oriented") is to be undertaken. Indeed, given that the certitude of such scientific knowledge

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and morals, cannot be deceived." Also, see Reginald Garrigou-Lagrance, *Sense of Mystery*, 28n41.

<sup>66</sup> Garrigou-Lagrance, "Theology and the Life of Faith," 430–31.

is derived entirely from the certitude of our knowledge of the principles of that discourse, the *scientific* task of *wisdom* can only benefit from *wisdom's* own task being undertaken within the same domain of knowledge.<sup>67</sup>

Because we are in need of a teacher on this topic, let us turn to Father Doronzo, whose *Theologia Dogmatica*<sup>68</sup> can be considered one of the last truly great manuals of theology written in line with the theological-philosophical school of which Father Garrigou-Lagrange was a member. In *De Revelatione*, the latter theologian distinguishes the tasks falling to theology as a science from those falling to it as a form of wisdom.<sup>69</sup> However, in Doronzo's manual, we find this distinction made with even greater clarity and detail, drawing on other theologians up to the time of his composing of the manual in the 1960s. The general perspective remains the same: *qua wisdom* theology has the specific tasks of *defending* and *meditating upon* its principles. These tasks fall to the theology because it is the highest form of acquired discourse, thus standing at the peak of the orders of natural and supernatural *scientiae* and *sapientiae*. All perspectives must be considered, responded to, and accounted for. Moreover—and here we see a point that will be essential to my closing, synthetic reflections—wisdom is concerned more with the formal and intrinsic illumination, so to speak, radiating from its principles than it is with the various truths *virtually* illuminated by that light. Science cannot exist without certain principles, but in scientific discourse, those principles are appreciated precisely as *the source of conclusions*.<sup>70</sup> The primary concern for *scientia* is the attainment of certain conclusions, and thus its principles are appreciated for the fact that their certitude enables this conclusion-certitude. Wisdom's primary concern is with the principles themselves, which formally contain much more in themselves than what is refracted in the various truths derived from them, just as white light contains more in itself than we could ever get from mixing together the colors of the rainbow derived from it.

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<sup>67</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that, for John of St. Thomas, the sapiential character of theology is discussed when he addresses the question of the certitude of theological knowledge.

<sup>68</sup> For what is discussed here, see Emmanuel Doronzo, *Theologia Dogmatica*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1966), 70–76 (nos. 62–64). Significant elements of the subject we are to discuss here can be found in the partial translation of the text published as Emmanuel Doronzo, *Introduction to Theology*, vol. 1 (Middleburg, VA: Notre Dame Institute, 1973).

<sup>69</sup> Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione*, prolog., ch. 1, a. 1, no. 3.

<sup>70</sup> As has been stated on several occasions before, this was the very conclusion reached by Conley on the basis of his lengthy textual-exegetical study of Aquinas's own works.

However, let us turn to the five categories of sapiential-theological tasks presented to us by Father Doronzo. (We should note, however, that his perspective seems to be primarily that of theology in its systematic/speculative undertakings. We should, moreover, integrate into these tasks those falling to “positive theology” in its study of Scripture, the creeds/councils, magisterial statements, the Fathers, and theologians. However, such important points must await later studies by others skilled in such matters of theological methodology.<sup>71</sup>)

First of all, the theologian can prove the convincing power of faith on the basis of *extrinsic credibility* drawing its probative force from prophecies and miracles (presumably including the “moral miracle” of the Church herself, as well as the sublimity of Christian doctrine). Such arguments aim to show that supernatural faith is rationally credible. One does not thereby arrive at a supernatural judgment of credentia, but one does in fact show how the truths of faith are deserving of rational belief. Such arguments are, according to him and the tradition in which he stands, evident criteria of such rational credibility.<sup>72</sup>

However, the principles themselves can be defended against those who deny them, thus giving us a second kind of sapiential task. By means of an

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<sup>71</sup> To this end, consideration of the following texts would be of interest to the reader: Labourdette, “La théologie,” esp. 26–44; Doronzo, *Theologia Dogmatica*, 399–544; Ambroise Gardeil, *Le donné révélé et la théologie* (Paris: Cerf, 1932), 196–223; Gardeil, *La notion du lieu théologique* (Paris: Lecoffre, 1908); Gardeil, “Lieux Théologiques,” *Dictionnaire de théologie Catholique*, ed. Alfred Vacant (Paris: Letouzey, 1926): 712–47; Albert Lang, *Die loci theologici des Melchior Cano und die Methode des dogmatischen Beweises: ein Beitrag zur theologischen Methodologie und ihrer Geschichte* (Munich: Kösel and Pustet, 1925); Joachim Joseph Berthier, *Tractatus de Loci Theologici* (Turin: Marietti, 1888); Boris Hogenmüller, *Melchioris Cani De Loci Theologico Libri Duodecim: Studien zu Autor und Werk* (Baden: Tetum, 2018). Of related interest, likely also having repercussions for philosophical and scientific methodology, is the much under-studied issue of probable certitude and the *Topics* of Aristotle. As a beginning here, see L.-M. Régis, *L’Opinion selon Aristote* (Paris: Vrin, 1935); Ambroise Gardeil, “La certitude probable,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 5 (1911): 237–66, 441–85; Gardeil, “La topicité,” *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 5 (1911): 750–57. Note, however, Melchior Cano’s immediate inspiration remains within the humanistic rhetorical traditions of his day. (His immediate inspiration seems to have been Rodolphus Agricola’s *De inventione dialectica*. One can find similar treatises *De locis* in the Reformed theology of this era as well.)

<sup>72</sup> This perspective is argued for at length in Garrigou-Lagrange’s *De Revelatione*. See also Joseph Clifford Fenton, *Laying the Foundation: A Handbook of Catholic Apologetics and Fundamental Theology* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road, 2016 [originally published as *We Stand with Christ*]).

argument directed at whatever it is that the person in question actually holds, the theologian aims to infer from a truth that his adversary does indeed admit another truth he or she denies. Thus, one has the example St. Thomas himself avers to, namely, the use of the Old Testament in arguments with Jewish interlocutors and the use of both Old and New Testaments for Christian heretics. Such arguments do not prove the principles of theology, but through such argumentation one shows one's interlocutor that, on his or her own terms, a given principle held on divine faith should not be denied.

The third category of sapiential tasks is the loftiest, for it involves the explanation of the principles themselves. Thus, beyond merely having *direct knowledge* (*intellectus* or, in the case of supernatural knowledge, faith) of its principles or seeing the principles *as certain lights for drawing conclusions* (*scientia*), wisdom involves direct reflection upon and deepening of our grasp of the very principles of that discourse. Doronzo lists three ways that theology explains its own principles. First, it determines and penetrates their meaning, through a gathering and ordering of the documents of Scripture, Tradition, and the magisterium so that the terms of the propositions expressing what is known by faith may be given greater specification. Secondly, the theologian can make use of expository syllogisms to explain the *immediate* content virtually contained within some truth known by faith.<sup>73</sup> Finally, through the analogy of faith, the

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<sup>73</sup> The nature of an expository syllogism is explained thus by Fr. Austin Woodbury, S.M., a student of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange and long-time director of the Aquinas Academy in Sidney, Australia. See Austin Woodbury, *Logic*, The John N. Deely and Anthony Russell Collection, Latimer Family Library, St. Vincent College, Latrobe, PA no. 299 (p. 240): "Let us take this example: 'Judas betrayed Christ. But Judas was an apostle. Therefore, an apostle betrayed Christ.' This is an *expository* syllogism (or, a syllogism of exposition). The middle term is *singular* (not particular). Therefore, there is no passage from one truth to another. Therefore, we do not here have a true illation because the principle 'said of every, said of none' (*dictum de omni, dictum de nullo*), which is supposed by every true illation (since every genuine illation has a universal objective concept as its middle term) here has no place. The expository syllogism is immediately regulated by the principle of triple identity or of the separating third (cf. no. 257Ab). As is stated in *De natura syllogismorum*, a work long apocryphally attributed to St. Thomas: "The expository syllogism is not truly a syllogism but, rather, is a certain sensible pointing-out or analysis made to the sense for this purpose, that the consequence, which is true according to intellectual knowledge, be declared in a sensible medium." Likewise, as is stated in Richard's *Philosophie de raisonnement* (p. 363): "In this case, the syllogistic form plays the same role as does the material object or diagram drawn upon the blackboard as a help in certain demonstrations." (edited for clarity; parenthetical numbered citations are internal references to Woodbury's own text).



theologian can illuminate one truth by comparing it with others (e.g., by comparing the mystery of the Church with the mystery of Christ's Incarnation so as to understand the former in light of the latter). Citing Fathers Charles Journet, Garrigou-Lagrange, and Bartolomé Xiberta, Doronzo states that, "indeed, this is the most excellent office of theology inasmuch as it is a form of wisdom."<sup>74</sup> And given that wisdom is the loftiest analogate of *scientia* "broadly so called," I believe we could add: "This is the most excellent office of theology *tout court*, indeed, the most excellent office of any form of wisdom."

The fourth category of such sapiential tasks is said to aim directly at strengthening reason in its attempt at grasping supernatural truths, making use of either probable arguments (or arguments from suitability) or analogies drawn from natural knowledge. Such arguments may indeed have great strength for the believer, who through them (especially regarding arguments of suitability) aims at the very certitude of the Beatific Vision<sup>75</sup> wherein these truths are seen with evidence. However, because of their non-probative character, such arguments should be limited only to those who hold such truths on faith, and not as arguments presented to non-believers, who would risk being confirmed in their skepticism precisely because of the non-probative character of such arguments.

Finally, the fifth category can be seen as being one step down from the previous. In a purely defensive posture, theology can make use lower disciplines for the end of defending its own principles. He cites the use of metaphysics and logic, though arguably one could add, for example, moral philosophy as another such discipline of a natural order utilized by supernatural theology in defense of the latter. Thus, one can show the philosophical, historical, logical, and so forth untenability of some position stated against the faith. The theologian does not thereby become a philosopher, historian, and so on, but he or she is tasked with knowing enough of his or her topic to be able to instrumentally utilize the discipline in question in such a defense.

Moreover, as a form of discourse that is capable of such detailed self-reflexive knowledge of its principles, theology has a unique relationship of superiority over inferior forms of discourse. Thus, without replacing the tasks of, for example, metaphysics and moral philosophy, it can externally judge the claims of those forms of discourse *in light of its own superior viewpoint*. In this way, anything judged to be irreconcilable with supernatural

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<sup>74</sup> See Doronzo, *Theologia Dogmatica*, no. 62 (p. 1:72).

<sup>75</sup> See Garrigou-Lagrange, *Sense of Mystery*, 168. Also, see Doronzo, *Theologia Dogmatica*, no. 63 (p. 1:73).

theology can be judged as being necessarily false. Moreover, theology can make use of such discourse for its own internal explanations: think merely of natural theology, as well as the philosophy of relation, both as applied in a super-elevated manner in the *Tractatus de deo uno et trino*, or the analogical extension of the philosophical notion of *eudaimonia* as super-elevated to explain the intrinsically supernatural beatitude of the Christian life, or the use of practical signification to explain the reality of the sacraments. With a serene countenance, theology uses these notions precisely by making them exceed themselves in the light of faith.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> On the superanalogy of faith, see: J.-H. Nicolas, *Dieu connu comme inconnu: essai d'une critique de la connaissance théologique* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966), 237–316; Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 256–59. See also Charles Journet, *The Dark Knowledge of God*, trans. James F. Anderson (London: Sheed and Ward, 1948), 61–64 and 69n20: “In *metaphysical analogy*, our intellect ascends from contingent being to its divine Analogue. In the *superanalogy of revelation*, it is God who comes down to us, making us understand that such concepts, proposed for our acceptance by faith, ‘are analogical signs of what is hidden in Him, and of which He makes use to speak of Himself to us in our language’ (Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 298, [citing the superseded translation by Wall]). In the first case, God is known *materially*, being concealed in the radiations, as it were, of His creative activity; in the second case, He [is] known *formally*, for it is God Himself Who then tells us the secret of His own Trinitarian life. But analogy obtains in both cases, because the knowledge we have of God must be mediated to us through concepts, which are patterned after created things. In the act of vision whereby God will be apprehended without the mediation of any concept, there will be no room for analogy.” See also Charles Journet, *The Wisdom of Faith*, trans. R. F. Smith (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1952), 14–32, esp. 16: “So it is when divine faith is born in a heart, when the Light which enlightens every man (John 1:9) penetrates to the innermost being of a person: the man is changed. He may be unconscious of the transformation, like some pauper who has become wealthy but is not yet aware of it, or like a sick person who does not yet know that he has already been cured; but for all that he is no longer what he once was. If now he says, “God is,” [or] “God is good” he does not make such assertions on natural grounds, as a philosopher might if left to the unaided resources of his reason; but—presupposing that he speaks from the depths of his heart and not with his lips only—he makes such assertions in a supernatural way, urged on as it were by the power of affirmation of the Spirit. Such an affirmation, such an activity of the soul does not pertain to the sphere of purely human achievement, but is concerned with the kingdom of God. . . . [And then citing Fr. Ambroise Gardeil’s *Le donné révélé et la théologie*:] “The Church is a society, the sacraments are signs, sanctifying grace is a reality that exists in man, charity is a virtue. . . . All this is true, but it is not at all true if the words are taken in their usual and ordinary meaning as might happen in a first consideration. Rather, to take one example, it is necessary to say what signs are in our natural lives. Have you, in fact, ever seen signs that by their own power efficaciously effect what they signify? And what is it that these sacramental signs

Now, we have perhaps spent so much time reflecting on the question of theological knowledge that the reader likely is wondering, “what about the philosophical problem concerning *scientia* in contrast to *sapientia*?” This is an understandable vexation. However, it is quite often the case that theological reflection pushes philosophy to sharpen itself so that it may be a fitting instrument for discussing supernatural truths. The now-sharpened scalpel then returns to philosophy to be fully explained in the lower form of discourse. Thus, Cajetan pushed the analysis of the formal object *quod* and *quo* of sciences to a high degree of precision precisely in order to explain the difference between theology and faith.<sup>77</sup> In the philosophy of the sciences, this distinction arguably has a great number of ramifications. Likewise, discussions surrounding the redemptive Incarnation required incredible precision in understanding the metaphysics of subsistence, and profound discussions on the nature of practical signification are to be found in arguments surrounding the sacraments. Here, as regards the distinction between *scientia* and *sapientia*, we find ourselves faced with a similar situation. The Catholic theologian is aware of this distinction between science and wisdom in the general Aristotelian noetic. Well aware that the theologian does something more than merely draw conclusions in the virtually revealed light by which formal revelation, so to speak, extends itself, he or she cannot help but push the philosophical point further along: how are these two kinds of knowledge different, precisely as unique kinds of discursive knowledge?

In our natural knowledge of the world around us, there are domains that are “uncircumscribed,” at least within their own order. Endless texts can be gathered from Aristotelian and Aristotelian-Scholastic sources praising metaphysics as a form of wisdom.<sup>78</sup> The unique character of a discipline concerned with “being as being” is deceptively simple, yet it is hidden in the very structure of the expression “being as being.” It presents us with the absolutely most general context for considering a subject matter: “being.” However, the qualifier does not delimit any field of knowledge but, instead, merely reduplicatively returns us to this all-embracing context: “as being.”<sup>79</sup>

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effect? They produce something divine, a participation in our soul of the divine life itself. What a sacrament is in its innermost nature is inaccessible to our minds, just as is the Holy Trinity. And in the final analysis the mystery in both cases is the same.”

<sup>77</sup> An excellent summary of this can be found in Jacques Maritain, *The Philosophy of Nature*, trans. Imelda C. Byrne (New York: Philosophical Library, 1951), 125–35.

<sup>78</sup> See the study by Conley cited above for a gathering of many such texts.

<sup>79</sup> Here, I owe my approach to Robert Sokolowski, “PH 880: Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*,

While I do not wish to make the point at length here, I also believe that this exact dynamic actually begins in natural philosophy, which is not solely scientific in character but, instead, is a first wisdom whose formal object—*ens mobile*—resonates well with the character of the human intellect’s proper object in the current state of union with our body (the quiddity or nature existing in corporeal matter).<sup>80</sup> Knowledge of “being qua being” occurs through an analogical “stretching” that allows us to grasp notions at the third degree of abstraction.<sup>81</sup> However, to begin the process of human knowing, we need that wisdom which is most attuned to our poor little intellects, which, after all, are the lowest among all intellects. Our intellects find a kind of proper (albeit not “complete”) natural wisdom in the domain of sensible quiddities and, so to speak, “being in motion.” Thus, just as metaphysical wisdom’s formal object, “being inasmuch as it is being,” contains within the latitude of the qualifier (“inasmuch as it is being”) the same latitude as what is qualified (“being”), so

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Lecture Notes,” Course Delivered at Catholic University of America, January through May 2014, 28–31. However, as regards natural philosophy’s own independent character, I differ from my beloved teacher (and likewise from those Thomists who adhere to a position akin to that held by the so-called “River Forest” and “Laval” streams of Thomistic thought concerning the relationship between the modern natural sciences and the philosophy of nature).

<sup>80</sup> For a very clear discussion on the distinction between the proper, adequate, and extensive objects of the human intellect, Woodbury is likely helpful: Austin Woodbury, *Natural Philosophy: Treatise 3, Psychology*, The John N. Deely and Anthony F. Russell Collection, Latimer Family Library, St. Vincent College, Latrobe, PA, esp. nos. 902, 904, and 920. These texts are quoted at length in an editorial footnote in Garrigou-Lagrange, *Sense of Mystery* (146n6). To this end, I must merely admit that I accept the language of the later school as found in Garrigou-Lagrange, Simon, Maritain, Woodbury, F.-X. Maquart, et al. The language on this point is not isomorphic with St. Thomas’s own language, but I believe that there is doctrinal continuity, though such a contention lies outside the scope of this current paper’s aims and endeavors.

<sup>81</sup> However, Thomists should always maintain a kind of humility here, given the distinction between our intellect’s *proper object* (*the quiddity or nature existing in corporeal matter*) and its *common object*. The latter is divided into the *mediate object* (that which is accessible through the intellect’s proper object—being as being—*analogically known*) or *extensive object* (that *toward* which the human intellect is *not* opposed by its nature, that for which it has a *negative* obediencial potency). The *proper* and *mediate* objects are included in the *proportionate* object of the intellect. Its *adequate* object includes the *extensive* object as well. For an important summary of this topic in relation to the possibility of metaphysics, see Woodbury, *Natural Philosophy: Psychology*, nos. 936–38, and as regards the possibility of the Beatific Vision, see nos. 960–71. However, these are matters to be discussed in a different venue.

too does our intellect's *proper* object—the quiddity or nature existing in corporeal matter—have a matching form of wisdom which considers the entire domain of mobile being *as mobile*, natural philosophy, as Maritain expresses it: “being under the conditions of poverty and division which affect it in that universe which is the material universe, *being viewed from the outlook of the mystery peculiar to becoming.*”<sup>82</sup>

If two physical sciences disagree about some principle, who can adjudicate the matter but an external discourse (arguably natural philosophy, though metaphysics as well)? But who will come to the defense of a sphere of discourse which embraces all of mobile being like natural philosophy or being in its full latitude as does metaphysics? They must come to their own defense as a proper task of their own discipline (though the latter ultimately is wisdom *simpliciter* in the natural order).

Thus, in *Metaphysics* 3, Aristotle defends the principle of non-contradiction at length, reducing to absurdity those who argue against it. Likewise, the *Physics* opens with a defense of the universally illuminative principles that are matter, form, and privation, as well as the four causes, which are defended on their own account in a manner that transcends various subordinate scientific disciplines. In my closing remarks, I will return to an open issue regarding the question of other sciences in the first order of abstraction. Nonetheless, whatever we may say about the distinction between natural philosophy *as wisdom* and the sciences *as sciences*, we can say that for Aristotle *metaphysics* directly defends its principles in a way that cannot be “handed off” to any higher discipline. In addition to its objectively inferential “conclusion tasks,” metaphysical discourse must turn back upon itself and become critical as well. *Using* tools attained from lower disciplines (such as logic, philosophical psychology, etc.), it defends its principles against those who would deny them, no matter the (natural)

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<sup>82</sup> Maritain, *Philosophy of Nature*, 120; regarding natural philosophy as a first sort of wisdom, see 118–25. For a different outlook from the Laval perspective, see John G. Brungardt, “Charles De Koninck and the Sapiential Character of Natural Philosophy,” *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 90, no. 1 (2016): 1–24. Note, however, that most thinkers following De Koninck are not willing to separate the scientific disciplines off from natural philosophy, nor even the specific treatises of natural philosophy. Here, we must just admit the open feud among Thomists. Some thinkers (such as Cajetan) held that its various branches were specific sciences, though this was not the general position held by others, including John of St. Thomas and members of the so-called Laval school (as well as the River Forest school of Thomists, at least if we take Frs. Benedict Ashley and William Wallace as expositors of this perspective). See Yves R. Simon, “Epistemological Pluralism,” in *Foresight and Knowledge*, ed. Ralph Nelson and Anthony O. Simon (New York: Fordham University Press, 1996), 97n5.



perspective from which they are denied.<sup>83</sup> Thus, among Thomists of no small repute in the twentieth century, we can find *critical metaphysics* as a course topic to be covered as an integral part of metaphysics. In their best forms, such concerns were concerned with this kind of “saptiential criticism,” not merely with a kind of “epistemological criteriology,” as one may find in certain Scholastic manuals at the time.<sup>84</sup> Writers like F.-X.

<sup>83</sup> See Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione*, prolog., a. 1, no. 3 (p. 15): “St. Thomas compares Sacred Theology and metaphysics inasmuch as they are supreme sciences in different orders. He says that because in the natural order metaphysics is not only science but a supreme science, or, wisdom, it not only deduces conclusions from its principles but also ‘disputes with those denying its principles.’ Thus, it defends against skeptics the ontological value of the first principles of reason, as well as the real value of the supreme criterion or motive of natural knowledge, namely objective evidence. Consequently, in the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle defends in particular the real value of the supreme principle of reason, namely, the principle of [non-]contradiction by resolving the objections of those who deny it, namely Heraclitus and the Sophists. Hence, this supreme principle stands forth not only as the logical rule of our reason but also as the ontological rule of extramental being itself, which is the object of metaphysics.

This defensive part of metaphysics can be called critical metaphysics or epistemology (ἐπιστήμη, science, λόγος discourse), that is, the science concerning the real value of our scientific knowledge. This critique, which is frequently set forth at the end of logic, is thus transferred from logic to ontology, and since it now treats not only of *ens rationis*, which is the subject of logic, but rather, of extramental being as it is knowable by us, it now pertains *per se* to metaphysics, which is the science of being. Hence, Aristotle treated of it not in logic but in the fourth book of the *Metaphysics*. Critical metaphysics indeed *uses* logic in order to defend the ontological value of our natural knowledge—but now in relation to extramental being. Hence, it can be called fundamental philosophy, for it treats of the objective foundation of our natural certitude. Thus, the defense of the first principles *per se* pertains to metaphysics inasmuch as it is not only science but is the supreme science. I say *per se* and not only *per accidens*, for even if there were nobody denying them, namely the skeptics, it would be necessary to scientifically determine the objective foundation or ultimate resolution of our natural certitude” (my translation).

<sup>84</sup> See the discussion on this in Woodbury, *Defensive Metaphysics*, nos. 5–10 (St. Vincent College, Latrobe, PA: The John N. Deely and Anthony Russell Collection). Woodbury also seems to owe much to the lecture notes of Fr. Pirotta, whose *Metaphysica Defensiva seu Critica* was never published. Moreover, as in much of his work, Maquart’s *Elementa Philosophia* remains the textual backbone of Woodbury’s own text, which then builds upon it in important and significant ways. See F.-X. Maquart, *Elementa philosophia*, vol. 3, part 1 *Metaphysica defensiva seu Critica* (Paris: Andreas Blot, 1938). Indeed, perhaps the whole disagreement between Gilson on the one hand and Maritain/Garrigou-Lagrange on the other concerning “critical realism” comes down to a misunderstanding of vocabulary, for the latter meant “critical” in the sense discussed above, not in the sense of a quasi-Cartesian criteriology. See:

Maquart and Austin Woodbury (who stand in line with Maritain and Garrigou-Lagrange) focused on the “critical” tasks of metaphysics related to human knowledge.<sup>85</sup> However, I suspect in light of the tasks that we have discussed in the theological order (as well as in light of the general claim that *sapientia* as such must defend its principles), there are many other *defensive* and *meditative* tasks that fall to *sapientia* in the order of natural knowledge as well, though a phenomenology and enumeration of these tasks remains as a kind of research project for the future.

### A Suggested Way Forward

It is tempting to see wisdom as being one more species of scientific knowledge, albeit the loftiest such species. Indeed, despite the fact that John of St. Thomas is not unaware of the fact that wisdom contains science, one still has the sense that he would hold that science and wisdom are part of a single genus of *generally scientific* (i.e., conclusion-oriented) knowledge. Thus, we find him saying in q. 26, a. 1, of the material logic of his *Cursus philosophicus*: “Wisdom is truly an inferential habitus using inferential proof and proceeding from [*per se nota*] principles: thus, it belongs to the

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Étienne Gilson, *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*, trans. Mark A. Wauk (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986); Gilson, *Methodical Realism: A Handbook for Beginners*, trans. Philip Trower (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011); Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, 75–144; Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Order of Things: The Realism of the Principle of Finality*, trans. Matthew K. Miner (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Academic, 2020), pt. 2, ch. 1.

<sup>85</sup> Woodbury, *Defensive Metaphysics*, no. 17 (edited): “Therefore, there is a twofold consideration of being [in metaphysics]. On the one hand, being inasmuch as it is being is considered absolutely according to itself; on the other, it is considered according as it is knowable to us. The former consideration is named OSTENSIVE metaphysics, for it demonstrates conclusions regarding being. Ostensive metaphysics embraces two parts, according as it (a) first deals with BEING IN COMMON, and this treatise is called ONTOLOGY, and (b) secondly, as it deals with the CAUSE OF BEING, which is God (and this treatise is called NATURAL THEOLOGY). The consideration of being according as it is knowable to us is named DEFENSIVE or CRITICAL METAPHYSICS, for it defends or critically vindicates our knowledge of being. Defensive metaphysics embraces two parts. On the one hand, it considers WHETHER being is in our mind through knowledge (which is the *critical* treatment of the NATURE of knowledge). This part is called CRITICAL NOETICS. On the other hand, it considers HOW being is in our mind through knowledge (which is the critical treatment of the truth of knowledge, which is the PROPERTY thereof). This part is called CRITERIOLOGY” (the use of all capitals for certain terms is a convention original to Woodbury).

system of the sciences.”<sup>86</sup> I suspect that this same temptation to hold that there is a kind of generic unity between science and wisdom<sup>87</sup> is what led to the disagreement between Maritain and Father Ramírez discussed above. To the degree that wisdom is viewed as being *generically and univocally* the same as science, the temptation is to see it as knowledge *of conclusions* through principles. However, one wonders if there is need to develop (obviously, in continuity<sup>88</sup>) the doctrine of the *Posterior analytics* so as to make clear the methodological distinction between wisdom and science. Otherwise, one must admit that wisdom is not something eminently containing *scientia* and *intellectus* within it and must, instead, say with Monsignor Sokolowski’s interpretation of Hobbes: “Wisdom is not different from science, not something else than science. [It is] just a lot of science.”

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<sup>86</sup> For full fairness even to this text, however, see John of St. Thomas, *Material Logic*, q. 26, a. 1: “Concerning the difference between the habitus of wisdom and that of science, let us merely quote the sentences of St. Thomas (Op. 70 [Exposition on Boethius’s treatise on the Trinity] , q. 2, art. 2 ad 1): “The distinction between wisdom and science does not have the character of an opposition; rather, the concept of wisdom results from an addition to the concept of science. As Aristotle says (Eth. 6. 7), wisdom is the head of all the sciences and controls all of them inasmuch as it is concerned with the highest principles.’ Thus, the function of wisdom is to judge and resolve by ultimate cause and first principles. On this see also *ST I-II*, q. 57, a. 2, and *ST I*, q. 1, a. 6. Owing to the universality of the principles from which it proceeds, wisdom has also the property of reflecting upon principles; it reflects both upon its own principles and upon those of the other sciences, not in such a way as to prove them, but in such a way as to explain and defend them. Wisdom is said to include understanding as well as science because it extends even to the principles whose habitus is called understanding. But wisdom is truly an inferential habitus using inferential proof and proceeding from principles: thus, it belongs to the system of the sciences” (Simon, Glanville, and Hollenhorst trans., p. 509).

<sup>87</sup> This is a position that we find in Thomists like Bañez and Gonet (but arguably also in John of St. Thomas), holding that science and wisdom have a generic unity. See Machula, “Theology as Wisdom,” nn52–54. I believe that it is better to say that *resolutive-analytic knowledge* (not *scientific knowledge*) is divided into *science* and *wisdom*. Moreover, in light of our discussions, it does not seem that such a division is that of a genus into two species but as two analogates related through proper proportionality, with the primary case being that of *wisdom*. This seems to be the case because the *unifying, universal* notion of *resolutive-analytic knowledge* is not said univocally and in the same sense of the analogates in question, but rather is affirmed as being *conclusion-oriented* in the case of *science* whereas it is *principles-oriented* in the case of *wisdom*. See Conley, *Theology of Wisdom*, 33–35. Granted, I am presenting this here as an open opinion for consideration, not as a decisive conclusion, nor as an exegetical or historical claim.

<sup>88</sup> This is what, ultimately, places me in the camp of those like Gagnebet and Labourdette, not Charlier, Chenu, Schillebeeckx, et al. (see notes 4 and 6 above).

For my own part, I am tempted to go the direction of Cajetan: *scientia* formally-eminently contains *intellectus* as part of its discursive task, and *sapientia* formally-eminently contains both *scientia* and *intellectus*. He did not draw this interpretive conclusion in a vacuum, for it seems indeed to be suggested by *ST* I-II, q. 57, a. 2, ad 2:

Whence, if we consider the point aright, these three virtues [i.e., *intellectus*, *scientia*, and *sapientia*] are distinct from each other according to a certain ordering and not merely as being on equal footing with each other. This is what also happens in the case of potential wholes having one part that is more perfect than another (e.g., as the rational soul is more perfect than the sensitive soul, which itself is more perfect than plant souls). For, in this manner, science depends upon understanding as upon what is more principle. And both of these depend upon wisdom as upon what is most principle, for wisdom contains under itself both understanding and science as rendering judgments concerning the conclusions of the sciences, as well as concerning their principles. (translation mine)

*Life* is a properly proportional analogous notion, formally applied to its analogates. In embodied creatures, it is found realized in vegetative life, sense life, and rational life. Indeed, it is a pure perfection which is realized in God. In all the cases of its realization, it denotes a way of existing that involves self-actuation in some form (albeit one that is subject to a host of efficient, final, and formal dependencies in all created beings).<sup>89</sup> And yet how varied that self-actuation is in each analogate! In the plant, it does not cross the threshold of material-subjective reception of forms. Nonetheless, the food becomes something it never was precisely because of the vegetative activity of nutrition: food *for* the plant's life.<sup>90</sup> In the sensate animal, it involves actions based on the self-determination of simple voluntary actions. Animal action is performed within the objective domain of the animal's estimative power, something new in comparison with the "mere" givens of the surrounding physical environment, considered in its brute

<sup>89</sup> See *ST* I, q. 18, a. 2.

<sup>90</sup> On this important though often-underrated point, see: Jacques Maritain, "Philosophie de l'organisme: Notes sur la fonction de nutrition," in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 6 (Fribourg, Switzerland: Éditions Universitaires, 1984), 981–1000; Ambrose Little, "Are You What You Eat or Something More?," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 92, no. 1 (2018): 1–20; Leon Kass, *The Hungry Soul: Eating and the Perfecting of Our Nature* (Washington, DC: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 17–56.

physicality.<sup>91</sup> In man, the activity of life involves a free, intellectual agent who can pursue the end precisely as an end. Moreover, through speculative knowledge, man rests in the other *qua other*. In God, the actuality of life is utterly pure and utterly immanent: the self-knowing life of the First Cause and, as we know through faith, the circumincessive life of the Trinity.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, *ad extra*, his activity does not add to his life either; it solely *gives* in utter largesse and mercy.

Through all these analogates, the notion of life is not susceptible to generic unity, but instead has only an analogical unity. The limitations befalling the lower analogates are denied of the higher ones. And yet, the higher ones embrace all of the perfection of the lower ones, albeit eminently. The animal to some degree can be said to determine itself in its passionate activity, and yet it does not play on the keyboard of the virtues as does man, who elevates the life of the passions to the life of reason and of grace.<sup>93</sup> Finally, all finite living beings truly and formally live, though with nowhere near the purity of he who formally and eminently is Self-Subsistent Life in the eminence of the Deity.

The same kind of analogical unity can be found in the case of science and wisdom. The knowledge had through *scientia* is not mere opinion. It is certain knowledge through causes. The principles of a given *scientia*, themselves known through *intellectus*, are of supreme interest to the science. Without them, there would be no science. And yet, *qua scientia*, its gaze is primarily turned toward the virtual riches of those principles, as reflected in the conclusions known scientifically through objectively inferential discourse.

For its own part, wisdom or *sapientia* is indeed a discursive and certain form of speculative knowledge. While it does indeed appreciate the scientific task of drawing conclusions (something asserted in many places in Aquinas, as is well attested in studies cited above), it has a loftier task

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<sup>91</sup> The most excellent recent studies on this topic can be found in the insightful work of Daniel D. De Haan: "Perception and the *Vis cogitativa*: A Thomistic Analysis of Aspectual, Actional, and Affectional Percepts," *American Catholic Philosophical Society* 88, no. 3 (2014): 397–437; "Moral Perception and the Function of the *Vis Cogitativa* in Thomas Aquinas's Doctrine of Antecedent and Consequent Passions," *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 25 (2014): 289–330. Also, for an excellent overview, see Julien Peghaire, "A Forgotten Sense: the *Cogitativa* according to St. Thomas Aquinas," *Modern Schoolman* 20 (1943): 123–40, 210–29.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. *Summa contra gentiles* IV, ch. 11.

<sup>93</sup> On the properly proportional character of life, see Simon, "Order in Analogical Sets," 148–49.



yet (something also asserted by Aquinas and noted by the same authors): defense and meditation on the very principles of that discourse, as well as judgment concerning “lower” domains of knowledge. Thus, the discursive task of *sapientia* is not the same as that of *scientia*, though the former does include the latter.<sup>94</sup>

As Yves Simon notes concerning the nature of analogy, analogical predication requires both “yes” and “no.”<sup>95</sup> Yes, science and wisdom are both kinds of discursive knowledge, certain through the principles involved therein, and interested in the illuminative capacity of those principles. They are united, analogically, by what we might call their *resolutive-analytic* character. This is the *ratio analagata* uniting them as a set of analogates. However, no, wisdom is not primarily concerned with those conclusions. Its first task, the one that magnetizes all of its undertakings, is the formal richness of its principles. Without this magnetization, one will lose the formal organization of wisdom, embracing only the *ratio* of *scientia* which is *formally and eminently* contained in the whole that is *wisdom*. One would thus fall victim to an intellectual trap which Father Garrigou-Lagrange himself admitted was a temptation in his own youth: “As a young student, . . . I was so engrossed in the many and varied questions of critica and metaphysics that I was in danger of losing my simplicity and elevation of mind and balanced judgment.”<sup>96</sup>

The intellectual dispositions of science and wisdom represent ways that our poor human minds “expand” the insights that we have through *intellectus*. We are not angels. We do not see conclusions in a single glance at principles. Our judgments are spread out through ratiocination (whether that reasoning be objectively inferential, explanatory, or expository in character). We may seek to know the truths that are virtually contained within our principles, thus turning our attention primarily toward the conclusions of our discourse. Or we may turn our gaze to the richness of our principles, not looking to understand them precisely as illuminating some kind of objective inference (as is the case for scientific inference, properly so called), but instead, through an appreciation of their wholly intrinsic truth, using reason only to explain one principle in light of another principle, or through the use of examples to show the richness of

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<sup>94</sup> The “*scientia* aspects” of sapiential bodies of knowledge themselves, however, do not go without change too. The drawing of conclusions is itself magnetized by *sapientia*’s own finalities.

<sup>95</sup> See Simon, “Order in Analogical Sets,” 18–26.

<sup>96</sup> Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Priest in Union with Christ*, trans. Rev. G. W. Shelton (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1954), 94.

the principle *formally in itself* and not as virtually containing the conclusions to be drawn therefrom.<sup>97</sup> Wisdom is, above all, contemplative. Thus, we can see both kinds of discourse trying to strive for a kind of synthetic unity—more disparate in the orderly conclusions of science, more united in sapiential meditation on the intrinsic intelligibility of the principles in wisdom.<sup>98</sup> Or, to put it another way, science is like looking at the light *as illuminating the whole valley*, whereas wisdom stands in awe with the light on high. It is tempting to be in awe of the extensive grandeur of principles which can illuminate *scientiae*, looking upon this “wise person” as a kind of simple and impoverished fool, ever babbling on about the same few principles over and over. Yet he or she is precisely the person whose apparent poverty more closely mirrors the infinite wealth of him who knows all things in the light of one, utterly simple gaze.

I think that we can see these two modes of attending to reasoned-out details in the difference between philosophical knowledge and scientific knowledge in the modern period. More open to the position of Maritain and Simon than to that of the Laval school (as well as the River Forest school) on this question,<sup>99</sup> I think that the modern sciences are more than a dialectic preamble to the philosophy of nature. Instead, I think that they are bodies of knowledge that draw *truly certain* conclusions, though within *limited* domains. Thus, they are forms of *scientia*. However, they are primarily concerned with the fact that their certain, *per se nota* prin-

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<sup>97</sup> See John of St. Thomas, *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, 145–46 (*Cursus theologicus* I-II, q. 70, disp. 18, a. 4, nos. 46–47): “Wisdom proceeds from principles in such a way that it reflects upon the principles, not indeed proving them, but by explaining and defending them from contrary arguments. . . . [He first explains how one truth of faith can be proven from another.] Similarly, one principle proves another, not by an essential and intrinsic medium, since principles are self-evident propositions which need no medium of demonstration. Rather, one principle explains another by an extrinsic medium, by an explanation from a similar principle or an example. This may also occur when many inadequate reasons mutually concur in one nature or essence in such a way that one may be inferred from the other. Yet each ought to pertain to the integrity of the essence, its definition or principle. . . . Wisdom, therefore, reflects upon its principles not by proving them through middle terms or from intrinsic principles, as it might prove conclusions, but by explaining them from other principles used as extrinsic or similar mediums, or within the same nature by inferring one inadequate reason from another.”

<sup>98</sup> For matters summarized in this paragraph, see R. M. Jolivet, “L’intuition intellectuelle,” *Revue thomiste* 15 (1932): 52–71 (esp. 63–66). Also, while not in agreement with my own approach in this text, I gained much from Jan Aertsen’s work on the question of *resolutio* in Aquinas (“Method and Metaphysics: The *via resolutionis* in Thomas Aquinas,” *The New Scholasticism* 63, no. 4 [1989]: 405–18).

<sup>99</sup> See note 80 above.

principles *enable the drawing of these certain conclusions*. Thus, they are subject to an ongoing dynamic of internal structural change that one does not experience in philosophical disciplines. The once-upon-a-time popular topic of “paradigm shifts” in the sciences<sup>100</sup> seems to my eyes to be nothing other than a recognition of the fact that, *within its own domain*, scientific knowledge at best can critique its own principles as providing light for its conclusions. This represents a real form of critique, but it is not the same as the sapiential meditation upon principles for their own sake. To cite once more a passage from Conley to which I have referred above: “While science is interested in principles only insofar as they are related to its conclusions, wisdom not only considers conclusions in the light of principles; it also judges the principles themselves, evaluating and defending their content.”<sup>101</sup> In reality, such “paradigm shifts” represent the reorganization of a discipline that was perhaps not oriented around the deepest possible articulation of its subject and principles, in whose light the architecture of the science’s objective illation must be reorganized.<sup>102</sup> Methodological exactness prevents the “scientist” from undertaking a full defense of these principles *in themselves*, against all other disciplines (at least in a given order of abstraction). For this, a philosophical eye is needed—namely, the sapiential eye of the *philosophy of nature*.

In line with our intellect’s connatural, proper object, the philosophy of nature (at least for speculative knowledge<sup>103</sup>) represents the first *sapientia*

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<sup>100</sup> See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 4th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

<sup>101</sup> See Conley, *Theology of Wisdom*, 77.

<sup>102</sup> Thus, we would have a *natural* analogy to what John of St. Thomas notes about the peculiar state of acquired supernatural, theological wisdom. Given that one holds the premises of such discourse on faith, such knowledge has a *certain* foundation. However, because of the lack of *evidential* knowledge of the supernatural mysteries included in what is known *de fide* (above all the mystery of the Trinity and that of the redemptive Incarnation, which illuminate all the rest), theology exists *in a diminished state*. In the case of acquired, supernatural theology, the deficiency is on account of the subjective state of knower *in via*. However, for the sciences, there is a possible objective deficiency. So long as a scientific domain remains explanatory within a range of principles and conclusions (e.g., classical mechanics), it would seem that we have a kind of imperfect science, though one that truly organizes itself around *per se nota* (and posited *per se nota*) principles. *Natural philosophy* provides the conceptual scaffolding that thus guarantees the fully scientific state of the natural sciences themselves. I note all of this as a pointer to further reflection and discussion, not as a definitive solution of the matter.

<sup>103</sup> There are further topics to be considered concerning the sapiential and scientific aspects of our moral, technical-aesthetic, and logical knowledge. However, we can do only so much in an article that is already quite lengthy! I have undertaken some

wherein the various sciences should be critiqued within the *relatively* all-embracing domain of *ens mobile*. However, philosophically speaking, the true and full critique of all principles and domains of knowledge comes with the truly all-embracing domain of metaphysics, where everything is formally judged in terms of the first principles of all reality and thought, which themselves are also meditated upon and defended.<sup>104</sup> Finally, beyond this, the broadest domain of acquired wisdom opened to us through the supernatural light of faith is that of acquired supernatural theology, which provides the highest possible principles in whose light everything else may be judged.<sup>105</sup>

Of course, all forms of wisdom have their own conclusions to draw in a way following the manner of scientific knowledge.<sup>106</sup> Supernatural acquired theology has *many* concerns with virtually revealed conclusions to be drawn through objective inference. Moreover, to be assured of the scientific tasks of metaphysics, we need only think of natural theology's quest for deducing conclusions regarding the divine attributes. Finally, in natural philosophy, discussions of topics including motion, time, and the nature of divisible continua all provide ample domains for objectively linking properties to their proper subjects—thus drawing scientific conclusions through objective inference. And yet, something is missing if such forms of wisdom are not *first and foremost* concerned with the intrinsic, *formal* intelligibility of their principles. The gaze of *scientia* is turned toward the refracted, *virtual* riches of its principles, like one who is entranced by white light because of its power to be split into the hues of the rainbow. The gaze of *sapientia* is fixed upon the very riches of its principles, first and foremost

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reflections on these matters in Matthew K. Miner, "Beyond Non-Being: Thomistic Metaphysics on Second Intentions, *Ens morale*, and *Ens artificiale*," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 91, no. 3 (2017): 353–79.

<sup>104</sup> And indeed, for almost the entire Thomist school, this alone seems to have been considered wisdom. Here, I believe that Maritain was right to make all the precisions that he did regarding the character of the sciences in distinction from natural philosophy, specifying the formal objects with great care so that we could see the truly sapiential character of the latter. It is with no small trepidation, however, that I separate myself from the school on a point of such importance.

<sup>105</sup> This same distinction that I have drawn here seems to have been held by Fr. Conley; see *Theology of Wisdom*, 29–39 and 77.

<sup>106</sup> One rightly wonders, however, whether such scientific knowledge itself would take on a new character as "the *scientia* exercised *within sapientia*," just as the *rationes* of simply simple perfections take on a new formal character in God, such that there is only an analogical unity between the *rationes* as applied to created analogates and the uncreated First Analogate. I say this by way of suggestion for further reflection, not by way of certain conclusion.

concerned with making clear the fact that their white light is something that qualitatively surpasses the combined power of however many colors it might be refracted into, though also indeed recognizing that white light contains such manifold and varied riches. This concern is precisely what begets wisdom's duty to defend and meditate on its principles. And whereas science rejoices in the certitude and truth that its conclusions draw from its principles, wisdom rejoices in the certitude and truth of its principles as an ever-rich and refulgent, illuminative center for all of its meditations, *formally* surpassing that which is *virtually* contained in it. The wise man is alone with the light.

To undertake theology, metaphysics, or even (perhaps) the philosophy of nature primarily with an eye to the conclusions drawn in that form of discourse would represent an abasement of those forms of sapiential knowledge. The great dignity of wisdom is the fact that its gaze is primarily fixed on the very lights from which all of its own conclusions may be derived: its principles. To try to capture this difference one last time, allow me to close with a quote from Father Garrigou-Lagrange wherein he describes Father Ambroise Gardeil in terms that capture the latter's sapiential outlook,<sup>107</sup> something that every theologian and philosopher should strive to imitate:

Fr. Gardeil was one of those people who believe that the living explanation of St. Thomas's *Summa theologiae* consists above all in emphasizing the great principles that illuminate everything and in drawing attention to the loftiest summits in this mountain range, that is, to roughly fifty articles that provide the key to the entire work. *He passed upward from conclusions to principles more than he descended from principles to conclusions.* Listening to some of his courses, one indeed understood why it is commonly said that St. Thomas learned more in prayer than in study—not, perhaps, that he would have grasped new conclusions, but because it is in prayer that the soul is lifted up to contemplation of the superior principles that have been often cited but whose elevation and radiation had not been yet seen well enough. One then perceives in an instant that they virtually contain entire treatises,<sup>108</sup> and in this way, the unification of knowledge is brought about, something that is far more

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<sup>107</sup> Gardeil, however, in line with the vocabulary of his age, does at times present theology in primarily scientific terms.

<sup>108</sup> And, indeed, far more than this: an intrinsic luminosity which far exceeds *all* the conclusions that could ever be drawn in those treatises.



precious than the material multiplicity of conclusions.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, “In memoriam: Le Père A. Gardeil,” *Revue thomiste* 64 (1931): 800 (my translation; emphasis added). In the course of editing this work, I received an unsolicited note online from a Mr. Geoff McInnes, who made me aware of Fr. Muñiz’s little work, which is so important concerning this topic. Also, thanks are owed to Dr. John Kirwan for making me aware of the Gagnebet–Charlier disagreement, which echoes so many of my own concerns. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not thank the following people for various insightful comments and conversations related to the current paper, appreciatively recognizing their discerning eyes, without enlisting them in support of my own particular (and perhaps peculiar) positions: an unknown yet quite helpful reviewer for *Nova et Vetera* (English), Mr. James Bryan, Dr. Thomas Howes, Fr. Christiaan Kappes, and Fr. Cajetan Cuddy, O.P., and Brett Kendall.