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TRANSFORMING ARISTOTELIAN PHILOSOPHY: ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS IN AQUINAS' EARLY ANTHROPOLOGY AND ESCHATOLOGY[1]

INTRODUCTION: POSSIBILITIES OF TRANSFORMATION

When scientific ideas, conceptions, and theories travel, they change. This seems to hold particularly true when they travel across diachronic or cultural borders.[2] The scientific theory of atomism in natural philosophy and natural science is probably one of the best-known examples for such a change. Atomism maintains that the universe is composed of indivisible, elemental bodies or particles. Beginning with Leucippus and Democritus, via Epicurus and Lucretius,

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[1] In this study, I refer to primary sources with the following abbreviations: *CS = Commentary on the Sentences* (Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great), *CUP = Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, *d = Dionysiaca* (pseudo-Dionysius), *DA = De anima* (Aristotle), *DN = De divinis nominibus* (pseudo-Dionysius), *LCDA = Long Commentary on Aristotle's De anima* (Averroes), *LDA = Liber de anima* (Avicenna), *Met = Metaphysics* (Avicenna), *NE = Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle), *PA = Posterior Analytics* (Aristotle), *QDDA = Quaestiones disputatae de anima* (Thomas Aquinas), *SCG = Summa contra gentiles* (Thomas Aquinas), *STh = Summa theologiae* (Thomas Aquinas). All other primary sources are referred to by their full titles. All translations of the original texts are mine unless otherwise indicated.

[2] Cf. Ragep & Ragep 1996. Particularly Ragep & Ragep's lucid introduction to their volume (1996, xv-xxxiv) has inspired my work for this paper. The conceptual scheme they propose for "appropriated transmission" and "selective transmission and transformations" has influenced my analysis of Thomas Aquinas' reception of Alexander of Aphrodisias. As this conceptual scheme seemed, however, to miss the points of a connectedness to the original research question versus a dissociation from the original research question, I have taken the liberty to introduce my two alternative conceptual schemes of "anchored and dissociated transformations" here.

then to the Muslim *mutakallimūn* and *As'arites* (among the latter most famously al-Ghazālī), and eventually to Early Modern Europe with Pierre Gassendi and Robert Boyle, Antoine Lavoisier and John Dalton, atomism has had a uniquely long history across both diachronic and cultural borders. During this long history, it has undergone enormous theoretical revisions and refinements, scientific progress and advancement, and foundational methodological shifts and alterations. The strongest of these is arguably the shift from the ancient and Islamic debates, which relied on metaphysical speculations, to the modern debates, which arose in seventeenth and eighteenth-century physics and chemistry and have relied on scientific experimental results ever since.[3] What seems most remarkable about atomism is, however, that despite all these shifts and transformations, it has always been anchored in one stable research question: Whether nature is exclusively composed of elementary particles, and if so in what way precisely. This question seems to be of such constitutive significance to the theory of atomism that it is ultimately responsible for its persistence within relatively stable boundaries of an original scientific context, first in physics and, from the nineteenth century onwards, in the closely related science of chemistry. Persistence in an original or closely related scientific context, and attachment to a native research question can, so it seems, be considered to constitute the main grounds for an "anchored transformation" of a scientific idea.

Yet anchored transformations present us with only one possibility of change for scientific ideas, conceptions and theories. Another, similarly wide-spread, but much more elusive change seems to occur when scientific ideas travel across scientific boundaries, departing, so to speak, from their original context, and taking hold in an entirely new and initially foreign scientific one. A well-known example among historians of science of this kind of change is Charles Darwin's Tree of Life. In the fourth chapter of his seminal 1859 work *On the Origin of Species by Natural Selection*, Darwin makes use of a tree diagram to illustrate the divergence of species over time, and to highlight a common historical ancestor in what he called a hypothetical species.[4] In Darwin's time, tree diagrams were clearly not anchored in evolutionary biology;[5] indeed, Darwin was the first to

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[3] Cf. PYLE 1997; CHALMERS 2014.

[4] Cf., for instance, REZNICK & RUSE 2010, 228–231. A special thanks to Judy Kaplan (MPIWG, Berlin) for this reference and insightful discussions on these matters.

[5] It seems that the first thinker ever to employ a tree diagram to visualise the Aristotelian system of *differentiae* was the last great Roman philosopher Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius in the sixth century. The *stemma* in his Latin *In Isagogen Porphyrii commentum* even invites his readers explicitly to consult the diagram for a better understanding of the text. But it was not before Peter of Spain's revival in the thirteenth century that Boethius' tree diagram was developed further. For more details concerning these matters, cf. Jean-Baptiste Piggin's extraordinarily detailed website http://www.piggin.net/stemmahistoryTOC.htm.

employ them for this new and emerging scientific theory. Yet the formal aspects of his application of a tree diagram — namely, the connection of observed phenomena to an inferred cause in history — were already present in a number of different contexts, both scientific and non-scientific. For an early example — if not the earliest in the Western tradition — one need only think of the Tree of Jesse which displays the biblical ancestry of Christ; or, in later centuries, of family trees which proved highly popular among noble families in the early and high Middle Ages.[6] Yet also for the generations of natural scientists before Darwin, tree diagrams proved highly popular in developing the so-called "palaetiological sciences" of geology, philology, and comparative archaeology.[7] The essential value of Darwin's application of the tree diagram to his new theory of evolution thus lies in dissociating it from its previous contexts, and in applying it to an entirely new and unrelated one. Yet although Darwin links the tree diagram to such a new context, its formal characteristics resist this change and persist:[8] for just as in the family trees and in the palaetiological sciences, Darwin's tree diagram accounts for the hypothetical historical source of observed members. It therefore seems to be this very stability of formal characteristics which constitutes the main grounds on which a scientific idea can undergo what I would call a "dissociated transformation." By stabilising and emphasising formal aspects, scientific ideas can be dissociated from their native scientific contexts, reassociated with new scientific contexts, and thus re-connected to new research questions.

When they are considered in isolation, both kinds of transformation seem to make for ubiquitous occurrences in the history of philosophy and the history of science alike.[9] Yet it seems a much more seldom occurrence that both of them concur in the thought of one and the same thinker, let alone with regard

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[6] The text of the Vulgate in Isaiah 11:1 reads as follows: "et egredietur virga de radice Iesse et flos de radice eius ascendet." Medieval artists combined this text with Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:1 and Luke 3:23–38. The earliest extant depiction of the *Tree of Jesse* is found in the Vyšehrad Codex from 1086; cf. Watson 1934. For medieval family trees and their purposes, cf. Thiele 1998–2008. A special thanks to Susana Bullido del Barrio for pointing out and explaining the history of the *Tree of Jesse* to me.

[7] Cf. Whewell (2001, 637–708), who on p. 637 defines the palaetiological sciences as follows: "[…] the class of *Sciences*, which I designate as *Palaetiological* are those in which the object is to ascend from the present state of things to a more ancient condition, from which the present is derived by intelligible causes."

[8] Cf. Ragep & Ragep 1996, xix-xxiv, in particular xxi. I should note that I have altered and potentially extended the use of Ragep & Ragep's term here to include scientific decontextualisation within one culture (and not across cultures as Ragep & Ragep suggest). Cf. also Sabra 1996, 3–27.

[9] Some inspiring examples that treat of these kinds of transformations implicitly are found in Ragep & Ragep 1996; Daston & Gallison 2007.

to one and the same scientific idea, conception, or theory. This, I contend, is precisely what happens in the case of the famous medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). For it is he who advances both kinds of transformation of Alexander of Aphrodisias' conceptions of the human soul, intellect, and ultimate human happiness.[10]

As is well known, almost all ancient Greek and Arabic Peripatetic works following the footsteps of Aristotle's psychology and ethics were opposed to some aspects of traditional Christian doctrines of the human soul, intellect, and ultimate happiness.[11] Alexander of Aphrodisias — the most influential Hellenistic commentator on the *corpus Aristotelicum*, who flourished around 200 AD — presents no exception to this picture. His Peripatetic interpretation of Aristotle's works can, in fact, be considered highly incompatible with Christian doctrine. Not surprisingly, therefore, as we will see, Aquinas criticises many aspects of his thought concerning the human soul, intellect, and happiness. Yet at the same time, Aquinas explicitly approves of some aspects of Alexander's thought concerning ultimate human happiness when he presents his own conception of the Christian doctrine of the face-to-face beatific vision — a doctrine that was unknown to Alexander and contrary to his understanding of ultimate human happiness. Initially, then, Aquinas' treatment of Alexander's thought appears contradictory and suggests that he either changed his mind or that he was inconsistent in his reading of Alexander.[12] Yet I contend that neither is the case.

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[10] Concerning the use of Aristotle's *libri naturales* at the University of Paris before 1255, cf. Lohr 1997, 251–269. Concerning the constitutions of the *Ordo Praedicatorum*, which heavily regulated the use and study of secular literature, cf. "Constitutiones antiquae Ordinis Praedicatorum II.28" 1965, 361.7–11.

[11] The most famous indication of this matter is the history of the early thirteenth-century condemnations, which was originally enforced with the 1210 condemnations of David of Dinant's pantheistic interpretation of Aristotle. This attitude toward Aristotle's works was reinforced several times (cf. Buffon 2004, 449–476), the last time on 13 April 1231, when the Bull *Parens scientiarum* was issued by Pope Gregory IX. It prohibited the Parisian Masters of Arts from drawing upon Aristotle's *libri naturales* until "they had been purged of their errors." Equally, it advised the Parisian Masters of Theology to abstain from openly drawing on these works, as evident from the following passage (*CUP* 1889, I.79, 138): "Ad hec jubemus, ut magistri artium […] libris illis naturalibus, qui in Concilio provinciali ex certa causa prohibiti fuere, Parisius non utantur, quousque examinati fuerint et ab omni errorum suspitione purgati." Only on 16 February 1252 and on 19 March 1255 did this attitude change. The new statutes of the Parisian faculty of arts now prescribed Aristotle's works as required readings for their students: in 1252 the *PA* and *DA* were prescribed (cf. *CUP* 1889, I.201, 227–230); and in 1255, his *libri naturales* followed (cf. *CUP* 1889, I.246, 277–279).

[12] Such a conclusion was drawn with regard to Aquinas' treatment of Averroes' doctrine of ultimate conjunction in Brenet 2006, 310–344. Brenet reasons that, because the young Aquinas adopts formal-structural elements of Averroes' doctrine of ultimate conjunction to account for the beatific vision (and maintains them throughout his works), his mature rejection of Averroism

In fact, Aquinas' treatment of Alexander's thought will no longer seem paradoxical if examined in light of the two kinds of transformation just outlined. For, as will emerge, whenever Aquinas implements an anchored transformation of Alexander's thought, he disapproves of it on the grounds of its irreconcilability with Christian doctrine. In contrast, whenever Aquinas implements a dissociated transformation of his thought, he approves of it on the grounds of usefulness for Christian doctrine, since the formal-structural elements from Alexander's conception of ultimate happiness serve in allowing him to conceive of the face-to-face beatific vision by way of ultimate conjunction. To the best of my knowledge, the particular nature of Aquinas' transformations of Alexander of Aphrodisias' thought have not yet been the subject of a detailed study.[13] The purpose of my paper is thus to provide such a study and to show how and why Aquinas treats Alexander's conceptions of the human soul, intellect, and ultimate happiness in such a twofold way.

Anchored Transformation I:
Alexander's Agent Intellect and Ultimate Happiness

Alexander of Aphrodisias bequeathed to posterity two treatises on the human soul, intellect, and happiness, entitled *De anima* and *De intellectu*.[14] The second of these became available to the Latin West in the twelfth century through a translation from the Arabic by Gerard of Cremona, entitled *De intellectu et intellecto*.[15] Thomas Aquinas' teacher, Albert the Great, made use of Gerard's translation in his early *De homine* (before 1242).[16] Yet Aquinas only seems to

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in his *De unitate intellectus* is "contradictory" and "inefficient." Brenet's criticism seems, however, to conflate the two distinctive levels of transformation as I am outlining them here.

[13] Taylor 2013, 141–183 briefly mentions Aquinas' earliest reading of Alexander as presented in his *CS* II.17.2.1, but does not discuss it in detail. Moreover, Brenet 2006, 330–334, Brenet 2011, 233–238, and Taylor 2012, 542 mention Aquinas' use of Alexander's structural elements for the beatific vision in his *CS* IV.49.2.1.

[14] The classic studies on Alexander's science of the soul are: Moraux 1942, 2001; Sharples 1987, 1176–1243. An edition, English translation, and commentary on Alexander's *De anima* is found in Fontinis 1979; and on his *De intellectu* in Sharples 2004. The latter is only ascribed to Alexander by contemporary scholarship which is divided about his authorship. Cf. Schroeder 1997, 105–120; Moraux 2001, 387. Moreover, Taylor 2009, lxxxi and lxxxi.n155 shows that Alexander's *De anima* is no longer extant in Arabic, but his *De intellectu* is.

[15] Cf. Théry 1926, 68–83, who gives a comprehensive overview of the extant manuscripts and provides a critical edition of the historical Latin translation.

[16] For the first explicit references to Alexander of Aphrodisias' *De intellectu et intellecto* in Albert's early works, cf., for instance, Albertus Magnus, *De homine* (ed. Coloniensis 27/2, 92.35–36; 96.37–38; 396.10–11; 424.4; 427.7–8; 431.26; cf. also 32.31; 63.26; 167.14; 397.67; 398.32–37; 401.42; 403.69; 404.64; 406.31; 407. 10; 410.23; 432.65; 433.12).

have been familiar with Alexander's treatises through Averroes' *LCDA*.[17] This third and last commentary by Averroes on Aristotle's *De anima* was written before 1186 and translated into Latin in the 1220s by Michael Scot.[18] It provided a highly critical reading of Alexander's conceptions of the human soul, intellect, and happiness upon which Aquinas drew throughout his career, most comprehensively in his *SCG*.[19] Yet in addition to Averroes' *LCDA*, the young Aquinas was equally indebted to Albert the Great's interpretations of Peripatetic ideas, conceptions, and theories.[20] As we turn our attention to Aquinas' first assimilation and refutation of Alexander's theory of the human soul, intellect, and happiness, which he presented in his *CS* II.17.2.1 (ca. 1252–1254/1255),[21] this source history will play a crucial role.

In his *CS* II.17.2.1, Aquinas divides his first extended discussion of the nature of the human soul and intellect into two main parts, focusing first on the agent intellect and subsequently on the possible intellect. As these two intellects were subject to a long history of Peripatetic psychology going back to some sparse remarks in Aristotle's *De anima* III.5,[22] Aquinas builds his discussion against this background and engages with a large number of Peripatetic interpretations available to him, including those of Alexander of Aphrodisias, Alfarabi, Avempace, Avicenna, and Averroes. Yet when Aquinas considers the multitude of

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[17] Cf., for instance, TAYLOR 2012, 515; TAYLOR 2013, 141–183.

[18] For the dating of Averroes' composition, cf. TAYLOR 2009, xvi. For the dating of Michael Scot's translation, cf. HASSE 2010.

[19] THOMAS AQUINAS, *SCG* III.42 (ed. Leonina 14, 106–108); *STh* I.76.2 (ed. Leonina 5, 216–218); *QDDA* 2 (ed. Leonina 24/1, 16.198–17.204).

[20] It is well known that Aquinas assisted Albert the Great between 1248–1252 in Cologne, and was educated by him on the complete *corpus Dionysiacum* and on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Before that, Aquinas studied in Paris between 1245–1248, at the same time that Albert the Great wrote his *CS* and included large selections from Aristotle's metaphysics, physics, psychology and ethics. When he eventually parted with Albert in 1252 and set off from Cologne back to Paris, the young Aquinas would soon thereafter begin to write his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences* on the basis of a solid philosophical training not only of the original sources, but also of Albert's interpretation thereof. The historical facts that Aquinas had prepared the edition for Albert's *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus* for his return to Paris and that he copied Albert's commentary on *De caelesti hierarchia* at Cologne, attest to his deep indebtedness to his master's thought. The question of whether Albert already commented on some of pseudo-Dionysius' works in Paris before 1248, or whether he began with it upon his arrival in Cologne has been controversially discussed in the secondary literature. According to the older position, Albert commented on *De caelesti hierarchia* while still at Paris before 1248 (SIMON 1972, vi-vii; KÜBEL 1993, ed. Coloniensis, t. 36/1, V; TORRELL 2000, 21–24). Yet this view was first questioned by SENNER (2000, 149–169, esp. 158–160), and subsequently disproven by BURGER (2005, 190–208; 2009, 561–581) and OLIVA (2006, 214–225), who, on the basis of examining a Cologne manuscript, have shown that Aquinas helped prepare Albert's commentary as his assistant in Cologne.

[21] Cf. OLIVA 2006, 198, 241, 344; OLIVA 2012, 633.

[22] Cf. ARISTOTLE, *DA* III.5, 430a10–430a26.

these conceptions of the agent intellect for the first time, he does so by way of a reading that cumulates these Peripatetic positions into one unifying account — an account that also includes Alexander of Aphrodisias' conception of the agent intellect. "It ought to be known," writes Aquinas,

> [...] that almost all philosophers after Aristotle concur on a difference in substance between the agent intellect and the possible [intellect]. Indeed, [they maintain] that the agent intellect is a certain separate substance, namely the lowest among the separate substances, and that it relates to the possible intellect as that by which we understand, in the same way as the superior intelligences [relate] to the souls of the orbit.[23]

Systematically speaking, Aquinas' cumulative reading highlights three features of the Peripatetic agent intellect: (1) it portrays its ontological nature as that of a separate substance; (2) it displays its function as a psychological formal-(efficient) cause for human cognition; and (3) it presents its cosmological rank as the lowest of all separate substances.

Regarding the first feature, Aquinas' reading certainly mirrors key elements of the authentic Peripatetic conceptions of the separate Agent Intellect, particularly its nature as a separate substance. The Peripatetic tradition did indeed unanimously agree on interpreting Aristotle's qualifications of the agent cognitive principle in his *DA* III.5 — namely that it is "immortal and eternal," "separable, impassable, [and] unmixed" — to imply its substantially separate nature.[24] Regarding the second feature, in contrast to this agreement on ontology, the Peripatetic tradition diverged significantly on the Agent Intellect's functional role as a productive principle for human cognition, distinguishing it along the broad lines of its "emanative" or "abstractive" roles.[25] While these

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[23] THOMAS AQUINAS, *CS* II.17.2.1 (ed. Mandonnet 1929, 422–423): "His ergo visis, sciendum est quod in hoc fere omnes philosophi concordant post Aristotelem [III *De anima*, text. 19 et 20], quod intellectus agens et possibilis differunt secundum substantiam, et quod intellectus agens sit substantia quaedam separata, et postrema in intelligentiis separatis, et ita se habet ad intellectum possibilem quo intelligimus, sicut intelligentiae superiores ad animas orbium."

[24] ARISTOTLE, *DA* III.5, 430a1.17 and 430a1.24 (transl. Barnes 1984, 684).

[25] On the emanative production in Avicenna, cf. AVICENNA, *LDA* V.5, 126.28–127.47. For controversial debates about this matter in contemporary secondary literature, cf. DAVIDSON 1992, 93f; GUTAS 2001, 1–38; HASSE 2001, 39–72, esp. 56–57; McGINNIS 2007, 169–183, 2013, 41–57; BLACK 2013, 59–81; TAYLOR 2013, 165. Albert oftentimes connects Avicenna's emanative production with the theory of *fluxus* in the *Liber de causis* and in pseudo-Dionysius; cf., for instance, ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De homine* (ed. Coloniensis 27/2, 96.22–69, and esp. 96.58–69); id., *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus* 4 (ed. Coloniensis 37/1, 121.46–122.13). For secondary sources on this specific connection in Albert, cf., for instance, DE LIBERA 1990, 117–177 (ch. IV *La métaphysique du flux*); ANZULEWICZ 2000, 251–295; BONIN 2001; BÄCHLI-HINZ 2004, 178–206; DE LIBERA 2005, 143–189.

roles can equally be traced back to Aristotle's *DA* III.5, the Peripatetics were nevertheless fundamentally at odds on the question of the ultimate source for human cognition: Is it the separate Agent Intellect that provides the very content of human cognition from above, as the so-called "giver of forms" (*dator formarum*)? Or is it sense perception that ultimately provides this content of cognition and is rendered intelligible through an abstractive operation by the light of the Agent Intellect?[26] Despite this authentic disagreement on the Agent Intellect's psychological function among the Peripatetics, the young Thomas Aquinas refrains from engaging with any of these divergent views, and presents instead the cumulative simplification. Regarding the third feature, a similar simplification emerges from Aquinas' reading of the Peripatetic Agent Intellect's cosmological rank. While Aquinas presents the Peripatetics as uniformly conceiving of the latter as the last of the separate substances, we can say that this is correct for most Peripatetic thinkers, including Alfarabi, Avempace, Avicenna, and, in a limited fashion, for Averroes.[27] It is, however, an incorrect reading of Alexander of Aphrodisias, since he appears to conceive of it as identical to God.

On two of the three ends, then, Aquinas' cumulative reading of the Peripatetic Agent Intellect does not capture the complexity and divergences of the authentic Peripatetic conceptions. Yet since he knew Avicenna's *LDA* and Averroes' *LCDA* with summaries of these intricate discussions, what could be the possible reason for Aquinas' cumulative simplification? One reason could be that he was not particularly interested in these authentic complexities. In light of his motivation to reject the separate nature of the Agent Intellect, this seems plausible. Nevertheless, even so, this does not explain the precise features of Aquinas' cumulative reading. Had Aquinas followed Averroes' *LCDA* as his main source, he could have easily avoided the issue of the Agent Intellect's cosmological rank, or he could have identified the Agent Intellect's psychological operation as that of an abstractive cause of human knowing. Yet Aquinas adopts neither of these two positions, and it therefore seems reasonable to suppose that he drew on other sources instead for his cumulative simplification of

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[26] According to this latter account, which was most notably maintained by Averroes, the separate Agent Intellect functions as the formal-causal principle, which, in co-causality with the phantasms, generates intelligible concepts in the human receptive intellect. Cf., for instance, Taylor 2013, 144ff, 2016, 273–284; and especially Scarpelli Cory 2015, 1–60.

[27] The mature Averroes clearly denies a hierarchy of separate substances that emerges from emanation and efficient causality, since he is convinced that in the intelligible realm we only find formal and final causality. But he nevertheless maintains a hierarchy among the separate substances, with the Agent Intellect being the lowest in rank by replacing the emanationist account with an account of potency in separate intellects. Cf. Davidson 1992, 223–231 and Taylor 2011, 391–404.

the Peripatetic separate Agent Intellect — sources that foreshadow the simplification in his *CS*.

One source that does so in striking similarity is Albert the Great's *De homine*. Like Aquinas, Albert presents the Peripatetics first as agreeing on the nature of the Agent Intellect as that of a separate substance, and second on its psychological function for human understanding as that "by which all things are made," regardless of cognitive abstraction or emanation.[28] Moreover, Albert reads some of the Peripatetics to maintain that the Agent Intellect's cosmological rank is "the tenth order" of the separate substances.[29] This overlap, together with Aquinas' deviation from a systematically exact reading of the complexities and divergences among the Peripatetic conceptions of the Agent Intellect, strongly suggests Albert's *De homine* as a possible source for Aquinas' cumulative reading — a picture that emerges even more clearly when considering Aquinas' criticism of the Peripatetic Agent Intellect later on.[30]

Yet despite his cumulative simplification, and despite his possible reliance on Albert's *De homine* for this simplification, Aquinas nevertheless reads the Peripatetic conception of the Agent Intellect in conjunction with its original research question on the human intellect's nature and function. Indeed, Aquinas explicitly situates his discussion within the boundaries of the original scientific context of Aristotelian psychology, posing the philosophical question of

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[28] Cf. Albertus Magnus, *De homine* (ed. Coloniensis 27/2, 400.8–9 & 401.30–43): "Primo ergo quaeritur, an sit intellectus agens. Et videtur quod non. […] Sed contra sunt auctoritates omnium philosophorum. Dicit enim Aristoteles in tertio *De anima*: 'Quoniam autem sicut in omni natura aliquid est aliud quam materia in unoquoque genere, hoc autem est potentia omnia illa, alterum autem est causa et efficiens quidem est et omnia facit, ut ars ad materiam sustinuit, necesse est et in anima has esse differentias. Et huiusmodi quidem quaedam differentia est intellectus, quo omnia fiunt, ille vero quo est omnia facere'. Item, Averroes ibidem dicit quod in anima est intellectus agens, 'quo est omnia facere' secundum Aristotelem, et intellectus possibilis, 'quo est omnia fieri'. Idem dicunt Alfarabius, Alkindius, Alexander et Avicenna et omnes philosophi."

[29] Cf. Ibid. (ed. Coloniensis 27/2, 408.13–15 & 412.49–68): "Tertio quaeritur, utrum intellectus agens sit intelligentia separata vel non. Et videtur quod sic. […] Dicendum quod sapientes, qui fuerunt ante nos, diversificati sunt in positione intellectus agentis, sicut partim supra tactum est. Quidam enim omnino agentem dixerunt non esse […]. Et quidam dixerunt ipsum esse habitum […]. Alii vero dixerunt ipsum esse intelligentiam separatam agentem decimi ordinis, et cum intelligentiae moveant non motae, sicut desideratum movet desiderantem et desiderium, dixerunt quod intelligentia agens mundi terreni movet intellectum possibilem humanae animae, sicut desideratum movet desiderium, ita scilicet quod sicut anima caeli movet caelum ad hoc quod conformetur intelligentiae agenti, ita etiam intellectus humanus possibilis movet hominem ad hoc quod conformetur intelligentiae agenti decimi ordinis; et hoc modo fluunt bonitates ab intelligentia agente in intellectum possibilem."

[30] In Averroes we are already exposed to a cumulative reading of Peripatetic theories predating his own conception of the Agent Intellect's nature and function. But in contrast to Albert, Averroes' reading focuses on the different feature of the Agent Intellect's self-thinking activity. Cf. Averroes, *LCDA* III.19 (ed. Crawford 1953, 441.15–35).

"whether the intellectual soul or the intellect is one in all humans,"[31] and referencing Aristotle's *DA* III.5 later on in the same *quaestio*. Aquinas' cumulative simplification of the Peripatetic Agent Intellect can thus be regarded as the first part of his anchored transformation — a transformation of the Peripatetic theory of the separate Agent Intellect that remains tied to its original research question.

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Still, Thomas Aquinas' purpose in presenting this anchored transformation of the separate Agent Intellect is principally motivated by his desire to refute it. His refutation, as we learn from the following passage, is based on two arguments from faith, both of which identify the separate Agent Intellect with angels.

> But this cannot be maintained according to our faith. For if, as Anselm shows, God did not will the salvation of humanity to occur through an angel, the parity between humans and angels would not be lost in glory, at the same time that the angel became the cause of human salvation. Similarly, if our soul were said to depend on some intelligence or angel for its natural operation, it could not rationally be maintained that the soul were equal to an angel in future glory, since the ultimate perfection of any substance consists in the fulfilment of its operation.[32]

Aquinas' argument against the separate nature of the Agent Intellect is clearly an argument from *sacra doctrina* (or more precisely from eschatology) as he highlights at the outset of his discussion. On the basis of the Biblical promise as, for instance, found in Matthew 22:30, Aquinas can say that humans will be equal to angels in the heavenly afterlife.[33] Yet if the Agent Intellect were of a separate nature, as asserted by the Peripatetics, this equality would be compromised for two reasons: first, human salvation would not be caused by God alone, but rather by God and by an angel together; and second, the human natural operation of understanding would be perfected by an angel — a reason which speaks directly against the principle that the perfection of any substance relies on its proper operation.

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[31] Thomas Aquinas, *CS* II.17.2.1 (ed. Mandonnet 1929, 420): "Utrum anima intellectiva vel intellectus sit unus in omnibus hominibus."

[32] Ibid. (ed. Mandonnet 1929, 423): "Sed hoc secundum fidem non potest sustineri. Si enim, ut Anselmus probat, reparationem hominis per angelum Deus fieri noluit, ne paritas hominis et angeli in gloria tolleretur, dum angelus homini fieret causa salutis; similiter si poneretur anima nostra secundum naturalem operationem dependere ab aliqua intelligentia vel angelo, non posset rationabiliter sustineri, quod anima angelis par sit in gloria futura, quia ultima perfectio uniuscujusque substantiae est in complemento suae operationis […]." On Aquinas' reference to Anselm, cf. *Cur deus homo* I.5 (ed. Schmitt 1940, 52).

[33] Matthew 22:30 (Vulgate): "in resurrectione enim […] sunt sicut angeli Dei in caelo."

Aquinas' repeated invocation of the angels here may seem strange at first. Yet it is important to note that his eschatological argument rests on an explicit identification of the angels with the Agent Intellect of the Peripatetics. The consequences of this seemingly innocent identification are, however, substantial, as it alters significantly the functional role of the Agent Intellect for human cognition. If the Agent Intellect, as Aquinas describes it, were indeed to be identified as one of the angels, it could not but an extrinsic and accidental principle for human cognition. In fact, it would have to be considered in a similar vein to the other separate substances which were frequently identified as angels by Peripatetic thinkers, and which had predominantly cosmological roles to play.[34] Yet Aquinas' understanding of the Agent Intellect's functional role for human cognition as an accident is diametrically opposed to the authentic Peripatetic views. In fact, if there is one point that the Peripatetics agreed upon, it is that the separate Agent Intellect's formal causality is *essentially* necessary for natural human cognition in this life. Or to put this the other way around: Human cognition would be inconceivable in the eyes of the Peripatetics without the Agent Intellect being separate and nevertheless exerting a functional role that is essential to human cognition — one that also allows for natural yet special cognitive acts such as prophecy, as is clear from Avicenna.[35] In developing an eschatological argument of this kind, however, Aquinas seems to turn the essential cognitive role of the Agent Intellect into an accidental role — a reading of his sources that departs strongly from their original intention.

More evident in disagreement still than this departure in intention is Aquinas' Christian commitment to human salvation in the "future glory" of the beatific vision. While it may be somewhat reconcilable with Avicenna's conception of an individual afterlife for human souls,[36] it stands in clear opposition to most Peripatetic ideas about human happiness. As is well known, the Peripatetics tended to insist that ultimate human happiness consists in noetic conjunction

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[34] It should be noted that a number of Peripatetic thinkers identified separate intelligences with angels. Cf., for instance, Avicenna, *Met* I.3 (ed. Van Riet 1977, 21.82–86); *Met* I.4 (ed. Van Riet 1977, 30.83–31.92); *Met* X.1 (ed. Van Riet 1980, 522.9–11; 523.21–30). In so doing, however, they usually do not include the separate Agent Intellect.

[35] For the essential functional role of the separate Agent Intellect for human cognition in the Peripatetic tradition, cf., for instance, Alexander of Aphrodisias, *De intellectu et intellecto* (ed. Théry 1926, 76); Avicenna, *LDA* V.5 (ed. Van Riet 1968, 126.27–128.63); ibid. V.6 (ed. Van Riet 1968, 144.66–150.67); Averroes, *LCDA* III.18 (ed. Crawford 1953, 437.1–440.98); ibid. III.36 (ed. Crawford 1953, 480.6–502.666. For Avicenna's account of prophecy and the essential functional role of the separate Agent Intellect, cf. Avicenna, *LDA* V.6 (ed. Van Riet 1968, 153.10–18).

[36] Cf. Avicenna, *LDA* V.6 (ed. Van Riet 1968, 150.71–75), and Avicenna, *Met* IX.7 (ed. Van Riet 1980, 506.90–521.94). Cf. also Davidson 1992, 103–116.

with the separate Agent Intellect in this life.[37] This shows that there simply was no question of theological disparity in salvation between humans and angels for the Peripatetics. But if we consider all these matters together, what were the reasons that Aquinas identified the separate Agent Intellect with angels? Why did he confuse the separate Agent Intellect's essential functional role for human cognition with an accidental functional role? And why would he insist on an afterworldly disparity between angels and humans in a way that has little to do with the authentic views of the Peripatetics?

Once again, the reason seems to lie in preceding Latin assimilations and readings of the Peripatetic sources, and the closest of these to Aquinas seems to be once again those of his teacher, Albert the Great. As we learn from his *De homine*, Albert identifies all separate intelligences other than the agent intellect with the angels, calling them "superior intelligences," "separate substances," "secondary intelligences," or "angelic intellects."[38] This identification must have been a commonplace for the young Aquinas, to the extent that he adopts it unhesitantly for his own doctrine.[39] Yet, and this is crucial to note, in his *CS*, Albert advances an understanding of human cognition in this life which relies on these angelic intelligences as secondary cognitive causes. Indeed, while he considers the principal cause for human cognition to be the ontologically intrinsic agent intellect (*lux intellectus agentis*), he considers the secondary cause to be the ontologically separate angelic intelligences (*lumen intellectus angelici et divini*). This co-causality is motivated by the perceived insufficiency of the intrinsic agent intellect's strength in relation to attaining knowledge.[40] The light of

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[37] Cf., for instance, DAVIDSON 1992 and TAYLOR 2009, i-cix.

[38] Cf., for instance, ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De homine* (ed. Coloniensis 27/2, 321.23–29): "Item, dicit Avicenna et Algazel et Alfarabius quod in somnis anima coniungitur intelligentiis superioribus, quae dicuntur angeli, et accipit ab eis intellectus puros simplices et immateriales, qui sunt somnia vera, quibus imaginatio praeparat imagines quandoque convenientes, quandoque contrarias, propter quas somnium illud indiget interpretatione."; ibid. (ed. Coloniensis 27/2, 459.46–57): "Intelligentia etiam quattuor modis accipitur. Substantiae enim separatae, quas vocamus angelos, dicuntur intelligentiae ab Isaac et in *Libro de causis*. Ab Alexandro autem quodlibet intelligibile denudatum pure a materia et materialibus appendiciis dicitur intelligentia." Cf. also ibid. (ed. Coloniensis 27/2, 356.3–8; 389.62–64; 390.57–60), and for a later identification between separate substances and angels, cf. ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Super Ethica* X.15 (ed. Coloniensis 14/2, 766.54–56): "[…] et ab illa [intelligentia prima] communicatur aliis intelligentiis secundis, et sic intelligentiae dicuntur dii participatione apud philosophos sicut etiam angeli et sancti apud theologos." For other early identifications of this in Albert's works, cf. TWETTEN 1999, 25–62.

[39] Cf. most prominently, THOMAS AQUINAS, *CS* II.3.1.3 (ed. Mandonnet 1929, 91–96), where Aquinas discusses and rejects the philosophical positions of Aristotle, Avicenna, and Moses Maimonides on the basis of his Catholic faith, and follows Gregory's *Glosse* and pseudo-Dionysius' *Celestial Hierarchies* instead.

[40] ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *CS* I.2.5 (ed. Coloniensis 29/1, 48.42–57): "lux intellectus agentis non sufficit per se, nisi per applicationem lucis intellectus increati, sicut applicatur radius solis ad

the angelic intelligences, reasons Albert, is required as an instrument for human cognition that impresses "its own illuminations onto the human intellect."[41]

Yet Albert's insistence on such co-causality equally provides a plausible reason for Aquinas' confusion concerning the authentic Peripatetic view on the essential functional role of the separate Agent Intellect with an accidental functional role. To explain: Albert's commitment to the Christian doctrine of personal immortality led him to construe the agent intellect as the ontologically intrinsic cause and principle of human knowing. His philosophical commitment to an extrinsic cause for human cognition, in contrast, led him to insist on the functional relevance of the ontologically separate intelligences. Albert's angelic intelligences thus unanimously fulfil the functional role of co-causes for human cognition, a seemingly *essential* role over and above the role of the intrinsic agent intellect. Yet it is precisely this essential role that Aquinas denies — a denial which he develops explicitly against the Peripatetic separate Agent Intellect, yet which seems to implicitly target his teacher's view..

On yet another level, Albert's insistence on the functional co-causality of the intrinsic agent intellect and the separate angelic intelligences seems to be the target of Aquinas' criticism. If human cognition depended essentially on the formal causality of the angelic intelligences in this life, particularly when it comes to cognising higher truths, would this not also hold true for the afterlife? A passage in Albert's *De homine* seems to confirm such a reading as it presents human cognition in the afterlife in just this way: "after death," explains Albert, "the potency of the possible intellect will be perfected by the agent intellect and by the forms, which are in the separate intelligences […]. For the philosophers say that, after death, the soul will be turned back to the first mover, and this is the terminus of its happiness."[42] Such a cognitive reliance on the angelic intelligences, however, seems to render any independent and individual fulfilment of the human intellect in the life to come impossible. The human soul,

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radium stellae. Et hoc contingit dupliciter, scilicet secundum lumen duplicatum tantum vel etiam triplicatum: duplicatum ut si fiat coniunctio ad lumen intellectus increati, et illud lumen est interior magister. Quandoque autem fit ad coniunctionem luminis intellectus angelici et divini, quia philosophi quidam animam posuerunt instrumentum intelligentiae, eo quod intelligentia imprimit in eam suas illuminationes. Et hoc vocat Dionysius reductionem nostrae hierarchiae per hierarchiam angelorum. Et Augustinus dicit hoc contingere multis modis. Et hoc vocant quidam philosophi continuationem intellectuum, quia etiam ipsi dixerunt, quod nihil videtur nisi per lucem primam."

[41] Ibid. Cf. also ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De homine* (ed. Coloniensis 27/2, 414.1–8).

[42] Another revealing text on this matter is found in ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De homine* (ed. Coloniensis 27/2, 429.15–20): "Ad aliud dicendum quod potentia intellectus possibilis post mortem complebitur ab intellectu agente et a formis, quae sunt in intelligentiis separatis, et ideo non erit supervacua. Dicunt enim philosophi quod anima post mortem convertitur ad motorem primum, et hoc est finis prosperitatis eius."

so it seems, would depend on the aid of these angelic intelligences that infuse intelligible forms into it, and thus provoke the kind of disparity between angelic and human salvation that Aquinas refutes above.

Hence, what this brief analysis of Aquinas' Peripatetic sources and Albert as mediator of their thought suggests is that Aquinas' refutation of the separate Agent Intellect seems to be aimed not exclusively at the authentic Peripatetic conceptions, but equally at his teacher's understanding and transformation of them. Additional support for my reading can be found in the development of Albert's conception of human knowing in conjunction with the fourth proposition of the 1241 condemnations at the University of Paris. This proposition suggests that angels and human souls will be equal in the unmovable imperial heaven.[43] Yet on the basis of our discussions above, Albert's transformation of co-causality can be identified as undermining this proposition. In fact, it is plausible that this condemnation was an immediate motivation for Aquinas' attempt to refute Albert's argument concerning the requirement of co-causality of angelic intelligences for human knowing. And for Albert, too, it may well have become a similar motivation, since he soon amended his requirement of co-causality in his more mature works, beginning with his *De anima* (ca. 1248), and suggested instead that the ontologically intrinsic agent intellect suffices entirely for human cognition in this life.[44]

In sum, our analysis of Aquinas' earliest anchored transformation and refutation of the separate Agent Intellect has revealed two key insights. First, in place of the highly divergent conceptions of the separate Agent Intellect in the Peripatetic tradition (including that of Alexander of Aphrodisias), Aquinas presents a cumulative simplification, which he possibly developed in conversation with Albert the Great's *De homine*. Second, Aquinas refutes this simplification on the eschatological grounds of a resulting disparity between the angels and human souls in heaven. This implicitly presupposes an identification between the Peripatetic separate Agent Intellect and the angels — an identification which is neither present in the Arabic sources nor in Albert the Great's *De homine*. In fact, Albert's own early theory of human cognition with its reliance on sepa-

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[43] *CUP* 1889, I.128, 171: "Quartus, quod anime glorificate non sunt in celo empireo cum angelis, nec corpora glorificata erunt ibi, sed in celo aqueo vel cristallino, quod supra firmamentum est, quod et de beata Virgine presumitur. Hunc errorem reprobamus, firmiter enim credimus, quod idem locus corporalis, scilicet celum empireum, angelorum et animarum sanctarum erit et corporum glorificatorum."

[44] Cf., for instance, ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De anima* III.3.11 (ed. Coloniensis 7/1, 222.15–28); *De intellectu et intelligibili* I.1.7 (ed. Borgnet 9, 488b-489a). For secondary literature on Albert's initial identification of the angels and separate substances and later refutation, cf. RIGO 2005, 351–2. For his explicit refutation of this identification, see ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De causis et processu universitatis a prima causa* I.4.8 (ed. Coloniensis 17/2, 58.19–29).

rate substances other than the Agent Intellect develops the Peripatetic insights further, and suggests that these angelic intelligences are required for human cognition in this life as well as in the afterlife. Yet such a conclusion seems to be the target of Aquinas' refutation of the separate Agent Intellect, on the grounds of its incommensurability with the Christian doctrine of the parity between angels and humans in the future glory. And even though it is not possible to say conclusively which of all his sources played a dominant role, Aquinas' anchored transformation of the Peripatetic separate Agent Intellect clearly served his own theological concerns in a systematic consolidation of a psychology[45] which was always commensurate with the larger framework of his Christian teleology, the vision of God face-to-face in the afterlife. Whether this commensurability is equally the driving force for Aquinas' systematic consolidation of the possible intellect is the subject of the following section.

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ANCHORED TRANSFORMATION II:
ALEXANDER'S POSSIBLE INTELLECT AND HUMAN NATURE

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The ontological nature and psychological function of the agent intellect was certainly of theological importance for the young Thomas Aquinas; but even more so is the nature and function of the possible intellect. As is well established in the secondary literature, Aquinas' systematic conception of the possible intellect focuses on its qualities as an immaterial, individualised, and properly intellectual nature. As such, it is a faculty of the human soul which is itself the form of the body.[46] For Aquinas, the human intellect as a whole, including the agent intellect and the possible intellect, receives this peculiar nature not during the process of generation, but rather by virtue of *creatio ex nihilo*. This particular metaphysical causality renders its existence (*esse*) solely dependent on the essence of the intellectual soul rather than on the material and corruptible hylomorphic composite.[47] As a consequence of the human soul's special origin

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[45] In the entire *quaestio*, Aquinas does not provide one single conclusive philosophical argument against the Peripatetic separate Agent Intellect, as he will do in his mature works. Rather, he closes his *quaestio* with a probability argument: THOMAS AQUINAS, *CS* II.17.2.1 (ed. Mandonnet 1929, 427–428): "[…] et superaddo etiam intellectum agentem esse in diversis diversum: non enim videtur probabile quod in anima rationali non sit principium aliquod quo naturalem operationem explere possit […]."

[46] Secondary literature on Aquinas' conception of the human intellect is vast. Standard overviews are provided by KRETZMANN 1993, DE LIBERA 1994, and PASNAU 2002; an excellent overview study with emphasis on Aquinas' *CS* is TAYLOR 2013, 141–183.

[47] For Aquinas' earliest highly condensed conception of this matter, cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *CS* II.17.2.1 (ed. Mandonnet 1929, 424): "Et ideo tertia opinio est Avicennae, qui ponit intellectum possibilem in diversis diversum, fundatum in essentia animae rationalis, et non esse virtutem

and nature, moreover, the possible intellect constitutes the true subject of human thinking, subjectivity, and self-awareness[48] — a subject that does not go out of existence with the body, but that rather survives its death in an afterlife.[49] The initial systematic consolidation of this intricate theory of the human soul, and in particular, of its faculty of the possible intellect, can be found in the ensuing argumentation of Aquinas' *CS* II.17.2.1, where he once again enters into conversation with the Peripatetic conceptions of the possible intellect. Yet in contrast to his cumulative simplification of the Peripatetic separate Agent Intellect, Aquinas' consideration of the Peripatetic possible intellect is marked by careful distinctions among five altogether different conceptions. Aquinas states that:

> there has been a considerable disagreement among the philosophers following Aristotle concerning the possible intellect. For some of them said that the possible intellect is individualised for each individual human being, whereas others said that it is one for all. Of those who maintain that it is individualised for each individual human being, there are three opinions.[50]

The three Peripatetic conceptions of an individualised possible intellect that Aquinas refers to in his overview, and that he will subsequently discuss in detail, are those of Alexander of Aphrodisias, Avempace, and Avicenna. In contrast, the view that there is a single possible intellect for all human beings is ascribed to Theophrastus, Themistius, and Averroes.[51] While Aquinas' extended discussion of all of these conceptions would certainly merit thorough attention, his

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corporalem, et cum corpore incipere, sed non cum corpore finiri. Unde quantum ad intellectum possibilem, ejus opinio est quam tenemus secundum fidem catholicam, quamvis erret cum aliis de intellectu agente, ut dictum est."

[48] On the possible intellect as the subject of subjectivity, cf. BLACK 2004, 319–352; on the possible intellect as the subject of self-awareness and self-thought, cf. SCARPELLI CORY 2013.

[49] Cf. the following section of this paper.

[50] THOMAS AQUINAS, *CS* II.17.2.1 (ed. Mandonnet 1929, 423): "De intellectu autem possibili similiter fuit magna diversitas inter philosophos sequentes Aristotelem. Quidam enim dixerunt intellectum possibilem esse diversum in diversis; quidam vero esse unum in omnibus. Eorum autem qui posuerunt eum diversum esse in diversis, sunt tres opiniones."

[51] As HERBERT DAVIDSON (1986, 91–137, esp. 92) has shown, these different Peripatetic positions concerning the nature of the possible intellect originated in two seemingly irreconcilable conditions found in Aristotle's *DA* III.4. For Aristotle writes that the possible intellect must, on the one hand, "not actually [be] any real thing before it thinks" and that, on the other hand, it must be "pure from all admixture" and "not blended with the body" (cf. ARISTOTLE *DA* III.4, 429a18–29). The subsequent Greek Peripatetic interpretations tend to emphasise one over the other of these two conditions, and oftentimes reach divergent conclusions concerning the possible intellect's nature, as subsequently reported by Aquinas in his *CS* II.17.2.1. Cf. also TAYLOR 2009, i–cix; 2013, 141–183 and his appendix.

depiction of Alexander of Aphrodisias' conception is the relevant one to our concerns. This, Aquinas portrays as follows:

> […] some say that the possible intellect is nothing but an inclination [*praeparatio*] in human nature for the reception of the impressions from the agent intellect. Moreover, it is a corporeal power consequent upon the human complexion [*complexio*]. And this was the opinion of Alexander.[52]

Aquinas' summary of Alexander's possible intellect here highlights two systematic features: its nature and its function for human cognition. In its nature, Aquinas portrays Alexander's possible intellect as a truly material power arising from the complexion of the human body; in its functionality, he portrays it as a mere inclination or disposition for accepting intelligible forms from the separate Agent Intellect.

As Richard C. Taylor has recently argued, Aquinas' systematic presentation of Alexander's possible intellect here builds directly on Averroes' *LCDA* — a conclusion that Taylor draws on the basis of a comprehensive textual comparison between Averroes' critical discussions of Alexander's conception and Aquinas' short passage.[53] Now, rather than providing a similar comprehensive comparison, I wish to restrict my supporting analysis of Taylor's findings to a new aspect of this indebtedness, which concerns the highly unusual term *complexio*. Historically speaking, this term is found neither in the Latin translations of Aristotle's *De anima*, nor in Alexander of Aphrodisias' *De intellectu*.[54] In fact, Alexander's Greek term *krāsis* is translated by the Latin terms *commixtio* or *mixtio* respectively.[55] The term *complexio*, in contrast, is principally used in medical texts and circles, and in the thirteenth century also in commentaries on Aristotle's *De animalibus*. In these closely interrelated traditions concerned with the

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[52] THOMAS AQUINAS, *CS* II.17.2.1 (ed. Mandonnet 1929, 423): "Quidam enim dicunt intellectum possibilem nihil aliud esse quam praeparationem quae est in natura humana ad recipiendam impressionem intellectus agentis; et hanc esse virtutem corporalem consequentem complexionem humanam; et haec fuit opinio Alexandri."

[53] Cf. TAYLOR 2013, 147–150.

[54] For the Latin translation of Alexander's *De intellectu*, cf. n. 15. It should be noted that, in his *De anima*, Albert the Great refers to Alexander's intellect also as "aptitude consequent upon the complexion of the elements" (*aptitudo consequens complexionem elementorum*); cf. ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De anima* III.2.4 (ed. Coloniensis 7/1, 182.74–84); III.3.6 (ed. Coloniensis 7/1, 215.35–50). However, at the time of writing Book II of his *CS* probably in 1253, Thomas Aquinas was most likely not familiar with Albert's discussion, which was most likely written between 1254 and 1257. Averroes' *LCDA* was, however, clearly a common source for Aquinas and Albert.

[55] Cf. ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS, *De intellectu* (ed. Théry 1926, 81): "intellectus in potencia, qui est virtus profluens ex hac commixtione que accidit corporibus et est apta recipere intellectum qui est in effectu." All other passages in which Alexander speaks of the body also draw on the term *commixtio*.

body of living beings, the term *complexio* was used to refer either to a blending of the elemental qualities of bodies, or to a blending of the humours — the latter being a level of arrangement above the blending of the elemental qualities, applicable to living beings only, and derived from the Galenic and Avicennian medical traditions.[56]

Since Averroes was not only a philosopher but also a medical doctor (whose most important medical work, the *Colliget*, was translated into Latin by 1285), it comes as no surprise that he makes use of the term *complexio* in his *LCDA*. In fact, Averroes employs this term quite frequently and interchangeably with the term *mixtio*, where it refers to the blending of the elemental qualities.[57] Yet it is highly unusual that he applies the term *complexio* in the context of his critical discussions of Alexander of Aphrodisias' possible intellect, since neither Aristotle nor Alexander nor Albert the Great identify the nature of this intellect with this term in their works.[58] Yet in Averroes' *LCDA* we find a passage which is strikingly parallel to Aquinas' summary above, in that it draws on the term *complexio* and summarises Alexander's view on the possible intellect to argue that "the first inclinations [*praeparationes*] for the intelligibles and the other subsequent perfections of the soul are the things produced from the complexion [*complexio*] of the human body."[59] This unusual use of the term *complexio* in the context of Alexander of Aphrodisias' possible intellect in Averroes and Aquinas

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[56] On Albert's use of the term *complexio* in his natural philosophy including medical discussions, cf., for instance, ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De animalibus* I (ed. Stadler 1916, 1.12–14). On its use and development in the Latin medical tradition, cf. JACQUART 1984, 71–76.

[57] On Averroes' use of the term *complexio* in isolation, cf., for instance, AVERROES, *LCDA* I.55 (ed. Crawford 1953, 76.9–10): "compositio corporis ex elementis est secundum modum complexionis"; and interchangeably with mixtio cf., for instance, AVERROES, *LCDA* I.60 (ed. Crawford 1953, 81.10–82.12): "si anima est aliud a mixtione et a complexione, quare corrumpitur cum corruptione complexionis?"

[58] For Albert's discussions on Alexander's possible intellect in his *De homine*, cf. ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De homine* (ed. Coloniensis 27/2, 32.31ff; 63.24ff; 92.35ff; 396.10ff; 397.67ff; 401.42f; 424.4f; 427.7ff). None of these discussions, which were most likely known to Aquinas (in contrast to Albert's *De anima*), makes reference to the term *complexio*, cf. n. 52. Similarly, not even Averroes' relevant quotation of Alexander's conception of the possible intellect from his *De intellectu* draws on the term complexio, cf. AVERROES, *LCDA* III.5 (ed. Crawford 1953, 394.220–227): "Cum igitur ex hoc corpore, quando fuerit mixtum aliqua mixtione, generabitur aliquid ex universo mixti ita quod sit aptum ut sit instrumentum istius intellectus qui est in hoc mixto, cum existit in omni corpore, et istud instrumentum est etiam corpus, tunc dicetur esse intellectus in potentia; et est virtus facta a mixtione que cecidit in corporibus, preparata ad recipiendum intellectum qui est in actu."

[59] AVERROES, *LCDA* III. 5 (ed. Crawford 1953, 397.312–317): "Et magis inopinabile de opinione Alexandri est hoc quod dixit quod prime preparationes ad intellecta et ad alias postremas perfectiones de anima sunt res facte a complexione, non virtutes facte a motore extrinseco ut est famosum ex opinione Aristotelis et omnium Peripateticorum."

alike strongly supports Taylor's conclusion that Aquinas' only source on this topic for his *CS* was indeed Averroes' *LCDA*.

Apart from this conceptual overlap, Aquinas also accurately summarises the key points of Averroes' critical discussions of Alexander's possible intellect. For just as in Aquinas' portrayal of Alexander's possible intellect above, so does Averroes identify the nature of Alexander's possible intellect to arise from the complexion of the body; and he conceives of it as an inclination for receiving intelligible forms.[60] In taking over these key systematic insights from Averroes' *LCDA*, Aquinas preserves the relation of Alexander's possible intellect to its original research question on the human intellect's nature and function; and although his reading of Alexander's possible intellect here has potentially come about on a different textual basis than his cumulative simplification of the Peripatetic Agent Intellect, it can equally be identified as an anchored transformation.

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Aquinas' ultimate purpose in providing this anchored transformation of Alexander's possible intellect is yet again to refute it. This time, however, his refutation falls into two distinctive methodological parts, the first of which is philosophical and the second theological. In his philosophical refutation below, Aquinas reveals once again his indebtedness to Averroes' *LCDA*:

> Still, this can certainly not withstand the intention of Aristotle, who intends the possible intellect to be receptive of intelligible species. Yet an inclination is not receptive, but rather preparative. But what has been prepared by this inclination is a body or a power in a body. And therefore, what receives the intelligible forms would be a body or a power in a body — a view that the Philosopher refutes. It would moreover follow that the possible intellect were no cognitive power. Indeed, no power caused by the blending of the elements is cognitive, because, in this case, the quality of the elements would act in excess of its species, which is impossible.[61]

Aquinas initially identifies the systematic framework of his refutation to be in accordance with the "intention of Aristotle," and subsequently shows that Alexander's conception of the possible intellect is incorrect in two ways. Drawing first

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[60] For references, cf. n. 57–59.

[61] Thomas Aquinas, *CS* II.17.2.1 (ed. Mandonnet 1929, 423): "Sed hoc non potest stare etiam secundum intentionem Aristotelis (III *De anima*, text. 19), qui vult quod intellectus possibilis sit receptivus specierum intelligibilium. Praeparatio autem non est receptiva, sed magis praeparativa: praeparatum autem hac praeparatione est corpus, vel virtus in corpore: et ita illud quod recipit formas intelligibiles esset corpus, vel virtus in corpore: quod Philosophus improbat. Praeterea sequeretur quod intellectus possibilis non esset virtus cognoscitiva. Nulla enim virtus causata ex commixtione elementorum est cognoscitiva: quia sic qualitas elementorum ageret ultra suam speciem, quod est impossibile."

on functional grounds, Aquinas reasons that Alexander's conception of the possible intellect as a sheer inclination requires an underlying subject, the body. Yet according to Aristotle, a body is incapable of cognition, and this is why Alexander's conception ought to be considered incompatible with Aristotle's intention.[62] Drawing on ontological reasons, Aquinas subsequently suggests that Alexander's possible intellect, which is in the body as its subject, could never actually be a cognitive power, as the elemental qualities would act beyond their natural limits if they brought about such a power.

Both of Aquinas' philosophical arguments against Alexander's possible intellect are again directly derived from Averroes' *LCDA*. For Averroes shows that there cannot be an inclination without a nature of its own; rather, every inclination takes on the nature of its subject. In Alexander's case this would have to be the body, which, according to Aristotelian principles, renders cognition impossible.[63] Moreover, Averroes reasons that it is impossible for any cognitive faculty to arise from a corporeal mixture of the elements, as this would lie beyond their natural limitations.[64] These earliest appropriations of Averroes' reading as well as these critical discussions of Alexander's possible intellect thus reveal the cautious beginnings of a systematic exercise that would fully come to blossom in Aquinas' mature works: the construction of a purely philosophical defence of his own conception of the possible intellect against the background of the established Peripatetic conceptions (which always included that of Alexander of Aphrodisias).[65]

In contrast to these mature exercises, however, the young Aquinas relies much more heavily on theological grounds in his *CS* for his refutation of Alexander's, with Avempace's, conceptions of the possible intellect. In fact, Aquinas' reading of this second Peripatetic conception by Avempace follows directly upon his earlier discussion of Alexander and portrays Avempace's possible intellect in ontological identity with the imagination.[66] And while Aquinas refutes this conception once again on the philosophical grounds of the nature of functional inconsistency and functional dependence on the body — all of which he encountered in Averroes' *LCDA*[67] — he concludes his overall refutation of both

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[62] Cf. Aristotle, *DA* I.1 403a9–10.

[63] Cf. Averroes, *LCDA* III.14 (ed. Crawford 1953, 430.77–431.104).

[64] Ibid. III.5 (ed. Crawford 1953, 397.304–398.330).

[65] Cf. n. 19.

[66] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *CS* II.17.2.1 (ed. Mandonnet 1929, 424): "Et ideo alii dixerunt quod intellectus possibilis nihil aliud est quam virtus imaginativa, secundum quod est nata ut sint in ea formae quae fuerunt intellectae in actu; et haec est opinio Avempace."

[67] Ibid.: "Sed hoc etiam est impossibile: quia, secundum Philosophum [in III De anima, text. 30, 31 et 32], phantasmata quae sunt in imaginativa, se habent ad intellectum humanum sicut colores ad visum: et ideo oportet quod phantasmata sint moventia intellectum possibilem, sicut

supposedly materialistic conceptions of the possible intellect by way of an eschatological counter-argument which relies on the Christian doctrine of personal immortality and retribution.

> Furthermore, it ought to be known that according to these opinions, the possible intellect is generated with the generated body and corrupted with the corrupted body. And because the only individualised intellect in different human beings is the possible intellect, [and] because the Agent Intellect is One, it would follow that what remains of the intellect from all humans after death would be One in number, namely the Agent Intellect. And this is exceedingly heretical, because, in this way, retribution after death for those who deserve it would be eliminated.[68]

Aquinas here suggests that any conception of the possible intellect as a corporeal power (Alexander's view) or as a power of the soul functionally dependent on the body (Avempace's view) implies its coming-to-be through generation together with the body. Yet any generation implies corruption, which would also apply to the materialistic possible intellect of Alexander's and Avempace's conceptions. Consequently, the separate Agent Intellect alone would remain in existence after the possible intellect's individual corruption, and this would necessitate a 'collective' immortality that goes against the two key Christian doctrines of personal immortality and personal retribution in heaven.

    Aquinas' appeal to these two eschatological doctrines to reject both materialistic conceptions of the possible intellect thus clearly reveals that his reasons for rejecting them are not predominantly philosophical but rather theological: it is not that they are inconsistent with Aristotle but rather that they are incommensurate with Christian doctrine. Indeed, indicating the severity of these errors in light of this doctrine, Aquinas calls them "exceedingly heretical" — an unusually hostile phrase for his early works. Yet in contrast to his previous refutation of a separate Agent Intellect, what is at stake here, theologically speaking, is

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color movet visum: unde aptitudo quae est in intellectu possibili ad intelligendum, est similis aptitudini quae est in patiente in potentia, ut sit patiens in actu: aptitudo autem quae est in imaginativa est sicut aptitudo agentis in potentia, ut sit agens in actu. Impossibile autem est quod idem sit movens et motum, et agens et patiens. Ergo impossibile est quod virtus imaginativa sit intellectus possibilis. Praeterea, adhuc sequeretur quod virtus recipiens intelligibilia in actu, quae dicitur intellectus possibilis, esset utens organo corporali, cum virtus imaginativa habeat determinatum organum."

[68] Thomas Aquinas, *CS* II.17.2.1 (ed. Mandonnet 1929, 424): "Sciendum est etiam quod, secundum has opiniones, intellectus possibilis generatur generato corpore, et corrumpitur corrupto corpore: et cum non sit differentia intellectus in diversis hominibus nisi intellectus possibilis, quia agens est unus, sequeretur quod illud quod remanet de intellectu ex omnibus hominibus post mortem, esset unum numero, scilicet intellectus agens; et hoc est valde haereticum, quia sic tolleretur retributio meritorum post mortem."

much more serious: not the *relative* relation of the equality between angels and humans in heaven, but rather *the very possibility* of ultimate individual happiness, the heart of Christian anthropology and eschatology.

Our brief analysis of Aquinas' anchored transformation and refutation of Alexander's possible intellect in this section has revealed two further insights in addition to section II. First, Aquinas has been shown to draw heavily on Averroes' *LCDA* for his consideration of Alexander's possible intellect: a reliance that is particularly salient in the identical use of the medical term *complexio* in both thinkers. Together with Aquinas' first anchored transformation of the Peripatetic separate Agent Intellect, Aquinas' reliance on Averroes here reveals a high flexibility in critically incorporating a variety of sources on the same topic. Second, Aquinas' refutation of his own presentation of Alexander's possible intellect relies on two different grounds: (1) its philosophical inconsistency with Aristotle; and (2) its theological incommensurability with Christian doctrine. Yet while Aquinas' philosophical grounds for refuting Alexander are noticeably reliant on Averroes' *LCDA*, his subsequent theological grounds appear as his main reason for refuting Alexander's materialistic conception of the possible intellect. Indeed, as has become clear that Aquinas' anchored transformation of Alexander's possible intellect, like his anchored transformation of the Peripatetic separate Agent Intellect, serves his own attempt to arrive at a systematic consolidation of a psychology that is, most importantly, fully commensurate with the Christian eschatological doctrine of the beatific vision, this time even in absolute terms. Yet it is not only the defence of the very possibility of this eschatological doctrine, but also the consolidation of its modality and precise workings which concerned the young Aquinas. How he innovatively draws on structural elements of Alexander's alongside Averroes' theories of ultimate conjunction to explain these will be subject of the last section of this paper.

III. Dissociated Transformation:
Aquinas' Beatific Vision and Alexander of Aphrodisias

Probably the best known case in which Aquinas appropriates philosophical insights for theology is his theory of subalternation. Following Aristotle's theory of subalternation in his *Posterior Analytics*, Aquinas conceives of the science of theology to be subaltern to "the science of God and the blessed."[69] Whether the political context of Paris favoured or even demanded such a reconception of the

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[69] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *STh* I.1.2 (ed. Leonina 4, 9): "Et hoc modo sacra doctrina est scientia, quia procedit ex principiis notis lumine superioris scientiae, quae scilicet est scientia Dei et beatorum." On *sacra doctrina* in Aquinas' *STh*, cf. Weisheipl 1974, 49–80; on *sacra doctrina* in general, cf., for instance, Grabmann 1948; Köpf 1974; Johnson 1990; Oliva 2006; Leinsle 2010.

science of theology in Aristotelian terms, and whether the new 1255 curriculum of the arts faculty urged theology to engage in a sort of self-justification along the lines of the new Aristotelian scientific framework, remains a matter of dispute.[70] Yet what these circumstantial developments did not require theologians to do is to appropriate philosophical ideas, conceptions, or theories into the very heart of Christian *sacra doctrina*. In fact, Aquinas' near-contemporaries, such as William of Auvergne, Albert the Great, and Bonaventure, remained deeply sceptical about the value of applying philosophical insights to theological truths.[71] And even Aquinas was always careful to point out that there are certain theological truths that transcend scientific inquiry and demonstration altogether, among them the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the heavenly afterlife including the bodily resurrection.[72] On the basis of Aquinas' sharp division here, it would thus not be far-fetched to assume that these theological truths remained immune from explanations grounded in philosophical insights.

Yet for Aquinas' theory of the beatific vision, such an assumption is far from correct. In fact, when we turn our attention to his eschatological theory of ultimate human happiness — the very grounds for rejecting the Peripatetic separate Agent Intellect and Alexander's materialistic possible intellect in the previous two sections — we find that Aquinas develops his understanding of the beatific vision in reliance on Alexander's and Averroes' doctrines of ultimate conjunction. The third part of this paper thus unravels one of the most fascinating appropriations of Peripatetic thought and one that seems to be rather counter-intuitive in Aquinas' works. Indeed, as discussed in the introduction of this paper, scholars have wondered how Aquinas' attitude of appropriating Alexander's thought here is reconcilable with his earlier attitude of refuting it. By examining how Aquinas appropriates Alexander's thought for his conception of the beatific vision, I shall argue that there is no real contradiction in his thought.

In the Christian theological tradition before Aquinas we find several answers to the question of how God can be seen face-to-face. Yet even though Aquinas had these answers at his disposal, he chose to draw on Peripatetic philosophical

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On Aristotle's conception of science, cf., for instance, Barnes 1975, Annas 1976; Burnyeat 1981, 97–139; Grant 1987, Detel 2004, 1–14.

[70] Cf. *CUP* 1889, I.79, 138; I.201, 227–230; I.246, 277–279. Even though the prescription was officially issued on 19 March 1255, it was already composed in 1254. Cf. Hasse 2014.

[71] Cf. Anzulewicz 2004, 44–45 & 53–54; Anzulewicz 2007, 129–165; Krause 2013, 213–229.

[72] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *SCG* IV.1 (ed. Leonina 15, 5): "ut primo scilicet ea tractentur quae de ipso Deo supra rationem credenda proponuntur, sicut est confessio Trinitatis. Secundo autem, de his quae supra rationem a Deo sunt facta, sicut opus incarnationis, et quae consequuntur ad ipsam. Tertio vero, ea quae supra rationem in ultimo hominum fine expectantur, sicut resurrectio et glorificatio corporum, perpetua beatitudo animarum, et quae his connectuntur."

sources instead. Most contemporary scholarship has identified the reasons for this approach as lying in the deep disruptions of his times. Aquinas' Latin predecessors, so it is argued, faced insurmountable systematic difficulties in explaining the *directness* of the beatific vision, and Aquinas was the first theologian to provide a solution.[73] Yet while there is abundant evidence for fierce controversies over this question of directness among Aquinas' predecessors (which ultimately resulted in the famous 1241 condemnation), his own conception of the beatific vision is not limited to solving these difficulties.[74] In fact, the main goal of his conception of the beatific vision is to show that it satisfies one of the most basic and essential criteria of the new Aristotelian epistemology: *cognitive identity* between the cogniser and its cognised object. To achieve this goal, Aquinas had recourse to Averroes' *LCDA*, where he encountered the functional psychological model that would provide him with the required structural elements. In his *CS* IV.49.2.1, at the end of his long *solutio* and after dismissing Avempace's and Avicenna's models as insufficient, Aquinas states that the right model for explaining the beatific vision is proposed by Alexander of Aphrodisias alongside Averroes:

> And thus another model should be taken, which some philosophers have also proposed, namely Alexander and Averroes in Book III of [the *Long Commentary on*] *De anima*. For since any cognition requires a form by which a thing is cognised or seen, the form by which the intellect is perfected to seeing separate substances […] is the separate substance itself which is conjoined to our intellect as form, so that it is itself what is understood and that by which it is understood. And whatever concerns other separate substances, it is nevertheless necessary for us to accept this mode for the vision of God *per essentiam*. For, by whatever other form our intellect were informed, it could not be drawn to the divine essence by it.[75]

Aquinas here builds his appropriation of Alexander's thought alongside Averroes' models of ultimate conjunction on the assumption that the purpose of any

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[73] Cf. DE CONTENSON 1959, 31; 1962, 409; WÉBER 1978, 25; TORRELL 1997; MAILLARD 2001, 221; TAYLOR 2012, 512.

[74] I have argued for this conclusion at length in my dissertation as a whole, KRAUSE 2014.

[75] THOMAS AQUINAS, *CS* IV.49.2.1 (ed. Parma 7/2, 1199): "Et ideo accipiendus est alius modus, quem etiam quidam philosophi posuerunt, scilicet Alexander et Averroes in 3 de Anima. Cum enim in qualibet cognitione sit necessaria aliqua forma, qua res cognoscatur aut videatur; forma ista qua intellectus perficitur ad videndas substantias separatas […] est ipsa substantia separata, quae conjungitur intellectui nostro ut forma, ut ipsa sit quod intelligitur, et qua intelligitur. Et quidquid sit de aliis substantiis separatis, tamen istum modum oportet nos accipere in visione Dei per essentiam: quia quacumque alia forma informaretur intellectus noster, non posset per eam duci in essentiam divinam."

intelligible form in the cognising intellect is to actualise this intellect by determining it to its cognitive object; and this determining actualisation results in cognitive identity between the intellect and its object. Yet in the special case of God, it is impossible that any intelligible form other than God identify the cognising intellect with God. Indeed, He must assume the function of the intelligible form (*qua intelligitur*) by way of formal-cognitive inherence in the cognising intellect, but not by way of existential-cognitive inherence, as do all other intelligible forms (usually referred to as *species intelligibiles* by Aquinas).

For Aquinas this distinction of inherences is the make-or-break condition for the possibility of a cognitive identification between the human intellect (a limited creature) and God (the unlimited creator). If God were to be inherent in the human intellect by way of existential-cognitive inherence, in the same way as intelligible species are, it would no longer be God Himself — neither as an intelligible form, nor as object of cognition. This is because any intelligible form existentially inherent in the human intellect must be a limited creature of His — after all it has taken on an accidental intelligible existence in the intellect of the cogniser. And as such, it cannot lead to the cognition of God as cognitive object, since there would be no formal identity between the intelligible form and God. In contrast, if God comes to be inherent in the human intellect by way of formal-cognitive inherence, as Aquinas reasons above, it is He Himself who actualises the human intellect by determining it to Himself. In Aquinas' eyes, it is only the essence of God Himself that is capable of revealing God's true self. And this is why he calls his theory of the beatific vision *visio Dei per essentiam* — it is through the essence of God that God is cognised. The resulting unmediated and intuitive grasp of God is sufficient to constitute a cognitive identification of the human intellect with God which remains non-comprehensive and which leads to ultimate human happiness instantaneously.[76] Aquinas' principal reason for drawing on Alexander alongside Averroes for his account of the beatific vision was thus to overcome the seemingly detrimental requirement that an intelligible form must be existentially instantiated in the cognising intellect.[77]

In Alexander's and Averroes' original contexts, however, this requirement was neither at the heart of consideration, nor connected to any theory of the beatific vision, for neither of them propounded anything close to an eschatological theory of ultimate happiness. Rather, Alexander and Averroes advocated a theory of happiness that is found in this life and in ultimate conjunction to the separate Agent Intellect. While they differed considerably on the precise details of

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[76] Concerning these two aspects of Aquinas' beatific vision, cf. Thomas Aquinas, *CS* IV.49.2.5. Both of them are also discussed below.

[77] This requirement was derived by Latin predecessors from Avicenna's *Met* III.8. Cf. Black 2014, 213–236.

ultimate conjunction — details that extend well beyond the limits of this paper[78]
— they nevertheless agreed on two key points. First, they thought that ultimate
conjunction with the separate Agent Intellect would be obtained by humans
at the end of a long and laborious process of acquiring all theoretical intelligi-
bles through natural cognition beginning with sense perception. Second, they
agreed that in this ultimate conjunction, the separate Agent Intellect would be
conjoined to humans by way of formal conjunction alone — it would become
"form for us," as Averroes aptly put it.[79]

Yet just as Aquinas over the course of his career, so is secondary literature
divided about this meaning of this "formal conjunction," particularly when it
comes to the interpretation of Averroes.[80] For on the one hand, formal conjunc-
tion could imply that a transcendent intuitive act of cognition is newly estab-
lished — a conjunction in which the separate Agent Intellect will become the
very object of human cognition as some scholars have argued. In this intuitive
act, there would be complete cognitive identity between the human cogniser and
the cognised object of the separate Agent Intellect. This interpretation seems
to be quite accurate for Alexander (as read by Averroes),[81] and it is also the
reading that the young Aquinas advances for both Alexander and Averroes as
seen above.[82] Yet in regard to Averroes' theory of ultimate conjunction, it seems
difficult to defend such a reading, given that Averroes insists on complete natu-
ral continuity between ordinary and ultimate conjunction to the separate Agent
Intellect. Such a requirement, however, seems to render a *newly* established act

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[78] Concerning Alexander's theory of ultimate conjunction, cf. DAVIDSON 1992, 36–39. Con-
cerning Averroes' theory of ultimate conjunction, cf. BLACK 1999, 159–184; GEOFFROY 2007,
77–110; DRUART 2011, 371–379.

[79] Cf., for instance, AVERROES, *LCDA* III.36 (ed. Crawford 1953, 481.58–63): "Nisi aliquis
dixerit quod illa intentio quam intendit Alexander, scilicet de existentia intellectus adepti, non est
informatio facta de novo in intellectu materiali, que ante non erat, sed ipse copulatur nobiscum
copulatione adeo quod sit forma nobis per quam intelligimus alia entia, sicut apparet ex sermone
Alexandri."

[80] I divide these divisions into a "transcendental" reading and a "naturalist" reading of ultimate
conjunction in Averroes. On the former, cf. BRENET 2006, 324–328; GEOFFROY 2007, 77–110;
BRENET 2011, 232–233. On the latter, cf. DAVIDSON 1992, 34–43, 321–335, 339; BLACK 1999,
181–182; TAYLOR 2009, lxxiv-lxxv. Passages in Averroes in favour a "transcendental" reading;
cf. AVERROES *LCDA* III.36 (ed. Crawford 1953, 500.599–609 and 501.636–639). For a passage
that speaks against this interpretation, cf. AVERROES, *LCDA* III.36 (ed. Crawford 1953, 500.590–
598).

[81] Cf. AVERROES, *LCDA* III.36 (ed. Crawford 1953, 481.58–485.158), and DAVIDSON 1992,
35–39.

[82] This reading is also the reading that Albert provides in his adoption of Averroes' theory of
ultimate conjunction in his *DA* III.3.11; for references cf. n. 44 in this paper.

of cognition impossible, as it would stand in opposition to previous acts of cognition as other scholars have argued.[83]

Yet apart from these meanings of ultimate conjunction with the separate Agent Intellect in Alexander and Averroes, what matters most for our purposes here is Aquinas' reading of them in his youth. In this youthful reading, Alexander and Averroes are portrayed to advocate a theory of ultimate conjunction in which a newly established intuitive act of cognition satisfies the Aristotelian requirement of cognitive identity between a cogniser and its ultimate cognitive object. By dissociating these structural elements from (what Aquinas reads as) their original context in ultimate conjunction with the separate Agent Intellect, and by re-associating them to the new context of the beatific vision, Aquinas can thus be identified as having performed a dissociated transformation;[84] a transformation, which — unlike the previous anchored transformations — works on a wholly different level of assimilation.

Indeed, in the previous two sections, Aquinas engaged with Alexander's conception of the human soul, intellect, and happiness on the level of content, on which he evaluates and disagrees with the precise subject matters of the separate Agent Intellect and the material possible intellect. In contrast, in this section Aquinas engages with Alexander on a purely structural or, one could even say, methodological level, one that gives him the explanatory tools for arriving at his own understanding of the beatific vision. These two entirely different levels, then, forestall any worries about inconsistency in Aquinas' reading of Alexander. While they enable him to reject Alexander on the level of subject matter entirely, they allow him to draw on his insights on the level of structures and method for explaining the subject matter of the beatific vision in a more sophisticated, or, as Aquinas would say himself, a more truthful way than his Latin predecessors had. Yet, why did Aquinas think that his way of explaining the beatific vision in reliance on Alexander and Averroes was more truthful? The answer to this question must be sought in the theological context of his times

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[83] Apart from the secondary literature, such a diagnosis was also given by Aquinas in his mature *Summa contra gentiles* III.42. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *SCG* III.42 (ed. Leonina 14, 107–108).

[84] A critic may argue that this dissociated transformation amounts to a single case in Aquinas' works — an interpretation that could be supported by the fact that Aquinas does not mention Alexander's contribution anywhere his later works. Yet, as I show in my dissertation (Krause 2014, ch. 4), Aquinas draws on Alexander's conjunction theory for his theological concerns more than once, appropriating further insights for an additional theological question. For instance, in his *SCG* III.53 (ed. Leonina 14, 146–147), Aquinas implicitly appropriates Alexander's insights (as discussed by Averroes) for his conception of the light of glory. This light was coined by Albert the Great and since its coinage was commonly used to explain God's special gift of grace for the beatific vision that enhances the human intellect for such an elevated cognitive act.

and in the precise ways in which his predecessors, including his teacher Albert the Great, accounted for the beatific vision.

As already mentioned at the outset of this section, theologians before Aquinas struggled with the question of the *directness* of the beatific vision. Augustine's optimistic reading of several biblical quotations — quotations that seem to suggest that the saints will see God face-to-face or directly, had remained largely unchallenged in the Latin West until a new manuscript of pseudo-Dionysius' treatises was circulated in Paris in the early thirteenth century.[85] Pseudo-Dionysius, like a number of other Greek Christian theologians, had proposed an apophatic reading of the same biblical passages.[86] His solution to the beatific vision turned on the *dictum* of God's supra-intelligibility: everything that God is in His transcendent self remains hidden to the intellectual capacities of creatures. Cognition of God is therefore limited to so-called "theophanies" — intelligible hypostases or God's outflowing actualities. Ultimate union with God is nevertheless possible, but only in a non-cognitive, or better supra-cognitive way.[87]

Some Parisian theologians of the 1230s were interpreted to follow pseudo-Dionysius' apophatic outlook. The young Alexander of Hales, Hugh of St Cher, and Guerric of St Quentin all seem to have regarded God as supra-intelligible in his transcendent self and cognitively accessible in theophanies only, even in the beatific vision.[88] Their interpretations of the beatific vision all appeared to amount to a negation of Augustine's directness criterion — at least the 1241 condemnations saw it this way.[89] Similarly, a second group of Parisian theologians, active around the same, were interpreted to endorse an equally indirect vision of God, this time following a source other than the apophatic theology of pseudo-Dionysius. These theologians included most prominently William of Auvergne, the later bishop of Paris responsible for the 1241 condemnations, and

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[85] Cf. DONDAINE 1953; WICKI 1954, 122; HARRINGTON 2004, 2–3. Apart from pseudo-Dionysius, John the Damascene, Scotus Eriugena and John Chrysostom played a crucial role as apophatic sources. Cf. DONDAINE 1952, 67–74 and WICKI 1954, 122.

[86] On the apophatic side, cf., for instance, 1 Timothy 6:16 (Vulgate): "quem nullus hominum vidit nec videre potest"; on the kataphatic side, cf., for instance, 1 John 3:2 (Vulgate): "videbimus eum sicuti est."

[87] Cf. esp., PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS, *DN* I.4 (ed. Suchla 1990, 114; PG 3,592B; d I.28; in: ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus*, ed. Coloniensis 37/1, 24); II.6–7 (ed. Suchla 1990, 130–131; PG 3,644CD; d I.92; in: ibid., ed. Coloniensis 37/1, 80–81); V.1 (ed. Suchla 1990, 180–181; PG 3,816A; d I.321; in: ibid., ed. Coloniensis 37/1, 303); VII.1 (ed. Suchla 1990, 193–194; PG 3,865A; d I.380; in: ibid., ed. Coloniensis 37/1, 337); XIII.1 (ed. Suchla 1990, 226–227; PG 3,977AB; d I.537; in: ibid., ed. Coloniensis 37/1, 432). On pseudo-Dionysius in general, cf. O'ROURKE 1992; BRADSHAW 2006, 93–119; LASTRA SHERIDAN 2010.

[88] Cf., for instance, PERL 1994, 15–30 and 2007.

[89] Cf. *CUP* 1889, I.128.

the anonymous of Douai MS 434. In relying on Avicenna's *Metaphysics* III.8, they maintained that God Himself will be seen by way of so-called "impressions" or "similitudes." If these similitudes are taken as cognitive objects in the cogniser's intellect, they could certainly be interpreted as mediating the beatific vision. For it would be the representations of God in the intellect of the cogniser that are cognised, but not God Himself. Such an unfavourable interpretation of these explanations ultimately leads to their being subsumed under the 1241 condemnations. Yet a closer look reveals that neither William nor the anonymous of Douai MS 434 conceived of the 'similitudes' in terms of representations. In fact, they understood them more in terms of a graciously granted enhancement or capacity given to the human soul for a new supra-natural cognitive act, the beatific vision.[90]

After the *caesura* of the 1241 condemnations, which disallowed any apophatic conception of the beatific vision, Albert the Great and a number of other Dominican theologians[91] focused on a different yet equally pressing question than that of the directness of the beatific vision: the distinction between *cognition* of God's essence and *comprehension* of God's essence. Following the Augustinian tradition, Albert agreed with his Latin contemporaries that it is impossible to comprehend God on grounds of His infinity. Yet for Albert this also implied that it is impossible to cognise God's quiddity (*quid est*):

> We agree with those who say that we will see God in heaven as He is [*sicuti est*]. For just as God sees Himself without a medium, so does He offer Himself to us without any medium. And this vision will be the gift of the soul. Yet it ought to be specified that it is one thing to see God as He is [*ut est*] and another to see God's quiddity [*quid est*], just as it is one thing to see an object as it is and another to see an object's quiddity. For to see an object as it is means to see its being and its essence, whereas to see an object's quiddity is to see its proper definition including all its limits. And these two differ, as do the questions differ which are asked of them.[92]

The secondary literature has interpreted this denial of a quidditative beatific vision in Albert as being tantamount to the denial of a direct vision, just as found

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[90] Cf. KRAUSE 2014, 64–71.

[91] These other theologians included first and foremost William of Melitona (d. 1257), and Peter of Tarentaise (1225–1276, Pope Innocent V), as DONDAINE (1955, 72–78) has shown.

[92] Cf. ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De resurrectione* 4.1.9 §1 (ed. Coloniensis 26, 328B.47–54): "Quod concedimus dicentes, quod videbimus deum in patria, sicuti est. Sicut enim deus seipsum videt sine medio, ita sine omni medio offeret se nobis. Et haec visio erit dos animae. Sed tamen distinguendum est, quod aliud est videre deum, ut est, et aliud est videre, quid est deus, sicut aliud est videre rem, ut est, et aliud videre, quid est res. Rem enim videre, ut est, est videre esse rei sive essentiam rei; videre autem, quid est res, est videre propriam diffinitionem includentem omnes terminos rei. Et ista duo differunt, secundum quod differunt quaestiones de ipsis."

in his predecessors before the 1241 condemnations.[93] Yet as his text clearly
shows, Albert's distinction between *ut est* and *quid est* cognition is not con-
cerned with the question of mediation. Here and elsewhere Albert repeatedly
insists that "God will be seen immediately by conjunction."[94] Albert's distinc-
tion between *ut est* cognition and *quid est* cognition of God rests, as he explains
above, on the extent to which an object is cognised. While *ut est* cognition
enables knowledge of an object's being and essence, *quid est* cognition enables
knowledge of an object's definition. The latter, however, can be identified as the
maximally possible kind of cognition in the axiomatic sciences as explained in
Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*.[95]

Here, in a short section introducing Book II, the Stagirite presents a four-
fold division of scientific questions. These look as if they are meant to link the
subject matter of the first book, namely demonstrations, to the subject matter of
the second book, namely definitions. Yet most importantly, they constitute the
very foundations of the axiomatic system of demonstrative sciences in the long
Aristotelian tradition, asking for "the fact, the reason why, if it is, what it is."[96]
Ancient and scholastic commentators alike interpreted the first two of these
questions to be concerned with the phenomena of things, on the one hand, and
the causes of things (*quaestiones complexae*), on the other. And they identified
the latter two of these questions as being concerned with the existence of things,
on the one hand, and their definition, on the other (*quaestiones simplices*).[97]

Still, in addition to their overarching relevance in the Aristotelian scientific
system, these four questions became similarly relevant in the eschatological con-
text of the beatific vision when some Latin scholastics in the early thirteenth
century assimilated them into this new context. The first of these thinkers has
been identified as Alexander of Hales, who, in his *Summa fratris Alexandri*, dis-
tinguished between four different modalities in which God can be cognised —
modalities which drew visibly on Aristotle's four questions: cognition of God
that He is (*quia est*), what He is not (*quid non est*), what He is according to His

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[93] Cf. n. 90 and Doucet 1947; Dondaine 1949; Dondaine 1960; Bianchi 2005.
    [94] Albertus Magnus, *CS* I.1.15 (ed. Borgnet 25, 36A): "Ad hoc sine praejudicio dicimus,
affirmantes quidem certissime, quod divina substantia videtur a beatis omnibus: qualiter autem
videtur, sine praejudicio dicimus sic, quod videtur immediate per conjunctionem: ita quod Deus
offert se nostro intellectui per substantiam suam, sicut intellectus sibiipsi: et hoc est quod dicit
Apostolus, I ad Corinth. XIII, 12: *Cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum.*" Cf. also id., *CS* I.1.15
ad 1–2, ad 9 (ed. Borgnet 25, 36A-B); *Super Dionysium De divinis nominibus* 1 (ed. Colonien-
sis 37/1, 10B.64–71); ibid. (ed. Coloniensis 37/1, 11A-B.36–58); *Super Dionysii epistulas* ep. 5
(ed. Coloniensis 37/2, 495.33–43).
    [95] Cf. Dondaine 1955, 72–78.
    [96] Aristotle, *PA* II.1 89b23–24 (transl. Barnes 1984, 147).
    [97] Cf. Detel 1993, 542–547.

substance (*quid est secundum substantiam*), how He is (*qualis est*), and how great He is (*quantus est*).[98]

Somewhat later, Albert the Great took up the last two of these four questions for the beatific vision and, in his reliance on them, distinguished between the cognition of God *ut est* and the cognition of God *quid est*. Albert explains that the question of *ut est* reveals the very being (*esse*) of any cognitive object to the human intellect, inasmuch as it "touches upon its object according to its own intellectual nature." In contrast, the second question of *quid est* reveals "the perfect definition [of any object] by the limits of this object, which encompass its entire being." It is in this way that the human intellect "truly comprehends its object," according to Albert, "since comprehension is a touching of the intellect over the limits of its object."[99] This last way of cognising, however, cannot be applied to the beatific vision, since it would imply comprehending God — an impossibility for any created intellect. Albert's conception of the beatific vision thus distinctly associates the Aristotelian epistemology of the *Posterior Analytics* with the psychology of the beatific vision. For on the one hand, he links Aristotle's epistemological question about the being of a cognitive object to the human intellect's conjunction to God's essence and claims that this results in an immediate vision of the divine substance or essence. On the other hand, he links Aristotle's epistemological question about the definition of a cognitive object (*quid est*) to the human intellect's comprehension of God's essence — a cognitive act that presents an impossibility for any created intellect. In this way, Albert's beatific vision unexceptionably fulfils the criteria of the 1241 condemnation — the beatific vision is direct, it is of the divine essence, and it is non-comprehensive.[100] And yet Aquinas did not embrace his teacher's conception, because it denied *quid est* cognition of God.

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[98] Cf. Dondaine 1955, 72–78, esp. 73.

[99] Cf. Albertus Magnus, *De resurrectione* 4.1.9 §1 (ed. Coloniensis 26, 328B.54–74): "De simplici enim sive incomplexo quaerentes primo quaerimus, si est res, et terminatur quaestio ista, cum cognoscimus, quod res illa est et habet esse causatum causae primae; causa enim prima non ponit nisi esse et nullam differentiam addit super illud. Cognoscentes ergo hoc quaerimus, quid est res, volentes cognoscere rei perfectam diffinitionem per terminos claudentes totum esse rei, ita quod nihil sit de esse extra terminos illos. Et intellectui primae quaestionis non competit nisi attingere rem secundum intellectum. Intellectui autem secundae quaestionis competit comprehendere rem vere, secundum quod comprehensio est contactus intellectus super terminos rei. Sic dicimus de deo, quod attingimus esse ipsius sine medio per intellectum, sed nequaquam comprehendimus. Et hoc est quod dicit Augustinus, quod videre deum mente possumus, comprehendere vero minime."

[100] Ibid. (ed. Coloniensis 26, 329B.55–59): "Ad ultimum etiam patet solutio, quia, ut habitum est, per formam videtur id quod essentialiter distat ab intellectu; sed deus essentialiter est in intellectu; unde non oportet, quod videatur, nisi per essentiam suam immediate."

Indeed, Aquinas maintained instead a *quid est* cognition of God's essence, but he did so on the different grounds of identifying God's quiddity with God's essence. For Aquinas, as opposed to Albert, quiddity does not refer to comprehensive cognition in the cognising intellect, but rather to the essence of the cognised object, since, as Aquinas explains, the quiddity is the proper object of the intellect: it is what enables cognitive identity between the cogniser and the cognised object.[101] This conceptual identification of the divine essence and the divine quiddity provides a first indication that Aquinas does not rely on any epistemological distinction as Albert did in reliance on the *Posterior Analytics*; and this is confirmed by Aquinas' distinctively onto-psychological arguments against the comprehension of God in the beatific vision. These arguments emphasise the ontological gap between the infinity of the divine essence and the finitude of the human intellect, rather than the epistemological gap resulting from this ontological gap. Even though the intellect of the blessed has been elevated to the beatific vision by the light of glory, Aquinas reasons, it nevertheless does not possess a sufficient capacity for comprehending God, because of the ontological gap between creator and creature. "The intelligible is more cognisable than the intellect is able to cognise," because "the truth of the divine essence exceeds the light of any created intellect."[102]

Unlike Albert, Aquinas' argument for the beatific vision *per essentiam* and his argument against the comprehension of God in the beatific vision rely primarily on onto-psychological insights derived from Peripatetics insights, namely those of Alexander and Averroes, rather than on epistemological insights derived from Aristotle. The psychological relation of conjunction between the two distinct ontological substances of the human intellect and God sufficiently accounts for the cognitive, non-comprehensive act of the beatific vision;[103] an epistemological distinction between essential cognition and quidditative comprehension is unnecessary. In fact, Aquinas invokes definitional comprehension merely as a useful analogy to human cognition in this life, but it plays no argumentative

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[101] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *CS* IV.49.2.3 ad 5 (ed. Parma 7/2, 1204): "Ad quintum dicendum quod eodem modo aliquis cognoscit, quid est res, quo cognoscit essentiam rei, cum ipsa essentia sit quidditas rei. Et ideo ille solus comprehendit, quid est res, qui comprehendit essentiam. Unde sicut sancti videbunt essentiam divinam, sed non comprehendent ipsam; ita videbunt, quid est Deus, sed non comprehendent. Et ita non videbitur Deus ab eis, sicut videtur res per suam diffinitionem cuius essentia comprehenditur." Cf. also Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate* 8.1 ad 8.

[102] Thomas Aquinas, *CS* IV.49.2.3 (ed. Parma 7/2, 1203): "[…] intelligibile plus est cognoscibile quam intellectus cognoscere possit […]. Veritas autem divinae essentiae excedit lumen quodcumque intellectus creati."

[103] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *CS* IV.49.2.1 (ed. Parma 7/2, 1199): "Et quod hoc sufficiat ad hoc quod intellectus per essentiam divinam possit videre ipsam essentiam divinam, hoc modo potest ostendi."

role in his distinction between cognition of God and comprehension of God in the beatific vision.[104] One may speculate that the reason for this was Aquinas' strong insistence on the criterion of cognitive identity between the cogniser and the cognised object — a criterion which he may not have seen fulfilled in Albert's approach. With regard to the 1241 condemnations, however, Aquinas' approach amounts to nothing more than a methodological disagreement with Albert. For, just as Albert before him, Aquinas' beatific vision is direct, it is of the divine essence, and it is non-comprehensive.

In sum, Aquinas' dissociated transformation and application of Alexander's discussion of ultimate conjunction has revealed two key insights. First, unlike his contemporaries, Aquinas does not hesitate to appropriate philosophical ideas of Peripatetic provenance into the very heart of *sacra doctrina*. This is not only evident from his dissociated transformation of Alexander's alongside Averroes' theories of ultimate conjunction, but equally from his assimilation of the omnipresent Aristotelian criterion of cognitive identity for the beatific vision. Yet in order to defend this latter development in his approach, Aquinas had to navigate between the Scylla of the existential inherence of an intelligible form in the intellect on the one hand, and the Charybdis of the distinction between the divine essence and the divine quiddity on the other hand. Aquinas' dissociated transformation of Alexander alongside Averroes provided the required systematic insights to account for the beatific vision by way of psychological-formal inherence of God Himself, and thus solves both difficulties at once. Second, unlike the previous two anchored transformations, Aquinas' dissociated transformation of Alexander alongside Averroes here takes place on the level of structure and method rather than on that of content or subject matter. Thus, Aquinas cannot be charged with inconsistency in his use of and attitude toward Alexander. Rather, his ability to incorporate Alexander's thought on different systematic levels reveals the ingenuity and sophistication with which he proposes his own systematic consolidation of a beatific vision that was coherent with Aristotelian philosophical principles as well as the Christian eschatological doctrine.

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[104] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *CS* IV.49.2.3 (ed. Parma 7/2, 1203): "Sed per se loquendo, intelligibile comparatur ad intellectum secundum rationem quantitatis virtualis, eo quod proprium objectum intellectus est *quid*; et ideo in his quae sunt separata a sensu, non impeditur comprehensio intellectus nisi per excessum quantitatis virtualis; et hoc est quando intelligibile plus est cognoscibile quam intellectus cognoscere possit vel cognoscat. Sicut ille qui scit hanc conclusionem, *triangulus habet tres*, per probabilem rationem, quia scilicet ita communiter dicitur, non comprehendit ipsam: non quia partem ejus videat et partem non videat; sed quia modus quo cognoscit, deficit a modo quo est cognoscibilis per demonstrationem. Essentia autem divina est cognoscibilis per veritatem suam; intellectus autem est cognoscitivus per lumen intellectuale quod est in ipso."

IV. Concluding Remarks

In this paper, I have argued that Thomas Aquinas draws on Alexander of Aphrodisias' thought in intricate ways. Not only does he appropriate the different interpretations of Alexander's thought as he found them in Albert the Great and Averroes, but he also engages with Alexander's thought on different systematic levels, as reconstructed here through the analytic categories of anchored and dissociated transformations. Thanks to these two reconstructed transformations, Aquinas' precise systematic relation to Alexander could be clarified in terms of his explicit reasons and inherent motivations. Both of these turned out to be of a theological nature: Aquinas rejected and, at the same time, drew on Alexander's thought for his psychology, anthropology and eschatology, with the decided purpose of articulating the rationality of his faith.

Yet Aquinas' transformations of Alexander's thought (alongside that of a number of other Peripatetic thinkers) constitute the decisive conditions under which this rationalisation of his faith could take place. Without access to Alexander's thought in Averroes' *LCDA*, without Albert's early reading of Alexander's *De intellectu* and of Averroes' *LCDA*, without Albert's differing solution for the beatific vision, Aquinas could not have developed or consolidated his own thought on these matters. Aquinas' mature and fully established doctrines of psychology, anthropology, and eschatology are thus — to a great extent — the systematic result of these historical conditions of the sources available to him and of the initial transformations of these sources. Or, put the other way around, the historical conditions combined with Aquinas' specific transformations have resulted in his unique systematic consolidation. Without turning to this source and transformation history and without thinking deeply about the analytic tools we use to analyse them, we may risk missing out on key insights for the histories of philosophy that we tell or draw premature conclusions, such as, for instance, that Thomas Aquinas' transformations of Averroes' thought contradict one another and render his late criticism of Averroistic doctrines inefficient.[105] If, however, we strengthen our scholarly efforts to rethink the analytic tools we use in examining, analysing and evaluating our philosophical sources, we may gain, to an ever growing and more sophisticated extent, similar insights and conclusions to those established in this paper.[106]

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TRANSFORMING ARISTOTELIAN PHILOSOPHY: ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS IN AQUINAS' EARLY ANTHROPOLOGY AND ESCHATOLOGY

Summary

Most ancient Greek and Arabic Peripatetic works following the footsteps of Aristotle's *De anima* and *Ethica Nicomachea* stood at odds with key aspects of the traditional Christian doctrines of the human soul, intellect, and ultimate happiness. Alexander of Aphrodisias presents no exception to this picture. The young Thomas Aquinas thus heavily criticises his thought on the human soul and intellect in his *Commentary on the Sentences* II.17.2.1. Yet at the same time, he explicitly approves of some aspects of Alexander's thought on ultimate human happiness for his doctrine of the beatific vision in his *Commentary on the Sentences* IV.49.2.1. The purpose of this paper is to dissolve these seemingly paradoxical treatments of Alexander's thought in Aquinas' earliest work. By showing that Aquinas performs two distinctive transformations of Alexander's Aristotelian philosophy — an anchored transformation and a dissociated transformation — I uncover how Aquinas systematically consolidates his own earliest theological anthropology and eschatology.