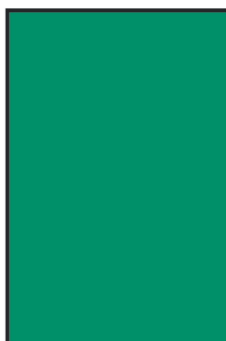


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as Thomas of Strasbourg (d. 1357) and Pierre de la Palud (d. 1342).⁹⁰ That said, it should be mentioned that the issue here concerned exceptional circumstances, having as it did beings such as children (or angels at the first moment in which their choice is fixed) who had not yet reached their normal development nor enjoyed a full life. It was generally thought that such children were, at the time of their deaths, ‘without fault and grace’ (*sine culpa nec gratia*), and that they enjoyed an existence ‘without punishment and glory’ (*sine poena et gloria*); that is, ‘in neither state’ (*in statu neutro*). There was no mention in their case of ‘natural blessedness’ but only of ‘lack of blessedness’ (*carentia beatitudinis*).⁹¹

The third, and most important stage, in the development of the concept of pure nature was the postulation in theological circles of a ‘natural end’ for human beings, an end which was independent of any ‘supernatural end’.⁹² We find this notion in some of the works of Paduan philosophers; but it first found its way into the interpretation of canonical texts, such as those of Thomas Aquinas, courtesy of the work of Cardinal Cajetan (1469–1534).⁹³ As is well known, Cajetan had studied in Padua from 1491 to 1496 and had subsequently taught there at the Dominican *studium generale*. During his time at Padua, self-styled ‘Thomists’ (invariably Dominicans)

⁹⁰ Thomas of Strasbourg, *In IV Sent.*, lib. II, dist. 33, q. 1, a. 3, concl. 2, ad 1: ‘Those who descend in original sin alone are not in vain; since, although they do not attain their supernatural end, they nevertheless attain their natural end. For they can possess a clearer contemplation than any philosopher could ever attain in this life; this contemplation is the natural end of the virtuous man’ (‘Illi qui decedunt in peccato originali solo, non sunt frustra; quia, quamvis non consequantur finem supernaturalem, consequuntur tamen, finem naturalem. Possunt enim habere evidentiolem contemplationem, quam quicumque philosophus unquam habere potuit in hac vita; quae quidem contemplatio est naturalis finis hominis virtuosus’). Or Petrus Paludus, *In IV Sent.*, dist. 1, q. 5, concl. 5: ‘Man who would be formed from the clay of the earth and would die without grace and sin would lack the vision of God, which would not be [his] punishment, but rather [his] nature’ (‘Homo qui formaretur de limo terrae et moreretur sine gratia et culpa, careret visione divina, quod tamen non esset et poena, sed natura’).

⁹¹ Paradoxically, some scholastics such as Giles of Rome (d. 1316) thought that children who died unbaptized before coming to the use of their *liberum arbitrium* really had to suffer the penalty of damnation without being deprived of their natural end and natural blessedness; see Giles of Rome (1581), *In Sent.*, lib. 2, dist. 32, q. 32, a. 2.

⁹² It is interesting that many thirteenth-century authors used the term ‘natural perfection’. See Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 19, a. 1, discussed by Bradley (1998), pp. 397–8; and the MSS of Albertus Magnus’s *De intellecta et intelligibile* in Averroes (2001), pp. 124–5.

⁹³ For a general discussion of Cajetan, whose reputation as a reliable commentator of Thomas’s texts has suffered at the hands of twentieth-century interpreters, see Grabmann (1934); and Gilson (1983), esp. pp. 33–89. For a general study of his work see Reilly (1971) and Pinchard (1987).

were then engaged in a bitter struggle with the 'Scotists' (invariably Franciscans), and Cajetan was eager to enter into the fray.⁹⁴

In an attempt to combat Scotist positions,⁹⁵ and in order to restore the putative purity of Thomist teaching,⁹⁶ Cajetan originated a shift in emphasis which many later Thomists came to accept without reservation. According to him, a human being can only have a really natural desire for an end which is connatural to him. In describing the desire to see God 'face to face' (*beatitudo*), Cajetan argued that Thomas could only speak of the desire awakened in man, that is, a natural desire in man which is actually raised by God to a supernatural end and enlightened by revelation. Commenting on Thomas's argument at *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 9, a. 2, ad. 3,⁹⁷ Cajetan says:

Be cautious, however, and pay attention to the phrase 'insofar as the soul by its very nature is capable of it [scil. the vision of God]' (*inquantum scilicet per naturam suam est capax eius*). This is a condition which diminishes the sense from *simpliciter* to *secundum quid*. It does not follow from the fact that man is capable of this vision [of God] that 'it is natural for him', or that 'he has a natural potency for it'. More is required for something to be 'natural' unqualifiedly (*simpliciter*) and to be a 'natural potency': and that is a natural inclination with regard to that act. It only follows that man has a nature which can be elevated to that act; for man differs from the animals precisely in the respect that he has an intellectual nature. Consequently, brute animals cannot be elevated to the act of seeing God, whereas man can. This comes from the fact that intellectual nature is capable of the vision, whereas sensitive nature alone is not. Therefore, the vision of God is in some way natural to our soul, but only in a certain respect (*secundum quid*), in that man is capable of it on the basis of his nature. It is not, however, natural to him unqualifiedly (*simpliciter*), or to any other creature, but to God alone.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ On the philosophical activity and rivalry at Padua see Nardi (1958); Di Napoli (1963), pp. 227–338; Poppi (1966) and (2001); and Piaia (2002).

⁹⁵ On early modern Scotism see Schmutz (2002b).

⁹⁶ On 'Thomism' during this period see Kristeller (1967); Hoenen (1997); and Goris (2002).

⁹⁷ *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 9, a. 2, ad. 3: 'Beatific vision or knowledge is, in one way, above the nature of the rational soul, for the soul cannot reach it by its own power. But in another way it is in accordance with its nature, insofar as the soul by its very nature has a capacity for it, being made in the image of God ('secundum naturam ipsius inquantum scilicet per naturam suam est capax eius, prout scilicet ad imaginem Dei facta est') ... But uncreated knowledge is above the nature of the human soul in every way.'

⁹⁸ Cajetan (1903), *In III*, q. 9, a. 2, ad. 3, pp. 141–2: 'In responsione ad tertium eiusdem articuli, nota distinctionem de supra naturam, vel secundum naturam. Quoniam hinc habes intellectum diversorum dictorum de beatitudine nostra, cum invenies quod est naturalis, aut quod est supernaturalis. Veruntamen esto cautus: ut bene notes, in secundo membro, ly *inquantum scilicet secundum naturam suam est capax eius*. Quoniam est conditio haec diminuens a *simpliciter* ad *secundum quid*. Non enim quia homo est capax illius visionis, sequitur, *Ergo est illi naturalis*, aut, *Habet ad illam potentiam naturalem*: quia plus requiritur ad naturalitatem simpliciter et ad potentiam naturalem, scilicet naturalis inclinatio

In this passage Cajetan notes that it is by no means remiss to say that human beings have a ‘natural potency’ for the vision of God, as long as one understands this phrase with a certain qualification. It is ‘natural’ in the sense that man has a natural capacity for the beatific vision which is specific to his intellectual nature. The term ‘natural potency’, however, without any qualification (*simpliciter*), implies also the presence of a connatural active power capable of realizing that potency, as well as a natural inclination for that act. In this case the potency is natural in the full or proper sense. For this reason, Cajetan observes that human beings have a ‘natural potency’ for the vision of God *secundum quid*, but not *simpliciter*, as this unqualified sense would imply in addition a natural inclination.⁹⁹

Cajetan’s role as a supposed innovator within Thomist circles was debated throughout the sixteenth century and beyond. Supporters of his reading of Thomas on the pure state were prepared to credit him with establishing the concept in theological discourse. Francisco Suárez (1548–1617), for instance, said that ‘Cajetan and more recent theologians (*moderniores theologii*) considered a third state that they called purely natural (*pure naturalem*), which although in fact it did not exist, nevertheless can be thought to be possible.’¹⁰⁰ Detractors such as his fellow Dominican Domingo Báñez (1582–1604) wrote: ‘Cajetan says that St Thomas treats man here as a theologian and therefore calls “natural desire” the desire which man expresses owing to the presupposed divine order through which man is disposed to that supernatural beatitude. This, I say, is not a satisfactory response, but instead weakens St Thomas’s argument.’¹⁰¹ Other theologians, however, were not so persuaded as Suárez; they did not attribute to Thomas what was the invention of the most personal of his

in illum actum. Sed solum sequitur quod habet naturam quae potest elevari in illum actum. In hoc enim differt homo ab animalibus, scilicet ex hoc ipso quod est intellectualis animae, quod bruta non possunt elevari in actum videndi Deum, homo autem potest elevari in illum. Quod hinc provenit, quia intellectualitas est capax visionis illius: pars autem sensitiva tantum non est illius capax. Quocirca visio Dei est aliquo modo naturalis animae nostrae, sed secundum quid: quia capax ex sua natura illius. Non est autem simpliciter naturalis illi, aut alteri cuicumque creaturae, sed soli Deo’.

⁹⁹ See Carro (1936); Alfaro (1952), pp. 5–280; and Hallensleben (1985).

¹⁰⁰ *De gratia, proleg.* IV, c. 1, n. 2, in Suárez (1856–78), VII, p. 179: ‘Cajetanus et moderniores theologii tertium consideraverunt statum, quem pure naturalem appellarunt, qui, licet de facto non fuerit, cogitari tamen potest ut possibilis.’ For further discussion of Suárez’s teaching on grace see Elorduy (1948) and Benzo Mestre (1950).

¹⁰¹ Báñez (1942), *In primam secundae*, q. 3, a. 8 (de Heredia (ed.) p. 123): ‘[Dicit Cajetanus] quod divus Thomas agit hic de homine sicut theologus, et propterea appellat desiderium naturale illud quod habet homo praesupposita divina ordinatione qua homo ordinatur ad illam beatitudinem supernaturalem: haec, inquam, responsio non satisfacit, quin potius enervat rationem divi Thomae.’ On Báñez’s views about grace, views that came to prominence in his dispute with Molina at the beginning of the *De auxiliis* controversy, see Beltrán de Heredia (1968); and Bermejo (1999).

commentators. This was the case, we shall see, with Soto; but it can also be found in Willem Hessels van Est or 'Estius' (1542–1613), a former pupil of Baius and Hessels,¹⁰² Nicolas Ysambert (ca. 1565/9–d. 1642)¹⁰³ and the Jesuit Rodrigo de Arriaga (1592–1667).¹⁰⁴ Only the mild effusiveness so common to the Carmelites of Salamanca, collectively known as the 'Salmanticenses' (fl. 1581–1641), would enable them to report that Cajetan 'faithfully preserved the deposit' of Thomism.¹⁰⁵

Before going into further detail as to how Soto appraised the concept of pure nature, it is important to record that from the death of Thomas Aquinas down to the time of Cajetan, many members of different 'Thomist schools' advanced an interpretation which was very different from that of the great cardinal. Johannes Quidort (John of Paris) (d. 1306) argued that 'in the aspect of the proper moral good, immediately through the action of the intellect and will, [God] is the end and beatitude of the rational creature.'¹⁰⁶ The 'Prince of Thomists', John Capreolus (d. 1444) said: 'It is fitting that the ultimate end of human perfection is in understanding something most perfect and intelligible, which is the divine essence; in this regard, every wholly rational creature is blessed because he sees the essence of God.'¹⁰⁷ Likewise, John Versor (d. 1485), who explains the doctrine of Thomas in his commentary on the tenth book of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* holds that the nature capable of attaining perfect good with help is of a more noble condition than that which attains an imperfect good without assistance.¹⁰⁸ Despite the efforts of Cajetan and his supporters to embed the new interpretation within Thomism, they met with resistance;

¹⁰² Báñez (1680), *In IV Sent.*, dist. 49, n. 1, p. 551.

¹⁰³ Ysambert (1643), p. 90: 'Caietanus et plures alii recentiores ita explicant s. Thomam.'

¹⁰⁴ Arriaga (1643), p. 65: '[Argumentum] quod videtur fuisse D. Thomae, desumitur ex appetitu universali ... Haec tamen ratio nullo modo convincit. Et ita tandem Caietanus fatetur.' For further discussion of Arriaga's thought on these issues see Ferrari (1951) and Ortiz-Monasterio (1964).

¹⁰⁵ Salmanticenses (1691), i, p. 53. On the distinctive teaching of Carmelite fathers of Salamanca, see Sierra del Santísimo Sacramento (1994) and Borde (2001).

¹⁰⁶ Jean Quidort *In IV Sent.* dist. 49, quoted in Muller (1947), pp. 499-500: 'Sed in ratione boni habitus proprii immediate per actionem intellectus vel voluntatis, [Deus] est finis rationalis creaturae et beatitudo.'

¹⁰⁷ Capreolus (1589), *In II Sent.*, dist. 23, q. 1: 'Oportet quod ultimus terminus humanae perfectionis sit in intelligendo aliquod perfectissimum intelligibile, quod est essentia divina; in hoc igitur unaquaeque tota rationalis creatura beata est, quod essentiam Dei videt.' Capreolus later set down his mature thoughts in his *Defensionum thomae* (1908). For further discussion of his position see Pinckaers (1997).

¹⁰⁸ Versor (1494), *In I. X.*, q. 11: 'Ultima et perfectissima hominis felicitas in visione divinae essentiae consistit. Probatum conclusio. Quia homo non potest esse perfecte felix quamdiu restat sibi aliquid ad desiderandum et quaerendum. Sed homini semper restat tale quaerendum quosque divinam essentiam videat.'

and by the time of Trent, the idea of a pure nature had scarcely made any progress. This can be observed in the work of Dominic de Soto.

DOMINIC DE SOTO

A contemporary of Baius and his colleague at Trent,¹⁰⁹ Soto composed his treatise *De natura et gratia* during the leisure afforded him by the interval between the sixth and the seventh sessions of the Council, only a few years before Baius started on his *Opuscula*. The book, dedicated to the Fathers of the Church, was published in Venice in 1547. It was to be followed, fifteen years later, by a commentary on the fourth book of the *Sentences*, published at Salamanca in 1561–2, and which Soto was still working on at the time of his death.¹¹⁰

At the beginning of *De natura et gratia*, Soto speaks of a man ‘with a mind conceived in pure nature (*in puris naturalibus*)’. He wonders what the power of this ‘bare nature’ (*natura nuda*) would be, that is, what would be possible for such a man to know and achieve in the moral order. But he is very careful to avoid saying that such a state must be held to be actually realizable. That said, Soto explains that there is nothing to prevent us from examining it as a useful fiction even though there is no basis for the concept in Scripture or the Fathers.¹¹¹ ‘Let us imagine’, he says, ‘that man was created by God in this natural state: as a rational animal, without guilt and grace, and without any supernatural gift.’¹¹²

This is man as the ancient philosophers pictured him, as a rational animal, born to live in political society and endowed with reason and virtue.¹¹³ Soto was well aware, however, that such a description of humankind in his pure state revealed a mistaken conception of his ultimate end. Following orthodox tradition, Soto claims that there is only one true

¹⁰⁹ For Soto’s role as a defender of the doctrines of Trent see Viel (1906) and Belda Plans (1995).

¹¹⁰ For commentary on Soto’s views on grace, in the context of his debates with other theologians, see Beltrán de Heredia (1941) and Olazarán (1942). For a general treatment see Stegmüller (1951).

¹¹¹ Soto (1570), lib. 1, cap. 3: ‘Cum de hoc homine, quem fingimus, nihil vel in sacra pagina vel apud sanctos patres scriptum sit; commodius elucidabitur ...’

¹¹² Ibid., lib. 1, cap. 3: ‘Faciamus itaque imaginando, ut homo hunc in modum naturalis a Deo sit creatus: utpote rationale animal, absque culpa et gratia, et quovis supernaturali dono.’

¹¹³ Ibid., lib. 1, cap. 3: ‘Cum homo sit rationale animal, finis eius naturalissimus est operari semper secundum rationem, id est, omnia agere propter honestum Suorum autem officiorum in hac vita est pax tranquillisque status republicanæ. Est enim homo politicum animal, natum in societate vivere ...’

end laid down for human beings, *beatitudo*, or the blessed vision of God.¹¹⁴ Among the arguments he uses to establish this point the principal proof (*potissima ratio*) is taken from the Bible. When God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness' (Genesis 1:26), it was our very nature that he designated, and by this he placed in us a 'natural inclination' or 'appetite' for union with God.

On the other hand, Soto knew perfectly well that this end is gratuitous: 'over and above every boundary and order of created nature, where God is infinite but every creature is limited, and infinitely far removed from that abyss of perfection.'¹¹⁵ And so, not for the purpose of tending towards it by virtue of a natural inclination or an 'innate appetite', but in order to understand it and desire it with an elicited desire, there is need for that 'supernatural light' which was absent in the deliberations of the ancient philosophers. Soto insists on the necessity of revelation if one is to be able to understand and desire 'true blessedness' and insists on the necessity of supernatural help to be able to reach it with a desire pleasing to God. He is fond of quoting in this connection the famous texts of Isaiah (64:4) and St Paul (1 Corinthians 2:9): 'Eye has not seen, nor ear has heard' (*Oculus non vidit, auris non audivit*); but he observes how many in his day take the opportunity from this to deny the natural desire. By doing this, he claims, they transform traditional teaching. He restates the position in simple terms: 'that happiness must be called a natural rather than a supernatural end' (*felicitas illa finis potius dicendus naturalis, quam supernaturalis*). Since the vision of God is the object of a natural desire, since it is for every man, whether he knows it or not, the real end of human nature, it is better, Soto thinks, to continue to say that the vision of God constitutes our 'natural end'. At the same time, this position also strikes him as more rational. The desire is not to be defined by its effect but rather by its cause; therefore, it will be called 'natural' not because human beings could naturally elicit it, but because nature has placed it in human beings. In like manner, the end will be natural, not because man could attain it naturally, but only because it is desired by this natural appetite. In this precise sense, Soto says, 'I indeed consider that end to be simply natural for us' (*profecto ita censeo, quod finis ille simpliciter sit nobis naturalis*).¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Soto (1589), d. 49, q. 2. a. 1: 'illam veram beatitudinem, quae est videre Deum'; '... quae in Dei visione consistit'.

¹¹⁵ Soto (1570), lib. 1, cap. 4: 'extra supraque omnem lineam et ordinem naturae conditae, eo quod Deus infinitus sit, omnis autem creatura limitata, ab illaque adeo perfectionis abisso infinitum distans'.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., lib. 1, cap. 4: 'Inquietudo ipsa humani animi ... fidem abunde facit illum esse finem nostrum naturalem.' Soto (1589), dist. 49: 'Respondetur ergo ad argumenta Caietani, non bene definisse finem naturalem esse illum quem potest homo naturaliter consequi, neque appetitum naturalem illum qui naturaliter potest habere actum elicatum: quoniam appetitus

Tellingly, Soto's use of terminology in these crucial arguments is far more indebted to Duns Scotus than to his beloved Thomas. Soto was well aware of this. It was Scotus who wrote: 'I concede that God is the natural end of man, although he is not attained naturally but supernaturally.'¹¹⁷ Thomas had said: 'It is natural for the human intellect that at sometime it should attain the divine vision'; and he had spoken of an end 'in one way above nature, but in another in accordance with nature', or else he had simply referred to an 'end of nature'.¹¹⁸ Despite this difference in terminology, Soto could feel that he was being faithful to the views of both medieval doctors. Scotus and Thomas did not feel the need to add an attributive adjective to the word end (*finis*)—unlike Peter Olivi (1248–98) who spoke of a 'proper end' (*proprius finis*)¹¹⁹—because they had no idea of making a distinction between two ends which were both final and transcendent, one of which would have been 'natural' and the other 'supernatural'.

Ever since the time of Scotus the question had begun to become confused as a result of controversy between fourteenth-century schools of theology. While holding to the same idea of the vision of God advanced by Thomas, Scotus was minded to emphasize his idea of a natural desire in opposition to a wholly 'elicited' one, like a 'weight of nature' (*pondus naturae*) analogous to what might be the obscure desire of a beast or a stone.¹²⁰ Fundamentally, of course, it was only an analogy, but the spiritual element was not sufficiently taken into account. To the former distinction of a natural or necessary desire and an elective or free desire—the one

naturalis non debet definiri per effectum, sed per causam. Est ergo appetitus naturalis quem nobis natura inseruit: et eo ipso quod creati sumus ad imaginem Dei, insitum habemus appetitum naturalem ad ipsum videndum. Atque adeo finis naturalis est quem naturaliter appetimus: licet consecutio eius et adeptio non sit nobis naturalis.' When, however, Soto desires to distinguish clearly this final end from the earthly end he speaks very differently. Compare, for instance, the same chapter of the *De natura et gratia*, the passage in which he attacks the opinion of Gregory of Rimini on man's moral powerlessness: 'This pertains to men who do not clearly distinguish between the natural and the supernatural end of man' ('Hoc est hominum haud oculate distinguendum inter finem naturalem et finem supernaturalem hominis').

¹¹⁷ Duns Scotus (1639), VIII, *In I Sent.*, Prol. q. 1 a. 12, p. 22: 'Concedo Deum esse finem naturalem hominis, licet non naturaliter adispiscendum sed supernaturaliter.' For a helpful analysis of Scotus's position see Wolter (1949).

¹¹⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 9, a. 2, ad 3. For further discussion see Bradley (1998), p. 398, esp. nn. 161–3; and Torrell (2001).

¹¹⁹ Peter Olivi, *In II Sent.*, q. 56: 'It is agreed, not only in accordance with faith, but also in accordance with right reason, that all rational nature is through essence of such a sort that the proper end cannot be attained through created nature, but only through a supernatural agent' ('non solum secundum fidem, sed etiam secundum rectam rationem constat, quod omnis natura rationalis est per essentiam talis, quod proprius finis non potest per naturam creatam acquiri, sed solum per agens supernaturale').

¹²⁰ We find this metaphor already in use in Augustine, *De musica*, VI.11.29.

'physical', the other 'moral'—there was now added the distinction of an innate appetite or an 'elicited' act of desire. Consequently, in criticizing this innate appetite, considered as a crude disposition, some Thomist theologians seemed more or less to deny any real natural desire. At least this is how they were interpreted by sixteenth-century scholastics. Scotus's 'innate appetite' (*appetitus innatus*) was contrasted to an 'elicited appetite' (*appetitus elicited*), an unsatisfactory expression which Soto chose to avoid. Like earlier thinkers such as Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (d. 1332)¹²¹ and Capreolus,¹²² Soto speaks only of an elicited act. But soon theologians were no longer so discerning in the choice of vocabulary.

This was not to remain merely a question of terminology: it was a genuine revision. With Thomas, the elicited act of desire was clearly the sign of a genuine natural desire, that is, of an appetite of nature, even when this latter was not mentioned by name; for this reason Thomas could argue from it, as he often did. On the basis of natural desires that can be observed, he sets out to show that such desires are never fulfilled unless and until they find God.¹²³ By bringing to bear the concept of an 'elicited appetite' in order to make sense of Thomas's thoughts on this issue, later interpreters of Thomas helped to make his teaching obscure. Chief among those who championed this mode of exegesis was João Poinset or John of St Thomas (1589–1664).¹²⁴ The Salamancan Scotist John of Rada (ca. 1545–1608) was to observe with a mixture of bitterness and irony, that whereas the leaders of the rival schools were in agreement, 'so as not to appear to agree with Scotus the students of St Thomas lead St Thomas to a position which is foreign to him' (*discipuli sancti Thomae, ne videantur cum Soto sentire, Divum Thomam in alienam adducunt sententiam*).¹²⁵

¹²¹ Durandus of Saint-Pourçain (1550), dist. 49, q. 8, n. 7, fol. 362^r: 'The appetite is two-fold, natural and elective The action of the natural appetite is not any sort of elicited act, but is only the natural inclination to that which is sought; the action of the elective appetite is a certain elicited act which is said to will ...' ('Duplex est appetitus, sc. naturalis et electivus Actus appetitus naturalis non est aliquis actus elicited, sed est sola naturalis inclinatio ad illud quod appetitur; actus vero appetitus electivi ... est quidam actus elicited qui dicitur velle ...').

¹²² Capreolus (1908), vii, pp. 169, 170, 179 and 180.

¹²³ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Ia–IIae, q. 3, a. 8l; *Compendium theologiae*, c. 104; and *Summa contra gentiles*, lib. III, cap. 50. See Bonino (2001b) and Torrell (2001).

¹²⁴ John of St Thomas (1930), *Cursus theologicus*, disp. XII, 'De potentia elevabili ad visionem Dei', a. 3, n. 7: 'He speaks expressly about the desire to see the cause by means of its visible effects; therefore, he speaks about desire founded in knowledge, that is, in visible effects; this is the elicited appetite. But he absolutely denies it (the innate appetite)' ('Expresse loquitur de desiderio videndi causam visis effectibus; ergo loquitur de desiderio fundato in cognitione, id est, visis effectibus; qui utique est appetitus elicited. Absolute autem illum (appetitum innatum negat).')

¹²⁵ Johannes Rada (1586), *Controversiae theologiae*, controversia prima, a. 2, at p. 14. Cf. p. 13: 'Tandem, admissio, quod loquantur de desiderio pro actu elicited, dico ibi necessario

A fear of the *Scotica officina* had probably influenced the position so resolutely defended by Thomists like Cajetan, Chrysostomus Javelli (1470–1538)¹²⁶ and Konrad Koellin (d. 1536).¹²⁷ At Padua in the early sixteenth century, the dispute between self-styled ‘Thomists’ and ‘Scotists’ was acrimonious.¹²⁸ It was the Scotist theologians of Padua who prepared the first early modern editions of the Subtle Doctor’s works, while in the neighbouring city of Vicenza the Dominicans published the *Liber propugnatorius*. At Padua Silvester de Prierio Mazzolini (1460–1523) wrote his *Malleus in falsas assumptiones Scoti contra sanctum Thomam*, published in Bologna in 1514.¹²⁹ Anti-Scotist polemics absorbed the energy of many Thomists at this time, principally among them Cajetan. He expended much time in refuting the views of Antonio Trombetta (d. 1518), who held the Scotist chair at Padua, the chair in opposition to his own. Behind every utterance of Trombetta, Cajetan espied the voice of Scotus; and for this reason the first major Thomist of the early-modern era endeavoured to refute and ridicule as many Scotist pronouncements as he could identify.¹³⁰ The upshot of Cajetan’s work was to attribute to Scotist writers a hostile reading of Thomas, a reading which found expression in wider Thomist circles, as is evidenced in the writings of Koellin¹³¹ and Javelli.¹³²

subintelligi naturalem inclinationem ad videndum causam: nam ille actus elicited, quo cupimus videre causam, non dicitur naturalis a D. Thoma, nisi quia consonus et conformis est inclinationi naturae’. For further discussion of Rada’s work and its bearing on this debate see Armellada (1959)

¹²⁶ On Javelli’s work, especially his criticism of Pomponazzi, see Gilson (1983), pp. 259–77.

¹²⁷ For interpretation of Koellin’s work see Wilms (1941), and more specifically (1934) and (1935).

¹²⁸ See Di Napoli (1963); and Poppi (1966), and (2001).

¹²⁹ On Mazzolini’s anti-Scotist writings see Tavuzzi (1997), pp. 41–4.

¹³⁰ It has been pointed out that Cajetan allows himself to get carried away where Scotus is concerned, see Gilson (1952), reprinted in Gilson (1983), pp. 33–7. For textual examples of Cajetan general impatience with Scotus see Cajetan (1888), *In primam*, q. 12, a. 11, in 5. Cf. q. 13, a.7, in. 8.

¹³¹ Koellin seems to fear nothing more than a possible agreement between the two great leaders of the schools; see Koellin (1589), q. 113, a. 10, p. 964: ‘It may appear to someone that the holy Doctor wished that there was a natural faculty for grace in the soul. And thus he would agree with Scotus. ... And it may be that the holy Doctor agrees’ (‘Potest alicui videri, quia Doctor sanctus vellet, quod anima esset in potentia naturali ad gratiam. Et sic concordaret cum Scoto. ... Et videri posset, quod Doctor sanctus concordet ...’).

¹³² Javelli regards it as the worst possible form of reproach of Thomist teaching, and the best refutation of it, to be able to say ‘this is to coincide with the teaching of Scotus’ (‘hoc est incidere in sententiam Scoti’): see Javelli (1695), q. 12, a. 1, f. 21. His method of articulating the difference between Thomas and Scotus is odd to say the least. First he propounds a thesis which he wishes to refute in Scotist terms, and then he meets Scotus’s arguments and adds that ‘some’ wish to attribute the same argument to Thomas. But, Javelli

When compared with these earlier Thomists, Soto reveals himself to be very different. A balanced defender of Thomas, who has also be formed by other intellectual influences,¹³³ he had no wish to see the thought of his master 'watered down' or 'twisted'.¹³⁴ To restore it in the face of what he regarded as misinterpretation, he adopted a contrary terminology to that favoured by Cajetan, Koellin and Javelli, so that his teaching on the *natura pura* adopted a quasi-Scotist tinge. In these terms, at least, Soto's reaction is more vigorous than that of his colleague and immediate predecessor in the *catedra prima* at Salamanca, Francesco de Vitoria (1483–1546), who also opposed the interpretation initiated by Cajetan but had not thought it necessary all the same to approximate Thomas's terminology to that of Scotus.¹³⁵

In any case, Soto had no intention of breaking with what he believed to be the fundamental teaching of Augustine,¹³⁶ Thomas,¹³⁷ Bonaventure¹³⁸ and Scotus, all of whom had never postulated an end which would be transcendent and 'purely natural', and which would consist in knowledge of God other than envisaged by the traditional concept of the beatific vision. Soto never imagined that theologians could ever speak of a man ordained to another end, he merely sought to know what would be the

adds, Thomas could not have fallen into Scotus's error, so he must be understood in a different sense. Ibid.: 'Note that blessed Thomas seems to maintain that there is a natural desire in the rational creature to see the divine essence, which, nevertheless, does not appear to be true Moreover, this coincides with the opinion of Scotus, who wishes the beatific end to be natural, although it is called supernatural by an extrinsic appellation' ('Adverte quod beatus Thomas videtur intendere naturale desiderium inesse creaturae intellectuali videndi divinam essentiam; quod non tamen non videtur verum Praeterea, hoc est incidere in sententiam Scoti, qui vult finem beatificum esse naturalem, licet denominatione extrinseca dicatur supernaturalis ...'). For further discussion of notions of causality as it impinged on this debate see Schmutz (2001).

¹³³ One must remember that before joining the Dominican order and studying under Vitoria at the University of Paris, Soto had received his MA from the nominalist arts faculty of the University of Alcalá, and was very *au fait* with philosophical developments outside the Thomist tradition.

¹³⁴ Soto (1562), dist. 49, q. 2, a. 1: 'Cajetan responds, however, that he understands about the desire to know the cause under the aspect of cause, namely, knowing how it effects these things, but not about the desire to see the essence. But, indeed, it is clear that he has misrepresented the mind of St Thomas' ('Respondet autem Caietanus quod intelligit de desiderio cognoscendi causam sub ratione causae, nempe cognoscere quomodo haec efficit, non autem de desiderio videndi essentiam. At vero hoc est plane mentem D. Thomae detorquere').

¹³⁵ On Vitoria see Stegmüller (1934).

¹³⁶ Augustine, *Contra Iulianum Pelagianum*, lib. 3, cap. 12; cf. lib. 6, cap. 10.

¹³⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibet* X, q. 8, a. 17; *De veritate*, q. 18, a. 1, and q. 8, a. 3, obi. 12; *De virtutibus in communi*, a. 10; and *Summa theologiae*, Ia q. 12, a. 1.

¹³⁸ Bonaventure, *In II Sent.*, dist. 16, a. 2, q. 1; and dist., 29, a. 1, q. 2 ad 4m; and *Breviloquium*, pars viii, cap. 7.

powers of a human being who had not at the outset of his creation been endowed with supernatural powers. If sometimes, Soto appears to depart from the neo-Augustinian tradition it is not that he seeks to depart from the contours of Augustine's teaching. Rather, like so many others embroiled in the theological disputes of the period he has to confront the claims of the Lutherans, then recently condemned by the fifth session of Trent, and their exegesis of crucial passages in Augustine's texts.¹³⁹ All the same, like his Thomist and Dominican predecessors, he treats the problems of grace and nature as if he had no idea, within creation, of a natural order distinguished by a natural transcendental end. And, as a matter of fact, Soto had no such idea. It could not be said that he passed over the idea of the pure state of nature in silence, but that he seems to exclude it in advance. That he opposed the attribution of the idea to canonical writings can be seen in his restatement of an argument that had been used by earlier scholastics against those who used Aristotle to deny the existence of the supernatural state. Soto says:

One may respond [to Cajetan] that Aristotle did not say: 'if they had the inclination', but 'if they had the power, they would have the means'. We, however, do not say that nature has the power, that is, the natural power to see God, but only the inclination. Moreover, Aristotle knew nothing about the supernatural, and therefore he would not have conceded that some thing has a natural inclination towards some other thing, unless it had the power and natural strength to obtain it. We, however, concede that our nature is so sublime that it is inclined towards that end which we cannot obtain except through God's help.¹⁴⁰

There was nothing here preventing Soto from affirming that even if God had not decided to grant the beatific vision to the first man, he would not have been unjust, because God owed the first man nothing. Soto then launched into various hypotheses on the subject. All the sources to which he wished to remain faithful had admitted this before him, at least implicitly, by saying that the beatific vision is a gratuitous gift. In this way, the absolute supernaturalism denied by Baius is upheld. But here we must note the following important feature: Soto did not imagine another world in which a purely natural knowledge of God would have constituted in eternity the natural end of human being. With Baius he shared an aversion to the state of pure nature.

¹³⁹ This aspect of Soto's work is clarified by Brett (2000), see esp. pp. 73–88.

¹⁴⁰ Soto (1589), dist. 41, q. 2, a. 1: 'Respondeatur [ad Caietanum] quod Aristoteles non dixit: si haberent inclinationem, sed: si haberent vim, haberent instrumenta. Nos autem, non dicimus quod natura habet vim, id est potentiam naturalem ad videndum Deum, sed inclinationem dumtaxat. Praeterea Aristoteles nil de supernaturabilis novit, et ideo non concederet rem aliquam habere naturalem inclinationem ad aliquid, nisi haberet potestatem et naturales vires ad illud assequendum; nos autem concedimus naturam nostram adeo esse sublimem, ut ad illum finem inclinetur quem non nisi per auxilium Dei assequi possumus.'

Yet, unlike the Louvain theologian, Soto was still minded to preserve some vestige of the earlier scholastic thought, whereby the essential characteristics of human beings can still be discussed and illuminated by recourse to an Aristotelian-Thomist anthropology.¹⁴¹ Like so many before him, Soto claimed that a consideration of these issues of grace and nature comes down, in the final analysis, to postulating a twofold end in human beings: one, which is proportionate to a human being's created nature, which he can attain by himself; the other, which is beyond all proportion and consists in eternal life. For Soto, as well as for the great medieval scholastics, this twofold finality in every created individual does not constitute a double polarity in human nature. The created nature and supernatural end of a human being coexist in concord. The first is determined by virtue and prudence, as explained by the ancients.¹⁴² It is neither removed nor smothered by the other, but it is always subordinate to it. For this reason, the second is fully deserving of the title 'final end' since it transcends the earthly horizon and leads us to our eventual perfection. By any objective standard, this is classical Thomism, and there is no reason to suppose that Soto ever compromised his allegiance to it on this vexed issue.

CONCLUSION

In Baius and Soto we meet two very different Catholic theologians attempting to work their way through to an orthodox understanding of grace and nature. For Baius, the route to clarifying the thorny doctrinal issues surrounding fallen human nature is through the *duplex fons* of Scripture and Augustine, sources which by-pass any need for further 'scholastic' elaboration, and which preserve the verities of the old religion by means of a clear appeal to revelation and divine authority. For Soto, however, the resources of the scholastic tradition, in the form of Thomism (and certain aspects of Scotism), are to be preserved by a faithful exposition of Thomas's writings. Where necessary, the claims of other 'Thomist' exegetes, such as Cajetan, to have distilled the essence of Thomas's teaching are debunked—as in the case of the pure state of nature—whenever such commentators are thought to exceed the *sensus* and *intentio* of a canonical text. On the foundation of Thomist works, Soto builds his system by drawing on elements of the biblical and patristic heritage in order to show the true *concordia* of the Thomist heritage with Scripture and Catholic tradition.

¹⁴¹ On Soto's account of human nature as it is expressed in his moral and political writings see Lisson Ramos (1976); Brett (1995), pp. 141–64; and Belda Plans (2000), pp. 487–97.

¹⁴² Soto (1570), lib. 1, cap. 3.

Despite these obvious differences, both Baius and Soto remain united in their opposition to the state of pure nature. This is not without significance. For the ‘Louvain Augustinian’ and ‘Salamanca Thomist’ are steadfast in their belief that any view of moral agency will be crucially dependent on a full characterization of the moral condition of human beings in their fallen state. To my mind, at least, this point is of crucial importance for any general understanding of sixteenth-century moral thought. Since neither Baius nor Soto is concerned with an account of pure human nature which derives from ancient philosophy, or even Christian humanism,¹⁴³ but are addressing the subject of morally imperfect individuals, the pressing question for both thinkers will be: how far, and to what extent, do the consequences of sin rid human beings of any prospect of improving their plight by their efforts as moral agents? As we have seen, Baius casts aside the idea that a human being can be a viable moral agent (at least independently of the *caritas* of God), while Soto considers it possible to articulate a Thomist account of practical reasoning and human action, while noting that the constraints of a distinctive Christian anthropology.

As the early modern period developed, the concerns which typified the approach of Baius and Soto were no longer shared by many later thinkers who sought to recast the picture of fallen nature on display here, and in doing so helped to construct the picture of moral agency which philosophers debate today. Yet, what we can learn from the period before and immediately after the Council of Trent is that Roman Catholic thinkers, just like their Protestant opponents, were hard at work making sense of human nature by means of an anthropology constructed from a reading of the texts of biblical revelation. For Baius and Soto, the moral condition of individuals was illuminated by recourse to the ideas of grace and fallen nature, concepts which would continue to play an important, if diminishing role, as early modern moral philosophy came into its own.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ See the account of human nature and society advanced by Juan Luis Vives (1492–1540) in *De concordia et discordia in humano genere* (1529), in Vives (1782–1790), v, pp. 380–8. Of further interest are Vives’s remarks in his prefaces to Cicero’s *De officiis* and *De legibus*, in which he expounds his Stoic view on *oikeiosis* and natural law, and concludes that, *prima facie*, these must have been Christian works. Only historical-philological arguments, then, prevent Vives from assuming that these texts are pseudepigraphs written by a Christian author who attributed them Cicero. Vives (1984), pp. 9–10, says: ‘that no human wisdom would have been able to reach that which is written in *De legibus* and *De officiis* with its own powers and without a peculiar benefice and gift from God’; see esp. p. 10, nn. 2–5.

¹⁴⁴ I am very grateful to my colleagues Dr Guy Guldentops and Prof. dr. Jan Roegiers for help and advice on an earlier draft of this paper. I also thank Jill Krave and Tom Pink for their comments.

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On the Anatomy of Probabilism

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Scholastic probabilism is a late and revolutionary product of the long-standing scholastic interest in moral decision-making in uncertainty. A deeper interest in this field arose around 1200, when medieval legal thought gained enormous importance and scholastic theories of conscience were brought into practice. For the scholastics, moral uncertainty was the result of the rational defensibility of both sides of a question. It was usually assumed that we should follow the side which is supported by weightier reasons. At the end of the sixteenth century, however, this dogma was challenged from within the scholastic tradition. The new doctrine of scholastic probabilism favoured a threshold model of rational, action-related deliberation. If an alternative was sufficiently supported by reason to be held true from some acceptable point of view, it could be chosen as a premise for action, even if the agent or authorities assumed that there are better reasons on the other side. Probabilism gained considerable ground in early modern times; but it did not survive the intellectual cataclysm of the scholastic tradition in the eighteenth century as an important doctrine of moral decision-making. Today, probabilism is familiar only to a few specialists in moral theology and early modern casuistry.

I shall argue that this neglect is unwarranted. Contemporary ethics should restore to probabilism some of its former notorious prominence. There is something in the probabilistic blend of medieval and early modern ideas of moral decision-making in uncertainty which is still disturbing. The scholastic probabilists created a novel blend of thought, and it soon became apparent that the emergent mixture was dangerous. Later, the dangers of probabilism were largely forgotten in the wake of the demise of scholasticism. But by then some of the new ideas which had led to probabilism had become part of the mainstream of modern ethics by other routes. The study of probabilism can thus inform us about serious genetic defects in modern ethics.

The study of these defects presupposes some knowledge of the structure and anatomy of probabilism. Therefore, the present investigation will play a mainly preparatory role by providing a rough sketch of the anatomy of scholastic probabilism. Unfortunately, this enterprise has its

difficulties. Many subtle but important distinctions were introduced during the heyday of probabilism. Quite often the historical record renders it difficult to decide which of these were important and which were not. Even within a very narrow understanding of importance, I shall definitely not be able to touch on all important aspects of probabilism. This paper deals with a selection of themes, but I hope an informative selection. Last but not least, I shall not completely dispense with chronological order. The evolution of probabilism followed a pattern, and this pattern can be used to gain insight into the anatomy of the doctrine.

With these premises in mind, I shall proceed in the following order. Section 1 will deal with the invention of probabilism by Bartolomé de Medina. Section 2 will discuss the spread of probabilism until the Thirty Years War, and especially the role played by the decision-making principle: ‘In doubtful situations the lot of the owner is better’ (*in dubiis melior est conditio possidentis*). At the end of Section 2 we will be able to distinguish between an information-centred and a liberty-centred form of probabilism. Section 3 investigates the connection between probabilism and early modern scepticism. Section 4 returns to liberty-centred probabilism and points out its importance for the present debate about the shortcomings of modern moral philosophy. Section 5 is concerned with equi-probabilism, a late form of probabilism. I shall argue that equi-probabilism is not the most mature and well-balanced form of probabilism, but that it marks a transition to a different ethical mind-set.

MEDINA’S PROBABILISM

In 1577 Bartolomé de Medina, a Dominican theologian and professor in Salamanca, coined the key formula of scholastic probabilism. He rightly and proudly assumed that he was departing from an established consensus. Medina’s revolutionary step is expressed in one sentence: ‘If an opinion is probable, it may be followed, even if the opposite opinion is more probable.’¹ Probabilism broke with tradition because medieval theories of rational and morally legitimate action (or choice of opinions) assumed that opinions with a higher degree of probability should be preferred.² But there was also much common ground between probabilism and older approaches

¹ Medina ‘Scholastica commentaria’, q. 19, a. 6, p. 464: ‘Si est opinio probabilis, licitum est eam sequi, licet opposita probabilior sit.’ My own translations into English, as here, are indicated by the sign (*). A full-stop inside inverted commas means that a complete sentence is quoted; a fullstop outside means that the quotation is truncated. I have left most of the original language as it is, except for expanding abbreviation.

² For some surveys of the medieval scholastic treatment of moral uncertainty see Deman (1936); Lottin (1948); Kantola (1994); Stone (2000); Franklin (2001).

to uncertain moral action. In both contexts ‘probable’ meant that a proposition was sufficiently supported by reason to be held true by a rational person. Hence, only reasons relevant to truth could generate probability. This traditional Aristotelian-scholastic concept of probability implied that both sides of a question could be probable. In particular, the greater probability of a proposition did not exclude the probability of its negation. This may sound strange to modern ears, but it can easily be understood if one abstracts from modern mathematical notions of probability. Incompatible probable propositions arise, for example, if an impartial observer assumes that both sides of a question can with reason be held true by rational persons. Ethical debates are full of such cases, but they are not unknown to science. Medina, of course, never asks the reader to hold opposite sides of a question to be true *at the same time*.

The reasons for ascribing probability may be known to the person deliberating or may derive from the rational force of the authority or expertise of others. Furthermore, Medina uses the same concept of opinion as medieval scholastics. To them, having an opinion meant assenting to a proposition, combined with some anxiety that it might not be true.³ Note that the security of an opinion is not mentioned in Medina’s formula of probabilism. For the scholastics, security or safety served as a measure of distance from sin. A safe opinion (*opinio tuta*) could be followed without any risk of sin. In comparative usage, the safer opinion (*opinio tutior*) was an opinion which led to a sin of smaller magnitude if things went wrong. Preference for security was considered a duty in medieval theories of moral decision-making in uncertainty, but only in cases with equally strong reasons for all alternatives.⁴ Assuming that one opinion is more probable than another precludes this situation. As a result, Medina did not need to mention security in his formula of probabilism. Later probabilists, however, explicitly assumed that a probable opinion might be preferred to a more probable *and* safer one.

Further insight into the meaning of probabilism can be gained by inspecting the context of Medina’s formula. It appears in a commentary on

³ See Guillaume d’Auvergne’s thirteenth-century statement in ‘De fide’, lib. I: ‘opinio ... est apprehensio alterius partis contradictionis, cum formidine reliquae’.(*)

⁴ Such situations were classified as cases of doubt (*dubium*) in the Middle Ages. In such cases the rule ‘In doubt the safer side is to be preferred’ (*in dubiis tutior pars est eligendum*) applied. For the scholastic concept of doubt see Guillaume d’Auxerre (thirteenth century) ‘Summa aurea’, lib. II, tract. 30, cap. 3, fol. 105, col. 3: ‘Dubium enim tale est quod habet equales rationes ad hoc quod sit et quod non sit.’(*) The scholastic concept of doubt has an Aristotelian background; see Aristotle’s remarks in the *Topics*, 145^b17: ‘Likewise also an equality between contrary reasonings would seem to be a cause of perplexity; for it is when we reflect on both sides of a question and find everything alike to be in keeping with either course that we are perplexed [Zekl’s German translation has ‘sind wir im Zweifel’/‘we are in doubt’ instead of ‘we are perplexed’] which of the two we are to do.’

Thomas Aquinas's 'Prima Secundae', q. 19, art. 6. Question 19 is the *locus classicus* for matters of conscience in the Thomist tradition. It had been an object of lively discussion ever since the renaissance of Thomism in the late fifteenth century. Therefore, when dealing with question 19, Medina could look back on a long tradition of commentary. He discusses the old case of a confessor wondering how to treat a penitent who has done something considered licit by many expert theologians, but regarded as illicit by the confessor himself. It is furthermore assumed that while the view of the confessor is probable, the opposite view is more so. Consider the case of a merchant. The merchant has traded in grain futures, as we would say today. It was controversial in the scholastic tradition whether certain futures contracts were morally licit or not. Suppose the confessor believes that the arguments for illicitness predominate. In contrast, most experts in law or business ethics assume that the contract is licit. There are, however, enough reliable experts who support the confessor's view to make his position appear rationally tenable. Scholastic commentators on the conduct of confessors would therefore ascribe probability to both sides of the case.

Traditionally, scholastic theologians demanded that the confessor should follow the course which is supported by better reasons according to the best expert judgement. This implicitly presupposes that the confessor knows about the expert opinions. In such circumstances, he is not supposed to follow his own (possibly idiosyncratic) view but rather to treat the penitent according to established standards. Medina cites the solutions to the confessor case put forward by four renowned authorities: Domingo de Soto, Silvester Prierias, Conrad Summenhart and Thomas de Vio (Cardinal Cajetan). Three of the four insist without qualification on following the more probable opinion. But note that we are speaking about following an opinion, not about holding it to be true. 'Following an opinion' simply means 'acting according to an opinion', which does not necessarily entail assenting to the truth of that opinion.⁵ According to scholastic sources, it was Cajetan who first made this distinction explicit.⁶ In the early sixteenth

⁵ This important point helps to defuse some epistemological problems which are often believed to be devastating for probabilism. Note that for a probabilist it is not necessary to hold to be true a proposition which has less support from reason than its negation. Nor must a probabilist be able to govern belief at will. It merely has to be assumed that we can withhold assent from controversial propositions if they and their negation are both sufficiently probable to be held true by a rational observer. The analysis of the epistemological premises and implications of probabilism forms an interesting area of research, which I can not enter into here.

⁶ Cajetan makes the distinction in a letter to Konrad Koellin from 1521. The letter can be found in Blic (1930), pp. 50ff. Kantola (1994), p. 116, emphasizes the role of Cajetan in establishing the speculative/practical distinction for moral judgements. He cites Blic (1925),