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Pasnau on the material–immaterial divide in early modern philosophy

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Abstract In *Metaphysical Themes*: 1274–1671, Robert Pasnau compares the medieval and early modern approaches to the material-immaterial divide and suggests the medievals held the advantage on this issue. I argue for the opposite conclusion. I also argue against his suggestion that we should approach the divide through the notion of a special type of extension for immaterial entities, and propose that instead we should focus on their indivisibility.

Keywords Mind-body problem · Extension · Divisibility · Dualism · Early modern metaphysics

Bob Pasnau's (2011) *Metaphysical Themes: 1274–1671* offers rich coverage of a long, and particularly fascinating period in the history of philosophy. The book contains a mixture of broad claims about the period and detailed discussion of particular philosophers on particular issues. Pasnau focuses on developments in Aristotelian scholastic and early modern views of the nature of substance, in particular, material substance (p. 5). He sees as central an important change with respect to the view what kinds of composition material substances have. The scholastics recognized what he refers to as "metaphysical parts", constituents into which bodies are analyzed and which are not themselves bodies. The main ones are prime matter and substantial form. Material substances also have "integral parts", parts of bodies that are again bodies, as opposed to matter and form (pp. 7–9). The early moderns did away with metaphysical parts and only recognized integral parts. On this view bodies have what Pasnau calls "corpuscular structure". He is surely right to see this as a very important change.

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Mostly he leaves aside matters about immaterial substances, but he devotes a separate chapter to the material–immaterial divide, and his treatment of that issue is the focus of my comments. Pasnau writes the following:

> The material–immaterial divide is problematic for us moderns in a way it never was for scholastic authors. Although we still readily speak of materialists and dualists, it has become very hard to know what that distinction amounts to. For the scholastics, the situation is relatively straightforward: material entities can be marked off as those that either contain or are by nature dependent on prime matter. Belonging to the first group are composite substance and their integral parts, and aggregates of composite substances. In the second group are material forms, substantial or accidental. Immaterial entities either exist independently of matter (God and angels) or at least are naturally able to do so (human souls) (p. 323).

So Pasnau thinks that the distinction has been more problematic "for us, moderns" since Descartes.[1] I will leave aside "us" in the sense of twentieth/twenty-first century philosophers, and focus on the early moderns.

The question what the material–immaterial divide amounts to is, of course, a good one, and it is a question for which it is important to attend to the differences between specific periods: views of what counts as material or immaterial shift over time. As the above quote suggests, Pasnau is quite critical of the early modern period on this issue and he conveys the sense that things were better in the middle ages. The tenor of my remarks is to defend my period against his criticism. (Perhaps we are both guilty of "period chauvinism"!) I will argue that the early moderns did not make it harder to draw the line between the material and the immaterial, and that there is more continuity on this issue than Pasnau allows. Furthermore, I will suggest that they were better able to give content to the distinction than the scholastics did. And I will defend the period against Pasnau's scepticism about early modern prospects of arguing for the immateriality of the soul or mind. Pasnau explores the early modern treatment of immaterial substances through examination of special types of extension some early moderns granted immaterial substances and that distinguish them from entities with corpuscular structure. While that issue is a very interesting one, I will contend that it was not central to the early modern understanding of the nature of the immaterial. Instead I will propose that the early moderns widely saw indivisibility as distinctive of the mental. Bodies, by contrast, are divisible because they have corpuscular structure. So the notion of corpuscular structure, so important to Pasnau's narrative, is central to the material–immaterial divide, but not in the way his focus on types of extension suggests.

1 The material–immaterial divide

Is Pasnau right that the scholastic way of dividing the material from the immaterial in terms of dependence on prime matter is superior to anything the early moderns have to offer? I will focus on substantial forms and souls in scholasticism and souls or minds in

[1] I will not worry about the question whether the terms (im) material or (in) corporeal are more appropriate.

the early moderns. Within scholasticism souls are species of substantial forms. I want to begin with raising questions about how helpful the scholastic criterion of immateriality for substantial forms, the independence from prime matter, is to understanding the material–immaterial divide. It is a *relational* characteristic: it does not tell us *what each form is in and of itself* that explains why it can or cannot exist without matter. What about its intrinsic nature makes it the case that it can exist without matter? Aquinas and others argued for the capacity for separate existence of the human soul on the basis of an analysis of intellectual activity, which was supposed to result in the conclusion that the soul acts *per se*, by itself, without the body, in intellectual activity. But is that *constitutive* of the soul's distinctive nature? Or is it rather that the soul has to be a certain kind of entity so that it can act and exist *per se*? I would have thought that a real account of what it is to be immaterial would explain the latter, so that this view about the intellect does not yet tell me what the nature of the soul is *qua* immaterial entity. So I find that this way of distinguishing between rational souls and other substantial forms leaves an important question unanswered.

A problem with Pasnau's discussion is that he freely mixes discussion of two different questions. One is the question of a mark of the material (or immaterial), a feature that all material (or immaterial) things share. The other one concerns the deeper question what it is to be a material (or immaterial) being, or what the nature or essence of such entities is. If he is simply interested in a mark of the immaterial, then the above criticism is not relevant. But in that case, a similar criterion can be advanced on behalf of the early moderns, *mutatis mutandis*. They could say that immaterial things exist independently of material ones and they do not have material characteristics. So the scholastics and the early moderns agree in seeing the immaterial as independent of their respective notions of matter. The big difference with the scholastics is then that since the early moderns abandon the notion of prime matter, they have a different notion of matter. For Descartes and many others matter is a substance in its own right rather than a metaphysical constituent of a corporeal substance.[2]

But some of Pasnau's criticisms of the early moderns go beyond worries about a simple feature to mark off the material from the immaterial. About Descartes's claim that the mind is essentially thought he writes that it "contributes little to understanding *what it is to be immaterial*" (324, emphasis added). He notes that the scholastics too held that all and only immaterial substances think. This is true. But there is an important difference that, in my view, gives Descartes's view an advantage in terms of understanding immaterial beings. Descartes made thought the *entire* essence or nature of the human soul and identified the soul with the mind. For many scholastics, such as Aquinas and Descartes's immediate predecessor Francisco Suárez, the human soul was the principle of life and the mind, which is what thinks, was merely a part of the soul.[3]

[2] An exception is Leibniz who denied that matter is a substance, but he does fall beyond the scope of Pasnau's book.

[3] Other scholastics thought that the human being had an intellectual soul as well as a sensitive soul, and that the two are really distinct, thus, in my view, moving closer to a dualistic picture. (For discussion see Adams 1987, pp. 647–664, Perler 2013). Descartes's treatment of the issues at stake here is most easily understood when related to the "unitarian" view. For other issues, the "pluralist" picture is very useful. See Hoffman (1986).

Descartes used the terms soul and mind interchangeably, but preferred the term "mind". He explained the contrast with the Aristotelian view to Gassendi:

> Primitive man did not perhaps distinguish between, on one hand, the principle by which we are nourished, grow and accomplish without any thought all the other operations which we have in common with the brutes, and, on the other hand, that principle in virtue of which we think. He therefore used the single term "soul" to apply to both. (AT VII 356/CSM II 246).[4]

He does not refer to the Aristotelians by name (he often abstains from doing so). His somewhat odd reference to "primitive man" indicates his conviction that the Aristotelian view was grounded in a pre-philosophical outlook. For Descartes these points about the notions of soul and mind were very important: as we all know, he conceived of the human body as a machine rather than an ensouled entity.

Pasnau notes Descartes's restriction of the soul to thought, but does not acknowledge what I see as its importance to the present issue. The scholastics too thought that all and only immaterial beings think, he writes, and he claims that they too thought the essence of body is extension, citing various definitions of body in terms of extension (p. 324). But this ignores the radical change in world-view Descartes brought about in his view of substance: While on a hylomorphic view all bodies may be extended, their world is populated by a wide variety of kinds of substances with different essences constituted at least in part by their various substantial forms. For Descartes, there are just two kinds of substances with the familiar two kinds of essences. The fact that the scholastics too thought that bodies are extended or necessarily extended does not mean they thought their essences consist in extension, or to be precise, that their essences consist entirely in extension. After all, in this period the notion of essence did not merely consist in necessary properties. An essence necessarily belongs to its substance, but also it constitutes its nature in the sense of determining what kinds of qualities the substances can have.[5] Within scholasticism corporeal substances include peach trees, roses, horses, cows, humans, which all have their own essences that determine what kind of qualities and behaviours they display. For Descartes there is only one kind of corporeal substance, its essence is just extension, its qualities are the modes of extension and similarly for mind. This is a far cry from the qualitatively and ontologically richly varied scholastic world.

I insist on this familiar point because it matters to the material–immaterial divide. Descartes thought that getting rid of the traditional notion of the soul as the principle of life, and substituting for it the notion of the mind as the principle of thought made defending the immateriality of the human soul or mind easier. And there is a sense in which this is so. Scholastic defenses of the immateriality of the soul relied on an analysis of intellectual activity,[6] but soul as principle of life is involved in many

[4] I use the standard method of referring to Descartes's writings by volume and page number. AT stands for Descartes (1996), CSM for Descartes 1984–1991. The former provides the texts in the original languages, the latter translations.

[5] This point is illustrated by the important notion of a *proprium*, a quality that necessarily belongs to a type of entity, but that is not part of its essence, as Pasnau notes elsewhere (p. 485n, .551, 658).

[6] See for instance Aquinas (1969) AT I.75.2, Suárez, *De anima* I.IX (in Suárez 1856 v.3).

inherently material activities, nutritive and sensory activities that take place in the body. Get rid of all those, mechanize them and you get two nice results, Descartes thought.

(1) You are left just with that activity that supports the immateriality of the soul, resulting in a clear picture of the soul as an entirely immaterial entity that can exercise its functions without the body. Furthermore, there is a tension in the conception of a single human soul as both the principle of thought and hence as immaterial and capable of existing without the body and as the principle of activities that inherently require a body: it seems to make the soul both dependent and independent of body.[7] Many other scholastics argued that the rational soul, the principle of intellectual activity, is really distinct from the sensitive soul, but this strikes me as putting significant strain on the notion of that soul as a substantial form of the body, and a significant step towards some sort of dualism.[8]

(2) You get rid of all sorts of souls and substantial forms that were not supposed to be immaterial according to the scholastics themselves. Those entities complicated matters by raising questions about just how to distinguish material and immaterial substantial forms. Descartes saw the category of substantial form and soul in the scholastics as a confusing hodgepodge, one that made it harder to defend the immateriality and immortality of the human soul.[9] I think all this is behind the following comments he makes. In the *Discourse* he claims that human beings are radically different from both machines and animals, and makes clear his position that animals are really just machines. He then writes:

> When we know how much the beasts differ from us, we understand much better the arguments which prove that our soul is of a nature entirely independent of the body, and consequently that it is not bound to die with it (*Discourse* AT VI 59/CSM I 141).

For those who allow for animal souls the problem is that they saw those souls as dependent on body and so it raises the question how exactly to distinguish animal souls from human souls. The more so when the human soul is seen as the principle of life and not just thought, and so the principle of bodily activities. And about the view that there are substantial forms everywhere:

> [I]t is the view which affirms substantial forms which allows the easiest slide to the opinion of those who maintain that the human soul is corporeal and mortal. Yet if only the human soul is recognized as a substantial form while other such forms consist in the configuration and motion of parts, this very

[7] Aquinas visibly struggled with the issue. See ST I.76.1 ad 6. For more discussion see Rozemond (1998, pp. 146–151).

[8] For discussion see Adams (1987) and Perler 2013.

[9] See also Rozemond (1998, p. 23 and pp. 40–48).

> privileged status it has compared with other forms shows that its nature is quite different from theirs. And this difference in nature opens the easiest route to demonstrating its non-materiality and immortality … (AT III 503/CSM III 207)[10]

In the background of this thought is the fact that an important role for a substantial form was to explain the characteristic qualities, activities, of the being it belongs to.[11] But for Descartes, in nonhumans mechanistic qualities can fulfil this explanatory role. Only human beings have a substantial form, which is the principle of thought and immaterial.

Furthermore, I wish to question an assumption that underlies Pasnau's objection that Descartes's claim that the essence of the mind is thought "contributes little to understanding what it is to be immaterial" (pp. 324, 348). The comment comes in a discussion where Pasnau seems to run together questions about a mere mark of the immaterial with questions about what it is to be immaterial. Pasnau's criticism seems to address the second question. But Descartes's claim that the essence of the mind is thought does not really address what it is to be immaterial. It is not what *constitutes* immateriality for him. Rather, he *argued for* the claim that the mind is immaterial. And that presupposes a view of what it is to be immaterial. Immateriality is a negative notion: it is the denial of being material and so it should be understood in terms of what a philosopher thinks it is to be material.

Descartes did hold that thought is sufficient for something to be a complete thing, a substance, and this was crucial in his most prominent argument for dualism.[12] In this sense, unlike the scholastic view that, as Pasnau has it, simply sees an immaterial substantial form as one that does not depend on matter, Descartes has a positive account of what constitutes the nature of an immaterial substance: its nature consists in thought.[13] But this is a different point from saying that thinking *constitutes what it is for* something to be *immaterial*.

Finally, Pasnau speaks sceptically of the possibility of an early modern argument for the immateriality of the mind (pp. 348–349). But there is this consideration: what argument for dualism in the history of philosophy has received more attention from "us moderns", that is, in the 20th and 21st centuries—than Descartes's? Indeed, the argument provoked from Sidney Shoemaker, no dualist by any means, the remark that it appeals to a "tiny dualist faction" in his soul![14]

[10] CSM mistranslates the second sentence saying: "if the soul is recognized as merely a substantial form", which obscures Descartes's point.

[11] See Suárez *Disputationes metaphysicae* XV.I.7, 8 (in Suárez 1856 v. 25), Descartes, AT III 506/CSM III 208.

[12] See Rozemond (1998, pp. 12–22).

[13] Pasnau himself indicates a reason why this route is problematic for the scholastics when he writes that they "tend to conceive of thought as conceptually removed from soul twice over (as activity of the intellect, which is in turn a power of the soul)" (p. 324). On that view, it is hard to see what the soul in and of itself is. Pasnau's comment is most applicable to those scholastics, such as Aquinas and Suárez, who thought the soul is really distinct from its powers (but Pasnau and I may disagree about this). See also n. 21 below.

[14] Shoemaker (1983, p. 235).

2 Extension

Pasnau concentrates on the notion of extension to examine the early modern material–immaterial divide. He does so in a distinctive way: he points out that a much neglected aspect of Descartes's thought, and not only Descartes's, was that he attributed a special type of extension to immaterial beings. And Pasnau pursues the idea that this is the way to understand the early modern conception of thinking beings as immaterial. This focus contributes to Pasnau's pessimism about the period. The scholastics, he writes, had a way of explaining the connection between immateriality and the mental. But he is sceptical about a strategy of relying on the idea that "true" extension is incompatible with thought and that immaterial thinking substances must have a special type of extension (p. 348). Referring to such special types of extension in Henry More and Descartes, he writes, "What for instance does penetrability have to do with thought? What does holenmerism? Some authors during our period do try to make a case for holenmeric structure as what enables the unity of consciousness, but this is not an idea Descartes develops." (p. 348). And he thinks the failings of this approach explain Locke's view that there might be thinking matter (p. 349). We will see in a moment what "holenmerism" refers to. Pasnau's remarks are grounded in a discussion of Descartes and More. I will focus on Descartes, who endorsed holenmerism, the type of extension Pasnau particularly pursues.

Pasnau is right that the idea that mental substances are in some sense extended deserves much more attention than it has received.[15] I also agree that such a type of extension is unpromising as a way of understanding the material–immaterial divide. But I do not think that this idea is the best way to approach the material–immaterial divide in early modern philosophy, because: (1) In Descartes, and more generally, the point of a special type of extension was not to explain what it is to be an immaterial substance, nor was it used to argue for the immateriality of the soul or mind. (2) It's not clear to me how widespread the view that the mind is in some sense extended was in the early modern period. But a clearly very common view held that immaterial substances are *indivisible*, an idea that was more directly connected to the notion of corpuscular structure. So if the question is how *the early moderns generally* drew the distinction between the material and the immaterial, divisibility is a much better avenue for investigation. I will explore this idea in the next section, where we will also see that it was central to an argument Pasnau was looking for but did not find: an argument why matter can't think that is grounded in the idea that matter has corpuscular structure.

(1) As Pasnau points out, while Descartes held that the essence of body is extension, on various occasions he claimed that the mind, or God, is also extended, albeit in a different sense: without having *partes extra partes*. But Descartes makes very clear that this idea is not central to his conception of what it is to be an immaterial, thinking substance, and he does not use it to establish the immateriality

[15] For discussion see Pasnau (2007), Reid (2003, 2008), Rozemond (2003).

of the mind.[16] Instead, he offers the idea of a special type of extension to address the action of mind on body. When the Princess Elizabeth prods him on how to understand such action, he writes that she could conceive of the mind as extended in a sense, and he refers her to the Sixth Replies where he writes that the mind is "whole in the whole and whole in the parts". There too he presents the notion as relating to the action of mind on body. And he explains to Elizabeth that an investigation of mind–body interaction requires focus on the *union* of mind and body as opposed to an understanding of the nature of the mind itself. And he even sees these two undertakings as in tension: focus on the union might be "harmful" to recognizing the distinction of mind from body, as he points out on various occasions (AT III 665–667, 693/CSM III 218–219, 228–229/AT VII 442/CSM II 298).

The idea that the mind or soul is "whole in the whole and whole in the parts" had been widespread since at least Plotinus.[17] On that view, an immaterial substance is really present in the physical world but in a sense that is different from the sense in which a body is. A body has *partes extra partes*, one part here, one part there. But a spiritual substance does not have such parts, yet a human soul is present throughout its body, God is present in the entire physical world. This presence is required to explain, for instance, how a spiritual substance can act on a body. So, this view proposes, a spiritual substance is present everywhere in its entirety, not one part here, one part there. Following Henry More, who criticized this notion as incoherent, I will refer to it as "holenmerism".

Descartes and More have an interesting exchange about the extension of immaterial substances, where again it is clear that this special type of extension is not constitutive of immateriality:

> For my part, in God and angels and in our mind I understand there to be no extension of substance, but only an extension of power. An angel can exercise power now on a greater and now on a lesser part of corporeal substance; but if there were no bodies, I could not conceive of any space with which an angel of God would be co-extended. (AT V 342/CSM III 372)

Of course, for Descartes if there are no bodies, there is no space, because they are only conceptually distinct. But God and angels can exist without space and bodies existing, he suggests. In that case they would not be extended in any sense. So the type of extension he here attributes to God and angels does not constitute what it is for them to be immaterial. Rather it appears to be a feature that only obtains when there are bodies and is meant to address the action of spiritual substances on bodies.

It is worth noting that in the case of Descartes it is quite difficult to give content to his claim that the soul is extended throughout the body, given that (1) Descartes also claimed that interaction occurs at the pineal gland and (2) he was a mechanist

[16] It plays no role in his main argument for dualism. The notion does occur in his statement of the Divisibility Argument, although I do not believe it is central to that argument. See Rozemond forthcoming.

[17] As Pasnau notes (p. 357). See also Grant (1981) for discussion.

about the human body.[18] For a hylomorphist, there is a real sense in which the soul is present through the body as it accounts for manifestations of life ranging from sense perception to digestion, activities that take place in ensouled organs. But this is not so for Descartes.

Pasnau's discussion of the material–immaterial divide focuses on holenmerism, the view we find in Descartes. But More came to reject holenmerism, and he developed a different conception of the extension of spiritual substances.[19] And while he did argue for the need to see such substances as extended from their capacity to act on body, his reasons for holding that immaterial substances are extended are broader: unlike Descartes, he held that *all* substances are extended, and so immaterial substances must be extended as well. But their type of extension must be different from that of bodies, because, like Descartes, More held that thinking can't belong to material substances. Spiritual substances, he writes, are impenetrable and indivisible (More 1995, 28.2, 3).

Apparently on the basis of his discussion of Descartes and More (and Hobbes's materialism), Pasnau assumes that the view that immaterial substances are extended in some sense was very widespread.[20] But how common was this view? At the same time, More and Descartes, who both allow for some such extension, are part of a broader and very long tradition that makes a different notion central. It is the tradition of claiming that God, angels and minds do not have integral parts, in Pasnau's terms, they do not have *partes extra partes*, and they are indivisible. They do not have the kind of composition that is characteristic of corpuscular structure. This view was indeed very widely accepted in the early modern period. And those that attributed some sort of extension to immaterial substances also endorsed their indivisibility. So while Pasnau investigates holenmerism as the way to understand the material–immaterial divide in the early modern period (pp. 345–349), I propose that a better way to do so is by way of the notion of indivisibility.

3 Indivisibility

The idea that "true" extension is incompatible with thought was a common argument for the immateriality of thinking things. Or rather, the argument relied on the idea that matter can't think because it is has parts, integral parts, in Pasnau's

[18] For more discussion see Rozemond (2003, pp. 356–362). The case of God is different as he was supposed to be able to act on bodies anywhere directly.

[19] See Reid (2003).

[20] He writes that "no one wanted to take that route", that is, the route of denying all extension to immaterial substances (p. 345). While there certainly were others who attributed some sort of extension to immaterial substances, in particular, Samuel Clarke, this claim is too strong. Malebranche and Leibniz did not, Cudworth refused to take a stance (Cudworth 1678 p. 833). The question deserves more investigation. Jasper Reid, argues that the Cartesians did not hold that created spiritual substances (as opposed to God) are extended (Reid 2008).

words, and is divisible.[21] And extension was held to include or entail this type of composition. Descartes offered the "Divisibility Argument" in Meditation VI:

> [T]here is a great difference between the mind and the body, inasmuch as the body is by its very nature always divisible, while the mind is utterly indivisible… This one argument would be enough to show me that the mind is completely different from the body, even if I did not already know as much from other considerations. (AT VII 85–86/CSM II 59).

The notion of divisibility was clearly important to Descartes as a feature that distinguishes material from immaterial substances. And Descartes was not nearly alone or the first in doing so; the idea has its roots in Plato, in particular the *Phaedo*. In the early modern period, many thought the soul or mind's indivisibility is a crucial difference with body: to mention some examples, we find the view in More, Cudworth, Bayle, and a bit later (beyond the endpoint of Pasnau's book), Samuel Clarke (who agreed with More that the soul is extended), and of course Leibniz. Furthermore, within scholasticism too spiritual substances were widely held to be indivisible, and, as we saw, this is what motivated the widespread acceptance of holenmerism. By contrast with immaterial human souls, material souls and substantial forms were seen as divisible.[22] In sum, the idea that material entities are inherently divisible, human souls or minds indivisible, is a common thread that cuts through the differences between a variety of views for much of the history of western philosophy and that includes Plotinus, scholastic hylomorphists, Descartes's dualism, More's conception of the soul as extended, Leibniz's monads.

This idea played a very important role in arguments for the immateriality of the soul in the early modern period and there is currently an emerging literature on the Divisibility Argument.[23] This is in contrast, however, with Aristotelian scholasticism (to my knowledge); while one finds Aristotelian scholastics holding that the immaterial human soul is indivisible, they did not seem to rely on the Divisibility Argument to establish its immateriality. They instead relied on a different line of argument, which they derived from Aristotle, according to which the intellect can't belong to a material subject because it is capable of knowing all types of bodies and its capacity for knowing universals.[24]

[21] It is important to note that the Divisibility Argument denied *a particular type of composition*, which comes with what Pasnau calls "integral parts". This leaves open the possibility that the soul has what he calls metaphysical parts. This is illustrated by the example of Francisco Suárez, who held that the human soul is really distinct from its faculties, thus creating, in Pasnau's terms, "metaphysical" complexity within the soul (*De anima* II.I). In this Suárez was in agreement with Aquinas, at least as the latter has usually been understood at least since Scotus (see, for instance, ST I.77.1). But at the same time Suárez held that the soul itself (as distinct from its faculties) is indivisible. (*De anima* I.xiii. For discussion see Rozemond 2012). For a different view of Suárez on the soul, see Shields (2012), who thinks that for Suárez the soul is nothing over and above a collection of faculties. For these issues see also Perler 2013.

[22] Although at least some thought the case of the souls of higher animals was complicated. See Des Chene (2000, pp. 171–189).

[23] See Mijuskovic (1974), which is currently receiving renewed attention, and Lennon and Stainton (2008).

[24] See, for instance, Aquinas, ST I. 75.2. For references to some late scholastics see Rozemond (1998, p. 45).

In an extensive and rich exchange with Anthony Collins, Samuel Clarke penned a nice, crisp version of the Divisibility Argument. The immateriality of the soul is demonstrable, he writes:

> [F]rom the single consideration even of bare Sense and Consciousness it self. For, *Matter* being a divisible Substance, consisting always of separable, nay of actually separate and distinct parts, 'tis plain, that unless it were essentially Conscious, in which case every particle of Matter must consist of innumerable separate and distinct Consciousnesses, no System of it in any possible Composition or Division, can be an individual Conscious Being (Clarke 1738, p. 730).[25]

In the early modern period it was especially popular among the Cambridge Platonists.[26]

So the idea of this line of argument is that a body has parts in a sense in which a thing that thinks can't; body has, in Pasnau's words, corpuscular structure. Clarke formulates the argument in terms of consciousness, others focused on sensory states, or spoke of thought. But *why* can't mental states belong to a composite subject? Statements of the Divisibility Argument in our period do not always come with clear answers to this question, but sometimes they offered very interesting ones. The most prominent answer is what we'd now call a "unity of consciousness" argument, which dates back to Plotinus, and which Kant discusses in the Second Paralogism, giving rise to the label "Achilles Argument". It can be found, for instance, in More, Bayle and in the following statement by Cudworth, who reports directly from Plotinus:

> That which percieveth in us, must of necessity be One thing, and by One and the same Indivisible, perceive all; and that whether they be more things, entring through several Organs of Sense, as the many Qualities of one Substance; or One Various and Multiform thing, entring through the same Organ; as the Countenance or Picture of a man. For it is not One thing in us, that perceives the Nose, another thing the Eyes, and another thing the Mouth; but it is one and the self same thing, that perceiveth all. And when one thing enters through the Eye, another through the Ear, these also must of necessity come all at last to one Indivisible, or else they could not be compared together, nor one of them affirmed to be different from another? The several Sentiments of them meeting no where together in One. He [Plotinus] concludes therefore, that this One thing in us, that sensibly perceives all things, may be resembled to the Centre of a Circle, and the several Senses, to Lines drawn from the Circumference, which all meet in that one Centre. Wherefore that which

[25] I provide references to Clarke (1738) but recently the correspondence was republished. See Clarke and Collins (2011). For early modern sources writing in English I have preserved the original spelling and punctuation. For discussion of Clarke's argument, see Rozemond (2009).

[26] The early moderns often stated that something that is extended is not merely divisible, but it has actual parts, as Leibniz held, for instance, and Samuel Clarke, as the above quote makes clear. For discussion see Holden (2004).

> perceives and apprehends all things in us, must needs be Really One and the very same, that is, Unextended and Indivisible.

If the subject is not indivisible, we can't explain a crucial feature of sense perception. On the most interesting scenario the argument foresees that

> … one Part of the Soul must perceive one Part of the Object, and another, another; and nothing in It, the Whole Sensible: just as if I should have the sense of one thing, and you of another. Whereas it is plain by our Internal Sense, That it is One and the Self same thing in us, which perceives, both the Parts and the Whole (Cudworth 1678, 824–825).[27]

This argument relies on the fact that we connect various sensory inputs, unite them within consciousness, whether within one sensory modality or between such modalities. And the argument contends that this requires that the sensing subject does not consist of integral parts, each of which would have a distinct and separate perception with no subject present to unify them. So the subject must be unextended and indivisible. I cannot offer a full discussion of this argument here. But to return to an earlier point, we can see now that in addition to Descartes's main argument for dualism, which continues to attract so much attention, the period has another, rich tradition of arguing for the immateriality of the thinking subject centred on the notion of indivisibility.

Finally, it is worth noting that there is another, very different line of argument for the need for something beyond matter in the early modern period.[28] Both the early moderns and the Aristotelian scholastics held that thought required an immaterial entity. But various early moderns thought that this was not only so for thought. They thought that the kind or purely mechanical processes Descartes and others favoured in the period fail to explain much of nature, and so one needs to go beyond the material. The best known example is Leibniz, who argued that to explain force, genuine causal activity, and so even bodily motion, we need to go beyond matter and accept his active, mind-like, simple monads. For others, like Henry More and Ralph Cudworth, life, activity and the order of nature require going beyond matter. This induced Cudworth to introduce his "plastic natures". He criticized the view that divides the world into extended and cogitative beings, and offered the following alternative:

> Resisting or antitypous extension, and life, (i.e. internal energy and self-activity) and then again that life or internal self-activity, is to be subdivided into such as either acts with express consciousness and synaesthesis, or such as

[27] There are two other scenarios: only one part of the composite subject perceives, but then, given the infinite divisible of matter, the problem starts all over again. Or each particle perceives the whole face, so that there is in fact a multitude of experiences of a whole single face in us. But, Cudworth writes, "we are Intimately Conscious to our selves, That we have but only One Sensation of One Object at the same time" (Cudworth 1678, p. 825).

[28] Some of my examples lead me beyond the period officially covered by Pasnau's book, which ends at 1671. But the ideas at stake do not emerge only after this date. And although Pasnau limits himself to the period before 1671, his frequent talk of "the early moderns" does invite reflection on the richness of the intellectual landscape at least in the entire seventeenth century.

> is without it; The latter which is this plastic life of nature (Cudworth 1678, p. 159)

This argument, of course, assumes a conception of matter that is radically different from the Aristotelian conception of prime matter, that is part of an overall very different framework with a different conception of what requires immateriality.

It is tempting to think that Descartes entirely set the tone for the early modern period and beyond in seeing only the mental as what requires immateriality. Our own discussions are in line with his approach when we debate whether the mental can be understood in terms of the physical, but do not wonder whether this is so for life, the order of nature and activity. That Cartesian focus is a real difference between our day and the early modern period where many were not yet ready to follow his lead.

4 Conclusion

In sum, I have defended the early moderns against Pasnau's critical evaluation of their treatments of the distinction between the material and the immaterial. I have distinguished several issues that run through Pasnau's discussion, in particular, I have separated the question what is a mere mark of the immaterial, a feature that all and only immaterial beings have, from the question what goes beyond this and constitutes what it is to be immaterial. And I have discussed arguments for the immateriality of the subject of thought. Focusing on Descartes—but the point applies widely—I have argued that he did not hold that thought is constitutive of what is to be immaterial. He did hold that all and only immaterial beings think, and that the nature of an immaterial being consist in thought. But he and others argued for the view that thought requires an immaterial subject, and in doing so presuppose a conception of the immaterial. Immateriality is a negative notion, the absence of materiality. The idea that thought constitutes the nature of a substance is a claim what its positive nature consists on. And I have suggested that Descartes saw making the soul the principle of thought as opposed to life as giving him an advantage over the scholastics in the defense of the immateriality of the human soul.

Pasnau focuses on special types of extension in his discussion of the early modern material–immaterial divide. But I have argued that a better approach is to turn to the notion of indivisibility. The early moderns widely saw it as part of what it means to be immaterial, and it was more widely accepted than the idea that immaterial substances enjoy some special type of extension. The notion of indivisibility is in fact intimately connected to the specific type of complexity that characterizes the notion of corpuscular structure that Pasnau makes so rightly central to his analysis.

Be that as it may, Pasnau's book is rich and thought-provoking. It ranges over admirable amounts of material and explores important, large questions about the centuries it covers. It is a stimulating contribution to an understanding of a marvellous period in the history of philosophy that too often is only dealt with piecemeal, in detailed analysis of specific authors and ideas.

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Pasnau on category realism: author Meets Critics, Robert Pasnau, Metaphysical Themes 1274–1671

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From the perspective of a contemporary metaphysician, *Metaphysical Themes* 1274–1671 is a fantastic book. It is an impressively rich, detailed, and thorough examination of a multitude of important metaphysical puzzles and arguments, written in a clear, engaging, lively, funny, and even on one occasion vulgar manner. The number of topics covered is astonishing: substance, attribute, form, matter, the metaphysics of predication, parts and wholes, the metaphysics of extension across space, persistence over time, the distinction between primary–secondary qualities, and many others. One of the disconcerting but exciting things about reading Pasnau's book was both the familiarity of so many of the metaphysical topics the medieval philosophers pursued as well as well as their divergent inclinations on how best to pursue them. This book is a metaphysical thriller, and I highly recommend it.

In what follows, I will engage as a metaphysician with Pasnau and through him some of the figures he discusses. The book is ridiculously rich, so I have narrowed my focus on one of the issues that Pasnau discusses that is directly relevant to my current work in contemporary metaphysics. Specifically, I'll focus on issues concerning various forms of category realism and related issues concerning being and existence. To give a sense of scale, my remarks focus on roughly 30 out of 730 pages of text.

We begin with the family of views that Pasnau calls 'category realism'. It's hard to precisely state what unifies this family, but what the various forms of category realism all have in common is that the categories—such as substance, attribute, action, relation, place, and so forth—must be treated as in some way metaphysically significant. It might be helpful to have at our disposal several different varieties of category realism. The names of these varieties are my own (and they are ugly), but most of them seem to have champions discussed by Pasnau. Suppose we have fixed on some specific set of categories about which we are to be some sort of realist. This

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set might not be the categories that Aristotle articulated. Nor need the set be the same for each author. Each view should be understood as a kind of realism about a specific contextually determined set of categories. The first view we will discuss is:

> Ontological Univocal Category Realism (OUCR): Each of the categories corresponds to a distinct type of entity; each of these types of entity is on a par with respect to how they exist, that is, there is no sense in which one type of entity enjoys a better form of existence than that of another type; and in fact, each type of entity exists in exactly the same way.

OUCR is a trivial view given that there is exactly one category. It is not a trivial view given that there is more than one category, though at least in contemporary circles it is a widely held view. OUCR is consistent with some types of entity having more power than others, or with having a different and less permissive modal profile than others. Friends of OUCR will caution us not to conflate differences in causal potency or modal permissibility with differences in manner of being. OUCR seems to be the view of Scotus, at least with respect to the categories of substance and quality.[1] This is the kind of view that, according to Pasnau, champions of 'real accidents' must embrace.

Since I will gently contest the claim that champions of real accidents must embrace OUCR, let me briefly say something about the doctrine of real accidents. Here's a rough attempt at characterizing this doctrine: there are real accidents just in case there are properties that are capable of existing independently of inhering in any substance. (It will emerge that neither Pasnau nor I are happy with this characterization, but I'll postpone finessing it until later.) The main medieval motivation for this doctrine is that it is tricky to make sense of Eucharist without it. When the bread is replaced with the body of Jesus, it looks like the accidental properties of the bread do not go out of existence: you still can see the crustiness 'of the bread', taste 'its' flakiness, and so forth. But the substance that previously supported these attributes is longer with us at the time of the miracle. Instead, this substance has been replaced. Now does this replacement substance instantiate these accidental properties? No. In general, it would be weird if a mode of one substance could migrate to another substance, but in this particular case there are obvious religious reasons for denying that this can happen: one doesn't want to say that, for example, the body of Jesus is chewy or dry. So chewiness and dryness are still around, but don't inhere in any substance. So some accidents can enjoy a form of existence independently of being exemplified.

Let's be more careful about what the doctrine of real accidents requires. On Pasnau's view, a belief in real accidents requires holding that substances and real accidents exist in the same way. Pasnau writes that, 'On my taxonomy … accidents are real only if they have their own proper existence, in the way that substances do' (p. 192). One does not embrace the doctrine of real accidents simply by holding that it is metaphysically possible for an accident to exist independently of whether it is instantiated by a substance. For on Pasnau's way of thinking, one way to accept this

[1] See Pasnau, (p. 131).

metaphysical possibility is to hold the radical view that God can change the way in which an accident exists. I'll have more to say about this alleged possibility in a bit, but suffice it say that Pasnau does not accept that a view on which this is possible should count as a doctrine of real accidents and that Pasnau accordingly requires that a friend of the doctrine of real accidents hold that accidents always enjoy the same kind of existence as substances. I think that it is probably not correct that the doctrine of real accidents requires that accidents always enjoy the same kind of existence as substances, but in order to see this, it will be helpful to get a second view on the table:

> Ontological Analogical Equality Category Realism (OAECR): Each of the categories corresponds to a distinct type of entity; each of these types of entity is on a par with respect to how they exist, that is, there is no respect in which one type of entity enjoys a better form of existence than that of another type (this is however consistent with some types having more power than others, or have a different and less permissive modal profile than others); but the ways in which these different entities exist are not the same.

I am not sure if any character discussed by Pasnau accepts OAECR. It has more recent advocates, such as Moore, Russell, Stebbing, Meinong, and Husserl, all of whom distinguished between the way in which concrete particulars exist and the way in which universals exist. (The former of mode of being was called by some of these authors 'existence' while the latter mode of being was called by some of them 'subsistence'.) Some remarks by Pasnau suggest that it might be reasonable to attribute OAECR to Henry of Ghent (p. 232), at least with respect to the categories of substance, quality, and quantity, since (i) we are told that substance, quality, and quantity each corresponds to a *res* and (ii) even though 'being' is equivocal, accidents have their own existence. Pasnau suggests that, with respect to the remaining seven categories, Ghent endorses what I'll call Structural Category Realism. But he also notes that Ghent seems committed to the superiority of the mode of being of substance. So perhaps he merely endorses what I will call Ontological Analogical Priority Category Realism. That said, OAECR could be a view that is congenial to those who believe in 'real accidents' (at least of the categories of quality and quantity) but who still wish to distinguish their mode of being from the mode of being of substances.

As mentioned earlier, Pasnau claims that the doctrine of real accidents entails that substances and real accidents exist in the way. Pasnau writes that, 'On my taxonomy … accidents are real only if they have their own proper existence, in the way that substances do' (p. 192) and 'Since Ghent denies that accidents exist in the same sense as substances do, he does not count as a proponent of real accidents, as I use the label' (p. 193). This suggests that on OAECR, there aren't real accidents. But on OAECR, accidents have their own proper existence, just as substances have their own (different) proper existence. It seems to me that OAECR is consistent with the doctrine of real accidents provided that it is metaphysically possible that real accidents enjoy their form of being independently of being exemplified by a substance.

Pasnau describes Ghent's position on the being of accidents as a transitional stage on the path towards a doctrine of real accidents.[2] Perhaps Ghent's position is transitional because it does not condone the metaphysical possibility of an accident enjoying its mode of being independently of whether it inheres in a substance. Given how Pasnau reports Ghent's views, it seems that, for Ghent to accommodate the Eucharist, he must claim that accidents can change their mode of being. This surprising doctrine is discussed in detail by Pasnau, and I'll discuss it more in a bit. But for now the suggestion I offer is that embracing the metaphysical possibility of a quality's maintaining its mode of being independently of whether it is instantiated by something is what is necessary and sufficient for belief in real accidents; it is neither necessary nor sufficient to hold that the mode of being of accidents must be the same as the mode of being of substances. It is not necessary for the reasons just outlined—one could accept OAERC. And it is not sufficient, since one could claim that substances and attributes exist in the same way even though the latter necessarily inhere in the substances that they actually inhere in.

In the same vein, I mildly protest conflating two distinct claims: (i) the claim that substances and attributes have distinct modes of being and (ii) the claim that the mode of being of an attribute is in some way attenuated while the mode of being of a substance is not. In several places, Pasnau does not distinguish these claims. On p. 190 Pasnau writes, '… what these deflationary views … have in common is the denial that accidents have the same sort of being as substances have.' But, although (ii) implies (i), (i) does not imply (ii). Keeping OAECR in mind helps one to see that (i) does not imply (ii), thus making conceptual space for a doctrine of real accidents according to which accidents do not enjoy the mode of being of substances.

To some extent the dispute over how to understand the doctrine of real accidents is terminological, and Pasnau is permitted to stipulate how he will understand the doctrine of real accidents. Insofar as this stipulation is partially due to a conflation of (i) and (ii) though, it is reasonable to suggest a different terminological choice. One methodological reason to be wary of conflating doctrines is that, when we approach a historical text, we run the risk of misinterpreting authors when we misunderstand the theoretical possibilities open to them. (I do not mean to suggest that Pasnau has done this.)

Let's return to the classification of various forms of category realism. The next view to be considered is:

> Ontological Analogical Priority Category Realism (OAPCR): Each of the categories corresponds to a distinct type of entity; but the ways in which these different types of entity exist are not the same, and moreover some of these ways of existing are in some respect superior to others.

Ontological Analogical Category Priority Realism is seriously obscure absent some way of explaining what it means to say that a form of existence is superior to another. One intuitive way to account for ontological superiority is by appealing to

[2] See Pasnau, (p. 232).

the 'logical form' of the modes of existences in question.[3] Consider the difference between the way a substance exists and the way an attribute exists: a substance exists *full stop*, that is, a complete attribution of existence to a substance need mention only the substance itself. But an attribute does not exist *full stop*, but rather only *exists in* something else. So a complete attribution of existence to a substance must mention something other than the attribute itself. The mode of being of a substance is a monadic mode; the mode of being of an attribute is a relational mode. This difference between having an absolute and having a relational mode of being does seem to track some intuitions about which form of being is better to have. And it provides a way to capture otherwise obscure intuitions. For example, Pasnau (p. 193) worries that, 'it may be that, for Ghent, accidents have diminished existence simply because their existence … depends on a substance, but it is not clear why a dependent entity should be regarded as any less of entity.' I agree that dependence by itself does not imply a diminishment of being—but it is the converse implication that we should find of interest. For necessarily, anything that has this 'diminished' mode of being does exist in something else. (This claim is consistent with the possibility of something that actually has this diminished mode later coming to have an undiminished mode; I'll say more about this in a bit.)

As queried above, perhaps Ghent endorsed OAPCR? Prior to reading Pasnau's book, I was tentatively, fearfully, and probably foolishly inclined to attribute this view of the manner of being of qualities to Aquinas. But at least with respect to many of the other categories, Pasnau suggests that Aquinas holds a different view, which I'll call:

Structural Category Realism (SCR): It is not the case that each category corresponds to a distinct type of entity. Strictly, there are things only in the category of substance. (Plus God, but I'm setting the Lord aside, as He belongs to no category.) The remaining categories about which we are to be a realist represent ontologically innocent but nonetheless metaphysically important structures of reality.

Pasnau's discussion of an ontologically innocent but metaphysically important structure is probably the only part of the book that I found obscure, which is remarkable given how big the book is. Here are some things Pasnau says about structures: 'A structure is … ontologically innocent: it is an attempt to account for how the world is organized, but without postulating any further items in the world' (p. 231). 'To say that there are ten categories of being is to say that there are ten fundamentally different ways in which the world may be arranged' (p. 232). And with respect to examples of structures, we are told that the difference between *actio* and *passio* amounts to nothing more than a difference in the structures we choose to pick out, and that the relation of similarity might merely be a structure (p. 237).

One way to try to sharpen the discussion of structures is to bring into discussion so-called beings of reason. Paradigmatic examples of what were called beings of reason are absences and privations, such as holes and blindness in an eye. Aquinas does not treat privations as full-fledged entities: they are not members of any

[3] I suggest this strategy in McDaniel (2010a).

category but are merely beings in the sense of being true. There is some sense of being in which holes have being, since there are innumerably many true sentences about holes, but this is not a fundamental sense of 'being'. Are claims about holes ontologically innocent in Pasnau's sense? One important way in which objects can be arranged is that one object can be wholly inside another, which of course requires that the containing object have a hole for the contained object to fit in. Of course holes are not metaphysically fundamental entities, but we would be crazy to eschew talk of holes.[4]

These observations suggest that Aquinas should be construed as endorsing SCR about holes. I think that this would be a mistake—and if so we need at the minimum more information about how to distinguish between metaphysically important categories such as action and passion from the non-category of privation.

I have a suggestion about how to flesh out the distinction between those categories that we treat as structures and non-categories. We begin by considering what kind of expressions we must employ in order to provide a complete description of reality. To be clear, a complete description of reality needn't be a maximally explicit description: provided that the complete description accounts for all of the basic truths concerning reality, it is enough that the maximally explicit description be entailed by the complete description. Some types of expressions we need in order to provide a maximally explicit description of reality might not appear in the complete description of reality. Think, for example, of the dream language of a contemporary Quinean, according to which the only types of expressions appearing in the complete description are those that can be represented using first-order logic plus set theory. In this Quinean language, there is no distinction between 'the passive voice' and 'the active voice', and there are no adverbs. (If the complete description of fundamental reality is given to us in the language of physics, there is no need for either the distinction between 'the passive voice' and 'the active voice' or adverbs.) But in order to express the difference between action and passion, arguably we can't get by only with using non-symmetric relational predicates but must have recourse to adverbs as well, at least given that we are eschewing commitment to actions and events. (That is, given that we are eschewing the idea that the categories of action and passion corresponding to distinct kinds of entities.) This Quinean would not be a structural realist about the categories of action and passion. Talk of actions and passions would not correspond to ontologically innocent but metaphysically important structures. Such talk would rather be dispensable altogether.

We could understand Structural Category Realism as the view that, although the categories do not correspond to entities of certain types, they do correspond to metaphysically important 'aspects of reality', and my gloss on this is that they correspond to *kinds* of expressions that a language must have in order to completely characterize reality. So a structural category realist might hold that speaking with metaphysical rigor there are no attributes but the category of attribute is nonetheless

[4] In fact, I think something stronger—we are not metaphysically capable of paraphrasing away talk of holes. I discuss why in McDaniel (2010b).

to be taken with metaphysical seriousness—since we cannot completely describe reality without employing predicates, that is, without making attributions to substances. Similarly, there are no actions or passions, but a structural category realist could hold that these two categories do mark important kinds of linguistic constructions (perhaps 'the active voice' and 'the passive voice', or perhaps adverbs) that we need in order to account for the difference between when substances are active and when they are passive—and this is a difference that must be accounted for in the complete description of reality.

Now this way of articulating structural category realism does feel anachronistic since it stresses the importance of certain kinds of linguistic categories, albeit for the purposes of providing descriptions of fundamental reality. Maybe a less anachronistic story would focus on what kind of representations (construed more generally so as to include mental acts or their products) we must have in order to completely characterize the world. But one nice feature of this way of articulating structural category realism is that we can in principle distinguish between a non-ontologically committing metaphysically important structure and the non-category of privations. If the world requires the language of privation for its fundamental description, we must at least be structural category realists about the category of privation—but if it does not, we must not. In my view, it is our cognitive deficiencies rather than the world that require us to speak in terms of absence and privation.[5]

While we are on the subject of structural categorical realism, a clarificatory question I would ask Pasnau is where, on his view, Aquinas stands on the existence of accidents in the category of quality. I wasn't clear on whether Pasnau has a settled view on this question, so let me mention some passages from his book that generated this question in me.

First, on the side of the view that 'all accidents are mere structures', we have sentences like these: 'In a sense, the only basic entities are substances. Given his deflationary theory of accidents, accidental forms do not properly exist at all, but exist only in the derivative sense that their subjects exist in a certain way' (p. 231). This sentence suggests that to say that redness exists is to say nothing more than that there are red substances. And much later in a passage in which he is not referring to Aquinas, but is instead discussing very reductive views of modes, Pasnau says of some authors that talk of modes that their talk, 'seems to be wholly reductive: just a way of signaling that all there really are in the world are substances, variously modified' (p. 244). This is the view that seems suggested by Pasnau's remark on p. 231. So some texts in Pasnau suggest that Aquinas is a structural category realist with respect to the category of attributes, rather than (as I was inclined to hold) an advocate of OAPCR.

On the other hand, Pasnau awrites, 'For Aquinas and Ghent, the concept [of structure] plays a role only at the margins of their categorical scheme, as a way to defend the scheme's reality all the way down the list. At the critical points—Substance, Quality, Quantity—the metaphysical commitments of the theory are not in doubt, and are solidly Aristotelian (albeit in rather different ways, given

[5] This view is spelled out more in McDaniel (2010b).

Aquinas's more deflationary stance)' (p. 234). This passage suggests that qualities are not mere structures, but the parenthetical remark also muddies things up a bit.

One reason why the ontological status of qualities matters is that one needs to have something sensible to say about the Eucharist. In this context, I'll now more fully discuss one of the most fascinating metaphysical doctrines discussed in Pasnau's book, specifically the doctrine that God has the power to change the mode of being of a mere 'inhering accident'—something that in its current manner of being can exist only in something else—to a mode of being such that this very same entity can then exist as a free standing being existing in its own right.[6] Pasnau rightfully finds the idea that objects could undergo a change of their manner of existing to be incredible, and suggests that there is no good precedent or analogy for this view. As mentioned earlier, the main motivation for this view is the problem of the Eucharist. Although I have no particular interest in saving doctrines of faith of this sort, in my own metaphysical explorations I have toyed with views in which an analogous change of manner of being can or does occur. So in the interest of finding some plausible partners in crime for this medieval doctrine, I'll briefly mention them.

To find partners in crime, we need to look at views according to which either (i) things could have had a different mode of being than they actually have or (ii) the mode of being of a thing at one time needn't be the same mode that it enjoys at a later time. With respect to the first kind of view, I've explored a variant of possibilism according to which the difference between the actual and the possible is a difference in mode of being: the possible and the actual both exist, but in different ways. But of course any merely possible thing could have been actual, and many actual things could have been merely possible. It's built into this ontological framework that things could have had a different mode of being than the mode they actually have.[7] With respect to the second kind of view, I've explored versions of the A-theory of time according to which merely past or merely future objects have a different mode of being than present ones. Moreover, on one of these versions, only presently existing things enjoy an absolute form of existence—they just plain exist—whereas merely past and merely future things enjoy a relative kind of existence—they always exist *at* some time or other. Not only is it built into this ontological framework that things can change their mode of being, this change of mode literally happens all the time. Moreover, it's a change from a kind of polyadic mode—existing at—to a kind of absolute existence—existence simpliciter—which, in this respect, mirrors the change of being that a mode can undergo in miraculous situations: the mode ceases to enjoy existence-in and comes to enjoy existence full-stop.[8] So although I have little interest in defending this particular doctrine of faith, I am less inclined to find it completely without precedent or analogue to other doctrines in metaphysics.

[6] See Pasnau, (pp. 188–190).

[7] See McDaniel (2009).

[8] See McDaniel (forthcoming).

So in order to accommodate the Eucharist, one has three views about qualities to entertain—the view that qualities enjoy the same manner of being as substances, the view that accidents have their own distinctive manner of being which in principle accidents can maintain without inhering in a substance, and finally the view that accidents can by virtue of God's power come to enjoy an altogether different mode of being. Can Structural Category Realism about accidents accommodate the miracle of the Eucharist? I'm not sure, but if talk of accidents of the category of quality is really a puffed up way of talking about structures, how could it? Perhaps God can make an accident change its mode of being—but in order for God to do this, the accident needed to have some genuine mode of being to begin with. However, something that exists merely in a manner of speaking doesn't really exist in any way at all, and nothing that exists in no way at all can come to enjoy some manner of being.

This analogy is a little strained, but useful: consider the average man. The average man exists only in a manner of speaking—there is no manner of being enjoyed by an entity referred to by 'the average man'. So it makes no sense to even entertain the hypothesis that God has the power to create an individual that is definitely described by 'the average man'. It doesn't make sense to entertain the hypothesis that the average man could change his mode of being to the mode of, for example, substances. For a less strained but still imperfect analogy, consider a hole. Can God change the mode of being of a hole to that of a substance? If talk of accidents of a certain sort is really a puffed allusion to an ontologically innocent structure, then not even God could make it that such 'accidents' enjoy a genuine form of existence. I suggest that this fact puts pressure against attributing to Aquinas too deflationary a view about the ontological status of qualities. Insofar as one is inclined to think that accidents corresponding to the remaining categories can persist during the miracle of the Eucharist, one should also hesitate to be a Structural Category Realist about those categories.

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Form, matter and nominalism (or what is in a name): comments on Robert Pasnau's "Metaphysical Themes"

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Abstract Prof. Pasnau's remarkable book offers an exciting integration of medieval and early modern philosophy. It begins, however, in mediis rebus and so downplays the role that a particularly Nominalist tradition plays in explaining the abandonment of substantial form rise of the mechanical philosophy. This paper attempts to sketch some of that role.

Keywords Abelard · Buridan · Matter · Nominalism · Substantial form

"Metaphysical Themes" is a remarkable book—certainly one of the very best and most important written about medieval and early modern Philosophy in recent times. In an age in which individual scholars write detailed studies and wide-ranging books are typically collections without a single point of view it is thrilling to find an erudite work of such scope by a single mind and single pair of hands.

Not only am I impressed by this work I'm in sympathy with by far the larger part of it. Like Prof. Pasnau I see the 17th century as the more or less natural culmination of a process and I see that process as concerned largely with rethinking the nature of matter and of substance. Like him too I see this process in good part as a sustained critique of a picture that arises in response to the arrival over the previous century of Latin translations of Arabic and Greek writers, especially Avicenna, Aristotle and Averroes.

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That said there remain some matters of detail and of general orientation about which we disagree.

First then about general orientation. As I see it Metaphysical Themes begins a story in the middle. The 13th century is anomalous within the larger picture of medieval Philosophy. The first half of the century saw the rise (against considerable opposition) of a generation bowled over, gobsmacked, by the rediscovery of Aristotle, the third quarter saw their entrenchment, and it is not until the generation of Peter John Olivi that we begin a slow process of returning to and building upon the insights of the 12th century. One of the things Prof. Pasnau is much to be thanked for is the thesis (in his 5.1) that Democritus deserves pride of place with Plato and Aristotle as a founder of a tradition that continues through the history of Philosophy as we have it. Nowhere is there better evidence for that than in the amalgam of the three which (together with liberal doses of Stoicism) makes up much of 12th century thought. Although we are still not in a position to trace this thought in detail into the late 13th century and beyond I'm pretty convinced there is continuity and that once the enchantment brought on by the sight of the riches of Aristotle and his Commentators begins to wear off something of the 12th century perspective begins to reassert itself. This slow reassertion was abetted in the fifteenth century and after by the gradual rediscovery and translation of material from the ancient world so that by the 17th century thinkers had very nearly the ancient texts we have now. They had too, both as cause and as effect of this movement, an interest in recovering the non-Aristotelian past that produced a very powerful fusion with these earlier, and if I am right never quite forgotten, trends.

Two developments, I think, made this process both slow and difficult to discern. One is that by the middle of the 13th century the gobsmacked generation had made Aristotle's texts the core curriculum of the Arts Faculty; every Arts master had to lecture on them and very much of the university texts production concerned them. Thus whatever issues or ideas a Master might have been interested in our knowledge of them is inevitably filtered through a discussion of Aristotle. The second development was the consolidation of what we might call an Aristotelian conceptual scheme in theology. The rise of Christianity coincides pretty closely with the ancient 'rediscovery' of Aristotle and Aristotle already provides a philosophical frame for Christian theology by the time of John of Damascus. What one had to profess as a Christian was increasingly couched in terms that presupposed particular ontologies—transubstantiation being perhaps the most striking example.

Thus, as I see it the 17th century is, just as some of its major figures thought, something of a return to Hellenistic Philosophy mediated by absorption of and reflection on roughly a millennium of Academic (both Platonic and Aristotelian) influence.

These claims about the impact of the new texts are neither new nor particularly controversial. More controversial (though no newer) are my claims about the continuing influence of the 12th century. Let me try to make the latter more concrete by focusing attention for the moment on what Stephen Menn and I think to be in some sense a movement which persisted throughout the Middle Ages and which Prof. Pasnau thinks an artifact of historians—nominalism. Prof. Pasnau proposes to

replace this concept with others, notably corpuscularianism. I, on the other hand, think the label 'nominalism' captures an important continuity.

The term 'nominales' comes into use in the generation just after Peter Abelard. It seems to have been adopted by his followers and to have persisted as a self-identification into the very early 13th century.[1] It was known to Bonaventure and Aquinas (though apparently hardly known) and, more importantly for our story it was explicitly linked with Epicureanism by Albertus Magnus in a passage in his Liber de Praedicabilibus. Zenon Kaluza has argued, convincingly I think, that it is this Albertine identification that grounds the reintroduction of the term at the beginning of the 15th century (Kaluza 1988).

After the generation of Albert, Bonaventure and Aquinas it is difficult to find any explicit talk about nominales until the beginning of the 15th century but, as Prof. Pasnau points out, by the third quarter of that century we have explicit self-reference by masters to themselves as Nominales and the forging of a chain of masters going back to Ockham, Buridan and several other 14th century thinkers—though not beyond.

Is there either a continuous nominalist tradition into and during the 14th century? Prof. Pasnau does not think so. While he is happy to admit there might be some sort of family resemblance among many of the 14th century figures later classified as nominalists in his judgment: "There is, in short, nothing like a coherent body of thought that one might refer to as nominalism—at least not in the fourteenth century." (p. 87). I'm less sure. Philosophical movements are at best shaggy beasts but there does seem to be at work in the 14th century a tradition of thought that I think justifies the fifteenth century characterization of it as nominalist.[2]

Let me start where Professor Pasnau does—with prime matter. The idea that there is a substratum that underlies changes and persists through it is not a specifically Aristotelian one. As Prof. Pasnau stresses it was shared by Platonists, Stoics and Epicureans alike. One important issue on which they differed was the relation between this substratum and three-dimensionality. The Stoics seem to have identified the ultimate substratum with three-dimensional body, the Epicureans with their three-dimensional atoms and John Philoponus at least in the Contra Proclum (XI.3) and perhaps also in the Corollaries on Place and Void takes the same line—arguing that there can be no unextended substratum because three-dimensional body could never change into anything not three-dimensional. This idea, that matter is of itself three dimensional and so of itself quantified seems to have been a controversial one in the 12th century as well.

Characteristic of 12th century thought to the extent we now understand it was that underlying ordinary things lay a substratum of some kind—a thing's essentia. Abelard's view, and that of the Nominales, was that it was matter actual and

[1] For the relationship between Abelard and the 12th century Nominales cf. Courtenay (1991) and Normore (1992). The latest clear self-identification in the 13th century seems to be by an anonymous bishop mentioned by Jacques de Vitry.

[2] For one thing there are significant commonalities in semantics among those characterized as nominalist despite some disagreement about whether there were such extra-categorial entities as dicta and complexe significabila. .

divisible. This matter could be informed in various ways and these forms, both substantial and accidental, gave to the matter statuses, that is made it appropriate to call an essentia a statue or a rabbit—or if matter was informed by a human soul (perhaps not a form for Abelard) made the composite of essentia and soul to be a human being. Abelard and his followers held, moreover, that a thing just is its parts and they drew from this the conclusion that while you and I could grow, no thing—that is no essentia—could change its parts and so no essentia could grow (Martin 1998). You and I could grow (or shrink) because we could be constituted (partially in our case) by different essentiae at different times. An essentia just is its parts and an ordinary object at a time just is its parts at that time.

This picture characterizes the 14th century figures later identified as nominalists too. In every case of which I am aware they claim that matter is actual, that its parts all exist, that none of these parts essentially involves others and that the ordinary middle-sized objects of our ordinary experience are composed of them. They claim too that a thing just is its parts and that distinct common nuns may refer to exactly the same things. These claims also characterize their 17th century successors as well: Hobbes, for example and Descartes (Brown and Normore 2014). There is, I suggest, an internal pressure given this collection of theses towards the mechanical philosophy.

This is not to deny that those who share this sometimes differ about much else. A nice case in point and one very relevant to our topic is the relationship between Buridan and Ockham—the two 14th century figures pretty well universally recognized in the 15th century and since as the 'founders' of whatever nominalism there might be.

One area in which Buridan and Ockham disagree—and one important for the story Prof. Pasnau wishes to tell—is over the ontological status of quantity and its relation to matter. Aristotle introduces matter in his Physics to account for change and as Prof. Pasnau analyzes the situation, matter serves inter alia to distinguish change from creation. In creation something comes to be from nothing. In change something comes to be from ingredients that pre-exist. As modern discussions of Aristotle's conception of matter show (and as Prof. Pasnau is well aware) this does not entail that those ingredients survive the change (Ebrey 2007). Prof. Pasnau points out that if one supposes that there are material causes of a change and thinks that a cause must be simultaneous with its effect then one will think that the material cause needs be present at the first moment of existence of the product of the change. It must then be an ingredient of the product at that moment. If for it to cease to be an ingredient is itself a change then that too will require a material cause which is present in the product of that change. That will either be the same ingredient or an ingredient of that ingredient. If the onion of ingredients is not to be infinite there must be a layer of ingredient which persists through every change. Hence prime matter.

Ockham and Buridan agree there is prime matter. They agree too that it is infinitely divisible and that every bit of it is actual. Ockham goes on to identify the quantity of a material thing with the thing. He insists there is no additional metaphysical item which is that quantity over and above the thing itself; About that Descartes and Hobbes will later agree. Buridan demurs, arguing that to suppose

there is no magnitude besides the substance which bears it is to reduce all change to quantitative change. To understand Buridan here we need keep two things in mind. First that he and Ockham agree (against Aristotle as they understand him) that besides substances—which are composites of chunks of matter and substantial forms—and those chunks and forms themselves, there are real qualities—like heat and colour—which can exist independently of matter or substantial forms and which themselves have quantity. Second that if we identify the quantity of a substance with the substance itself then every generation or corruption of a substance is a generation or corruption of a quantity and, if qualities too have quantity every qualitative change will be the generation or destruction of a quantity. Thus every substantial change and every qualitative change is a quantitative change. Buridan concludes that this would entail the abolition of substantial and qualitative changes as distinct kinds of changes and he recoils from that. There is, of course, another way to describe the situation—as reducing all change to the generation and corruption of real entities—and local motion. If we rewind to Democritus and Epicurus or fast-forward to Galileo, Hobbes and Descartes we find a picture on which all natural change has been reduced to local motion. What Aristotle systematizes, and the 17th century mechanists largely eliminate, is change other than local motion. In particular what is eliminated is substantial change and alteration.

From this perspective the disagreement between Ockham and Buridan over quantity is very much a family quarrel. They agree that all change is either local motion or the generation or destruction of something which exists in its own right. What they disagree about is how to categorize what is generated or corrupted in other-than-local change. They agree too that Aristotle has maintained that there were only items in the category of substance moving locally and that one should not posit anything further without explanatory necessity.

If we return to the impulses underlying what Prof. Pasnau calls the substratum thesis, that in every natural change something must endure from what is undergoing the change into the product of the change, we can see at once that there is something very odd about both substantial change and alteration as Aristotelians conceive them. What is odd is that the substantial forms whose departure and arrival mark the termini of the change themselves have no substratum. They then are neither generated nor altered. They simply come into being!

Within an ontological perspective that is broadly ‘Realist’ this oddity can be hidden by thoughts like that it is in some sense the same form that is in the agent that ends up in the patient but very few medievals and even fewer early moderns thought this could be taken literally. In the case of humans it was thought from early on that God had especially to create souls (or at least the intellectual substantial forms which formed part of souls) one at a time and ex nihilo. Animal substantial forms and in general accidental forms were thought to be ‘educed from the matter’ but unless one understood this as Alexander of Aphrodisias seems to have, as meaning that they are supervenient on the arrangement of the matter, it is very difficult to see what this could mean—and in any case the substratum thesis is violated.

These difficulties confront Aquinas. On the one hand he wants to maintain that not even God could create an individual substantial form ex nihilo except by creating or finding an individual parcel of matter for it to inform. On the other hand he has no principled way of creating or finding an individual parcel of matter except as the matter of some something informed. The obvious conclusion is that there is no such thing as creating matter or form except as byproducts of creating substances. Thomas makes the best of this by insisting that matter is not actually anything—and this cannot mean just that it can take on any form whatever, it has to mean, and Thomas is clear about this, that it has no esse of its own. On the other side the substantial form has no esse of its own either—it is just the composite without those features ascribable to the matter! That is why Aquinas insists the disembodied human soul has the same esse that the composite had and that the resurrected composite will have.

Nominalists, will of course, have no truck with any of this. First of all there are no general forms to be in any sense the same between agent and patient. Second the composite is just its parts and the being of the composite is just the combined being of the parts. Third, the matter and the form of a material composite and the substance and accidental form of a union per accidens are all entities that could exist separately and are metaphysically prior to the composites they make up. Given this last one cannot make a substantial form by making the composite—it has to be the other way round—and given that, and that forms have no substrate, the intuitions behind the substratum thesis would suggest that they are not the products of change but of creation. Best to be rid of them!

That is not a step medieval nominalists (with the possible exception of the unusual Nicholas of Autrecourt) take but it is on their near horizon. To reach it one needs first a way back from real qualities (for why strain at substantial forms if one needs posit accidental forms anyway?) and that is supplied by the doctrine of modes.

The development of the theory of modes by the Spanish Jesuits in particular was designed to circumvent the doctrine of real accidents that had been developed—notably in nominalist circles where the view that accidents could by the power of God exist apart from subjects was combined with the view that they existed in the same sense of 'exist' that substances do. In many ways the Jesuit development marks a return to the conception of accidents we find in Aquinas where an accident has no being in the sense in which a substance has and there seems to be no way of comparing the being of a union of a substance and an accident with that of the being of the substance alone. As developed by the Jesuit thinkers modes accomplished two purposes at once: they replaced real accidents with items that could not exist apart from the substances of which they were modes and they avoided the nominalist thesis that a whole was its parts without supposing that there was an additional thing which was added to the parts to produce the whole.

While a neat way of avoiding real accidents, the doctrine of modes by itself would not have sufficed to enable the elimination of substantial forms. One needed also to eliminate the need for them. Here Buridan was a pioneer.

A mystery to which Prof. Pasnau draws our attention is how it is that substantial forms are supposed to work. One account is what Prof. Pasnau elegantly terms

Holenmerism—the view that they are whole in whole and whole in every part of the bodies they inform. Buridan is a unitarian about substantial form and in the human case agrees that it is the soul which is the form of the body. He thinks, however, that this is a miracle precisely because he finds it unintelligible that numerically the same thing should be the form of distinct extended parts. Every part of a human is human just as every part of a horse is horse and it must be the indivisible human soul which accounts for this—but how? In the case of the horse Buridan thinks he knows how—the horse soul is extended precisely as the matter of the horse is and parts of it inform parts of the horse. Moreover since every part of the horse is equally horse, Buridan thinks that horse soul must be homogeneous, like water. This, however, raises another problem: horse bodies are organic and vary considerably from part to part. How is this possible if exactly the same (kind of) form is present everywhere exercising the same powers? Buridan's answer is that while the soul exercises the same powers everywhere they have different effects because the matter they encounter is differently disposed. As he puts it if the matter in the foot were disposed as is the matter in the eye the horse (and we) would see with the foot (Zupko 1993).

Given that all the variation in a substance is due, on Buridan's account, to different dispositions of the matter and not to the form, one might ask what work there is left for the form to do? Buridan does not answer that question but it does seem clear that within his picture any answer has to be one which applies to every part of the substance, In the case of the horse the horse soul accounts, perhaps, for its being alive; certainly it accounts for each part of horse being horse. It is this thought—that there is something about what it is to be a horse that cannot be accounted for in terms of the way matter is arranged—that the mechanical philosophers of the 17th century question and it is the issue whether this is so that remains with us still.

Prof. Pasnau suggests (p. 555) that "the standard scholastic assumption was that a material substance remains the same substance for as long as it has the same substantial form". Once one grants, with Buridan, that substantial forms have parts that mirror precisely the substantial parts of the matter this assumption becomes nugatory. As a substance changes material parts so it changes formal parts. It may still be true that it is the same substance as long as its form is the same but we must now use exactly the same tools to determine whether the form is the same that we would use to determine whether the matter or the substance as a whole is the same. Substantial forms (other than the miraculous human form) can, then, no longer play their role as bearers of identity for substances over time. This is precisely Descartes' view even for items which are not substances. He allows, in the letter to Mesland of Feb. 1644, that a human being is the same over time as long as its matter is united to the same (indivisible) human mind. Extended substances on the other hand are the same only if their parts are the same.

The view that non-human substantial forms are extended is, I think, a very common scholastic view. It seems to be in tension with Holenmerism—a view that Buridan thought required a miracle. If one grants that substantial forms themselves have parts, the actuality of matter, and that matter can be directly informed by accidents, there seems little that a substantial form can do that cannot be done

without it. What remains, it seems is the bare thought that something is needed to account for a thing being of the kind it is. Here too of course the nominalist tradition turns the problem on its head by suggesting that kinds are themselves the product of similarities among things (among 'thin' things in Prof. Pasnau's sense).

It is an interesting fact about post-medieval thinking that it rejects an isomorphism between what there is in the world and the common nouns we find in natural language. Natural language speaks of shoes and ships and sealing wax and cabbages and kings. Descartes gave up on sealing wax, post medieval physics gives up on the lot, and even modern logic has only a single category—what a bound variable takes as value. It is not that we can no longer speak of cabbages or even of kings but that what they are turns out to be something less specific qualified in various ways. This raises of course the question of whether they have enough unity to be considered proper things—to be what medievals would call entia per se as contrasted with entia per accidens.

Entia per se are often conflated with substances. Even Prof. Pasnau suggests it (pg. 557) when he claims that the Coimbrians explain per se unity as the unity of matter and form. That is not really what is going on in the passage under discussion though—rather the type of unity produced by a union of matter and form is described as of the sort that is understood to be per se unity. For the Coimbrai commentators, as for Descartes, there are per se unities that are not substances. Descartes thinks a mouse is an ens per se. Suarez and the Coimbrai commentators think that Christ, though not a single substance, is an ens per se because of the hypostatic union of his two natures.

Once the notion of ens per se comes adrift from that of substance the way is open for views that attempt to claim that certain material structures are entia per se while others are not, even though none of them has a substantial form. Descartes' view is that those which are entia per se have a' true and immutable nature'. The effort to find intuitively satisfying conditions for there being an ens per se continues to our own day and some despair of it and hanker for the return of substantial forms. We who study the history of these things should, however, remember that even Leibniz, who was as fond of substantial forms as anyone and closer to their demise than we, saw that they really could not compose extended objects in any usual sense of 'compose' or 'extended'. There seems no way back!

I'm not sure whether Prof. Pasnau thinks there is a way back. He is fully aware of the difficulties but seems also to think that our own difficulties in separating genuine things from the wrinkles in our carpets may be unsolvable without them. Among the many things it does brilliantly "Metaphysical Themes" shows us why one might be thus ambivalent.

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On *Metaphysical themes*: replies to critics

Robert Pasnau

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1 Reply to Normore

Calvin Normore offers a very interesting big-picture thesis about the later medieval period, one with multiple components. First, he thinks the first quarters of the thirteenth century—the era of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas—are "gobsmacked" by the recovery of Aristotle's work, and hence are "anomalous." Second he thinks that, once the gobsmacking is over, the philosophers—beginning with Peter John Olivi and onward into the fourteenth century—return to "building upon the insights of the twelfth century"—that is, back to the era of Peter Abelard and others. Third, he thinks that this broader movement—what one gets if one sets aside the anomaly of Thomas Aquinas and his era—is characterized by a broader interest in the whole spectrum of ancient philosophical traditions, so that it is not just Aristotelian, but also Platonic and Stoic and Epicurean and much else. Fourth, this broadening movement sees its culmination in the seventeenth century, when the authority of Aristotle is fully subverted, at least in the more progressive circles of Europe.

I like this picture insofar as it puts us on notice that we should not think of Thomas Aquinas as the unique exemplar of medieval philosophy. It is quite surprising how often—still—this sort of thing is done. One wants to say something about what "the medievals" thought about a given topic, so one looks up what Aquinas said—no doubt using the handy online English version of the *Summa theologiae*—and sets it down as if this gives us the medieval view on the topic in question. Background in place, one can then carry on with a clear historical conscience in talking about Descartes, or Spinoza, or Kant, or whatever. I am as enthusiastic as the next person about the Angelic Doctor. But it has to be understood that Aquinas's views are weird and idiosyncratic in all sorts of ways, and that he no

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more exemplifies later medieval thought than does Scotus, or Ockham, or Buridan, or Walter Burley, or Peter of Ailly, or any of countless other figures. I suggest we think of Aquinas among the scholastics as a figure rather like Descartes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: undoubtedly a major, brilliant, influential thinker, but just an early chapter in a much longer, complex story, one that quite arguably gets more interesting as it goes. The reason people misunderstand this, Isuspect, is that the Catholic Church was so obsessed with Aquinas for much of the twentieth century. Since the Church is essentially a medieval institution, people seem to have taken it for granted that the Middle Ages must have been equally obsessed with Aquinas, if not more so. But in fact, quite to the contrary, as I put it in my book, Thomism was "always a minority view during the scholastic era" (*MT* p. 588).[1] Dominican friars tended to be Thomists, but most philosophers were not Dominicans, and certainly most of the most impressive and influential philosophers of the later Middle Ages were not Dominicans. When the Jesuit order comes along in the sixteenth century, and begins to have a pronounced influence on educational institutions, even they are not Thomists. Francisco Suarez, for instance, is not a Thomist.

Part of what is weird about Aquinas, as Normore points out, is that he really is just obsessed with Aristotle. A very large part of Aquinas's last decade was devoted to producing word-for-word commentaries on Aristotle's corpus. This is something that Albert also did, and also Averroes. (One tends not to think of Averroes as part of the same movement, but he died only 27 years before Aquinas was born, and he lived in southern Spain, a mere day's ride from Paris on the TGV—longer, admittedly, by donkey). Later great figures, such as Scotus, Ockham, and Buridan, would never have proceeded in this way. They wrote works that took one or another Aristotelian text as their topic, but they never produced mere commentaries, and never showed all that much interest in capturing Aristotle's authentic views.

So Aquinas, let us agree, is much more anomalous than is often supposed. But should we then think that medieval thought after Aquinas is *less* Aristotelian, *more* open to non-Aristotelian influences? At some point, to be sure, this starts happening. But I am not sure it is right to think that it happens as soon as we get past the gobsmacking that runs from Averroes through Aquinas. One of the main ideas of *Metaphysical Themes* is that we should think of Aristotelianism as lying in the middle of a continuum that runs from Platonism on one end to atomism on the other. Now you might have thought that a book dedicated to this period would have a great deal to say about Platonism. And of course one can find that sort of thing, particularly among the Italian humanists. But in fact my argument is that the much more important influence comes from the left, so to speak—from the reductive conception of nature championed by Democritus and Epicurus. The influence of so-called Renaissance Platonism is, to my mind, wildly exaggerated, both with regard to later scholastic authors and with regard to the famous figures of the seventeenth century. And as Aristotle's influence starts to wane in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, one finds a great deal of interest in alternative sources of

[1] Pasnau (2011), cited in the main text as *MT*.

inspiration. I go on about this at some length in the book, but here I will mention just one little-known but vivid example, that of Sebastian Basso, who in 1621 (20 years before Descartes's *Meditations*) published a *Philosophia naturalis adversus Aristotelem*. Basso puts on the title page, in large letters, the familiar saying "Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica Veritas." The preface of the work worries at some length about how philosophy can go on without Aristotle, wondering: "Where should they [philosophers] turn? To whom should they go, once Aristotle has been abandoned? The ancient texts have been lost, with a few of their fragments dispersed over other books, mainly Aristotle's. When interpreted, they resemble feverish dreams…. Is it still any wonder that philosophers adhere so stubbornly to Aristotle? Whom else would they follow?" (*MT* p. 79).

It feels to me as if this sort of thing—the search for alternative ancient sources of inspiration—really begins to be important only rather late in my story. Although scholastics of the fourteenth century were not obsessed with Aristotle in the way Aquinas was, they continued to work under his influence, and in some sense accepted his authority in a way that made them uninterested in looking for *other* sources of authority. Ockham, for instance, produced a great many works that are, nominally at least, responses to the Aristotelian canon. Most do not think that his own views display any great *fidelity* to Aristotle. But it is not as if he took on some *other* master in Aristotle's place. Rather, he simply was unwilling to be bridled by anyone else, ancient or modern. And I think that is the characteristic attitude of much of fourteenth-century thought. Aristotle becomes less central, but is not replaced by anything else.

What about the twelfth century? This is the most idiosyncratic part of Normore's big picture. I have almost nothing to say in the book about the twelfth century, and so if Normore is right then that is an important part of the story that I am neglecting. But his suggestion is rather surprising, because—with just a few exceptions—there is just very little by way of signs of twelfth-century influence on later medieval thought. The most obvious exception is Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, the influence of which is unmissable. Also noteworthy is the *Liber sex principiorum*, a kind of postscript to the *Categories* that was written by some unknown twelfth-century logician. One might also mention various Cistercian texts, and we could go on from there. But what Normore is really interested in, I take it, is the influence of twelfth-century nominalism, above all the work of Peter Abelard. It is really very hard to say whether Abelard and his followers, the *nominales*, had an influence on later philosophy, even on the nominalist movement that began with Ockham in the fourteenth century. Neither Abelard nor the *nominales* are cited by these later figures, except in a few rare cases. Even today, the texts of Abelard are something of a mess, in part precisely because the lines of transmission across the later Middle Ages are very faint. So the case that twelfth-century nominalism is important for later medieval thought really requires some work to establish. But this is an ongoing project, being developed by Normore and others, and we'll have to see how far it gets.

What really inspires the project is not just the superficial commonality of label—nominalist—but the striking affinities in doctrines. This gives rise to the question of whether we can rightly speak of a common school of thought, nominalism. If we set

aside the mysteries of the twelfth century, then it is clear enough that, by the fifteenth century, the label was used quite widely to refer to a tradition that began with Ockham, the so-called venerable inceptor of nominalism, and ran through Buridan and other figures at Paris closely associated with him, like Marsilius of Inghen and Albert of Saxony. None of these fourteenth-century figures themselves used the term, but that is not really what is at issue. The more interesting issue is whether the label 'nominalism' is a helpful organizing tool, in our thinking about later medieval thought. I certainly do not think we should stop using the term, and in fact I myself extend its application in various ways. (I suggest at the very end of the book, for instance, that we should describe Locke as holding a nominalist theory of identity.) But in the passage Normore is particularly focusing on, I complain that in general this period has not been well-served by the organizational categories we tend to employ, and I single out nominalism here as well as atomism and skepticism. None of these concepts, I think, really manage to cut the issues at their joints. As I write: "skepticism is a view that no one held, atomism a view that barely mattered, and nominalism not a view at all" (*MT* p. 84). What one would naturally suppose is that the nominalists are unified in their rejection of universals. But this is not a very helpful way to divide up the scholastic territory, because nearly everyone rejected universals, if a universal is a property that is concurrently and wholly instantiated in multiple subjects. The various forms and modes that, for the scholastics, are their analog to properties are best described as tropes. Almost no one thinks they are universal—neither Aquinas nor even Scotus thinks that. So it cannot be anti-realism with regard to universals that distinguishes nominalism. A doctrine that stands a better chance to distinguish the nominalists is their anti-realism regarding most of the accidental categories—the focus of Kris McDaniel's remarks. But, as Normore points out, there was disagreement among the nominalists over how reductive to be here: Ockham accepted only substances and qualities (and maybe relations in some contexts); Buridan also accepted quantities. Moreover, even worse, and as I will discuss later, it is very hard to figure out whether earlier figures like Aquinas were more or less realists than the nominalists in this area, again making the term 'nominalist' less than helpful in describing the lay of the land.

Normore's strategy is not to focus on any one defining difference, but to pile on further features, from a wider set of topics, that distinguish the nominalist movement. And here I think our ways of looking at these issues come closer to being in sync. For I do think one can see a very broad sort of metaphysical perspective at work in Ockham and Buridan, for instance, that goes in a very different direction from that of Aquinas and Scotus, for instance. Rather than use the term 'nominalism' here, I prefer to invoke the continuum I mentioned earlier, with Platonism on one end and reductive atomism on the other. But since, as I said, I also do not much like *atomism* as a classification, let me introduce the term of art I use in the book, and speak of *corpuscularianism* as the metaphysical doctrine that postulates only bodies and their integral parts, rejecting all metaphysical parts such as forms and powers and dispositions (cf. *MT* p. 8). The label captures, I think, a perennial idea that runs through the whole history of philosophy, first appearing in Leucippus and Democritus, then in the Epicureans, then again in twelfth-century

Abelard and in fourteenth-century Ockham and Buridan and Nicholas of Autrecourt, again all over the place in the seventeenth century, and finally in our times, somewhat transmogrified, in David Lewis. Whatever the facts about the historical lines of influence, I think the set of ideas that is corpuscularianism exerts its own magnetism on the human mind, independently drawing philosophers toward a picture on which all there is bodies in motion, big ones and small ones, and where to be a body is just to be a thing that occupies space. The view gets defended in more or less pure form in different eras, being held rather impurely by Ockham—who believed in both substantial forms and real accidents – and then very purely indeed in various seventeenth-century figures, like Hobbes and perhaps Descartes. It is a view whose magnetic attraction I feel the pull of, because it seems to hold out the hope of getting rid of all the metaphysical weirdness of both Platonism and the Platonism-on-the-cheap that Aristotle offers. But the main lesson of my book is that such glorious parsimony carries a very high price at the end of the day, because it is very hard to be so parsimonious at the foundations and still account for all of the ordinary commonsensical things we want to say about the world. Dogs and cats and people, if they exist at all, end up looking very strange indeed, if we let the corpuscularians carry the day.

Normore wants to draw me out on the prospects of form in the twenty-first century, but I do not suppose that even a very large book on the history of metaphysics qualifies me to speak with authority on what we ought to say today. What I will, say, though, is that I think the scholastic era, together with the cautionary tale of its collapse in the seventeenth century, makes the very best historical case there is to be had for an ontology of substances *plus* something else. Call these further entities forms, or powers, or whatever you like. Over the years, I have found myself little moved by Plato's brief on behalf of the Equal Itself, or by David Armstrong's modern arguments for universals, or by mathematicians who want their discourses to be made true by some Platonic realm. Those sorts of entities I have always felt that I could do without. But I have come to think nonetheless that the world just cannot consist of good old concrete particles all the way down, and nothing more. We've tried that, and it does not work.

2 Reply to Rozemond

It is a pleasure to engage with Marleen Rozemond on questions of mind and body, because there's no one in the field who has influenced my thinking on this issue as much as she has. I confess to have harbored some hope that she would just wholly agree with me up and down the line in these areas, but I should have known better. At least I can now put to rest my sometime-fear that my thinking in this area is just all wholly derivative from Rozemond's work.

Rozemond quotes me to the effect that the material–immaterial divide is unproblematic for scholastic authors. What I would like to say is not that there are no *hard problems* here for the scholastics, but that the divide was relatively *well-defined* for them, whereas today it is not at all well-defined. For them, the material can be defined as that which either contains prime matter (like dogs and trees and

stones) or else naturally depends on prime matter (see *MT* p. 323). The dependence provision is meant to capture accidental and substantial forms, which do not contain prime matter but do depend on it, at least naturally speaking. What gets left out of the material realm is then God, the angels, and human souls. Rozemond objects that such dependence is a "relational characteristic," which she judges to be unhelpful inasmuch as it omits any account of *why* the thing itself is independent of matter. She takes it for granted, I think, that the ultimate story about what makes a thing immaterial will be a feature of a thing's *intrinsic* nature.

Although that is a natural enough assumption, I do not accept it. On my picture, the material–immaterial divide for the scholastics mostly *is* relational: a thing can qualify as being material either by *being* prime matter, which is the limiting, non-relational case, or else by *relating* to prime matter in a certain way, either by *containing* it or *depending* on it. To fail to be so dependent, on my view, is just *what it is* for a thing to be immaterial, in the scholastic sense. It would be good to provide a text at this point to bear this out, but I confess that I do not have one. Instead, I just want to urge a certain picture of what forms are, one that is heavily indebted to my earlier book on Thomas Aquinas.[2] Forms, I think, are simply actualities, and at the deepest level actualities are all of the same kind. To be sure, one form actualizes its subject in one way and another in another way. One form makes its subject green, another makes it taste a certain way, a third governs its entire nature, actualizing a fig tree. Still another, when present in the right sort of subject, makes a thing be rational. These forms must of course be intrinsically different in all sorts of ways, but there is no special intrinsic difference between material forms and immaterial forms. The difference lies instead in the kind of subject they require, in order to do their work. What is special about what actualizes rationality—whether that be God, the angels, or a human soul—is that it requires no material subject at all. Minds are a kind of actuality that can naturally operate on their own. This is important—it is what makes rational forms not only *capable* of surviving apart from a body, but downright *incapable* of destruction. But it is quite a serious misunderstanding, in my view, to imagine a divide between material forms and immaterial forms, and then suppose the material forms are made of one kind of stuff—concrete, perishable stuff—and the immaterial forms made of another kind of stuff—ethereal, imperishable stuff, like titanium but even lighter and stronger. To deny that the material–immaterial divide tracks an intrinsic difference between things is, in part, to reject this sort of two–stuff picture. The scholastics have a material–immaterial divide, but it is not fundamental in the way that it is for Descartes.

From this perspective, I hope it becomes clearer why I find it so disappointing for Descartes to tell us that the *essence* of the mind is thought. It seems to me that Descartes does hold the sort of view that Rozemond expects to find, according to which the material–immaterial divide is explained by the intrinsic features of things. For Descartes, the divide *is* quite fundamental. On the material side, we get an account, in terms of extension, which I do find helpful (more on this below). But on the immaterial side it seems to me that Descartes just punts, abandoning any

[2] Pasnau (2002), esp. pp. 131–140.

pretense of explaining what it is to be immaterial, and instead pretending that it is sufficient to say that the mind is essentially thinking. It is noteworthy how close this is, in a way, to the scholastic position, inasmuch as they agree that thought is a *mark* of the immaterial. But they can go on to develop this in the way I just sketched, by explaining how thought is an actuality that does not require a material subject, making it independent of matter, hence making it immaterial. Descartes, in contrast, seems to want the mind's immateriality to be a fundamental feature of its very nature. From someone with that picture, we have the right to ask about what this curious immaterial stuff is like. Descartes might admit that he hasn't a clue, and that would be fair enough, but for him to stonewall so shamelessly, and insist that he *does* know the essence of mind, and its essence is *thought*, seems to me among the most disappointing features of his whole philosophy.

Rozemond thinks there is something more to be said, on Descartes's behalf, beyond the mere fact of the mind's thinking. That something more is *simplicity*. In order to think about this, we should explicitly distinguish two questions: first, what I'll call the demarcation problem: how to mark the material–immaterial divide; second, the distinct question of why only immaterial things can think. Now, before turning to simplicity, let me address a couple of related issues. First, there is a question of whether the doctrine of holenmerism might help with the demarcation problem. (Holenmerism, remember, is the idea that a thing wholly exists at one place and at the same time wholly exists at another. The term is due originally to Henry More, though it is Rozemond herself who first began to make the term popular in recent times.) On my view (*MT* p. 347), holenmerism could provide only a *sufficient* condition for demarcation. One reason it cannot be necessary is that, even if one thinks that God exists holenmerically throughout the universe (as I think philosophically well-informed Christians have almost always thought, for the whole history of Christianity), still one has to leave room for the idea that God was immaterial before there was a material world to exist in. So Rozemond and I agree that holenmerism cannot be anyone's solution to the demarcation problem. I also agree with Rozemond that holenmerism really does not ultimately explain immateriality even in those cases where it does successfully track the division. Holenmerism is just a manifestation of the more fundamental property of simplicity. Take a simple thing and locate it at multiple places, and you get holenmerism.

Second, readers may be a bit perplexed at this point about why, in the context of Descartes, Rozemond and I are talking at all about the mind's extension through the body, and why simplicity is being held out as the mark of immateriality, rather than lack of spatial location. The reason is that she and I agree that the human mind *does* have a location, at least in this life. It is located where the body is. It is my further view, thought I think Rozemond is not persuaded of this, that the mind is located throughout the body. In any case, however, the mind is in some sense extended. But, as I take pains to explain in my book, Descartes denies that this counts as "true" extension (see *MT* §16.4), which is chiefly marked by having *partes extra partes*, parts outside of parts. Hence the mind can exist holenmerically throughout the body and still not count as extended in the way that defines body. I think this is important to recognize, because it calls into question the very widely held recent view that it must be lack of location that demarcates the immaterial. Often people suppose this,

I think, because they suppose that this is how the doctrine was canonically defended by Descartes. Although Descartes scholars disagree on this point, at least Rozemond and I are in agreement that an immaterial mind can (and often does) have a location.

This brings me to simplicity, and here let me register just a few worries, first with respect to whether it could be a sufficient mark of the mental, and then with respect to whether it could be a necessary mark. If, for Descartes, it is simplicity that defines immaterial things, and if simplicity is the key to thought, then we should wonder why Descartes always insists on treating thought itself as the essence of mind, rather than simplicity. As Rozemond sees things, it would seem natural for Descartes to say that the essence of body is extension, and the essence of mind is simplicity. So one worry here concerns why he does not talk that way. I also think there is something worrisome about Rozemond's idea that simplicity is going to *explain* very much for Descartes. Consider, first, the apparent possibility of material simples. Descartes himself does not think that this is a possibility. He rejects atomism, for instance, on the grounds that any body, no matter how small, must be infinitely divisible (e.g., *Principles* II.20). He gets that result for free, if he wants, because of how he defines 'body,' as a thing extended with *partes extra partes*. So let's give him that, and ask ourselves whether, in dividing bodies, we could get down to something too small to count as a body, something without parts. We could be fancy about this, and imagine something extended and yet partless (which Descartes *really* thinks is incoherent), or we could more straightforwardly imagine something that exists only at an extensionless point. Let's stick with the latter. I don't see anything at all incoherent about the possibility of such a thing; indeed, plenty of physicists have believed such things to be actual. So now consider the demarcation problem: is this extensionless particle material or not? I do not see any good reason to insist that it goes on the immaterial side. I would want to know more, before ruling one way or the other. Nor, to touch briefly on the question of how immateriality relates to thought, do I see any reason to think that this simple particle would be a mind. Indeed, a simple particle like that strikes me as very unlikely to be a mind, just as unlikely, say, as Leibniz's mill, or Searle's Chinese Room.

Now let me turn from sufficiency to necessity. It is interesting to note that Descartes's argument for simplicity in Meditation VI is aimed at least in part at those who would postulate distinct faculties within the mind. This highlights the fact that one way of having parts, and so being non-simple, is to have distinct powers or faculties. There was a lively scholastic debate about this topic, one that in fact Normore might hold out as an instance of the historical pattern he champions. In the twelfth century, it was widely thought that the human soul is entirely simple, and that talk of distinct faculties of will and intellect is just talk. With the rise of Aristotle, it became standard to suppose—Aquinas is the classic example—that the human soul is comprised of really distinct faculties: not just the various sensory and nutritive powers, but also a possible and an agent intellect, and a will. Then in the fourteenth century, their gobs no longer smacked by Aristotle, scholastic authors often (but not always) reverted to the twelfth-century view. The issue remained unsettled from there forward. I mention this history in order to make clear that it was very much a live question whether the rational soul did or did not have parts of this sort. But that in turn raises a question about whether simplicity could be a necessity

condition for immateriality. For it would not seem very plausible to say, in the face of this history, that the rational soul as described by Aquinas failed to count as immaterial.

Another cause for concern, again thinking historically, concerns the usual scholastic account of perception. Unlike Descartes, scholastics did not suppose that perception takes place in the immaterial mind. They thought it takes place in the sense organs and brain, both in human beings and of course in other animals. There is controversy over just how precisely to tell this story, but in my first book I described Aquinas as a "semi-materialist," by which I meant that he allowed that *some kinds* of conscious experience could be had in wholly material entities.[3] In particular, animals can perceive without immaterial minds. This line of thought gives rise to something of a dilemma for those who would take simplicity as the mark of immateriality and consciousness. Either animals must be given a simple, immaterial mind. Or they must be judged to be mere automata. That Descartes so forthrightly faced this dilemma supports Rozemond's interpretation of the texts, as a scholarly matter. But it should make us pause over having much enthusiasm for the view.

3 Reply to McDaniel

Aristotle says, quite a few different times, that 'being' is said in many ways. What on earth does that mean, and how could it possibly be true? Are there different ways of being—of existing? You could take the view that anything that exists exists in a different way from how anything else exists. So, for instance, Kris McDaniel exists in one way, Rozemond in a second, and Normore in a third. One might make some sense of that way of talking, but it doesn't seem to be what Aristotle was after. Similarly, one could say that dogs exist in a different way than cats do, and here we are getting closer to what Aristotle seems to have been after, but not quite. Aristotle's remark seems to advert to his theory of the categories, which tells us that dogs and cats and philosophers all exist in the same way, as substances. Substances, however, are contrasted with those beings whose distinctive character is to have being in *another*. So the categorial scheme seems to hold that being is said in one way of substances, and in another way when it comes to the non-substantial categories, which is what the scholastics describe as accidents. Inasmuch as Aristotle distinguishes nine different accidental categories, the Aristotelian might say that being is said in ten different ways, and that these are actually ten different ways in which things exist.

Modern Aristotle scholars do not tend to get too worked up about this stuff, because they take the *Categories* to be an earlier treatise, superseded at least in large part by the mature metaphysics of the *Physics*, the *De anima*, and the *Metaphysics*. But the medievals did not for the most part accept any such developmental reading of the Aristotelian corpus. They tended to think, instead, that the *Categories* was the

[3] Pasnau (1997), p. 36.

foundational text of Aristotelian metaphysics, perhaps somewhat streamlined and simplified relative to these more elaborate works, but nevertheless *the* place to start, in setting out a theory. And on their behalf one might note that Aristotle *does* recite the ten categories, or at any rate most of them, in various places in his "mature" works. Moreover, he does keep saying that being is said in many ways, throughout his presumably later works.[4]

There are lots and lots of things it might mean to say that being is said in many ways, but for the purpose of thinking about scholastic views, we might focus on two different issue. First, there is the issue of whether the ten categories mark out ten distinct kinds of entities, in *any* sense. They must do so in some sense, one might think, but there was a medieval tradition, associated with nominalism, of treating the categorial scheme as merely linguistic, and so as making no metaphysical commitments. Hence there is quite a lot to say about the various ways in which scholastic authors did or did not treat the categorial scheme as an ontological scheme. Second, supposing the categorial scheme is ontologically committing, there is the issue of whether categorial differences come with a difference in how things exist. That is, are there in fact different *ways* of existing. Can we even make sense of that?

One of the most robustly realistic scholastic views was Scotus's. He explicitly rejected that 'being' means different things—that it gets used analogously—across any of its various applications. He denied this with respect to God versus creatures, and he denied it with respect to substances versus accidents. Now, this is something that Ockham also said, a generation later, but with this great difference: Ockham thought that, once we commit ourselves to saying that accidents, if they exist, *really* exist in just the way substances do, then we ought to be much more cautious in admitting that accidents do exist. So although Ockham agreed with Scotus on the second of the above questions, he took a famously parsimonious view regarding the accidental categories, regarding them as real only in the case of Quality, and holding that the rest of the categories capture mere linguistic divisions. Scotus, in contrast, *both* thought that what exists must fully exist, univocally so, *and* thought that we should be realists about all ten categories. They mark off ten irreducibly distinct kinds of beings. In my book, I worry about some of the details here, but for present purposes let's just agree that this is McDaniel's "Ontological Univocal Category Realism."

I mention Scotus and Ockham because it is the framework of their disagreement that sets the agenda for later scholastic metaphysics, and so serves as the foil against which we should read seventeenth-century metaphysics. If we were not still living in the Dark Ages with regard to our understanding of medieval philosophy, this story would be as familiar to you as are the best-known elements of seventeenth-century thought. But here we need Scotus and Ockham simply as background, because McDaniel—understandably enough—is interested in some of the subtler, less-discussed alternatives of the time. In particular, McDaniel is intrigued by the ways in which, in the context of the categories, we might develop a non-univocal

[4] E.g., *Physics* 185a21, *De anima* 410a13, *Metaphysics* 1003b5, 1017a22, 1028a10.

picture of how things exist—that is, he is interested in those figures who, contrary to Scotus and Ockham, give an affirmative answer to the second of the above questions, and hold that being is used analogically of substance and accident.

Aquinas is quite clear, in many places, that this is his view. In the *Summa theologiae*, for instance, he writes that "Forms, accidents, and other such things are called beings not because *they* exist (*ipsa sint*), but because something exists *by them*. The reason whiteness, for instance, is called a being is that its subject is white *by it*" (1a 45.4c, in *MT* p. 184n). I do not think Aquinas takes himself to be saying anything controversial here. The view was common in the mid-thirteenth century; you can see it in Albert the Great and Richard Rufus of Cornwall, for instance (*MT* p. 183). These authors, gob-smacked as they perhaps were, all take themselves simply to be following the lead of Aristotle's dictum about being being said in many ways. Aquinas's view is that we can rightly speak of accidents as beings, but that they are beings in a different way from how substances are.

This interesting view fell completely out of favor after Scotus, and has been weirdly neglected by modern scholars, despite its being *Aquinas's* view. Now perhaps it has been neglected because scholars do not think that Aquinas really means it. That could be the case, if he were simply making a point about ordinary language: saying merely that there is some sort of linguistic impropriety about saying that "whiteness exists." But I do not think we should find this interpretation very plausible. Elsewhere Aquinas says that "if we are to speak strictly" we should not say that accidents exist (*De virt. in comm.* 11c, in *MT* p. 184). When Aquinas talks this way he is not doing ordinary-language philosophy, but rather telling us that this way of talking best hews to the way the world is. Hence I take his view to treat qualities according to what McDaniel calls "Ontological Analogical Priority Category Realism." A quality is a being or entity, it does not exist in the way substances exist, and it is inferior, inasmuch as its being is dependent on its having a subject that, in virtue of the quality, is so-qualified.

One of the interesting issues McDaniel raises is what we ought to say about a third view—"Ontological Analogical Category Equality Realism"—that treats being as non-univocal, but does not suppose there is any kind of inferiority on one side or the other. Here I have two initial thoughts, which I will report and then reflect on. First, I am inclined to wonder how we can account for different ways of being *other* than by treating one being as dependent on another. That is, I wonder whether this third view even makes sense. Then, on second thought, I am inclined to wonder how even such dependence of one being on another can account for different ways of being. It just looks to me like a non-sequitur to say that *a* depends on *b*, and therefore *a* exists in a different way than does *b*. On this basis I am inclined to doubt whether any sort of non-univocal view makes sense, and I am inclined to approve of Scotus's and Ockham's insistence on treating accidents as beings in just the way that substances are. Now McDaniel mentions my worrying about this issue, in my book, and he agrees that there is no direct inference to be had from dependence to diminished being. But he thinks this is the wrong way to construe things, and that instead we should see such views as starting off with the idea that accidents have being in a different way, and derive their dependence from that.

To reflect on all of this, let's consider a bit more what Aquinas is doing in the above-quoted passage from the *Summa theologiae*. The view he frames is a rather odd one, on its face, because it maintains that qualities are *beings*, but yet that they do not *exist*. This sounds weird in English, and I think sounds at least as weird in Latin, where the term Aquinas is denying of accidents is just the ordinary finite form of the verb for 'to be' (*est*), and the term he is granting them is just the ordinary participle for 'to be,' *ens*. Stretching modern English a bit, it is as if he saying that they are beings, but that they do not be. Now it seems hopeless to try to say very much directly about this different way of being that accidents supposedly have, since, after all, we cannot say very much about the paradigmatic sort of being that substances have. (One might think here of Peter Geach's witticism that existing seems to be something like breathing, only quieter). So what can we say? Well, the only conclusion the texts really license is the thought that accidents have being in a different way inasmuch as they inhere in substances, whereas substances do not inhere in anything. So we are back to the idea that there's a link between the dependence of accidents and their diminished way of being.

McDaniel wants to broaden the range of possible views, and I cheer him on in those efforts, but I fear, on reflection, that the scholastics do not have the conceptual space to draw the distinctions he wants to draw. For them the categorial scheme comes down, at its most basic, to the distinction right at the start of the *Categories* (ch. 2) between things that are in a subject and things that are not in a subject. Those who, like Aquinas, treat categorial being as non-univocal do so on the grounds of this distinction. Since the distinction is set out in terms of a certain kind of dependence, the critical issue among the scholastics becomes whether this sort of dependence—the dependence of one thing's inhering in another—gives us reason to postulate a difference in ways of being. From this perspective, there is just no conceptual space to separate out the two sorts of analogical views that McDaniel wants to distinguish. So I find myself standing by my original thought that—at least from the vantage-point I'm occupying—there is no way to account for a difference in ways of being, other than in terms of this sort of dependence. Hence though I think McDaniel is right to say that I conflated two distinguishable views, I do not feel too bad about it, because I think the scholastics had no room for other options.

What would other options actually look like? Here I am sure McDaniel has more to say than I do, but one interesting idea, which he alludes to a few times, would be a theory of separated universals, à la Plato. We would then have a category of beings that are not dependent on substances by way of inhering in them, and are not the subject of inhering accidents, but yet that plausibly are beings in a different way. In Aristotle, license for this might have been found in the *Categories*' discussion of things that are said of other things without being *in* other things (ch. 2). But, as I stressed in my response to Normore, universals in general were almost always rejected by scholastic authors, and separated universals of the Platonic kind were usually judged to be hardly worth mentioning.

What one therefore arrives at is the picture of real accidents I describe in the book, as items in the nine accidental categories that are held to be irreducible, and to exist in their own right, just as substances do (*MT* p. 191). This picture makes good sense of what happens in the seventeenth century, when Descartes and others attack

the doctrine of real accidents. They are not, I think, attacking the general notion of substances having irreducibly real properties of one sort or another. I think that cannot be the target, because I think Descartes, for instance, is fully a realist about his modes—that is, modes exist, and are distinct from substances. Nor do I think the target is exactly the separability of accidents. Some Protestant scholastics did not insist on the separability of accidents, but they held them to be altogether real nevertheless, and their views were just as unacceptable to anti-Aristotelians. The target, then, is the doctrine of accidents that treats them, in effect, as little substances, beings in just the way that substances are. Ockham was already mocking such a view back in the fourteenth century, as the doctrine of *parvae res*—little baby entities (*MT* p. 243). This is, I think, fair enough as an account of how Scotus thought accidents should be constructed. By comparison, I think that the thirteenth-century view of Aquinas and others ought not to have been controversial in the seventeenth century, because I think that view comes very close to being the same as the theory of modes that one finds in Descartes. (The great difference is that Descartes's modes of extension are what we now call primary qualities, whereas Aquinas's accidents are what we now call secondary qualities. But that is a part of my story that I cannot go into here).

What about the *structures* I ascribe to Aquinas, and which McDaniel presses me to explain? First, let me clarify something that might have been clearer in the book: that I think Aquinas takes a different attitude toward different accidental categories (see *MT* pp. 229–32). I think it is clear that he treats Quality and Quantity as irreducible. Here is where the theory have been describing holds, and I take these accidents to be something like Cartesian modes. In the case of many of the lesser categories, however, I think it is perfectly clear that his view is reductive. Even here, however, I tried to carve out a space between his view and the view of someone like Ockham, who treats these categories as nothing more than linguistic classifications. Aquinas, I argued, even while admitting that categories like Where and When carve out no domain of irreducible entities, does think that these categories are doing some ontological work. As an analogy, think about how someone might conceive of chemistry. One might think that the basic, irreducible entities are the elements. (Just forget, if you will, about the particles that compose the elements). Still, one would want to talk about molecules—structures of elements—and would of course think that chemistry has to talk about these things if it is to describe the world as it actually works. Here the 'has to' is meant to be understood more loosely than I think McDaniel contemplates in his remarks. I am supposing that, strictly speaking, one *could* stay at the basic level, and refuse to speak loosely of composites like water and salts and sugars. But it would of course be crazy, because as it happens there are certain elemental structures in the natural world that are tremendously important to telling the story of how the world is. This is how I think Aquinas conceives of the lesser categories. They are not basic, in the way that qualities like whiteness (or, better, heat) are basic, irreducible features of reality. But still they are so critical to the character of the world that they deserve a place in the categorial scheme.

McDaniel suggests—but then quickly retracts–the idea that privations such as holes might be a comparable case. I am perhaps more enthusiastic about this idea than he is, inasmuch as my conception of an ontologically innocent structure fits

quite well with what I take Aquinas's view of privations to be. So here is a place where I can return McDaniel's thanks for a stimulating suggestion—especially because it points toward interesting historical lines of research. So far as I have found, neither Aquinas nor any of his contemporaries compares the status of the lesser categories to the status of privations. But they do have a great deal to say about the sense in which a privation might be a fundamental explanatory principle, inasmuch as Aristotle had dubbed privation one of the three fundamental principles of natural philosophy, in the first book of his *Physics*. So there is more historical work to be done here, although it will have to wait for another day.

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