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DIVINE SIMPLICITY AND THE GRAMMAR OF GOD-TALK. COMMENTS ON HUGHES, TAPP, AND SCHÄRTL

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Abstract. Different opinions about the simplicity of God may be connected with different understandings of how abstract terms are used to name the properties which are affirmed of a being. If these terms are taken to signify parts of that being, this being is not a simple one. Thomas Aquinas, who attributes essence, existence and perfections to God, nevertheless thinks that these are not different parts of God. When essence, existence and perfections are attributed to God, they all denominate the same, the Being of the first cause. For Aquinas, this is a consequence of his way of introducing the language about God by basing it upon the philosophical ways leading to God as first cause. Awareness of this connection between Divine attributes and the arguments for God's existence is crucial for an adequate understanding of Aquinas' position.

I. INTRODUCTION AND PREVIEW

Firstly, I want to express my gratitude to those who have organized the Innsbruck *Aquinas Lecture* 2014 (and in fact turned it into a symposium on Divine simplicity, at the occasion of my 85th birthday!), and to those who contributed their papers and underwent the burden of this publication. And I am grateful for the opportunity to present my impressions of the debates at the symposium and some comments on the papers now published in print. I can imagine that the contributions might have puzzled some people in the audience by giving the impression of a mere mixture of ideas of Analytical Philosophy, Thomas and Hegel. But I think this reflects the philosophical challenge we have to meet in our days: to perceive the differences between approaches, to trace and understand the underlying common concern and in effect to find ways to do justice to these different approaches. So each of these contributions is interesting and valuable in itself, especially in that it highlights important differences between the various approaches to Divine simplicity.

II. ESSENCE AS A PROPER PART OF A BEING?

Christopher Hughes presents arguments for the simplicity of God which are also used by Aquinas.¹ Some of them seem to be straightforward. But Hughes is not ready to comply with some further consequences which Aquinas wants to draw about the identity of God's essence and existence, of God and his attributes, and about the exclusion of any contingent relational foundation of God's activities regarding creatures. These claims, so Hughes argues, should not be regarded as plausible when speaking about God, since they are at odds with other important beliefs we have about him.

¹ Christopher Hughes, "Aquinas on the Nature and Implications of Divine Simplicity", *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 10, no. 2 (2018).

In order to analyze the differences between Hughes and Aquinas, it is a helpful starting-point to trace a difference between two possible levels of understanding the use of concrete and abstract terms in predicating properties of individuals. Hughes regards both levels as adequate, and he especially adopts one of these ways in the further course of his contribution (and obviously takes its adequacy for granted). According to Hughes, the relation between our use of concrete terms F as a predicate (e.g. red, animal, wise, good) and our use of the corresponding abstract terms F -ness (e.g. redness, animalhood, wisdom, goodness) can be reconstructed in the following way:

- (1) If x is F , then x has F -ness,

and also

- (2) If x is F , the x has x 's F -ness.

I see Hughes' claim that F -ness is realized in the *individual's singular mode* (i.e., as x 's F -ness) as a move to reverse the generalization of properties. It should help to avoid the undue reification of F 's-ness — a position which was often discredited as Platonism.

The uses of such abstract terms were traditionally classified as expressing genera, differences, substantial and accidental forms, essence, existence, perfections, etc. The crucial point for the further considerations is this: Relying on textual evidence in Aquinas, Hughes takes these elements which can be predicated of an individual as examples of (proper) parts of this individual. But according to Hughes's view, an individual being which has proper parts is not a simple being any more. If, for instance, we say that an individual is human, it is said about this individual that it has its humanity or its having-its-being-human as its essence. For Hughes, essence is in this sense a proper part of that being, and the latter is therefore not a simple being. He also suggests that having proper parts is an indication that the respective being cannot be a first and non-contingent being, as it is assumed for God. Therefore, if God were simple, he could not have such an essence, because the essence is a (proper) part of a being. The same holds for perfections and the other parts of composed beings. As a consequence, Hughes cannot but see Aquinas' statements that, on the one hand, God has an essence, perfections and existence, and that, on the other, these are not seen as proper parts which God has, but as items which are identical with him and identical with each other, as problematic.

As a confirmation of his doubts, Hughes points out some of the curious consequences that would follow if we would assume, as Thomas does, that Divine simplicity could be saved by the assumption that God does not *have* an essence as his proper part but that he *is identical* with it (and that the same holds for his existence and perfections). But this would apparently admit of odd consequences which can hardly be accepted:

According to scheme (2) above we have: If God is good then God *has* God's (his) goodness, but *is not* God's goodness. Otherwise, if we were to hold that God = God's goodness, then it would follow: that which is denoted by "God" is identical with that which is denoted by "God's goodness". But, if God *is* his goodness, then from "God has God's goodness" we might infer (by the replacement of identical elements) the consequences that "God's goodness has God", that "God's goodness has God's goodness" and that "God has God".²

2 Hughes is not alone in his discomfort about the identity statements between God and his essence, existence, or perfections. Similar worries, from a more theological standpoint, are raised by R. T. Mullins, "Simply Impossible: A Case against Divine Simplicity", *Journal of Reformed Theology* 7, no. 2 (2013). Even some scholars with notorious high esteem for Aquinas share them, see, e.g. Eleonore Stump, "God's Simplicity", in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (Oxford Univ. Press, 2012); Nicholas Wolterstorff (on him, see Christian Tapp, "Utrum verum et simplex convertantur: The Simplicity of God in Aquinas and Swinburne", *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 10, no. 2 (2018), sct. 2.1) is another prominent example.

III. SIMPLICITY AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

In reaction to Hughes' position, other contributors asked whether the difference to Aquinas might perhaps vanish if one paid more attention to some views Aquinas had developed in the course of his *Five Ways* (S.Th. I, q.2, a.3) to show the existence of God. The overall soundness of these arguments is of course a notorious issue in itself, and one might personally hesitate to accept them. Hence this question will be bracketed here. But taking some side-aspects of these arguments into consideration seems to be required to gain an adequate understanding of Aquinas's position on Divine simplicity.

In his contribution, Christian Tapp recalls the significance of the fact that Thomas discusses the Divine attributes after treating the arguments for the existence of God. And indeed, attention to the structure of Aquinas's metaphysical reasoning in his discussion of the ways to show the existence of God as the first Being may contribute to an adequate understanding of his views about the attributes of this first Being.³

Thomas prefers to develop a posteriori ways to argue for the existence of a first Being, the latter being introduced as the cause for the beings in the experiential world. In his view, these beings are composed of essence and existence in a contingent, non-necessary way. Nevertheless, when these beings display certain properties, these properties do not by themselves entail their bearers' contingency, nor are the instantiations of these properties necessarily limited. Hence, the contingent existence of such beings which display actually finite instantiations of properties requires an explanation. Aquinas argues that ultimately such an explanation can only be provided by a being which is neither contingent in its existence nor finite in its properties and which is the ultimate source of the beings which are on the explanandum side — their first cause or *causa prima*. Any properties which are attributed to this first cause will therefore have to exclude signs of contingency and limitation, in order to avoid the re-opening of explanatory questions. This implies that the understanding of these attributions relies on the three components of (a) *affirming* certain perfections of the first cause, however (b) *negating any limited modes* of their contingent realization (as in finite beings), and thus, by contraposition, (c) *attributing their non-contingent mode of realization* to God as first cause.

As a consequence, an adequate understanding of the Divine attributes as non-contingent realization-modes of properties will have to keep in mind the aforementioned three-step procedure of their conceptual construction. Likewise, it is not to be expected that these attributions will be directly imaginable to us, in the way that the properties of experiential objects are. Even more: If such a property is attributed to God, the perfection expressed by the abstract term is not to be understood in the sense that God has this perfection (in a limited and contingent way, and with a difference between God and this perfection), but that God *is* this perfection, indicating the unlimited realization of this perfection by God as first cause. To take an example: Let us say that some human person is wise, that she has wisdom (to some contingent degree). God, as the last cause of the finite beings, is also wise, but he does not *have* wisdom (in a limited mode) but he *is* wisdom (in an unlimited mode).

My foregoing remarks are not more than a brief reminder to Aquinas's general methodological approach; in the questions following the *Five Ways* in the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas investigates the various attributions to the first cause in much more detail. These investigations may be seen as further contributions to motivate the identification of the (philosophically introduced) first cause with that what has been understood as "God" in the leading religions at that time; this identification is brought out in the (often-overlooked) final clauses of each of the *Five Ways*: "et hoc omnes dicunt Deum" or similar wordings.

3 Winfried Löffler recently argued for a similar view on Divine attributes and simplicity in particular in Winfried Löffler, "Two Approaches to Divine Simplicity: Reply to Anthony Kenny and Christopher Hughes", *Giornale di Metafisica*, no. 1 (2016).

IV. THE GRAMMAR OF GOD-TALK

In contemporary terms, Aquinas's considerations may be understood as a “grammar” of speaking about God (in a philosophically acceptable way). The traits of this grammar are developed in a process of reasoning which sheds light on the necessary requirements for speaking about the first cause of any being.

Aquinas makes use of the ways how in ordinary language concrete terms refer to an individual, and how a concrete predicate can signify a property which the individual *has* and which is signified by an abstract term. This way of expression reminds us that one concrete realization of a property does not exhaust all possible realizations of this property.

If it can be shown that something exists as first cause by inner necessity and possesses the supposed properties as perfections in an eminent manner, this paves the way to justify an understanding of properties as participations in some infinite realization of the respective perfections. Participation has a twofold meaning here: properties realize this perfection in a limited mode, and they owe this realization to the infinite mode of realization as their cause.

Such infinite realizations of perfections should not be regarded as free-floating ideas or mere illegitimate reifications of modes of speaking (admittedly, referring to properties by using a substantive (*F*-ness) might be seductive in that direction). This linguistic device refers to the real source of the existence of a being with such a property. On a Christian background of the theology of creation, Augustine (and Aquinas in his wake) understood *F*-nesses as intentions in the mind of a personal creator, as ideas or exemplars in his mind. But it would be a misunderstanding to interpret this as a composition of God and an additional perfection subsisting in itself: the perfection is included in the original unlimited being (*subsistens esse*) as source of all limited beings and their perfections.

Seen this way, the abstract mode of the predicate can now be seen as a legitimate way to denote the real source for the finite realizations of properties, a source which excludes contingent compositions, e.g. of essence and existence. Therefore the words “infinite” and “simple” can be seen as linguistic indicators of this special mode of the original realization of the perfections or properties in which the finite beings only participate. This unusual way of speaking about properties serves to draw our attention to the differences between the ways of signifying and the thereby intended as signified (i.e. *denoted*), and to recall the contrast to the assumptions behind the usual way of speaking about experiential objects and their properties.

V. ON THE METAPHYSICS OF PARTICIPATION

In contrast to this *a posteriori*, more reductive-explanatory way of introducing Divine simplicity in the spirit of Aquinas, it has been asked if an approach by proceeding *a priori*, in allusion to Neoplatonism's topic of the “One”, could show God's simplicity in a more direct way. According to Christian Tapp and Thomas Schärfl,⁴ however, this would seem too undifferentiated, especially when the relevance of the so-conceived simple God for the world we live in should be explicated. Paying attention to different approaches to God-talk is also helpful for considerations about the Trinity, as Schärfl explains in his interesting contribution. Nevertheless, Tapp pays attention to the Platonic background of simplicity, which leads to the further metaphysical view of understanding the individual as limited *realization of a perfection as participation*, indicating both, the character as a kind of *part* of the whole perfection, but *also as being caused* by the full realization of the perfection (*eminentiori modo*), which is marked by the usage of the abstract term together with the definite article, e.g. the goodness, the unlimited being-good as such, and the like. But if such a perfection is identical with other perfections and with God as the subsisting Being, then one has to say that although these abstract terms *signify* the infinite and subsistent perfection, *they denote* the same, God, as identical with the first cause of this perfection.

⁴ Tapp, “Utrum verum et simplex convertantur” and Thomas Schärfl, “Divine Simplicity”, both in *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 10, no. 2 (2018).

Such an approach to establish God's simplicity makes critical use of the Neoplatonic notion of the "One" as the last source of the beings, which participate in it as their exemplar and last foundation. If this idea is seen in combination with the *a posteriori* ways of arguing for the existence of God, the views of Aquinas on simplicity can be understood more adequately.

As Tapp rightly notes, Thomas points out that within a reductive-style theology we start our ways to God from the limited and diversified perfections and trace them back to their origin, their subsistent realization (Schärfl calls it a *standard object*). These perfections are then recognized as identical with the unlimited and subsistent Being as ultimate source of all perfections as modes of being, in their different finite realizations. Epistemically, however, it should be noted that these finite realizations are the starting-points of our coming to know and to name the perfections. It is the diversity of the finite beings which makes us aware of the differences in the perfections, expressed in their names. But as participations of being they can be traced back to the first Being as their common source, with which the perfections are identical. So the reductive *a posteriori* way shows why the various names of the perfections are not simply synonyms.

To summarize, let's come back to Hughes's analysis. If we affirm that individuals x have a property P , we have:

x is P x has P -ness (or, more precisely) x has x 's P -ness,

and

x has P may be understood in the following way:

P is the set of individuals which are understood as instantiations of P —or at least of the individuals which the users of the language regard as similar enough to a *stereotype* s . A more empirical approach to epistemology might render it as follows:

Extensional reading: $a \in \{x: x \in P\}$ or $a \in \{x: x \approx s\}$ with $a \in \{s \dots a \dots\}$.

Intensional reading: $a \in P$ with P as expression of the conceptual content of which a was understood as an instantiation.

Such a reconstruction does not exclude an interpretation of predication that emphasizes the participation of a perfection P :

If x is P , then x participates in its finite mode in P -ness as *standard-object*, which is the *pure form of x having P* in its infinite mode and is *identical* with the *first cause of x having P* , which has P in the *mode of coincidence with P -ness or being- P* , expressed as " x is P -ness" in difference to the usual " x has P -ness".

What is the consequence with regard to simplicity? If, e.g., a person has wisdom (or her wisdom), her wisdom is a limited realization of wisdom. This limited realization of the perfection is a proper part of that person. If God *is* wisdom, this indicates infinite realization of wisdom, which is therefore not a proper part of God or of some composition. Here I am sympathizing again with the view that in this context the words "simple" and "infinite" function as auxiliary predicates or meta-predicates which indicate the unlimited use-mode of the predicates which express properties.

Now, does God's simplicity rule out speaking of God's essence? "Essence" and "existence" denote the object of questions when we ask what a being is and if that being exists. And such questions are not only appropriate about finite beings, but obviously also with regard to God—notably, there are discussions whether God exists and what he is like. On the other hand, questions about a genus, a differentia or an accidental form would not be appropriate with regard to God because of the singularity and immutability of God, according to the *a posteriori* approaches to God.

So there is an answer to the question what kind of being he is: it may duly be answered that his essence is unlimited Being (*esse subsistens*), because this makes him what he is. This essence (Godhood,

Divinity, Divine nature) is identical with him. God does not *have* Godhood but he *is* Godhood, identical with Godhood, subsistent unlimited Being. This holds also for his other perfections: God is, e.g., not only good, but he is the (and his) goodness, which is identical with his subsistent unlimited Being.

VI. THREE SPECIAL WORRIES RAISED BY HUGHES

In what follows, I will take up the three special worries raised by Hughes. There is a similarity between them in that they can all be brought closer to a solution by paying closer attention to the fact that the Aquinas's approach to God, at least as the first cause, relies on a distinction between the “way of signifying” (the “modus significandi”, in Thomas's words) and “what is signified” (the “res significata”).

This distinction (and the problem behind it) is not exclusive to the philosophy of religion. The problem of speaking in ordinary language about objects which require special attention to their different ways of accessibility is familiar across various fields. A famous example is talking about the planet Venus by speaking of “the morning star” and “the evening star” — with different signification, but referring to the same object (at times, the latter might have been a surprising discovery). Our talk about electrons, using the planetary or probability-cloud models for atoms, provides another example: it might well cause surprise that these objects also constitute the solid experiential objects in our environment.

The difference between signification and the intended object is also crucial for an adequate talk about God. However, this distinction may be more difficult to see for someone who does not follow Thomas in his access to God, at least to God as a first cause. It may hence be worthwhile to pay attention to the “grammar of God-talk” and the thereby differentiated uses of abstract terms, which does not fully conform to their usual understanding for things in common experience.

To illustrate this, let us come back to Hughes's first worry⁵. Given that God is good, according to Hughes this can be analyzed as

- (i) God *has His goodness*

Behind that is the assumption that

If God is good, then He has (His) goodness,
according to the general scheme,

- If *a is F* then *a has (its) F-ness*.

Now, so Hughes's further reasoning, if according to Thomas God is identical with (His) goodness, it might be inferred (via substitution of identicals):

- (ii) God's goodness *has His goodness*.

But, since according to Aquinas God is identical with his perfections, there seem to follow curious consequences like:

- (iii) God's goodness has God.

However, I think that according to Thomas “God is good” has to be understood not as *having* goodness (in a mere participating mode), as this might be insinuated by the common use of language. Aquinas's grammar of God-talk rather suggests that when we are using the abstract term Goodness in its unusual function (namely when we regard Goodness as identical with God; God *is* Goodness), this usage also expresses that participated perfections are explained ontologically as participating in the unlimited realization of the perfection. This is being signified by the abstract term Goodness, whose referent is identical with God's essence — his being the subsistent Being, as source of all perfections.

⁵ Sketched above in section 2, see Hughes, “Aquinas on Divine Simplicity”, 16–17.

Similar considerations should be taken into account concerning the second and third difficulty exposed by Hughes⁶. They regard God's knowing and acting, which seem to require contingent accidental states in God:

According to Hughes, expressions which signify God's attitudes towards contingent events in the world insinuate, by their way of signifying, events in God by temporal external denomination. This seems to be required in analogy to our familiar use of such relational terms, when we use them to attribute such activities to finite human actors who learn and decide in time. Nevertheless, according to the above-described reductive way to establish the existence of a first cause, the usage of such terms does not presuppose contingent, temporal events in God. When we speak of activities of God as the first cause, we have to exclude from our understanding those aspects of the signified reality which are incompatible with a first cause — the contingency and temporality of being, as they are exemplified in the examples in our experiential world, from which we take the signification.⁷ Claims which include denominations to God as actor should draw our attention to the grammatical peculiarities of the intended object: When talking about the actions of God as the first cause, anthropomorphic interpretations of an “additional” act (which God would otherwise not have), should be excluded. When such significations occur in a religious context (and they are not unusual there), the further, complementary semantic assumptions behind this context may help to protect the pious user against misleading anthropomorphic consequences. Outside religious contexts, however, and/ or if the user has no personal access to religious thought, the intended understanding of the signified may be blocked, and this may give occasion to curious conclusions.

My previous considerations followed the ontological framework of Thomas Aquinas. However, those who look out for a way to take statements about a temporal effect of God's activity phenomenologically more seriously, might use a framework of intentional objects, methodologically abstaining from existential weight. Temporal aspects of God's actions would then be rendered as formalities or terminations in God, which ontologically are identical with his essence, but manifest it in a special way within the created, temporal world.⁸

VII. SIMPLICITY, PERFECTIONS AND TRANSCENDENTAL NOTIONS

One might perhaps muse whether simplicity could be another transcendental notion, but in our context of Divine simplicity it is helpful to keep in mind the contrast between properties of different categories and transcendental notions. Towards the end of his contribution, Tapp shows why “simple” is not a transcendental notion like “*unum*”. The reason is that “simple” adds a further determination, in so far as it excludes having proper parts or any other contingent composition. Perfections have their original realization in their identity with God, but in their manifold limited instantiations they let us distinguish the various finite beings that we encounter in our experiential world. By affirming the perfection involved

⁶ See Hughes, “Aquinas on Divine Simplicity”, 17–20 and 20–21.

⁷ A similar problem loads e.g. Jordan Howard Sobel's comment of Kurt Gödel's Ontological Argument; on that see Otto Muck, “Eigenschaften Gottes im Licht des Gödel'schen Arguments”, *Theologie und Philosophie* 67 (1992): 81–83. The suggestion to keep apart different ways of speaking about God is also developed in Otto Muck, “Grundlagen des Sprechens von Gottes Wirken im Leben von Menschen”, in *Handeln Gottes: Beiträge zur aktuellen Debatte*, ed. Roman Siebenrock and Christoph J. Amor (Herder, 2014), esp. 128–131

⁸ E.g., Joseph Donat, *Theodicea* (Kerle, 1945), n.182 (Conciliatio libertatis Dei cum immutabilitate et infinitate) speaks of intentional terminations of God's knowledge and will regarding contingent created objects, terminations which are really identical with the necessary actuality of God, but as merely intentional contents they are not adding any reality or perfection to God which otherwise would not be present. Donat is only one example from the rich, but scarcely known (neo-)scholastic discussions about different presuppositions in ontology. For the relevance of different ontological approaches see also Mark K. Spencer's recent and useful study “The Flexibility of Divine Simplicity”, *International Philosophical Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (2017). Another field where different scholastic ontologies showed their usefulness were the discussions on the notoriously difficult notion of (prime) matter; on that, see Otto Muck, “Der Begriff der materia prima bei Thomas von Aquin und seine ontologischen Voraussetzungen.”, in *Otto Muck, Rationalität und Weltanschauung. Philosophische Untersuchungen*, ed. Winfried Löffler (Tyrolia, 1999), esp. 393–399.

in the experientially familiar properties, but at the same time negating its limitations a concept of the respective “pure” perfection is formed. We refer to the latter by an abstract term and by the use of the definite article, but its full content is not immediately known from experience.

There is a further group of properties which are perfections and which are realized in the various beings according to their different levels of participation in being: the so-called transcendental notions. Even though these properties are co-extensional with being, they have different contents, and these contents correspond to the intentional objects of the highest inner operations of beings: self-reflection, cognition and voluntary affirmation are intentionally oriented towards unity, truth and goodness.

These transcendental notions are not only coextensional with the *highest* realization of being, but they can (in lesser degrees) be attributed to *any realization* of being. Participating to the same extent in being, they have at all levels of participation their characteristic expressions. So Thomas shows how the transcendental notions of being are realized in increasing intensity throughout all the layers of the experiential world, from inanimate matter up to the human mind⁹. On this latter level, the different characteristics of the transcendental notions “being one”, “true” and “good” correlate with the different potentialities of the human mind: the ability of identifying something and referring to it, the ability of cognition and the ability of voluntary affirmation (on that, see Schärtl’s paper).

This correlation insinuates that the first, highest being might also realize the highest forms of these operations: of conscious self-presence in cognition and voluntary affirmation, in eternal self-presence (the latter is God’s way of being one). This thought can even be extended and developed towards a classical Trinitarian conception, provided that the requirements of the “grammar of God-talk” are borne in mind: here again, when models taken from experience are (affirmatively) applied to God, ontological contingency has (negatively) to be excluded from the actuality of God’s nature in order to apply the model (eminently) to God (in our case, the model was the above-mentioned structure of the mind in its correlation with the transcendental notions).

Schärtl, taking up an idea of Hegel, pays attention to the fact that our human spirit is gaining subjectivity from mediating of itself (*Selbstvermittlung*, interpretation of what it is). In our human, incarnate form this happens under the conditions of a processing of empirical presentations (*conversio ad phantasmatata*). In an analogy to the human mind, gaining subjectivity by mediation of itself, showing what it is, may also be affirmed from God as a positive element of subjectivity, which is resulting from mediation of himself in personal relations¹⁰. But a negative element (which has to be excluded from God’s analogous way of gaining subjectivity) would be any ontological dependency on temporality and on created beings.

Schärtl’s contribution is an attempt to coherently integrate Trinitarianism into a theistic framework which comprises the simplicity of God. According to Schärtl, the conception of a triune and yet simple God is not bound to be inconsistent: God as absolute source of all beings, without which nothing would be possible, is by his essence/nature personal life (*unum*) in relations of light (*verum*) and love (*bonum*) and — as I would add — he opens up this life by his enlightening word to the world which he created in love.

Even if this might appear to be in correspondence with Christian faith, it should not be forgotten that it only amounts to a consistent model or a heuristic structure. Agreement to it does not relieve one from the task of identifying clues for its truth in personal investigation: the adequacy of this model to the sources of one’s reasonable personal religious orientation is of course one such clue, and its illuminating function in the challenges of life is another one.¹¹ Incidentally, such an aspect of “personal integration” of one’s philosophical views and distinctions into one’s overall life-experiences is not only relevant to topics

⁹ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra gentiles* 4, 1; *Summa Theologiae* I, 14, 1; I, 18.3.

¹⁰ On affinities between Hegel and Aquinas see Emerich Coreth, “Trinitätsdenken in neuzeitlicher Philosophie”, in *Beiträge zur Christlichen Philosophie*, ed. Christian Kanzian (Tyrolia, 1999), esp. 112f.

¹¹ On that see Otto Muck, “Assumptions of Classical Arguments for the Existence of God”, in *Proofs for the Existence of God: Contexts — Structures — Relevance*, ed. Christian Kanzian and Hajj M. Legenhausen (Innsbruck Univ. Press, 2008), esp. 67-72.

like the Trinity and other subjects in the philosophy of religion; to a certain extent it is relevant in any field of philosophy.¹²

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¹² I would like to thank Winfried Löffler and Simon Kittle for helpful comments on earlier versions of this paper.