THE METAPHYSICS OF THE INCARNATION

Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus

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For my father
Alan Cross

Preface

'Philosophy presupposes knowledge,' Cardinal Newman remarks in *The Idea of a University*; sometimes, however, philosophy is required for accurate knowledge, and a full understanding of an idea cannot be achieved without philosophical engagement. The topic that I consider here is a case in point; the history of medieval accounts of the union of divine and human in Jesus cannot be satisfactorily told without considerable philosophical analysis. The medieval debate I examine is fundamentally based on argument of a highly rigorous and deductive nature, and makes use of many concepts that derive not from theology but from metaphysics. The proper understanding of such debate requires an analytical—philosophical—consideration both of the arguments and of the concepts used. In a most basic way, keeping in mind issues from modern philosophy can often help us to understand just what is at issue in some otherwise obscure scholastic discussions. So the method I adopt is of necessity not merely historical, though my fundamental aims are such. Theologians and historians interested in the topic will need to extend to me their indulgence.

But my aim is more than merely historical; I try too to engage with the material theologically, both to show how medieval Christological debates relate to modern ones, and to show how medieval discussions may make a contribution to modern ones. To this extent, I have attempted to produce not just an exercise in the history of ideas, but also an engagement in historical theology of the kind that I believe is essential to current theological debate. Most—though not all—of the non-historical, more analytical, material is found in the Introduction, Conclusion, and section 2 of Chapter 9. Historians will find little of interest in these sections, and in tracing a route through the book may like to skip them. But I have concerns in systematic theology too, and someone interested in seeing how medieval theories might relate to modern ones could choose an altogether different route through the book, focusing on Chapters 5, 8, 10, 15, Excursus 1 and the Conclusion, and perhaps too—for a fuller view of the issues—on the Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 7, 9, section 1 of Chapter 12, and Excursus 2. There is a third route through the book, too, one that could be taken by someone interested not in medieval theology but in medieval metaphysics (specifically theories of substance, including the problem of universals and the relation to accidents). This route would include the Introduction, Parts I and IV, Chapter 6, and Excursus 2.

Obviously, medieval ways of doing theology will not suit all forms of contemporary Christology; neither will all medieval discussions be even tangentially relevant to modern ones. But many parts of medieval Christology will be of interest to any theologian who thinks that a clear understanding of the metaphysics underlying the Incarnation is an important element in understanding the doctrine as a whole—even if the modern theologian should (wrongly, in my view) come to regard medieval contributions as ultimately misguided. We learn from the mistakes of our

forebears as much as from their successes. My conclusions about the relevance of medieval Christology for modern thought might turn out to be quite surprising. My argument is—in a nutshell—that medieval understandings of the individuality of the assumed human nature in Christ can be used to buttress a very strong two-minds Christology of a sort that might be thought to be desirable by a theologian anxious to stress the autonomy and limitation of the assumed human nature. This much is just standard medieval insight. But I show too that the medieval theories can be used to develop a Christology that the medieval theologians themselves would have found undesirable—a Christology that entails divine passibility and mutability. Indeed, part of my argument is that any properly worked out doctrine of the Incarnation straightforwardly entails these divine limitations.

My choice of period is deliberate, from both an historical and a systematic point of view. Doing Christology of an analytical kind requires a firm grasp of some sophisticated metaphysical ideas. The first medievals to combine the relevant philosophical skills with a real theological interest in expounding Chalcedonian Christology are thirteenth-century: specifically, Bonaventure and Aquinas. (The twelfth-century Peter Abelard does not count here, because of his distance from Chalcedonian insights.) And the general contours of the medieval debates are, with one significant exception (which I mention in Chapter 7), established by the time of Scotus. This is not to say that no original Christology was done after Scotus; but the work tended more to the consolidation of positions already established, the proposal of novel and increasingly sophisticated arguments for and against existent theories. In any case, a study of the Christology of the high Middle Ages—on any account one of the most fecund periods in the history of theology and philosophy alike—hardly requires defence. Within the period, I have had to make choices about what to include, though I have tried to be as comprehensive as possible. To make the whole of a reasonable length, I focus on those areas which satisfy both of the following criteria: first, that there is a reasonable *variety* of Christological views, where this variety springs from conscious debates in the period; secondly, that there is specifically *Christological* debate. For example, there was a huge debate about the distinctions between the divine person and the divine essence. But this debate, while interesting in itself, did not have a great directly Christological focus. So Part II, where I look at Trinitarian issues, is relatively short, since the main debate is not Christological in nature. Equally, there was a reasonable degree of consensus about the question of the communication of properties, which I examine in Part III. This part too is, therefore, relatively short. There is one group of thinkers in my period whom I judge to be worthy only of scant attention: Dominicans after Aquinas. These thinkers—with one possible exception—have little of any originality to say, largely either following Aquinas or failing to develop their ideas with any philosophical or theological sophistication. They are minor figures, functioning at a considerably lower intellectual level than the theologians I focus on here. So there is less on Dominicans than there is on other (secular and Franciscan) theologians.

My choice of title, too, is a considered one. I make no pretensions to having written a complete account of scholastic Christology, still less of the Christology of the high Middle Ages as such. My aim is more modest: an account merely of the metaphysical aspects of the doctrine. I make very little attempt to integrate the highly abstract material I examine here into the many other aspects of medieval Christological speculation. This is largely because it is not clear to me that there are any obvious links either way; if there are, I am happy to leave it to my readers to spot them and point them out at leisure.

R. C.

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Acknowledgements

Contents

Abbreviations

Averroës
  In Metaph.   *In Libros Metaphysicorum*
Avicenna
  Metaph.   *Metaphysica (Liber de Philosophia Prima sive*
                            Scientia Divina)

Bacon, Roger
  Com. Nat.   *Communia Naturalium*
Baconthorpe, John
  In Sent.   *Quaestiones in Libros Sententiarum*
Bernard of Auvergne
  Imp.   *Impugnatio contra Godefridum de Fontanis*
Bernard of Clairvaux
  Cons.   *De Consideratione*
Bernard of Trilia
  Quod.   *Quodlibeta*
Boethius
  De Per.   *De Persona et Duabus Naturis*
  De Trin.   *De Trinitate*
  Hebd.   *Quomodo Substantiae (De Hebdomadibus)*
Bonaventure
  In Sent.   *Commentaria in Quatuor Libros Sententiarum*
Cyril of Alexandria
  Ep.   *Epistulae*
Duns Scotus
  DPP   *De Primo Principio*
  In Metaph.   *Quaestiones Subtilissimae in Libros Metaphysicorum*
                            Aristotelis
  In Periherm. (I)   *Quaestiones super Perihermeneias (I)*
  Lect.   *Lectura*
  Ord.   *Ordinatio*
  Quod.   *Quodlibetum*
  RP   *Reportatio Parisiensis*
  Th.   *Theoremata*
Durandus of Saint Pourçain
  In Sent.   *In Sententias Theologicas Petri Lombardi*
                            Commentaria

Faustus of Riez
  De Spir. Sancto   *De Spiritu Sancto*
Giles of Rome
  DCA   *De Compositione Angelorum*
  In Sent.   *In Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Quaestiones*
  Lect.   *Lectura super Libros Sententiarum*

QuEE	*Quaestiones de Esse et Essentia*
Quod.	*Quaestiones Quodlibetales*
ThCC	*Theoremata de Corpore Christi*
ThEE	*Theoremata de Esse et Essentia*

Godfrey of Fontaines

Qu. Disp.	*Quaestiones Disputatae*
Quod.	*Quaestiones Quodlibetales*

Henry of Ghent

Quod.	*Quodlibeta*
SQ	*Summa Quaestionum Ordinariarum*

Hervaeus Natalis

In Sent.	*In Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Commentaria*

Hugh of St Victor

De Sac.	*De Sacramentis Christianae Fidei*

John of Damascus

De Fide Orth.	*De Fide Orthodoxa (Expositio Fidei)*

Kilwardby, Robert

In Sent.	*Quaestiones in Libros Sententiarum*

Leontius of Jerusalem

Adv. Nest.	*Adversus Nestorianos*

Lombard, Peter

Sent.	*Sententiae in Quatuor Libros Distinctae*

Luther, Martin

Bekenntnis	*Vom Abendmahl Christi. Bekenntnis*
Daß diese Wort (1527)	*Daß diese Wort Christi ›Das ist mein leib‹ noch fest stehen (1527)*
Disp. de div. et hum. Christi (1540)	*Disputatio de Divinitate et Humanitate Christi (1540)*

Matthew of Aquasparta

QDI	*Quaestiones Disputatae de Incarnatione*

Maximus the Confessor

Opusc.	*Opuscula*

Olivi, Peter John

QI	*Quaestiones de Incarnatione*
In Sent.	*Quaestiones in Libros Sententiarum*

Peter of Tarentasia

In Sent.	*In Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Commentaria*

Raymund of Guilha

Qu.	*Quaestio de Unico Esse in Christo*

Richard of Middleton

In Sent.	*Super Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Quaestiones*
Quod.	*Quodlibeta*

Richard of St Victor
  De Trin.   *De Trinitate*
Robert of Orford
  Imp.   *Henrici Gandavensis Quaestiones Quodlibetorum*
                        Contractae et Impugnatae
Sum. fr. Alex.   *Summa Fratris Alexandri*
William of Auxerre
  Sum. Aur.   *Summa Aurea*
William of Ockham
  Rep.   *Reportatio*
William of Ware
  In Sent.   *In Sententias*

Versions, translations, and series

Alluntis and Wolter	Duns Scotus, *God and Creatures: The Quodlibetal Questions*, ed. and trans. Felix Alluntis and Allan B. Wolter (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1975).
Borgnet	Albert the Great, *Opera Omnia*, ed. S. C. A. Borgnet, 38 vols. (Paris: Ludovicus Vivès, 1890–9).
Buytaert	John of Damascus, *De Fide Orthodoxa: The Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus*, ed. Eligius M. Buytaert, Franciscan Institute Publications: Text Series, 8 (St Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute; Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts; Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1955).
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DS	Henricus Denzinger and Adolfus Schönmetzer (eds.), *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*, 36th edn. (Barcelona, Freiburg, and Rome: Herder, 1976).
Hocedez	Edgar Hocedez, *Quaestio de unico esse in Christo a Doctoribus saeculi xiii disputata*, Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana. Textus et Documenta. Series Theologica 14 (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1933).
Kotter	Bonifatius Kotter, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, vol. 2: *Expositio fidei*, Patristische Texte und Studien, 12 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1973).

Macken   Henry of Ghent, *Opera Omnia*, ed. R. Macken
                                and others, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy,
                                De Wulf-Mansion Centre, Series 2 (Leuven:
                                Leuven University Press; Leiden: Brill, 1979–).

OPh   Duns Scotus, *Opera Philosophica*, ed. Girard. J.
                                Etzkorn and others (St Bonaventure, NY:
                                Franciscan Institute, 1997–).

Op. Theol.   Aquinas, *Opuscula Theologica*, ed. R. A. Verardo,
                                R. M. Spiazzi, and M. Calcaterra, 2 vols. (Turin
                                and Rome: Marietti, 1954).

OT   William of Ockham, *Opera Theologica*, ed.
                                Iuvenalis Lalor and others, 10 vols. (St
                                Bonaventure, NY: St Bonaventure University,
                                1967–86).

Paris   Henry of Ghent, *Quodlibeta*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1518).

PB   Les Philosophes Belges

PG   Migne, Patrologia Graeca

PL   Migne, Patrologia Latina

Qu. Disp.   Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae*, ed. R. M. Spiazzi
                                and others, 2 vols. (Turin and Rome: Marietti,
                                1949).

Trapp   Damasus, Trapp, 'Aegidii Romani de Doctrina
                                Modorum', *Angelicum*, 12 (1935), 449–501.

Spade   Paul Vincent Spade (ed. and trans.), *Five Texts on
                                the Mediaeval Problem of Universals: Porphyry,
                                Boethius, Abelard, Duns Scotus, Ockham*
                                (Indianapolis, IN, and Cambridge: Hackett, 1994).

Vatican   Duns Scotus, *Opera Omnia*, ed. C. Balić and
                                others (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950–).

WA   Martin Luther, *Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*
                                (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus, 1884–).

Wadding   Duns Scotus, *Opera Omnia*, ed. Luke Wadding,
                                12 vols. (Lyons, 1639).

                                Manuscript sigla

MS A   Assisi, Biblioteca Communale, MS 137 (Duns
                                Scotus, *Ordinatio*).

MS M$_1$ Merton College, Oxford, MS 103 (William of
                                Ware, *In Sententias*).

MS M$_2$ Merton College, Oxford, MS 104 (William of
                                Ware, *In Sententias*).

MS V	Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 1438 (William of Ware, *In Sententias*).
[ ]	Indicate deleted material in transcriptions from manuscripts, and added material in all other contexts.
<>	Indicate added material in transcriptions from manuscripts.
{}	Surround editorial comments in transcriptions from manuscripts.

Frequently cited principles

(**AF**) For any accidental property φ-ness and any substance x which exemplifies φ-ness,
  (1) φ-ness depends on x
  (2) φ-ness informs x
  (3) φ-ness is a truth-maker, such that x is φ.

(**AI**) For any accidental property φ-ness and any substance x which exemplifies φ-ness,
  (1) The φ-ness of x is a universal
  (2) The φ-ness of x is individuated by x, and is not numerically distinct from x
  (3) The φ-ness of x is individuated by x, but is numerically distinct from x
  (4) The φ-ness of x is individuated independently of x, and is numerically distinct from x.

(**AU**) For accidental whole φx and any substance x included in φx,
  (1) It is not the case that φx is an object
  (2) φx is an object identical with x
  (3) φx is an object numerically distinct from x.

(**CF**) For any concrete part p and any whole w of which p is an integral part,
  (1) p depends on w
  (2) p actualizes passive potency in w
  (3) (having-)p is a truth-maker, such that w has p.

(**E**) If a form F-ness is that in virtue of which something is F, then F-ness must itself exist.

(**E$_r$**) If a form F-ness is that in virtue of which something is F, then F-ness must itself be a thing.

(**F**) If a form F-ness is that in virtue of which something acts (in manner f), then F-ness must act (in manner f).

Introduction

THE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM

SUBSTANCE AND NATURE

The seventh [cause of Absurd conclusions], [I ascribe] to names that signifie nothing; but are taken up, and learned by rote from the Schooles, as *hypostatical, transubstantiate, consubstantiate, eternal-Now*, and the like canting of Schoole-men.[1]

Hobbes's anti-scholastic rhetoric here doubtless reveals his ignorance of the Patristic origin of the phrase 'union in/according to hypostasis',[2] or 'hypostatic union'[3] (the union of divine and human natures in the second person of the Trinity). But thinkers of considerably greater metaphysical sophistication than Hobbes have found medieval accounts of the hypostatic union wanting. The problem, as seen through modern eyes, lies in the common medieval claim that we should understand the human nature united to the second person of the Trinity to be a thing or (in some sense) a substance. In this chapter, I will try to explain how this medieval understanding arose, and how it relates to the standard expression of orthodox Christology in the creed of the Council of Chalcedon (451). I will also try to show that there may be good—or at any rate defensible—philosophical reasons for wanting to make the sort of claim about the assumed nature that the medievals accepted.

1. THE MEDIEVAL PROBLEM

According to the Council of Chalcedon, the divine and human natures of Christ are united 'in a single person and subsistent being (hypostasis)'.[4] The claim that the

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[1] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 35.

[2] For 'union according to hypostasis', see e.g. Cyril of Alexandria, *Ep.* 4 (PG, lxxvii. 45B); for 'union in hypostasis', see e.g. the creed of the Council of Chalcedon, in Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (London: Sheed and Ward; Georgetown, Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), i. 86ᵃ.

[3] See e.g. Leontius of Jerusalem, *Adv. Nest.* 1. 50 (PG, lxxxvi. 1512C–D); 3. 5 (PG, lxxxvi. 1617A); Maximus the Confessor, *Opusc.* (PG, xci. 152B).

[4] Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, i. 86. Strangely, only Aquinas of all of my thinkers explicitly cites the Council's creed: see Ignaz Backes, 'Die christologische Problematik der Hochscholastik und ihre Beziehung zu Chalkedon', in A. Grillmeier and H. Bacht (eds.), *Das Konzil von Chalkedon: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 3 vols. (Würzburg: Echter-Verlag, 1953), 923–39. Nevertheless, it is clear that the overall thrust of the Council's teaching was known to the medieval writers I examine, mediated through the accounts of this teaching found in Boethius and John of Damascus.

two natures are united in one hypostasis is contrasted, in the Creed, with something like the claim that the two natures are mixed together into one new nature. This seems to suggest that there is some sort of ontological distinction between a hypostasis and a nature. The medievals generally understood this distinction to be consistent with the assertion that the human nature is a substance, or something like a substance. This sort of assertion is problematic because an obvious way of distinguishing a person from a nature is by claiming that a person—and not a nature—is a substance. Let me explain what I mean.

According to C. J. F. Williams, we should understand the Chalcedonian distinction between hypostasis and nature as an instance of Aristotle's distinction between first and second substance. Williams holds that this latter distinction is not

between different kinds of *things*, however different (as between seraphim and chrysan-themums, for instance), but between different ways we have of *talking* about things. . . . The fact that sometimes we have to use a proper name and sometimes a common noun when we talk about them reflects, not that there are two sorts of substance, first and second, but that there are two sorts of statement, general and particular.[5]

Applying this to the distinction between hypostasis and nature, Williams notes:

If *first* and *second* substance are, as I have indicated, formal concepts and *person* and *nature* are to be explicated in these terms, *person* and *nature* will also be formal concepts. . . . To say that Christ is a person is to say the word 'Christ' is a proper name. To say that Christ is one person, or, more misleadingly, that there is one person in Christ, is to say that in all the singular statements we make with 'Christ' as subject he to whom we refer is the same.[6]

On this sort of analysis, the medieval account of Christ's human nature as a kind of first substance entails a radical misunderstanding of the distinction between first and second substance. On the medieval account, both persons and natures are first substances; persons are just first substances *of a certain type*—namely, subsistent first substances. Williams summarizes:

First substances have something over and above substantial existence, something which mere second substances lack: this we may call 'subsistence'. . . . [S]ince it is the distinction between *nature* and *person* which is all-important for Christology, the great question with which the Scholastics were faced was, 'What is subsistence?'.[7]

    [5] C. J. F. Williams, 'A Programme for Christology', *Religious Studies*, 3 (1967), 513–24, pp. 520–1.
    [6] Williams, 'A Programme for Christology', 522. Similar accounts can be found in commentators of a more theological stamp too. For example, Bernard Lonergan claims: 'The distinction between persons and nature [in the decree of Chalcedon] is added to state what is one and the same and what are not one and the same. The person is one and the same; the natures are not one and the same. While later developments put persons and natures in many further contexts, the context of Chalcedon needs no more than *heuristic concepts*' (Bernard Lonergan, 'The Origins of Christian Realism', in *A Second Collection*, ed. William F. J. Ryan and Bernard J. Tyrrell (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974), 239–61, p. 259: my italics). Kenneth Surin makes a similar point: 'The "classical" christological formulations function—"negatively"—as "meta-linguistic" or "grammatical" principles, and not as ontological "descriptions" of the "mind" or "will" of Christ' (review of Thomas V. Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), in *Theology*, 90 (1987), 53–5, p. 55).
    [7] Williams, 'A Programme for Christology', 517. Note that Williams is thinking of a nature as a second substance here.

On Williams's account, this exercise—which I discuss in detail in Part IV—is wholly misguided and wrong-headed, springing as it does from an initial misunderstanding of the distinction between first and second substance:

What will follow for the theology of the Incarnation [once it is seen that person and nature are formal concepts]? In the first place, it will be seen to be utterly misguided to conduct the operation as though what had to be done was to prevent something called subsistence from attaching itself to something called an individual human nature. . . . [Christ's having a human nature] does not mean that there is something named by the word 'man' in the statement 'Christ is a man' which is other than, or falls short of being, Christ himself.[8] . . . Christological speculation must proceed . . . not by experimenting to discover, if I may be so crude, how many skins of the onion one must peel to remove the personality without destroying the nature. The Scholastics tackled the problem and their courage in doing so is to be applauded. . . . That they no more than Aristotle recognised that the distinction [between *person* and *nature*, *first* and *second* substance] was second-order, that the concepts involved were formal concepts, may have led them into pointless subtleties. But theirs is a mistake which we can correct.[9]

Williams's analysis of the language of the Chalcedonian creed is agnostic about the existence of a distinction *in re* between hypostases and natures. An orthodox Chalcedonian could remain agnostic about this. Chalcedonianism is thus consistent with extreme anti-realism ('anti-realism' in the sense of 'idealism', not 'nominalism'). The extreme anti-realist would have to reduce the Chalcedonian definition to a set of linguistic rules. But we do not need to do this; indeed, as soon as we adopt any sort of realist stance (whether moderate or extreme) on the status of the sorts of entity that we presuppose in our ordinary language we are likely to want to talk about an ontological content to the Chalcedonian formula. And the way we spell out the ontological content will be in part driven by philosophical analyses of reality —though a theological concern to remain faithful to the basic Chalcedonian claim that there exists someone who is both (a) God and a man might end up placing some constraints on the nature of the philosophical strategies we feel free to adopt. So I do not think that it is sufficient to think of the Chalcedonian decree as providing *no more* than formal concepts or linguistic rules. We could indeed begin from an analysis of hypostasis and nature as merely formal concepts, but conclude that these formal concepts do indeed—under particular sorts of analysis—have some purchase on reality.[10]

Something like this is just what the medievals did.[11] The sort of analysis that the medievals proposed—for philosophical reasons quite independent of theology—is

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[8] Williams, 'A Programme for Christology', 522.   [9] Ibid., 523–4.

[10] Williams and Lonergan are clearly in favour of pursuing some strategy of this sort; it is not so clear to me that Surin is not in fact simply an anti-realist of some kind on the whole Christological question. But if he is so, he will need to explain why this sort of anti-realism is desirable.

[11] In this they are not alone. The Church Fathers of the fifth, sixth, and seventh centuries interpreted Chalcedon in something like this way too: see e.g. my 'Individual Natures in the Christology of Leontius of Byzantium', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, forthcoming. Reformation debates, too, start from the presupposition that Christ's human nature is an individual, individuated in some sense

of a sort that might lead an unsympathetic commentator to conclude that they did indeed hold that reality was such that general predicate terms turn out in some sense to name individuals: individual natures. The conclusion would not be wholly accurate, since—as we shall see in Chapter 8 below—none of the medieval thinkers I examine here believes that a predicate term refers to, or names, an individual. Nevertheless, at least some of them believe that, for certain subject–predicate sentences (specifically, those where *sense* of the predicate term (not: the reference) is a non-essential property) a necessary condition for the truth of the sentence is that the substance referred to by the subject stands in a relation of 'having' to an individual of the sort that the predicate term signifies. If 'Socrates is white' is true, then there will be in reality an individual whiteness which Socrates has.

What ways are there of understanding the possible ontological commitments of someone who accepts the Chalcedonian creed in some sort of realist sense? One way is to divide reality into two clearly delineated categories, and assign hypostases to one of these categories and natures to the other. And one natural way of doing this—perhaps the most obvious way of doing this—is to distinguish between an individual (hypostasis) on the one hand and a universal (nature) on the other. The point of this move is to provide some explicit content to the first substance–second substance distinction. Richard Swinburne for example claims:

Christ was divine and human and so he had a divine and human nature. But human nature, as Aristotle and, I suspect, almost everyone else up to the fifth century AD understood it, is a universal.[12]

This (universal) nature can be said to be exemplified by—united to—the individual divine hypostasis, in the sense that the divine person begins to possess the properties necessary for membership of human-kind. For Swinburne, the medieval problem lies in failing to categorize Christ's human nature correctly as a universal. Particulars on this sort of theory are likely to be bare particulars (since every property is a universal).

We could however accept some sort of two-category analysis of reality without accepting the existence of real, extra-mental, universals. We could, for example, accept an irreducible distinction between things and properties even without supposing that properties are universals. Universality would not be the distinguishing mark of properties. Both things and properties would be equally individual. On this sort

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independently of the person of the Word. Given the close reliance of reformers of all stamps on medieval Christology, this is hardly a surprise. I hope to explore some of the debates in Reformation Christology in a future study.

[12] Richard Swinburne, *The Christian God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 212. I am not sure that Swinburne is quite right in ascribing to the early Christians such a firm grasp of nature language, and even less sure that we should unequivocally saddle Aristotle with the (unelucidated) claim that a nature is a universal. On a standard reading, it was precisely their failure to make such a distinction in the Christological context that led to the heresies of Apollinaris and Nestorius. On this reading—which looks to me to be correct—the Chalcedonian settlement was a direct result of Cyril of Alexandria's insight that the Cappadocian theology of the Trinity—where a divine person is an individual and the divine substance an (immanent) universal—could be utilized in Christology too.

of view, the difference could be spelt out in terms of (say) dependence—things (substances) are the subjects of dependent properties or qualities, where the mark of such qualities is not universality (they can be as individual or particular as the substances they depend upon), but the impossibility of their existing apart from a substance: substances exist independently, qualities do not. This view, where the two basic categories of reality are individual substances and individual qualities, is usually associated with Locke. As for the universalist, it is tempting—as Locke did—to identify substances on this sort of view with bare particulars.[13] And this possibility yields two different versions of the sort of theory I am spelling out here. The first would make mere independence the mark of a substance; the second would claim that this sort of independence entails lack of qualitative content. (The reason why it is so tempting to make this second move, from independence to lack of qualitative content, is that it is very hard to spell out the sort of independence that is supposed on this view to be the mark of substance. Clearly, material substances are causally dependent on any number of other such substances for their existence without this entailing that material substances are qualities of these other substances. So dependence has to be defined in terms of qualities: dependent in the way that qualities are dependent. And this makes it tempting to dissociate any qualitative content from substance considered as independent.)

Clearly, both of these two-category strategies—the Lockean one and the universalist one—allow for a clear understanding of Chalcedon. On the universalist view, Christ is substance who exemplifies the universal *human nature*, just as I exemplify the universal *human nature*. On the second view, Christ is a substance who is the subject of a necessarily dependent human nature, just as I am a substance that is the subject of a necessarily dependent human nature.

Could we accept the basic Chalcedonian insight if we were to adopt a different sort of analysis altogether—say one which believed there to be only one basic category in reality? I believe so, and I will try to show this in the next section. But at least one commentator has argued forcibly against this possibility, taking as his starting point Ockham's claim that the only things which exist are concrete objects. Having noted that, for Ockham, the abstract noun 'humanity' refers to a concrete individual composed of body and soul, Peter Geach infers a Christologically undesirable consequence:

This doctrine is not nonsense but thinly disguised Nestorian heresy. Ockham thinks, as the Nestorians thought, that what was assumed to some sort of union with the Word of God was a human creature existing independently of such union. He merely writes 'humanitas' where an outspoken Nestorian would write 'homo'. . . . And though he can claim that his definition of 'homo' [viz. 'homo' is 'either a humanity or a *suppositum* sustaining a humanity'[14]]

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[13] See e.g. John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 2. 23. 2 (ed. Peter H. Nidditch, The Clarendon Edition of the Works of John Locke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 295–6).

[14] Ockham *ap*. Peter Geach, 'Logic in Metaphysics and Theology', in *id*., *Logic Matters* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 289–327, p. 296. A *suppositum* is any ultimate ontological subject of properties—examples are a human being, a dog, (probably) a tree, (perhaps) a puddle.

makes it unequivocally true of Christ and other men, this too is a mere subterfuge; for Christ is not *verus homo* as we are, if 'homo' applied to him and us only because one half of the disjunctive definition applies to him and the other half to us.[15]

I shall try to argue in the rest of this chapter that, although none of the medievals I examine here would subscribe to the view that there is just one category of things, nevertheless the categories that (for philosophical reasons) the medievals want to carve the world into do not allow them to associate person and nature, in the Christological context, with any of the two category analyses that we have yet encountered, and that, in some ways, one-category analyses of reality—whether reducing everything to things or to properties—most closely parallel the sort of analysis that the medievals want to offer of matters Christological.

Put very bluntly, my claim is that the medievals tended to see Christ's human nature as an individual in the genus of substance: and thus that the way they distinguish person from nature will be such that—put crudely—persons are just natures of a particular kind. After all, on the face of it being an individual in the genus of substance is just the sort of thing that should count as a person or *suppositum*. Before I try to show in more detail how medieval philosophical analyses of reality lead to this sort of conclusion, I would like to present some preliminary evidence that the medievals do indeed tend to see Christ's human nature as an individual in the genus of substance. I will give most of my evidence for the medieval view of Christ's human nature below in Chapter 1 and Part IV. But it is worth spending a little time considering some preliminary data.

The thinker who is least equivocal on the whole matter is Duns Scotus. Most of the material comes from the late *Quodlibet*. But Scotus makes it clear in the slightly earlier *Ordinatio* too: '. . . the human nature, which is a substance . . .'.[16] The *Quodlibet* is explicit about this. Scotus holds that Christ's human nature is a subject of accidents —not an ultimate subject, admittedly, but nevertheless a substance that supports its accidents, such that the substance itself is supported by a further underlying substance or *suppositum* (where '*suppositum*' is the technical term for ultimate subject):

(0.1) While the dependence of an accident [of Christ] is somehow upon the singular substance [viz. Christ's human nature] it only ends with the singular as incommunicable [viz. the (divine) *suppositum*]. For if it depends on the singular substance as communicable, since this substance is the being of that to which it is communicated, the dependence only ends with the latter.[17]

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[15] Geach, 'Logic in Metaphysics and Theology', 296–7.

[16] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 5 (*Opera Omnia*, ed. Luke Wadding, 12 vols. (Lyons, 1639), vii. 10).

[17] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 13 (Wadding, xii. 503; ET Duns Scotus, *God and Creatures: The Quodlibetal Questions*, ed. and trans. Felix Alluntis and Allan B. Wolter (Princeton and London: Princeton University Press, 1975), 429 (n. 19. 41)); see also *Quod.* 19, nn. 12, 14, 15, 23 (Wadding, xii. 502, 503–4, 506, 512; Alluntis and Wolter, 428 (n. 19. 38), 429–30 (n. 19. 42), 431 (n. 19. 48), 440 (n. 19. 84)). Note that these dependence relations are transitive, an analysis that Scotus derives from his account of the relation of many substantial forms in one pluriformed composite (on this, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 66–8). Of course, there is nothing about a plurality of forms metaphysic that entails the sort of view of Christ's human

Aquinas is less assured about this—partly, I suspect, because he is reluctant to espouse the underlying Christology that Scotus is later so happy with. (I shall try to present evidence for this analysis of Aquinas as I proceed.) But there are huge *philosophical* pressures on Aquinas to make the sort of move that Scotus later makes so unequivocally. Aquinas, in fact, seems to operate with two quite distinct under-standings of nature, each of which entails a rather different Christology from the other.[18] On the one hand, Aquinas is sometimes quite clear that we should under-stand a nature not to be a substance, or an existent thing in the universe, but just to be that in virtue of which a *suppositum* is the sort of thing it is:

(0.2) 'Person' signifies something other than 'nature'. For 'nature' signifies 'the essence of a species, which the definition signifies'.[19] . . . Nature and *suppositum* are really distinct, not as two wholly separate things, but since the nature of the species is itself included in the *suppositum* and certain other things are added which are beyond the nature of the species. Whence, a *suppositum* is signified as a whole, having a nature as a formal part, perfective of it.[20]

(0.3) *Esse* belongs to hypostasis and to nature: to hypostasis as to that which has *esse* [i.e. as to that which exists], and to nature as to that by which something has *esse*, for nature is said in the manner of form, which is called a being from the fact that by it something is—as some-thing is white by whiteness, and someone is a human being by whiteness.[21]

On this sort of account, a *suppositum*–nature composite is only one thing: a *suppositum* of a certain kind, a *suppositum* that belongs to a certain kind. In the Incarnation, the second person of the Trinity is a *suppositum* who belongs to human kind. Talk of a nature here is just a way of talking about the kind-membership of a *suppositum*.

On the other hand, as I shall try to show later in this Introduction, there are some powerful reasons why this account of a nature, if applied to the Incarnation, does not sit easily with certain other philosophical claims that Aquinas makes. First, Aquinas believes that the natures and accidents of *supposita* are themselves indi-viduals. This claim is in itself harmless: an individual nature can be that in virtue of which a *suppositum* belongs to a certain kind. But the individuality of the nature on this sort of account ought to be parasitic on the individuality of the *suppositum*. If it is not (and we shall see below that Aquinas is explicit in stating that it is not), then the nature is an individual in its own right; and a (substantial) nature that is an individual in its own right looks to be about as strong a candidate for

nature that Scotus is committed to. See also Matthew of Aquasparta, *QDI* 9 ad 12 (2nd edn., Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi, 2 (Quaracchi: Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae, 1957), 190): 'Humana natura in Christo vere est substantia'; William of Ware, *In Sent.* 171 (MS V, fo. 115vb): 'Verbum . . . assumpsit substantiam primam.'

[18] I do not mean to suggest that Aquinas consciously uses two different understandings of 'nature'; quite the contrary, he seems unaware of the equivocation: on this, see Michael Gorman, 'Uses of the Person–Nature Distinction in Thomas's Christology', *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales*, 67 (2000), 58–79.

[19] Aristotle, *Ph.* 2. 1 (193^{a}30–1).

[20] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 2 c (ed. Petrus Caramello, 3 vols. (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1952–6), iii/1. 12^b–13^a).

[21] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 17. 2 c (iii/1. 111^b).

(first) substancehood—or something like substancehood—as we could hope to find:

(0.4) Not every individual in the genus of substance—even in rational nature—counts as a person, but only that which exists in itself, and not that which exists in some other more perfect thing. . . . Therefore, although [Christ's] human nature is a certain individual in the genus of substance, it does not have proper personhood, because it does not exist separately in itself, but rather in some more perfect thing—viz. the person of the Word.[22]

On this account, unlike Aquinas's first account, the assumed nature, though not a substance, is something like a substance (it is an individual in the genus of substance), the sort of thing of which it makes sense to ask why it is not a person or *suppositum*. Thus, in (0.4), Aquinas explicitly speaks of personhood (subsistence) as the sort of thing that an individual in the genus of substance (a nature) might have or lack. On this account, personhood is a *property* of an individual nature. This does not dovetail very neatly with (0.2), because in (0.2) Aquinas claims that an individual nature is a property of a person (property in the sense that in (0.2) a *suppositum* appears to be constituted by its individual nature and certain other features of it: a *suppositum* in short appears to be something like a collection of properties and parts).[23]

In line with this, Aquinas often speaks of the human nature of Christ as a bearer of accidents. For example, as I will show in Chapter 10, Aquinas is happy to claim that the human mind of Christ has various sorts of human knowledge. All of this is very different from the first sort of account we find in Aquinas, on which the only bearer of properties is the (divine) *suppositum*. On this first account, it would make no sense to speak—as Scotus later does—of a series of subjects ordered transitively, such that if accident A depends on substance S_1, and substance S_1 depends on *suppositum* S_2, then A depends on S_2. But Aquinas's second sort of account is more or less consonant with this sort of strategy, though as I show in Chapter 10, Aquinas's preferred way of dealing with the relation between the Word and his concrete humanity is to think of the humanity as an *instrument* of the Word's divinity. As I will show in Chapter 1, theological (rather than philosophical) pressures sometimes force Aquinas to argue similarly about accidents too—that they can (under certain circumstances) be individuals in their own right.

The point of all this is that the medievals tend more or less explicitly to think of Christ's human nature as a substance, or as something like a substance. In the rest of this Introduction I shall try to show why the medieval thinkers I examine

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[22] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 2 ad 3 (iii/1. 13ᵇ); see also *ST* 1. 29. 1 ad 2 (i/1. 156ᵃ). We should note that this latter text makes it quite clear that, although it as an individual in the genus of substance, Christ's human nature fails to be a substance—just as it fails to be a *suppositum*—on the grounds that all primary substances are *supposita*.

[23] I do not mean to suggest that there is no sense in which (0.2) and (0.4) can be made consistent with each other. But as I shall show in Ch. 12, Aquinas develops two rather different accounts of the relation between *suppositum* and nature, one that appears more in line with (0.2), and one that appears more in line with (0.4).

here found themselves philosophically constrained to offer the sorts of analysis they did. A central feature of all the criticisms of medieval Christological analysis just considered is that the problems encountered by the medievals all stem from the problem of distinguishing two basic ontological categories—particulars and universals. More precisely, medieval problems spring either from a failure altogether to analyse reality in terms of these two categories (Geach's criticism of Ockham), or from a failure to apply this distinction in quite the right way. These are of course *philosophical* worries, and it seems to me that both of them could be questioned (though as we shall see, almost all the thinkers I discuss in the body of my text would be happy to deny that reality should be analysed in terms of just one category).

2. SUBSTANCE, NATURE, AND INDIVIDUATION: SOME MEDIEVAL ANALYSES

In this section I want to consider a topic the Christological development of which will occupy much of the rest of the book. The easiest way into the topic seems to me to be to consider more deeply Geach's claim that a one-category analysis of reality leads directly to Nestorianism. Geach is presumably motivated to make this criticism because he believes that all attempts to solve the subsistence problem turn out to be unacceptably ad hoc, and thus to be 'thinly disguised Nestorianism'. For Geach, there are thus theological (as well as philosophical) reasons for rejecting a one-category analysis of reality. As I shall show in Part IV below, however, it is easy enough to show that a Christological analysis in terms of a relation between two individuals (the second person of the Trinity and the assumed human nature) has various satisfactory ways of avoiding Nestorianism. Philosophically, too, it is not obvious that a two-category metaphysics is in fact the best analytical tool for giving an account of what there is. One-category analyses are simpler (i.e. involve fewer sorts of entity), and it is at least arguable that they can explain as much as two-category analyses. It is easy enough to show that a reasonable version of a one-category analysis generates the subsistence problem identified by Williams. This is no criticism of a one-category analysis; it is, however, a criticism of Williams's rejection of medieval Christology merely on the grounds of its generating a subsistence problem.

The most common contemporary form of one-category analysis supposes that the world is made up of tropes:

Tropes are instances of properties, like the whiteness of a certain white patch, or Don's humanity: an entity as distinct from Bill's humanity as it is from the particular Don and the universal humanity. And for trope theorists these tropes are not complexes, or a particular patch or person with a universal, whiteness or humanity. On the contrary: trope are simples, of which particulars and universals are complexes. Don is just a complex of . . . 'concurrent'

tropes (Don's humanity, his shapes, his size, etc.), while humanity is just a complex of all
the tropes exactly similar to the trope that is Don's humanity.[24]

Tropes bear most likeness in the world of medieval philosophy to the individual
substances and accidents defended by Abelard and Ockham.[25] As usually under-
stood, trope theories are nominalist in the sense required by writers on medieval
philosophy: they involve a denial of the existence of universals. (They are not nom-
inalist in more modern senses, since they do not deny the existence of *properties*:
indeed, they suppose that *only* properties exist.) There are at least three forms of
trope theory, one of which is a form of two-category analysis.[26] A *bundle* theory holds
that substances are just collections of tropes. Keith Campbell summarizes: 'An ordin-
ary object, a concrete particular, is a total group of compresent tropes. It is by being
a complete group that it monopolizes its place as ordinary objects are ordinarily
thought to do.'[27] A *substrate* theory claims that

there is something more to a substance than a bundle or collection of tropes: there is a fur-
ther something, the substratum, which both bears the tropes (and hence accounts for their
dependent status), and also accounts for the unity of the class of tropes borne, since they
are all borne by one and the same substratum.[28]

The substrate theory is evidently a version of a two-category analysis of reality, since
it posits both tropes and substrata, where substrata are not tropes. The third sort
of trope theory—the *nuclear* theory—involves the claim that a substance includes
an essential nucleus of tropes—its individual essence—and, in a second stage, fur-
ther non-essential tropes that 'may be considered as dependent on the nucleus as
a whole as bearer'.[29]

Suppose we agree that there are good reasons for wanting to preserve a dis-
tinction between essential and accidental properties. (Perhaps we believe that the
distinction is presupposed to talk of natural kinds.) If we do this, it is easy enough
to see that the nuclear theory of tropes will generate precisely the subsistence prob-
lem for a Chalcedonian Christology that the medievals identified. The assumed
human nature includes all the compresent tropes jointly necessary for that nature's
being an independent substance; so we have to find a criterion or criteria to explain
why this substance fails to be a person or *suppositum*; we have to find a reason why
the presence of all the compresent tropes jointly necessary for a nature's being an

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[24] D. H. Mellor and Alex Oliver (eds.), *Properties*, Oxford Readings in Philosophy (Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 1997), 17.

[25] For Abelard, see Christopher J. Martin, 'The Logic of the *Nominales*, or the Rise and Fall of imposs-
ible *positio*', *Vivarium*, 30 (1992), 110–26, p. 112: Abelard 'may be characterised in contemporary terms
as a transferable trope anti-realist'; also John Marenbon, *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard* (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 1997), 114, 122–3, 197, 201. For Ockham, see Stephen Lahey, 'William
of Ockham and Trope Nominalism', *Franciscan Studies*, 55 (1998), 105–20.

[26] For this analysis, see Peter Simons, 'Particulars in Particular Clothing: Three Trope Theories of
Substance', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 54 (1994), 553–75.

[27] Keith Campbell, *Abstract Particulars* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 21, quoted in Simons, 'Particulars
in Particular Clothing', 558.

[28] Simons, 'Particulars in Particular Clothing', 565.   [29] Ibid., 567–8.

independent substance is not also sufficient for the nature's being an independent substance. More crudely: on this analysis a subsistent is a particular of a certain sort—a subsistent sort of particular.

Of course, decisions about the desirability of various metaphysical views are in principle philosophical matters, not theological.[30] And as I pointed out above, almost none of the thinkers I examine in detail here would have accepted a one-category analysis of reality. So, equivalently, they would all have wanted to reject a bundle theory of tropes (even though, as we shall see, there are some commonalities between their accounts and bundle theories). Such trope theories—like many forms of nominalism—usually appeal to exact resemblance to explain kind-membership: an object x belongs to a kind F only if x (exactly) resembles all other F-like objects. Ockham, for example, appeals to this sort of account.[31] Scotus—who alone of the thirteenth-century schoolmen explicitly discusses the philosophical inadequacies of nominalism—expressly argues that resemblance cannot explain kind-membership. Two objects x and y resemble each other in a certain respect only if there is some feature of x and y—their nature—that is really shared by them.[32]

Only two of the thinkers I examine here came close to accepting a nominalist theory: Peter John Olivi and William of Ware.[33] And neither of these thinkers drew any direct Christological consequences from their acceptance of such a theory. The remaining thinkers, however, all accepted some version of realism on the question of universals. Accepting such an analysis, would, on the face of it, allow the medievals to deal with Christological problems fairly straightforwardly. Accepting some form of realism would on the face of it allow the medievals, just as it allows Swinburne, to see the human nature as a universal. On this account we could think of a particular substance (the second person of the Trinity) exemplifying (universal) human nature.

[30] An exception might arise if a proposed metaphysical system turns out to have heterodox theological consequences—much as Geach (wrongly) believes about nominalism. But, as I hope to make clear here, solutions to the subsistence problem entail that, at least Christologically, there is nothing inherently undesirable about nominalism. For various different defences of the Christological respectability of Ockham's nominalism, see Marilyn McCord Adams, 'Relations, Inherence, and Subsistence; or, Was Ockham a Nestorian in Christology', *Nous*, 16 (1982), 62–75; Alfred J. Freddoso, 'Logic, Ontology and Ockham's Christology', *New Scholasticism*, 57 (1983), 293–330; and my 'Nominalism and the Christology of William of Ockham', *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*, 68 (1991), 126–56.

[31] See Ockham, *Rep*. 3. 10 (*Opera Theologica*, ed. Iuvenalis Lalor and others, 10 vols. (St Bonaventure, NY: St Bonaventure University, 1967–86), vi. 335–7), discussed in Marilyn McCord Adams, *William Ockham*, 2 vols., Publications in Medieval Studies, 26 (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987), i. 117–20.

[32] Scotus, *Ord*. 2. 3. 1. 1, n. 18 (*Opera Omnia*, ed. C. Balić and others (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950–), vii. 398; ET in Paul Vincent Spade (ed. and trans.), *Five Texts on the Mediaeval Problem of Universals: Porphyry, Boethius, Abelard, Duns Scotus, Ockham* (Indianapolis, IN, and Cambridge: Hackett, 1994), 61), referring to Aristotle, *Metaph*. Δ. 15 (1021ᵃ9–12). For other arguments, see Scotus, *Ord*. 2. 3. 1. 1, nn. 7–28 (Vatican, vii. 394–402; Spade, 58–63).

[33] For William, see Gedeon Gál, 'Gulielmi de Ware, O. F. M. Doctrina Philosophica per Summa Capita Proposita', *Franciscan Studies*, 14 (1954), 155–80, 265–92, pp. 269–70; for Olivi, see *In Sent*. 2. 13 (ed. Bernardus Jansen, 3 vols., Bibliotheca Franciscana Medii Aevi, 4–6 (Quaracchi: Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae, 1922–6), i. 253).

But the medievals reject this sort of account. Perhaps the best place to start is with Scotus, whose ideas on the question of substance are by far the most fully developed. As we shall see in the body of my text below, not all my thinkers would be happy with Scotus's explicit reification of Christ's human nature. But, as I have tried to show above, even the thinker who most wants to avoid this reification—namely, Aquinas—finds it hard to do so. In a moment I will show why Aquinas has this difficulty, a difficulty which seems to have solidly philosophical origins—though admittedly philosophical origins different from the ones I am about to discuss in Scotus.

Let me begin with an account of angelic (immaterial) substance in Scotus, since the introduction of matter into the account brings with it further complexities that are extrinsic to the theory of substance as such. For Scotus, the substance of an angel is identified as including a particularizing component (haecceity or thisness) and a nature (angelic, archangelic, seraphic, or whatever) that is in itself common but which is made particular in each instance of it. The common nature is the subject of a haecceity, such that the possession of a haecceity is what it is for the nature to be instantiated (or at least, one way in which a nature can be instantiated). As instantiated in many particulars, the nature is made to be numerically many. I will explain this more fully in a moment.[34] The haecceity is inseparable from the nature (they are, in Scotus's jargon, really identical). But the haecceity and common nature are in some sense different components, irreducible the one to the other (formally distinct, in Scotus's jargon).[35]

There are two crucial differences between Scotus's account and that of more Platonically-minded modern writers such as Swinburne. Of these, the first is relatively simple: the individuating component here is not identified as the substance, or even as the ultimate subject of the substance's properties. I do not know a place where Scotus argues for this, though it is clear from what he says that he thinks of the whole nature–haecceity complex as the substance, and as the subject of the

[34] Scotus, *Ord.* 2. 3. 1. 7, n. 237 (Vatican, vii. 504–5). Referring to the common nature and the haecceity as 'components' of a substance is not entirely accurate—I talk in this way in the text here merely to avoid introducing unnecessary complexities.

[35] Roughly two realities—two aspects of one thing—are formally distinct if and only if they are both (a) really identical and (b) susceptible of definition independently of each other. The clearest account of the issue is Marilyn McCord Adams, 'Universals in the Early Fourteenth Century', in Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 411–39, p. 415, referring to Scotus, *Lect.* 1. 2. 2. 1–4, n. 275 (Vatican, xvi. 216); *Ord.* 1. 2. 2. 1–4, n. 403 (Vatican, ii. 356–7). Scotus's criterion for real identity is real inseparability. In fact, real inseparability (such that the real separation of two or more realities is *logically impossible*) is *necessary and sufficient* for real identity: see Scotus, *Quod.* 3, n. 15 (Wadding, xii. 81; AW, 73–4 (n. 3. 46)) for the *sufficiency* of inseparability for real identity; and Scotus, *Ord.* 2. 1. 4–5, n. 200 (Vatican, vii. 101) for the *necessity* of inseparability for real identity. Scotus thinks of his formal distinction, at least in the *Ordinatio*, as a form of real distinction, in the sense that it is extra-mental; what distinguishes it from a fully-fledged real distinction (which Scotus sometimes calls an 'actual' real distinction) is that the formal distinction holds not between things but between necessary (and therefore inseparable) properties: see *Ord.* 1. 2. 2. 1–4, nn. 400–3 (Vatican, ii. 355–7).

substance's non-essential properties.[36] Aristotelianism about substances requires that substances have essential properties, and (standardly) that they belong to kinds. Bare particulars can do neither of these things.

The second difference from modern accounts is more significant, and goes at least some of the way towards explaining why the medievals I examine here spelt Christological claims out in the way they did. According to standard (modern and Platonic) theories of universals, a universal is a one-of-many: one and the same entity existing in different objects, or one and the same entity to which different objects have a certain relation. The one-of-many theory commits its followers to the following claim about universals, neatly summarized by Christopher Hughes in relation to the property 'whiteness':

[T]he expressions 'the whiteness of this egg' and 'the whiteness of that (distinct) egg' . . . pick out *the same thing* by means of different descriptions.[37]

Whiteness here is an *immanent* universal: (numerically) one object repeated in each exemplification. Scotus knows of this strongly realist theory, and ascribes it variously—and rather misleadingly—to Roger Bacon and Godfrey of Fontaines.[38]

Scotus rejects immanent universals in the case of created natures, because he thinks that substances whose nature is an immanent universal will for some of their accidents share numerically the same accidents. And this is false:

(0.5) This opinion posits that that one substance, under many accidents, will be the whole substance of all individuals, and then it will be both singular and this substance of this thing [*x*] and in another thing [*y*] than this thing [*x*]. It will also follow that the same thing will simultaneously possess many quantitative dimensions of the same kind; and it will do this naturally, since numerically one and the same substance is under these [viz. *x*'s] dimensions and other [viz. *y*'s] dimensions.[39]

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[36] For a useful discussion of the difference between Scotus's haecceity and more standard bare particular theories, see Woosuk Park, 'Haecceitas and the Bare Particular', *Review of Metaphysics*, 44 (1990), 375–97; for example, with reference to Gustav Bergmann's bare particular: 'Scotus would complain that Bergmann unnecessarily gives the bare particular a double role, that is, the role of principle of individuation and that of the possessor or the supporter of qualities', Park, 'Haecceitas and the Bare Particular', 396.

[37] Christopher Hughes, *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God: An Investigation in Aquinas' Philosophical Theology*, Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 11 (my italics).

[38] See Scotus, *In Metaph.* 7. 18, nn. 17–20 (*Opera Philosophica*, ed. Girard. J. Etzkorn and others (St Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1997–), iv. 342–3), referring to Bacon, *Com. Nat.* 2. 10 (*Opera hactenus inedita Rogeri Baconi*, ed. R. Steele and others, 16 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905–60), ii. 102). For the attribution to Godfrey of Fontaines, see Scotus, *Ord.* 2. 3. 1. 5–6, nn. 148–54 (Vatican, vii. 466–8; Spade, 97–8), referring to Godfrey, *Quod.* 7. 5 (*Les Quodlibets cinq, six et sept de Godefroid de Fontaines*, ed. M. de Wulf and J. Hoffmans, Les Philosophes Belges, Textes et études, 3 (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1914), pp. 319, 324–5).

[39] Scotus, *RP* 2. 12. 5, n. 3 (Wadding, xi. 326ᵇ); note that here Scotus ascribes the view he is rejecting to Plato, at least as Plato's view is presented by Aristotle; see also Scotus, *Ord.* 2. 3. 1. 1, nn. 37 and 41 (Vatican, vii. 406–7, 409–10; Spade, 65–7). The mistake is sorted out at *In Metaph.* 7. 18, n. 13 (*OPh*, iv. 340).

If the universal is some sort of substance—a one-of-many—then counterpossibly it will possess the accidents of two different substances. So there cannot be immanent universals, ones-of-many, at least in the case of those *supposita* that possess accidents of the same kind as other *supposita* of the same kind such that the accidents are numerically distinct from each other.[40]

Scotus replaces such immanent universals—ones-of-many—with Scotist *common natures*—natures that are *divided* amongst their instantiations such that the instantiated nature is itself made numerically many on its instantiation. For example, Scotus believes that there are as many humanities as there are human beings. The common nature is an object that in itself has not numerical unity but some sort of 'less-than-numerical' unity.[41] It exists in each of the particulars that possesses it, but each such particular is a subjective *part* of the nature (there is some sense in which no particular is the whole nature). Scotus believes that a being one or more particulars is a property of this common nature: it is a property had by the nature in virtue of its union with one or more individuating haecceities or thisnesses:

(0.6) Community belongs to the nature outside the intellect, and so does singularity. Community belongs to the nature from itself, while singularity belongs to the nature through something in the thing that contracts the nature.[42]

The common nature, in Scotus's account, has some being of its own, prior to its instantiation. I do not mean that Scotus's theory of common natures entails that common natures can exist separately from their instantiations; rather, as instantiated, the nature has a two-fold being: its own intrinsic being, making it not nothing, and a further being as instantiated:

(0.7) Just as a nature, according to its being, is not *of itself* universal but rather universality is *accidental* to the nature according to its primary aspect according to which it is an object, so too in the external thing where the nature is together with singularity, the nature is not *of itself* determined to singularity, but is naturally prior to the aspect that contracts it to that singularity. . . . [Less-than-numerical unity] is a proper attribute of the nature according to its primary entity.[43]

Scotus's motivation in ascribing some being—entity—to the common nature in itself is presumably that, if it had no such being, it would be nothing at all, and thus could not be the subject of a haecceity. This might appear to be merely some version of nominalism. But it is not, because Scotus is explicit that the common nature is real—extra-mental. The trick, as far as Scotus's account is concerned, is to hold that there can be a real object that in itself lacks numerical unity. Thus, the unity of the common nature is much tighter than merely aggregative unity. There is no sense in which any part of an aggregative whole really exhibits all of the features

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[40] I discuss this argument in detail in my 'Divisibility, Communicability, and Predicability in Duns Scotus's Theories of the Common Nature', forthcoming.
[41] Scotus, *Ord.* 2. 3. 1. 1, nn. 30 and 34 (Vatican, vii. 402, 404; Spade, 63–4).
[42] Scotus, *Ord.* 2. 3. 1. 1, n. 42 (Vatican, vii. 410; Spade, 67).
[43] Scotus, *Ord.* 2. 3. 1. 1, n. 34 (Vatican, vii. 404; Spade, 64).

of that extensional whole. The common nature in itself does not admit of an extensional definition at all.

Aquinas accepts a precursor to Scotus's doctrine of the common nature. But he claims that a common nature in itself lacks any being at all:

(0.8) It is false to say that the essence of man as such has being in this individual: if it belonged to man as man to be in this individual it would never exist outside the individual. On the other hand, if it belonged to man as man not to exist in this individual, human nature would never exist in it. It is true to say, however, that it does not belong to man as man to exist in this or that individual, or in the soul. So it is clear that the nature of man, considered absolutely, abstracts from every being, but in such a way that it prescinds from no one of them; and it is the nature considered in this way that we attribute to all individuals.[44]

Again, this is not a version of nominalism. The common nature, for Aquinas, is certainly an extramental object of thought, and it is the subject of individuality. But it lacks being in itself, gaining it either as it is instantiated (i.e. being one or more individuals) or as it is conceptualized (i.e. being universal).[45] Whether we prefer Aquinas's theory or Scotus's here will depend on our intuitions about the degree of being that something requires in order for it to be real. On Aquinas's view, its reality is somehow prior to its being; for Scotus, the two coincide.

Aquinas explicitly ties his theory of common natures into his account of the hypostatic union. He holds that even if a common nature had some sort of existence in itself (perhaps in the way that Plato suggested), the assumption of such a nature would not result in the Word's being an individual human being:

(0.9) If human nature were subsistent in this way [viz. as having existence (esse) in itself outside matter], it would not be appropriate that it be assumed by the Word of God . . . because only common and universal operations could be attributed to the common nature, according to which a human being neither merits nor demerits . . . ; [and] because a nature existing in this way is intelligible, but not sensible. The Son, however, assumed a human nature so that he could be seen visible to human beings.[46]

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[44] Aquinas, De Ente 3. 4 (ed. M.-D. Roland-Gosselin, Bibliothèque Thomiste, 8 (Kain, Belgium: Revue des Sciences Philosophiques at Théologiques, 1926), 26; ET Armand Maurer, 2nd edn., Medieval Sources in Translation, 1 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1983), 47). For a useful discussion of the similarities between Aquinas and Scotus here, see Joseph Owens, 'Common Nature: A Point of Comparison between Thomistic and Scotistic Metaphysics', Mediaeval Studies, 19 (1957), 1–14.

[45] Aquinas's claim that there is a real composition between essence and existence is relevant in this context, because at least some of the ways in which Aquinas spells out this theory make it look as though what he has in mind is the inherence of existence in a real but otherwise non-existent common essence: see e.g. passage (12.7) below. Unfortunately, as I show in Ch. 12 below, Aquinas usually spells out the composition between essence and existence in terms of a composition between individual essence and existence. This is wasteful and probably incoherent: the real but otherwise non-existent common nature is individuated by something other than its existence, and it is this individual essence whose existence is explained by its possession of an existence that is sufficiently distinct from it to enter into composition with it. As I shall argue in Ch. 12, there is no reason to suppose that an individual essence requires the addition of existence: having an individual essence is just what it is to exist. In order to explain the existence of an individual essence, we do not need to appeal to a further principle—existence—over and above the essence.

[46] Aquinas, ST 3. 3. 4 c (iii/1. 34b).

The assumption of common human nature would result in the Word's being *every*
human being.[47]

The medievals have another reason too for denying that the human nature united
to the Word is merely a common nature rather than an individual nature. The reason
has to do with the accounts of individuation accepted by the medievals I examine
here. To understand the arguments I am about to present, we need to keep in mind
an important distinction, one which perhaps most distances medieval discussions
from modern ones. The distinction is between the individuation of a *person* (*sup-
positum*) and the individuation of a *nature* or a *property*. Suppose we think that a
suppositum is a particular that underlies properties (a particular that is, *in itself*, bare).
We could give an account of the individuation of this *suppositum*, either by claim-
ing that the *suppositum* is in itself an individual, or by claiming that it is somehow
individuated by its properties. In the second case, its properties could be individuals
or universals. If the properties are universals, what would individuate the *suppositum*
would be the unique bundling of the universals it exemplifies. If the properties are
individuals, then the individuation of the *suppositum* is parasitic on the individua-
tion of the properties. And, about these properties, we could further claim either
that each property is an individual in itself, or that the properties themselves require
an explanation for their individuation.

Medieval accounts are on the whole rather different from this, since none of the
thinkers supposes that a *suppositum* is the sort of thing that underlies its nature or
properties. One possible view is that a substance is just a collection of universal prop-
erties: hence the claim that, in the final analysis, *place* would individuate bodies:
whatever universals two bodies can share, they cannot both occupy the same place
at the same time.[48] But scholastic views are very different from this. The school-
men tend to assume that a *suppositum* is not a collection of universals, but rather
just an individual(ized) nature (or that a *suppositum* includes an individualized nature
and other principles or components such as *esse*).[49] This is just a consequence of
the moderate realism that the medievals I examine here hold to on the question of
universals. (I try to show elsewhere that there might be good reasons for wanting
to hold this version of realism; I do not have space to discuss the matter here.[50])

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[47] See Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 2 ad 3 (iii/1. 13ᵇ).
[48] See e.g. Boethius, *De Trin.* 1 (*The Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. H. F.
Stewart, E. K. Rand, and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University
Press; London: William Heinemann, 1978), 6/7–8/9).
[49] I include this parenthetical observation since, as we will see in Part IV, Aquinas tends to distin-
guish natures from *supposita* in terms of a *suppositum*'s including *esse* as a component. Other writers hold
that natures are distinguished from *supposita* in terms of the addition of a relation, or even merely in
terms of a negative or privative feature. These are answers to the subsistence problem, of course; it should
already be clear how deeply committed the medievals are—for philosophical reasons—to the sorts of
analysis that generate the sorts of difficulties that Williams highlights in his *Programme for Christology*.
But if good philosophy can generate a subsistence problem, then the medievals were right to see that a
solution to this problem needs to be found.
[50] See my 'Divisibility, Communicability, and Predicability in Duns Scotus's Theories of the
Common Nature'.

Supposita do not underlie their natures or properties as Locke's mysterious substances are supposed to; they are not substrates (except in the restricted sense that they underlie their accidents or non-essential properties). So the problem of individuation, for the medieval thinkers I deal with here, is largely a problem about the individuation of natures or properties. Most of the thinkers (though, as we shall see below, not all) accepted that accidental properties are individuated by their *supposita* or underlying subjects. But substantial natures cannot be individuated in this way, since a *suppositum* is fundamentally nothing other than an individual nature (perhaps along with other principles or components). No medieval account of the individuation of a substantial nature appeals to the individuation of a *suppositum* to explain the individuation of the nature—quite the contrary, the individuation of a *suppositum* is standardly explained by the individuation of a nature. That is to say, the medievals all offer explanations of individuation without appealing to *supposita*. So long as the medievals have good reasons for these accounts of individuation, they will have good reason for thinking of the assumed nature as an individual in its own right, as it were.[51]

This allows us to see why the medieval thinkers I examine here would not regard their rejection of any sort of one-category analysis as enabling them to give a clear analysis of Christology merely in terms of things and necessarily dependent properties, or of particulars and universals, where things/particulars correspond to Chalcedon's hypostases, and properties/universals correspond to Chalcedon's natures. Put another way, the analysis will allow us to see why the medievals generally want to think of the human nature of Christ as some sort of *substance* (albeit a substance that fails to be a *suppositum*).

Given the medieval claim that individuation centres on natures and properties, not on *supposita* as such, there are broadly two sorts of reason that push the medievals towards seeing Christ's human nature as an individual (and not as a universal). The first sort of reason has to do with features proper to the Incarnation itself—features, in other words, that result directly from the anomalous metaphysical position of an assumed substantial nature. The second sort of reason has to do with general features of certain accounts of what it is to be a property. Some of the medievals—most notably Scotus—believe that all properties are like substances in the sense of being possibly independent self-individuated particulars. *A fortiori*, then,

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[51] To do otherwise—perhaps by claiming that Christ's human nature is individuated by its union to the divine *suppositum*—would be to allow that the individuation of Christ's human nature has no parallels to the individuation of any other created nature. And the medievals would rightly have regarded this as inconsistent with the Chalcedonian claim that Christ is the same in kind as all other human beings. As far as I know only Albert the Great explicitly claims that the second person of the Trinity individuates the human nature: see Albert, *In Sent.* 3. 6. C. 3. ad 1 (*Opera Omnia*, ed. S. C. A. Borgnet, 38 vols. (Paris: Vivès, 1890–9), xxviii. 129ᵇ); also 3. 5. B. 12 in cont. 2 (Borgnet, xxviii. 111ᵇ), ad 1 (Borgnet, xxviii. 111ᵇ), ad 3 (Borgnet, xxviii. 112ᵃ ᵇ), ad 4 (Borgnet, xxviii. 112ᵇ); 3. 5. D. 15 sol. (Borgnet, xxviii. 115ᵃ ᵇ); see too Albert, *ST* 1. 10. 44. 2 ad 14 (*Opera Omnia* (Monasterium Westfalorum: Aschendorff, 1951–), xxxiv/1. 352ᵃ). Albert's way of looking at the matter has the consequence—that he himself appears to be aware of—that natures, whether Christ's or anyone else's, are simply not the sort of thing that could, under the relevant circumstances, subsist. A nature is necessarily an *id quo*, as it were.

Christ's human nature, as something like a property of Christ, is a possibly inde-
pendent self-individuated particular.

Let me look at this second sort of suggestion first. Scotus spends some time
trying to show that the individuating feature to which a common substantial nature
is united must be somehow proper to the substantial nature, and that the indi-
viduating feature to which a common accidental nature is united must be somehow
proper to the accidental nature. Since the Word's human nature is a non-essential
property of the Word, the application of Scotus's argument here to the hypostatic
union is obvious, though it is not an application that Scotus ever makes explicit.
The basic idea is that each category, substantial and accidental, consists of its own
proper hierarchy from most general (the category as such) to most particular (indi-
vidual instances of the category). These (most particular) individuals must include
individuating features that somehow belong properly to the category itself, and
not to any other category. The idea is that a common nature is properly located
in a category: substance as such is in the category of substance; quantity as such
is in the category of quantity; quality as such (whiteness, wisdom, and so on) is
properly in the category of quality. But if we are to explain how this common nature
is united to an individuating feature, we cannot do so in terms of its union to an
individuating feature extrinsic to the category to which the nature belongs. There
is, Scotus argues, no way in which such an extrinsic individuating feature could
have the relevant causal effect on the common nature required for the nature to be
'contracted' to the individuating feature.[52]

Scotus does not really offer a compelling reason in favour of his position. But I
think that one can be found. A haecceity is in some sense a bare particular. There
is nothing about a haecceity as such that on the face of it makes it apt to indi-
viduate these sorts of properties (accidents) rather than those sorts of properties
(substantial natures). As bare, it has no qualitative (quidditative) features at all, and *a
fortiori* no necessary quidditative features. But the relation between the essential prop-
erties of a substance and the substance's haecceity must be intrinsic to the haecceity
in a way that the haecceity's relation to its substance's accidental properties is not.
(If it were not, then it would be hard to see how the properties could be acciden-
tal to the substance individuated by the haecceity.) But one way of achieving this
intrinsicity distinction is to place an *extrinsic* block on the capacity of a substance's
haecceity to individuate its accidents. And such an extrinsic block can be effected
by positing that the individuation of the substance's accidents is achieved by some-
thing intrinsic to the accidents, and extrinsic to the substance as such.

The result of this sort of view is that a substance's accidents are themselves indi-
viduals, individuated by their own intrinsic haecceity. The application to the case

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[52] Scotus, *Ord.* 2. 3. 1. 4, n. 92 (Vatican, vii. 435–6; Spade, 80–1), Spade's italics. Scotus's remarks
here are specifically directed at the individuation of substances, but the context makes it clear that his
remarks apply equally to accidents. Scotus has some other arguments too, some of which I discuss in
my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 97–100. See also texts (1.18) and (1.19) for further relevant quotation
from Scotus.

of the hypostatic union is obvious. The common human nature has to be united to a particularizing feature that is proper to its categorial classification (i.e. as a non-essential nature—something like an accident).[53] So the nature cannot be united, as common, to the individuating feature of the divine person. If it were, there would be no appropriate metaphysical distinction between the human nature and the divine person's essential properties. So the nature must have its own intrinsic haecceity, and thus be an individual in itself. And a substantial nature that is an individual in itself is a strong candidate for being a substance.

This theory clearly entails that there are (at least) two basic categories to reality. But these categories are not things and properties, but haecceities and natures. And an analysis along these lines does not, for reasons outlined, dovetail in neatly with the Chalcedonian distinction between persons and natures. There is no sense in which a Scotist common nature is a Chalcedonian nature, and no sense in which a Scotist haecceity is a Chalcedonian person. For Scotus, persons and natures, things and properties, are alike in including their own proper haecceities.[54] In Part IV I will outline how Scotus and others go about distinguishing subsistent natures—*supposita*—from non-subsistent natures such as Christ's assumed human nature. But the point I am trying to make here is that at least one of my thinkers—namely, Scotus—could have provided a powerful argument in favour of his enthusiastic reification of Christ's human nature, an argument that would require an answer from someone unsympathetic to this Christological move.

There is another way to establish that the human nature is an individual in itself, independently of its dependence on the divine person. This way involves considering the human nature of Christ specifically in its proper circumstance of being assumed to the second person of the Trinity. Thus, unlike the way I just proposed, it does not rely on an analogy between the human nature and an accident or property (though, as I shall argue in Part I below, there is nothing objectionable about such an analogy if properly understood). The argument that I am about to propose does, however, rely on the claim that the presence of matter is (in some sense) sufficient for the individuation of a human nature.

Suppose that the individuation of a material nature is sufficiently explained (logically, not causally)[55] by the individuation of that nature's *matter*. Among the thinkers I consider here, Aquinas, Giles of Rome, Godfrey of Fontaines, Hervaeus Natalis, and Duns Scotus all accept that there is a sense in which the individuation

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[53] For Scotus's explicit acceptance of the analogy between the human nature and an accident, see Ch. 5 below.

[54] Properties in the sense of substantial natures and accidents; not in the sense of the essential features and necessary *propria* of these natures and accidents. Note that Scotus is unequivocal in claiming that accidents are things: see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 95–6.

[55] Logically sufficient, not causally sufficient, since the individuation relations I am trying to describe are asymmetrical and transitive, but such that the individuation of objects later in this chain of formal causes requires additional causal explanation—the haecceity of matter, for example, is not sufficient for the individuation of form in the sense that form's individuation is explained by its own haecceity—even though the presence of the form's haecceity is necessitated by the haecceity of the matter.

of a material substance is sufficiently explained by the identity of its matter.[56] This theory of individuation entails that the assumed human nature is individuated independently of its union to the divine person. (Thus, as I noted above, the individuation of natures was generally detached by the medievals from the individuation of *supposita*.) Aquinas, for example, makes this point explicitly:

(0.10) If human nature were subsistent in this way [viz. as having existence (*esse*) in itself outside matter], it would not be appropriate that it be assumed by the Word of God . . . because this assumption has a person as its end term. *But it is against the idea of a common form that it is individuated in its person in this way.*[57]

Compare too the Dominican Thomist Hervaeus Natalis:

(0.11) The assumed nature does not have numerical unity from the assuming *suppositum*, formally speaking, but from its indivision according to quantity.[58]

To understand the point, we shall need to extend the preliminary discussion of substance, given above in terms of angelic substance, to include material substance. Again, the clearest account can be found in Scotus, so I examine his theory here.

The theory involves certain added difficulties over and above the basic haecceity theory I discussed a moment ago. These difficulties spring from the fact that, in whatever ways material substance is composite, *one* of these ways is that a material substance includes matter and form as *parts*.[59] These parts—matter and form—are themselves individualized parts of an individualized material substance. Both matter and form would in principle admit of description (at least for Scotus), and to this extent could be considered as something like more-or-less simple bundles of (common) matter-like properties and (common) form-like properties, coupled with respective individuating features (haecceities).[60] (I say '*more or less* simple bundles'

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[56] This is put very bluntly. For the most recent discussion of the issue in Aquinas, Giles of Rome, and Godfrey of Fontaines, see the essays by Joseph Owens ('Thomas Aquinas (b. ca. 1225; d. 1274)'), Linda Peterson ('Cardinal Cajetan (Thomas De Vio) (b. 1468; d. 1534) and Giles of Rome (b. ca. 1243/47; d. 1316)'), and John F. Wippel ('Godfrey of Fontaines (b. ca. 1250; d. 1306/09), Peter of Auvergne (d. 1303), and John Baconthorpe (d. 1345/48)'), in Jorge J. E. Gracia (ed.), *Individuation in Scholasticism: The Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation*, SUNY Series in Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 173–94, 221–56, 431–56. Godfrey believes that quantity, rather than matter as such, has the explanatory role in individuation: see too the discussion in John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines: A Study in Late Thirteenth-Century Philosophy* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 359–64. But this clarification does not affect my broad point here. I defend in a moment, as an account of Scotus's thought on the topic, the claim that matter in some sense individuates material substances.

[57] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 4. 4 c (iii/1. 34ᵇ), my italics. Aquinas, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 2. 5 ad 1, n. 145 (ed. P. Mandonnet and M. F. Moos, 4 vols. (Paris: Lethielleux, 1929–47), iii. 45) is perhaps even more explicit: 'I say that the nature derives from one and the same [principle] its being individuated and its being divided. So, since the principle of individuation is matter, in some way under determined dimensions, the human nature [of Christ] is both divided and multiplied by the division of matter.'

[58] Hervaeus, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 2. 2 ((Paris, 1647), 288ᵃ).

[59] See e.g. Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 8. 1. 1, n. 7 (Vatican, iv. 154–5).

[60] On this, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 19–22, 34–41. Scotus believes that this complex account of the individuation of matter and form is necessary to explain the physical phenomena of generation and corruption.

because I do not want to give the impression that there is anything accidental or aggregative about either matter or form.) The union of an individual chunk of matter and an individual form itself results in an individual substance whose properties are explained by the properties of the matter and form that compose it. This substance, analogously to the matter and form that compose it, is itself individuated by its own haecceity—it is thus a complex of common nature + haecceity.[61]

This does not look much like an account of individuation by matter. But I have argued at length elsewhere that Scotus does in fact hold that the individuation of a material substance x of kind φ is sufficiently explained (logically, not causally) by the individuation of φx's matter.[62] The idea is that, for a material substance x of kind φ, the identity of φx's matter is logically sufficient for the identity of φx's form, and of φx itself. Presumably, underlying Scotus's acceptance of a principle like this is the indiscernibility of successive substances of the same kind whose forms inhere in the same lump of matter.

There is an obvious objection to the Christological application of all this, as found in for example (0.10). Surely, an objector could argue, it might be true that the individuation of a material substance of such and such a kind is explained by the identity of its matter. But the human nature of Christ is not a substance. It is a nature of the second person of the Trinity, and it is this *person* who is the substance. Presumably, however, Scotus accepts—for the sorts of reason already considered—that the individuation of a material nature of such and such a kind is sufficiently explained by the individuation of that nature's matter. And there would be a good reason for him to do this. The matter of Christ's body is derived from his mother.[63] The matter persists through the generative process, and the individuation of the matter is wholly natural. (It does not, for example, derive from the divine person.) So the assumed human nature includes its own naturally individuated matter. But the presence of such matter, along with the presence of a form of the relevant (human) kind is sufficient for the presence of an individuated human substance, composed of the individual matter + the (consequentially) individualized human form. So Christ's human nature is composed of (naturally) individualized matter and human form. It is thus an individual nature in its own right: that is, it is a substance.

Aquinas, as we have seen, expressly links his account of individuation by matter to the Christological problem. Aquinas's account of individuation by matter is very different from the Scotist one that I have just been examining. According to Aquinas, 'signed' matter (matter + extension) individuates form (and consequently

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[61] See my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 89.

[62] See my 'Identity, Origin, and Persistence in Duns Scotus's Physics', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 16 (1999), 1–18, pp. 9–15. I always use 'φx' as referring expression.

[63] Assuming the Virgin Birth, though one lesson of medieval discussions—as I shall point out in the Conclusion, below—is that this doctrine makes no difference to the metaphysics of the Incarnation. (If the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is accepted, it must be so for other reasons than the metaphysics of the Incarnation; if it is rejected, it must likewise be so for reasons other than the metaphysics of the Incarnation.) If we deny the Virgin Birth, then the matter will of course derive from both human parents.

the individual substance composed of matter + form).[64] On this account, it is easy
to see why the assumed nature is individual in some manner independently of its
suppositum. It is united to individual matter in some sense independently of its
suppositum.[65]

Of course, we might object, the matter of Christ's human nature is as much a
part of his *suppositum* as his nature is.[66] Could we not then, at least for Aquinas,
appeal to the divine *suppositum*—as including matter—to explain the individuation
of Christ's human nature?[67] (This strategy would allow us to block the claim that
Christ's human nature is self-individuated, and thus reduce the temptation to think
of it as something that might under the right circumstances subsist.) I do not think,
however, that this strategy will be successful. It is *only* in virtue of its possession
of human nature that the divine *suppositum* includes matter. So we cannot appeal
to the *suppositum*'s possession of matter to explain the individuation of his human
nature without putting the (metaphysical) cart before the (metaphysical) horse. For
the human nature to be individuated by the divine *suppositum*'s matter requires that
the divine *suppositum*'s possession of matter is not itself explained by its possession
of the human nature that the *suppositum* is supposed to be individuating.

Whether right or wrong, I have tried to show that the medievals were not simple-
minded when thinking that the assumed human nature had to be individual, and
that their reasons would certainly require a response. I hope that I have also shown
that a position similar to the medievals' would result from adopting some kind
of trope theory of substances—specifically the nuclear trope theory. Certain forms
of mereological theory of the Incarnation will also generate the same difficulty.
The human parts or properties of the divine person, considered in themselves as a
compresent set, will on the face of it be sufficient to form an independent human
person; so such a theory of the Incarnation will require some sort of account of the
subsistence problem I have been talking about here.

It is of course no surprise too that the medieval theories generate similar
Christological problems to the sorts of problems that would be raised by nuclear
trope theories. The sorts of account of substance that I have been considering here
are like nuclear trope theories in the sense that a substance is an individual nature.
(They are different from a nuclear trope theory in the sense that the nature really
is individual*ized*, not just individual: the nature really is itself an instance of a

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[64] On this, see Owens, 'Thomas Aquinas', 181–6.

[65] As Scotus notes, Aquinas's account is aporetic. Aquinas believes that matter as such (common mat-
ter) is included in the (common/universal) essence of a material substance: Aquinas, *ST* 1. 75. 4 c (i/1.
353b); see Scotus, *Ord*. 2. 3. 1. 5–6, n. 139 (Vatican, vii. 462–3; Spade, 95). So matter itself requires
individuation, and as such cannot in itself have an ultimately explanatory role in individuation: see my
The Physics of Duns Scotus, 20–1. For Scotus, the individuation of matter is of course explained by the
haecceity intrinsic in a lump of matter.

[66] As we shall see in Ch. 12 below (especially passage (12.1)), Aquinas insists that a *suppositum* includes
its natures, accidents, and matter as *parts*.

[67] For reasons that should by now be evident, Scotus, for better or worse, would be unable to make
this move. But of course Scotus explicitly affirms something that Aquinas in effect distances himself
from, namely that the human nature of Christ is a substance.

common shared nature.) Like the nuclear trope theory, these views have similarit-
ies to both bundle theories and substrate theories. Like bundle theories, medieval
theories of substance do not involve any *underlying* subject of all other properties.[68]
A substance just is an individualized nature. Like substrate theories, the substance
is a substrate-like subject for some of its properties—namely, its accidents.[69]

Before I leave this topic, it is perhaps worth thinking of the other reasons that
the medievals had for adopting the sort of Christological position that I have been
examining here. One sort of reason I have in mind is an argument from *authority*.
When focusing on the individuality of the assumed nature, one author in particular
—indeed one passage from one author—is invariably quoted. The author is John
of Damascus, and the passage is the following:

(0.12) The Word assumed an individual human nature (*in atomo*).[70]

Scotus seems to believe that this passage from Damascus is sufficient for accept-
ing that the human nature is an individual, and hence a substance—though it might
be that Scotus thought this was so obvious that it did not need argument. Under-
lying the passage in John of Damascus are doubtless elements of earlier Patristic
tradition. For example, ascribing certain sorts of property to the assumed nature—
properties such as suffering—entails that the nature is an individual substance or
property-bearer; and the Council of Chalcedon—at least in the *Tome* of Leo which
it canonized—certainly appears to ascribe things—proper activities—to the human
nature.[71] And important for the thirteenth-century theologians is the further fact
that twelfth-century theologians almost unanimously accept that the assumed

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[68] Matter on some medieval accounts looks a bit as though it would be some sort of underlying
subject. But many medievals believed that matter was far from 'bare' (see for example my *The Physics
of Duns Scotus*, 17–23); and in any case, I do not know any thinker who would have been happy to
identify matter with substance.

[69] I deal with this in detail in the next chapter.

[70] John of Damascus, *De Fide Orth.* 55 (ed. Bonifatius Kotter (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter,
1973), 131; Latin translation ed. Eligius M. Buytaert, Franciscan Institute Publications: Text Series, 8
(St Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute; Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts; Paderborn: F. Schöningh,
1955), 203–4). For quotation of this passage in medieval authors, see e.g. Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 5. 1.
4 fund. 3 (*Opera Omnia*, 10 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae, 1882–1902), iii. 127ª);
Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 2 ad 3 (iii/1. 13ª); Giles of Rome, *Quod.* 6. 3 ((Louvain, 1646), 361ª ᵇ); William of
Ware, 171 (MS V, fo. 115ᵛᵇ): 'Secundum intentionem Philosophi et naturaliter loquendo, omnis sub-
stantia prima est suppositum. Non ista est verum secundum intentionem Damasceni l. 3 c. 11 ubi dicit
quod Verbum assumpsit naturam individuam et tamen non assumpsit suppositum, et tunc dicendum
quod assumpsit substantiam primam, non tamen assumpsit suppositum'; Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 6
(Wadding, vii. 12); *Quod.* 19, n. 17 (Wadding, xii. 507; AW, 432 (n. 19. 55)). Part of the motivation for
John of Damascus's view is that the assumed nature cannot be a universal, since then the Word would
have assumed the nature of all human beings: see John of Damascus, *De Fide Orth.* 47 (Kotter, 111;
Buytaert, 176), cited in Peter Lombard, *Sent.* 3. 2. 1, n. 3 (3rd edn., 2 vols. Spicilegium Bonaven-
turianum (Grottaferrata: Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1971–81), ii. 28). I discuss
some of the precedents (twelfth-century and earlier) for the medieval view in Ch. 11 below. I discuss
the relevant passages from John of Damascus in my 'Perichoresis, Deification, and Christological
Predication in John of Damascus', *Mediaeval Studies*, 62 (2000), 69–124, pp. 73–86.

[71] See e.g. Ch. 6, n. 29 below.

nature is an individual, and that non-assumed natures are persons in virtue of their possession of a certain property—personhood—not had by the assumed nature.

Are there theological reasons for this sort of account too? If there are, they will have to be to the effect that views which deny any sort of substancehood to the human nature involve paying an undesirable theological price. The medievals did not argue for the substancehood of the assumed nature on theological grounds, though it is clear to me that there are theological considerations (perhaps not overwhelming, but significant nevertheless) in favour of the medieval view. I will consider these in the Conclusion below.

3. LITERATURE

Biographical and bibliographical details of the various thinkers I discuss—most notably Bonaventure, Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, Giles of Rome, Peter John Olivi, Matthew of Aquasparta, Richard of Middleton, Godfrey of Fontaines, William of Ware, Hervaeus Natalis, and John Duns Scotus—are well-known, and I will not rehearse them here.[72] Perhaps more to the point is a brief consideration of some of the secondary literature on the Christology of the period I am interested in examining. Setting aside the Christology of Aquinas, literature on which deserves treatment by itself, there is surprisingly little. And for the whole period—including Aquinas—little of the work that is done pays much attention to any sort of philosophical analysis of the kind that I attempt here. There are only four real exceptions to this: the excellent but tantalizingly brief discussion of some of the material by Marilyn McCord Adams;[73] the short discussion of Scotus by Alfred Freddoso in an article focused on the Christology of Ockham;[74] a still-unpublished doctoral

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[72] Brief bio-bibliographies on most of these can be found in Kretzmann et al. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*. I frequently rely on established dates for the various works I discuss. For the dates of Aquinas's works, I use Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1: *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996). For Henry of Ghent, José Gómez Caffarena, 'Chronología de la "Suma" de Enrique de Gante por relació a sus "Quodlibetos"', *Gregorianum*, 38 (1957), 116–33. For Godfrey of Fontaines, see John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, xxi–xxxiv. For the dates of Scotus's works, see conveniently my *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4–6. In general, see P. Glorieux, *La Littérature Quodlibétique de 1260 à 1320*, 2 vols., Bibliothèque Thomiste, 5 (Kain: Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques, 1925), 21 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1935); id., *Repertoire des Maitres en théologie de Paris au XIIIe siècle*, 2 vols., Etudes de philosophie médiévales, 17–18 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1933–4); F. Stegmüller, *Repertorium in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, 2 vols. (Warzbürg: Schöningh, 1947). When I derive a date from some source other than those thus far mentioned, I give the source in a footnote.

[73] See Marilyn McCord Adams, 'The Metaphysics of the Incarnation in some Fourteenth-Century Franciscans', in William A. Frank and Girard J. Etzkorn (eds.), *Essays Honoring Allan B. Wolter*, Franciscan Institute Publications, Theology Series, 10 (St Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1985), 21–57. At p. 28, Adams focuses on the part–whole analogy for the hypostatic union that we find in Aquinas; pp. 29–39 contain her discussion of Scotus.

[74] Alfred J. Freddoso, 'Human Nature, Potency and the Incarnation', *Faith and Philosophy*, 3 (1986), 27–53.

dissertation, 'Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union' by Michael Gorman,[75] along with various articles published and forthcoming;[76] and two unpublished articles by Eleonore Stump.[77] Other available accounts tend to be more or less expository. The Christologies of most of the thinkers in my period are dealt with briefly and clearly in Paul Bayerschmidt's wartime monograph on Henry of Ghent's teachings on form and existence in relation to Christology.[78] But the account offered by Bayerschmidt, while useful and largely accurate, fails to see much of the philosophical significance—let alone the theological interest—of the thinkers he discusses. The same seems to me true of Maria Burger's recent monograph on the Christology of Scotus, which tends to follow through the discussion in Scotus in much the same way as Scotus presents the material in his *Ordinatio*—a presentation largely governed by traditional arrangements dictated *ab extra* by the treatment in Lombard's *Sentences*.[79] Burger offers no attempt to analyse the philosophical presuppositions and implications of Scotus's position. The merit of Burger's account lies in a thorough summary of the twentieth-century debate on the meaning and theological significance of Scotus's Christology that took place in Roman Catholic circles after the controversial Christological speculations of Déodat de Basly. I will allude to some of this material briefly in what follows; anyone wanting full details should consult Burger.[80]

All this should make it plain that historical interest is only one of my reasons for writing. It seems to me that there are genuine Christological lessons to be learnt

[75] Boston College, 1997. I am grateful to Michael Gorman for making his invaluable analysis available to me.

[76] See Gorman, 'Uses of the Person–Nature Distinction in Thomas's Christology', and Gorman, 'Christ as Composite according to Aquinas', *Traditio*, 55 (2000), 143–57.

[77] Eleonore Stump, 'Aquinas's Metaphysics of the Incarnation', forthcoming, and Stump, 'Aquinas's Metaphysics: His Theory of Things', forthcoming. I am grateful to Eleonore Stump for giving me copies of her unpublished papers, the excellent analysis in which saved me from several errors. I mention in later chapters some other accounts of Aquinas that are worth considering from an analytic rather than merely expository viewpoint. In addition to these, it is worth noting here Thomas V. Morris, 'St Thomas on the Identity and Unity of the Person of Christ: A Problem of Reference in Christological Discourse', *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 35 (1982), 419–30, and the final chapter of Hughes's excellent *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God*.

[78] Paul Bayerschmidt, *Die Seins- und Formmetaphysik des Heinrich von Gent in ihrer Anwendung auf die Christologie. Eine philosophie- und dogmengeschichtliche Studie*, Beiträge zur Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 36/3–4 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1941). See too Stephen F. Brown, 'Thomas Aquinas and His Contemporaries on the Unique Existence of Christ', in Kent Emery, Jr., and Joseph Wawrykow (eds.), *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans: Representations of Christ in the Texts and Images of the Order of Preachers*, Notre Dame Conferences in Medieval Studies, 7 (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1998), 220–37, an essay that—for all its strengths, and despite its extensive citation of the central texts—signally fails to offer any real analysis of the nature and philosophical significance of the differences between the various writers discussed.

[79] Maria Burger, *Personalität im Horizont absoluter Prädestination: Untersuchungen zur Christologie des Johannes Duns Scotus und ihrer Rezeption in modernen theologischen Ansätzen*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, N. F., 40 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1994).

[80] Burger contains an almost complete listing of Scotist Christological bibliography in languages other than English. In my thesis, 'The Doctrine of the Hypostatic Union in the Thought of Duns Scotus', unpublished doctoral dissertation, Oxford University, 1991, I attempt a preliminary analysis of the kind that I offer in far more detail here. The present work, I hope, wholly supersedes the earlier essay.

from medieval discussions, and part of my aim is to assess the perennial theolo-
gical value of the scholastic contributions to Christology—whatever our attitude to
the basic reification of the human nature that the medievals generally embrace with
gusto.[81] In fact, the medieval account of the human nature as a substance has been
tremendously influential on more recent theology, particularly Catholic (but also
Lutheran, since Luther assumes that Christ's human nature is individual; this
Lutheran belief, shared with Calvin and the Reformed tradition, clearly derives
directly from the medieval tradition). In exploring medieval theories more closely,
we can begin to get some idea of the sorts of strategy that could be adopted by more
modern theologians in order to avoid the many theological difficulties that such a
way of looking at the Incarnation can cause.

[81] Wolfhart Pannenberg, for example, comments enthusiastically on Scotus's contribution to Christo-
logy: 'Scholasticism was unable to achieve a solution to the Christological question on the basis of the
idea of the incarnation, even though, in distinction to the patristic discussion, the question of Jesus's
human individuality stood explicitly in the field of view. Duns Scotus came closer than anyone else to
a solution of this problem': Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man*, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and
Duane A. Priebe (London: SCM Press, 1968), 296. It is clear from this that Scotus's very enthusiastic
reification of the human nature is what Pannenberg finds so appealing.

PART I

Models for the hypostatic union

Chapter 1

THE HISTORICAL AND
PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

In Part I, I want to examine the accounts the medievals gave of the hypostatic union as such—the union of the divine and human natures in the person of the Word, or, equivalently, the union of the human nature to the divine person. Underlying the medieval discussions is the insight, discussed in the Introduction, that the assumed human nature is something like an individual substance. Most of the medieval theologians I examine in this book believe that the human nature is united to the Word in a way analogous to that in which an accident is united to a substance. Of course, there were many different theories about how accidents are united to substances. In this chapter, by way of background to the more theological material that follows, I want to examine some of the philosophical theories about substances and accidents that were current in the thirteenth century. Doing this will help us see why many thinkers found the analogy appealing; and why at least one thinker (Thomas Aquinas) was less happy with it. But before I do this, I will describe the state of the question during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. By doing this, we will get some idea of the theological background to the more sophisticated later discussions.

1. HISTORY

Working out how to picture the hypostatic union is not wholly straightforward. An immediate intuition is that the human nature is something like a contingent property or non-essential kind-nature of the second person of the Trinity. Cyril of Alexandria, for example, argued that we should think of the assumed human nature as something like a *proprium* of the Word—what the medievals would later call a 'necessary accident'.[1] I am sure that this is the right sort of approach for any Christologist, and I will return to it at various points below. But it requires careful handling, especially if the human nature is taken as being a substance-like individual. Suppose—as most of the medievals did—that the assumed human nature is such an individual. An obvious way to give an account of the hypostatic union is to propose that this human nature and the Word are two parts of one person,

[1] See Ruth M. Siddals, 'Logic and Christology in Cyril of Alexandria', *Journal of Theological Studies*, N. S., 38 (1987), 341–67; also R. A. Norris, 'Christological Models in Cyril of Alexandria', in *Studia Patristica* 13, Texte und Untersuchungen, 116 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1975), 225–68.

Christ. In the twelfth century, Peter Abelard defended a 'parts' Christology of this
sort, and was roundly condemned for his pains—under suspicion of holding the
Nestorian heresy—at the Council of Sens under St Bernard.[2]

In fact, St Bernard is wrong to suppose that a parts Christology entails
Nestorianism—though the amount of metaphysical effort required to show this means
that the relatively unsophisticated Bernard might be forgiven his somewhat jejune
theological blundering. One condition for a mereological account of the Incarnation
to work is that there are identity conditions for a substance x over the following
sort of change: at t, x is identical with y; at t_1, x is identical with z, where y is a
part of z. Growth is a good example of a change of this sort. And in fact, members
of the school of Peter Abelard did try to work out identity conditions of such changes,
and applied them directly to the identity problem apparently raised by the
Incarnation.[3]

There is a far more acute problem too: how the union of divine and human natures
as parts can result in one person. If such a union does not result in just one person,
then Nestorianism is true. (The parts might, for example, constitute no more than
an aggregate.) But if such a union does result in one person, this will probably be
because it results in one nature too. As we shall see in the next chapter, Aquinas
proposes a whole–part Christology that ultimately posits something analogous to
the union of essential parts in one nature—something analogous, in other words,
to monophysitism.[4]

Suppose, however, that a parts theory is rejected. One obvious available move
is to make the concrete human nature something like an accident of the divine
person. But since this person, according to standard medieval theory, cannot change
in any respect at all, the accident will need to remain in some sense metaphysically
extrinsic to the Word. Perhaps, following the lead of Augustine, we could suggest
that the human nature is related to the Word in the same way as clothing is related
to a person: the Word clothed himself with human nature.[5] After the condemna-
tion of Abelard, some members of his school held something like this view.[6] Peter
Lombard gives it as the third—the so-called *habitus* theory—of three current

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[2] There is a lot of literature on this. See e.g. Lauge Olaf Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy in the Twelfth
Century: A Study of Gilbert Porreta's Thinking and the Theological Expositions of the Doctrine of the Incarnation
during the Period 1130–1180*, Acta Theologica Danica, 15 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 218–20, 230–1;
D. E. Luscombe, *The School of Peter Abelard: The Influence of Abelard's Thought in the Early Scholastic
Period*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, Second Series, 14 (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1969), ch. 4; A. Victor Murray, *Abelard and St Bernard: A Study in Twelfth Century
'Modernism'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press; New York: Barnes and Noble, 1967).

[3] On this, see Christopher J. Martin, 'The Logic of Growth: Twelfth-Century Nominalists and the
Development of Theories of the Incarnation', *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, 7 (1998), 1–16.

[4] I discuss some of these matters in my 'A Recent Contribution on the Distinction between
Chalcedonianism and Monophysitism', *The Thomist*, 65 (2001), 361–84.

[5] Augustine, *De Div. Qu.* 73. 2, n. 2 (ed. Almut Mutzenbecher, CCSL, 44A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1975),
210–12), quoted in summary by Peter Lombard *Sent.* 3. 6. 6, n. 1 (ii. 56). I discuss this in more detail
at the beginning of Ch. 9 below.

[6] See Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy*, 231–42; Marcia Colish, *Peter Lombard*, 2 vols., Brill's Studies
in Intellectual History, 41 (Leiden, New York, Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1994), i. 408–12.

Christological theories he recounts on the compatibility of the Incarnation with divine immutability:

(1.1) There are some who in the Incarnation of the Word . . . say that those two, namely body and soul, are united to the person or nature of the Word such that there is no nature or person made or composed of those two or from these three (viz. body, soul, and divinity), but rather that the Word of God was vested with those two as a clothing, so that he should appropriately appear to the eyes of mortals. . . . They say that God was made man by clothing (*habitus*).[7]

The remaining two theories given by Lombard are harder to understand. The first, the *assumptus homo* theory (assumed man theory), claims that a man, composed of body and soul, was assumed such that he became identical with the Word. The theory can be found in Hugh of St Victor.[8] The Lombard presents it as follows:

(1.2) Others say that in the Incarnation of the Word there was a certain man, constituted of rational soul and human flesh (from which two every true human being is constituted), and that man began to be God, not indeed the nature of God, but the person of the Word, and God began to be that man. They concede too that that man assumed by the Word and united to the Word, was the Word, and for the same reason they accept that God was made man, or to be a man, since God was made (i.e. began to be) a certain substance subsisting from rational soul and human flesh, and that substance was made (i.e. began to be) God. It was brought about that God was that substance, and that substance was God—not however by the change of nature into nature, but preserving the property of each nature.[9]

The second theory, the subsistence theory, claims that the person begins to be composed of divine and human nature (i.e. of divinity, body, and soul), without this in any sense compromising the identity of the person:

(1.3) There are also others who agree with these [i.e. the adherents of the first theory] in part, but say that that man is not composed of rational soul and flesh alone, but from human and divine nature (i.e. from three substances: divinity, flesh, and soul). And this they confess to be Jesus. And [they say that] there is only one person, simple before the Incarnation but composed of divinity and humanity after the Incarnation was brought about. Neither is he for this reason a different person from before, but since he was before only the person of God, in the Incarnation he was made also the person of a man: not such that there were two persons, but that there was one and the same person of God and of the man.[10]

This theory is not supposed to be any version of Abelard's parts theory. Lauge Nielsen argues that it represents an attempt to give an account of the Christology of Gilbert of Poitiers.[11] Gilbert, one of the most interesting of medieval Christologists, seems to have wanted to propose an analysis of the hypostatic union in which the *substances*

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[7] Lombard, *Sent.* 3. 6. 4, nn. 1, 3 (ii. 55). On the Lombard's Christology in general, see Colish, *Peter Lombard*, i. 417–38; Luscombe, *The School of Peter Abelard*, 267–74; Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy*, 243–79.

[8] Hugh, *De Sac.* 2. 1. 11 (PL, clxxvi. 411B).   [9] Lombard, *Sent.* 3. 6. 2, n. 1 (ii. 50).

[10] Ibid. 3. 6. 3, n. 1 (ii. 52–3).   [11] Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy*, 256–60.

(unlike the person) are understood abstractly.[12] (Lombard, who does not share Gilbert's understanding of substance, confesses that he finds the theory 'inexplicable': according to Nielsen, because he conceives of persons as substances of a certain sort, and hence cannot explain why the addition of a further substance does not cause a change in the identity of the person.[13])

Because of the functional importance of Lombard's *Sentences* in medieval theological studies, these three opinions received more attention in the thirteenth century than perhaps they—or at least Lombard's expressions of them—really deserve. And the results were interesting. According to Aquinas, both the *assumptus homo* theory and the *habitus* theory amount to versions of the Nestorian heresy:

(1.4) Some of these [i.e. twelfth-century theologians] conceded that there is one person of Christ, but posited two hypostases or *supposita*, saying that a certain man, composed of soul and body was assumed from the beginning of his conception by the Word of God. And this is the first opinion which the Master posited in the sixth distinction of the third book of *Sentences*. Others, wishing to preserve the unity of person, posited that the soul of Christ is not united to the body, but both of these, separated from each other, are united to the Word accidentally, so that in this way the number of persons would not increase. And this is the third opinion which the master posited in the same place. Each of these opinions falls into the heresy of Nestorius. The first, because positing two hypostases or *supposita* is the same as positing two persons. . . . The other opinion falls into the error of Nestorius in this way, that it posits an accidental unity.[14]

Aquinas understands the *habitus* theory to have been condemned by Alexander III in 1170 and 1177.[15] In fact, Alexander condemned a rather different view recounted later in the Lombard's *Sentences*, so-called 'Christological nihilism', which I discuss (along with Alexander's condemnation) in Chapter 11 below. Aquinas's misunderstanding here is significant (and far from peculiar to him), since it shows Aquinas to have believed that any account of the human nature as an accident was heretical —a belief that I return to in the next chapter. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which the human nature is contingently united to the Word—more precisely, in which the Word is only contingently man. So the human nature is *something like* an accident. This was seen clearly by William of Auxerre, who in turn derived it from Godfrey of Poitiers and other late twelfth-century theologians.[16] According to William, the human nature 'degenerates into an accident':[17] the union is not accidental,[18] but it is 'contingent, adventitious, dependent on God's free will; it occurs at a moment

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[12] 'Human nature . . . is concretised with the eternal property that creates the divine person': Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy*, 177.

[13] Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy*, 256–60.   [14] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 6 c (iii/1. 18[a b]).

[15] Ibid. 3. 2. 6 sed contra (iii/1. 17[a b]).

[16] For the twelfth-century background, see Walter Henry Principe, *William of Auxerre's Theology of the Hypostatic Union* (The Theology of the Hypostatic Union in the Early Thirteenth Century, 1), Studies and Texts, 7 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963), 96–100.

[17] William of Auxerre, *Sum. Aur.* 3. 1. 3. 3 sol. 2 (ed. Jean Ribaillier, 4 vols., Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 16–19 (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1980–6), iii. 20).

[18] William of Auxerre, *Sum. Aur.* 3. 1. 3. 3 sol. 2 (iii. 20).

in time'.[19] As we shall see, the analogy to an accident remained important through-
out the thirteenth century, and is fully developed in Scotus. But the (supposed)
condemnation of the *habitus* theory made theologians reluctant to use the language
of accidentality.

2. PHILOSOPHY

Several antecedent metaphysical positions informed discussions of the hypostatic
union in our period. At first glance, the most fruitful—certainly the one which seems
most to have affected the medievals' own perception of the issues—is the distinc-
tion between essence and existence. Thus, medieval debates on the metaphysics of
the Incarnation often present themselves in part, or even largely, in terms of a dis-
cussion of the unity of Christ's existence (*esse*), and they are often presented as such
by modern commentators.[20] I shall try to show that this way of looking at the issue—
tempting though it is—in fact does little more than obscure far more metaphys-
ically significant differences between the various thinkers. It seems to me that there
is a more basic metaphysical presupposition which we need to get clear about: the
relation between a substance and its accidents. I hope my reasons for thinking this
will be reasonably plain by the end of Part I. Basically, all thinkers focus their accounts
of the relation between the human nature and the Word on either an acceptance
of, or a rejection of, the appropriateness of a substance–accident analogy for this
relation.[21] (This acceptance is not always made clear. Sometimes, indeed, theolo-
gians consciously distance themselves from it. But I include under the heading of
those who accept the analogy all of those thinkers whose account of the metaphysical
relation between substance and accident bears a close resemblance to their account

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[19] Principe, *William of Auxerre's Theology of the Hypostatic Union*, 96.
[20] The account offered by Paul Bayerschmidt, *Die Seins- und Formmetaphysik des Heinrich von Gent
in ihrer Anwendung auf die Christologie. Eine philosophie- und dogmengeschichtliche Studie*, Beiträge zur
Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 36/3–4 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1941) exemplifies this nicely.
But it is common in all commentators who write from a Thomist standpoint, presumably because on
the face of it one of the most distinctive features of Aquinas's account is that he posits just one *esse* in
Christ. (I will show below that there are more important distinguishing features of Aquinas's account
than this.) Perhaps most striking in the recent literature is Stephen Brown's claim that Giles of Rome's
account of the hypostatic union should be seen as a *defence* of Aquinas's theory (Brown, 'Thomas Aquinas
and His Contemporaries on the Unique Existence of Christ', in Kent Emery, Jr., and Joseph Wawrykov
(eds.), *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans: Representations of Christ in the Texts and Images of the Order
of Preachers*, Notre Dame Conferences in Medieval Studies, 7 (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Univer-
sity Press, 1998), 220–37, p. 228). My analysis below will, I hope, show how very wrong this view of
the relation between the Christologies of Aquinas and Giles is.
[21] There is a good reason for supposing that the substance–accident model is an obvious one for the
Incarnation, and that is that the human nature is a contingent (non-essential) property of the divine
person. To this extent, the medievals' customary claim that the nature is an essence is misleading. Their
point, of course, is that the human nature is not in fact an accident: it is a kind-nature. Thomas V.
Morris draws the obvious conclusion: the orthodox Christian 'will reject the view that every nature is
an essential property of every individual who exists in that nature': Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate*
(Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), 41.

of the metaphysical relation between the Word and his human nature, irrespective of their official assessment of the value of the analogy.)

By way of introduction to some of the philosophical problems we will encounter the medievals grappling with in the chapters of Part I of this study, I will try to provide some very basic distinctions which will—I hope—serve as a useful template to analyse medieval views of the hypostatic union. In choosing these tools, I make no claims for metaphysical originality, or even perspicacity. I have merely tried to highlight some chosen claims which will (I hope) help us to understand the medieval claims as clearly as possible, pinpointing some central features from medieval discussions and building on these in a way which seems to me appropriate. I have done this as carefully as I can; of course, my choices are open to debate. I will try to show, however, that the choices I make do have some obvious parallels in medieval discussion. I look, in turn, at the function of an accident in relation to its substance; at the individuation and identity of an accident relation to its substance; and at the identity of an accidental whole in relation to the substance which it includes. The first of these I illustrate from Godfrey of Fontaines and Duns Scotus; the second and third from these two thinkers and from Thomas Aquinas.

Looking first at the function of an accident relative to its substance, I would like to pinpoint three features:

> (AF) For any accidental property φ-ness and any substance x which exemplifies φ-ness,
>> (1) φ-ness depends on x
>> (2) φ-ness informs x
>> (3) φ-ness is a truth-maker, such that x is φ.[22]

(AF1) and (AF2) can clearly be found in Aristotle,[23] and were generally assumed by the medievals too. Scotus, for example, pinpoints two features necessary for the relation of inherence:

(1.5) One is that of form to the informable; here substance is the recipient and the potential term. . . . The other is the accident's dependence upon the substance; here substance is essentially prior and the accident naturally posterior.[24]

Godfrey of Fontaines, a little earlier than Scotus, makes much the same point in somewhat different terminology:

(1.6) The human nature in Christ . . . is not an accident informing and inhering, as whiteness.[25] . . . The human nature in Christ . . . has a certain mode of an accident and of a part, in so far as it has the feature of a being united and dependent [innitentis] on another.[26]

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[22] Strictly, such that 'x is φ' is true; but I am more interested in the extra-mental objects referred to and/or signified by 'φ' and 'x' than in the relation between the linguistic or conceptual items 'φ' and 'x'.

[23] For dependence, see e.g. Aristotle, *Metaph.* Z. 1 (1028ᵃ18–20); for informing, see Aristotle, *Ph.* 1. 7 (190ᵃ31–ᵇ1).

[24] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 13 (Wadding, xii. 502–3; Alluntis and Wolter, 428 (n. 19. 40)); see *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 6).

[25] Godfrey, *Quod.* 8. 1 (ed. J. Hoffmans, Les Philosophes Belges, Textes et études, 4/1 (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1924), 14).

[26] Godfrey, *Quod.* 8. 1 (PB 4, p. 17).

Scotus uses 'inherence' as the generic term for the relation between an accident and
its substance; Godfrey uses it as a synonym for 'informing', and thus as a way of
talking about **(AF2)**. But the substantive points in both thinkers are the same: we
need to make a distinction between **(AF1)** and **(AF2)**. (I follow Scotus's usage, not
least because it is closer to modern accounts of the issue.)

The first of the relations pinpointed in **(1.5)** and **(1.6)**—the relation that I am
labelling **(AF2)**—is very difficult to talk about. Generally, as we see in the passage
from Scotus, the most basic feature of **(AF2)** is that an accident *actualizes* some
passive potency (liability) in its substance. The second relation—**(AF1)**—is best
defined modally: for an accident to depend on its substance is for the existence of
the substance to be a necessary condition for the existence of the accident. We will
go wrong if we think of this condition as in any sense *causal*: a substance does not
(at least under standard circumstances) cause its accidents, and it is not in any sense
part of a set of causal conditions for its accidents. Nevertheless, the fact that an
accident exists entails that a substance exists; accidents do not (again, in the normal
run of things[27]) exist independently. In fact, the medievals often think of the two
relationships in terms of their *active* and *passive* components. In **(AF2)**, an accident
is seen as active, and its substance passive: an accident actualizes a liability—a pass-
ive potency—in its substance. Conversely, in **(AF1)**, a substance is seen as active,
non-causally sustaining its accidents in existence.

In addition to **(AF1)** and **(AF2)**, we need to introduce a third feature of the rela-
tion between a substance and an accident in order to understand medieval discus-
sions of the matter. I am labelling this feature **(AF3)**. The medievals, though they
would not have put the issue quite like this, all saw an accident as a *truth-maker*:
in virtue of a substance x's having an accident φ-ness, it is true that x is φ.[28] This
truth-making aspect of the relation between an accident and a substance was some-
times spelt out in terms of x's potency for φ-ness. Thus, in virtue of the actual-
ization of x's potency by φ-ness, it is true that x is φ. Seeing the truth-making relation
in these sorts of terms would reduce the theoretical account of truth-making to
(AF2).[29] One of the things I shall try to show in the next few chapters is that, in

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[27] The medievals all believed, of course, that God could conserve one or more accident without its
substance, and that he does so in the Eucharist.

[28] I do not intend my use of the term 'truth-maker' to imply any *theory* of properties—it certainly
should not, for example, be understood to mean that all properties are tropes. I intend the term to be
read in as neutral a way as possible, as defined in my text. Neither do I want to be committed to a theory
of truth-making that excludes states of affairs from being truth-makers. All I need is *some* sense in which
we can allow that accidents are truth-makers—just as defenders of trope theories are wont to claim that
tropes are truth-makers. It is not that tropes are states of affairs: they are individual properties tied to
just one substance. That said, my choice of term is consciously evocative of a trope theory, since it seems
to me that accidents, as understood by the philosophers that I examine here, are indeed individualized
properties (though unlike tropes in the sense that they are instances of universals). My discussion
in this chapter and in the Introduction should make this clear enough. For the identification of truth-
makers and tropes (under the Husserlian designation 'moment'), see Kevin Mulligan, Peter Simons,
and Barry Smith, 'Truth-Makers', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 44 (1984), 287–325.

[29] Note that the only sentences whose truth I am interested in here are those whose subjects refer to
substances. The idea is that a substance can have an accidental property only if it has a passive potency
for that property. The implied modality in **(AF2)** is *de re*.

the period between Aquinas and Scotus, **(AF3)** was dissociated from **(AF2)**, and increasingly reduced instead to **(AF1)**.[30] In other words, the truth-making function of an accident was reduced to dependence rather than to informing. Scotus, for example, is quite clear that, at least in the case of the 'quasi-accident', Christ's human nature, it is true *both* that the nature fails to inform the divine person, and that the human nature is a truth-maker: in virtue of the human nature, it is true that the divine person is a man.

This manoeuvre—from informing to dependence—had two results: first, it allowed the relation between a substance accident to be used more explicitly as a model for the hypostatic union; secondly, it allowed the medievals to see that the possession of a contingent property does not entail the possession of passive potencies.[31] This shift involved, it seems to me, both loss and gain. On the debit side, the passive potencies entailed in **(AF2)** allow for a theoretical explanation of **(AF3)**; on the credit side, an appeal to passive potencies looks suspiciously like an appeal to properties for which there is no obvious empirical evidence.[32]

The medievals talked about both of these features of the relation between an accident and its substance in terms of the communication (sharing) of existence. Thus, it was commonly held that a substance communicates its existence to its accidents (i.e. that they depend on it in the sense just described), and that accidents communicate their existence to their substance (i.e. that in virtue of the communication of existence to a substance x by an accident φ-ness, it is true to claim that x is φ). And it is this fact—that the medievals talked about both features of the relation in terms of the communication of existence—that explains the importance of the distinction between essence and existence in these Christological discussions. Unfortunately, as we shall see, the discussions are rendered rather more complicated than they need be because of the medievals' signal failure to agree on what they meant by 'existence'. I shall not introduce this difficult controversy here, but instead draw attention to it as I proceed in the subsequent chapters.

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[30] Another way of looking at the issue is to think of the theologians I am discussing as coming to a firmer grasp of the distinction between *de re* and *de dicto* possibility, and thus to dissociate the *de re* implications of **(AF2)** from **(AF3)**: the proposition 'Possibly, x is φ' does not require x's possession of a passive potency for it to be true.

[31] As is well known, the period immediately after Scotus saw the ever more secure dissociation of logical possibility from the possession of active causal powers. This sort of shift involves the dissociation of modalities from individuals: modalities cease to be properties of individuals, and are instead seen as properties of either propositions or (perhaps) states of affairs. My tentative claim here is that working out a theology of the Incarnation had an analogous philosophical result: namely, the dissociation of (passive) modalities from the possession of individualized accidental forms. I do not know the extent to which the erosion of the notion of passive potencies, at any rate as a necessary theoretical explanation for the concept of property possession, was connected to the analogous shift in the notion of active causal powers, though my intuition is that the two are unrelated.

[32] As we shall see in Ch. 9, the medievals all denied that the relation between the Word and his assumed nature is *real* (though, of course, they thought of the relation between the human nature and the Word as real enough). It seems to me that this claim is, at least in principle, unrelated to the shift from identifying **(AF3)** with **(AF2)** to identifying **(AF3)** with **(AF1)**.

How does all of this discussion of the relation between accidents and their substances relate to what I have been calling the 'medieval problem'? The main Christological difficulty for the medievals lies in their insistence that the human nature of Christ is in itself an individual substance, or something very like an individual substance. We have already seen how this insight created problems for debates in the twelfth century. Analogous sorts of insight affect the medievals' doctrine of accidents too. Before I look at the Christological material in the next few chapters, I would like to consider, by way of introduction, some of the things the medievals say about the individuality and identity of accidents.

I began this task in the previous chapter with a discussion of a reason that one thinker—Duns Scotus—offered for thinking that accidents are individuated separately from their substances. Here, I would like to develop this discussion a little further. It seems to me that one of the central questions that lies in the background of medieval doctrines of the hypostatic union has to do with the question of *countability*: to what extent can the human nature be counted as an object over and above the divine person to whom it is united? Answers to this question depend in part on ways in which parts of substances can be counted. For most thinkers, this question can be focused yet further. Almost all the thinkers I shall examine believe that the hypostatic union is (more or less) like an accidental union. So the answer to the Christological question will depend on prior accounts of the countability of a substance's accidents: specifically, whether an accident can be in any sense counted as a discrete object over and above its substance. The issue of the countability of accidents seems to me intrinsically related to another question: the individuality of accidents. Broadly, there are four possible positions on the identity and individuality of accidents relevant to an understanding of medieval accounts of the hypostatic union:

(AI) For any accidental property φ-ness and any substance x which exemplifies φ-ness:
  (1) The φ-ness of x is a universal
  (2) The φ-ness of x is individuated by x, and is not numerically distinct from x
  (3) The φ-ness of x is individuated by x, but is numerically distinct from x
  (4) The φ-ness of x is individuated independently of x, and is numerically distinct from x.

(AI1) is of course the standard strong realist account. None of the mainline medievals I look at here accepted (AI1), however, so I ignore it from now on.[33] (AI2) also needs some clarification. The adherent of (AI2) will certainly want to deny that the φ-ness of x and x itself are numerically distinct *objects*. Rather, the adherent of (AI2) believes that an accident is an (individual) *state* or *mode* of its substance. So the (AI2) adherent could talk of a distinction between x and the φ-ness of x. A substance, after all, is not a state. The non-distinction claim in (AI2) should be understood to mean that the (individual) states of a substance x cannot be counted over

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[33] I have discussed these matters in the Introduction.

and above x. For the adherent of **(AI2)**, talk about identity or distinction between a substance and any of its properties is simply inappropriate. Relations of identity and distinction obtain between substances. Another way to talk about this is to claim that properties have some sort of 'adverbial' status: they are not things, but modes of existence—modalizations of a substance. For a substance to be red is for it to be 'redly'. And the relationship between a substance and an accident in this view will parallel the relation between subject and predicate in the predicate calculus. We might look at **(AI2)** in another way too. Clearly, on **(AI2)** there is nothing which φx is which x is not. Both x and φx are the substance of which the φ-ness of x is a state. But we might want to think of the φ-ness of x being something neither x nor φx is—namely, a state of x. I do not want to claim that all of these versions of **(AI2)** are the same theory; just that they can all be broadly grouped under the same sort of heading, accepting both that accidents are individuals, and that they are wholly unlike substances, necessarily lacking any sort of *independent* existence. Accidents are, minimally, necessarily dependent particulars. **(AI2)** is thus related to the sort of view of properties in general that I ascribed to Locke in the Introduction.

The adherents of **(AI3)** and **(AI4)** will likewise talk of a distinction between x and the φ-ness of x. But for them this distinction has considerable ontological value: x and the φ-ness of x are numerically distinct objects. I will return to these theories in a moment.

I have already indicated that one way the medievals had for dealing with the cluster of issues raised as the various **(AF)** claims was in terms of *esse*. What makes it often very hard to unpack their views is that one way they have of talking about the group of issues raised as the various **(AI)** claims is likewise in terms of *esse*. They often, for example, talk about **(AF1)** in terms of a *suppositum*'s sharing its existence with its accidents. But adherents of **(AI2)** similarly talk about the identity of an accident in terms of its sharing in the existence of a *suppositum*. The issues are quite different; the terminology tends to obscure some important distinctions. There are other obvious confusions too, likewise caused by the equivocal senses of *esse*. As I will show below, a popular argument for **(AI3)** is that it is entailed by **(AF3)**. But in reality there are no direct links between the truth-making role of accidents and their existing as objects over and above their substances. (I will return to this below, because I think that a sophisticated argument can be found to make the required link—though it is not an argument the medievals appealed to explicitly.) The equivocation on the senses of *esse* suggests an entailment (from 'giving existence to a substance' to 'being an existent') which in reality can hardly make any intellectual claims on us, at least as thus phrased. As Giles of Rome regretfully but appositely notes at one point in his discussion,

(1.7) The poverty of words has many bad results for us, so that, on account of the defect of words, it is necessary to use one word to signify one thing, even though [the word] in itself properly signifies something else.[34]

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[34] Giles, *Quod.* 5. 3 ((Louvain, 1646), 272^b).

Some thinkers, following Henry of Ghent, distinguish between *esse essentiae* (the *esse* of essence), *esse existentiae* (the *esse* of (actual) existence), and *esse subsistentiae* (the *esse* of subsistence). Henry of Ghent, at least by 1286, claims that accidents have proper *esse existentiae*, and that *esse subsistentiae* is communicated to them from their substance. I take it that the first of these claims commits him to rejecting **(AI2)**, and that the second commits him to the dependence claim **(AF1)**. (I look at Henry's various claims about accidental existence in Chapter 4.) In the following few chapters, I will try as best I can to unravel some of the threads; but the confusion manifest in some of the texts means that my conclusions should perhaps be treated as fairly provisional.

Before I look in detail at **(AI3)** and **(AI4)**, I would like to introduce a further set of claims. The claims all have to do with the relation between a substance and any putative accidental whole which includes the substance:

> **(AU)** For accidental whole φx and any substance x included in φx:
>   (1) It is not the case that φx is an object
>   (2) φx is an object identical with x
>   (3) φx is an object numerically distinct from x.

Clearly, the various **(AI)** claims are linked to the various **(AU)** claims. **(AU1)** could be accepted by an adherent of any of the **(AI)** claims. But **(AU3)** is not an option for adherents of **(AI2)**; and **(AU2)** is not an option for adherents of **(AI3)** or **(AI4)**. On **(AI2)** an individual accident—the φ-ness of x—is a state of its substance x. So it is a *part* neither of x nor of an accidental whole φx. Thus φx has no properties or parts which are not properties or parts of x, and x has no properties or parts which are not properties or parts of φx. On the assumption that both x and φx are objects, it follows by identity of indiscernibles that x and φx are identical. So given **(AI2)**, **(AU3)** is false. According to both **(AI3)** and **(AI4)**, the φ-ness of x is numerically distinct from its substance x. So an accidental whole φx has a part which is not a part of x. Accepting **(AU3)** does not entail denying that accidental properties are properties of a substance: here, that an accidental property—the φ-ness of x— is a property of x. Scotus, for example, who accepts **(AU3)** (in virtue of his accepting **(AI4)**, as we shall see), also accepts that accidents are properties of their substance.[35] Since the crucial Christological relation is *identity* (Christ must in some sense be identical with the second person of the Trinity), it is easy to see that accepting the applicability of a principle analogous to **(AU3)** will turn out to raise *prima facie* Christological difficulties. The solution of these difficulties is not all that easy, and I will return below to the general identity problem relating to accidental wholes, and to the specific Christological problem in Chapter 5, since Scotus is the only thinker to see that the claim that the human nature is an individual substance raises significant identity problems, at least if it is supposed that the possession of an individual nature or concrete property entails certain composition claims.

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[35] I discuss this in Ch. 5 below.

The medievals often saw their way through these metaphysical complexities, though they did not always do so very clearly. So where appropriate, I shall use (AI2) to (AI4), and (AU1) to (AU3), as analytical tools to help provide a way through the sometimes obscure medieval discussions of the hypostatic union. I believe that it is in fact possible to clarify a great deal of the terminological density that obscures these Christological discussions; the positions just briefly outlined will, I hope, help us to do this. For example, much of the debate that we shall encounter in Part I turns on whether or not accidents have (their own) existence (*esse*). Generally, what is really being debated here is the nature of the unity which obtains between substance and accident—and consequently, of course, the nature of the unity which obtains between Christ's human nature and the Word. To see how this might work out in practice, we can usefully look at a few examples. I shall examine three thinkers in turn—Thomas Aquinas, Godfrey of Fontaines, and Duns Scotus.

As we shall see in Chapter 2, Aquinas does not use the substance–accident analogy for the hypostatic union. But he is generally a clear supporter of (AI2)—the theory I am trying to describe first—and his understanding of this theory goes some way to explaining why he rejects the substance–accident model. Aquinas is not unequivocally explicit in his support for (AI2); some of the things he says seem to favour (AI3). (Analogously, as we saw in the Introduction, Aquinas is equivocal on whether or not we should think of Christ's human nature as something like a substance, or merely as some sort of 'state' (construed broadly) of the divine *suppositum*. His reasons for sometimes thinking of the human nature as something like a substance are, as I have tried to show, philosophical; his reasons for feeling equivocal about (AI2) are instead theological, as we shall see.) It seems to me that the evidence points overwhelmingly to Aquinas's acceptance of (AI2); his (AI3)-looking assertions are atypical, and all made under pressure of church dogma. I will examine Aquinas's standard set of claims first, and then offer an analysis of his (AI3) assertions. I will also try to show that Aquinas is committed to (AU2)—again, a claim inconsistent with a wholehearted acceptance of (AI3).

Aquinas is at least unequivocal in asserting that accidents are individual forms, individuated by their substances:

(1.8) Although universal and particular are found in all the genera [i.e. Aristotle's categories], nevertheless the individual is found in a special way in the genus of substance. For a substance is individuated through itself, whereas an accident is individuated by its subject, which is substance. For we speak of 'this whiteness' in so far as it is in this subject.[36]

This passage is, of course, consistent with (AI2) and (AI3). But Aquinas generally makes a further claim which is consistent only with (AI2). He claims that we should not count an accident as an object over and above its subject:

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[36] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 29. 1 c (i/1. 156ᵃ). See also e.g. Aquinas, *CT* 1. 211, n. 409 (*Opuscula Theologica*, ed. R. A. Verardo, R. M. Spiazzi, and M. Calcaterra, 2 vols. (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1954), i. 96ᵇ), where Aquinas claims unequivocally that accidents are individuals.

(1.9) Just as accidents and non-subsistent forms are said to be beings (*entia*), not because they have existence (*esse*), but because by them something is, so they are called good or one not by some other goodness or unity, but because by them a thing is good or one. In this way virtue is called good, because by it something is good.[37]

The parallels between this and Aquinas's official account of nature-language are obvious. According to this passage, an accident φ-ness is not an existent object, but rather that in virtue of (the possession of) which an existent object is φ. What Aquinas means is made clear elsewhere:

(1.10) Because being made or corrupted pertains to something that has existence (*esse*), no accident is properly speaking made or corrupted; rather it is said to be made or corrupted in so far as a subject begins or ceases to be actual according to that accident.[38]

Accidents, then, are not things to be counted over and above their subjects; they are states of their subjects, numerically identical with their subjects.

What about Aquinas's acceptance of (AU2)? Aquinas claims that a substance and an accident together compose one complete object:

(1.11) In a human intellect, the likeness of a thing known is different from the substance of the intellect, and exists as its form. Hence, from the intellect and the thing's likeness, one complete thing is produced, which is the intellect actually knowing.[39]

The likeness of a thing known is, of course, an accident of the intellect. So the claim is that a substance and an accident compose one object—one complete thing. And in the light of the passages just quoted in which Aquinas signals his support for (AI2), we should surely interpret (1.11) to commit Aquinas to (AU2). Substance and accident compose an object; but the object they compose is numerically identical with the substance. Robert Pasnau helpfully comments on this text:

The species that informs the intellect isn't a separate thing (on his way of counting things) from the intellect. It is, he says on many occasions, a form of intellect. An intelligible species, as he suggests in [(1.11)], is not the substantial form but an *accidental* form of intellect; it gives the intellect the characteristic of actually cognizing a certain thing. Hence it's quite misleading to think of intelligible species and intellect as two different things. A species, as an accidental form, is what we might call a . . . state of intellect.[40]

We should perhaps note that Aquinas's talk of an accident (the likeness) being different from its substance (the intellect) does not mean that he does not accept (AI2). As I noted above, an adherent of (AI2) can reasonably—indeed should—maintain some sort of distinction between objects and states. As Aquinas puts it, an accident 'is different from a substance . . . and exists as its form'. But this distinction will not be numerical.

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[37] Aquinas, *ST* 1-2. 55. 4 ad 1 (i/2. 242^b).   [38] Aquinas, *ST* 1-2. 110. 2 ad 3 (i/2. 542^a b).
[39] Aquinas, *In Sent.* 2. 3. 3. 1 sol. (i. 113), quoted in Robert Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 191.
[40] Pasnau, *Theories of Cognition*, 191.

We need too to see how Aquinas's acceptance of **(AI2)** dovetails in with his account of the dependence and truth-making aspects of the relation between an accident and a substance—the relations I am labelling **(AF1)** and **(AF3)**. Clearly, Aquinas will have little difficulty asserting the dependence thesis—his claim that an accident is an (individualized) state of a substance seems to entail exactly this thesis (though, as we shall see in a moment, pressure of church doctrine sometimes compels him— undesirably—to drop this claim). The truth-making feature is spelt out in terms of the actualization of passive potency in the substance.

(1.12) A subject is compared to an accident as potency to act, for a subject, in virtue of an accident, *is* in certain ways.[41]

That is to say, a substance x is φ in virtue of φ-ness; and x possesses φ-ness only if φ-ness actualizes some passive potency in x: **(AF3)** entails **(AF2)**. The claim that an accident constitutes its subject in (some sort of) existence does not, I think, entail positing that the relevant existence is something distinct from either the substance or the accident.[42] To claim that an accident constitutes its substance in some sort of existence is just an ellipsis for the accident's actualizing some passive potency in its subject; which, again, is just a theory-laden way of buttressing a claim that an accident is a truth-maker.

Aquinas is usually commendably clear on these matters. But, possibly under pressure of church doctrine, he sometimes confuses all of these claims. In particular, Aquinas sometimes confuses talk about an accident actualizing some passive potency in its substance with the claim that an accident has its own proper *esse*. The problem arises in Aquinas's discussion of transubstantiation:

(1.13) Accidents of this sort, like other accidents, do not have *esse* while the bread and wine remain. Rather, their substances have this sort of *esse* through them, just like snow is white through whiteness. But after the consecration the accidents which remain have *esse*.[43]

(1.14) Accidents of this sort acquire individual *esse* in the substance of the bread and wine. When this [substance] is converted into the body and blood of Christ, the accidents, by divine power, remain in the individualized *esse* which they had before.[44]

(1.13) starts off by suggesting, in accordance with Aquinas's official **(AI2)** account, that accidents do not exist in any proper sense of the word. For an accident to exist

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[41] *ST* 1. 3. 6 c (i/1. 19ᵃ).

[42] There is a tremendous amount of literature on this question in Aquinas: for a bibliography, see Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines: A Study in Late Thirteenth-Century Philosophy* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 209–10. The problem debated by modern Thomists, I believe, wholly misses the point in Aquinas. The point in ascribing some sort of *esse* to an accident is just that it is a truth-maker—according to Thomas, the *esse* of an accident φ-ness is its being that in virtue of which something is φ. Being a truth-maker is clearly a property of the accident; but we would not want to posit any sort of real distinction between the accident and its truth-making features, and there is no evidence that Aquinas wants to either.

[43] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 77. 1 ad 4 (iii/1. 465ᵃ). For a discussion of transubstantiation with which my analysis is in fundamental agreement, see P. J. FitzPatrick, *In Breaking of Bread: The Eucharist and Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), ch. 1.

[44] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 77. 1 ad 3 (iii/1. 465ᵃ).

is for its substance to have *esse* through it. But the last sentence suggests something different: after the Eucharistic consecration an accident can exist without its substance. (1.14) is even clearer: the reason that an accident can exist without its substance after the consecration is that the accident always had *esse* in its substance. This makes it look as though the sort of *esse* an accident has in its substance is the sort of *esse* that can attach to things, the sort of *esse* that belongs to (possibly) independent objects. And this makes it look as though Aquinas wants to accept (AI3).

What has gone wrong here is an equivocation on the term *esse*. This equivocation can, I think, be detected in claims that Aquinas hints at in (1.13). In one sense, an accident has *esse* in the (highly restricted) sense of being a truth-maker—an accident φ-ness is that in virtue of which something is φ. But existence as an item—the sort of existence which is had by things which exist independently—is quite different from this. I can see no reason on Aquinas's metaphysical presuppositions to associate *being a truth-maker* with *having a capacity to exist independently*; Aquinas is only tempted to make this move because of the beguiling way in which the medievals talk of *esse* in both these ways.

Godfrey of Fontaines clearly accepts (AI3).[45] His reason for doing so is that he considers that it is only by accepting (AI3) that an accident can be a truth-maker—can perform the function required in (AF3). (I have already mentioned this very questionable argument, and I will return to it in subsequent chapters. I discuss Godfrey's position on this in Chapter 4.) Consistent with this, Godfrey accepts (AU3). Again, I will discuss further aspects of this in Chapters 4 and 12. But I would like here to give fairly clear evidence in favour of this reading of Godfrey:

(1.15) Since the unity of *suppositum*, and the numerical unity of an accident with a subject (or [the unity] by which an accident and the subject in which it exists are one in subject), and also the unity by which many accidents existing in the same subject are numerically one, is a certain true unity, *something is caused* when this unity is made, since many are made one, and *something is destroyed* when this unity is dissolved.[46]

Godfrey clearly asserts that an accidental unity is a 'true' unity, and that it is destroyed on the destruction of one of its components. This looks like an acceptance of (AU3).

When responding to Giles of Rome's claim that the union of an accident with a substance entails, in addition to the accident itself, some sort of accidental mode of existence in the substance, Godfrey makes it clear that the accident and the substance compose an accidental whole without any need to appeal to some additional mode. But the salient point here is that when substance and accident compose a whole, it is the case both that the accident is a thing really distinct from the substance, and that accident and substance compose a whole that is really distinct from the substance itself:

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[45] Godfrey is clear that accidents are individuated by their substances. So he does not accept (AI4). See Godfrey, *Quod.* 7. 5 (PB 3, pp. 320–1) for arguments against individuation by accidents, and *Quod.* 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 322) for the statement that substance—properly, substantial form—individuates. The discussion in Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, ch. 9, is very helpful on this.

[46] Godfrey, *Quod.* 8. 1 (PB 4, p. 16), my italics.

(1.16) Although the composite [i.e. of substance and accident] is really different from itself [i.e. from the substance] in virtue of these parts [i.e. substance and accident] in so far as it exists as a composite from these [parts], by reason of one part's really differing in itself from the other the composite is really distinct from this part [i.e. the accident]. As a result, the whole is really accidentally different from itself.[47]

The idea here seems to be that there is an accidental whole which is really distinct from the substance, although Godfrey's way of talking about this (a substance can really differ from itself considered as substance + accident) is not very clear. Godfrey in the same passage makes the point more explicitly by focusing on an example:

(1.17) A white substance differs from itself without whiteness . . . since the white thing includes two [things], and the thing without whiteness [includes] one [thing]. Therefore the white thing differs from itself as not-white, without whiteness, by something real added [to it].[48]

Godfrey's way of talking here, speaking of a substance differing from itself, results from the context: a discussion with Giles of Rome. Giles believes that a substance can really differ 'from itself' in virtue of its having or not having such and such a mode of existence. (I look at Giles's theory in Chapter 12 below.) Godfrey ought to be claiming, of course, that an accidental whole differs from the substance that is a part of it. And this, of course, is (AU3).[49]

The same acceptance is found even more clearly in Scotus. Scotus accepts (AI4). He explicitly claims that accidents are individuals:

(1.18) In every categorial hierarchy there can be found something intrinsically individual and singular of which the species is predicated—or at least there can be found something not predicable of many.[50]

Scotus also accepts—as we saw in the Introduction—that accidents are individuated without reference to their substances—and indeed that an accident of one category is individuated without reference to any other category:

(1.19) In every categorial hierarchy the singular or individual is not established through anything belonging to any other hierarchy.[51]

Scotus's arguments for this claim are complex, and I have discussed one of them in the Introduction. Roughly, Scotus's worry is that extra-categorial individuation—individuation of an object belonging to one category by an object belonging to another category—entails that a categorial object is an accidental unity. And he believes it

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[47] Godfrey, *Quod.* 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 313).   [48] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 314).

[49] Later in *Quod.* 7. 5, Godfrey makes it clear that substance and accident form one composite, a composite thing containing two further things one of which (the substance) is potential to the other (the accident): 'the composite of matter and quantity is an extended thing in itself (*quid extensum per se*)': Godfrey, *Quod.* 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 315). So I take it that Godfrey wants to assert (AU3) unequivocally.

[50] Scotus, *Ord.* 2. 3. 1. 4, n. 90 (Vatican, vii. 434; Spade, 80). For the notion of a categorial hierarchy, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 98–9. The idea, deriving from Porphyry, is that each of Aristotle's categories includes a range of members from most general to most specific, culminating in particular instances of the category.

[51] Scotus, *Ord.* 2. 3. 1. 4, n. 89 (Vatican, vii. 434; Spade, 79–80).

to be false that an accident is itself an accidental unity. So an accident is an object individuated independently of its substance, and Scotus accepts (AI4).[52]

There is another important reason why Scotus wants to hold (AI4). Basically, Scotus holds that accidents have a causal role to play in the universe, and that anything that has a causal role must count as a thing.[53] We would want to reject the claim that anything that has a causal role must count as a thing, at least without further support. It demonstrates, however, an increasing tendency towards the hypostatization or reification of properties, and it does so by highlighting an important feature of this tendency: namely the insight that *explanatory* work has to be done by *things*. As I shall show in Chapter 4, this insight can clearly be found in Giles of Rome, and I suspect that this might be its origin in Scotus.

Consistent with this, Scotus explicitly accepts (AU3) as well. He claims that an accidental unity counts as one thing (*unum aliquid*) over and above its parts.[54] And Scotus is explicit that we should think of forms (including accidental forms) as *parts*:

(1.20) A form in creatures shares in imperfection in two ways, namely because it is an informing form, and because it is a part of a composite; and it has a feature which does not share in imperfection, but is a necessary consequence of its nature, namely that it is that in virtue of which something is such a thing.[55]

It might be thought that Scotus moves too quickly from talk of forms to talk of parts. This sort of language, as we have already seen, is standard in thirteenth-century treatments of forms in general.[56] But a case can be made for the philosophical propriety of such a move. Recall the nuclear trope theory described in the Introduction. Non-essential tropes (properties which do not constitute the nucleus) are clearly in some sense properties of the nucleus. But they are in some sense parts of the whole which includes the nucleus and all the non-essential tropes attaching to the nucleus. Equally, there is a sense in which the tropes that constitute the nucleus are both properties and parts of the nucleus. Making this claim does not entail that tropes are anything like *integral* parts of their wholes, or physical parts. In this sense, it is right to distinguish tropes and parts. But it does not seem at all clear to me that there is not some sense in which we could think of tropes as parts. And this is just the sort of point that I think Scotus, *mutatis mutandis*, wants to make about his accidents and their accidental wholes.

[52] For the argument, see Scotus, *Ord.* 2. 3. 1. 4, n. 91 (Vatican, vii. 434–5; Spade, 80), and my discussion in *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 98–9. For other arguments, see *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 97–100, though a couple of obvious slight mis-statements there need to be corrected.

[53] I discuss this argument in *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 96.

[54] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 2. 2, n. 7 (Wadding, vii. 76).

[55] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 8. 1. 4, n. 213 (Vatican, iv. 271). Scotus immediately gives 'wisdom' as an example of a form—lest there be any doubt that Scotus wants to label an accidental form (as opposed to a substantial form) a 'part': see passage (5.11).

[56] As should be apparent, I am judging that we should take this sort of parts language more seriously in some thinkers—e.g. Scotus—than in others—e.g. Aquinas. My reason for this has to do with a judgement about the extent to which each thinker tends to reify forms.

There is a difficulty with **(AU3)** that only Scotus seems aware of. Clearly, on **(AU3)**, x and φx are different objects, since they have neither the same parts nor the same properties. But they do seem to have all the same forms, and Scotus is clearly willing to claim that it is true of φx *both* that it is φ and that it is x.[57] Clearly, it is true of φx that it is both φ and x; Scotus's claim is stronger than this: both φx and x are φ, and both φx and x are x (both white-Socrates and Socrates are white, and both of them are Socrates). This is understandable, since including a form as a part (as I suggested above) is sufficient for the form's being (in some sense) a property of the whole that includes it. So it seems that, for example, Socrates and white-Socrates are different objects, but the same man. And this on the face of it commits Scotus to relative identity.

Scotus does suggest a solution to this problem, and it is one that he applies in some Christological contexts, as we will see in Chapter 5. The solution can best be seen in his discussion of the case of an accidental whole like white-Socrates beginning to exist. Clearly, there is a sense in which white-Socrates can—or does—begin and cease at different times from the beginning and ceasing of Socrates. Socrates could change colour—become pink for example. And in this case white-Socrates would cease to exist, although Socrates would not. Scotus's solution is that the reference of the subject term determines the sense of the predicate term, at least in the sense of increasing the possible range of senses that can be had by the predicate. Scotus makes the point in the following passage by talking about Christ, the whole man-God:

(1.21) It remains that the whole issue concerns the predicate: whether 'beginning' implies a beginning according to the first *esse* of the thing of which it is said, or [merely] according to some *esse* that belongs to it simply speaking (*simpliciter*). If [read] in the first way, the proposition ['Christ began to exist'] is false, just like 'Christ was created' is. If [read] in the second way, Christ began to exist simply speaking, since any *esse* of a substance is *esse* simply

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[57] Medieval notions of forms are narrower than the modern conceptions of properties: 'Contemporary analytic philosophers are often quite generous about what counts as a property, supposing that for every function from the set of possible worlds to the set of possible individuals (or every set of world-bound *possibilia*, for the counterpart theorist) there is a corresponding property': Christopher Hughes, *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God: An Investigation in Aquinas' Philosophical Theology*, Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 8. Hughes goes on to note that for Aquinas—and indeed, we might add, for all the medievals I examine here—'If the expression [viz. the *F*-ness of x] does not signify anything contained in the nature of x, it may or may not pick out a dependent particular in *suppositum* which makes x be in a certain way—*viz.*, *F*. . . . [I]f it does not, it does not pick out an accident of x': Hughes, *On a Complex Theory*, 9. More simply, the medievals rightly do not want to postulate, as many modern philosophers seem to, that 'for each distinct predicate' there is 'corresponding to it, a distinct property': D. M. Armstrong, 'Properties', in D. H. Mellor and Alex Oliver (eds.), *Properties*, Oxford Readings in Philosophy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 160–72, p. 165. Forms are the medieval analogue to Armstrong's 'ontological properties'—those properties that fit in with the way reality is, that are 'fit to appear in the formulations of an exact science': Armstrong, 'Properties', 166. I do not want to dwell more on the distinction between forms and properties here, more than to note that all of my thinkers would regard forms—but certainly not all properties in the modern sense—as dependent particulars, and as properties that would play some kind of explanatory role in Aristotelian science.

speaking, and Christ began to be according to his human *esse*, which is the *esse* of a sub-
stance. The second [reading] is more in accord with the sense of the words, because just as,
in the case of those things like Christ that have more than one *esse*, second *esse* means *esse*
simply speaking, and not (from the sense of the words) the first *esse* of the thing of which it
is said, so 'beginning', determined by second *esse*, seems to mean beginning in *esse* simply
speaking, though not [beginning] in the first *esse* of the subject. Simply speaking, then, from
the sense of the words it can be conceded that Christ, as it implies the thing which is the
Word-man, began to be, that is, had some *esse* simply speaking which he did not have before
(though this [*esse*] is not the first *esse* of Christ).[58]

According to this passage, the reference of the subject determines the sense of
the predicate: if the subject refers to an object that has more than one *esse*, then
'began to exist' properly predicates the subject even if the substance-part[59] of the
object referred to by the subject pre-exists.[60] The issue is easily seen in the case of
white-Socrates. It is easy to imagine white-Socrates—and not Socrates himself—
beginning to exist. But this is because the predicate 'began to exist' has a different
sense in the two cases.[61]

It is important to understand that there is a real distinction between the Word
and Christ here—what is at stake is not just a case of one referent being signified
in two different ways, but of two different referents. The discussion contrasts strik-
ingly with, for example, Aquinas's. Aquinas insists that the proposition 'Christ began
to be' is not true 'simply speaking', because Christ refers to the Word, and there
is no sense in which the Word began to be.[62] Aquinas allows instead that the proposi-
tion 'Christ began to be' is true qualifiedly, in so far as it is not the case that Christ
pre-existed in virtue of his humanity.[63] (I deal with the question of these sorts
of qualifications—what the medievals called 'reduplication'—in section 2 of

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[58] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 11. 3, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 250). See too Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 14–16. un., n. 13 (Vatican,
v. 131–2).

[59] By 'substance-part', I mean to refer to something that is a complete substance—a complete
substance that is part of a more inclusive whole such as an accidental unity. I do not mean part of a
substance, since on Scotus's Aristotelian account of natural generation, all naturally generated material
substances have a part (matter) that pre-exists.

[60] Scotus's analysis here resembles the 'Abelardian predicates' appealed to by some modern philo-
sophers to solve certain identity problems particularly associated with Locke's account of personal iden-
tity, but—as the modern commentators note—of wider application than this: on Abelardian predicates,
see Harold W. Noonan, 'Constitution and Identity', *Mind*, 102 (1993), 133–46. The modern applica-
tion is to show how one object can have *prima facie* incompatible predicates without violating the indis-
cernibility of identicals. As we will see in a moment, Scotus could use the strategy to show how two
distinct objects (e.g. Socrates and white-Socrates) can be *prima facie* associated with exactly the same
substance sortal without violating the identity of indiscernibles. Scotus's discussion of the proposition
'A white man runs' in *In Periherm. (I)* 2. 7–10, nn. 4–6 (Wadding, i. 208b–9a) focuses on the unity of
the proposition rather than on issues of the sense of the predicate, and so is no help in confirming or
disconfirming my reading of the Christological material.

[61] There will presumably be properties of a substantial whole which will correspond on a one-to-one
basis with properties of an accidental whole. For example, suppose it is a property of white-Socrates
that he began to exist at time *t*; it too will be a property of Socrates that he began to be white at *t*.

[62] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 10 c (iii/1. 125b).

[63] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 10 ad 1 (iii/1. 125b); see too *ST* 3. 16. 11 c (iii/1. 126a b).

Chapter 8 below.) Scotus's claim that Christ began to be unqualifiedly, even though the principal part of Christ did not begin to be, entails a different referent: in this case, the whole that includes the Word and an assumed human nature as parts.[64] (There are good reasons for supposing that the view that I am ascribing to Scotus does not entail Nestorianism—the belief that there are two persons in Christ. I consider these in Part IV and in the Conclusion.)

The issue of the sense of the predicate term is raised acutely in the case of white-Socrates's being a man. White-Socrates can—or does—begin to exist without human parents. Perhaps diligent application of after-sun has helped restore Socrates to his white state, in which case white-Socrates begins to exist (again?).[65] But this beginning is clearly not the result of human parents, or of natural human generation. So it seems that there is a man—white-Socrates—whose causal origin is quite unlike that of other men—and quite unlike that of Socrates (who is supposedly the same man as white-Socrates). Scotus does not outline a solution to this. But presumably he could appeal to something similar to his suggestion in the case of beginning: the predicate 'is a man' does not have the same sense in the proposition 'white-Socrates is a man' as it does in the case of 'Socrates is a man'. Perhaps in the former case we could think of the sense as being 'is a man in part', or something of that nature; and we should construe the putative identity 'is the same man as Socrates' as 'is in part the same man as Socrates'. So Scotus has a solution to the identity problem: Socrates and white-Socrates are not the same man, because 'is man' as a predicate of 'Socrates' and 'white-Socrates' shifts its sense. White-Socrates is a man only in the sense of being man in part. (Not: lacking something required for being human, but: having other parts too.)

The closest Scotus comes to making this point explicitly is in the following passage:

(1.22) A concept that is not a *per se* unity is not predicated *per se* of anything that is one thing, and neither is any [*per se*] one [concept] predicated of it. So [the proposition 'Christ is a man'] is not entirely accidental, since the subject includes the predicate; but neither is it entirely *per se*, because the subject does not possess in itself utterly one concept. And it is claimed similarly for the following: 'a white man is coloured' [viz. in virtue of being white].[66]

The idea here is that the predicate term 'coloured', in its usual sense (where this sense entails that the concept 'coloured' is a *per se* unity), does not truly predicate 'white man' since 'coloured' is *per se* one concept, whereas 'white man' is not a *per se* unity. But clearly Scotus wants both predications (namely 'Christ is a man' and 'a white man is coloured') to be true. So he must be suggesting that, in these

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[64] I am aware that this reading is likely to be controversial, not least because Scotus does not draw out the implications of his position as explicitly as I am doing for him. A different reading would make Scotus more like Aquinas. But it seems to me that his treatment of these matters entails the view that I am ascribing to him. I consider more evidence in Ch. 5, sect. 3 below.

[65] On the possibility of temporally discontinuous existence in Scotus, see my 'Identity, Origin, and Persistence in Duns Scotus's Physics', *History of Philosophy Quarterly*, 16 (1999), 1–18, pp. 7–12.

[66] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 7. 1, n. 8 (Wadding, vii. 193).

contexts, the concepts 'man' and 'coloured' are not *per se* unities. And one way of satisfying this claim would be to argue that, in these contexts, 'man' means 'man in part', and 'coloured' likewise means 'white in part'. The relevant parts here, of course, are respectively the Word and the man: it is the Word that is that part of Christ (in this sense of 'Christ') that is man; and it is the man that is that part of the white man that is white. I will return to the Christological application of all this in more detail in Chapter 5.[67]

All of this raises the question why anyone should prefer (AU3) to (AU1), given that the coherent understanding of (AU3) requires so much philosophical and grammatical effort. One reason will be Aristotelian. According to Aristotle, the union of substance and accident is a *compositional* unity: the parts compose a whole. (AU1) does not allow for this. The point of (AU1) is that substance and accident do not compose an object at all. Scotus cites Aristotle in support of his claim that substance and accident form a composition;[68] indeed, it is precisely for this reason that he claims that an accidental unity is an object. There may be some secure philosophical intuitions behind this move, though I am not completely sure about this. Adopting (AU3) may be necessary for anyone who wants to be able to give an account of the unity of a substance and its accidents, given either (AI3) or (AI4)—given, in other words, that accidents are things. It seems hard to envisage how it could be the case that such an accident could be both really dependent on its substance in the relevant way, and really united to its substance in the relevant way, unless (AU3) is true. If (AU1) is true, there seems to be no way in which substance and accident could be components of one object, and thus no way in which the accident could really depend (in the relevant way) on its substance. (AU1) makes it look as though substance and accident together are no more than an aggregate; and this does not seem a sufficiently tight union by itself to allow for dependence or truth-making. It is in this sense, I think, that a case could be made for an inference from (AF3) to (AI3) or (on a different understanding of individuation) (AI4). There is room for doubt, however, since it may be that one of the principles (AF1)–(AF3) is sufficient to distinguish an accidental whole from an aggregate, setting aside any composition claims.

There is perhaps a Christological consequence of this (though I am less sure about this consequence than I am about the composition claim as applied to accidents), which is that if the Word and his individual human substance are to be united as

[67] Since only Scotus posits any sort of developed extra-mental distinction between Christ and the Word, I shall not be too careful about the way I use the term 'Christ' in what follows—it will, I hope, be obvious when I have Scotus's distinctive conception in mind. As we will see in the next chapter, for example, Aquinas insists that the difference between Christ and the Word is merely to do with the way in which the terms refer to the one object (the second person of the Trinity). But Scotus's reification of Christ's human nature is so clear, and his claim that Christ is a whole that includes parts so unequivocal, that I am fairly sure Scotus sees the difference between Christ and the Word as more than a merely linguistic matter. And unlike Aquinas, Scotus never claims that the distinction is merely linguistic. But there is room for disagreement here.

[68] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 2. 2, n. 7 (Wadding, vii. 76), citing Aristotle, *Metaph.* Z. 12 (1037^{b}14–20).

a person—as opposed to, say, an aggregate or merely accidental unit—then there must be *something* (not necessarily a person) that the Word and his human nature *compose*. This something will be Christ, the whole that consists of Word and human nature. As we have seen, this is in line with claims that I understand to be made by Scotus.

There is an important principle at stake in all of this, an existence principle which I shall label '(E)':

> (E) If a form F-ness is that in virtue of which something is F, then F-ness must itself exist

(where built into the notion of existence here is that of 'being an individual'). (E) turns out, as we shall see, to have some important Christological applications. Whether or not the various thinkers accept (E), I hope that the material in this chapter will provide a useful framework for assessing the Christological insights of the medievals. I indicated in my Introduction that there may be good reasons for accepting the basic medieval insight about the individuality and substantiality of the assumed nature. This does not mean that we need accept all the details of the different medieval accounts. (E) in fact is an excellent example of a principle that we should not accept, at least on the grounds offered by the medievals. As I have just tried to argue, however, there might be some other reasons for accepting it. But many of the arguments given in the Introduction allow us to infer the same conclusion as (E) does if applied to Christological matters—namely, that Christ's human nature is a substance.

I hope to show in the next few chapters that there is a wide variety of metaphysically sophisticated Christologies to be found in the Middle Ages, and that some of these Christologies are both philosophically and theologically defensible.

Chapter 2

THE CONCRETE WHOLE–
CONCRETE PART MODEL
PRO ET CONTRA

1. *PRO*: THOMAS AQUINAS

Aquinas unequivocally rejects the substance–accident analogy for the hypostatic union.[1] Some of his reasons are best explained historically, and I will return to a more detailed consideration of the historical position of Aquinas's distinctive theory at the end of this section. In *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas rejects the claim that the human nature is an accident of the Word on the grounds that such a claim would entail the Nestorian heresy. The argument has to be cobbled together from two different articles. When discussing Christ's *esse*, Aquinas makes it clear that the human nature's being an accident of the Word is logically equivalent to the human nature's being united to the Word accidentally. Thus, he claims,

(2.1) If the human nature came to the Son of God . . . accidentally, then we would have to posit two *esse* . . . just as two *esse* are posited in Socrates, one as he is white, and one as he is human.[2]

Aquinas here rejects the claim that there are two *esse*s in Christ in this way, on the grounds that it is false that the human nature is united to the Son of God accidentally. And the reasons he offers for rejecting the claim that the human nature is united to the Son of God accidentally have to do with his rejection of the *habitus* theory of the Incarnation suggested by Peter Lombard, discussed earlier in the *Summa Theologiae*. Clearly, Aquinas supposes that the claim that the human nature is united to the Son of God accidentally itself entails the *habitus* theory.[3] Why reject the *habitus* theory? Aquinas reasons, as we saw in Chapter 1, that this theory amounts to

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[1] At one point, he does allow the analogy some force. Significantly, however, none of the bases offered by Aquinas for the analogy carry any real *metaphysical* weight. Noting that, like an accident, the human nature comes to a being that is already complete in existence (Aquinas, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 3. 2 ad 1, n. 120 (iii. 247)), Aquinas immediately clarifies: unlike an accident, Christ's human nature is united in the *esse* of its subject: see Aquinas, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 3. 2 ad 2, n. 121 (iii. 247).
[2] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 17. 2 (iii/1. 111^b–112^a).
[3] Aquinas does not make this clear; but the structure of his argument, as I am outlining it, requires this presupposition. Aquinas makes it clear—as we saw in the previous chapter—that the rejection of the *habitus* theory is sufficient for a rejection of the accidental union claim. So the accidental union claim entails the *habitus* theory.

some version of the Nestorian heresy. According to the Nestorian heresy, as Aquinas presents it, the union between the divine person and the human nature has five elements: (1) the Word indwells the human nature; (2) the Word and his human nature are united in will; (3) the Word uses his human nature as an instrument in operation; (4) the human nature is accorded equal dignity with the Word; (5) predicates of one component can be only equivocally attributed to the other.[4] As Aquinas notes, these views entail an accidental union.[5] The *habitus* theory, which reduces the union to the first of these Nestorian claims, is clearly a version of this heresy.

Aquinas sometimes offers more straightforward arguments against the substance–accident analogy. These arguments are more conceptually challenging. (We could easily reject the complex argument from *Summa Theologiae*, just given, merely by resisting the inference from accidental union to *habitus* theory.) The best examples are found in *Summa contra Gentiles*. First, no divine person could be the subject of an accident.[6] Aquinas's reason for this claim is that (AF2) is a necessary feature of the possession of an accident: the possession of an accident entails the actualization of a passive potency. But God is pure act, and contains no passive potencies.[7] Secondly, the human nature is a substance; and no such composite object can be an accident.[8]

Central to Aquinas's rejection of the substance–accident analogy is his rejection of the possible applicability of (AF2)—a necessary feature of accident-possession— in the case of the hypostatic union. Aquinas proposes a replacement model which is not open to the objections which in his view the substance–accident model faces. The proposed model is the union between a concrete whole and a concrete part of that whole.

According to Aquinas, a union between a concrete whole and its parts does not entail the actualization of any passive potency in the concrete whole. A concrete part does not contribute any *esse* to its *suppositum*. Rather, the concrete parts of a *suppositum*—Aquinas's examples in *Summa Theologiae* are heads, bodies, souls, hands, feet, and eyes—are such that they together compose the one *esse* of the whole concrete *suppositum*:

(2.2) Having a head (*esse capitatum*), being bodily (*esse corporeum*), and being animate (*esse animatum*) all pertain to the one person of Socrates; and therefore from all these there is made just one *esse* in Socrates.[9]

Aquinas is clear that the composition involved here should be reduced to some sort of relation; but he is rather agnostic on the sort of composition relation involved:

(2.3) If it should happen that, after the constitution of the person of Socrates, there should come to Socrates hands, or feet, or eyes (as happens in the case of someone born blind),

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[4] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 6 (iii/1. 17ª).   [5] Ibid.
[6] Aquinas, *ScG* 4. 41, n. 3792 (ed. Petrus Marc and others, 3 vols. (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1961–7), iii. 330ᵇ).
[7] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 3. 6 (i/1. 19ᵇ).   [8] Aquinas, *ScG* 4. 41, n. 3792 (iii. 330ᵇ).
[9] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 17. 2 (iii/1. 112ª).

there would not accrue to Socrates another *esse* from these, but only a relation to these things, since he would be said to be (*esse*) not only in virtue of those things which he already had, but also according to those things which came to him later.[10]

As we have seen, Aquinas is clear that concrete parts do not actualize any passive potency in their wholes. But Aquinas still wants a concrete part to be a truth-maker. Aquinas wants the truth-making functions of a concrete part to be explained by its sharing in the personal *esse* of its whole. Thus, as we have seen, Aquinas explains a substance's 'being headed' (*esse capitatum*), for example, by appealing to the fact that the substance's head shares in the personal *esse* of the whole. At one point, Aquinas makes the relevant truth-making claim explicitly:

(2.4) All those things which do not subsist in themselves, but rather in another and with another—whether they are accidents or substantial forms or *any kind of part*—do not have *esse* such that they themselves are. But *esse* is attributed to them in another way, namely as that by which something is.[11]

So in the case of concrete parts, but *not* in the case of accidents, Aquinas will allow truth-making without actualization of potency. It is important to keep in mind that Aquinas seems to want to say that the truth-making function of concrete parts—their *esse*, in his terminology—is reducible to their being parts of the personal *esse* of the whole of which they are parts. Whatever *esse* they have is ultimately just the *esse* of the whole: thus, according to (2.2) the *esse* of a concrete part just is part of the *esse* of the whole.

I will explore below why this should be. But before we carry on, it is perhaps worth introducing a few new principles to express this claim of Aquinas's. As we have seen, Aquinas accepts (AF1)–(AF3). Furthermore, as we have seen, Aquinas is happy to explain (AF3) in terms of (AF2). Clearly, we can formulate analogous principles about concrete parts and their wholes:

> (CF) For any concrete part *p* and any whole *w* of which *p* is an integral part,
> (1) *p* depends on *w*
> (2) *p* actualizes passive potency in *w*
> (3) (having-)*p* is a truth-maker, such that *w* has *p*.

I think that Aquinas's talk of a concrete part sharing in the existence of its *suppositum* should be taken to signal—among other things—that Aquinas is happy to accept some form of (CF1).[12] Aquinas, as we shall see in a moment, accepts (CF3) but not (CF2). Aquinas rejects (CF2) by means of his claim that concrete parts,

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Aquinas, *Quod.* 9. 3 (ed. Raymundus Spiazzi (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1949), 181ᵃ), my italics.

[12] We need to be careful about an over-hasty ascription of (CF1) to Aquinas. After all, Aquinas often claims that a whole depends on its parts: see e.g. Aquinas, *ST* 1. 3. 7 c (i/1. 19ᵃ). But, as we shall see in a moment, Aquinas is clear that integral parts fail to retain their identity if separated from their whole; and he spells out this failure in terms of their gaining new *esse*. So the existence of a whole is a necessary condition for the existence of the part. (A separated part is a new object, not just an old object under a new description.) I take it that a sufficiently careful construal of (CF1) will allow Aquinas to assert it without inconsistency.

unlike accidents, are united to a *suppositum* 'in its personal *esse*'.[13] Accidents are not like this—they contribute *esse* to their *suppositum*. I will try to offer some reasons for this in a moment.

It seems to me that we can say a little more about this dependence thesis, not least because it looks as though it might be reducible to a more basic claim about the identity of the integral parts of a substance. The crucial issue is whether or not the parts of a substance can in some sense count as *things*. Aquinas's claim that a concrete part shares in the *esse* of its substance might turn out to be a way of denying that parts are things in the required sense. In this case, I think we might reasonably want to spell the dependence claim (**CF1**) out in terms of a more basic claim: concrete parts are not things at all; as such, their existence is just the existence of the thing of which they are parts.

What does Aquinas think? He is quite clear that concrete parts do not, for example, have a substantial form other than the substantial form of the whole.[14] Equally, the separation of a concrete part from its whole entails the destruction of the part.[15] The dead head in the basket next to Charles I's execution block, for example, is a substance that is identical in no respect with Charles I or any of his parts (even though it might share the same matter as the head that was Charles's). The concrete parts of an object are not themselves things.

But Aquinas's claims about Christ's human nature having no *esse* of its own amount to more than just this. Recall that, as I am reading him, Aquinas wants to contrast concrete parts with accidents: accidents have some *esse* of their own; concrete parts do not. The *esse* that is under discussion in (**2.2**) and (**2.4**)—the relevant passages here—is truth-making *esse*, and the claim is that concrete parts do, and accidents do not, derive their truth-making function from the whole substance to which they belong. Concrete parts really have truth-making *esse*, but this *esse* is proper not to

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[13] On this, see e.g. Aquinas, *ST* 3. 17. 2 c (iii/1. 112ª), where Aquinas draws his analogy between the assumed human nature and concrete parts, noting that, like concrete parts, the assumed nature does not cause any 'new personal *esse* to come [to the *suppositum*], but only a new relation of the preexisting personal *esse* to the assumed nature'. For an excellent discussion of union in personal *esse*, and its differences from union merely in person (such as can be satisfied by accidents too), see Gorman, 'Thomas Aquinas on the Metaphysics of the Hypostatic Union', unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston College, 1997, ch. 3. It seems to me that we should understand union in personal *esse* to be a way of referring specifically to the union between an integral whole and its integral parts.

[14] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 76. 8 c (i/1. 368ª ᵇ).

[15] Aquinas, *In Gen. corr.* 1. 15, n. 108 (*In Aristotelis Libros de Caelo et Mundo, de Generatione et Corruptione, Meteorologicorum Expositio*, ed. Raymundus M. Spiazzi (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1952), 380ª ᵇ); see especially 'no part of an animal remains . . . over death' (p. 380ᵇ). For a useful discussion of these matters—one on which I depend in part here—see Robert Pasnau, 'Olivi on the Metaphysics of the Soul', *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, 6 (1997), 109–32, pp. 128–9, though Pasnau's otherwise excellent discussion is marred by a failure to realize that all forms of atomism were rejected by the medieval Aristotelians. Aquinas's account is not quite as clean as I have been presenting it thus far. In particular, Aquinas claims that a head is a *hoc aliquid*—a 'this something', a substance-like thing that is nevertheless, in virtue of its being a part, not a complete substance: see Aquinas, *ST* 1. 75. 2 ad 1 (i/1. 352ª).

them but to the whole of which they are parts.[16] Part of what Aquinas is saying, in more modern language, is that parts are not instantiations of an essence independently of the whole of which they are parts. It is the whole things that are instantiations of essences.

Aquinas uses the analogy of concrete whole and concrete part to help understand the hypostatic union:

(2.5) Since the human nature is united to the Son of God hypostatically or personally . . . and not accidentally, it follows that no new personal *esse* comes to him in virtue of the human nature, but only a relation of the preexisting personal *esse* to the human nature, such that the person can now be said to subsist not only according to the divine nature, but also according to the human.[17]

Importantly, Aquinas does not wish to deny that the human nature is in some sense a truth-maker; just that it is so in virtue of actualizing any passive potency in the Word. Aquinas accepts (CF3): passage (2.2) above makes it clear that concrete parts are truth-makers in the sense that, to use the terminology of my (CF3), 'having-*p*' is a truth-maker—as (2.2) puts it, 'being *p*-ed' (e.g. *esse capitatum*), or, more succinctly, '*p*-izing'. (As I will show below, Aquinas's critics were very unhappy with this claim of Aquinas's.) Aquinas's claim is that concrete parts are truth-makers without being potency-actualizers. In passage (0.3) above he makes just the same sort of claim about Christ's human nature, which he unequivocally states to have *esse* in the sense of being that in virtue of which something has (some sort of) *esse*. But again, we should understand this with a *caveat*: the *esse* of the human nature is not distinct from the personal *esse* of the whole—it is, as it were, a part of this personal *esse*.

Aquinas holds that the human nature, like a concrete part, is a truth-maker without being a potency-actualizer. Clearly, there are several advantages to Aquinas's

[16] I find it hard to understand this Thomist claim. Aquinas wants to hold—if I have understood him correctly—that it is my substance that is formally responsible for my having the concrete parts I have—that is, in other words, the truth-maker for my having the concrete parts I have. But this cannot be right, since this would seem to make my substance sufficient for my possessing a hand—a clearly falsifiable claim. There is an exegetical difficulty here, which is whether Aquinas means to claim that there is one *esse* merely of the *suppositum*, or whether he wants somehow to claim that there is one *esse* of the two natures too. As I have noted above, Aquinas holds in e.g. (2.4) that the human nature of Christ is a truth-maker, and in this sense has *esse*: it is that by which (*id quo*) something is human. The question is this: does it have this *esse* in some sense derivatively from the divine person, in line with (2.5) and (2.6) below, or should we suppose that these latter two passages are merely ways of asserting that the human nature is not an object over and above the divine person? This seems to me an open question, though it should be clear that I am inclined to prefer that (2.5) and (2.6) make the stronger claim that the nature's truth-making function too derives from the divine person. Aquinas could use this to buttress his claim that the human nature is a truth-maker without thereby communicating *esse* to the divine person. And this allows too a clear distinction between this case and the case of the relation between an accident and a substance: an accident is a truth-maker by communicating a certain sort of *esse* to a substance; a concrete part is a truth-maker by sharing in the *esse* of the substance.

[17] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 17. 2 (iii/1. 112ᵃ). Of course, the model is only that, a model; Aquinas is explicit in denying that the human and divine natures could in fact be parts of Christ: see *ST* 3. 2. 4 obj. 2 and ad 2 (iii/1. 15ᵇ). Of course, the less the natures are seen as parts, the less Aquinas is able to give an obviously coherent account of the hypostatic union.

subtle and sophisticated model. Concrete parts are, like the human nature of Christ and unlike accidents, hylomorphically composite things. And—perhaps more significantly—Aquinas's utilization of this model allows him to posit a union far closer than a merely accidental one. As we shall see in the next chapter, thinkers who are unhappy in principle (even if not in practice) with the substance–accident model—Bonaventure, for example—are unhappy with it precisely because the union it seems to involve is not tight enough. The spectre of the *habitus* theory is doubtless in the background here.

But the advantages of Aquinas's account come at a high price—a price which (as we shall see later in this chapter) other theologians refused to pay. To see what this price is, we need to look more closely at Aquinas's reasons for believing that the concrete whole–concrete part model avoids the actualization worries which he associates with the substance–accident model. Why should Aquinas believe that concrete parts compose the one *esse* of a *suppositum*, rather than contributing new *esse* in the manner of an accident? Why, in other words, should he deny an inference from **(CF3)** to **(CF2)**?

During his career Aquinas offered at least two different answers. As we shall see, the unsatisfactoriness of the proposed answers led Aquinas temporarily to abandon his distinctive Christology altogether, though (as we shall also see) he remained ultimately convinced of its superiority over rival accounts.

The first answer can be found in two early works, both dating from the 1250s: the *Sentence* commentary and the ninth *Quodlibet*. In these accounts, Aquinas wants to claim that the reason why a concrete part fails to contribute *esse* to its *suppositum* —and hence why **(CF2)** is false—is that concrete parts are part of the *nature* of the *suppositum*. For example:

(2.6) Parts of substances, *even though they belong to the nature* of subsisting things, do not themselves subsist, but exist in another.[18]

The sorts of thing Aquinas is prepared to countenance as parts in this passage explicitly include hands, feet, and bones. The claim, on the face of it, is that these parts are essential; and that it is for this reason that they do not actualize any potency in their *suppositum*. Presumably, this account could be undergirded by the explanatorily basic claim that the hands, feet, and bones of a human substance do not have any form other than the form of the human body. (Having hands, feet, and bones is just part of what is loosely required for being human.)

This, of course, is just the sort of thing Aquinas should say to allow him a philosophically principled way of accepting **(AF2)** while rejecting **(CF2)**. In both of the early works I am discussing here, Aquinas makes similar claims with regard to the hypostatic union. For example, in the *Sentence* commentary, Aquinas claims that the divine and human natures are analogous to constitutive parts of the Word.[19] In the ninth *Quodlibet*, Aquinas argues that the divine and human natures in Christ

[18] Aquinas, *Quod.* 9. 2 (p. 179ᵇ), my italics.   [19] Aquinas, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 2. 2, n. 82 (iii. 239).

are *integral parts* of the *suppositum*[20]—where an integral part is understood to be a concrete non-accidental constitutive part.[21] The trouble with this account of Aquinas's is the apparent falsity of the claim that a part is not an instantiation of an essence. Non-essential parts would seem to be instantiations of essences; or at least, there are some parts the possession of which is not required for a substance's being an instantiation of an essence. Even if my legs are not legs unless attached to me, I am certainly a human being without being attached to my legs. So there must be a reasonable sense in which my (attached) legs are instantiations of an essence—say, legginess—over and above the essence of humanity.

Theologically, Aquinas's refusal to countenance this sort of account appears to be disastrous. Aquinas's explicit reason here for accepting (**AF2**) and rejecting (**CF2**) is that concrete parts are essential. But the human nature cannot be an essential part of the divine *suppositum*, as Aquinas was well aware. Such a Christological claim would amount to some version of the monophysite heresy, according to which Christ's divine and human attributes will count as (in some sense) parts of one composite essence. Of course, Aquinas was well aware of the dangers of the monophysite heresy, and explicitly counters it, both in the *Sentence* commentary and in the ninth *Quodlibet*. But he does so only at the expense of consistency. Even in these two early works, Aquinas rejects various monophysite-like claims which look suspiciously close to positions he wants to affirm. For example, as we just saw, Aquinas claims that the two natures in Christ are like concrete constitutive (i.e. essential?) parts of the Word. But in the *Sentence* commentary, Aquinas carefully rejects the claim that the divine *suppositum* is in any sense composed of the conjunction of concrete parts;[22] and in the *Quodlibet* he denies that the human nature is a constitutive part of the divine *suppositum*.[23]

Aquinas's account, in these two early works, seems in the final analysis unsatisfactorily ambiguous, his preferred model for the hypostatic union turning out on inspection to pull in a direction away from Chalcedonian orthodoxy. In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas suggests a second, rather different, way of underpinning the concrete whole–concrete part analogy. But, as I shall try to show, it hardly leaves Aquinas any better off theologically.

The early Aquinas buttressed the concrete whole–concrete part analogy by seemingly countenancing the suggestion that the relevant sorts of concrete part are necessary parts. In the account in the *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas is more careful to distance himself from any such suggestion. For example, he avoids any suggestion that parts such as hands could be essential to a substance. Thus, in passage (**2.3**), Aquinas makes it clear that the correct analogue for the hypostatic union is the addition of a part 'after the constitution of a person'—a person is *already complete* without her hand. This makes it look as though Aquinas has lost any principled

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[20] Aquinas, *Quod.* 9. 3 (p. 181ᵃ).

[21] For a concrete integral part as constitutive part see Aquinas, *In Sent.* 3. 33. 3. 1, sol. 1, n. 268 (iii. 1073); for the contrast with accidental parts, see Aquinas, *Quod.* 9. 3 (p. 181ᵃ).

[22] Aquinas, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 2. 3, n. 95 (iii. 241–2).   [23] Aquinas, *Quod.* 9. 2 ad 1 (pp. 179ᵇ–180ᵃ).

reason he might have for wanting to deny that a concrete part such as a hand con-
tributes *esse* to its *suppositum*; that is to say, Aquinas seems to have sacrificed the
principle which will allow him to accept **(AF2)** while denying **(CF2)**. In *Summa
Theologiae* 3. 2. 6 ad 2, however, Aquinas suggests a new principle:

(2.7) That which comes after complete *esse* comes accidentally unless it is brought into
communion with that complete *esse*.[24]

The image of 'communion in *esse*' does not occur in earlier accounts, and clearly
represents an attempt to clarify the account in a way which can avoid both mono-
physitism and a merely accidental union.

But what exactly is this communion in *esse*? The term '*communio*' has a variety
of meanings in Aquinas's writings.[25] But Aquinas, in the passage I am discussing
here, helpfully gives an example of the sort of thing he means. At the resurrection
of the body, a human soul reassumes its body. The body begins to share in the *esse*
of the soul without itself giving any new *esse* to the soul.[26] This example clearly
avoids some of the pitfalls of the hand analogy. But if the body–soul analogy is taken
seriously, it makes the case in favour of Aquinas's monophysitism look rather strong.
Body and soul are two constituent parts of a human person,[27] and they are essen-
tial parts.[28] Equally, the crucial claim here is that a body has just *one* (substantial)
form—a claim which can easily be used to provide a philosophically convincing
buttress for the claim that body and soul share in *esse*. This, of course, cannot be
relevant to the case of the hypostatic union, since Aquinas is clear that there are
two forms in Christ: the divinity and the human soul.

   (2.7) is interesting for another reason too, one that takes us to the heart of Aquinas's
whole–part Christology. For **(2.7)** marks a distinct attempt to limit the applicab-
ility of the whole–part analogy, and to do so in a fundamentally confusing way.
According to **(2.7)**, the Word without his human nature is *complete*. To that extent,

   [24] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 6 ad 2 (iii/1. 19ᵃ).
   [25] I discuss some of its senses in my 'Aquinas on Nature, Hypostasis, and the Metaphysics of the
Incarnation', *The Thomist*, 60 (1996), 171–202, p. 195.
   [26] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 6 ad 2 (iii/1. 19ᵃ ᵇ).   [27] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 5 obj. 2 and ad 2 (iii/1. 16ᵃ ᵇ).
   [28] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 75. 4 (i/1. 353ᵇ). It is generally acknowledged that Aquinas's increased knowledge
of the Greek Fathers during the 1260s allowed him to see that the Lombard's first and third
Christological theories were in effect Nestorian, and thus that Aquinas comes to an increased aware-
ness of the requirements of Chalcedon. See e.g. Joseph Wawrykow, 'Wisdom in the Christology of Thomas
Aquinas', in Kent Emery, Jr., and Joseph Wawrykow (eds.), *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans:
Representations of Christ in the Texts and Images of the Order of Preachers*, Notre Dame Conferences in
Medieval Studies, 7 (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1998), 175–96, pp. 187–8; still
useful is Ignaz Backes, *Die Christologie des hl. Thomas von Aquin und die greischischen Kirchenväter*
(Paderborn: Schöningh, 1931), esp. pp. 192–212. It is clearly true that Aquinas is more secure about
the three theories later in his life, and it is doubtless the case that he came to this view as a result of his
reading in the Greek Fathers, particularly Cyril. The first and third Christological theories can ultim-
ately be traced to various insights of Augustine, writing before the fifth-century Christological
settlement. But I hope that my account makes it clear that there is no substantive shift in Aquinas's
Christology. All that changes is Aquinas's grasp of the limits of orthodoxy. My argument is that Aquinas's
Christology is consistently close to monophysitism; to this extent, he does not need Cyril to warn him
of the dangers of Nestorianism.

he already has all the parts he ever has (that is to say, no parts at all, since as we shall see in Chapter 6 below he is identical with the utterly simple divine nature). This leaves the status of the human nature relative to the Word unclear. Elsewhere, Aquinas explicitly denies a whole–part analogy, arguing that the person of Christ is composite not in terms properly of having parts but merely in terms of the numerical distinction of his two natures.[29] (We should recall that the concrete whole–concrete part model is no more than a model—it should not be taken as implying that Aquinas accepts a parts Christology, for example.[30]) So perhaps we should claim that, while the two natures in Christ are not parts of his, at least the human nature is sufficiently like a part for us to make use of whole–part analogies in understanding the hypostatic union. We could think of the human nature as like a part—as not being the whole Christ—even if there is no sense in which Christ has any other parts (his relation to his divine nature will not be construed along the lines of a whole–part relation, even if his relation to his human nature can be).[31] Still, the more the precise applicability of the whole–part model is denied, the harder it will be to make any sense of—or at least give any content to—the claim that Christ's human nature shares in the *esse* of the Word.

One possible solution to this would be to claim that the Word—the second person of the Trinity—lacks parts (and is thus complete without his human nature), whereas Christ—the whole of human nature is a part—does not. As we shall see in Chapter 5, Scotus makes this sort of move later, arguing that the Word and his human nature are parts of Christ. But this solution—if indeed it is a solution to anything[32]—is not open to Aquinas, because Aquinas is explicit that Christ is identical with the Word, such that there is a sense in which the human nature is as much a constituent of the Word as it is of Christ.[33] Equally, Aquinas is clear that

[29] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 4 ad 2 (iii/1. 15ᵇ); see too Aquinas, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 2. 3 ad 4, n. 99 (iii. 242). On the basis of texts such as these Chris Hughes has argued that there is no sense for Aquinas in which Christ is made up of divinity and humanity as parts (see Hughes, *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God: An Investigation in Aquinas' Philosophical Theology*, Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 246–7). In Ch. 8 below I shall discuss Aquinas's analysis of Christological predication, and we shall see there the extent to which Aquinas's analysis relies on the whole–part model.

[30] In this respect, Aquinas is unlike those thinkers who accept a substance–accident Christological model. As we get further through my period, and certainly by the 1280s, people who accept the substance–accident model are prepared to allow it some real explanatory power, and to delineate precisely those ways in which the hypostatic union is and is not like a substance–accident relation.

[31] There will be limits to how far this understanding could be pushed. I have been arguing that the most important feature of the whole–part analogy for Aquinas is that it allows him to give a sense to the claim that the human nature is a truth-maker without being a potency-actualizer.

[32] Scotus, as we shall see, does not make his claims about Christ in order to solve any questions of unity, but rather merely to draw out certain consequences of his understanding of the hypostatic union.

[33] See e.g. Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 5 c (iii/1. 103ᵃ ᵇ), where Aquinas notes that both 'Christ' and 'Son of God' refer to the one person, although in doing so they have a different manner of signifying (that is, such that we use the two terms differently); and *ST* 3. 16. 6 ad 3 (iii/1. 104ᵃ), where Aquinas makes it clear that it is the Son of God (the Word) who is made human by being united to the human nature. One passage that might on the face of it offer evidence to the contrary is *De Unione* 1 ad 15 (as found in the revised version to be printed in the critical Leonine edition): 'It is not necessary that the [human] nature is simpler and more formal than the Word in itself; but it is simpler and more formal than that

there is a legitimate sense in which the Word is composite, even though (as we have just seen) this composition is not properly a composition of parts.[34] And when giving his official definition of person (passage (0.2) above), Aquinas refers to natures in general as *parts* of their persons (and thus, in the case of Christ, he implicitly refers to the human nature as a part of the Word). The overall impression seems to me to be of an account that remains in several central respects aporetic.

It is perhaps not surprising that Aquinas's use of the whole–part model raises the sorts of problems that it raises. After all, as I suggested in Chapter 1, the problem with any parts Christology is that the parts must be such as to be parts of a *person* (or substance) without thereby being parts of a nature (or essence). Integral parts—heads, hands, and so on—look to be the parts of a nature, and for this reason parts of a person. (More precisely, the reason why such concrete parts are parts of a person is that the abstract properties of which they are the correlates— being-headed, being-handed, and so on—are parts of a nature.) And the Christological application of this will be monophysitism—just the problem that it seems to me Aquinas's Christology is most susceptible to. Suppose that the whole constituted by the relevant concrete parts is not a nature. The most obvious alternative sort of whole is an aggregate. An aggregate as such is not a person or substance. And the Christological correlate to this will be Nestorianism. As we shall see below, Aquinas's opponents all draw attention to the inapplicability of the whole–part model, on the grounds that it will not yield the appropriate sort of whole—namely, a person with irreducibly two natures: natures that are not themselves parts of some third sort of thing or nature.

In the next section, I shall look at some medieval responses to Aquinas's account, beginning with a response flirted with by Aquinas, albeit briefly. Before I do this, I will just mention briefly some possible origins of Aquinas's theory. On the one hand, it is clear that the systematic development of the concrete whole– concrete part analogy is—in the thirteenth century—unique to Aquinas and his followers. On the other hand, there are some earlier twelfth-century antecedents: most notably the growth theories of the *nominales*, ultimately deriving from Abelard's parts Christology.[35] Equally, the analogy of the addition of an integral part (the grafting

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man who is the Word made flesh, and whom it constitutes in so far as he is man' (I am grateful to Michael Gorman for drawing this passage to my attention; see Gorman, 'Christ as Composite according to Aquinas', *Traditio*, 55 (2000), 143–57, p. 150, n. 12. The revised text is significantly different from that in current editions such as the Marietti manual edition which I have been using here: see Aquinas, *Qu. Disp.* ii. 425ᵃ). One possible reading of this is that Christ, and not the Word, is constituted by human nature. Since Aquinas does not distinguish Christ from the Word, however, I do not think that this is the best available reading. Perhaps we should understand the passage to mean that, if we deliberately exclude the human nature from consideration, the Word is prior to the humanity, although the Word as man is not prior to the humanity for the reason that the *Word* is constituted as human by the humanity. On the question of Aquinas's talk about parts and wholes in this context, see also Bernard Bro, 'La notion métaphysique de tout et son application au problème théologique de l'union hypostatique', *Revue Thomiste*, 68 (1968), 181–97, 357–80, pp. 189–96. Bro offers a rather different analysis of the issues from the one I have been arguing for here.

    [34] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 4 obj. 1 and c (iii/1. 15ᵃ ᵇ).   [35] On this, see Ch. 1, n. 3 above.

of a branch onto a tree, for example) was something of a commonplace in early thirteenth-century Christology.[36] To this extent, it seems to me that Aquinas's Christology ultimately looks backwards to mid-twelfth-century scholastic debates and earlier in a way that none of the other Christologies that I consider here do. Thus, Aquinas accepts that the human nature is a constituent of a composite whole, where the identity of the composite whole is dependent on one of its parts (that is to say, on the pre-existing divine person), and in line with this Aquinas is inclined to give some sort of *mereological* description of a person as an object that somehow includes its various non-essential properties, just as an incarnate divine person includes its non-essential human nature: see e.g. (0.2) and (12.1). The later twelfth century began the development of the substance–accident model, dissociating it from the *habitus* theory though without any philosophical basis for so doing. It is the substance–accident model that dominates the thirteenth century too.

One further source could be mentioned, and that is Albert the Great. Albert's position relative to Aquinas is somewhat ambivalent. In a disputed question from 1247–8,[37] Albert claims that the human nature has the mode of an accident, and that it is able to communicate *esse* to the divine person without inhering in that person (just as the divine nature can communicate *esse* to the divine person without inhering in that person).[38] Clearly, this sort of Christology is far removed from Aquinas's, and cannot count as a plausible source for Aquinas here. In the roughly contemporary *Sentence* commentary (*c.*1246–9), however, Albert adds an important observation that makes him slightly closer to the sort of view that Aquinas takes a couple of years later. Having argued that the *esse* of a nature is multiplied in Christ, since both natures give *esse* to the Word (both natures, in my terminology, are truth-makers), Albert notes:

(2.8) If we want to speak properly, then we would say that it has, considered in this way, not two *esse*s but one *esse* that has a two-fold role in the constitution of *esse*. The *esse* of a nature is the *esse* that the nature has in itself, for every thing (*res*) has its *esse*; the *esse* of the human nature in Christ is not the *esse* of the divine nature, and neither are these *esse*s two in the way that the natures [are].[39]

The idea is that the two *esse*s of the two natures constitute one whole *esse*—the *esse* of the person, presumably—without the natures themselves constituting some third nature. Setting aside Albert's failure to appeal explicitly to a concrete part model, the similarity with Aquinas is quite striking: the constitution of the whole *esse* of the person from components. Of course, there is a difference: Albert's claim that the components in some sense retain their own *esse*. Aquinas's whole–part model

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[36] I give references to Bonaventure and the *Sum. fr. Alex.* for this at n. 5 of Ch. 3.

[37] Franz Pelster, 'Die Quaestio Alberts des Großen über das Eine Sein in Christus nach Cod. lat. 4245: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Problems', *Divus Thomas* (Freiburg), 26 (1948), 3–25; for the date, see p. 8.

[38] Albert, *Qu.* (p. 25). As we shall see in the next few chapters, this sort of claim is consistently made by sophisticated defenders of the substance–accident model.

[39] Albert, *In Sent.* 3. 6. c. 5 (Borgnet, xxviii. 132ᵇ).

might be thought of as plugging this gap in Albert's theory, entailing that the parts constitute the *esse* of the whole without themselves retaining—as constituents—their proper *esse*.

2. *CONTRA*: (1) THOMAS AQUINAS

In two late discussions, neither of which we have considered thus far, Aquinas himself expresses some reservations about the concrete whole–concrete part analogy. He does so in two different ways, however, and the two discussions are worth looking at separately.

The first is found in *Compendium Theologiae* (1265–7). Here Aquinas's reservations about the analogy are fairly hesitant. He denies the force of the hand example. But he still thinks of the divine *suppositum* as analogous to an integral whole, so the shift from the accounts considered above cannot be regarded as great:

(2.9) If we consider Christ himself as a certain integral *suppositum* of two natures, then there will be just one *esse* in him, just as there is just one *suppositum*.[40]

Nevertheless, in the *Compendium* account Aquinas is prepared to countenance the substance–accident analogy too. This is on the face of it puzzling, since Aquinas gives no unequivocal indication that he wants to weaken his commitment to (AF2). But he does make the following remark: 'An accident is taken into the personality of its subject';[41] which perhaps makes one wonder whether Aquinas might want to replace (AF2) with a weaker principle, on which an accident is a truth-maker in virtue of its being some sort of part of its *suppositum*. (Of course, Aquinas holds that everything that is united to a *suppositum* exists *in* a *suppositum*; but his unusual talk here of something being 'taken into the personality' of a substance appears to suggest something stronger than this; it is certainly very reminiscent of his claim that a concrete part belongs to the personal *esse* of its whole.)

The overall picture to emerge from the *Compendium* account is far from clear. Certainly, Aquinas is later unequivocal about (AF2). We might think of the *Compendium* account as Aquinas's feeling his way towards a rather different sort of view, one which he defends fully in the disputed question *De Unione Verbi Incarnati* (spring 1272).[42] Assessing the *De Unione* account is not easy, and it has presented its

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[40] Aquinas, *CT* 1. 212, n. 418 (*Op. Theol.* i. 98ᵃ).   [41] Ibid. 1. 211 n. 413 (*Op. Theol.* i. 97ᵃ ᵇ).

[42] It is usual to regard the *Compendium* account as a version of the account defended in the works discussed in section 1 of this chapter. But I think that the dissimilarities between the *Compendium* and the other accounts should make us very wary of this sort of classification. The reason for the usual analysis is that, in all of these accounts Aquinas defends the claim that there is one *esse* in Christ (or at least, he defends the claim that the *suppositum* has only one *esse*), whereas in the account in *De Unione*, which I am about to look at, Aquinas seems to deny this. But this analysis glosses over some very significant metaphysical differences between the account in *Compendium Theologiae* and that in the other works. Concetta Luna has recently argued, on the basis of the chronology of the early works of Giles of Rome,

commentators with significant difficulties.[43] As in the *Compendium* account, only with more confidence, Aquinas rejects the analogy of concrete whole–concrete part:

(2.10) The human nature in Christ . . . exists in another, namely the hypostasis of the Word: not like an accident in a subject, or properly like a part in a whole, but by an ineffable assumption.[44]

In the accounts considered in section 1 above, Aquinas appeals to the concrete whole–concrete part analogy to explain how the human nature is a truth-maker: it is a truth-maker by sharing in the *esse* of its *suppositum*. In the *De Unione* account, Aquinas drops this explanation:

(2.11) Christ . . . has one *esse* essentially (*simpliciter*) in virtue of the one eternal *esse* of the eternal *suppositum*. But there is also another *esse* of this *suppositum*, not in so far as he is eternal, but in so far as he is made man temporally. This *esse*—even if it is not accidental *esse* (since 'man' is not predicated accidentally of the Son of God . . .)—is not however the principal *esse* of its *suppositum*, but secondary.[45]

It is hard to gauge, from such scant data, the extent to which this is supposed to represent a significant shift in theory. Presumably the claim that Christ's human nature contributes 'secondary *esse*' to the Word is no more than a way of claiming that the human nature is a truth-maker. So it should be understood along the lines of **(AF3)** or **(CF3)** without entailing either **(AF2)** or **(CF2)**. Nevertheless, there are two differences: first, and more importantly, Aquinas here holds that truth-making requires the communication of *esse*—if a nature is a truth-maker, then it must communicate *esse* to its *suppositum*; secondly, and as a consequence of this, the human nature's sharing in the existence of the *suppositum* is no longer either necessary or sufficient for its being a truth-maker. After all, Aquinas does not claim, in the *De Unione* account, that the human nature actually shares in the existence of the *suppositum*. On Aquinas's standard account, the human nature is a truth-maker in virtue of its dependence on the divine *suppositum*; in *De Unione*, the nature is a truth-maker in virtue of its communicating *esse* to the divine *suppositum*. The account

that *De Unione* should perhaps be dated as early as 1270. The *Reportatio* of Giles's *Sentence* commentary draws on material in *De Unione*. Since we know that Giles was revising book 1 of the commentary in 1271–3, we should perhaps date the *Reportatio* to 1269–71: see Luna, 'La *Reportatio* della lettura di Egidio Romano sul Libro III delle Sentenze (Clm. 8005) e il problema dell'autenticità dell' *Ordinatio*', *Documenti e Studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 1 (1990), 113–225; 2 (1991), 75–126, vol. 1, p. 129. But the grounds for dating *De Unione* to 1272 are reasonably secure (that others of Aquinas's late disputed questions are occasions for preparing topics for inclusion in the *Summa*, and that the early portions of the *tertia pars* date from 1272). There seems to me no objection to the thought that a thinker—particularly a writer with Giles's gift for working at speed—could be busy revising book 1 while delivering his lectures on books 3 and 4. So we should keep with the standard date for *De Unione*.

[43] For a useful summary of some of the different views that can be found in the literature, see Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines: A Study in Late Thirteenth-Century Philosophy* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 251.

[44] Aquinas, *De Unione* 2 (*Quaestiones Disputatae*, ed. R. M. Spiazzi and others, 2 vols. (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1949), ii. 427[b]).

[45] Aquinas, *De Unione* 4 (*Qu. Disp.* ii. 432[b]).

is agnostic to the extent that it is unclear how, given Aquinas's general emphasis, something can communicate *esse* to a *suppositum* without thereby actualizing any passive potency in the *suppositum*. The *De Unione* account of truth-making, in other words, successfully detaches truth-making from any theory of actualization, without committing itself to Aquinas's usual view in this context that the truth-making function is reducible to the nature's sharing in the existence of the *suppositum*. (This move is exactly analogous to the sort of claims made by those who accept the substance–accident analogy for the hypostatic union, as we shall see in the next few chapters.) On my reading of the *De Unione* account, then, the difference from other discussions of the hypostatic union in Aquinas does not lie in the claim that the human nature contributes secondary *esse* to the divine *suppositum*, since as far as I can tell this claim in the *De Unione* account entails no more than that the human nature is a truth-maker—a claim that Aquinas always accepted. The difference lies in his abandoning the claim that the human nature is a truth-maker precisely in virtue of its sharing in the *esse* of the *suppositum*.

By making this move, the *De Unione* account avoids the problems of the other accounts. It does this by a frank acknowledgement that the doctrine of the hypostatic union exceeds the possibilities of any philosophical explanation. No philosophical theory is adequate to the task of giving a coherent account of the hypostatic union. Aquinas cannot have found this conclusion agreeable, and in fact at more or less the same time as he was propounding it he was constructing the less agnostic 'communion in *esse*' account found in question two of the *tertia pars*.[46] This 'communion in *esse*' account, of course, represents a new way of trying to give a theologically acceptable reading to the concrete whole–concrete part analogy.

3. *CONTRA*: (2) MATTHEW OF AQUASPARTA

The first serious attempt to refute Aquinas's one-*esse* view came from Matthew of Aquasparta, some time between 1279 and 1287.[47] According to Matthew, the basic presupposition behind Aquinas's view is that there can be only one substantial form in a substance. As Matthew correctly notes, this unitarian claim is used by Aquinas to defend the claim that there can be only one substantial *esse* in a thing. The idea is that a thing's one substantial *esse* is had by it in virtue of its one substantial form.[48] Matthew holds that this view is 'frivolous',[49] and notes (wrongly) that it was

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[46] Aquinas left Paris shortly after 25 April 1272. According to Weisheipl, Aquinas could have completed no more than 'the first two or three questions of the *tertia pars* before leaving Paris' (James A. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought, and Works* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), 307). Needless to say, the communion in *esse* claim on the face of it looks consonant with the material in question seventeen of the *tertia pars*, but not with the account in *De Unione*. So his flirtation with the *De Unione* account must have been extremely brief. Perhaps we should think of it as a classroom experiment.

[47] For Matthew's life, see the introduction to *QDI*, p. 8*; for the date of *QDI*, see p. 11*.

[48] Matthew, *QDI* 9 (p. 182).   [49] 'Omnino videtur esse frivolus': Matthew, *QDI* 9 (p. 182).

condemned 'by the Parisian masters'.[50] His own theory is that there can be plurality of substantial forms in a substance, each hierarchically ordered to perfect a lower-order composite of matter and (lower-order) form. (The lowest form of all, of course, will perfect matter.) Each of these substantial forms contributes some sort of substantial *esse* to the whole; the highest gives *esse* simply speaking.[51] The idea is that it is in virtue of the highest form that we can claim that a substance possesses a *kind-nature*—that it is in virtue of the highest form that a substance is said to subsist.[52]

This clarification allows Matthew to show how there could be many substantial *esse*s in Christ without this compromising the *unity* of the incarnate Word. It thus allows Matthew to develop his own model for the hypostatic union. I examine Matthew's theory in the next chapter. But Matthew has some criticisms aimed more directly at three features of Aquinas's theory. (i) According to Aquinas, the human nature does not contribute any sort of *esse* to the divine person. But, Matthew argues, if this is true, then it is difficult to see how the human nature could be a truth-maker, and thus difficult to see how Christ could be said to be human at all. Aquinas's doctrine is for Matthew a version of the Docetic heresy:

(2.12) If [the human nature] does not give any existence, or make [the *suppositum*] be a man (*esse hominem*), then Christ is not really a man, which is utterly heretical and false.[53]

This objection gains its force from Matthew's presupposition that, if a substance is to be φ, this must be in virtue of φ-ness communicating *esse*—'being-φ'—to the substance. Aquinas, of course, certainly accepts this claim. But he does not regard the inherence of an accident as a good analogy for the hypostatic union. Instead, as we have seen, Aquinas can accept the analogous claim **(CF3)**, while rejecting **(CF2)**. Matthew's first objection, then, relies on the presupposition that there is no sense in which concrete parts are truth-makers. The possession of a part *p* by a substance *x* is not sufficient for us to be able to form true propositions of the form '*x p*-izes'. Aquinas would certainly disagree with this. But we could then ask Aquinas why the inherence of the *property* '*p*-izing' (not the *part p*) is not sufficient to entail **(CF2)**. And recall too that Aquinas's reply relies on our seeing the assumed nature as analogous to an essential part of its *suppositum*.

(ii) Aquinas's proposed account is that the divine person can be said to be human in virtue of a relation to the human nature analogous to the relation between a concrete whole and a concrete part. Although a concrete part does not contribute any

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[50] Matthew, *QDI* 9 (p. 182). The rogue Thomist position—that there can be only one substantial form in a substance—was indeed condemned, but not at Paris. Various versions of the unicity theory were condemned at Oxford in 1277 by Robert Kilwardby (see *Cartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed. H. Denifle and E. Chatelain, 4 vols. (Paris: Delalain, 1889–97), i. 599) and at Canterbury in 1286 by Pecham, where it was described as a new view (see *Registrum Epistolarum Fratris Johannis Peckham, Archiepiscopi Cantuarensis*, ed. C. T. Martin, 3 vols. Rolls Series, 66 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1882–5), iii. 921–3). The Canterbury condemnation, of course, almost certainly post-dates Matthew's disputed questions.

[51] Matthew, *QDI* 9 (p. 180).   [52] Ibid.   [53] Matthew, *QDI* 9 (p. 183).

sort of *esse* to its concrete whole, it can nevertheless be said to be a part of that whole in virtue of the relation obtaining between it and its whole. Matthew replies that, in this case,

(2.13) The proposition 'Christ is man' will be a relational predication. But this is false, because it is really a substantial one. Thus, [the divine person] does not acquire merely a relation, but this form or essence [viz. the human nature] really gives substantial existence, in virtue of which 'man' is predicated substantially of Christ.[54]

The idea is that, on Aquinas's view, we do not predicate concrete parts of a concrete whole substantially, but relationally. Thus, for example, we do not claim that Socrates *is* a hand, but that he *has* a hand. He does not, for example, instantiate his hand, but rather stands in some other sort of 'having'-relation to his hand. Conversely, we do not claim that Christ *has* a man, but that he *is* a man.[55] The objection is clearly a way of drawing attention to the unity problem that attaches to the whole–part model. Since monophysitism is false, it looks as though a whole–part model results in a merely aggregative union—a version, in other words, of the *habitus* theory.

(iii) On Aquinas's view, the human nature exists in virtue of its relation to the divine person: the person communicates its *esse* to the assumed nature. Matthew reasons that, in this case, the human nature has *esse* from the everlasting divine person. But according to Matthew this entails that the human nature is everlasting too.[56] And this looks suspiciously Docetic, as well as being factually false. (Jesus's human nature began to exist at its conception.) This criticism hardly seems fair to Aquinas. The addition of a concrete part does not entail that a completely new object exists—think of grafting a shoot onto a bush: this does not on the face of it entail that a new bush begins to exist.

4. *CONTRA*: (3) WILLIAM OF WARE

Perhaps the most sophisticated set of arguments against Aquinas's view comes from the Franciscan William of Ware, writing in the mid-1290s.[57] Like Matthew before

[54] Matthew, *QDI* 9 (p. 183).

[55] Aquinas has his own way of explaining this, but it does not seem obviously consistent with his concrete whole–concrete part analogy. It relies on being able to treat the human nature as an abstract property. On this, see Ch. 8.

[56] Matthew, *QDI* 9 (pp. 183–4).

[57] For a full bibliography on William of Ware, see conveniently Stephen D. Dumont, 'William of Ware, Richard of Conington and the *Collationes Oxonienses* of John Duns Scotus', in Ludger Honnefelder, Rega Wood, and Mechthild Dreyer (eds.), *John Duns Scotus: Metaphysics and Ethics*, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 53 (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1996), 59–85, p. 62, n. 13. For a list of questions in his *Sentence* commentary, see A. Daniels, 'Zu den Beziehungen zwischen Wilhelm von Ware und Johannes Duns Scotus', *Franziskanische Studien*, 4 (1917), 221–38. William's *Sentence* commentary exists in two versions, long and short. Ludwig Hödl has argued convincingly that the shorter version represents a school text, edited not by William but by later (i.e. early fourteenth-century) Franciscans. The long version is found in two manuscripts, the earlier and better

him, William ignores Giles of Rome's position, focusing instead on Aquinas's concrete whole–concrete part analogy.

(i) William's first and most important criticism of Aquinas's theory has some relation to Matthew's first objection, and to the major criticism found in Godfrey and Duns Scotus, which I examine in the next section. The criticism is directed explicitly against Aquinas's claim that the hypostatic union is like the union between a human body and one of its concrete parts—a hand:[58]

(2.14) I say that there is no likeness, since the human nature is a wholly different essence from the divine nature, and thus it necessarily has an *esse* other [than the divine], corresponding to it. But a hand is an integral part of a human being, and thus does not have an essence [that is] wholly different from the *esse* of the whole. For this reason it is brought under the *esse* of the whole. It can, however, be conceded that such a human being with a hand inserted would have more *esse*, just as more essence.[59]

What William wants to claim is that the only reason a concrete part like a hand is part of the existence of the whole is that a concrete part is a part (in some sense) of the essence of the whole (just as I have argued Aquinas himself implicitly held in his earlier exposition of his one-*esse* theory—most notably in *Quodlibet* 9). Applied to the human nature in the hypostatic union, Aquinas's analogy would amount to the claim that the human nature is a part of the Word's essence. And this, of course, would be a version of the monophysite heresy. (The last sentence of the quotation,

one of which is MS V. I use MS V where possible. But the state of the text in MS V is poor. So where the text in MS V is too garbled, I use manuscripts of the shorter version. For the whole issue, see Ludwig Hödl, 'Literar- und problemgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Sentenzkommentar des Wilhelm von Ware O. M. (nach 1305)', *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*, 57 (1990), 97–141.

[58] 'In supposito divino sunt duae naturae unitae modo essentiali non accidentali, cum haec sit maxima unio praeter unionem personarum in essentia. Unde quamvis in illis quae uniuntur accidentaliter possint poni plura esse, non tamen in illis quae uniuntur substantialiter. Exemplum: si aliquis homo crearetur sine manu et postea insereretur manus, manus illa sic inserta non haberet aliud esse actualis existentiae quam esse suppositi praecedentis. Ita est, ut dicunt, de natura humana quae quodammodo per unionem est inserta supposito divino, et per consequens non habebit aliud esse actualis existentiae quam suppositi divini': William, *In Sent.* 175 (MS M₂, fo. 111ᵛᵃ, slightly correcting MS M₁, fo. 159ʳᵇ). The text in MS V, fo. 117ᵛᵃ–118ʳᵃ is inferior. The reference in the first sentence is of course to the union of the divine persons in the divine essence.

[59] 'Dico quod non est simile, quia natura humana dicit aliam essentiam totaliter a natura divina, et ideo necesse est quod habeat aliud esse correspondens. Sed manus, cum sit pars integralis hominis, non habet essentiam totaliter differentem ab esse totius, et ideo fit sub esse totius. Potest tamen concedi quod talis homo cum manu inserta plus haberet de esse sicut et plus de essentia': William, *In Sent.* 175 (MS M₁, fo. 160ʳᵇ). See also the more extended version in MS V, fo. 118ᵛᵃ: 'Dicendum quod non est simile quia natura humana in Christo est una natura per se totalis et non pars integralis corporis, et ideo necessarium est quod habeat aliud esse correspondens. Manus autem, cum sit pars integralis hominis, non habet essentiam totaliter differentem ab essentia totius, et ideo fit sub esse totius, immo esset proportio similis si poneretur quod Deus crearet in materia formam quae est una natura totaliter alia; et tunc dicerem posito tali casu proportionato in materia quod forma sic creata in materia haberet esse actualis existentiae <aliud> ab esse actuali ipsius materiae primae creatae sive forma. Eodem modo dico in proposito de natura humana in Christo. Vel aliter dicendum quod sicut augmentaretur essentia actualis in homine si caretur ipsa manus sic augmentaret ipsum esse in quantum enim iste homo manatus habet modo manum et prius non habuit, habet plus de natura positiva. Similiter dico in proposito quod plus haberat de esse positivo.' William's neologism ('manatus') picks out nicely the truth-making feature of concrete parts.

I take it, is a way of saying that a hand, while not strictly a (logically) *necessary* part of the essence of humanity, is nevertheless a *natural* part of the essence of humanity, a part that human beings have unless prevented.) William's problem here is that it is hard to see how a parts Christology can be made to work unless monophysitism is true—that is to say, it is hard to see how the relevant parts can be made to compose a person unless they can be made to compose a nature.

(ii) One of Aquinas's motivations for accepting his theory, according (rightly) to William, is that it avoids the problem of the divine person's being in potency to human existence.[60] William replies with a standard claim made by upholders of the substance–accident model: the human nature is sustained by the divine person, but does not inform the divine person (it does not become a form of the divine person by actualizing any potency in the divine person).[61] I will return to this in the next chapter.

(iii) William's final objection does not focus on the concrete whole–concrete part analogy, but rather on Aquinas's claim that accepting this analogy entails accepting a one-*esse* Christology. According to William, Thomas holds that existence is a 'property (*proprietas*) of a *suppositum*'.[62] The sentiment, though not the way of putting it, is clearly Thomist. Aquinas talks about personal *esse* belonging to (being 'of') a *suppositum*, for example; he does not strictly speaking claim that it is a 'property' of a *suppositum*. According to William, however, while it is clearly true that personal *esse* belongs to *suppositum*, this does not preclude the parts of a whole having their own *esse*, as objects, united in a whole.[63]

I suspect that there is a deep metaphysical gulf here between Aquinas and William. As we saw above, Aquinas denies that the concrete parts of a thing are themselves things. He does this by claiming that the concrete parts share in the *esse* of their whole. William's claim—that the parts have their own *esse* in the whole—signals a deeper dissension about the status of the parts of a whole. For William, the concrete parts of a whole are themselves things, and William thus accepts the applicability of something analogous to the existence principle (E) from Chapter 1 to concrete parts.[64] (Both Godfrey and Scotus, whom I examine in the next

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[60] 'Quantumcumque ita est quod unum ponitur esse in alio, illud quod ponitur esse in illo se habet per modum actus et illud in quo ponitur inesse per modum potentiae. Quare si natura humana poneretur esse aliquod inesse supposito Verbi, haberet natura humana rationem actus et suppositum divinum rationem potentiae. Consequens est falsum quare et cetera': William, *In Sent.* 175 (MS V, fo. 117vb).

[61] For the text, see Ch. 3, n. 49.

[62] 'Esse est proprietas suppositi et existentis. Si ergo est duplex esse, ergo duplex suppositum et duplex existens, sive duo supposita et duo existentia. Consequens est falsum, quare et cetera': William, *In Sent.* 175 (MS V, fo. 117vb).

[63] 'Omne esse est ipsius suppositi vel per se vel per accidens. Si esse sit ipsarum partium, quia partes sint in supposito, dicitur esse suppositi. Modo autem dico breviter quod illud quod assumitur est unum solum esse subsistentiae quod est ipsius suppositi modo tali, et tali esse geminato geminatur ipsum suppositum': William, *In Sent.* 175 (MS V, 118va).

[64] Note that William's third criticism is not inconsistent with his first. William's first criticism involves affirming that there is an acceptable sense in which parts can share in the *esse* of their whole; both first and third criticisms, however, allow William to accept that the parts are themselves objects too. He does not offer any philosophical reason for this move; neither—as far as I know—does he offer an account

section of this chapter, disagree with this position of William's: concrete parts, for them, are not things, and that is why Aquinas's concrete whole–concrete part model does not adequately picture the hypostatic union.)

5. *CONTRA*: (4) GODFREY OF FONTAINES AND DUNS SCOTUS

Two theologians who criticize Aquinas precisely because of the theological losses his position incurs are Godfrey of Fontaines and Duns Scotus. The criticism offered by both thinkers is substantially the same, and is in turn much the same as William's first criticism. (The work of William in Oxford and of Godfrey in Paris was more or less simultaneous, and I cannot tell whether the two thinkers worked the criticism out independently.) Curiously, given his strong focus on William's Christological work, Scotus borrows the argument not from William but from Godfrey.

Godfrey's criticism of Aquinas is interesting, not least because, unlike the other thinkers I consider in this chapter, he accepts Aquinas's unitarian intuitions on the question of substantial form. As I shall try to show in the next chapter, Godfrey accepts the substance–accident model for the hypostatic union. And it is this acceptance that allows him both to reject Aquinas's concrete whole–concrete part Christology and to accept Aquinas's unitarianism. (Of course, it is not necessary to be a unitarian to accept the substance–accident relation.)

Having noted that the form of a foot is part of the form of the whole of which the foot is a part, Godfrey notes:

(2.15) Just as no new personal existence comes [from the union of a foot], so too there is no new actual existence remaining distinct [from the person's existence]. For this reason there cannot be posited to be a real relation between a *suppositum* and a part coming to it, on account of their being indistinct. It is however different in the proposed case [viz. the hypostatic union]. Since the human nature coming to the divine *suppositum* does not receive the form of divinity, and neither do both [the human nature and the form of divinity] combine into a third [nature], but remain essentially distinct, their existences remain distinct.[65]

The *theological* point, of course, is that, if Aquinas's foot example is apposite, then monophysitism is true, since the form of Christ's human nature will just be a part of the form of divinity. Again, the problem Godfrey highlights in Aquinas's view is that it is hard to see how a parts Christology can yield just one person without monophysitism being true. Philosophically, Godfrey refuses to follow William in allowing that the parts have their own *esse*. But this is no surprise. Godfrey's

of the relevant unity criteria that might govern such integral wholes. Equally, William does not offer any ways of distinguishing homogeneous integral wholes from heterogeneous integral wholes—of distinguishing the ways in which parts of flesh differ from their whole, for example, from the ways in which bodily organs differ from their whole.

[65] Godfrey, *Quod.* 8. 1 (PB 4, p. 15).

unitarian assumption, coupled with his claim that essence and *esse* correspond on a one-to-one basis, entails that the parts of an essence lack their own *esse*. Godfrey's rejection of Aquinas is in fact quite stringent. He refuses to allow even Aquinas's claim that there is a *relation* between a whole and its integral parts: there is no relation whatever between King Charles I and his head, before or after decapitation. (There can be no such relation after the awful event, because at this time neither Charles nor his head exists (although rotting remains that initially bear considerable resemblance to their living ancestors certainly exist); there is no relation before the King's death, since Charles and his head are just one object, and real relations obtain only between different objects.)

Scotus borrows Godfrey's criticism, although he gives it a different philosophical underpinning. Unlike Godfrey, Scotus not only denies Aquinas's unitarianism on the question of substantial forms, he also believes it to be 'probable' that some integral concrete parts—organs for example—have their own substantial forms.[66] The criticism of Aquinas runs as follows:

(2.16) A part coming to a whole does not give *esse* to the whole, but rather receives [*esse*], since it is perfected by the form of the whole. . . . But the human nature united to the Word is not informed by the Word, but remains simply distinct [from the Word].[67] . . . The existence (*existentia*) of a foot is not other than that by which I exist. But the opposite holds here [i.e. in the hypostatic union].[68]

Clearly, Scotus wants to deny that a foot in any sense has its own substantial form. The idea, I take it, is that the nature and structure of a foot is fully explained by the bodily form which for Scotus accounts for the nature and structure of all straightforwardly fleshy (and bony?) parts of a human body. For Scotus, the unity of all such homogeneous wholes is explained by the presence of one relevant substantial form. A puddle of water, for example, is one thing just because all the parts share one substantial form.[69] A foot, or a hand, will be like this for Scotus: part of a body because it shares straightforwardly in the body's substantial form. (The situation, according to Scotus, is a bit different for organs with a very specific structure or function—heart or liver, for example.[70]) So, in (2.16), the foot is a human foot because of its sharing in the form of the body; and the foot is a part of a substance (namely, the body)—the foot is not itself a substance.

Scotus's acceptance of Godfrey's argument against Aquinas's concrete whole–concrete part analogy means that Scotus understands Aquinas's analogy to liken Christ's human nature to a hand or a foot, but not to a head or a heart (though the argument might be *ad hominem*, in which case of course the distinction does not matter). Heads and hearts, for Scotus, are not united to their bodily wholes by sharing in the bodily form, as would be required on the rejected analogy. (As we have

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[66] For Scotus, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 62–71; for Godfrey, see Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, 314–47.

[67] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 6. 1, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 174).   [68] Ibid. 3. 6. 1, n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 175).

[69] On this, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 142.

[70] For the relevant unity criteria in such cases, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 68–70.

seen, Aquinas uses all four of these parts as analogues for the human nature.) Despite the added complications involved in Scotus's rejection of the analogy, there seems no reason to deny to Scotus this rejection. Christ's human nature surely is nothing like a concrete integral part of the divine person: and this is because monophysitism is false.

6. DOMINICANS AFTER AQUINAS

Dominicans in two decades or so after Aquinas's death generally accept his view that there is one *esse* in Christ.[71] I do not want to spend much time on these theologians, because it seems to me that their thought is derivative and adds nothing substantive to Aquinas's position. But a sampling will give a sense of the range of their positions, which are far from unanimous.

Peter of Tarentasia's *Sentence* commentary dates from 1257–9—almost immediately after Aquinas, whose pupil he probably was. In some ways, Peter is more open to the developments of earlier thirteenth-century Christology than Aquinas appears to have been. Thus, he is happy to claim that the hypostatic union is like an accidental union, and quotes with approval William of Auxerre's claim that the human nature is like an accident. But he claims that the accidentality of the human nature does not involve any sort of composition in the divine person. Rather, he thinks of a (mere) *association* of the two natures in one *suppositum*.[72]

In two respects, then, Peter is unlike Aquinas. He accepts the substance–accident analogy, and he claims that the union is in some ways less tight than a substance–accident union (less tight because it involves association but no composition).[73] Peter never uses Aquinas's whole–part model, though he takes over certain features of that model when elucidating more closely the nature of the hypostatic union. Thus, he agrees with Aquinas that there is only one *esse* in Christ, such that the human nature shares in this *esse*, on the grounds that 'neither parts nor accidents have *esse*'; rather,

(2.17) [The *esse* of the divine person has] a relation to diverse things in diverse respects: for as *esse simpliciter* it has a relation to the divine essence; as the *esse* of a man it has a relation to the human [nature][74]

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[71] On this, see F. Pelster, 'La quaestio disputata de Saint Thomas "De unione Verbi incarnati"', *Archives de Philosophie*, 3 (1925), 198–245.

[72] Peter, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 1 (4 vols. (Toulouse, 1652), iii. 4ᵇ).

[73] The term 'association' is found most notably in the Dominican Hugh of St Cher (writing 1230–2); see Walter H. Principe, *Hugh of St Cher's Theology of the Hypostatic Union* (The Theology of the Hypostatic Union in the Early Thirteenth Century, 3), Studies and Texts, 19 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1969), 81, 112, 119 (for the date, see pp. 14–15); see too Principe, *William of Auxerre's Theology of the Hypostatic Union*, 104. Of course, Peter is explicit that the hypostatic union is the greatest (tightest) of all created unions: see *In Sent.* 3. 6. 4. 3 (iii. 49ᵃ ᵇ). The problem I am highlighting here is with the models and analogies that Peter is able to utilize in trying to spell out the metaphysics of the Incarnation in more detail.

[74] Peter, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 3. 2 (iii. 47ᵃ).

(words that echo Aquinas's teaching in (2.3) very closely). Elsewhere, Peter is clear that the human nature is more like a part than an accident,[75] though he is explicit that the human nature is not an integral part of the divine person.[76] Note a difference from Aquinas, however: Peter holds that the human nature is a truth-maker in the sense of giving human *esse* to the Word, and he explicitly likens this to accidental *esse*.[77] So while it is true that Peter sees the existence of Christ's human nature as analogous to the existence of a part in its whole, he carefully distinguishes the truth-making function of the nature from this existence. The truth-making function of the nature makes it more like an accident than a part.

Aquinas's pupil, Annibald d'Annibaldi—whose *Sentence* commentary was for many years attributed to Aquinas—follows Peter of Tarentasia very closely. Generally, Annibald is recognized as being heavily influenced by both Thomas and Peter, with the latter of whom he was an almost exact contemporary, reading the *Sentences* probably in 1258–60. My impression is that in Christology Annibald reads his Aquinas through distinctly Tarentasian spectacles, though he is closer to Thomas than he is to Peter. Just like Peter, he speaks of the hypostatic union as an association between natures in one person, where association is explicitly distinguished from composition—specifically, the sort of composition that obtains in the substance–accident union.[78] Unlike Peter's account, however, there is no move to liken the assumed nature to an accident. In terms highly reminiscent of Peter, Annibald accepts Aquinas's view that the one *esse* of the *suppositum* has a relation to diverse parts.[79] But Annibald adds an important clarification that appears to be entirely his own:

(2.18) Two things belong to the concept of a whole. One is that the *esse* of the whole composite belongs too to all of its parts, since the parts do not have proper *esse*, but exist under the *esse* of the whole. The other is that the component parts cause the *esse* of the whole. The first condition of a whole is found in the person of Christ, since both natures come together in the *esse* of the whole. But the second condition is not found in him. For the *esse* of the whole composite [person of Christ] is not caused by the constitution of components.[80]

The conclusion is agnostic, since Annibald does not state what it is to have a part without that part being a component part. But the purpose of the distinction is clear enough: to ensure both that the doctrine defended is not in fact a parts Christology (thus guaranteeing wholly unconditioned and simple nature of the divine person) and that the doctrine is not some kind of covert monophysitism.[81]

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[75] Peter, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 2. 1 (iii. 43ᵇ–44ᵃ).   [76] Ibid. 3. 6. 3. 3 (iii. 47ᵇ); 3. 6. 4. 2 ad 3 (iii. 49ᵃ).

[77] Ibid. 3. 6. 3. 2 ad 1 (iii. 47ᵃ).

[78] See Annibald, *In Sent.* 3. 5. un. 1 c and ad 1 (in Aquinas, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 30 (Paris: Ludovicus Vivès, 1878), 468ᵃ).

[79] Annibald, *In Sent.* 3. 6. un. 3 c (p. 476ᵃ). Annibald cites Aquinas's hand example at *In Sent.* 3. 6. un. 1 ad 1 (p. 474ᵇ).

[80] Annibald, *In Sent.* 3. 6. un. 3 c (p. 476ᵇ).

[81] It is worth noticing too one way in which Annibald's Christology is indebted to Bonaventure rather than the early Dominicans: Annibald speaks of the *dependence* of the human nature on the divine person, a way of speaking that, as we shall see in the next chapter, is decidedly Franciscan: see Annibald, *In Sent.* 3. 5. un. 3 (p. 470ᵃ).

Dominicans of the 1280s seem more confident in their assimilation of Aquinas's position. Bernard of Trilia's first *Quodlibet* (1283) contains a useful summary of the Thomist position.[82] According to Bernard, *esse* can belong to a *suppositum* in two ways. Its substantial or personal *esse* results from the union of its integral parts; its accidental *esse* results from the inherence of accidents.[83] The human nature of Christ is not an accident, so the *suppositum* of the Word does not have accidental *esse* from the nature (though it does have accidental *esse* from the *accidents* of the nature).[84] Rather, Bernard claims in standard Thomist fashion that the personal *esse* of the Word gains a new relation to the human nature in much the same way as the personal *esse* of a human person can gain a relation to a new integral part.[85]

There are no surprises here, and an attempt to deal with the objection that a form (such as the human soul) must always communicate *esse* to something reiterates the general Thomist insight that no *esse* is communicated to the divine person, whether by the human nature or by the human soul. *Esse* is communicated by the soul only to a *part* of the *suppositum*, namely to the human nature.[86] On this understanding, *esse humanum* belongs to the *suppositum* in virtue of the personal *esse* of the Word— specifically, in virtue of this personal *esse*'s gaining a new relation to the assumed nature conceived as analogous to an integral part. So, just as I have been arguing is the case in Aquinas, truth-making is ultimately explained by the *esse* of the Word.

A question of Raymund of Guilha (1284–5) is very similar to this, and might be taken as a good exposition of the Dominican party line in this decade.[87] Raymund argues that the *esse* of an accident—its *quo est*, what I am calling its truth-making function—is not a part of the *esse* of a *suppositum*. But the *esse* of a concrete integral part is a part of the *esse* of a *suppositum*, because the *esse* of the *suppositum* is the result of the union of the (*esse* of its) integral parts.[88] Any new integral part of a *suppositum* thus gains *esse* from the *esse* of the *suppositum*—it exists (only) as a part of the *suppositum*.[89] The human nature of Christ is not an accident of the Word; it should be understood along the lines of an integral part. Hence the human nature does not have its own *esse*; rather, it gains its *esse* (its truth-making function) from the *esse* of the Word.[90] Raymund claims—somewhat disingenuously—that this is the teaching not only of Aquinas, but also of Innocent V (i.e. Peter of Tarentasia), Annibald, Bonaventure, and Albert.[91] (Only Aquinas and Annibald should be on this list.)

[82] See A. André, 'Les Quodlibets de Bernard de Trilia', *Gregorianum*, 2 (1921), 261–4, question 3 reprinted in Edgar Hocedez, *Quaestio de Unico Esse in Christo a Doctoribus Saeculi XIII Disputata*, Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana. Textus et Documenta. Series Theologica 14 (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1933), 35–8. I cite here from Hocedez.

[83] Bernard, *Quod.* 1. 3 (Hocedez, p. 36).

[84] Bernard, *Quod.* 1. 3 (Hocedez, p. 36 for the claim about accidents, and p. 37 for the claim that the human nature is not an accident and thus does not give any sort of accidental *esse* to the person).

[85] Bernard, *Quod.* 1. 3 (Hocedez, pp. 37–8).   [86] Bernard, *Quod.* 1. 3 (Hocedez, p. 38).

[87] The text is published in Stephen L. Forte, 'A Late Thirteenth Century Collection of Questions in MS Vat. lat. 14013', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 19 (1949), 95–121, pp. 115–21.

[88] Raymund, *Qu.* (p. 117).   [89] Ibid. (p. 119).

[90] Ibid. (pp. 117–18).   [91] Ibid. (p. 119).

Later Dominicans diverge radically from Aquinas's teaching, even if—like Hervaeus Natalis—they sometimes claim to be expounding Aquinas's thought. I will look here at Bernard of Auvergne (fl. 1295–1305) and Hervaeus Natalis, whose *Sentence* commentary is dated to 1302–3. (Durand of St Pourçain, a more interesting thinker than either Bernard or Hervaeus, falls just outside my period, and in any case does not diverge radically from his usual adversary Hervaeus.[92])

Bernard of Auvergne targets the Christology of Godfrey of Fontaines, which I consider in Chapter 4.[93] We do not need, however, to have a deep grasp of Godfrey's Christology in order to appreciate how far removed from Aquinas Bernard's theory is. Briefly, according to Godfrey, the hypostatic union should be understood on the analogy of substance and accident, and we should understand accidents in general—and thus Christ's human nature—to have their own proper underived existence. Godfrey's motivation for this belief is that if accidents do not have such existence they cannot be truth-makers—they cannot satisfy the necessary accidental condition **(AF3)**.

Bernard criticizes the second claim here—namely, that accidents, and thus Christ's human nature, have their own proper underived existence—existence as things. But he accepts Godfrey's fundamental insight (one which was standard among non-Thomists by the 1290s) that the hypostatic union is best construed along the lines of the relation between substance and accident. This seems to me an understanding that is profoundly antithetical to Aquinas's theory. The relevant passage is worth quoting:

(2.19) In Christ the nature to some extent degenerates into an accident, according to the Damascene, because it comes to a *suppositum* that has *esse simpliciter*. For this reason, it does not give to [the *suppositum*] *esse simpliciter*, but being this [type of thing] (*esse hoc*), that is, being human (*esse humanum*), just as also an accidental form, because it comes to something having *esse simpliciter*, does not give *esse simpliciter*, but being this [type of thing], that is, accidental *esse*.[94]

In so far as the human nature is like an accident, Bernard suggests too that the human nature shares in the existence of the *suppositum*,[95] and he notes that accidents have existence communicated to them from the *suppositum* in which they exist[96]—again, a claim quite unlike Aquinas's understanding of the relation between an accident and its substance. Aquinas, while accepting **(AF1)**, explicitly denies that there is a sense in which accidents share in the existence of their subjects, as we have seen.

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[92] For a more detailed exposition of Bernard of Trilia, Bernard of Auvergne, Hervaeus Natalis, and Durandus, see Stephen F. Brown, 'Thomas Aquinas and His Contemporaries on the Unique Existence of Christ', in Emery and Wawrykov (eds.), *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans*, 220–37, pp. 228–31. Brown's useful account is marred by his failure to understand that merely defending one *esse* in Christ is not sufficient to align a thinker with the Christology of Aquinas—despite the impression that some early Thomists attempt to give. The debates seem to me to be of far greater complexity than Brown allows for.

[93] The relevant extracts from Bernard's *Imp.* are edited in Hocedez, pp. 101–14.

[94] Bernard, *Imp.* (Hocedez, p. 109). The reference to John of Damascus is a mistake.

[95] Ibid. (Hocedez, pp. 108 and 110).   [96] Ibid. (Hocedez, p. 108).

Still, Bernard may be wanting to assert that the *esse* that the human nature gives to the divine *suppositum* is not distinct from the *esse* of the divine *suppositum*, a claim that resembles Aquinas's claim that the human nature shares in the existence of the divine person. Underlying this, however, is a very different analogy for the hypostatic union, and ultimately a very different understanding of the relation between substance and accident. If Bernard's theory resembles any other thirteenth-century theory, it is Giles of Rome's, though Giles works his theory out on the basis of a far more complex underlying metaphysic, as we shall see in Chapter 4. Of Aquinas's various theories, Bernard's is closest to Aquinas's proposals in the *Compendium Theologiae*, discussed in section 2 above.

Hervaeus Natalis's understanding of the matter is very similar to this. He claims that the human nature can be made to exist *in* another substance in a way analogous to that in which an accident exists in a substance. The human nature does not properly inhere in the divine person, because the human nature is not in fact an accident.[97] Nevertheless, the human nature is said to depend on the divine person, in a way analogous to that in which an accident depends on its substance.[98]

Remarkably, Hervaeus claims that this is the opinion defended by Aquinas in *Quodlibet* 9. 2, and in *Summa Theologiae* 3. 17. 2.[99] Clearly, the analogy to an accident is alien to Aquinas's account in these two discussions, though again it might claim some Thomist ancestry in the discussion in *Compendium Theologiae*. In fact, close inspection of Hervaeus's account reveals just how far removed it is from Aquinas. Hervaeus's claim is that the *inesse* of the human nature is precisely the same as the *esse* it would have if it were separated from the Word.[100] He claims good Thomist ancestry for this by pointing out that Aquinas's denial that the human nature has *esse* is merely a way of distancing Aquinas from the *habitus* theory.[101] This, of course, radically underestimates how far removed from the substance–accident model Aquinas's theory really is. Equally, in two passages—the only two passages where Hervaeus mentions a whole–part relation, Hervaeus expressly denies that the hypostatic union should be thought of along the lines of a whole–part relation. For example:

(2.20) Such dependence there [viz. in the hypostatic union], of the humanity on the divine *suppositum*, should be imagined without the fact that one has properly the condition (*ratio*) of a part, or any sort of composition, properly speaking.[102]

So, despite his claim to good Thomist credentials, Hervaeus in fact appears anxious to distance himself from the sort of Christology that I have been ascribing to Aquinas.

[97] Hervaeus, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 4 ((Paris, 1647), 285$^{a\ b}$), 3. 6. 1. 3 (p. 295^{b}).
[98] Hervaeus, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 1 (p. 282^{b}). In a way very similar to Scotus, Hervaeus claims that the union of the natures is a dependence relation between the human nature and the divine person: 'this relation is real in the united nature, which has real dependence on the divine *suppositum*: from the side of the divine *suppositum*, a relation of reason is posited': *In Sent.* 3. 5. 1. 1 (p. 292^{a}).
[99] Hervaeus, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 1. 3 (p. 295^{b}).
[100] Ibid. 3. 6. 1. 3 (p. 295^{b}). On this, see Ch. 14 below.   [101] Ibid. 3. 6. 1. 3 (pp. 295^{b}–296^{a}).
[102] Ibid. 3. 1. 1. 4 (p. 283^{b}), 3. 6. 1. 5 (p. 296^{a}).

Overall, Hervaeus's theory has more in common with the sorts of views defended by those theologians who accept the substance–accident model for the hypostatic union. As we shall see in the next three chapters, a standard move made by these theologians is to claim that the human nature—like an accident—*depends on* the divine person, while—unlike an accident—not actualizing any passive potency in the divine person. Hervaeus's position, then, seems to be far more in conformity with the standard non-Thomist thirteenth-century view than it is with any theory proposed by Aquinas.

Chapter 3

THE SUBSTANCE–
ACCIDENT MODEL
(1) FRANCISCANS FROM
BONAVENTURE TO WILLIAM OF WARE

As I have suggested, most theologians in the period after Aquinas appeal to the substance–accident analogy, if not explicitly, then at least implicitly. These theologians can usefully be divided into two groups: those who do, and those who do not, engage with some very distinctive problems raised by the account given by Giles of Rome. The problems all spring from Giles's very distinctive view of the relation between essence and existence. Henry of Ghent and Godfrey of Fontaines strongly disagree with Giles's theory, and I discuss both Giles's theory and the proposed reactions to it in the next chapter. Roughly, both Henry and Godfrey believe Giles's view on the composition of essence and existence not only to be false in itself, but to entail heterodox Christological conclusions. In this chapter, I examine the views of some thinkers who do not bother with the debate between Giles and Henry. The basic origin of these thinkers' views—all of whom were Franciscan— is Bonaventure. When these thinkers criticize one-*esse* views of the incarnate Christ, it is Aquinas's very different account that is the target. And such thinkers criticize Aquinas—as we saw in the last chapter—not because of Aquinas's views on the composition of essence and existence (though they would all certainly find those views disagreeable), but rather because of Aquinas's acceptance of the concrete whole–concrete part analogy for the hypostatic union.

In Chapter 5 I examine the Franciscan Scotus's views on the same subject. He deals only briefly with Giles's position, and is generally uninterested in debates about the real distinction between essence and existence.[1] I do not think this predominance of Franciscan writers is necessarily indicative of a distinctively Franciscan approach to the subject. William of Ware and Scotus might—reasonably—both have regarded Giles's bizarre view to have been sufficiently refuted by Henry of Ghent. William elsewhere—though not in this context—effectively sides with Henry on the question of essence and *esse*,[2] and Scotus clearly believes all theories of the real distinction between essence and *esse* to be mistaken.[3] Perhaps both William and

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[1] I discuss Scotus's very brief criticism of Giles of Rome at the end of Ch. 4.
[2] See Gal, 'Gulielmi de Ware', 265–7.
[3] See in particular Scotus, *Ord*. 4. 11. 3, n. 46 (Wadding, viii. 649).

Scotus felt that Aquinas's concrete whole–concrete part model—which these Franciscans correctly identified as relying on an analogy that seems close to entailing monophysitism—ultimately presented a far greater theological threat than Giles's substance–accident Christology.

One final point. As we get further through my period, and certainly by the 1280s, thinkers who accept the substance–accident model see it as more than a model: they allow it some real explanatory power, and delineate precisely those ways in which the hypostatic union is and is not like a substance–accident relation. We should not think of Aquinas as adopting a parts Christology, even though he accepts that a parts model is the most useful way of thinking about the hypostatic union. But we should think of some of the thinkers I examine here as explicitly adopting a view of the hypostatic union that closely resembles the substance–accident relation. As we go further through the period that I examine, theologians become—for better or worse—more confident in the power of reason to fathom the Christological mystery.

1. BONAVENTURE

The first real attempt to spell the issue out in a systematic and philosophically perceptive way was Bonaventure. Officially, Bonaventure denies that there are any analogies for the hypostatic union, or at any rate any explanatory analogies.[4] Nevertheless, as I shall show, Bonaventure in fact makes a good deal of use of the substance–accident analogy when trying to spell out the metaphysics of the Incarnation.[5] As I showed in Chapter 1, the medievals tend to distinguish both active and passive features in the relationship between a substance and its accidents: a substance (in some sense) actively sustains its accidents, and is (in some sense) passively receptive of them. The two features correspond to (AF1) and (AF2) respectively. I shall look at these two features in turn, and show how Bonaventure relates them to the hypostatic union.

Dependence features of the relation

When discussing the possible senses of 'suppositum', Bonaventure claims that a suppositum is that 'in which the whole existence of a thing is stabilized and grounded'.[6] Elsewhere, and I take it equivalently, Bonaventure claims that a suppositum is 'that in which the whole existence of a thing is substantified'.[7] This substantification

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[4] Bonaventure, In Sent. 3. 6. 2. 2 c (iii. 161ᵃ).

[5] Bonaventure derives (from Sum. fr. Alex.?) the metaphor of a branch grafted onto a tree, a metaphor that on the face of it bears some resemblance to Aquinas's part–whole analogy: see Bonaventure, In Sent. 3. 6. 2. 1 c (iii. 158ᵃ); Sum. fr. Alex. 3. un. 4. 2. 1 sol. (4 vols. (Quaracchi: Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae, 1924–48), iv/2. 83ᵇ–84ᵃ); 3. un. 4. 2. 7. 2 sol. (iv/2. 94ᵇ–95ᵃ). But Bonaventure makes no use of the metaphysics of integral or organic parts in his account of the hypostatic union, so we can more profitably focus on his treatment of the metaphysics of substance and accident.

[6] Bonaventure, In Sent. 3. 10. 1. 3 c (iii. 231ᵃ).

[7] Ibid. 3. 6. 1. 1 c (iii. 149ᵇ); see ibid. 3. 6. 2. 1 ad 4 (iii. 159ᵃ): 'What is substantified in something is less stable than it.'

relation holds between a *suppositum* and both its essential and accidental properties. Thus, as Bonaventure makes clear when talking about this relation, both 'body and colour can have one *suppositum*'.[8] Bonaventure frequently claims that the relation between the Word and Christ's human nature is analogous to the relation of substantification between a substance and an accident united to it. Thus, he claims that the human nature, like an accident, is substantified in an object which is already in some sense complete.[9] As he notes, the human nature, like an accident, does not give 'first existence (*esse*)' to its *suppositum*: it is not that in virtue of which its *suppositum* exists.[10] Equally, the human nature, like an accident, is substantified in a *suppositum* essentially different in kind from it.[11]

What is this substantification relation? The crucial feature of it seems to be *dependence*; thus, if x substantifies y, then y depends on x. Bonaventure makes the point both by claiming that accidents (and Christ's human nature) *depend* on a *suppositum*, and by claiming that they are *sustained* by a *suppositum*.[12] Bonaventure, therefore, accepts (AF1). He also believes it to have some bearing on the question of the hypostatic union. Bonaventure is careful to distinguish this dependence/sustenance relation from any *causal* relation:

(3.1) God can be compared to creatures in two ways, namely as a causal principle, and as a sustaining *suppositum*. In the first comparison, it is necessary that the three persons share with each other, since in God there is but one nature, and there is but one operative power by which God is the cause of creatures. The second comparison can pertain to one person distinctly, since, even if the one person shares with another in nature and power, nevertheless he is distinct in *suppositum* and personal property.[13]

Bonaventure goes on to note that the second sort of relation obtains between God and a creature only in the case of the hypostatic union. Clearly, what Bonaventure wants to claim is that Christ's human nature is substantified by the divine *suppositum* in a way analogous to the substantification of an accident by its substance.

There are, however, limitations to the dependence features of the substance–accident analogy. Involved in the substantification relation between a substance and its accidents is an individuation relation: an accident is individuated by its substance.[14] The analogy with Christ's human nature here is far from exact. Particularized accidents are individuals in the sense of being predicable of just one thing. A substance individuates an accident in the sense of making it such that it is unrepeatable.[15] Only a substance is individual, properly speaking, 'divided from all others', existing in

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[8] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 1. 1 c (iii. 149[b]).   [9] Ibid. 3. 6. 1. 3 c (iii. 155[a] [b]).
[10] Ibid. 3. 6. 1. 3 c (iii. 155[b]).   [11] Ibid. 3. 10. 1. 2 ad 4 (iii. 228[a]).
[12] For Christ's human nature, see Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 1 c (iii. 10[a]); for both accidents and Christ's human nature, see ibid. 3. 6. 1. 3 ad 6 (iii. 156[b]); 3. 6. 2. 1 ad 4 (iii. 159[b]).
[13] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 2 c (iii. 13[a]).
[14] See Peter King, 'Bonaventure (b. ca. 1216; d. 1274)', in Jorge J. E. Gracia (ed.), *Individuation in the Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation*, SUNY Series in Philosophy (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994), 141–72, p. 161.
[15] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 10. 1. 3 c (iii. 231[a]); Bonaventure claims that an accident is an individual in the sense of being 'undivided in itself', i.e. unrepeatable.

itself (*in se*) and through itself (*per se*).[16] Material substances, in the normal run of things, are individuated by the union of their matter and form, such that they exist *in se* and *per se*.[17] Christ's human nature has its own matter and form, and these render it individual (i.e. unrepeatable).[18] But, like an accident, it is united to an alien *suppositum*, and thus fails to be in every respect divided from all others (failing to exist *in se*). Thus, like an accident, Christ's human nature is a dependent object; its existence, though not its individuation, is dependent upon an alien *suppositum*.

Truth-making features of the relation

Central to medieval accounts of the relation between a substance and its accidents is that the substance *passively receives* its accidents, such that an accident φ-ness actualizes its substance's potentiality to be φ. Focal in Aquinas's rejection of the substance–accident analogy is, as we have seen, an inability to separate the substance–accident relation from (**AF2**). According to Bonaventure, an accident φ-ness denominates its substance—it is a truth-maker—by contributing some sort of being—specifically 'being-φ'—to its substance.[19] Bonaventure uses the term 'inherence' to refer specifically to (**AF2**)—an accident *inheres in* its substance. The substance is the passive component of this relation: inherence is what an accident in some sense does to its substance. Thus, 'inherence (*inesse*) is the act of an accident in relation to a thing of another genus'.[20] Evidently, then, Bonaventure (like Godfrey after him) uses 'inherence' in the way that I want to use 'informing', and he explains accidental truth-making—(**AF3**)—by appealing to (**AF2**).

Bonaventure is clear that Christ's human nature does not inhere in the Word.[21] Nevertheless, the human nature contributes 'being-human' to the divine Word.[22] Christ's human nature, then, is a truth-maker without informing its subject, or actualizing any passive potency in its subject. To this extent at least the hypostatic union is unlike the relation between substance and accident. Part of Bonaventure's motivation for this is that he wants the relation between the human nature and the Word to be *closer* than the inherence relation seems to allow:

(**3.2**) To the objection that an accident is a thing which comes to something already complete, I reply that, even if [Christ's human nature] is likened [to an accident] in that it comes to something already complete, it is not utterly [like an accident], because an accident lies utterly outside, extrinsically, and implies a sort of adherence, whereas the human nature comes

[16] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 10. 1. 3 c (iii. 231ᵃ). For the exclusion of accidents here, see King, 'Bonaventure', 142–4.

[17] See Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 10. 1. 3 c (iii. 231ᵃ). For further references, and an explicit discussion of Bonaventure's failure to provide a 'global' account of individuation (as opposed to an account which fails to explain the individuality of matter and form), see King, 'Bonaventure', 154–60.

[18] See Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 10. 1. 3 c (iii. 231ᵃ); see also ibid. 3. 5. 1. 4 fund. 3 (iii. 127ᵃ), where he cites John of Damascus, passage (**0.12**) above.

[19] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 4. 12. 1. 1. 3 fund. 1 (iv. 273ᵃ).

[20] Ibid. 4. 12. 1. 1. 1 ad 3 (iv. 271ᵇ).   [21] Ibid. 3. 6. 1. 3 ad 3 (iii. 156ᵇ).

[22] Ibid. 3. 6. 1. 1 ad 4 (iii. 150ᵃ ᵇ).

to the person such that it does not lie outside, extrinsically; neither does it imply a sort of inherence, but the substance and nature of the hypostasis itself.[23]

So, according to Bonaventure, in the relation of the human nature to the divine person, we have truth-making, and the communication of existence without any potency-actualization. But Bonaventure argues that, for Christ's human nature to be assumed by the Word, it must have some sort of (non-subsistent) existence:

(3.3) Nothing is assumed unless it is, in its assumption, a being (*ens*). And this is true, and neither is the case under discussion a counterinstance, since the human nature simultaneously had *esse*, and had assumed-*esse*.[24]

(I take it that for a nature to have assumed-*esse* is equivalent to its being dependent.) So Bonaventure repudiates a one-*esse* account of the hypostatic union on the grounds that, for the human nature to be assumed by the Word, it must have *esse*, where having *esse* is entailed by being a being, an *ens*. We should be careful to avoid inferring too quickly from this repudiation of a one-*esse* Christology that Bonaventure accepts (AI3), or that Christ's human nature is a thing that can be counted over and above its *suppositum*. Bonaventure is explicit that accidents are not things that can be counted over and above their subjects, and that Christ's human nature is not a thing that can be counted over and above its *suppositum*. When we count, it is *supposita* that we count, not their parts or properties.[25] So perhaps we should understand (3.3) to be making a claim about truth-making: Bonaventure repudiates a one-*esse* Christology because he believes that the human nature is a truth-maker. (As we saw in the previous chapter, Aquinas believes that the human nature is a truth-maker; but Aquinas does not want to ascribe *esse* to this nature, or categorize it as an *ens*. It seems anomalous to hold both that the human nature is an *ens* and that it is not a thing, so I think Aquinas's position should be preferred here.)

Officially, Bonaventure's grounds for repudiating the substance–accident analogy are not that it would lead to passive potency in the divine person, but that it leads to the *habitus*-theory.[26] Doubtless, however, by denying inherence (in his sense— that is, in denying the applicability of (AF2) to the hypostatic union), Bonaventure wants to deny any kind of actualization relation. Thus, Christ's human nature gives 'being-human' to the divine person without actualizing any passive potencies in this person. As I shall show in Chapter 9, Bonaventure's account of this truth-making without actualization relies on the claim that the relation between the human nature and the Word exists merely in the nature, and not at all in the Word. This reliance is unique among the medievals, though most other features of Bonaventure's account are taken up and developed by his Franciscan successors.

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[23] Ibid. 3. 6. 1. 3 ad 3 (iii. 156ᵃ); see also ibid. 3. 6. 1. 3 ad 4 (iii. 156ᵃ); 3. 5. 2. 1 ad 2 (iii. 131ᵃ), where Bonaventure claims that the dependence is not by *adiacentia*. Aquinas, of course, can use his account of union in personal *esse* to explain how the hypostatic union is closer than an accidental one. This move is not open to Bonaventure, since he does not consider the concrete whole–concrete part analogy to be a good one for the hypostatic union.

[24] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 5. 2. 1 ad 1 (iii. 131ᵃ).   [25] Ibid. 3. 6. 1. 1 c (iii. 149ᵇ).

[26] Ibid. 3. 6. 1. 3 fund. 5, 6 (iii. 155ᵃ).

2. MATTHEW OF AQUASPARTA

In the previous chapter I examined in detail Matthew's rejection of Aquinas's account of the hypostatic union. Matthew's own theory is, perhaps as we would expect from such a conservative Franciscan, very close to Bonaventure's.[27] Matthew sees his own account as relying on his pluralist presuppositions: some material substances have more than one essential form. In fact, as I pointed out in Chapter 2, it is not necessary to be a pluralist here to criticize a view like Aquinas's, although I take it that a convinced unitarian on the substantial form question would need to stress the analogy with an accident in order to criticize Aquinas's view. As we shall see in a moment, this is just the move made by Godfrey of Fontaines. Matthew in fact makes much use of the substance–accident analogy when talking about the hypostatic union, though he tends to do so covertly. (He does at one point claim that 'the human nature, in virtue of its coming to a *suppositum* that is maximally complete, to which it does not give first *esse*, has a certain mode of an accident'.[28] But unlike the thinkers I consider in the next two chapters, Matthew does not make any further explicit systematic use of the analogy; he does not for example explicitly use an exploration of the substance–accident relation to clarify in any way the relation between the Word and his assumed human nature.)

Central to Matthew's own account is a standard presupposition that 'Christ' names the divine *suppositum* considered as existing in both divine and human natures.[29] The human nature communicates its *esse* to this *suppositum*:

(3.4) An accidental form is related to *esse* of such-and-such a type in the same way as substantial form is related to substantial *esse*. But in Christ, accidental forms give to him *esse* of such-and-such a type, and many accidental forms give many such *esses*. Therefore many substantial forms or many essences [give] many substantial *esses*.[30]

That is to say, the human nature is a truth-maker. (As we saw in Chapter 2, Matthew regards Aquinas's refusal to allow that the human nature communicates *esse* to the divine *suppositum* as tantamount to denying that the human nature is a truth-maker.) Matthew uses his pluralist presuppositions to show how this communication of *esse* is consistent with the unity of Christ. A substantial unity is not characterized (as it is for Aquinas[31]) by the presence of just one *esse*. And this is because each

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[27] For a detailed discussion of Matthew's Christology, see, in addition to Paul Bayerschmidt, *Die Seins- und Formmetaphysik des Heinrich von Gent in ihrer Anwendung auf die Christologie. Eine philosophie- und dogmengeschichtliche Studie*, Beiträge zur Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, 36/3–4 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1941), Zachary Hayes, 'The Plurality of Esse in Christ according to Matthew of Aquasparta', in Frank and Etzkorn (eds.), *Essays Honoring Allan B. Wolter*, 131–52.

[28] Matthew, *QDI* 9 ad 12 (p. 190); see also *QDI* 8 ad 11 (p. 165) for Matthew's claim that the human nature has the mode of an accident.

[29] Matthew, *QDI* 9 (p. 177); 9 ad 12 (p. 190). At *QDI* 8 ad 5 (p. 163), Matthew notes, '"Christ" names a *suppositum* or person'; and at *QDI* 9 ad 7 (p. 188), Matthew is clear that all the properties of a whole exist in their *suppositum*. So I take it that he is clear that the divine person, and not some other whole, is properly speaking the subject of the divine and human properties.

[30] Matthew, *QDI* 9 (p. 182); see also *QDI* 9 (p. 184); 9 ad 12 (p. 190); 8 ad 5 (p. 163).

[31] See Aquinas, *ST* 1. 76. 3 c (i/1. 362b).

substantial form in a pluriformed composite substance, according to Matthew, con-
tributes *esse*—is a truth-maker independent of any other substantial form.

Proponents of the substance–accident model argue that Christ's human nature,
like an accident, has dependent existence: its actual existence in some sense
depends on—requires—the existence of its substance. Matthew, likewise, claims
that the human nature depends on the divine *suppositum*, to which it is 'ordered';[32]
it has existence communicated from the divine *suppositum*;[33] it exists *in* the divine
suppositum, and it is substantified in this *suppositum*.[34]

But Matthew is quite clear that this sort of dependent existence is genuine exist-
ence. The assumed nature is not only a truth-maker, it is 'that which exists':

(3.5) Where a nature is substantified in its proper *suppositum*, that which exists (*illud quod*
est) is the *suppositum*; where however [it is substantified] in an alien *suppositum*, as in the case
at hand, that which exists (*illud quod est*) is the substance itself, which has its substantial *esse*
and substantial principles, though in another.[35]

Although Matthew's way of speaking (in terms just of there being two *esse*s in Christ)
is too ambiguous to allow us to say for certain that he wants to make a connection
between a truth-making function and being an actual existent, it is hard to avoid
the impression that he does indeed have some such link in mind: unless the human
nature has actual existence (i.e. unless there are two *esse*s in Christ), the human nature
will not be able to communicate its existence to the divine person—in other words,
be a truth-maker. The link with Bonaventure's analysis is obvious.

Overall, it is harder for Matthew to explain Christ's unity than it is for Aquinas,
though Matthew's pluralist assumptions make it easier for him than it is for those
unitarians (such as Giles of Rome and Godfrey of Fontaines) who accept the
substance–accident analogy for the hypostatic union. But, as I have tried to show,
the theological losses Aquinas has to accept for his increased ability to explain the
hypostatic union are too great to make his position ultimately more desirable than,
for example, Matthew's.

3. PETER JOHN OLIVI

Olivi's account of the hypostatic union can be found usefully in his *Quaestiones de*
Incarnatione, written between 1274 (since the questions allude to Aquinas's theory)
and 1298 (Olivi's death). Olivi never explicitly likens the human nature to an
accident. In fact, like Bonaventure, the only time he mentions the relation between
substance and accident is to deny its relevance as an analogy.[36] I discuss him here,

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[32] Matthew, *QDI* 9 ad 4 (p. 186).   [33] Ibid. 9 (pp. 183, 187–8); 8 ad 5 (p. 163).
[34] Ibid. 9 ad 7 (pp. 187–8); see 8 ad 11 (p. 167).
[35] Ibid. 9 ad 7 (p. 187). Matthew goes on to claim that, if separated, nothing would need to be added
to get a *suppositum* (*QDI* 9 ad 7 (pp. 187–8)); so I take it that Christ's human nature is individuated by
its substantial principles.
[36] Olivi, *QI* 1 ad 1c (ed. Aquilinus Emmen and Ernest Stadter, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica
Medii Aevi, 24 (Grottaferrata: Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae, 1981), 28).

however, since (like Bonaventure and Matthew) the basic thrust of his account of
the relation between the Word and the human nature is very similar to his account
of the substance–accident relation. Crucially, as we shall see, Olivi distinguishes both
dependence and truth-making features of the relation between the human nature
and the Word. He thus accepts the relevance and **(AF1)** and **(AF3)** to a discussion
of the hypostatic union.

The problem for adherents of the substance–accident analogy lies in showing
how it can be that the human nature is united to the Word without actualizing any
passive potency or liability in the Word: that is to say, how Christ's human nature
can be like an accident in the sense of exhibiting **(AF3)**, but not **(AF2)**. Olivi is
aware of this difficulty, and he solves it by two not wholly consistent strategies. First,
he glosses all passive aspects of the relation in terms of active ones:

(3.6) If we understand 'to receive' as 'to comprehend and hold and stabilize and be the end
term of something below oneself', then God does have susceptive potency, since this potency
does not have anything passive, but is pure act. And it is like this in the case at hand [viz.
sustaining a human nature].[37]

The second strategy contrasts interestingly with the views proposed by Olivi's great
Franciscan predecessor, Bonaventure:

(3.7) If you object that . . . this human nature will give some existence to Christ, and also
that . . . it will in some way be his form and will inform him: it should be said that it is not
inappropriate that [the nature] gives or communicates his existence to him, not by inher-
ence but by adherence and collection (*colligentiam*), through which it does not inhere in him
[Christ] as an accident in a subject, or as form in matter, or as perfection in its perfectible
subject, but only as a nature extrinsic to a *suppositum* of another nature.[38]

Olivi's argument here is that we should understand the communication of existence
to the *suppositum* to entail no more than that the human nature *adheres* to, or is *col-
lected* with, the divine person. I take it that, minimally, we can read (3.7) in line
with (3.6), and claim that the human nature is a truth-maker in so far as the human
nature *depends* on the divine person. Elsewhere, Olivi seems to link all of these claims
together:

(3.8) We do not posit that he has [the nature] by essential identity, but only by adhesion and
collection, and by the dependence (*impendentiam*) or reliance (*insistentiam*) of the nature on
the person of God as on the most actual and stable end term of its perfect dependence, and
immediately and totally terminative.[39]

In (3.8) Olivi appeals to **(AF1)** as an explanation for **(AF3)**.

But (3.7) is nevertheless in itself somewhat problematic, for two reasons. First,
'adherence' and 'collection' sound suspiciously like signs of an *aggregative* union—
that is to say, a union even less tight than an accidental one. Secondly, and related
to this, Olivi seems to accept precisely the view that Bonaventure counsels us to

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[37] Olivi, *QI* 1 ad 9 (p. 36); see also ibid. 1 ad 8 (pp. 35–6).
[38] Ibid. 1 ad 2 (p. 30).   [39] Ibid. 1 c (p. 17).

reject: namely, that the union is so loose that we can use the term 'adherence'. Bonaventure rejects even the stronger term 'inherence' on the grounds that it implies a view of the union that is far too loose. (The contrast is interesting because the philosophically perceptive but theologically conservative Olivi very often follows Bonaventure closely.) Nevertheless, Olivi's basic insight—that we can talk of truth-making without needing to talk of inherence, or the actualization of passive potentialities—seems exactly in line with the basic insights of those thinkers who want to accept the substance–accident model for the Incarnation.

A further feature of Olivi's account of the hypostatic union needs to be mentioned: his insistence on the claim that the Word *indwells* his human nature. As I shall show in the next chapter, this indwelling claim was stressed in Henry of Ghent, and was used too by William of Ware, a major follower of Henry, as I shall show in the next section of this chapter. Basically, Olivi claims that, just as God indwells the whole of creation, so the *suppositum* of the Word indwells the nature whose *suppositum* he is, such that, wherever this nature is, the Word is too.[40]

4. WILLIAM OF WARE

William develops a subtle version of the substance–accident analogy. He derives from Giles of Rome the claim that the substance–accident model can actually have some *explanatory* force in the Christological context. For example, when discussing the possibility of the Incarnation, he argues as follows:

(3.9) Although a thing of one genus cannot be a thing of another genus, since this entails a contradiction, nevertheless a thing of one genus can certainly have the mode of another genus, as is clear in the case of a specific difference, which is in the genus of substance, but has the mode of quality. But there does not seem to be a greater incompatibility between a substance and an accident (or in relation to an accident) than the other way round. But it is possible for something which is in itself an accident to take on the mode of a substance, which is to exist in itself (*per se stare*). Therefore that which is a substance, can, while remaining a substance, take on the mode of an accident. Therefore just as an accident can take on the mode of a substance, which is to exist in itself, as is clear in the sacrament of the altar, so a substance can take on the mode of an accident, which is not to exist in itself, or to exist in another, since such a mode of inherence can be in a substance while it remains a substance. And it follows as a consequence that such a nature is substantified in another *suppositum*, as it were coming to it in the mode of an accident.[41]

[40] Ibid. I c (pp. 12–13).

[41] 'Licet enim res unius generis non possit esse res alterius generis quia hoc implicat contradictionem, bene tamen res unius generis potest modum alterius generis habere, sicut patet de differentia quae est in genere substantiae et tamen habet modum qualitatis. Sed non videtur esse maior repugnantia substantiae ad accidens sive respectu accidentis quam e converso. Sed est possibile quod illud, quod in se est accidens, [quod] induat modum substantiae quod est per se stare. Ergo illud quod est substantia, manens substantia, potest induere modum accidentis. Ergo sicut accidens potest induere modum substantiae quod est per se stare (sicut patet in sacramento altaris), sic substantia potest induere modum accidentis, quod est per se non stare sive esse in alio, quia talis modus inhaerendi potest inesse

And, as another manuscript suggests, 'This mode is being sustained in an alien person.'[42]

This complex passage requires some commentary. The genera William is talking about are Aristotle's categories, and he cites an Aristotelian example of a (part of a) substance which has the mode of a quality: rationality, the specific difference of man (as in 'man is a rational animal'), is very like an Aristotelian quality.[43] We often, for example, talk of people being more or less rational, or behaving irrationally— even in the intellectualized environment of the academy. And theology provides an example of an accident having the mode of substance: in transubstantiation, the accidents of the bread and wine exist without any underlying supporting substance. In the same sort of way, a complete substance—an individual human nature—can have the mode of an accident, and be dependent on the Word in the same sort of way as an accident is dependent on its substance.

Dependence features of the relation

William claims that, just like an accident, the human nature depends on its *suppositum*, and—equivalently—receives *esse* from it:

(3.10) A subject gives the *esse* of subsistence to an accident, since it is supported by a subject; and for this reason an accident does not give the *esse* of subsistence [to its subject]. Since therefore the human nature is assumed by the Word, it will have the *esse* of subsistence from the Word, and however will not give any *esse* of subsistence to the Word.[44]

Here, the communication of the *esse* of subsistence should be understood to amount to the claim that the human nature has existence as dependent on the Word— thus, it should be understood in terms of (AF1). As we will see in a moment, William is clear that the human nature has its own underived existence too, and thus that its identity relative to the Word should not be understood as analogous to (AI2) (as (3.10) might have been taken as suggesting).

William spells out this dependence relation in terms of the Word's *indwelling* the human nature. In reply to an objection that all substantification involves the actualization of passive potency,[45] William replies by dividing substantification

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substantia manens substantia. Et per consequens sequitur quod natura talis substantificatur in alio supposito quasi sibi adveniens per modum accidentis': William, *In Sent.* 155 (MS V, fo. 104[va]); see also q. 175 (MS V, fo. 118[va]). The source of this material is Giles of Rome: it is an almost exact quotation from Giles, *ThCC* 27 ((Bologna, 1481), fo. 18[ra b]), where Giles uses it to defend the possibility of transubstantiation; he applies the argument to the hypostatic union in the even earlier *Lect.* I give references at the beginning of Ch. 4 below.

[42] '. . . qui modus est sustentificari in supposito alieno': William, *In Sent.* 155 (MS M₁, fo. 137[va]).

[43] See Aristotle, *Metaph.* Δ. 14 (1020[a]32–[b]2).

[44] 'Subiectum dat esse subsistentiae accidenti quia a subiecto supportatur, et ideo accidens non dat esse subsistentiae. Cum ergo natura humana assumatur a Verbo, habebit esse subsistentiae a Verbo et tamen nullum esse subsistentiae dabit Verbo': William, *In Sent.* 175 (MS M₁, fo. 159[ra]).

[45] 'Quod debet aliquid ad se sumere oportet quod ante sit in potentia et imperfectum respectu eius, quia si non esset in potentia non potest aliud recipere sicut si esset perfectum non posset sibi fieri additio.

into two sorts, one which involves the inherence of a property in a subject, and another which merely involves the subject's indwelling the thing it substantifies. Only the first of these involves the actualization of passive potency; and it is the second that is involved in the Incarnation. So the Word's substantifying his human nature does not require any passive potency in the Word.[46] William thus neatly combines two aspects of Henry's account (an account which I examine in the next chapter): sustenance and indwelling, explaining sustenance as a special kind of indwelling. (Of course, we would ideally want the explanation to run the other way round: the special kind of indwelling is characterized as a relation of hypostatic dependence, rather than the dependence relation being characterized as one of indwelling.)

Truth-making features of the relation

As we have just seen, William stresses the active role of the divine person at the expense of the passive role. He frequently claims that the human nature has its own actual existence. But he never, as far as I can see, speaks of this existence being communicated either to the divine *suppositum* or to the composite Christ. He claims instead that the human existence is *in* Christ.[47]

William places firm limits on the analogy with an accident. Accidents both inhere in and inform their substances; Christ's human nature does neither to the Word.[48] The truth-making function of the human nature is explicitly reduced—just as in Olivi—to its dependence:

(3.11) The human nature cannot be act, or in the manner of act; rather, the human *esse* is related in a certain adjacence (*adiacencia*) to the divine *suppositum*, and is not related by inherence. For it has been said that such a union is not by information, or by an informing mode, by substantification, or by an active substantifying mode, and for this reason it should be said that the divine person who actively substantifies the human nature is related as act [to the nature], and not vice versa.[49]

Sed natura divina non est in potentia neque imperfectum, ergo et cetera': William, *In Sent.* 155 (MS V, fo. 104ra).

[46] 'Verum est quando sic perficit et substantificat per modum inhaerentis quod est in potentiam et imperfectum. Sed quando substantificat per modum illapsus sicut in proposito tunc est per modum activae potentiae': William, *In Sent.* 155 (MS V, fo. 104vb).

[47] 'Quod est album habet esse albi ergo quod est creatura actualis habet esse actuale creatum. Sed Christus secundum naturam humanam est creatura actualis, quare et cetera': William, *In Sent.* 175 (MS V, fo. 118ra); MS M₁, fo. 159vb, concludes: 'ita in Christo est duplex esse'.

[48] 'Ex hoc quod materia recipit formam substantialem est in potentia ad esse substantiale actuale, ergo similiter ex hoc quod subiectum recipit formam accidentalem est in potentia ad aliud esse accidentale': William, *In Sent.* 176 (MS V, fo. 119ra).

[49] 'Ipsa natura humana non potest esse actus vel per modum actus; immo ipsum esse humanum se habet in quadam adiacencia ad suppositum divinum et non se habet per inhaerentiam. Dictum est enim quod talis unio non est per informationem vel per modum informantem sed per substantificationem sive per substantificantem activam, et ideo debet dici quod ipsa persona divina quae substantificat ipsam naturam humanam active se habet ad modum actus et non e converso': William, *In Sent.* 175 (MS V, fo. 118va).

William goes on to note that if an opponent should insist that an essence can be a truth-maker only by actualizing passive potency in its subject, then we would (falsely) have to deny that the human nature is an essence at all.[50]

The basic thrust of William's discussion is similar to that of the other Franciscans—we can talk of the human nature being a truth-maker, but we must be careful to understand this without any suspicion of passivity in the Word. As perhaps with Olivi, truth-making is in a strong sense reduced to dependence. As we shall see in Chapter 5, Scotus finds this too extreme, and prefers to talk, with Bonaventure and Matthew of Aquasparta, explicitly of the human nature communicating some sort of *esse* to the Word. In their denial that the human nature communicates *esse* to the Word, it is hard not to see Olivi and William as rather closer to the rejected view of Aquinas than the other Franciscans are.

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[50] 'Similiter hoc idem argumentum probare posset quod in supposito divino non habet natura humana esse essentiae, quia quandocumque duae essentiae componuntur, una se habet ut actus, aliud ut potentia. Sed illae duae essentiae uniuntur secundum modum informationis, cum natura humana se habeat in Christo ut forma, quia per ipsam formaliter dicitur homo. Quod natura humana se haberet ut actus respectu suppositi divini, si uniretur sibi per informationem (sicut ipsi imaginantur unionem), et ita illud in consequens sequitur posito quod in Christo sit essentia naturae humanae sicut sequitur posito quod sit ibi esse humanum actuale': William, *In Sent.* 175 (MS V, fo. 118va). See also q. 176 (MS V, fo. 118vb): 'Ponere aliquam formam determinatam et quod <non> det esse in illo quod est est contradictio'; for the emendation, see MS M₁, fo. 160vb.

Chapter 4

THE SUBSTANCE–ACCIDENT MODEL (2) GILES OF ROME AND HIS OPPONENTS

In this chapter, I examine a group of thinkers who accept the substance–accident model for the hypostatic union, but whose views are directly informed by the results of a detailed debate between them on the question of a real distinction between essence and existence. The three thinkers are Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent, and Godfrey of Fontaines. Giles's account of the hypostatic union relates directly to his views on the substance–accident relation. And these views are in turn determined by Giles's distinctive account of a real distinction between essence and existence. Henry of Ghent and Godfrey of Fontaines both reject a real distinction between essence and existence; they likewise reject Giles's account of the existence of accidents and the application of this account to the hypostatic union. For this reason, I examine Giles's account before that of Henry of Ghent, even though all of Henry's accounts of the Incarnation pre-date Giles's. Henry's account of the Incarnation underwent a radical shift between 1279 and 1286—I take it in 1286 itself, when he probably encountered for the first time Giles's account of the existence had by accidents. This encounter led Henry radically to rethink his account of the Incarnation. Henry's later view—and his shift in 1286—cannot be understood without a firm grasp of Giles's account of the metaphysics of substance and accident.

1. GILES OF ROME

Giles's very earliest Christological speculations make no use of his distinctive account of the relation between essence and existence, and the theory of accidents that is tied up with this distinction. In the *reportatio* of his early *Lectura* (probably dating from 1271–3) Giles makes full use of the substance–accident model (thereby immediately distancing himself from Thomas Aquinas on the nature of the hypostatic union—a distance that Giles's later account of the hypostatic union only serves to increase, as we shall see). Indeed, unlike any thinker before him, Giles claims that the substance–accident model is more than just a model—it has some genuinely explanatory function, showing how that hypostatic union is possible. For Giles,

Aristotelian philosophy entails that qualities can have the mode of substance: the *differentia* 'rational', in the definition of 'human being', is properly speaking a quality, but as found in the definition of a substance it has the mode of a substance. A substantial nature such as humanity, contrariwise, can have the mode of an accident. Substantial natures are ordered to their *supposita*. Standardly, this ordering is a relation of constitution: a substantial nature constitutes a *suppositum*. But if a nature is found that is ordered to a *suppositum* that it does not constitute, the nature is said to have the mode of an accident.[1] In the hypostatic union, the assumed nature is like this, in the sense that rather than constitute a *suppositum* it presupposes a *suppositum*.[2] Like an accident, it depends on its *suppositum*,[3] and is a truth-maker: it 'gives to the divine *suppositum* that it is a man'.[4] But unlike an accident it does this without composition—though note that the denial of composition here is not an explicit denial of inherence as such, but merely a denial that the divine person in any sense requires the human nature for his existence.[5] Here, then, we have dependence, and truth-making without composition. These become commonplaces among the defenders of the substance–accident model, though Giles's account is among the earlier ones to offer the position with any sort of metaphysical development. Later, Giles abandons the language of dependence—though the concept is still there under a rather more complex guise. Giles's later theory—to which I now turn—depends on a very fully worked out (and idiosyncratic) account of the relation between substance and accident, an account that is in turn closely related to Giles's distinctive theory of the real distinction between essence and existence.

This theory was clearly worked out by 1286. On these issues, I refer to the *Theoremata de Corpore Christi*, the *Theoremata de Esse et Essentia*, and the important *Quaestiones de Esse et Essentia*. The *Theoremata de Corpore Christi* are usually dated to 1275–6, and the *Theoremata de Esse et Essentia* to 1278–80. There is more controversy over the dates of the remaining work, but in general it is safe to suppose that the *Quaestiones de Esse et Essentia* date from 1285–7.[6] On all of these accounts of the chronology of Giles's works, however, the relevant Aegidian positions are clearly established by 1286. Giles tackles Christological issues in his *Quodlibets* 3, 5, and 6 (1288, 1290, and 1291 respectively). Giles's *ordinatio* on book 3 of the Lombard's *Sentences* is too late (variously dated 'after 1309',[7] '1311/12',[8] and 'post 1316'[9]) to

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[1] Giles, *Lect.* 3. 19 (ed. in Concetta Luna, 'La *Reportatio* della lettura di Egidio Romano sul Libro III delle Sentenze (Clm. 8005) e il problema dell'autenticità dell' *Ordinatio*', part 2, *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 2 (1991), 75–126, p. 197).

[2] Giles, *Lect.* 3. 19 (pp. 196–8).   [3] Ibid. 3. 15 (p. 190).

[4] Ibid. 3. 19 (p. 197).   [5] Ibid. 3. 18 (pp. 194–5).

[6] See Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines: A Study in Late Thirteenth-Century Philosophy* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 41–3 and the bibliography there.

[7] P. Glorieux, *Repertoire des maitres en théologie de Paris au XIIIe siècle*, 2 vols., Etudes de philosophie médiévales, 17–18 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1933–4), ii. 304.

[8] F. Stegmüller, *Repertorium in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, 2 vols. (Warzbürg: Schöningh, 1947), i. 19.

[9] Silvia Donati, 'Studi per una cronologia delle opere di Egidio Romano. I: Le opere prima del 1285. I commenti aristotelici', *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione medievale*, 1 (1990), 1–111; 2 (1991), 1–74, vol. 2, p. 71.

fall into the scope of my discussion. The treatment of the issues there is in any case less speculative and far more closely tied to exposition of traditional opinions. I also refer to Giles's treatise *De Compositione Angelorum* (1287–90).[10]

Giles's basic claim about the unity of substance and accident is that an accident is united to its substance by participating in the *esse* of the substance. Analogously, Christ's human nature is united to the Word by participating in the *esse* of the Word. This latter claim might make us want to assimilate Giles's account of the hypostatic union to Aquinas's. But, as we shall see, this would be a mistake: there is no sense, for Giles, in which Christ's human nature is analogous to a concrete part. What grounds Giles's account of the hypostatic union is a theory of the relation between substance and accident that is very different from Aquinas's.

In order to understand Giles's account of the hypostatic union, then, we need to get clear on his theory of the relation between substance and accident. And this theory, in turn, owes something to his distinctive account of the relation between essence and existence.

Giles on substance and accident

Giles's account of the relation between substance and accident is best grasped by looking at a specific though somewhat atypical example: the relation between quantity and matter. The basic account is that quantity and matter are two things, and that the union of quantity and matter entails that matter receives a new *mode*: extended being. Let me refer to quantity as an extension-thing (*res*)—an extension$_r$. The extension of matter is an extension-mode—an extension$_m$. The extension of matter necessarily involves two elements: (i) the inherence of extension$_r$ in matter—where matter is itself a (further) thing: 'In matter existing under quantity, there are two extended things [viz. quantity and matter]';[11] and (ii) that this inherence cause matter to participate in quantity—that it cause extension$_m$ in matter:

(4.1) If matter should be extended by quantity, two things are required—though these two things cannot be separated from each other: first, there is a requirement that quantity is in matter; secondly, that matter is caused to be actually extended by the existence of quantity in matter, and participates in quantity.[12]

In this passage Giles talks about participation, but he clearly understands talk of participation to be equivalent to talk about modes:

(4.2) The essence of matter has a two-fold mode of existence: one under privation, and then it is called potentially such-and-such, and another under form, and then it is called actually such-and-such. Therefore matter participating in form is the essence of matter itself, not taken in just any way, but with this mode of being (*modo se habendi*), that it is made to be

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[10] The text of this is unpublished, though parts of it are cited in Damasus Trapp, 'Aegidii Romani de Doctrina Modorum', *Angelicum*, 12 (1935), 449–501. I rely on Trapp's quotations here, as well as on Trapp's dating of the treatise.

[11] Giles, *QuEE* 8 (*De Esse et Essentia. De Mensura Angelorum. De Cognitione Angelorum* (Venice, 1503), fo. 15vb).

[12] Giles, *QuEE* 8 (fo. 16vb).
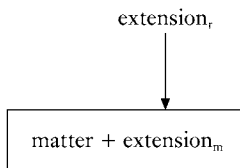
Figure 4.1

actually the such-and-such that it was potentially. Therefore the participation of form is a certain mode of being (*modus se habendi*) which pertains to matter as it is under a form.[13]

Extension$_r$ is a thing really distinct from matter; extension$_m$ is a mode identical with matter:

(4.3) The extension of quantity is not a thing other than quantity; rather quantity is essentially extension itself; and the extension of matter is not a thing other than the matter. Such extension is not quantity, but a participation in quantity.[14]

Giles usually speaks of this mode as a participation in extension, and quantity itself as essential extension: 'The extension of quantity is essential; the extension of matter by participation.'[15]

Talk of a substance participating in an accident, and having a mode of the accident is understood by Giles as a case of (**AF3**), which he in turn reduces to (**AF2**):

(4.4) A *suppositum* receives some sort of *esse* from each nature existing in it, whether substantial or accidental, such that 'being man' (*esse humanum*) follows from humanity, and 'being a quantum' (*esse quantum*) follows from quantity, and so on.[16]

The idea, I think, is not that a form in any sense adds some sort of thing to its substance, but that, for example, *being quantized* is a mode of a substance. (The mode, of course, is the result of the inherence of a thing—quantity—in the substance.)

We could represent the whole scenario usefully by means of a diagram (Figure 4.1). Analogously, for any accident φ, the substance receives a φ-mode (φ_m) from the φ-thing (φ_r) that inheres in it (Figure 4.2). φ_r is a thing, and as we shall see below (passage (4.8)), any essence (substantial or accidental) is responsible for the *entity* of its subject. In the terminology of the time, Giles holds that an essence (substantial or accidental) has *esse essentiae*—the sort of minimal existence that can be ascribed to essences considered independently of their actual existence (their having *esse existentiae*).[17] In what follows, I shall use '*esse*' to talk about actual existence, not about *esse essentiae*. Having *esse essentiae* in Giles's metaphysic is just the same

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[13] Giles, *QuEE* 8 ad 6 (fo. 17vb).

[14] Ibid. 8 (fo. 16vb). As I outlined briefly above, Giles does allow for a real distinction between a thing and its modes—here, between matter and extension$_m$. I discuss this in Ch. 12. But, he claims, the relevant distinction here is between a thing and itself. The distinction between matter and extension$_r$ is between two things.

[15] Giles, *QuEE* 8 (fo. 15vb).   [16] Giles, *Quod.* 5. 3 (p. 273^a).   [17] Giles, *QuEE* 9 (fo. 20rb).
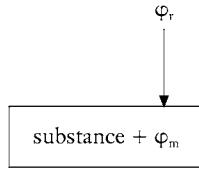
Figure 4.2

as being a thing—it does not entail the actual existence of an individual. (I discuss in a moment Giles's view on what it is to be a thing.)

On the face of it, this account of accidental dependence is metaphysically wasteful. After all, we might be inclined to regard extension$_r$ as identical with the extension$_m$ of matter.[18] But Giles is convinced that extension$_m$ requires an additional object—extension$_r$—in order to explain it. If an accident φ-ness is to explain how a substance x is φ (if an accident is to satisfy the requirement in (AF3)), the accident must be an object really distinct from the substance. The presupposition here is that a mode of being alone cannot explain anything—talk of modes is no more than *descriptive*. An explanation requires an explanatory object or thing.[19] This principle goes to the heart of Giles's metaphysical analysis, and I shall note below how it affects his account of the union between essence and existence.

Giles's view is thus related to (E) from Chapter 1:

(E) If a form F-ness is that in virtue of which something is F, then F-ness must itself exist.

Giles would however reject (E) as it stands and affirm instead a related principle not about existence but about being-a-thing:

(E$_r$) If a form F-ness is that in virtue of which something is F, then F-ness must itself be a thing.[20]

(E$_r$) is the version of (E) that captures the intuition that accidents are objects, given something like Giles's account of the inherence of an accident. But we need to be wary about too close an association between (E) and (E$_r$). Giles holds (as I shall show in a moment) that an object's being a thing obtains in some sense prior to its having actual existence. So Giles's principle (E$_r$), being a thing is equivalent to possessing *esse essentiae*, the sort of minimal existence that belongs to essences prior to their instantiation; (E) asserts, rather differently, that a form has some sort of *esse existentiae*—real, concrete, extra-mental, countable existence—independently of

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[18] As I will show in Ch. 12, Godfrey of Fontaines criticizes Giles in just this way.
[19] The point is made beautifully at *ThEE* 19 (ed. Edgar Hocedez, Museum Lessianum, Section Philosophique, 12 (Louvain: Museum Lessianum, 1930), p. 134, ll. 1–4): 'Unless matter were joined to a quantity which really differed from it, neither extension nor the mode of being that is not really different from [matter] would belong to [matter].'
[20] Being a thing does not entail having actual existence for Giles, though it does entail having the sort of minimal *esse essentiae* that belongs to essences.

the existence of its substance. Applied to accidents, **(E)** does, and **(E$_r$)** does not, entail the falsity of **(AI2)**.

Thus far, I have been silent on an important feature of extension$_r$, namely that it would be a mistake to think of extension$_r$ as a universal, or as in any way common. Extension$_r$ is individual—it is in fact responsible for the individuation of its matter. Thus, in Figure 4.1, we should understand both extension$_r$ and (matter + extension$_m$) to be individuals. But the case of quantity here is disanalogous to that of other accidents. Quantity individuates matter, and thereby material substance;[21] other accidents (the things, not the modes) are individuated by their substances.[22] Presumably, the commonality of quantity is somehow *prior* to its being a thing— prior to its being an extension$_r$. In the case of other accidents, contrariwise, the thing— φ_r—is common, since non-quantitative accidents are not individuated prior to their inherence in a substance; the individual instances of φ_r are *existent* as well as real. But Giles is annoyingly vague about all this.

This has an important philosophical consequence which we need to understand if we are to make sense of Giles's account of the hypostatic union, and more generally of the real distinction between essence and existence. As we shall see, Giles holds that essence is a thing (*res*), and that it has its status as *real*—as a thing— independently of its existence (independently of its union with *esse*). But the discussion of the relation between substance and accident that I have just offered makes it clear that Giles's claims about the non-existence of certain real items is indifferent to the individuality or commonality of these items. Individual quantity is real, but (as we shall see) exists only by union with the *esse* of a substance. But the individuality of other accidents is the result of their inherence in a substance: their existence and their individuality coincide; real but non-existent accidents other than quantity are common, not individual. The reason why this observation is pertinent to the question of the hypostatic union, and more generally to the question of the distinction between essence and existence, is that (as we shall see) while Giles is equivocal on the individuality of essence prior to its union with existence, he is clear that the assumed human nature of Christ is individual independently of its union with existence. More generally, Giles tends to the view that essence that is united to existence is individual; some of his arguments for the real distinction, however, rely on the commonality of a real but non-existent essence.[23]

Giles argues that there is a real distinction between essence and *esse* analogous to that between matter and extension$_r$. He has a cluster of reasons for wanting to make such a distinction. But one of these reasons is more interesting (both historically and philosophically) than the others. A real distinction between essence and

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[21] Giles, *ThCC* 36 (fo. 26ra), 38 (fo. 28ra). Neither is quantity—extension$_r$—some sort of Platonic universal. Platonic forms remain separate from matter—they do not inhere in things. And such a non-inherent form could not explain how matter—*this* matter—is actually extended: Giles, *QuEE* 8 (fo. 17rb).

[22] Giles, *ThCC* 36 (fo. 25vb–26ra), 38 (fo. 28ra).

[23] See e.g. Giles, *ThEE* 12 (p. 70, l. 17 to p. 71, l. 16). As we shall see in Ch. 12, Aquinas's account of the composition between essence and existence is open to a similar equivocation between individual and common essence.

existence is required to explain the existence of contingent beings. Every contingent thing includes a principle that is potential to being and not-being. (Presumably, if it did not include something with a passive capacity for being, then it could not exist; if it did not include something with a passive capacity for non-being, then it could not fail to exist. In neither case would it be contingent.) This principle is the essence of the thing. Given that an essence is indifferent to being and non-being, the fact that it exists requires the addition of an actualizing principle, existence (*esse*), for its explanation.[24]

Just as in his treatment of matter and quantity, Giles explicitly claims that essence and existence are two things (*res*).[25] Given his commitment to (E_r), this should not come as a surprise. Existence, after all, is required to explain facticity, and explanations for Giles always involve an appeal to things. Giles explains the union between essence and *esse* along the lines of his explanation of the union between matter and extension. *Esse* explains the facticity of an essence. To do this, *esse* must be a thing—*esse_r*—and its union with its essence must result in a mode—an *esse*-mode ($esse_m$)—of the essence. (Giles often talks in this context, using terminology derived from Henry, of *esse existentiae*—the *esse* in virtue of which something actually exists. It is this *esse* that I am identifying as $esse_r$.[26]) Again, Giles puts some of these claims in terms of participation. An essence participates in *esse*—and to do this, there must be an individual *esse*—an $esse_r$—united to it:

(4.5) We should therefore know that the essence of a creature is imagined to be related to *esse* in the same way as matter in its way is related to extension. Just as, therefore, matter is a non-extended thing, such that if it should be extended it is necessary that a quantity which is essentially extension itself be added to it, so every created essence is something that is not existent of itself, such that for it to exist it is necessary for an *esse* which is essentially existence (*existere*) to be added to it.[27]

The $esse_r$ that is added to essence is non-participant (unparticipating: it does not participate in anything else):

(4.6) Let us imagine that *esse*, in so far as it is of itself, does not participate in anything else, and other things can participate in *esse*, but *esse* itself, in so far as it is of itself, can participate in nothing else. . . . *Esse* in itself implies nothing other than actuality.[28]

$Esse_r$ does not have modes.

Elsewhere, Giles explicitly claims that an essence's participation in $esse_r$ is a mode of an essence:

(4.7) A nature acquires another mode—a real mode—from the fact that it is subject to *esse* and properties. Through this mode it differs really from itself considered as disjoint from these features. This mode, however, does not imply an essence other than the nature itself. Therefore a *suppositum* (which means a nature with such a mode—which the nature gains

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[24] Giles, *QuEE* 9 (fo. 20vb–21ra).   [25] See e.g. Giles, *QuEE* 10 (fo. 23ra).
[26] See too n. 44 below.   [27] Giles, *QuEE* 10 (fo. 23rb; see also fo. 23vb).
[28] Ibid. 10 (fo. 23vb).

$$esse_r$$

$$\downarrow$$
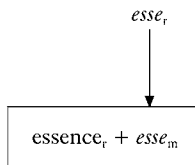
$$\boxed{essence_r + esse_m}$$

Figure 4.3

from its being subject to *esse* and properties) really differs from nature considered in itself, even though it does not mean an essence other than the nature.[29]

So *esse*$_m$ is identical with essence, and is had by essence as the result of the presence of *esse*$_r$. Giles here uses the term '*suppositum*' to refer to an essence + its *esse*$_m$. What explains a *suppositum*'s being a *suppositum* is the union between its essence and its non-participant but participated *esse*$_r$. Presumably, Giles does not want to claim exactly that essence + *esse*$_m$ is sufficient for a nature's being a *suppositum*, since, as we shall see in a moment, Christ's human nature has an *esse*$_m$, one which it derives from the *esse* of the divine *suppositum*. Christ's human nature exists *in* the divine *suppositum*. Presumably, the relevant claim is that a *suppositum* is an essence + its (own proper) *esse*$_m$—that is to say, an *esse*$_m$ that derives from its own *esse*$_r$, and not from the *esse*$_r$ proper to some other object. (I will discuss the distinction between nature and *suppositum* further in Part IV, where I will also try to suggest some reasons why Giles is unwilling to include the *esse*$_r$ as *part* of a *suppositum*.)

On this account, every created essence participates in an *esse*$_r$ (a participated *esse*), just as matter participates in an extension$_r$; every created essence includes an *esse*$_m$, just as matter includes an extension$_m$. And this participation or mode is the result of the union of an *esse*$_r$ or an extension$_r$, respectively. Equally, 'all created *esse* is participated';[30] creaturely *esse* is participated by being received in potency.[31] (The only *esse* which is unparticipated (as well as non-participant) is God's.[32])

So the general scheme proposed by Giles looks rather like this. Essence and existence—the central metaphysical components of a creature—are two things. The thing which is participated individual *esse*—*esse*$_r$—is the (formal) cause of the existence of the essence, such that the essence has, in virtue of this *esse*$_r$, an *esse*$_m$ (it participates in *esse*), just as matter has an extension$_m$ in virtue of quantity (extension$_r$). This analogy between matter and quantity explains why Giles should want to think of *esse* as a thing (*res*). If *esse* is to be able to explain the facticity of an essence, then, on Giles's general principle that only things can do any explanatory work, *esse* must be a thing. Figure 4.3 shows the theory diagramatically (note that there is no essence$_m$ because the essence is non-participant—nothing else formally explains its being what it is).

All this leaves it unclear whether Giles is talking about individual essence or common essence. Giles himself is ambiguous on this. But my general impression is that

[29] Giles, *DCA* 5 (Trapp, p. 453).   [30] Giles, *QuEE* 11 (fo. 24vb).
[31] Ibid. 11 (fo. 24vb–25ra).   [32] Ibid. 9 (fo. 18ra).

he is supposing that essence is individual. The best evidence comes from a passage in the *Theoremata de Esse et Essentia*. In this passage, Giles claims that the individuation of a substance originates not from its *esse* but from its essence. The context requires a bit of explanation. Giles's point is that the (transcendental) being and unity of a substance originate from its essence, prior to its existence, whereas its being an existent is explained by its *esse*. Transcendental being is that which characterizes all the Aristotelian categories (it is 'trans-categorial'); thus the being of a substance appears here to be no more than simply its being a substance:

(4.8) Each *per se* thing is a being and one through its essence. . . . It does not actually exist in the nature of things, however, unless some *esse* is added to its essence or nature.[33]

Transcendental unity is identified as individuality:

(4.9) Each form gives to a thing that it is a being, and gives to it that it is one. For each thing is something, and is undivided (*indistincta*) from itself and divided (*distincta*) from others by its form.[34]

Being undivided from self and divided from all others is a classic medieval definition of individuality. So the clear implication of all this is that essence, is individuated independently of its union with *esse*, and thus that the real but non-existent essence that Giles is concerned with is an individual, and not as such common. This dovetails in very neatly with Giles's Christology (as we shall see below), since Giles unequivocally claims that the assumed human nature of Christ is an individual.

   This of course raises a problem: why should we suppose that an individual essence is somehow distinct from its actual existence? We might reasonably enough suppose that all creaturely existence is contingent, and if we accept non-existent but real common natures, we might think of talking of the contingent instantiation of such an essence in terms of its *actualization*, the addition of (individual) *esse*—existence as this or that individual. But to claim that the instantiation of an essence is contingent does not require us to claim that an *individual* essence or substance enters into composition with existence. I will return to this below, when looking at Henry's critique of Giles.[35]

   A comment is in order on Giles's claim that essence and existence are *really* distinct. As we shall see below, Giles's claim is made explicitly in opposition to Henry of Ghent's claim that there is a merely intentional distinction between essence and existence. For Giles, as we shall see in Chapter 12, any distinction which is not merely rational is real: there is no distinction midway between rational and real distinction. But Giles distinguishes those real distinctions that obtain between a thing

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   [33] Giles, *ThEE* 13 (p. 82, ll. 6–7, 12–13).   [34] Ibid. 13 (p. 78, ll. 14–16).

   [35] There is a problem too in terms of the internal coherence of Giles's account, namely, his tendency elsewhere to associate individuation with *esse* (on this, see below, n. 44). Equally, as we have seen, Giles wants to associate the individuation of a material substance with its quantity, and thus its matter, not its form. I do not know what comment to offer on any of this, except to note that associating the individuation of a substance with its matter makes essence and not *esse* the locus of individuation, just as Giles suggests here.

and a mode, on the one hand, from those real distinctions that obtain between two things, on the other. As we have seen, Giles holds that there are two ways in which essence and *esse* are distinct: (i) as thing and thing; (ii) as thing and mode. On Giles's account, the distinctions in both cases should be classified as *real* distinctions. (On all these issues, see my discussion in Chapter 12, especially text **(12.20)**.)

This account of real distinction makes the appeal to any sort of separability criterion for real distinction otiose. In fact, Giles rather puzzlingly holds both that neither (an individual) essence nor (an individual) existence can persist without the other, and that (an individual) essence and (an individual) existence are separable:

(4.10) Let us imagine that the essence of an angel is in itself something unformed, and something that can be perfected by *esse*, and that an angel is produced in the following way: God perfects the essence of an angel by means of *esse*, and the essence and existence are produced simultaneously by God; and an angel is annihilated in the following way: the essence can lose its *esse*.[36]

The point here is that Giles sees the production and destruction of a substance as entailing (or, in the case of the immaterial substance considered here, to consist of) respectively the union and separating of two components, essence and existence, even though neither part pre-existed their union, and neither part exists after their separation.[37]

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[36] Giles, *QuEE* 9 (fo. 21ra).

[37] This point is important for a correct understanding of the commonly held view amongst modern commentators that Giles has 'reified' Aquinas's 'principles of being'—essence and existence. Paulus and Hocedez, for example, both suggest that Giles has turned into *physical* components elements which Thomas saw as metaphysical principles of individual things: see Jean Paulus, *Henri de Gand: Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, Etudes de philosophie médiévale, 25 (Paris; J. Vrin, 1938), 283–4; Hocedez's introduction to Giles, *ThEE*, 62–5, 117. Wippel helpfully comments: 'Not surprisingly, he [viz. Giles] is often accused of having "reified" or turned into things Thomas's principles of being, that is to say, essence and existence': *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, 44. It is not immediately clear what is meant by this, but presumably the following comments offered by Nash are close to the intended target: 'Giles's world was a Boethian world in which the creature is distinguished from the creator by being a plurality of parts [i.e. essence and existence]': P. W. Nash, 'Giles of Rome on Boethius' "Diversum est esse et id quod est"', *Mediaeval Studies*, 12 (1950), 57–91, p. 58, cited by Wippel, 'The Relationship Between Essence and Existence in Late-Thirteenth-Century Thought: Giles of Rome, Henry of Ghent, Godfrey of Fontaines, and James of Viterbo', in Parviz Morewedge (ed.), *Philosophies of Existence Ancient and Medieval* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), 131–64, p. 158, n. 64. On the face of it, the two views are indeed very different. Giles talks of *esse* as a thing (*res*), a usage which is never found in Aquinas, and which presumably underlies the sort of assessment of Giles's position suggested by Paulus, Hocedez, and Nash (though note that, *pace* Nash, Giles never claims that *esse*c is part of a *suppositum*; I discuss this in Ch. 12). Equally, Giles sometimes talks of essence and existence as (in some sense) separable—again, a usage which Aquinas is not prepared to countenance. If the criticism of Giles is supposed to be understood as meaning that he believes essence and *esse* to be two distinct and fundamentally equivalent things—two existents, for example—then it is clearly a total misrepresentation of what he wants to claim. Giles insists that the composition of essence and *esse* yields irreducibly one existent: see e.g. Giles, *ThEE* 13 (pp. 80, 82–4). And he is adamant that essence and *esse* are not really separable in the sense that either could 'exist' independently of the other: see e.g. the texts and secondary sources cited in Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, 44 n. 14. Giles's separability claim is just an unfortunate *façon de parler*. Giles endorses Avicenna's talk of *esse* as an accident—an endorsement that has encouraged misinterpretation of his opinion. Giles's point is that *esse* has to be added to a substance—it is not part of the substance's essence: see e.g. Giles, *QuEE* 9 (fo. 20rb). But

Giles uses his account of the distinction between essence and existence to explain, among other things, unity. Anything—matter, form, or accident—which belongs to a substance must somehow share in the existence of the substance:

(4.11) One existence (*existere*) and *esse* in one thing is sufficient for the fact that all exist and are through it, just as one quantity in one thing is sufficient for all things being extended through it. Through the same quantity through which matter is extended (since it is subject to extension), other accidents are extended too (since they are received in the extended thing). So it is not necessary that there are as many quantities as there are extended things, if we should imagine that a substance is extended because it is perfected by quantity, and other accidents are extended because they are received in the extended thing. Thus too in the case at hand, the substance of each creature exists because it is perfected by *esse*, and accidents exist because they are received in the existent. Accidents however are not beings but of a being (*non sunt entia quia sunt entis*),[38] as is said in *Metaphysics* 7;[39] thus we can say that they are not existent things (*existentia*) except because they are of an existent.[40]

The analogy with quantity plays some role in the argument—just as we only need one quantity (extension$_r$) to explain the extension of all the components united in a substance, so too we only need one existence (*esse$_r$*) to explain the existence of all the components united in a substance. But it is clear that there are deeper metaphysical intuitions at work here. To grasp more precisely why Giles should have wanted to make his unity claim, we need to recall his reason for wanting to posit a real distinction between essence and existence in the first place. As we saw above, Giles's basic motivation for his theory of the real distinction of essence and existence

Aquinas is likewise clear that existence is non-essential, and that at least to this extent it is like an accident—see e.g. *Quod.* 12. 5 (p. 227^a). (Though see Aquinas, *In Metaph.* 4. 2, n. 558 (ed. M.-R. Cathala and Raymundus Spiazzi (Turin and Rome: Marietti, 1950), 155^b) for an unequivocal denial of the accidental status of *esse*.) Giles's things are clearly like the 'principles of being' of Aquinas and Aristotle: individuals whose composition is necessary and sufficient for the actual existence of a substance. In fact, Thomas himself is happy to countenance the sort of terminology that Giles later made his own. Aquinas is clearly willing to call the components of a substantial unity its 'parts' (Aquinas, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 1 c, nn. 12, 14 (iii. 8); see too (0.2) and (12.1) here); equally he is content to label the powers of the soul its 'parts' (Aquinas, *ST* 3. 46. 7 c (iii/1. 263^b)). And both of these look to be prime candidates for the status of 'principle' (as Aquinas often refers to them: see e.g. Aquinas, *In Sent.* 1. 26. 2. 2 ad 4 (i. 636)). Equally, while Thomas never labels essence and existence 'things' (*res*), he is clearly happy to use the word of forms. For example, he talks of accidents as 'things' (Aquinas, *In Sent.* 1. 26. 2. 2 ad 4 (i. 636)). So it is not clear that he would have had a principled reason for not wanting to label an essence a thing; or indeed, to label an existence a thing, given the analogies between form and existence. This said, Aquinas generally reserves the word 'thing' (*res*) for events or substances. In regard to the latter, Aquinas notes, 'the noun "thing" is taken from quiddity' (Aquinas, *In Sent.* 1. 25. 1. 4 sol. (i. 611–12)). The point, presumably, is that we only have a thing when we have a substantial form. The gist of all this is that Aquinas could have no principled objection to Giles's usage, or that of Giles's commentators; but that Aquinas's habitual usage of the words 'part' and 'thing' make it unlikely that he would choose to use these words for essence and existence. The difference between Aquinas and Giles lies, as far as I can see, fundamentally in Giles's baroque doctrine of modes, which has no parallel in Aquinas's ontology. Equally, where Aquinas is ambiguous about the possible existence of a nature or essence as, under the right circumstances, a *suppositum*, Giles unequivocally embraces this view of nature or essence. I discuss this in detail in Ch. 12 below.

  [38] The Latin here reads 'non sunt entia quia non sunt entis', but I take it that this is a mistake.
  [39] Aristotle, *Metaph.* Z. 1 (1028^{a}18).   [40] Giles, *QuEE* 10 (fo. 23rb).

is the need to explain the facticity of an individual essence. This explanation is *esse*ᵣ:
and Giles reasonably supposes that such a single explanation—*esse*ᵣ—is sufficient.
(The sort of explanation here, of course, is not efficiently but formally causal. Giles
does not invoke existence as the efficient cause of an essence's facticity; rather, he
is interested in isolating a feature of a substance which formally explains existence,
just as, say, humanity (rather than a capacity for smiling) formally explains being
human.) Setting aside the essences of immaterial substances (God, angels), an essence
is a composite of matter and form. So the existence of the essence is sufficient to
explain the existence of this essence's matter and form too. Giles does not believe
that the facticity of a substance's accidents requires any further explanation beyond
the *esse*ᵣ of the substance. He has two reasons for this. First, anything which exists
is a substance: so an accident cannot have its own *esse*ᵣ. Secondly, an accidental form
is not part (an essential part) of a substance; and *esse*ᵣ only arises from a union of
essential parts.[41] Thus, *esse*ᵣ accounts for unity.

Giles insists that accidents share in the existence of their substances by their being
'received by' their substances: they exist 'in' their subjects:

(4.12) A *suppositum* exists in itself (*per se*), whereas all other things, such as nature, existence,
and accidents, exist in the *suppositum*. From this it is clear what it is to exist in a *suppositum*:
it is not [for something] to have *esse*, or to exist in itself (*existere per se*), but to have the *esse*
of the *suppositum*.[42]

(4.13) Accidents exist, not because they have existence in themselves (*per se esse*), or because
they have their own existence (*existere*), but because they are in an existent, and exist by the
existence of the subject (*sunt in existente et existunt per existere subiecti*).[43]

In short, an accident has *esse*ₘ by sharing in the *esse*ᵣ of its substance.[44] The whole
scenario can be seen diagrammatically (Figure 4.4). The top box in Figure 4.4

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[41] Giles, *QuEE* 10 (fo. 23ᵛᵇ); see too e.g. *ThEE* 8 (p. 44, ll. 10–14) where Giles speaks of essence
'causing' *esse*. The point is that *esse* supervenes on an essence; the emergence of *esse* from an essence is
precisely what explains the existence of the essence. Equally, Giles in *ThEE* (though not in the later
Quaestiones on the same subject) talks of form being responsible for the *esse*ₘ of an essence (see e.g. *ThEE*
16 (p. 102, ll. 3–5)): I take it that what he means is that *esse*ᵣ supervenes on an essence (thereby com-
municating *esse*ₘ to it) as a result of the composition of the essence from its essential parts.

[42] Giles, *Quod.* 2. 2 (p. 51ᵇ).

[43] Ibid. 2. 2 (p. 51ᵃ ᵇ); see also 2. 2 (p. 52ᵇ); 5. 3 (p. 273ᵃ ᵇ). In the terminology of the time, Giles
identifies the *esse*ᵣ that is proper to a *suppositum* as *esse subsistentiae*; this *esse* is identified as the *esse exist-
entiae* of the *suppositum* and all that is in it, and it is the only *esse* to be found in any composite whole:
see e.g. Giles, *Quod.* 2. 2 (p. 51ᵃ ᵇ).

[44] How does Giles understand this 'sharing in *esse*' that is the mark of the unity between substance
and accident? What is it, in other words, for a substance to communicate its existence to its accidents?
In the early *ThCC* Giles gives an extensive account of what it is for an acquired accident to share in the
existence of its substance—though we should keep in mind that the ways in which Giles speaks in this
early work are not wholly typical of his later thought. (An acquired accident is a contingent property
of a thing, contrasting such properties with necessary but non-essential (non-defining) *propria* such as
the capacity for smiling in humans: see Giles, *ThCC* 38 (fo. 27ʳᵃ ᵇ).) Giles isolates three features in the
relation of substance and accident. (i) An accident *depends* on its substance: Giles, *ThCC* 38 (fo. 27ʳᵃ ᵇ,
27ᵛᵇ). Giles thus clearly accepts (AF1), and I take it that it is this claim that Giles wishes to spell out
in terms of the communication of existence from a substance to its accidents. (ii) An accident exists *in*
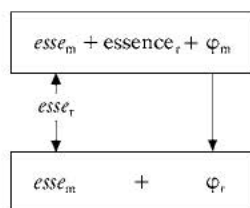
Figure 4.4

is the existent substance with its accident-mode; the bottom box is the existent accident-thing. Both substance and accident have $esse_{rm}$ in virtue of the $esse_r$ of the substance. The accident-thing (φ_r) is that in virtue of which the substance has its accident-mode (the accident-thing communicates its existence to the substance, represented by the large arrow on the right).

Giles's account is more sophisticated than commentators have often given it credit for. My analytical tools, (AI1)–(AU4), are not sufficiently fine-grained to capture Giles's position, because Giles wants to distinguish things from existents, and to include in his ontology non-existent but real objects. Difficulties seem to me to arise when Giles insists that some of these non-existent but real objects are individuals. This problem is far from unique to Giles: I shall argue in Chapter 12 below that Aquinas is open to an analogous criticism. Giles's distinctive contribution is that we cannot think of modes as real unless we can talk in terms of real *things*. This is just his principle (E_r). On the one hand, the instincts behind (E_r) might appeal to anyone who accepts a one-category analysis of reality. On the other hand, Giles is surely wrong to suppose that, for example, the union of matter and quantity results in two extended things, the matter and the quantity. Whatever analysis of substances we offer, it must be such as to avoid this sort of duplication of properties.

The hypostatic union

This analysis of substance and accident—and essence and existence—has a direct bearing on Giles's discussion of the Incarnation. Thus, just as in his early account,

its substance—it has *inesse*: Giles, *ThCC* 38 (fo. 27ᵐ). So Giles accepts (AF2). (iii) An accident—with the exception of quantity—is individuated by its substance. Quantity is responsible for individuating matter. But other accidents are individuated by their substances (for references, see above, nn. 21 and 22). Giles is not wholly unambiguous on the matter, sometimes suggesting that accidents are individuated by the *existence* of its substance—for example, 'This whiteness is individuated because it has this existence in a subject; and thus in different subjects there are different whitenesses on account of the different existences' (*Quod.* 2. 7 (p. 66ᵃ)). But it is possible that Giles later comes to regard existence as the ultimate explanation for individuation: on this, see Nash, 'Giles of Rome on Boethius' "Diversum est esse et id quod est"'. If Nash's interpretation is correct, we should keep in mind that Giles's later account of the hypostatic union is aporetic, inasmuch as the claim that existence individuates is never integrated into the theological doctrine. Giles never shifts from his view that the assumed nature is individuated independently of its union with the divine person. But the view that *esse* individuates would require Giles to affirm that the human nature is individuated by the *esse* of the Word.

the later Giles unequivocally affirms that the hypostatic union is like the relation between a substance and an accident:

(4.14) It is well said that the human nature in Christ is indeed not an accident, but has a certain mode of an accident; for, just as an accident does not constitute a *suppositum*, but is sustained in a *suppositum* already constituted in existence (and in this way exists by the existence of the *suppositum*, such that an accident does not exist except in so far as it belongs to an existent), so the human nature in Christ does not constitute a *suppositum*, but is sustained in a *suppositum* already constituted in existence.[45]

(4.15) Let us imagine indeed that the human nature is not an accident, but that it has a certain mode of an accident. For just as we do not allow to an accident that it constitutes a *suppositum*, but that it is sustained in a *suppositum* that is already constituted, so the human nature in Christ does not constitute a *suppositum*, but is sustained in the *suppositum* of the Word.[46]

Note here that Giles is talking about Christ's human nature, and he clearly construes this as an individual—indeed, something that might under different circumstances constitute a *suppositum*. (I shall return to this in Chapter 12 below.) So the relation between Christ's human nature and the divine *esse* is analogous to the relation between quantity and matter, rather than between any other accident and its substance. (Recall that other accidents are individuated by the substances.) There are, however, limits to the analogy: specifically, while Christ's human nature is individual, there is no sense in which it has a role in the individuation of the divine *suppositum*.

In terms of the general substance–accident analogy, the most important similarity is that, just like an accident, Christ's human nature has existence communicated to it by a *suppositum* that is extrinsic to it:

(4.16) In this way we can understand how the human nature was assumed by the Word, namely, since it exists by the existence (*esse*) of the Word.[47]

(4.17) The human nature does not exist in itself (*per se*), neither by its proper existence (*existere*), but it is assumed to the personal existence (*esse*) of the Word.[48]

So Giles clearly accepts the relevance of (AF1) to the question of the hypostatic union, and construes it in his own idiosyncratic way.[49] In common with many medieval theologians, Giles considers what would happen if the union between the Word and his human nature were to be dissolved. He argues that the human nature would need to be given its own proper existence.[50] I take it that this existence would be a new created *esse*$_r$, from which the nature would receive an *esse*$_m$. So the communication of *esse* by the divine *suppositum* should be understood to entail the communication of *esse*$_r$ to Christ's human nature, such that the nature has *esse*$_m$.

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[45] Giles, *Quod.* 2. 2 (p. 52^b).   [46] Ibid. 5. 3 (p. 273^b); see also ibid. 6. 3 (p. 361^a).

[47] Ibid. 2. 2 (p. 51^b).   [48] Ibid. 5. 3 (p. 273^b).

[49] This could be plausibly thought of as explicable in terms of the first of the three features of the substance–accident relation outlined in n. 44 above: a substance *conserves* (communicates existence to) its accidents; the Word conserves (communicates existence to) the human nature.

[50] Giles, *Quod.* 2. 2 (p. 52^b).

Giles's account here goes some way to explaining why Giles, unlike Aquinas, is happy to accept the substance–accident model. Suppose that, like Aquinas, Giles wants to affirm that Christ's human nature shares in the existence of the divine *suppositum*. Giles's general claim that accidents share in the existence of their substances would allow him to preserve the basic Thomist Christological insight (the human nature shares in the existence of the divine *suppositum*), while allowing that the human nature is something like an accident of the Word.[51] Thus, Christ's human nature is had by a *suppositum* to which it is non-essential, and it exists only in so far as it shares in the existence of the *suppositum*.

Equally, just as an accident-thing communicates an accident-mode to its substance, so too Christ's human nature communicates 'being human' to the Word:

(4.18) If *esse* is taken for the relation which a *suppositum* gains from its nature, then there are in the *suppositum* of the Son of God many *esse*, since from the divinity he has the *esse* of God, and from the humanity the *esse* of a human being, and is true God and true man.[52]

I take it that the claim that something has 'the *esse* of a human being' is a way of claiming that the Son of God is human—that it receives a humanity-mode (humanity$_m$) from the humanity-thing (humanity$_r$) united to it. This seems to be the closest any thinker comes to acknowledging the pertinence of (AF2) for the hypostatic union. Giles can thus offer a theoretically grounded account of the truth-making role of the human nature, though at the expense of coming perilously close to affirming passive potency in the divine person—a potency actualized by the humanity$_m$ received by it from the humanity$_r$ united to it.[53]

Again, Giles's whole account can be conveniently represented diagrammatically (Figure 4.5). Like an accident, the humanity is a thing. But—like an accident—it does not have proper *esse$_r$*—its proper actual existence (*esse existentiae*). It is this last claim that Giles's opponents Henry of Ghent and Godfrey of Fontaines ultimately focus on in their attack of Giles's account of the hypostatic union.

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[51] To the extent that his contemporaries disagreed with his claim that Christ's human nature does not have any existence independently of the person of the Word, Giles's critics disagree too with Aquinas's account of the hypostatic union; though their reasons for so doing have to do not with Aquinas's account of substance and accident, but with his acceptance of the concrete whole–concrete part analogy, as we have seen.

[52] Giles, *Quod.* 5. 3 (p. 273$^{a\ b}$).

[53] Thus, in terms of the second of the features outlined in n. 44, there is a loose sense in which the human nature's relation to the Word is at least analogous to an accident's informing its substance—a startling position to hold if understood in anything other than the loosest way. In terms of the third feature of the substance–accident relation outlined in n. 44, Giles explicitly denies that Christ's human nature is individuated by the divine Word. When discussing the possibility of multiple divine incarnations, Giles claims that a divine person could assume any number of human natures, on the grounds that (among other necessary conditions) the assumed nature is not individuated by the Word. (If it were so individuated, Giles reasons, multiple incarnations of one divine person would be impossible, since the individuality of the person would be sufficient for the identity of an assumed nature.) See Giles, *Quod.* 6. 3 (pp. 359^b–360^a); for the early Giles, see *Lect.* 3. 4 (p. 183).
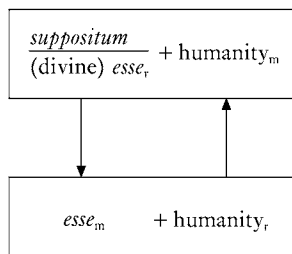
Figure 4.5

2. HENRY OF GHENT

Henry, like Giles of Rome, accepts the substance–accident analogy for the hypo-static union. But, as I pointed out above, Henry's account of the union between sub-stance and accident underwent a radical shift between 1279 and 1286—probably in 1286 itself, when he devoted a great deal of intellectual effort to countering Giles's account of the real distinction between essence and existence, and the account of the relation between substance and accident which Giles's theory of essence and existence involves.[54]

The shift of opinion on the nature of the substance–accident relation entails a similar shift on the question of the metaphysics of the hypostatic union. Henry came to see that his rejection of Giles's real distinction between essence and existence entails that any essence—substantial or accidental—must have its own existence. (For Giles, of course, the real distinction between essence and existence allows him to dissociate an essence$_r$ from an esse$_r$.) Thus, what Henry at first denied, but later accepted, was that the human nature of Christ has its own underived existence. Henry modified his account of the union between this nature and the divine person to take account of this new insight.

Henry's early account

Central to Henry's early account is the claim that only *supposita*—independent substances—exist. This insight, later abandoned, and to which I return below, gov-erns many of Henry's claims in his earlier account. Since Henry, as we shall see, takes the substance–accident model as basic, we can best understand what he wants to say about the metaphysics of the Incarnation by looking at what he has to say about the substance–accident relation. The main discussion is in *Quodlibet* 3. 2 (1278). In this discussion, Henry is silent on the extent to which an accident φ-ness has a

[54] For various opinions on the precise chronology of the 1286 debates, see the literature cited at Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, 41 n. 7. I am assuming, with Edgar Hocedez, 'Gilles de Rome et Henri de Gand sur la distinction réelle (1276–87)', *Gregorianum*, 8 (1927), 358–84, that Henry's 1286 *Quod.* 10 is written after the first eleven questions of Giles's *QuEE*; but the precise chrono-logy does not matter for my purposes here.

role in actualizing its substance's potency for being φ. (I doubt that Henry would want to deny this **(AF2)** function to accidents, not least because every account needs some way of spelling out how **(AF3)** is true; but it is difficult to be sure.) Henry does, however, speak of the dependence aspects of the relation: a substance 'shares its existence' with an accident.[55] Thus, an accident exists in virtue of the substance on which it depends.[56] So Henry accepts **(AF1)**.

Henry, in this early *Quodlibet*, is clearly too an adherent of **(AI2)**, explicitly denying that accidents have actual existence:

(4.19) The *esse* of actual existence . . . is attributed properly only to this which has it [viz. the *esse* of actual existence] in itself and absolutely, and not to that which has it [viz. the *esse* of actual existence] in another, or from union with another.[57]

The claim is similar to Aquinas's: accidents do not actually exist; they are just states (necessarily dependent particulars) of (belonging to) substances. So Henry at this stage in his career denies **(E)**. Henry also claims (a little later, in 1280) that accidents are individuated by their substances.[58]

Christ's human nature is united similarly to the divine person, although Henry is clear on the limitations of the analogy: 'Not that the human nature is an accident or the matter of the divine nature: God forbid (*absit hoc sentire*).'[59] Nevertheless, Henry claims:

(4.20) Inasmuch as the human nature has actual existence, it has this only in him in whom it is united and to whom it was assumed. Thus, it should absolutely be claimed that Christ had no actual existence in itself (*ex se*) in virtue of his human nature, just as an accident which is in a subject [does not], or matter which is in a composite. Rather, Christ had actual existence only in virtue of his divine nature, which [existence] is communicated to the human nature by assumption to it [viz. the divine nature] in the unity of *suppositum*, just as the actual existence of a subject is communicated to an accident.[60]

Henry makes it clear that the human nature as united to the divine *suppositum* does not have its own existence. He claims that the reason for this is that it (factually) never existed separately from the Word.[61]

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[55] Henry is famous for allowing substances an efficiently causal role in the production of some of their accidents. But the sort of accident he has in mind is an *operation*, not the sort of acquired accidents that Giles speaks of in this sort of a way: see Henry, *Quod.* 10. 9 (*Opera Omnia*, ed. R. Macken and others, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, De Wulf-Mansion Centre, Series 2 (Leuven: Leuven University Press; Leiden: Brill, 1979–), xiv. 221–2). I believe that the positions of Henry and Giles on the question of the causal role substances have in relation to some of their accidents are independent of each other.

[56] Henry, *Quod.* 3. 2 (text, edited from MS Vat. Lat. 853, in Hocedez, p. 33).

[57] Ibid. 3. 2 (Hocedez, 33).

[58] Ibid. 5. 8 (2 vols. (Paris, 1518), i. fo. 165ᵛκ); he claims too here that they share in their substances' existence. This could be a bare dependence claim—an assertion of **(AF1)**. I am inclined to read it, however, as helping to confirm Henry's commitment to **(AI2)** at this stage in his intellectual development.

[59] Henry, *Quod.* 3. 2 (Hocedez, 33).

[60] Ibid. 3. 2 (Hocedez, 33). The account is closest to Aquinas's account in *Compendium Theologiae*, an account which I have argued is atypical of Aquinas's accounts of the Incarnation.

[61] Henry, *Quod.* 3. 2 (Hocedez, 33).

The analogy with an accident is not exact. Among other things, Henry is clear
in denying that Christ's human nature is individuated by the divine *suppositum*.
Christ's human nature fails to be so individuated even though the nature belongs
to an alien *suppositum*.[62] Claiming that Christ's human nature is individuated inde-
pendently of its union with the Word makes considerable difference to the onto-
logy here. Henry's account of accidents requires that, considered in abstraction from
their substances, they possess *esse essentiae*, the *esse* that is proper to a *common* nature.
(On this, see passage (4.21) below and my comments there.) His account of the
assumed human nature entails that this sort of *esse* can be also proper to something
that is as such individual. This makes Henry's account analogous to Giles's, in that
where Giles accepts that the individual assumed nature is a *thing*—and to that extent,
if considered in abstraction from the Word, real but non-existent—Henry accepts
that the individual assumed nature has in itself the sort of *being* that belongs to non-
actual common essences—and is to that extent real.

How does this account relate the view Henry takes in opposition to Giles that
the distinction between essence and existence is not a *real* distinction? (I discuss
this opinion in detail in a moment.) In *Quodlibet* 3. 2, Henry holds that existence
only belongs to complete things—independent substances. Since the assumed human
nature, like an accident, is not such an independent substance, the assumed nature
lacks its proper existence. So it looks as though, at this stage in the debate, the ques-
tion of the nature of the distinction between essence and existence is irrelevant. Henry
can hold both that essence and existence are not really distinct, and that accidents
lack their proper existence. (Later, as we shall see, Henry is most unhappy with
this coupling of views.)

There is one further very distinctive feature of Henry's account which is worth
mentioning. Unlike any other medieval thinker, Henry supposes that the existence
of Christ's human nature is given to it not by the divine person but by the divine
nature. Henry reasons that actual existence is not a relational feature of a thing.
But what is distinctive to the divine persons is relational; hence actual existence
cannot belong to a divine person in virtue of what is distinctive to it, but rather in
virtue of the non-relational divine essence. Thus, the actual existence communic-
ated to the human nature is communicated by the divine *suppositum* 'in virtue of
the essence which it includes in itself'.[63] The same point is made in (4.20). While
Henry is aware that his position in general has in common with Aquinas's the view
that there is only one *esse* in Christ, Henry consciously opposes Aquinas's tendency
to speak as though the Word communicates *esse* to the assumed nature. But the
difference between the two thinkers here is little more than verbal, since Aquinas
is bound to agree that the *esse* communicated to the assumed nature is proper to

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[62] Henry, *Quod*. 6. 7 (Macken, x. 74). I discuss the individuality of Christ's human nature in more
detail in Ch. 12 below.

[63] Henry, *Quod*. 3. 2 (Hocedez, 34). On this, see also Richard of Middleton, *In Sent*. 3. 1. 1. 2 ad 1
(4 vols. (Brescia, 1591), iii. 7ᵃ), who considers Henry's position to be possible. I discuss other aspects
of this in Ch. 7 below.

the divine essence. (On the non-distinction between the divine person and the divine essence in Aquinas, see Chapter 6 below.)

Henry's late account

Henry's late account of the issues is very different, not because Henry becomes unhappy with the substance–accident analogy, but because his view of the relation between a substance and its accidents undergoes a radical change. Henry rejects his earlier claim that accidents lack their own existence (*esse existentiae*). He thus, I think, becomes an adherent of **(AI3)**, and comes to accept **(E)**—presumably on the basis of his encounter with Giles, although, as I have tried to show, Giles actually accepts the related principle **(E$_r$)**, a principle that, relying as it does on Giles's account of essence and existence, Henry rejects. ((E$_r$) relies on Giles's account of essence and existence in the sense that, if applied to the essence–existence issue, it relies on his claim that *esse* is a thing, and thus (on principles that both Henry and Giles accept) really distinct from essence.)

Why should Henry shift from **(AI2)** to **(AI3)**? Some—though not all—of the reasons have to do with clarifications of his view that there is no more than an intentional distinction between essence and existence. So before we look at the shift from **(AI2)** to **(AI3)**, we need to get clear on Henry's reasons for rejecting Giles's real distinction. Henry's three reasons first appear in *Quodlibet* 1. 9 (1276), and are repeated in more detail in *Quodlibet* 10. 7 (1286, probably written just after the first eleven books of Giles's *Quaestiones de Esse at Essentia*, a work which explicitly targets Henry's view).

(i) The first reason appears in two rather different forms in the two *Quodlibets*, though the basic intuition is much the same. (i.1) In *Quodlibet* 1. 9, Henry argues that, if *esse* is not a *per se* (i.e. necessary) feature of a substance, then there is no existent object that is a being *per se*.[64] (i.2) Later, Henry puts the argument in a less tendentious manner. Being, like unity and truth, is a transcendental, and as such does not add any real non-relational feature to an essence. In response to Giles's objection that no essence is of itself of sufficient actuality to exist, and hence that being must add some real non-relational feature to essence,[65] Henry agrees that no essence is of itself of sufficient actuality to exist, but denies that this should lead us to infer that there is a real distinction between essence and existence. No creature is a necessary existent, but, by the same token, there is no individual creature for which existence is a merely accidental feature. Existence is a *per se*, non-accidental feature. As such, it cannot be a thing over and above the individual essence.[66]

(ii) Clearly, the participated existence—let us call it *esse*$_1$—which, on Giles's view, is added to essence, is not God. So it is a creature. But no created existence is necessary; so all created existence is existence by participation. To explain how *esse*$_1$

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[64] Henry, *Quod.* 1. 9 (Macken, v. 51).   [65] Giles, *QuEE* 9 (fo. 20$^{\text{rb}}$).
[66] Henry, *Quod.* 10. 7 (Macken, xiv. 155).

exists, we need to posit another existence—$esse_2$—in which $esse_1$ participates: and so on, *ad infinitum*. As Henry sees it, Giles's view will entail an impossible infinite regress of participant and participated existences. So, Henry reasons, we should simply deny that there is an existence really distinct from the individual essence to which it belongs.[67]

(iii) Henry claims that Giles's existence can be neither a substance nor an accident. Clearly, no substance can exist in virtue of one of its accidental properties. So existence cannot be an accident. Neither can it be a substance, since every substance is matter, form, or composite. Henry shows that existence cannot be any of these. Most relevantly for our purposes, existence cannot be a form, because it would then have to be a substantial form of a creature—a substantial form of a creature which, absurdly, would not be part of the creature's essence.[68]

Given that creatures exist contingently, and hence that their existence is not a part of their essence, Henry argues instead for an intentional distinction between essence and existence. Henry's intentional distinction is mid-way between real distinction and rational distinction. He explains it at *Quodlibet* 1. 9, but at greater length and more satisfactorily in *Quodlibet* 10. 7. Like Scotus's later formal distinction, Henry's intentional distinction is between inseparable but definitionally distinct properties of an object. Henry describes the three sorts of distinction—real, rational, and intentional—as follows. Really distinct things are separable, and such that, if united, they form some sort of real composite. Rationally distinct things are concepts that are synonymous. Henry's example is a *definiendum* and its definition. Intentionally distinct things are not synonymous concepts; but neither are they objects which could compose a non-simple thing. Henry claims that the relevant necessary and sufficient distinction for a merely intentional distinction is merely definitional distinction. His example is a genus and specific difference: we can define a genus without relation to any specific existence, even though the union of genus and specific difference does not result in anything other than a simple form.[69] The distinction between essence and existence is like this. A contingent essence does not include existence among its defining features—even though the essence can never be exemplified without existence.

Before I show how Henry's views on essence and existence relate to his abandonment of **(AI2)** in favour of **(AI3)**, I would like to pause and consider Henry's rejection of Giles's view. To understand what is at issue between Henry and Giles, we need to consider two possible relevant senses of 'essence' and 'existence', here pinpointed by Anthony Kenny:

Existence itself . . . can be attributed in various ways. When we use 'exists' in a way corresponding to the English 'There is a . . .' construction, we are saying that there is something in reality corresponding to a certain description, or instantiating a certain concept. . . . We

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[67] Henry, *Quod.* 10. 7 (Macken, xiv. 155–6); see also 1. 9 (Macken, v. 51).
[68] Ibid. 1. 9 (Macken, v. 51–2); see also 10. 7 (Macken, xiv. 157–9).
[69] Ibid. 10. 7 (Macken, xiv. 165).

might call this specific existence: it is the existence of something corresponding to a certain specification, something exemplifying a species, for instance, such as the insect-eating plant. But when we say 'Julius Caesar is no more' we are not talking about a species, we are talking about a historic individual, and saying that he is no longer alive, no longer among the things that live, move, and have their being in the world. We might call this 'individual existence'.[70]

Kenny goes on to point out that there is a similar ambiguity in the senses of the word 'essence': sometimes it means no more than 'concept'; sometimes it is used to refer to something 'as individual as [a creature's] individualised form'.[71]

Given this distinction, we can understand better the debate between Giles and Henry on the real distinction. Clearly, Giles is concerned with individual essence and individual existence. He consistently talks of both as *res*, and his discussion makes it evident that he has concrete, individual objects in mind. Given this it is clear that Henry must be right in wanting to deny such a real distinction. Giles believes that a real distinction is necessary to account for the existence of contingent beings. As we saw, he argues that, for any possible individual essence F, the contingency of F's existence entails a real distinction between F and its existence. But this claim is logically equivalent to the following, for any possible individual essence F, real identity of F and its existence entails F's necessary existence. And this claim is false. The reason for this can be found in Kenny's discussion of a view similar to Giles's, that of Aquinas: 'If we do not believe in pre-existent potentialities of creatures, their essence and existence are equally contingent.'[72] We can put the objection another way: Why suppose that an individual essence is real but, in itself, non-existent? Surely, we might suppose, the existence of an individual essence is just as contingent as the individual essence?

So for this reason we should prefer Henry's denial of the real distinction to Giles's defence of it. What about Henry's proposed intentional distinction? Here things get a bit more complicated. It would be tempting to think that what Henry has in mind is something like Kenny's distinction between specific essence and specific existence. After all, Henry spells out his intentional distinction in terms of definitional distinctions. And thus construed, of course, Henry's claim is uncontroversially true: there is no created being the definition of whose specific essence includes existence. But Henry must be committed to slightly more than this sort of definitional distinction. His claim is about individual essence and individual existence construed as something analogous to *property-instances*, and he wants to claim that these two property-instances are not in every respect identical. And in this case how we

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[70] Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas*, Past Masters (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 49–50. Kenny's account here draws on some well-known insights proposed by Peter Geach in his seminal essay 'Form and Existence', in Anthony Kenny (ed.), *Aquinas: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Modern Studies in Philosophy (London and Melbourne: Macmillan, 1969), 29–53, pp. 44–7.

[71] Kenny, *Aquinas*, 54.

[72] Kenny, *Aquinas*, 56. It is important to note that Giles is not suggesting that *esse essentiae* need in any sense be *ante rem*. It is precisely for this reason that Henry's arguments have the force they have.

view Henry's intentional distinction will depend on our presuppositions about the distinctions between (essential) property-instances of any one substance.[73]

Given this account of the intentional distinction between essence and existence, we can understand Henry's reasons for shifting from (AI2) to (AI3). I shall give three of Henry's arguments here.

(i) The major reason relates explicitly to the essence–existence question:

(4.21) I say that, if we are speaking of the *esse* of essence (*esse essentiae*) simply speaking, and of the *esse* of existence (*esse existentiae*), since in no way is essence properly essence without its proper *esse* of essence, which is its proper act, in virtue of which it is called essence, likewise existence (*existentia*) [is in no way existence] without its proper *esse* of existence (*esse existentiae*), which is its proper act, in virtue of which it is called existence (*existentia*), just as whiteness is the proper act in virtue of which something is called white. Just as, therefore, nothing can be this white thing unless it has this whiteness, so nothing can be called this essence unless it has this *esse* of essence (*esse essentiae*) proper to it, and likewise for the *esse* of existence. So, however many essences are in one thing, whether of the category of substance or of accident, there are just as many *esse* of essence and *esse* of existence.[74]

Henry draws on the insights of Avicenna here. Avicenna draws attention to the priority of an essence to both its singular existence (in the individual) and its conceptualization (as a universal). We have encountered this principle already in Aquinas's account of the relation between common nature and its existence as a concept and as an extra-mental individual. Henry developed this notion of the 'bare' essence (bare in the sense of being prior to its individuality and universality) by adding the notion of the essence's *existence*: the essence *in itself* must have some sort of existence (if it did not, how could it have any reality at all?). And this is Henry's *esse essentiae*—the essence's possession of some sort of being in itself.[75] *Esse existentiae* is the mark of the essence's instantiation as an individual.

Given that accidents can count as essences, the argument in (4.21) seems clear enough. Accidents are objects, not states: they are the individual instantiations of accidental essences. Since they are essences, they have their own *esse*, inseparable from the essence—intentionally distinct from the essence. But why accept that accidents are essences? (Recall that the account in *Quodlibet* 3. 2 entails denying

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[73] There are certainly ways of distinguishing intentional distinctions from definitional distinctions. A merely definitional distinction, on the face of it, holds between concepts (at least, it does so for the nominalist and moderate realist); and distinctions between concepts might be no more than rational distinctions. Distinctions between property-instances might be thought to be a little more robust—as distinctions go—than this.

[74] Henry, *Quod.* 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 203–4).

[75] See Henry, *Quod.* 3. 9 (Paris, i. fo. 69ᵛO). The Avicennan background is Avicenna, *Metaph.* 5. 1–2 (*Liber de Philosophia Prima sive Scientia Divina* [*Metaphysica*], ed. S. van Riet, 3 vols., Avicenna Latinus (Louvain: Peeters; Leiden: Brill, 1977–83), ii. 227–45). A very helpful discussion of the whole issue can be found in Mark G. Henninger, *Relations: Medieval Theories 1250–1325* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 44–6. The contrast with Giles is instructive. Giles presumably holds that common essences are real, but, like individual essences, not existent in themselves. (Aquinas is even more agnostic than Giles here, simply talking of the common nature in itself.) Scotus later identifies the existence of the nature in itself, prior to its instantiation or conceptualization, as its primary being: see (0.7) above.

that accidents are essences.) Henry's reasons explicitly invoke both Aristotle and Averroës—doubtless to remind us that he sees Giles's (mis-)conception of the issue as springing from faulty philosophy, even though according to Henry the result of Giles's view is straightforward heresy.[76] According to Henry, Aristotle explicitly claims that accidents are both things and beings: and this is sufficient for their having their own *esse*.[77] What, then, should we make of the well-known conflicting Aristotelian *dictum* that accidents are not beings because they belong to a being? Henry argues that the correct reading, given Aristotle's claim that accidents *are* beings, is that accidents are not beings *unless* they belong to a being. As he puts it, accidents 'do not have their being and their essence separately, but in a substance, with the exist-ence and essence of a substance'.[78] According to Henry, then, not only is Giles's position mistaken, it cannot even claim to be genuinely Aristotelian.

(ii) A second argument appeals to the status of being as a transcendental. If an accident lacks its own being, then it lacks its own unity, since being and unity are logically equivalent. But accidents have proper unity, since they are really distinct features of a substance, and any such feature must—if it is to be really distinct from something else—have its own unity.[79] The idea here is that the only sorts of objects which can be really distinct from each other—even if they both exist in some fur-ther whole—are numerically discrete items: and hence are items which have their own proper unity.

(iii) A final argument—tucked up in Henry's typically lengthy discussion of the second argument—does not take issue with Giles's account of essence and existence, and appeals instead to a different metaphysical intuition. If we are to be able to speak of an accidental unity, the various components of that unity must count as things, each with its own (underived) existence. And the motivation for this new belief is simple:

(4.22) In an accidental composite of substance and accident, there are in it as many exist-ences (in either way [viz substantial or accidental]) as there are diverse essences of substance and accident in it. For if an accident does not have proper existence in a subject, but only the existence of the subject, then in no way could the composite be accidentally one thing. . . . For something is said to be one thing accidentally in virtue of the accidental form, in that [the accidental form] communicates its existence and unity to the whole composite from substance and accident. Whence if an accident did not have its proper existence in a sub-ject, it would not have its proper unity either.[80]

[76] Henry, *Quod.* 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 204).

[77] *Metaph.* Δ. 7 (1017ᵃ22–4): 'Those things which the figures of the categories signify are said to be *per se*, for they are according to the number of these,' cited in Henry, *Quod.* 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 215). Henry uses the comments of Averroës as his guide to this difficult sentence: 'This noun "being" is said of all those things of which the categories are said, since what the word "being" signifies seems to be the same as that which the words of the categories signify' (Averroës, *In Metaph.* 5. 14 (*Aristotelis Opera cum Averrois Commentaria*, 11 vols. (Venice, 1550), viii. fo. 1161)).

[78] Henry, *Quod.* 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 215).   [79] Ibid. 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 206–7).

[80] Ibid. 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 205).

Similarly:

(4.23) If what is formal in a thing did not have in itself its unity and its essential and actual existence simply proper to it, then it could communicate no existence to the matter or the composite. Neither could the existence of the *suppositum* be had from it, nor the unity of the *suppositum* or composite.[81]

The idea seems to be that an accident cannot perform the required actualization function necessary for an accidental unity ((AF2)) unless it is an underived exist-ent (i.e. unless (AI2) is false). So Henry comes to accept (E). We should note here too that (4.22) seems to signal possible support for (AU3), a claim inconsistent with (AI2).[82]

This does not, mean, of course, that Henry wants to deny a sense in which a substance actively shares its existence with its accidents. Thus, in (4.22), Henry talks about an accident 'having the existence of its subject'. (This existence is *esse sub-sistentiae*, the existence of a subsisting object.[83]) Thus, there is still a sense in which an accident depends on its substance, even though it also has its own underived existence. Henry still accepts (AF1). But the new claim is that, for a substance to possess an accident, it must be possible for both substance and accident to com-pose an accidental unit: and they can only do this if they are both existent things. Clearly, Henry wants there to be a relation here between two concrete objects, each with its own existence, such that the relation consists in the substance sharing its existence with the accident.

What is the input of Henry's debate with Giles? Basically, the fundamental point of disagreement is that an accident must have its own existence. Giles's ontology does not allow this, since for Giles the only things that have their own proper existence are substances (although note that Giles's ontology certainly allows that accidents are things—I dealt with this aspect of Giles's theory above). Henry, on the other hand, believes that there can be no distinction between a substance

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[81] Henry, *Quod.* 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 206). Henry claims that he has not shifted from his earlier view, but I find this frankly difficult to credit. (Henry is no stranger to changing his mind while insisting that he is doing no more than changing the terminology—I cite another example in my 'Four-Dimensionalism and Identity Across Time: Henry of Ghent vs. Bonaventure', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 37 (1999), 393–414, p. 414, n. 83.) In *Quodlibet* 10, Henry claims that he uses '*esse essentiae*' in *Quodlibet* 3 to refer to any sort of non-subsistent existence (including the existence of an individual essence): see passage (12.15) below. As we have seen, it is clearly true that he allows that the human nature is an individual essence with its proper *esse essentiae*. But the point in the earlier account is that there is no sense in which the human nature is *actual* independently of the Word. It has the *esse* that belongs to non-actual objects. In the later account, this claim is denied, and Henry explicitly asserts that the human nature has some sort of actuality independent of the Word. So Henry's later claim is at the very least disingenuous.

[82] On this, see additionally my comments in Ch. 1 above, where I note that Henry by 1286 comes to reject (AI2). Note too that Henry's claims about *esse essentiae* are not relevant to this discussion. Henry never spells out his understanding of *esse essentiae* in terms of any sort of truth-making function. *Esse essentiae* is a way of talking about the reality of essences (usually common natures, but also particular natures as in the case of Christ's human nature).

[83] On Henry's account of the conditions necessary and sufficient for subsistence, see Part IV below.

and its accidents unless this distinction can be spelt out in terms of a distinction in existence. Equally, as we have seen, Henry is convinced that an accident cannot be a truth-maker unless it is a thing in the sense of being an underived existent. Perhaps at root, Henry might (not unreasonably) argue that it makes no sense calling an object a 'thing' unless that object also has its own underived existence. Of course, Giles's position would preclude this sort of move, since Giles takes his account of the real distinction between essence and existence to entail that there can be only one existence in any one object—where an object is taken to include its accidental properties.

One point remains unclear here: whether or not Henry still wants to see an accident as *individuated* by its substance. At one point, Henry discusses the case of the separated accidents in the Eucharist, arguing to the effect that they retain the same existence when separated as they had when united to their substance.[84] This might make us suppose that Henry abandons the individuation feature of accidental dependence. But we should perhaps not be too hasty to draw the obvious inference here. Aquinas, after all, supposes both that the accidents retain their (individual) existence on separation, and that their (individual) existence is individuated by their substance.[85]

Henry sees the union of Christ's human nature with the Word in terms of this new substance–accident account. Just as in the case of an accidental unit, Henry explains Christ's unity in terms of the communication of existence by the Word—more properly, the divine nature (see below)—to the assumed nature.[86] This human nature, however, has its own proper existence. If it did not, it would be impossible to claim that Jesus was in any sense a creature:

(4.24) If the human nature in Christ had no proper existence, but only the existence of the divine *suppositum*, it would follow that, since that [existence of the divine *suppositum*] is uncreated, the humanity of Christ would utterly lack any created existence, and thus Christ would not be a creature according to his human nature, since he is not a creature except by participating in created existence.[87]

The human nature shares this created existence with the composite of Word and human nature which is Christ.[88] And as we have seen, Henry makes it clear that, just as in the case of an accidental unit, if Christ's human nature did not have its own underived existence, then the whole composite Christ could not exist. The idea is that, necessary for a genuine composition of the sort required, all of the parts of the composite have their own existence which they can share with the whole.[89]

One final feature of Henry's later account needs to be mentioned. Although much of his earlier account has been abandoned, Henry retains his insistence that

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[84] Henry, *Quod.* 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 209–10).   [85] On this, see my discussion in Ch. 1 above.
[86] Henry, *Quod.* 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 205).   [87] Ibid. 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 211).
[88] Ibid. 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 214): 'licet det ei esse existentiae simpliciter'.
[89] See (4.22), above. Note that the claim relates both to the accidents of a substance and to Christ's human nature.

the existence communicated from the divine *suppositum* to the human nature is had by the person in virtue of the divine nature:

(4.25) There is no absolute existence posited in God other than the form of the divine essence which is common to the three divine persons, and is in some way communicated to Christ, according to his humanity, under the *suppositum* of the Word.[90]

Indwelling

Henry stresses more than any thinker other than the Franciscans Peter John Olivi and William of Ware one further feature of the hypostatic union: God's special indwelling in the assumed nature. As Henry understands it, the divine essence is *substantially* present in the assumed nature.[91] There are two relevant contrasts. First, the divine essence is present not in the substance but in the *powers* (intellect and will) of a created person, in so far as these two faculties are the locus for the Trinitarian image in humanity.[92] Secondly, the divine essence is present everywhere in a way that is natural to creatures; but it is present in Christ in a way that is supernatural, transcending the natural capacities of the creature.[93] Henry does not put the claim to any great metaphysical or explanatory use, except in discussing whether or not the Word could assume an irrational nature.[94] (Scotus criticizes the notion as it crops up in William of Ware. As we shall see in Part II, William uses the indwelling model as one of a number of possible strategies for explaining how a divine person could become incarnate.[95])

3. GODFREY OF FONTAINES

We saw in Chapter 2 how Godfrey refutes Aquinas's account of the union between the divine person and his assumed human nature. Godfrey explicitly rejects Giles's view too. His basic objection is that Giles's view presupposes a real distinction between essence and existence. Godfrey, as we shall see, rejects this distinction. It is for this reason that, officially, he rejects Giles's account of the hypostatic union. But it seems to me that something different is really at issue between the two thinkers—namely, the existential status of accidents. (The real distinction between essence and existence is only relevant to this issue because Giles believes his real distinction to entail that accidents do not have their own existence.)

Godfrey against Giles

In his *Quodlibet* 8. 1, Godfrey gives an extended account of the union between Christ's human nature and the Word, in the course of which he rejects Giles's

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[90] Henry, *Quod.* 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 218–19).   [91] Ibid. 13. 5 (Macken, xviii. 34–5).
[92] Ibid. 13. 5 (Macken, xviii. 35).   [93] Ibid. 13. 5 (Macken, xviii. 30).
[94] On this, see Excursus 1, Ch. 10, and my detailed discussion in 'Incarnation, Indwelling, and the Vision of God: Henry of Ghent and Some Franciscans', *Franciscan Studies*, 57 (1999), 79–130.
[95] On this, see also Matthew of Aquasparta, *QDI* 8 (p. 157).

theory, according to which the human nature, like an accident, exists merely in virtue of the existence of its *suppositum*. According to Godfrey, Giles's view is that each *suppositum* has its own existence, such that anything united to that *suppositum* shares in the existence of the *suppositum* while not contributing any sort of existence to the *suppositum*. Thus, accidents and Christ's human nature share in the existence of their *suppositum* without in any way contributing existence to their *suppositum*. It is, according to Godfrey, in this manner that Giles understands the claims that Christ's human nature is substantified, or sustained, by the divine person.[96]

Godfrey claims that this view is inconsistent with his own claim that there is no real distinction between essence and existence:

(4.26) This [viz. Giles's account] does not seem to be able to stand. Supposing that essence, and the *esse* of essence (*esse essentiae*), and the *esse* of existence (*esse existentiae*) are really utterly the same (as I have shown elsewhere), wherever there is found some essence, or something to which the notion of essence belongs, actual existence is also found there.[97]

Presupposed to this argument (though not, as we shall see, to Godfrey's rejection of Giles's overall Christological strategy) is Godfrey's rejection of Giles's real distinction between essence and existence. Why should Godfrey want to reject Giles's real distinction? Some of the arguments are reminiscent of Henry's. (i) The transcendental attribute *one* does not add anything real to its subject. *A fortiori*, then, the attribute *being* (*ens*)—and therefore *existence* (*esse*)—can add nothing real to its subject, since *being* is more universal than *one*.[98] (ii) If *being* is an attribute added to a substance, then we will be faced with an impossible infinite regress—a further *being*-attribute needing to be added to explain the being of this first being.[99] (iii) According to defenders of a real distinction between essence and existence, essence is potency to existence's actuality. But the only available sorts of passive potency are the pure potency of prime matter in relation to substantial form or the qualified potency of substance in relation to accidental form. Essence is not prime matter; neither is any putative composite of essence and existence a merely accidental

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[96] Godfrey, *Quod.* 8. 1 (PB 4, pp. 9–10).

[97] Ibid. 8. 1 (PB 4, p. 10). I discuss Godfrey's arguments in favour of real identity between essence and existence in a moment.

[98] Godfrey, *Quod.* 3. 1 (*Les quatre premiers Quodlibets de Godefroid de Fontaines*, ed. M. de Wulf and A. Pelzer, Les Philosophes Belges. Textes et études, 2 (Louvain: Institut Supérieur de Philosophie, 1904), p. 303 (br.); p. 163 (lon.)): note that Godfrey's arguments in *Quodlibet* 3 appear in two versions, short (= br(evis)) and long (= lon(ga)). The argument I give as the first here is conflated from Godfrey's first two; my second is his third, and my third his fifth.

[99] Godfrey, *Quod.* 3. 1 (PB 2, p. 303 (br.); p. 164 (lon.)). With regard to these first two arguments, Wippel comments that Godfrey has confused a discussion of *being*, the transcendental attribute, with *existence* (*esse*), an intrinsic principle of a being. The confusion, at least in relation to Thomas's theory, lies in mistaking a whole (a being) for one of its intrinsic principles (*esse*). For Thomas, *esse* is that in virtue of which something is a being (see Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, 56–7). But surely Godfrey's point is that, just as we do not need to posit a principle 'oneness' to explain unity, so too we do not need to posit a principle 'existence' to explain how something is a being. And put like this, the objection seems eminently reasonable.

unity, as would be the case if essence exhibited the second sort of potency for its existence. So there cannot be a real distinction between essence and existence.[100]

Godfrey thus rejects Giles's view of the real distinction, and consequently of the hypostatic union. Godfrey's response to Giles is similar to that of the later Henry. But there are some differences, not least because Godfrey rejects Henry's intentional distinction between essence and existence. This rejection limits Godfrey's options in relation to the way he chooses to understand the hypostatic union, so I will pause briefly here to see why Godfrey might want to reject this theory of Henry's. Most of Godfrey's reasons have to do with Henry's theory of the reality of non-existent but possible individual essences. While this is necessary for a full understanding of the debates on the issue between Henry of Ghent and both of his opponents, I do not need it for my more limited purposes here. One of Godfrey's arguments, however, does seem pertinent to the Christological debate. Godfrey—like Giles—argues that no sense can be made of any sort of distinction other than real and rational distinctions. His reason is that there is no sort of object that is neither real nor merely rational. So there cannot be objects which are distinct 'intentions' in the sense required.[101]

There seems to be an obvious objection to Godfrey's way of looking at the problem. Surely someone—perhaps someone accepting the position of the early Henry—could plausibly argue that there is no real distinction between the existence and essence of a substance, but still claim that *accidents* exist merely in virtue of sharing in the existence of a substance? Godfrey would want to reject this since, if essence and existence are really identical in every respect, then whatever is true of the existence of a thing will be true of its essence. Thus, if an accident shares in a substance's existence, it will also share in the substance's essence. (This would have the philosophical result of destroying the difference between essential and accidental properties.) Analogously, if the assumed human nature shares in the existence of the incarnate divine person, it will share too in the essence of the incarnate divine person. And this looks like some version of the monophysite heresy.

In fact, however, Godfrey has several non-theological reasons for wanting to suppose that accidents have their own existence. Godfrey's position on this point was already clearly established by Christmas 1286. Godfrey consistently claims that the question of the real distinction between essence and existence is irrelevant to the substantive issue of the existence of accidents: even if someone wanted to defend the real distinction, he would still need to allow for the proper existence of accidents.[102] The two claims are not independent, however: someone denying the real distinction would *eo ipso* need to claim that an accident has its proper existence,

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[100] Godfrey, *Quod.* 3. 1 (PB 2, p. 304 (br.); pp. 167–8 (lon.)).

[101] Godfrey, *Qu. Disp.* 12 (in John F. Wippel (ed.), 'Godfrey of Fontaines: Disputed Questions 9, 10 and 12', *Franciscan Studies*, 33 (1973), 351–72, p. 368). Of course, Henry need hardly be too worried by the objection thus phrased. His 'intentional' objects are certainly real enough; it is merely that the distinction between them is not such as to allow them to be separated. For a discussion of Godfrey's arguments, see Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines*, 85–8.

[102] Godfrey, *Quod.* 3. 4 (PB 2, p. 310 (br.); p. 188 (lon.)); 8. 1 (PB 4, pp. 10–11).

supposing that an accident is something like an essence, and thus really identical with its existence.[103]

For our purposes, Godfrey's most significant argument is little more than a throw-away line in his Christological discussion:

(4.27) It is clear that a subject and its *esse* are not related to an accident as a formal perfection, but rather the other way round [i.e. the accident perfects its subject]. Therefore every accident has its proper *esse* which is other than the *esse* of the subject.[104]

If an accident is to be a truth-maker, the accident must have its proper *esse*. Clearly, the adherent of (AI2) will want to deny that accidents exist: an accident *F*-ness is not an existent object, but merely that in virtue of which an object is *F*. So (AF3) entails that (AI2) is false. Godfrey thus accepts (E). (As we shall see in a moment, this argument is central to Godfrey's Christological claims.)

What is really at stake between Giles and Godfrey on the matter of Christology has to do with the existential status of accidents—each thinker's view being in part determined by his view on the essence–existence distinction. Godfrey is clearly an adherent of (AI3); this in turn, as we shall see, makes a difference to the way he spells out the hypostatic union. Equally, Godfrey himself acknowledges the basic nature of the question of the existential status of accidents. Whatever one thinks about the real distinction between essence and existence, it is according to Godfrey (as we have seen) necessary to posit that accidents have their proper existence. And this assertion itself reveals how strongly Godfrey is committed to (AI3).

The hypostatic union

Godfrey's account of the metaphysics of both the substance–accident relation and the relation between the Word and his human nature is fairly straightforward. In fact, Godfrey thinks it scarcely necessary to invoke the substance–accident analogy at all. He claims that it is quite clear that the divine and human natures each have their own existence, such that each of them counts as an object in virtue of which something else is the thing it is.[105] Nevertheless, he believes that there is some value in the substance–accident analogy. The existence of the human nature is 'quasi-accidental' and 'secondary';[106] 'in so far as the human nature comes to the preexistent eternal *suppositum* it is said to have the mode of an accident with respect to it [viz. the *suppositum*]'.[107]

In his refutation of the position of Aquinas (discussed in Chapter 2 above), Godfrey is clear that Christ's human nature gives existence to its *suppositum* in a way analogous to that in which an accident does:

    [103] Ibid. 3. 4 (PB 2, p. 310 (br.); p. 188 (lon.)); 8. 1 (PB 4, p. 10).
    [104] Ibid. 8. 1 (PB 4, p. 11).   [105] Ibid. 8. 1 (PB 4, p. 12).
    [106] Ibid. 8. 1 (PB 4, p. 13); Godfrey's terms here are reminiscent of Aquinas's in *De Unione*, though unlike Thomas Godfrey locates them in the context of the substance-accident analogy.
    [107] Godfrey, *Quod.* 8. 1 (PB 4, p. 13).

(4.28) Since in the assumption of a human nature a thing and substantial nature—to which real proper *esse existentiae* belongs not less but rather more than to an accident—comes [to the divine *suppositum*], then if it is conceded that the nature of an advenient accident gives some *esse* (albeit imperfect, since [an accident is] an imperfect nature), how should it be denied that the human nature in Christ has proper *esse*?[108]

So Godfrey argues that a property's giving existence to its *suppositum* requires that the property itself exists. In other words, if an accidental property is a truth-maker it must in some sense exist. So Godfrey clearly accepts the inference from (AF3) to the falsity of (AI2), an inference which I have already suggested to be highly questionable.

It is in just this inference that the significance of the debate with Giles is found. If the human nature—as Giles claims—did not have its own existence, then there would be no way in which the human nature could be a truth-maker. And this claim about Christ's human nature is, of course, parasitic on Godfrey's claims about the existence of accidents.

Nevertheless, we should not conclude from this that Christ's human nature is in fact an accident:

(4.29) From this analogy with an accident, we should conclude merely that [Christ's human nature] does not give accidental existence, since it is neither an informing or inhering accident nor a substance coming accidentally (as it were that some accidental existence arises from some relation between it and the thing to which it comes, like a piece of clothing in relation to its wearer); rather, it gives substantial existence, though not in itself (*secundum se*).[109]

Because the human nature is a dependent substance, it does not itself constitute a *suppositum*. But because it does not inhere, it is not properly speaking an accident.[110]

Godfrey explains the unity of Christ by appealing to the dependence features of the relation between the Word and his human nature. He argues that anything which exists *in* a *suppositum* has existence communicated to it from the *suppositum*.[111] Equally he is clear that both accidents and Christ's human nature exist in the relevant sense *in* a *suppositum*.[112] Godfrey seems to believe that this dependent existence somehow explains unity.[113] In fact, in passage (1.15) Godfrey claims of the unit that is an accidental whole (and, presumably—by analogy—of Christ) that it is *caused by* the dependence of an accident (Christ's human nature) on its *suppositum*. Both substantial and accidental unities involve something more than just the aggregation of their parts; and this 'something more' is caused by the union of the parts. This might look harmful for the identity of Christ with the Word, and it is not until Scotus—whose account

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[108] Godfrey, *Quod*. 8. 1 (PB 4, p. 14).   [109] Ibid. 8. 1 (PB 4, pp. 14, 17).

[110] Note that—as we saw in Ch. 1—Godfrey seems to use 'inherence' and 'informing' synonymously. This is rather different from the usage found a little later in Scotus, which I discussed in Ch. 1. According to Scotus, 'inherence' is the general term that covers both active (sustenance) and passive (informing) aspects of the substance–accident relation. I do not think any metaphysical points turn on this terminological difference.

[111] Godfrey, *Quod*. 8. 1 (PB 4, p. 15).   [112] Ibid. 8. 1 (PB 4, p. 16).

[113] Ibid. 8. 1 (PB 4, pp. 15, 16).

I deal with in the next chapter—that we find a clear account of the matter. Basically, we have to allow that the term 'Christ', like terms referring to accidental wholes, refers to the object that includes the non-essential nature or accident as a part. The Word is not identical with Christ, thus understood; harmful consequences can be avoided, however, by adopting the strategy that predicate terms vary their senses depending on whether the subject term refers to a *suppositum* or to a mereological whole of which the *suppositum* is a part.

The early Henry and Godfrey's objection to Giles

Overall, Godfrey's position is more interesting for the refutation of Giles (and indeed of Thomas, as described in the previous chapter) than for its own contribution, which seems on the face of it thin. But Godfrey's account raises acutely a problem for Henry's earlier theory.

The early Henry denies that the human nature has existence in any sense independently of the Word. But he also claims both that there is not a real distinction between essence and *esse*, and that the human nature—though not the human existence—remains distinct from the divine essence. How vulnerable is Henry's early position to Godfrey's claim that someone denying the real distinction between essence and existence will be unable to maintain the view that the union could be a union in *esse* but not in essence? Put another way, could someone who denies the real distinction between essence and *esse* still maintain both that there are two essences in Christ, and that there is only one *esse* in Christ?

Henry could argue that we should not think of accidents or Christ's human nature as essences at all. (Recall that the early Henry too denies that accidents are essences.) Essences in this context—the individual essences of things—are just the things themselves. And there is no sense, in Henry's early account, in which accidents, or Christ's human nature, are things themselves. Alternatively, essences are properties had by their substances necessarily: and on this definition, neither accidents nor Christ's human nature can be essences. (On this, see too my comments in the Introduction.)

4. HERVAEUS NATALIS AND DUNS SCOTUS

Brief criticisms of Giles's view can be found in Hervaeus Natalis and Duns Scotus too.

Hervaeus Natalis

Hervaeus briefly indicates several possible lines of attack on Giles, though it is not clear to me that Hervaeus has a wholly accurate understanding of Giles's theory. According to Hervaeus, *esse* belongs immediately to an essence, such that any essence has its own *esse*.[114] Equally, a form (substantial or accidental) always communicates

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[114] Hervaeus, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 1. 3 (pp. 294ᵇ–295ᵃ).

esse to a *suppositum*—and this entails the multiplication of *esse* in one substance.[115]
Against Giles's insight that there can be only one *esse* in one substance, just as there
can be only one quantity, Hervaeus suggests that the analogy is misleading. Most
special species—the individual quantity of a substance, or the final determinate
of quality (whiteness, for example)—cannot be multiplied in one substance. But
categorial genera—colour, for example, of which the medievals held whiteness to
be a species—can be multiplied in one individual. Nothing could have more than
one whiteness—though it could have more than one colour. *Esse* is like a genus,
not a species, here. My being white and my being human entails my having two
esse (one substantial and one accidental), just as it entails my having two forms (one
substantial and one accidental).[116]

Hervaeus does not really understand Giles's theory. According to Giles, *entity*
follows directly on any essence—its being the sort of thing that is open to further
determination as existent or merely possible. And any form φ-ness communicates
being-φ to its subject. To this extent, Giles is actually in agreement with Hervaeus.
Giles's point is that none of this is sufficient for the actual existence of a substance.
And this is misunderstood by Hervaeus. According to Hervaeus, Giles claims that
esse is responsible for entity; and Hervaeus believes that there are many entities in
a substance (the substance, along with the substance + any of its accidents), and
thus many *esse*. Giles agrees that there are many entities in a substance, since Giles
holds that there are as many entities as there are natures, substantial or accidental
(recall that Giles makes entity a consequence not of *esse*—as Hervaeus claims—but
of essence). Giles's point is that entity is not sufficient for existence—and thus that
there can be many entities (essences or natures), but only one *esse*.

This discussion reveals how far Hervaeus is from Aquinas. Aquinas, after all (as
I have been reading him) unequivocally denies that Christ's human nature has any
esse that is not derived from the divine person.

Duns Scotus

According to Scotus, Giles's theory amounts to the view that the human nature
exists by—in virtue of—the existence of the Word. But if this is true, then all other
features of the human nature will be possessed in virtue of some feature of the divine
person: the assumed nature 'will be formally good by uncreated goodness (and thus
infinitely lovable), and likewise for truth and other [attributes]', just as all the fea-
tures of an individual, substantial and accidental, are quantized by one and the same
quantity in Giles's account.[117] Presumably, the thought is that there are no real dis-
tinctions between the different divine attributes, and thus that the communication
of one such attribute entails the inseparable communication of all of them. This
argument, of course, if successful will be so not only against its target, Giles, but
also against Aquinas and the early Henry.

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[115] Hervaeus, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 1. 3 (p. 295ᵃ).   [116] Ibid. 3. 6. 1. 3 (p. 295ᵃ).
[117] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 6. 1, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 174).

Chapter 5

THE SUBSTANCE–
ACCIDENT MODEL
(3) DUNS SCOTUS

Scotus offers the most fully developed Christology of any of the thinkers considered here other than Aquinas, and his is certainly the most sophisticated offering. Scotus takes very seriously the claim that the assumed nature is a substance, and he is generally very aware of the sometimes awkward implications of this view. I shall consider most of these in Chapter 10 below. But I will spend some time below considering the identity problem that a view like Scotus's raises—namely, if Christ is a whole who includes both a person (the Word of God) and a non-essential substance (the assumed human nature), how can Christ be identical with the Word? In what follows, I consider first Scotus's account of the type of unity relevant in the Incarnation (sections 1 and 2), along with the attendant identity problem (section 3), before going on to consider a problem raised by the contingency of the relation between the nature and the person (section 4) and (briefly) the Henrician notion of indwelling as applied by Scotus in the Incarnation (section 5).

1. THE TYPE OF UNITY

In one important passage, Scotus distinguishes six different sorts of unity:

  (i) The unity of aggregation;
 (ii) The unity of order;
(iii) Accidental unity;
(iv) Substantial unity (viz. the unity of a substance composed of really distinct parts);
 (v) The unity of simplicity (viz. the unity of a substance composed of merely formally distinct parts);
(vi) Formal identity (viz. unity which has no parts at all, either really distinct or formally distinct).[1]

The hypostatic union, whatever sort of unity it is, consists of really distinct things —the human nature and the divine person: 'I am speaking of a unity of really distinct things.'[2] So the last two sorts of unity in this list are irrelevant. But which of

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[1] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 2. 2. 1–4, n. 403 (Vatican, ii. 356–7).
[2] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 2 (Wadding, xii. 492; Alluntis and Wolter, 419 (n. 19. 5)).

the remaining four is pertinent to the hypostatic union? Both accidental unity and substantial unity involve relations of *informing*: accidents *inform* their substances,[3] and substantial form *informs* matter, or some lower-order composite of lower-order form and matter.[4] The hypostatic union thus fails to count as either an accidental or a substantial union:

(5.1) No union based on informing can be postulated, since the Word is neither potential, informable, nor an act which informs the human nature.[5]

Equally, the hypostatic union is not any sort of aggregation:

(5.2) Neither is there any union here resulting solely from aggregation, for the Word has this sort of union with my own nature, and the Father has such with the assumed nature [of Christ], and in general such a union obtains between any two things that are simply distinct.[6]

The idea is simple: any pair of objects satisfies the conditions for being an aggregate. Presumably, Scotus is supposing that there are relations between all objects, and that such relations are sufficient for a union of mere aggregation. (Some of the relations, of course, will qualify their *relata* for a union closer than mere aggregation.)

Given the rejection of all other sorts of union, Scotus concludes, 'All that remains, therefore, is that the union is . . . a union of order.'[7] What sorts of thing does Scotus believe to be united by order? The most complete discussion of this occurs at the beginning of Scotus's great treatise on the existence of God, *De Primo Principio*. Scotus divides order into two different sorts: dependence and eminence:

(5.3) In the first place I say that the primary division of essential order appears to be that of an equivocal term into its equivocates, namely into the order of eminence and the order of dependence. In the first, what is eminent is said to be prior whereas what is exceeded in perfection is posterior. Put briefly, whatever in essence is more perfect and noble would be prior in this manner. . . . In the second type of order, the dependent is said to be posterior whereas that on which it depends is prior.[8]

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[3] On this, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 106–7.

[4] On this, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, chs. 4 and 5. Some of the material from ch. 5 appears in more extended form in my 'Duns Scotus's Anti-Reductionistic Account of Material Substance', *Vivarium*, 33 (1995), 137–70.

[5] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 2 (Wadding, xii. 492; Alluntis and Wolter, 419 (n. 19. 5)).

[6] Ibid. 19, n. 2 (Wadding, xii. 492; Alluntis and Wolter, 419 (n. 19. 5)).

[7] Ibid. 19, n. 2 (Wadding, xii. 492; Alluntis and Wolter, 419 (n. 19. 5)).

[8] Scotus, *DPP* 1. 6–8 (ed. Allan B. Wolter, 2nd edn. (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, [1982]), p. 4/5). Under the general heading of dependence, Scotus includes all four of the standard Aristotelian causes: Scotus, *DPP* 1. 15 (p. 8/9). Note further that Scotus divides order into essential and accidental orders, where the distinguishing feature of an essential order is that the relations between its members are transitive: see Scotus, *DPP* 3. 11 (p. 46/47). The relevant sort of dependence in the hypostatic union is an essentially ordered relation, since if, for example, an accident depends on Christ's human nature, and Christ's human nature depends on the Word, the accident depends on the Word too. I deal with all this in detail below. We should note too that not all dependence relations of the sort relevant for the hypostatic union are transitive: see Ch. 8 and the Conclusion below. Scotus's account here is aporetic. On the notion of dependence in Scotus's Christological writings, see too Michael Gorman, 'Ontological Priority and John Duns Scotus', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, 43 (1993), 460–71.

Scotus goes on to divide the order of dependence in such a way that the whole universe exhibits a unity of order, each element being causally related to every other element, even if only in the limited sense of depending equally on the same first cause.[9]

In the case of the hypostatic union, the relevant sort of order is that of dependence. 'Every relation which is neither mutual nor between equals is a kind of dependence.'[10] What Scotus means by claiming that the relation is not mutual is that the relation is a property which belongs to the human nature without there existing any corresponding relational property in the divine person.[11] Scotus's claim is that every relation which is both non-mutual and between unequals is in some sense a dependence relation.[12]

If Scotus is right about this, he has a good argument in favour of seeing the relation as some sort of dependence relation. The most obvious sort of dependence relation, of course, is a *causal* one: if x causes y, then y depends on x. But there are other sorts of dependence relations too. Scotus argues that the sort of dependence relation relevant in the case of the hypostatic union is not causal dependence. Scotus reasons that all creatures have causal dependence on God,[13] and that all three divine persons count as one causal principle of this dependence.[14] Thus causal dependence fails on two counts: it cannot provide an explanation for the dependence of just one human nature, and it cannot provide an explanation for dependence on just one divine person.

Scotus argues instead, however, that there is another sort of dependence relation:

(5.4) It is therefore a relation of order or dependence that is of a different type from all dependence or order of effect to cause, and of what is caused later to what is caused earlier, since this [dependence] is universal, by reason of nature, in both extremes. And although it is difficult to see that some dependence is like this, nevertheless is can be shown somehow in [the relation of] subject and accident.[15]

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[9] Scotus, *DPP* 3. 48–9 (p. 64/65). For the claim that two objects, independent of each other, that depend on one and the same cause exhibit a unity of order, see Scotus, *DPP* 1. 13–14, 1. 16 (pp. 6/7–10/11).

[10] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 2 (Wadding, xii. 492; Alluntis and Wolter, 419 (n. 19. 6)).

[11] The medievals tend to reduce relations to monadic properties. I discuss this, and its bearing on the Incarnation, in Ch. 9, where I look in detail at the medievals' universal claim that there can be no real relations in God to anything external to himself. Scotus is the only thinker to use this relational non-mutuality as a premiss to show that the hypostatic union must be a certain kind of union. (Bonaventure argues that the nature of the hypostatic union as such, namely, as a non-causal dependence relation, entails that the relation cannot be real in the divine person. On this, see my comments in Chs. 3 and 9.) If Scotus believes that every relation of (causal) order is non-mutual, then he too will believe that his account of the hypostatic union entails the unreality of the relation in the divine person. But it is not clear to me whether Scotus would want to make every relation of causal order non-mutual. For a strong suggestion to the contrary, see Scotus, *Ord.* 4. 13. 1, n. 12 (Wadding, viii. 796–7).

[12] This claim is very problematic, not least because it contradicts Scotus's explicit (and *prima facie* true) claim made elsewhere that the orders of dependence and eminence are logically independent: see *DPP* 2. 41 and 2. 43 (pp. 30/31 and 32/33).

[13] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 5–6).

[14] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 2 (Wadding, xii. 492; Alluntis and Wolter, 419–20 (n. 19. 7–19. 8)).

[15] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 6).

The discussion is not all that far removed from the conventional claim that the appropriateness of the substance–accident analogy lies in the fact that, like an accident, the human nature comes to a substance that is already complete in being. This, I take it, is part of the point of Scotus's claim that a substance is prior to its accident. Later, Scotus makes the point more explicitly:

(5.5) When it is claimed that Christ is an accidental being, I say that if 'accidental' is taken properly, as it involves an aggregate of two different sorts of thing (*genera*) or two things of two sorts (*res duorum generum*), then there is no accidental being there, because the divine nature is not a sort of thing (*in nullo genere est*), and the human nature is not an accidental feature of a thing (*nulli accidit*), since it truly is. If however anything properly including two things, of which one comes to the other already complete in being (and is not a substantial form constituting [with the other] a third thing), is called 'accidentally one', then it can be conceded [that Christ is an accidental being], although it does not sound good here.[16]

This passage certainly makes it clear that the human nature is like an accident. But the text also delineates two ways in which the analogy with an accident is unsound: (i) human nature is a kind-nature, not one of the Aristotelian accidents; and (ii) the divine nature is not a kind of thing at all.

In the late *Quodlibet* 19, Scotus—following Giles of Rome and William of Ware— allows the substance–accident analogy some genuinely explanatory force. Thus, he repeats William's argument that the possibility for a human nature's dependence lies in its being able to take on the mode of an accident:

(5.6) An accident can have the mode of a substance, although not perfectly in the sense that it would be repugnant for it to depend on a subject, but in some analogous way, viz. insofar as it does not actually depend; this is seen in the case of a separated accident. By the same token, it seems that a substance can have the mode of an accident, although not perfectly in the sense that it would depend or inhere in a subject, but in an analogous fashion, viz. in the sense of actually depending on an extrinsic *suppositum*.[17]

Scotus goes on to distinguish two features of the accident–substance relation: informing, and dependence (on this, see Chapter 1). The hypostatic union, although itself no more than a union of order, is like an accidental unity in the second of these features, but not the first. I examine Scotus's discussion of this in the next section.

2. ACCIDENTAL DEPENDENCE AND TRUTH-MAKING

Scotus is clear that the 'sustenance is maximally similar to that of an accident by its subject'.[18] The analogy relies on our being able to distinguish accidental informing

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[16] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 6. 1, n. 8 (Wadding, vii. 175).
[17] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 23 (Wadding, xii. 512; Alluntis and Wolter, 439–40 (n. 19. 84)), though see the slightly earlier *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 10), where Scotus rejects the argument.
[18] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 4, n. 2 (Wadding, vii. 47).

from accidental dependence: the first entails actualization of passive potentiality; the second, however, does not. The problem, of course, is that the divine person does not have any passive potencies. Thus,

(5.7) No nature can be related to the Word in the first way, for this would imply potency and therefore imperfection in the Word. The second sort of relationship, however, is possible, for all it requires in the Word is *per se* priority, and it is not incompatible that the Word have such a priority over every created nature.[19]

(*Per se* priority here amounts to being possibly the subject of a dependent nature.) Scotus is clear that, of the two features of the relation between an accident and its substance—dependence and informing—dependence is in some sense prior to informing. This allows him to explain how something can be dependent without informing:

(5.8) An accident has this sort of dependence upon the *suppositum* of the substance in which it inheres. Although in this case dependence is conjoined with inherence, the reason for dependence seems prior to the ground for inherence. . . . There seems to be no contradiction, then, in thinking that some nature may be able to depend . . . without inhering in that on which it depends.[20]

Thus, a nature can depend on the divine person without informing it, and thus without actualizing any passive potentiality in it.

There is an obvious problem with Scotus's presentation. How can we allow that Christ's human nature—which fails to inform its *suppositum*—is a truth-maker? Scotus's reply makes the now familiar metaphysical point that truth-making does not entail the actualizing of any passive potencies in a subject. Scotus's discussion is worth looking at in some detail.

First, Scotus makes it clear that truth-making entails in some sense the communication of existence to a subject. Thus, he will speak of Socrates's being white 'by the existence of a white thing [i.e. of a white patch, an instantiation of whiteness: *existentia albi*]'; and of a nature 'giving existence' to its subject.[21] ('Existentia albi' must be the existence of the white patch, the property instance, rather than just Socrates (or perhaps white-Socrates); Socrates is made white by his whiteness, and not by his being Socrates (or his being a part of white-Socrates).[22]) I think—though I am not sure about this—that Scotus wants to claim that this communication of

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[19] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 13 (Wadding, xii. 503; Alluntis and Wolter, 428–9 (n. 19. 40)); see *Ord.* 3. I. I, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 6).

[20] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 23 (Wadding, xii. 512; Alluntis and Wolter, 439 (n. 19. 83)).

[21] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 6. 1, n. 6 (Wadding, vii. 175). See also Scotus *RP* 3. 1. 2, n. 5 (Wadding, xi. 422ᵇ), where Scotus clarifies: accidents do not give real *esse*, they just give *esse* denominatively—which is, I take it, a way of claiming that accidents are truth-makers.

[22] For more detailed discussion of the signification of concrete accidental terms in Scotus, see Sten Ebbesen, 'Concrete Accidental Terms: Late Thirteenth-Century Debates about Problems Relating to such Terms as "*Album*"', in Norman Kretzmann (ed.), *Meaning and Inference in Medieval Philosophy: Studies in Memory of Jan Pinborg*, Synthese Historical Library, 32 (Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer, 1988), 107–74, pp. 132–4.

existence cannot be reduced to mere dependence. One of his reasons for rejecting Aquinas's claim that the human nature does not communicate existence to the divine *suppositum* is that, on Aquinas's account, nothing new could be predicated of this *suppositum*:

(5.9) If the Word gains only a new relation to the [human] nature [and does not receive existence from the nature], this relation will be merely rational. But since a subject is not formally said to be anything in virtue of a rational relation, it follows that the Word, as man, will not be formally anything, which is against *Cum Christus*.[23]

This passage requires a bit of unpacking. I suggest the following reading. The rejected claim is that the hypostatic union involves no more than a rational relation in the Word—and, presumably, no real relation in the Word, and no relation of truth-making in the assumed nature. Scotus's replacement claim is that there must be, in addition, a real relation of truth-making in the human nature. But Scotus does not, in this passage, mention his dependence claim; so I take it that he does not want us to think of the communication of existence—truth-making—in this way.[24]

Thus read, the criticism of Aquinas is related to the first one found in Matthew of Aquasparta. If the divine person does not in some sense receive existence from the human nature, then the human nature simply cannot be a truth-maker. And this view is heretical—it amounts in fact to Docetism.[25]

Secondly, Scotus is clear that this truth-making, and the communication of existence to a subject, does not entail actualizing any passive potency in a subject:

(5.10) The [human] nature is not a form of the Word. Thus it does not give existence by informing [the Word], but by union [with the Word]. For just as the Word is man by this nature, so this nature is an existent by the existence of this nature.[26]

The insight is not original to Scotus, since it can be found in some of his Franciscan predecessors of the late thirteenth century. But Scotus knows of a created analogue for the distinction that he makes in the context of the hypostatic union, though it is not one that he explicitly invokes in this context. Scotus claims that the divine attributes are truth-makers, such that, for any divine attribute F, 'God is F' is true. An objector wonders how truth-making can be separated from actualization:

[23] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 6. 1, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 174). On *Cum Christus*, the condemnation of Christological nihilism, see Ch. 11 below.

[24] There is an alternative reading of (5.9), according to which Scotus wants to argue that the relation in the Word must be real, and not merely rational. But, as we have seen, Scotus elsewhere bases his whole argument that the relation is a dependence relation on the claim that the relation in the Word is rational, not real. And he cannot have made such an elementary blunder in the passage I am discussing now as to make a suggestion that so flatly contradicts his core argument earlier on. Neither does (5.9) constrain us to read it as contradicting other claims that Scotus makes.

[25] Like Aquinas, Scotus understands the condemnation of Christological nihilism to amount to a condemnation of something like the *habitus* theory.

[26] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 6. 1, n. 9 (Wadding, vii. 176); see also 3. 1. 2, n. 8 (Wadding, vii. 38); 3. 7. 1, n. 9 (Wadding, vii. 193): 'Most-final concrete denominatives are taken from substances that denominate *supposita*. And this is not by information, as concrete accidents denominate *supposita*, but by possession, or by a relation to something extrinsic to the substance.'

(5.11) You will object: how is something formally wise by wisdom unless [wisdom] is its form? I reply: a body is animate denominatively (as it were), because the soul is its form. A human being is said to be animate essentially, and not (as it were) denominatively, because the soul belongs to him or her as a part. So being of a certain sort because of something [*F*] does not require that the thing [viz. *F*] is a form informing something, because a form [e.g. the soul] is not a form informing the whole, even though [the whole] is said to be of a certain sort because of it.[27]

The human soul is a truth-maker without this function being reducible to informing.

As the discussion thus far has made clear, Scotus is quite clear that the human nature is a truth-maker, and that it performs this role by communicating existence to the divine *suppositum*. He argues that, in order for the human nature to communicate existence, it must have its own existence, distinct from the existence of the Word.[28] Thus, his position on truth-making entails a position on the existence and dependence of accidents: namely, that accidents, while dependent on their substances, have distinct existence. Scotus accepts **(E)**: **(AF3)** entails that **(AI2)** is false. In fact, as we saw in Chapter 1, Scotus is an adherent of **(AI4)**—he allows accidents, and Christ's human nature, not only to have existence distinct from that of their subjects, but also to be individuated independently of their subjects. I will return to the implications of this—especially of **(AU3)**, entailed by **(AI4)**—for the identity of Christ in the next section.

Oddly, Scotus does not provide an argument for his claim that Christ's human nature is individuated independently of its union with the divine person, and it is difficult to avoid the impression that Scotus just thought it obvious that this should be the case.[29] As I mentioned in Chapter 1, Scotus does provide a series of arguments in favour of the claim that accidents are individuated separately from their substances. Perhaps in the light of his acceptance of the substance–accident analogy for the hypostatic union, we should not be surprised by his belief that the human nature is individuated independently of the divine *suppositum*.

Clearly, Scotus's talk of dependence is a way of talking about the active features of the substance–accident relation: a substance in some sense *sustains* its dependent accidents. In Chapter 7, I shall look in detail at what Scotus thinks is required for this sort of sustenance. But it is worth bearing in mind that Scotus believes that this talk of dependence can in some sense be cashed out in terms of the *suppositum*'s communicating existence to the assumed nature. Thus, in one passage, he argues:

(5.12) To communicate existence in this way is not the same as the divine existence's formally informing the human nature; nor is it a communication as an efficient cause, such that

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[27] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 8. 1. 4, nn. 213–14 (Vatican, iv. 271–2).

[28] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 6. 1, n. 7 (Wadding, vii. 175); see also 3. 11. 3, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 250), where Scotus claims that human *esse* is *esse simpliciter* of Christ, but not of God. I discuss this passage below.

[29] As I mentioned in my Introduction, Scotus cites John of Damascus (passage **(0.12)**) in favour of the individuality of the assumed nature. This is all Scotus provides by way of explicit support, although, as I also indicated in the Introduction, Scotus has by far the richest metaphysical resources to use in support of this individuality.

the assuming person as an assumer efficiently gives any existence to the assumed nature. Rather, to communicate existence in this way is to be the end term of the dependence of the actual existence of an assumed nature.[30]

As we shall see in Part II, Scotus is reluctant to spell this sort of relation out in any sort of *causal* way. But he clearly wants there to be a sense in which a substance is (naturally) necessary for the existence of its accident, and some analogous sense in which the Word is necessary for the existence of its assumed nature.[31]

3. IDENTITY AND MEREOLOGY

Given that the human nature is an individual object, and given that **(AI4)** entails **(AU3)**, we might expect a thinker of Scotus's perspicacity to notice something which his predecessors seem to have missed: namely, that the object (Word + human nature) is numerically distinct from the object (Word). The most important passage is **(1.21)**. But there are others too, notably the following:

(5.13) 'This man' can stand only for the *suppositum* of divine nature. . . . It can, however, stand for this *suppositum* as it exists in human nature, just as 'white-Socrates' can only stand for the *suppositum* of a substance as it exists in whiteness—this is what allows the human *esse* to be *esse* simply speaking of Christ, but not of the Word—since it is quasi-adventitious [i.e. quasi-accidental] to the Word, but not to Christ.[32]

Here, Scotus clearly distinguishes the whole Christ from the Word as such. Human nature is essential to Christ, but not to the Word. To understand the point Scotus wants to make, we should think back to the discussion in Chapter 1. According to Scotus, an accidental whole has a part (viz. an accident) that the substance which is a part of the accidental whole does not have. White-Socrates includes a part (viz. whiteness) that Socrates does not. But white-Socrates does not have any forms not

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[30] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 5, n. 8 (Wadding, vii. 56); see also Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 24 (Wadding, xii. 512; Alluntis and Wolter, 440 (n. 19. 85)).

[31] There will be limits to this analogy, not least because Scotus is clear that accidents have a natural tendency to inhere in substances (this presumably is the force of claiming that the existence of a substance is naturally necessary for the existence of an accident), whereas the assumed human nature has a natural tendency to exist independently of the Word. On the natural inclination of an accident to inhere in a substance, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 104. On the natural inclination of Christ's human nature to exist independently of the Word, see Ch. 15 below.

[32] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 11. 3, n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 250). Sometimes, Scotus suggests, contrariwise, that 'man' refers to the individual assumed nature: ' "Man" can stand for the singular thing of human nature, and not for the Word, just as "white" can stand for this concrete white thing—and not for the subject or subsisting *suppositum*—such that "this white thing is coloured" ': *Ord.* 3. 6. 3, n. 1 (Wadding, vii. 183). The discussion at *Ord.* 3. 7. 2, n. 7 (Wadding, vii. 197)—where Scotus argues that 'man' in the proposition 'A man is made God' can refer to human nature—seems to be rather different, since the proposition here ('A man is made God') can only be metaphorically true. (I discuss this point, important in the history of Scotus interpretation, in Ch. 8.) Scotus's general account of the reference of substance-sortals is that substance-sortals refer not to *supposita* but to individualized natures. I return to this in Ch. 8 and Excursus 2 below.

had by Socrates. Socrates and white-Socrates are both men, and they are both white: though, as I outlined in Chapter 1, Scotus believes that the different references of the subject terms here affect the sense of the predicate terms, such that 'is man' and 'is white' have different senses in the various propositions.

Provided it is treated carefully, the claim that (Word + human nature) is a thing need not entail any heterodox conclusions. After all, Scotus is clear that the Word is the subject of the human nature (I shall return to this claim in Chapter 8). The case is exactly analogous to Scotus's acceptance of (AU3): accidental units are objects, even though one of the components (the accident) of such an object belongs to the other (the substance). And, as I outlined at the end of Chapter 1, we might want to make these various mereological claims as a strategy to avoid seeing Christ, and for that matter any accidental unity, as merely aggregative wholes.

Still, there is on the face of it an identity problem here. The problem is that Scotus's view seems to imply that the Word is not identical with Christ, since Christ does (and the Word does not) include human nature as a part. For Scotus, this is just a specific case of a more general problem about the community of reference in terms referring respectively to substantial and accidental wholes. (Recall that as an adherent of (AU3) Scotus believes that accidental wholes are numerically distinct from the substances that are parts of them.) Scotus raises the problem in the sharpest possible way, considering a property that Christ (understood as the whole that includes both the person of the Word and the assumed nature as parts) has and the Word lacks: that of beginning to exist. I have already introduced the central Scotist text, quoted at (1.21) above. In (1.21) Scotus argues that 'Christ began to be' is true under a certain understanding of the sense of the predicate, where the sense of the predicate is determined by the reference of the subject term to a whole that includes a person (and its essential nature) along with a further kind-nature (individual substance) as parts. Scotus in fact allows several other ways of reading sentences whose subject refers to an accidental whole:

(5.14) We should consider . . . from the side of the subject, whether a whole being *per accidens* [i.e. an accidental whole] can stand, in relation to this predicate [viz. 'begins'] in virtue of its totality, or in virtue of a formal part, or precisely in virtue of the principal part [i.e. the Word]—just as if white-Socrates is said to begin, [we should consider] whether the subject can be taken (with respect to the predicate) for the whole being *per accidens* [i.e. the accidental whole], or for the whiteness itself (viz. such that the whole is said to begin on the grounds that whiteness begins to be in the whole), or whether it should be taken only for the subject of which the whiteness is said [viz. Socrates].[33]

Scotus summarizes:

(5.15) The difficulty is . . . whether the beginning said by such a predicate signifies the beginning of the whole in virtue of its whole, or in virtue of a part; and if in virtue of a part, of which part.

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[33] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 11. 3, n. 2 (Wadding, vii. 249).

Scotus's presupposition—which he derives from John of Damascus—is that the name 'Christ' refers to the God-man, which Scotus understands to be to the whole that includes the Word and his human nature as parts. Terms which predicate 'Christ' can in principle be understood to signify properties of the Word, or of the human nature, or of the whole composite thing that is distinct from the Word in the sense of having a part not had by the Word.[34] (We should be careful not to understand Scotus to be saying that the human nature is not some sort of property of the Word, just as whiteness is a property of Socrates. The point is that the human nature is not a part of the Word (though it is a part of Christ), just as whiteness is not a part of Socrates (though it is a part of the accidental whole white-Socrates).) As passage (1.21) makes clear, if we (improperly) understand 'began to exist' in the proposition 'Christ began to exist' to imply that no substance-part of Christ pre-exists the constitution of the whole Christ, then the proposition is false, since this sense of the predicate precludes any substance-part of Christ pre-existing. But again according to (1.21), the proper reference of the subject term 'Christ', to a whole that includes both the Word and his human nature, entails that the correct sense of 'began to exist' is 'is newly constituted from a pre-existent *suppositum* and a newly generated kind-nature' (as Scotus puts it, begins 'according to some *esse* that belongs to it simply speaking'). On this proper understanding, the proposition 'Christ began to exist' is true. (Scotus does not make it clear whether 'Christ began to exist' can be true in virtue of the human nature's beginning to exist, though at one point he claims that 'Christ began to exist' is true in the sense that Christ began to exist according to his humanity, and as we will see in Chapter 8, the specificative reduplication 'according to his humanity' should be understood to mean that the human nature (of Christ) began to exist.[35])

Scotus notes that conceding that Christ began to be sounds heretical. But he replies by noting that his understanding of the sense of the predicate—as *determined* by the reference of the subject (such that no one correctly understanding the nature of the subject as referring to a whole of two substances should be in any doubt about the sense of the predicate as signifying the new constitution of the whole from its parts)—means that the proposition is wholly orthodox: the Fathers avoided it only because some heretics somehow failed to understand the metaphysical structure of Christ and the grammatical structure of propositions with 'Christ' as subject— specifically, the heretics supposed that beginning to exist entails being a creature. To avoid this misunderstanding, the Fathers do not allow that Christ began to exist, since—prudently adopting the heretics' misunderstanding of the predicate 'began to exist', and the consequent unsound inference—they deny that Christ is a creature.[36]

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[34] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 11. 3, n. 2 (Wadding, vii. 249).
[35] Ibid. This does not mean that 'Christ' can refer to the human nature, but that one sense of the predicate 'began to be' (where the subject refers to the mereological whole of two substances) is 'has a part that began to be'.
[36] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 11. 3, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 250).

There are two problems with Scotus's analysis here, though I think that they are problems to which he can provide an answer. The first—which I introduced above—looks particularly worrisome from a theological point of view: that Christ and the Word fail to be identical. I do not think, however, that we should let this trouble us. First, as I shall show in Chapter 8, Scotus is quite clear—in line with the standard understanding of Chalcedon—that the Word is properly the subject of both divine and human natures and properties. The material about Christ is just a consequence of certain views Scotus has on the unity of composite wholes. Furthermore, there is clearly a sense in which Christ is both God and man; the distinctively Scotist position is just that, in the case of a mereological composite such as Christ, the senses of the predicate terms are different from their senses in more standard applications (namely, when they predicate *supposita*). (I outlined this in Chapter 1, and will not discuss the material again here.)

Indeed, Scotus is explicit that there is a clear sense in which Christ and the Word are identical: they are the same *person*, and to that extent should not be thought of as two things. When discussing *ex professo* the question of Christ's duality, Scotus is clear that we should not infer from the claims that Christ as God is something and Christ as man is something, that he is two somethings. Rather, we can properly infer neither sameness nor difference in such cases. Being God is sufficient for being something, and being man is sufficient for being something. But being God is not sufficient for being something different from man (if it were, the Incarnation would be impossible); and being God is not sufficient for being something the same as man, otherwise every God would be a man. Equally, being man is not sufficient for being something different from God (if it were, the Incarnation would be impossible); and being man is not sufficient for being something the same as God (if it were, every man would be God).[37] Properly, Christ is one thing, because he is one person.[38] (This does not count as evidence against my claim that Scotus holds *in some sense* that the Word and Christ are numerically distinct; the point here is that they are not two persons or two substances. Christ, after all, is not properly a substance on my reading of Scotus, except (of course) in so far as 'Christ' is taken as referring straightforwardly to the Word. Christ is a person or a substance in an improper sense, different from that in which the Word is a person or a substance. He is a person or substance in so far as he has a person or substance as a part or parts of his.)

The second problem is more closely related to the internal coherence of Scotus's account. As we have seen, Scotus is happy to speak of the Word and his human nature as parts of Christ: see for example (1.21), (5.13), and (5.14). But elsewhere, Scotus makes it clear that there is no whole that the Word and his human nature compose. In reply to an objection to the possibility of the Incarnation on the grounds that it implies counterpossibly that God—pure infinite act—can be composed

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[37] Ibid. 3. 6. 2, nn. 3–4 (Wadding, vii. 178).
[38] Ibid. 3. 6. 2, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 178).

with something else, Scotus argues that the Incarnation should not be thought of
as involving the perfect God's becoming a part of some greater whole, on the grounds
that wholes are always more perfect than their parts. The Incarnation should be
thought of as a dependence relation.[39]

On the face of it, this sort of claim would preclude Scotus thinking of the Word
as a part of Christ. But things Scotus says elsewhere make it clear that the sort of
part–whole relation he would object to is one that would make the Word and his
human nature parts of some different *kind* of thing altogether—parts, in other words,
of a *substance*. When discussing the claim of John of Damascus that the person of
Christ is composed, Scotus notes:

(5.16) [The claim that the person of Christ is composed] is not generally held properly to
speak of composition, viz. from act and potency, as from matter and form or from two things
in potency (the sort of things that, according to Aristotle, are called elements, and integrate
the whole nature). The authorities of the Damascene, which sound as though the person is
composed, should be expounded [to mean] that there is truly both divine and human nature
there, as if these [natures] composed a person. But they do not compose [a person], nor is
any third thing made from them, but they remain distinct and unconfused. . . . It should
therefore be expounded and be said that a person is composed on account of the union of
two natures in which it subsists; but more truly composition can be denied since one does
not perfect the other, nor is any third nature [made] from them.[40]

The two natures, divine and human, do not make 'a third nature'—they are not
components of a substance. Clearly, adopting medieval hierarchical views of the uni-
verse, it is fair enough to claim that substances are more perfect than their parts.
But Scotus does not believe that a mereological whole such as Christ is a substance
at all. It has more in common with an accidental whole like white-Socrates than it
does with substances like Socrates, or the Word. And there is no reason to think
that an accidental whole, or something like it (such as Christ) is more perfect than
its parts.

If Scotus is right about (AI4), he will certainly need to be able to give a mereo-
logical account of accidental wholes and accept (AU3), as I argued in Chapter 1.
Pari passu, if he is right to reify Christ's human nature, he will need to adopt the
mereological analysis of Christology that I have just been describing, on pain of
holding that there is no whole composed of the Word and his human nature—a
claim that I argued in Chapter 1 might be sufficient to compromise the unity of
the incarnate Word. To this extent, it seems to me that Scotus sees far more clearly
than any of the other thinkers I am trying to describe the implications of the medi-
eval approach to Christology that I am examining here. Of course, it would be pos-
sible to adopt a more thoroughgoing mereological account. But without Scotus's
accidental-whole analogy, it will be hard to see how such an account could avoid

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[39] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 16 (Wadding, vii. 25), replying to n. 1 (Wadding, vii. 3).
[40] Ibid. 3. 6. 3, n. 2 (Wadding, vii. 184); see John of Damascus, *De Fide Orth.* 47 (Kotter, 111; Buytaert,
178). The claim that the hypostasis is composed is not original to John of Damascus.

Nestorianism. If we deny that there is any sense in which one of the Christological parts (the Word) is in some sense the subject of the other (the human nature), then we will find it hard to see how the union of the two natures results in just one person. And this looks like Nestorianism. Since Scotus claims that there is a clear sense, however, in which the Word is the subject of the human nature and attributes (as I will show at length in Part III below), he has a clear way of avoiding Nestorianism, and of guaranteeing the identity of the Word over the Incarnation.[41]

4. AN ARISTOTELIAN PROBLEM

All the thinkers I have discussed so far are clear that the hypostatic union involves a relation in the human nature. Scotus—unlike any other of our theologians—makes it quite clear that the hypostatic union involves no more than a relation in the assumed human nature. For example, there is, according to Scotus, no non-relational property had by the assumed nature but not had by any other nature. In the background of this claim are Scotus's strongly anti-Docetic assumptions that I will look at in Excursus 1 and Chapter 15. Briefly, suppose the hypostatic union necessitated some additional non-relational property in Christ's human nature. In this case, we would have to say that, necessarily, any assumed nature has some non-relational properties which no other nature has. And this might serve to make any assumed nature radically unlike any non-assumed nature; a situation which Scotus—for reasons I will return to in Chapter 15—wishes to avoid.

There are, on the face of it, two sorts of non-relational property that Scotus could have in mind here. First, he could be thinking of a non-relational property whose presence is explained by the relation of hypostatic dependence. Secondly, he could be thinking of a non-relational property which is explanatorily *prior* to the relation of hypostatic dependence. In fact, as we shall see, Scotus has in mind the second sort of property: a property which could serve as an explanation for the presence of the relation of hypostatic dependence. But his arguments will work equally effectively against the first sort of property, and Scotus certainly denies that the relation of hypostatic dependence entails any further non-relational property.[42]

Scotus's argument for the claim that there is no non-relational property in the assumed human nature not had by any other nature does not seem to me successful. He reasons that any such proposed entity could not fit into the classification of created substances and their properties proposed in Aristotle's *Categories*. Equally, if any such non-relational property were a necessary property of Christ's human nature, then it would be impossible for Christ's human nature to be given up by

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[41] A more complex mereological analysis would liken the Incarnation to growth, or something similar —the sort of account abortively tried by the twelfth-century *nominales*. (On this, see Ch. 1, n. 3 above.) Scotus's account will avoid some of the difficulties of this sort of account, while retaining all the advantages of seeing the Word and the human nature as two parts of a composite whole. I will return to possible advantages of reifying Christ's human nature in the Conclusion below.

[42] I consider Scotus's denial of any such property in Excursus 1 below.

the Word.[43] Neither can the proposed property be an accident of Christ's human nature, for then (Scotus reasons) subsistence would in general be the result of an accidental feature of a nature.[44]

In fact, it is difficult to see why this should be so. As we shall see in Chapter 15, Scotus believes that subsistence is caused by a (non-essential) negation. Negations for Scotus are not things at all, and thus *a fortiori* cannot be accidents. But I fail to see why the lack of subsistence could not be caused by a non-relational accident. Irrespective of what we make of Scotus's argument for the claim that the Incarnation does not necessitate any non-relational property in Christ's human nature, the claim is open to a powerful Aristotelian objection. According to Scotus, it is possible for the Word to lay aside his human nature. If the Word did this, there would according to Scotus be no change in the abandoned nature other than a merely *relational* one. Thus, no non-relational feature of the nature would be changed. But this claim—that there could be a relational change without an underlying non-relational one—is profoundly anti-Aristotelian. Aristotle claims that there is no change that is merely a change in the category of relation. Suppose there is a relation between two objects x and y. We would normally suppose that there could not be any change in this relationship unless either x or y is itself changed.[45]

If successful, the objection entails that Christ's human nature can be united to the Word only in virtue of some non-relational property in it, one not shared by any other nature.[46] As we have seen, Scotus believes that this is false, and that the union can be sufficiently accounted for without positing such a non-relational feature of Christ's human nature. The reply to the Aristotelian argument clarifies exactly how we should understand the relation between the human nature and the Word.

The objection itself is first found in Richard of Middleton, who seems to me clearly to be the source for the discussion in Scotus. Richard raises the objection as follows. Suppose (factually) that there is no non-relational difference between a nature as assumed and a nature as non-assumed. This supposition violates the Aristotelian relation claim. Richard replies by noting that there can be a relational change without a corresponding non-relational change if the cause of the relation is *voluntary*:

(5.17) For a created essence to exist in itself or in another . . . depends on the divine will, and since the divine will without change can will a created substance to exist in itself or in the divine *suppositum*, it follows that if the human nature of Jesus Christ, before it was assumed was actually existent in itself, nevertheless it can be made—by divine will—existent in the divine *suppositum*, as it is now.[47]

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[43] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 13 (Wadding, vii. 21). For the general medieval claim that Christ's human nature can be given up by the Word, see Part IV below.

[44] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 13 (Wadding, vii. 21).

[45] Aristotle, *Ph.* 5. 1 (225^b11-13): 'Nor is there any change in respect of Relation; for it may happen that when one correlative changes, the other, although this does not itself change, is no longer applicable, so that in these cases the motion is accidental.'

[46] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 13 (Wadding, vii. 21); *Quod.* 19, n. 25 (Wadding, xii. 512–13; Alluntis and Wolter, 441 (n. 19. 90)).

[47] Richard, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 1 ad 7 (iii. 5^b-6^a). (I will look in Part IV at the distinction between nature and person implied here.)

Scotus treats the same issue very similarly, though he fleshes out Richard's skeletal suggestion into a more sophisticated account of different sorts of relation. Basically, Scotus makes a distinction between two different sorts of accidental relations: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic relations are such that, given a pair of objects x and y and their various non-relational properties, x and y are necessarily related in a given way; whereas extrinsic relations are such that, given a pair of objects x and y, and their various non-relational properties, it is a contingent matter whether x and y are related or not.[48] For example, Scotus believes that the relations between matter and form, and substance and accident, are extrinsic relations: with no other change in either of the pairs of objects, the relations between them could be dissolved. Thus, God could separate my matter and my form, or my quantity and my substance, without any further concomitant change in any of these objects. Not all accidental relations are like this. Scotus's example of an intrinsic relation is that of similarity: given two white objects, he reasons, it would be impossible for them not to be similar (in respect of their whiteness).

Given this, what should we say to the Aristotelian objection? Scotus argues that the objection is true of intrinsic relations, but not of extrinsic ones. Thus the Aristotelian objection does not cause any difficulty for Scotus's position. (We might note also that this provides another way in which the hypostatic union is similar to the relation between an accident and its substance: both relations are extrinsic.) In extrinsic relations, there can be a relational change which does not entail any other change in the *relata*. This is clearly true. As extrinsic relations are defined, the existence of the relation is a contingent matter, given the existence of the *relata* and their various non-relational properties. According to Scotus, Aristotle himself implicitly concedes the possibility of a change that is merely relational. According to Aristotle, being in a place is nothing more than a relation between a body and its immediate container; hence a change in place is nothing more than a change in relation—a body first has one relation to one place, and then has a different relation to a different place, such that the change here is *reducible* to a change in relation.[49] So there is a respectable example from the natural world—an example that Aristotle himself should be happy with—of the sort of counter-instance to Aristotle's own relation claim that Scotus's account of the hypostatic union is.

Scotus's successful response to the Aristotelian objection means that the way is open for him to accept both that the Incarnation does not entail that Christ's human nature has a non-relational property not had by any other human nature, and that the assumption of the nature is and remains a contingent matter—again, a claim I examine in Chapter 15. But the claim that Christ's human nature has no non-relational property not had by any other human nature makes it clear that the hypostatic union involves no more than a dependence relation. There are no other features of the union to require any further theological account.

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[48] On this, and all the material in the rest of this paragraph, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 112–14.
[49] Scotus appeals to the Aristotelian passage (*Ph.* 5. 1 (225ᵇ5–10)) in *Quod.* 19, n. 25 (Wadding, xii. 513; Alluntis and Wolter, 441 (n. 19. 90)), and *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 15 (Wadding, vii. 23). I discuss Scotus's account of place, and changes in place, in *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 193–208.

5. INDWELLING

As we saw in Chapters 3 and 4, both Henry of Ghent and William of Ware give some theological weight to the claim that one feature of the hypostatic union is the *indwelling* of the Word in the human nature. Scotus is happy to allow that this is true; but he is anxious to avoid the impression that this indwelling could possibly have any explanatory role in the Incarnation. Thus, Scotus claims that there is a certain 'intimacy' (*intimitas*) of *suppositum* to nature, and that we can talk about this intimacy in terms of indwelling (*illapsus*). He understands this indwelling, however, to entail the non-causal priority of *suppositum* over nature, and to be the result of (or perhaps even identical with—the passage I am about to quote is unclear) the *suppositum*'s sustenance of the nature:

(5.18) If we take [indwelling] for a certain intimacy, the sort of thing which a *suppositum* has to a nature which depends on it, then in this way only the Word indwells [the human nature], since only he is the end term of the dependency of this nature.[50]

This sounds similar to William of Ware, who, as we have seen, explains sustenance in terms of indwelling. I am not sure how close we should see the two thinkers here. As we shall see in Part II, William uses the notion of indwelling as one of a number of possible strategies for explaining how the Incarnation is possible. The Word can indwell the human nature in a special way on the grounds that the Trinity can indwell in a general way the whole of creation. Scotus notes, however, that God's general indwelling is reducible to his being the efficient cause of the universe, whereas the Word's special indwelling is wholly unrelated to any sort of efficient causality. Thus, according to Scotus, there is no relevant analogy between the two sorts of indwelling.[51]

Overall, Scotus provides the most detailed and metaphysically sophisticated defence of the substance–accident analogy of all the thinkers we have looked at. He is fully aware of what the position entails, and he is fully aware of the required separation between truth-making and the actualizing of passive potency. (It is this separation which Aquinas makes only in the case of concrete whole–concrete part and analogous relations; and Aquinas's refusal to make the same separation in the case of substance–accident relations in part explains Aquinas's very different Christology.)

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[50] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 20 (Wadding, vii. 30).
[51] Ibid. 3. 1. 4, n. 2 (Wadding, vii. 47); 3. 1. 1, n. 20 (Wadding, vii. 30).

Excursus 1

CONSEQUENCES OF THE UNION

Although it is strictly speaking outside the remit I have set myself here (which is restricted to properly *metaphysical* issues), I would like briefly to consider an issue which is of Christological importance, and which has some relation to the issue I have been looking at thus far: namely, the question of the consequences that the union has for the assumed nature. Specifically, the question is whether the union automatically entails that, for example, the human nature considered as including a human mind has any special religious experiences or gifts, whether these be of a kind not possibly had by other natures, or of a kind possibly had by other natures —albeit as a result of a different cause.

It might be thought that even asking this question is improper—not because it is the kind of ineffable question that we might not be able to find an answer to, but because the only subject of the religious experiences and gifts of Christ is the second person of the Trinity. I have already sketched an answer to this sort of objection in my Introduction above, and I will return to consider it in more detail in Chapter 10, and in my Conclusion below. But even if we agree that the only subject of the special gifts and experiences of the human nature is the Word, we can still deal with some of the issues I am going to look at here. The question would simply be: does the hypostatic union entail that the Word has any particular human spiritual gifts? (Recall that all orthodox accounts of the hypostatic union agree in maintaining that the Word has certain human properties. The question here simply regards a subset of such possible properties, namely, those that fall under the headings of religious gifts and experiences.)

The issue was tackled by the medieval theologians as one of a number examined through the discussion of various counterfactual and even counterpossible states of affairs. Among these, we can find, for example: (i) Are multiple incarnations possible? (ii) Could many divine persons assume just one and the same nature? (iii) Could a created person assume an additional created nature? (iv) Could a divine person assume an irrational nature? (v) Could a divine person assume a rational nature that did not enjoy the beatific vision, or which lacked habitual (i.e. justifying) grace? I examine what the medievals have to say about the first two of these in Excursus 2, and I will briefly examine the third in Chapter 7.

Here I would like to examine the fifth of these issues. My discussion will be brief, since I have discussed both this issue and the fourth in great detail in an extended

article on the topic, and I return to it briefly in Chapter 11.[1] Roughly, the question is whether the indwelling of the Word in the human nature entails that the human nature has any particular spiritual gifts or experiences. The medievals thought of this primarily in terms of the assumed nature's experience of the beatific knowledge, and its possession of sanctifying grace, but we could perhaps think of it in a more modern way by asking whether the assumed nature knew that it was hypostatically united to the Word—or whether the Word had human knowledge of this fact. Or we could think of Jesus's *Abba* consciousness, or whatever: was this consciousness entailed by the hypostatic union, or could Jesus have lacked it? All the schoolmen, of course, took it for granted that the assumed nature—and therefore the Word—enjoyed the beatific vision and had justifying grace.[2] But of my thinkers, only Aquinas and Henry of Ghent deny that the Word could have assumed a nature that did not experience the beatific vision, or which lacked habitual grace.

This debate can be thought of as starting with Robert Kilwardby, writing in the 1250s or 1260.[3] Kilwardby asks whether the Word could assume a human nature that lacked a habit of grace. According to Kilwardby, an affirmative answer entails that God 'would be simultaneously a sinner, or at least unjust, and just, and the most vile and the best'.[4] But Kilwardby is happy with this, on the grounds that, in general, the Incarnation entails affirming contradictory properties of one and the same person, albeit in different respects.[5]

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[1] See my 'Incarnation, Indwelling, and the Vision of God: Henry of Ghent and Some Franciscans', *Franciscan Studies*, 57 (1999), 79–130. The issue of the possible assumption of an irrational nature—a stone, or an ass—is a notorious feature of medieval Christology. The intention is, however, wholly serious, as I argue in 'Incarnation, Indwelling, and the Vision of God'. The major point is that there is no intrinsic connection between rationality and subsistence. Scotus, for example, argues that subsistence belongs to an individual nature in virtue of its independence: its factual non-assumption (a state for which it has a natural inclination). But this subsistence is not the sort of thing that could block assumption. As I discuss further in Ch. 15, only the divine persons possess subsistence in such a way as to block this sort of assumption: see Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, nn. 9–11 (Wadding, vii. 15–16). *Qua* subsistence, irrational natures are no more perfect than created rational natures. So if the subsistence of a created rational nature is such that it does not prevent assumption, *a fortiori* the subsistence of an irrational nature is not such as to prevent assumption: see Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 2. 1, n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 65–6). Subsistence, then, is had not in virtue of rationality but in virtue of non-assumption. I return to the issue of subsistence in Part IV.

[2] Indeed, they were far more generous in the gifts they ascribed to the human nature than modern theologians—even of a rigorously orthodox stamp—tend to be. For a discussion of medieval views of the factual (though, as I make clear here and in my 'Incarnation, Indwelling, and the Vision of God', not necessary) consequences of the hypostatic union, see Marilyn McCord Adams, *What Sort of Human Nature? Medieval Philosophy and the Systematics of Christology*, The Aquinas Lecture, 1999 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999).

[3] For this date, see Kilwardby, *Quaestiones in Librum Quartum Sententiarum*, ed. Richard Schenk, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 17 (Munich: Verlag der Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1993), 65*–67*.

[4] Kilwardby, *In Sent.* 3. 7 (*Quaestiones in Librum Tertium Sententiarum. Teil 1: Christologie*, ed. Elisabeth Gössmann, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 10 (Munich: Verlag der Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1982), 33). Clearly, Kilwardby identifies the lack of a habit of grace with being in a state of sin: hence his inference from lack of a habit to sinfulness.

[5] Kilwardby, *In Sent.* 3. 7 (p. 33). William of Ware argues similarly when discussing the possibility of the Word's assuming a sinful nature—a demonic nature, for example. I discuss William's claims here in detail in 'Incarnation, Indwelling, and the Vision of God', sect. 9.

Aquinas disagrees:

(i.1) It is necessary to posit habitual grace in Christ. . . . The closer something is to the cause pouring out what the thing is receptive of, the more it participates in the cause's out-pouring. But the outpouring of grace is from God. . . . Therefore it was most appropriate that the soul [assumed by the Word] received the outpouring of divine grace.[6]

For Aquinas, the closeness of the union of the human nature with the Word entails[7] that the human nature have habitual grace. Henry of Ghent presents a similar argu-ment to show that the assumed nature—whether or not it has grace—must enjoy the beatific vision.[8] Henry's fundamental principle is similar to Aquinas's. God's (hypostatic) presence to the essence of the assumed nature entails his presence to the powers—the intellect and will—of that nature. The way Henry develops the argument is more complex. He holds that God's presence to the powers of the assumed nature entails that the nature enjoys the beatific vision. So the assumed nature has the vision of God as a necessary result of the hypostatic union.

Henry draws an analogy between God's hypostatic indwelling in (presence to) the assumed nature—his circumincession—and God's general indwelling in the universe—his ubiquity. Henry analyses God's ubiquity in terms of two components. First, God is present to the essence of a creature by conserving it; secondly, God is present to the powers of a creature by being the primary cause of every action of which the creature's powers are the secondary cause.[9] According to Henry, the second of these—God's presence to the powers—is necessary for the first—God's presence to the essence. Henry's reason for accepting this is philo-sophical. According to Aristotle, the species of a substance is determined by the sorts of *function* it has; there is no substance which lacks its own sort of function.[10] Given that, according to Aristotle, a creature's being able to function is neces-sary for its existence, Henry reasons that, similarly, God cannot conserve in being a creature which lacks the powers to act. God, in other words, cannot conserve the essence of a creature unless he can also be the primary cause of the actions of which the creature—or one of its causal powers—is the secondary cause. So God's

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[6] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 7. 1 c (iii/1. 47^a).

[7] In (i.1) Aquinas slips easily between necessity and appropriateness.

[8] Henry holds that the assumed nature could enjoy the beatific vision without grace: see *Quod.* 6. 6 (Macken, x. 69–71). But the gist of his argument—like Aquinas's—is that there are certain automatic consequences of the hypostatic union, be they grace or the vision of God. It is this sort of claim that thinkers like William of Ware and Scotus disagree with vehemently, as we shall see.

[9] Henry, *Quod.* 11. 10 (Paris, ii. fo. 465^{r}F).

[10] See e.g. Aristotle, *Metaph.* Θ. 8 (1050^{a}21–^{b}1), where Aristotle makes the link between actuality and action. Elsewhere (e.g. *Metaph.* H. 2 (1043^{a}14–19)) Aristotle makes it clear that knowing what some-thing is is reducible to knowing what it is for—what it does. Equally, Aristotle's claim that nothing unnatural is eternal (*Cael.* 2. 3 (286^{a}18)) was understood by the medievals to entail that there can be no natural inclinations that remain for ever frustrated. Analogously, this might suggest that, in an Aristotelian universe, there can be no powers that lack any opportunity to act. Discussion of the whole issue in Aristotle is clearly related to a discussion of Aristotle's possible commitment to the principle of plenitude.

general indwelling in a creaturely essence entails his indwelling in the creature's powers.[11]

Analogously, Henry argues, God cannot be hypostatically present to the human nature—say, by assuming it to his person—unless he can be hypostatically present to the powers of this nature. So the Incarnation, according to Henry, entails that God is hypostatically present to the powers of the assumed nature.[12] This presence in turn entails that the assumed nature enjoy the beatific vision. God's presence to the powers of the assumed nature maximally beatifies these powers; and the maximal beatification of intellect and will consists respectively in beatifically knowing and loving God.[13]

Henry suggests another argument for this last conclusion too. The divine nature is maximally knowable and lovable. So its mere presence to the essence and powers of a created substance entails that the substance know and love God, rather like the presence of light in the eye entails that the eye sees.[14] The Incarnation, then, entails that Jesus is *comprehensor*, and during his earthly life both *viator* and *comprehensor*.

The later Franciscans—Richard of Middleton, William of Ware, and Duns Scotus—disagree with all this. Most explicit about the general claim—concerning Christ's grace—is Scotus. Scotus discusses in detail whether grace could count as what he calls a 'medium of congruity' in the hypostatic union. Scotus argues that the personation of a substance *in se*—its existing as person—is prior to its possession of grace. Many substances, after all, do not have grace (dogs, for example, or sinners). *Pari passu*, then the personation of a substance *in alio*—its being assumed by the Word—is prior to its possession of any of its principles of action. So the personation of a substance *in se* or *in alio* must be prior to its possession of grace. Grace therefore cannot be a medium in the nature's personation *in alio*.[15]

Scotus elsewhere presents a more elegant argument:

(i.2) No new absolute is posited in this nature through the union, because for it to be united to the Word implies only its special dependence on the Word; and just as the nature remains [the same] with regard to its absolute [property], so [it remains] having the same capacity.[16]

The idea is that the relation of dependence on the Word appears to be logically independent of any other relational or non-relational property of the assumed nature.

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[11] Henry, *Quod*. 13. 5 (Macken, xviii. 32–3); Henry's reference in this passage to Aristotle, *Metaph.* Γ seems to be a mistake, though it is one repeated in the manuscripts of William and Scotus. See also Henry, *Quod*. 13. 5 (Macken, xviii. 30–1).

[12] Henry, *Quod*. 13. 5 (Macken, xviii. 33).

[13] Henry, *Quod*. 6. 6 (Macken, x. 72). God, of course, is always present to the powers, so the conclusion of the argument is that the assumed nature *always* enjoys the beatific vision. I do not know what Henry would want to say about cases such as sleep, or the sedative given to Jesus at the crucifixion (John 19: 29). Presumably the enjoyment of God requires that the assumed nature's powers are actually capable of functioning.

[14] Henry, *Quod*. 6. 6 (Macken, x. 71).

[15] Scotus, *Ord*. 3. 2. 2, n. 12 (Wadding, vii. 82). Presupposed to this argument is that grace is an accident, a claim that Scotus makes a little earlier in the same passage as I am discussing here.

[16] Scotus, *Ord*. 3. 13. 4, n. 10 (Wadding, vii. 269).

In particular, it does not affect the natural capacities of this nature. Thus, the relation of dependence does not entail that the human nature have grace.[17]

Of more interest to these later thinkers, however, is Henry's challenging Aristotelian attempt to show that the assumed nature must enjoy the beatific vision. Henry's opponents argue that hypostatic presence does not entail that the assumed nature enjoy the beatific vision. God can indwell the powers without these powers ever eliciting any actions at all. William of Ware argues that the essence and powers of a substance are really distinct from the substance's action. So God can conserve the substance and its essential powers without moving the substance such that it actually elicits any action. Analogously, therefore, nothing about God's presence to the assumed nature entails that this nature elicit any actions.[18] The claim is found in a different context in Richard of Middleton, who argues for the possibility of the Incarnation on the following grounds:

(i.3) Just as [the divine person] can be present such that a substance exists but does not operate, so he can be present such that [a substance] exists, but does not exist in itself.[19]

William of Ware appeals to a biblical story that seems to constitute evidence in favour of his claim. Daniel and his companions were cast into the burning fiery furnace without harm. And the reason they did not burn, according to William, is not that they were protected from the action of the fire, but that God withheld his primary causation necessary for the fire's external action. So God conserves both the essence and the powers of fire without this entailing that the fire causes any effects, even when placed in circumstances under which it would standardly cause certain sorts of effects—here, the deaths of Daniel and his friends.[20]

Scotus's version of the argument is similar. He holds that real distinction is sufficient for separability,[21] such that, for two really distinct objects x and y, if the existence of y requires the existence of x, then y cannot exist without x, even though, on the separability claim, x can exist without y. In Scotus's language, x in this situation is *prior* to y. Scotus reasons that an object's being a person is in some sense prior to its eliciting any actions. More precisely, a person is really distinct from, and prior to, all of its actions. So a substance can be a person without ever eliciting

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[17] For the logical independence of the relation of hypostatic dependence from other possible special properties of the assumed nature for Scotus, see my *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), ch. 9, sect. 3.

[18] 'Ex quo sunt alia re ipsa essentia et potentia ab ipsa actione, posset Deus influere ad conservationem essentiae in quantum res quaedam est, conservando ipsam, et non influere ad conservationem ipsius in quantum est elicitiva actus; nec per consequens conservat ipsum actum': William, *In Sent.* 161 (MS V, fo. 108vb).

[19] Richard, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 1 (iii. 5^a).

[20] 'Sicut legitur factum in Danielem, quod ille ignis lucebat et calefaciebat in se, non tamen ardebat istos tres pueros, nec combrurebat missos in fornacem ignis ardentis, et per consequens sequitur quod natura assumpta a Verbo posset esse unita Verbo personaliter, non tamen frueretur eo': William, *In Sent.* 161 (MS V, fo. 108vb).

[21] See for example Scotus, *Quod.* 3, n. 15 (Wadding, xii. 81).

any actions. In the Incarnation, a nature can be assumed even if it does not elicit any special actions—or even any actions at all.[22]

These three Franciscans want to deny that activity can ever be an essential feature of the existence of a substance: the possession of a causal power or inclination does not entail that its possessor have an opportunity to exercise this power. On this sort of view, it would be possible to possess a causal power that could never be exercised, and an inclination that was always frustrated. None of this, of course, entails that created substances could ever lack their causal powers. So it does not explicitly go against the plausible Aristotelian claim appealed to in Henry's argument.[23]

The Franciscans offer some arguments directly against Henry's claim that the Word's presence to the powers of a nature specifically entails the beatific vision. First, whether or not a creature has the beatific vision is entirely a matter for God to decide: the vision of God requires God's willing presentation of himself, as object, to the creature's intellect. And, as William points out, God's self-presentation to the powers of a creature seems to be a quite separate action from his hypostatic indwelling in the essence and powers of an assumed nature.[24] The significance of this move is to weaken any claim Henry can make to the effect that the beatific presence of the Word to the powers of the assumed nature is necessarily *causal*. If this presence were to amount to the Word's causing beatific actions in the assumed nature, then Henry's view might look reasonably compelling. But the argument offered by both Scotus and William shows that the presence of the divine person to the powers of the assumed nature, if it is causal at all, is only contingently causal.

The second argument is that the mere presence of God to the powers of a rational substance does not entail that the substance elicit any appetitive act in relation to God. So it does not entail enjoyment.[25] Scotus appeals here to his general account of fruition, discussed in *Ordinatio*, book one, distinction one. There, Scotus claims that the direct intellectual vision of God does not necessitate the appetitive enjoyment of God. Henry of Ghent is one of Scotus's opponents. According to Henry, the mere presence of God to the will is sufficient for the will's loving God. For

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[22] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 2. 1, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 61).

[23] When discussing the Aristotelian claim that no natural inclination can remain for ever unsatisfied, Scotus offers a helpful distinction. Things are naturally inclined to whatever perfects them. It is true that nothing can always lack some essential perfection—loosely, something required for it to be fully the sort of thing it is. But things can certainly lack accidental perfections, even if they are naturally inclined towards such perfections: see Scotus, *Ord.* 4. 43. 2, n. 25 (Wadding, x. 34; *Philosophical Writings: A Selection*, ed. and trans. Allan B. Wolter (Indianapolis, IL, and Cambridge: Hackett, 1987), 155). Presumably, Scotus would regard proper activity as such an accidental perfection.

[24] 'Quod probo primo ex parte naturae sive personae assumen<ti>s, secundo ex parte personae assumptae. Primum ostendo sic. Ex parte Verbi assumentis alia est actio quae beatificat ipsam creaturam rationalem, alia quae sibi unit et substantificat naturam rationalem, ita quod iste actiones duae sunt divisae et distinctae, et ipsum Verbum alio modo se habet ut substantificat et ut beatificat. Sed nunc est sic quod quando actiones sunt divisae et sunt ad extra, cum sint voluntariae et liberae potest Deus facere unam in creatura non faciendo aliam. Sic autem est in proposito, nam istae duae actiones sunt ad extra': William, *In Sent.* 161 (MS V, fo. 108ᵛᵃ); Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 2. 1, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 61).

[25] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 2. 1, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 61); for William, see *In Sent.* 161 (MS V, fo. 108ᵛᵇ).

Henry, the will of a saint in heaven is not free. In the presence of God, the will is not a free power relative to the action of loving God: it does not have the power to fail to love God.[26] Scotus proposes a series of arguments to try to show that this position cannot be right.

First, the presence of an external object cannot cause a free power to cease to be free, since the mere presence of an external object to a power does bring about any change intrinsic to the power—changes such as the freedom or necessity of the power's activity.[27] Secondly, it is empirically evident that the presence of an external object does no more than make an action more or less intense. Scotus appeals to the example of heat: if we bring objects more or less close to a flame, the objects get (respectively) more or less hot. But the proximity of the objects does not change the sort of thing the flame does.[28] Thirdly, acts of intellection and appetition are absolute qualities inhering in the soul of a human being. Intellection is prior to appetition, and really distinct from it. But Scotus's separability criterion for real distinction entails that really distinct items are separable, such that if x is really distinct from and prior to y, x can exist without y. But the intellectual vision of God is prior to the appetitive enjoyment of God. So vision can exist without enjoyment.[29]

Overall, the point of these arguments, if successful, is that the assumption of a created nature does not in itself result in the beatification of this nature, or in the nature's reception of even basic spiritual gifts. I will discuss this somewhat surprising claim in my Conclusion below.

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[26] See Henry, *Quod.* 12. 5 (Macken, xvii. 31–3). Aquinas holds much the same view: see *ST* 1-2. 10. 2 c (i/2. 58ᵇ). Scotus describes the view at *Ord.* 1. 1. 2. 2, nn. 85, 87 (Vatican, ii. 63–4).

[27] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 1. 2. 2, nn. 136–7 (Vatican, ii. 91–3).

[28] Ibid. 1. 1. 2. 2, n. 138 (Vatican, ii. 93).   [29] Ibid. 1. 1. 2. 2, n. 139 (Vatican, ii. 93–4).

PART II

Trinitarian issues

Chapter 6

SOME POINTS OF CHRISTOLOGICAL CONSENSUS

In this chapter, I want to look in some detail at three issues about which there was broad agreement among all of our writers: (i) the divine essence (unlike one of the divine persons) fails to be incarnate; (ii) the Son can become incarnate without the other two persons becoming incarnate; (iii) the efficient cause of the Incarnation is the Trinity of persons. I examine briefly a fourth issue here too: that the efficient cause of the divine actions of the incarnate Word is the Trinity. Although there should be consensus about this, none of my thinkers discuss it with anything other than frustrating vagueness. There is a further issue about which there was consensus: that the Father and Spirit could have become incarnate instead of—or in addition to—the Son. But I will examine this issue in the next chapter, since understanding some of the arguments about this requires some grasp of the issue that I deal with in that chapter: namely, whether the possession of the divine essence is necessary—or perhaps even sufficient—for the possibility of being incarnate.

1. THE INCARNATION AND THE DIVINE ESSENCE

The first of these topics is fundamentally an issue in Trinitarian theology. According to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, at least as understood in our period, each divine person is really identical with the divine essence, and really distinct from both other persons. The distinctions between the persons result from *relations* between the persons. It might be thought that the real identity of the Son with the divine essence would entail that the incarnation of the Son would result in the incarnation of the divine essence too. The medievals generally disagreed. God the Son is incarnate; the divine essence—which is had too by the Father and the Spirit—is not. Clearly, the medievals are presupposing some sort of distinction between the divine essence and the person of the Son. But exactly what distinction? There was not complete agreement about this—though the nature of the debate is ultimately Trinitarian, and only exiguously related to the main thrust of my discussion here.

According to Aquinas, each divine person is really identical with the divine essence. Nevertheless, we can consider the divine essence in two different ways: first, as identical with one of the divine persons; secondly, as common to all three persons:

(6.1) The nature is said to be incarnate, just as [it is said to be] the assumer, in virtue of the person who is the end term of the union. . . . It is not [said to be incarnate] according to its being common to the three persons.[1]

Taking the essence in the first sense, it is identical with each divine person—and hence, in the case relevant to the Incarnation, identical with the Son. But taking the essence in the second sense, we can clearly *talk* about the essence differently from the way we talk about each person (and hence differently from the way we talk about the essence if this essence is understood in the first way, as identical with each divine person). Technically, essence-terms have a different mode of signification from person-terms.[2] This explains why human attributes—suffering, for example— can be predicated of the Word but not of the divine nature:

(6.2) In God, person and nature are really identical, and because of this identity the divine nature is predicated of the Son of God. But the mode of signifying [of person and nature] is not the same. So some things are said of the Son which are not said of the divine nature, just as we say that the Son of God is generated, but not that the divine nature is generated.[3]

Aquinas explains this different way of talking as a *rational* distinction: there is a rational distinction between each divine person and the divine essence. Grounding the possibility of there being a merely rational distinction is the standard Augustinian insight that the divine persons are subsistent relations. Aquinas defines 'person', as predicable of God, as follows: ' "Person" signifies a relation as subsistent in divine nature.'[4] While these subsistent relations are not things over and above the divine essence (such that the persons are not things over and above the divine essence), nevertheless we can think of the persons as distinct from the essence:

(6.3) In God, there is no real distinction between the essence and a person. . . . Relation, when compared to the essence, does not differ really, but only in reason.[5]

Given that these distinctions are merely mind-imposed, not corresponding to distinct extra-mental objects, it is hard to see why it is improper to claim, given the truth of 'the divine essence is incarnate', that the divine essence suffers, dies, and so on. But Aquinas appeals to the rational distinction as sufficient here: things that can be predicated of the person prior (as it were) to his being enfleshed can be predicated of the divine nature as well as the person. Incarnation—*becoming* flesh—is predicated of the person prior to his *being* flesh, and thus can be predicated of the divine nature as well as of the person; suffering, contrariwise, cannot be.[6]

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[1] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 3. 4 ad 2 (iii/1. 27ᵃ).
[2] See Aquinas, *ST* 1. 39. 4 c (i/1. 195ᵇ), where Aquinas argues that, although the term 'God' refers to the divine essence, the way in which we use the word—its *modus significandi*—means that it often refers to the divine essence 'as in the one that possesses it'—that is, as a divine person. (Think of 'God from God . . . true God from true God' in the creed of the Council of Nicaea.) On signification in Aquinas, see Ch. 8, n. 12 below.
[3] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 5 ad 1 (iii/1. 103ᵃ); see 3. 2. 2. ad 1 (iii/1. 13ᵃ).
[4] Ibid. 1. 39. 1 c (i/1. 193ᵃ).   [5] Ibid. 1. 39. 1 c (i/1. 193ᵃ).
[6] Ibid. 3. 16. 5 ad 2 (iii/1. 103ᵃ).

The medievals after Aquinas found his merely rational distinction between essence and person in God insufficient to ground the different predication rules Aquinas is prepared to allow. After all, if the distinction between the divine essence and the Son is merely a rational matter, with no corresponding extra-mental distinction, it is hard to see how we can plausibly deny the application of the indiscernibility of identicals, and thus deny that, if the divine person suffers, the divine nature suffers too. Understandably, then, thinkers after Aquinas often criticized Aquinas for positing a theologically insufficient distinction between the essence as such and the divine persons. According to Aquinas's critics, there must be some sort of extra-mental distinction between each divine person and the divine essence, otherwise we will have no way of blocking the undesirable inference to the Incarnation of the divine essence. William of Ware, for example, makes this sort of point explicitly:

(6.4) The divine essence and the person differ by a relational thing, in relation to a third, and for this reason a person can communicate itself, or unite to itself, a human nature, and the essence however not. I do not understand how a relation could not persist in God in relation to the essence, because the person of the Word could otherwise not accept a nature to himself unless he assumed it to the unity of essence, just as he assumes it to the unity of person. I do not claim that essence and relation in God are different, but that they are (as it were) two powers included in the one person. And for this reason something can well belong to a person in virtue of a relation which cannot belong to him in virtue of the essence.[7]

The idea is that, whatever their relation to each other, nevertheless the essence and the person are extra-mentally distinct from each other in terms of their different relations to various things: the Son is, and the essence is not, for example, really related to the Father as to his origin. It is for this reason that a divine person can become incarnate without the divine essence thereby becoming incarnate.

Scotus alludes to precisely the same objection, arguing that the real identity of the divine person with the divine essence entails that if the divine person assumes a human nature, then (counterfactually) the divine essence does too.[8] Scotus develops his reply far more fully than William does:

(6.5) This seems to be a difficulty for those who say that property or person differ only in reason from the [divine] nature. But it was said otherwise in distinction 2 of the first book, that incommunicable entity is, in its nature, formally not communicable entity, and therefore, from the nature of the thing, prior to any operation of the intellect, the Father communicates communicable entity, not incommunicable entity, to the Son. In this way, to whatever third object they [viz. person and nature] are compared, it is not necessary that what belongs

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[7] 'Essentia divina et persona differunt re relativa per respectum ad tertium, et ideo potest persona communicare se vel unire sibi naturam humanam, non tamen essentia. Non video quin relatio manet in divinis in respectu ad essentiam quia aliter non possit persona Verbi accipere naturam humanam ad se nisi assumeret ad unitatem essentiae sicut assumit ad unitatem personae. Non dico quod alia sit essentia et relatio in divinis, sed sunt quasi duae virtutes inclusae in una persona. Et ideo bene potest competere personae sub ratione relationis aliquid quod non competit sibi ratione essentiae': William, In Sent. 168 ad 3 (MS M₁, fo. 153ᵛᵃ); see also MS V, fo. 114ʳᵇ.

[8] Scotus, Ord. 3. 5. 1–2, n. 1 (Wadding, vii. 122).

to the one according to its formal nature belongs to another which is not formally the same as it. And assumption is like this . . . since it belongs incommunicably to the subsistent, as such, as to its end term.[9]

The target here is clearly Aquinas, or someone who takes a view like his. Scotus's point is that there must be some extra-mental distinction between person and essence in order to block the claim that whatever is true of the person is true of the essence. In Scotus's jargon, there is a *formal distinction* between a divine person ('incommunicable entity') and the divine nature ('communicable entity'—where 'communicable' means 'shareable' or 'repeatable').

Scotus expressly develops his account of the formal distinction as a way of solving this general Trinitarian difficulty. The divine essence is really shared by (repeated in) each divine person. To this extent it is like a common nature, shared by each divine person:

(6.6) Any nature is communicable to many by identity; therefore the divine nature too is communicable.[10]

Nevertheless, Scotus wants to insist too that the divine nature is numerically one— it is in other words like some sort of immanent universal, repeated in its various exemplifications but not numerically divided between them. It has numerical unity, not the less-than-numerical unity that is the mark of a common nature. So Scotus continues the passage just quoted:

(6.7) [The divine nature] is not, however, divisible. . . . Therefore it is communicable without division.[11]

The formal distinction here is not supposed to achieve anything more than claim that there is some sort of distinction between a *suppositum* and its nature or properties—and that this distinction holds whether the properties are common natures, divided between their *supposita*, or immanent universals, genuine ones-of-many, like the divine essence. In this case, we know that a divine person is not in every sense identical with the divine essence, since the essence is a one-of-many, whereas the divine person is not. Each divine person exemplifies the divine essence. And I do not suppose that anyone would really want to claim that the distinction between a *suppositum* and its properties is the same sort of thing as a distinction between two *supposita*.

On this view, a divine person has both the common or shared divine essence and his own distinctive personal feature as something like properties. This account is

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[9] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 5. 1–2, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 128); see also *Quod.* 19, n. 16 (Wadding, xii. 506; Alluntis and Wolter, 431 (n. 19. 53)).
[10] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 2. 2. 1–4, n. 381 (Vatican, ii. 346).
[11] Ibid.; for a brief discussion of these matters, with further references, see my *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 68–9. I examine all of this in great detail in my 'Divisibility, Communicability, and Predicability in Duns Scotus's Theories of the Common Nature', forthcoming.

very different from Aquinas's. Aquinas denies that the divine essence is communicable (i.e. shareable or repeatable) in any way.[12] For Scotus, on the other hand, the formal distinction between each divine person and the divine essence is grounded on the communicability of the essence and the incommunicability of the persons. Given Scotus's distinction between the divine essence and the divine persons, it is easy enough to see how Scotus can hold himself entitled to claim that a divine person can become incarnate without this entailing that the divine essence becomes incarnate. As we have seen, formal distinctions are defined by Scotus in terms of the possibility of distinct *predications* being made of one and the same object: so the human nature can be predicated of the divine person without thereby being predicated of the divine essence.[13]

2. THE INCARNATION OF JUST ONE DIVINE PERSON

Unsurprisingly, all thinkers agree with the claim that it is possible for one divine person to become incarnate without either of the others becoming incarnate. There is a *prima facie* problem here. On standard Augustinian understandings of the Trinity, the external actions of the divine persons are undivided: whatever one of them does, the others do as well. The general response to this is just to claim that the Incarnation involves a relation not to the divine substance or essence, but to a subsistent person. Aquinas, for example, notes that causing the union is a Trinitarian action, but that being the subject of an assumed human nature is a state, not an action, and so—since it thus does not fall prey to the Augustinian action axiom—can pertain to just one person:

(6.8) In the word 'assumption' two things are signified, namely the principle of the action, and its end term. Being the principle of the assumption belongs to the divine nature in itself, since the assumption was brought about by its power. But being the end term of the assumption does not belong to the divine nature in itself, but in virtue of the person in whom it is considered.[14]

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[12] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 11. 3 c (i/1. 49ᵇ).

[13] The medievals were generally in agreement about a related question: that the divine essence, abstracted from the divine persons, can become incarnate. We can best grasp the point of the discussion by thinking of it as a counterpossible exploration of a divine incarnation on the supposition that Unitarianism is true. The basic point is that if Unitarianism is true, the divine essence will be an incommunicable subsistent. But since what is required for becoming incarnate is being an incommunicable subsistent, the unitarian divine essence would indeed be capable of sustaining a human nature. See e.g. Aquinas, *ST* 3. 3. 3 (iii/1. 26ᵃ); William of Ware, *In Sent.* 169 (MS V, fo. 115ᵐ): 'Haec enim duo requiruntur a parte suppositi quod debet substantificare aliquam naturam aliam a natura propria, videlicet quod contineat virtutes omnium excellentas, quare cum suppositum divinum absolutum esset ita perfecte subsistens per se sicut suppositum respectivum, immo secundum modum intelligendi illa subsistentia esset nobilior qua subsisteret modo absoluto quam illa susbsistentia relativa modo relativo quod est et ita perfecte continet virtutem omnium'; and Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 2, n. 6 (Wadding, vii. 37). I will return briefly to Scotus's discussion of this in the next chapter.

[14] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 3. 2 c (iii/1. 25ᵃ).

(6.9) The act of assumption proceeds from divine power, which is common to the three persons; but the end term of the assumption is the person. . . . And therefore that which pertains to the action is common to the three persons, whereas that which pertains to the nature of the end term belongs to one person such that it does not belong to the others.[15]

Again, there are Trinitarian problems here. We might, for example, think that if there are merely rational distinctions between each divine person and the divine essence (as Aquinas believes), then there are merely rational distinctions between each person. Aquinas disagrees:

(6.10) Relation compared to the essence differs not in reality but merely in reason; but compared to the opposed relation it has (in virtue of the opposed relation) a real distinction. Thus there is one essence and three persons.[16]

Scotus holds, as we have seen, that there are merely formal distinctions between each divine person and the divine essence. Thus, we could not distinguish the divine essence and a divine person as two objects. Nevertheless, like Aquinas, Scotus holds that there are real distinctions between the three divine persons, such that the divine essence is really repeated (though without numerical division) in each of them.[17] Given that there are numerical distinctions between the three divine persons, Scotus can, just like Aquinas, appeal to the non-causal nature of hypostatic dependence to show how just one person can be incarnate:

(6.11) Although a relation that follows upon the nature, or being the end term of such a relation, is common to the three [divine persons]—for which reason all causality in relation to a creature belongs to the three [divine persons]—it is not however necessary that this relation [of hypostatic sustenance], which follows upon personal [entity] (and not quidditative entity) is common to the three.[18]

According to Scotus, then, there are two requirements that need to be satisfied to allow for the incarnation of just one person. First, there must be real distinctions between the divine persons; secondly, being incarnate cannot itself be an action.

3. CAUSALITY AND DIVINE ACTION IN THE INCARNATION

As we have seen so far, the medievals all argue for the possibility of just one divine person's becoming incarnate by noting that the state of being incarnate does not in

[15] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 3. 4 c (iii/1. 27ᵃ).

[16] Ibid. 1. 39. 1 c (i/1. 193ᵃ); see Aquinas, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 2. 2. ad 2, n. 85 (iii. 240).

[17] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 2. 2. 1–4, n. 421 (Vatican, ii. 366). Note that this is not quite Scotus's usual sense of 'real' distinction, because real distinction usually requires separability. Presumably Scotus wants to hold that two divine persons are two objects in a sense in which a divine person and the divine essence are not two objects (since the divine essence is an immanent universal).

[18] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 7). See also William of Ware, *In Sent.* 158 (MS M₁, fo. 140ʳᵇ): 'Non oportet omnes incarnari incarnata una. Sed quia tres personae sunt tres subsistentiae, licet sint una substantia—incarnatio autem terminatur ad subsistentiam, non ad substantiam (nisi ut in persona)—non enim est necesse, si una subsistentia sustentificat aliquam naturam quod alia subsistentia sustentificat eamdem naturam'; see also Richard of Middleton, 3. 1. 1. 2 concl. (iii. 6ᵇ). In the next chapter, I show that Scotus believes another claim of William's to entail, falsely, that all three persons will have to become incarnate.

itself place an incarnate being in any sort of causal relationship with anything
external to that being. For the Son to become incarnate does not require his exercising
any causal power other than that exercised by all three divine persons. By adopt-
ing this strategy, the medievals avoid having to abandon the Augustinian axiom that
the external actions of the Trinity are undivided. But this does not mean that the
Incarnation itself does not require some divine causal activity. In this last section
of this chapter I would like to consider the causal features of the Incarnation: just
what it is that the three divine persons cause externally to themselves in the
Incarnation. The causal aspects of the Incarnation are two-fold: bringing about the
Incarnation, and bringing about certain divine actions that are attributed to Christ.
As we shall see, the medievals ascribe the first of these causal functions to the whole
undivided Trinity, but are annoyingly reticent about the second of these funtions.

Before I look at these issues, I would like to consider briefly just why the medievals
should have felt themselves committed to the Augustinian axiom. The basic argu-
ment can be found in Aquinas. Divine causal power is common to all three persons,
since it is identical with the divine essence.[19] Since all three divine persons possess
the (numerically singular) divine essence, all three possess the (numerically singu-
lar) divine causal power. Scotus attempts to flesh this argument out, and I consider
his position again in more detail in the next chapter.[20]

The cause of the union

The thinkers I examine explicitly claim that all three divine persons acting together
bring it about that a human nature is united to the second person of the Trinity.
Aquinas summarizes:

(6.12) The action of assuming proceeds from divine power, which is common to the three
persons. . . . For this reason, the element of the assumption which is action is common to
the three persons.[21]

William of Ware argues identically:

(6.13) The Incarnation can be compared to its efficient cause, and in this way it is an action
of the Trinity, because according to Augustine, *De Trinitate* book 4, chapter 19, 'the works
of the Trinity are undivided'.[22]

And Scotus makes the same point too:

(6.14) The whole Trinity equally brought about the Incarnation.[23]

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[19] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 25. 1 ad 2 (i/1. 139ᵃ); for specific links between this doctrine and Trinitarian theo-
logy, see Aquinas, *ST* 1. 45. 6 c and ad 2 (i/1. 232ᵃ ᵇ).
[20] For Scotus on this, see too my *Duns Scotus*, 70–1.   [21] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 3. 4 c (iii/1. 27ᵃ).
[22] William, *In Sent*. 158 (MS V, fo. 106ʳᵃ): 'Incarnatio potest comparari ad causam efficientem, et sic
est actio Trinitatis {Trinitatis] Trinitate MS} quia secundum Augustinum 4 <de> Trinitate 19, "Indivisa
sunt opera Trinitatis".' The rogue Augustinian reference is repeated in the later MS; the quotation is
from Augustine, *Enchir*. 12. 38 (*De Fide Rerum Invisibilium, Enchiridion ad Laurentiam* [etc.], CCSL, 46
(Turnhout: Brepols, 1969), 71). See also William, *In Sent*. 158 (MS M₁, fo. 139ᵛᵇ): 'Tota Trinitas est
causa efficiens incarnationis', a passage with no parallel in MS V.
[23] Scotus, *Ord*. 3. 1. 1, n. 18 (Wadding, vii. 29).

Furthermore, the thinkers all agree that the causal power used to bring about the Incarnation is possessed by the persons in virtue of their possession of the divine essence. Thus Aquinas:

(6.15) Being the principle of the assumption belongs to the divine nature in virtue of itself, because the assumption is brought about by its power.[24]

William of Ware makes the same point in more detail, summarizing the interplay between person and essence as, respectively, agent and causal power:

(6.16) If the assumption is compared to the 'principle from which' (*a quo*), this can be in two ways, because it can be compared either to the 'principle from which' that is the efficient [principle], or [to the 'principle from which'] that is the formal principle. If the assumption is compared to the formal 'principle from which', then I say that the essence is the assuming thing, because the assumption is an external action, whose formal basis (*ratio formalis*) is the essence, just as of all other external actions since they are essential actions. If the assumption is compared to the efficient 'principle from which', then I say that the essence cannot in itself assume a human nature, because actions belong to *supposita*, and that which acts in itself is a perfect being in the line of *suppositum*.[25]

(6.15) and **(6.16)** make it clear that it is the persons, rather than the divine essence as such, that act.[26] Scotus, as we have seen, agrees both that the external action is brought about by the Trinity, and that the divine causal power is possessed by the divine persons in virtue of their possession of the divine essence. But Scotus's overall view, both on the nature of causation and on the possession of causal powers, is somewhat more complex than this. I discuss further elements of it in Chapter 10.

The cause of Christ's divine actions

It follows straightforwardly from the Augustinian axiom that Christ's divine actions, whether performed with the human nature as an instrument or not, are all properly caused by, and predicated of, each divine person. (Because they are predicable of each divine person, they are *a fortiori* predicable of the Son.) Surprisingly, no one, as far as I can tell, discusses this issue in my period. The theologians do all expressly claim that these divine actions of Christ are brought about by, or in virtue of, the divine nature. Aquinas argues as follows:

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[24] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 3. 2 c (iii/1. 25^b).

[25] 'Si assumptio comparetur ad principium a quo, hoc potest esse dupliciter, quia vel potest comparari ad principium a quo quod est efficiens, vel quod est principium formale. Si assumptio comparetur ad principium formale a quo, sic dico quod essentia est assumens, quia assumptio est actus ad extra cuius ratio formalis est essentia, sicut et omnium aliorum actuum ad extra, cum sint actus essentiales. Si autem assumptio comparetur ad principium efficiens a quo, sic dico quod essentia non potest assumere naturam humanam per se, quia actus sunt suppositorum, et quod per se agit est suppositive ens perfectum': William, *In Sent.* 168 (MS M₁, fo. 153rb); see also MS V, fo. 114rb.

[26] Aquinas is not always so clear about this, and sometimes speaks as if it is the divine essence that causes effects, rather than the three persons together—see e.g. *ST* 3. 3. 2 c (iii/1. 25^b), just quoted; 3. 3. 5 c (iii/1. 27^b); 3. 2. 12 c (iii/1. 23^b). But sometimes he is explicit that it is the persons who act; see e.g. *ST* 3. 3. 1 c (iii/1. 24^b): 'Acting belongs properly to a person.'

(6.17) Just as the human nature in Christ has the proper form and power through which it operates, so too does the divine. Whence the human nature has a proper operation distinct from the divine operation, and vice versa. The divine nature, however, uses the operation of the human nature as the operation of its [viz. the divine nature's] instrument; likewise too the human nature participates in the operation of the divine nature as an instrument participates in the operation of the principal agent.[27]

(Aquinas makes an important claim here—that the human nature operates (does things)—that I will return to in Chapter 10.) Clearly, according to **(6.17)**, Aquinas attributes the divine actions to the divine *nature*.[28] Henry of Ghent suggests likewise: 'each nature bringing about, in communion with the other, what is proper to it'.[29]

Scotus is frustratingly vague on all of this—perhaps he thinks that what he says elsewhere about divine action entails that the whole Trinity causes the divine actions of Christ. In fact, Scotus never (as far as I know) discusses Jesus's miracles explicitly. When discussing Jesus's words in John 10: 8 ('I have the power to lay [my life] down, and I have the power to take it up'), Scotus signally fails to make the sort of point we would expect in the light of my discussion thus far:

(6.18) 'I' is said in virtue of the Word. . . . And when it is said: 'And to take it up', it is true, for it is not impossible for the person [to do this], though perhaps it is impossible for the soul.[30]

(6.19) 'I', that is, the *suppositum* of the Word according to the divine nature.[31]

Here, Scotus is explicit that an action that could not be performed by (or in virtue of) the human soul—that is, a divine action—is performed by the Word in virtue of his divine nature. The agency is explicitly ascribed to the Word, and there is no suggestion—as I think there ought to be—that the causality belongs to the Trinity.

Presumably, as in the case of the assumption of the human nature, the idea in all of these thinkers would be that, in virtue of their possession of the one divine nature, all three persons of the Trinity are together equally agents of these actions. Thus, such actions can be ascribed to each divine person, and therefore, as the quotations suggest, to the Son. Jesus's miracles are performed by the Trinity, whether or not the human nature is used as an instrument.

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[27] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 19. 1 c (iii/1. 120^b); see also e.g. 3. 43. 2 c (iii/1. 241^b).
[28] See also Aquinas, *In Sent.* 3. 16. 1. 2, n. 23 (iii. 512–13): 'The power of the divinity of Christ could repel everything that leads to death or passion.'
[29] Henry, *Quod.* 15. 3 (Paris, ii. fo. 576^rB). Henry is here quoting the *Tome* of Leo: see Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (London: Sheed and Ward; Georgetown, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), i. 79^b.
[30] Scotus, *RP* 3. 16. 1–2, n. 15 (Wadding, xi. 483^a).
[31] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 16. 1–2, n. 15 (Wadding, vii. 374).

Chapter 7

THE *RATIO TERMINANDI*
ESSENCE OR PERSONAL PROPERTY?

In this chapter, I want to look at a question that only really received serious atten-
tion in the years after Aquinas's death: in virtue of which of its properties—that
is, the essence or the personal property—is it possible for a divine person to be
incarnate? The issue is just to do with the feature of the divine person that allows
it to sustain (to exemplify) human nature. (I looked at the question of the *cause* of
the Incarnation in the previous chapter.) I shall refer to the property in virtue of
which it is possible for a divine person to have a human nature as a divine person's
S-property. The question, then, is whether the S-property is the Son's essence (or
a property itself had in virtue of his essence), or the Son's personal property (or a
property itself had in virtue of his personal property).

It is clearly possible for the various properties had by the Son themselves to be arranged
in explanatory sequences. For example, as we shall see in a moment, some thinkers
suppose that the Son's S-property is his infinity, or his omnipotence, or his perfec-
tion (or is a property had in virtue of his infinity, or of his omnipotence, or of his
perfection). But in principle infinity, omnipotence, and perfection could themselves
be properties of the Son had (in some sense) in virtue of the divine essence or in virtue
of the Son's personal property. It becomes the established view during my period that
the infinity, the omnipotence, and the perfection of the Son are properties all had in
virtue of the divine essence. So using infinity, omnipotence, or perfection to explain
the Son's S-property will entail supposing that the Son ultimately has his S-property
in virtue of the divine essence. In fact, the medieval discussions of the issue, perhaps
motivated by considerations of divine simplicity, sometimes simply *identify* the S-
property variously with the essence or personal property of the Son. But I shall speak
of the S-property as being had *in virtue of* the essence or personal property respect-
ively. This will allow me to discuss the issue in the most perspicacious manner.

So far, then, I want to talk of a property—the S-property—which is had in virtue
of another of a divine person's properties (be it the divine essence or the personal
property), such that the S-property is that in virtue of which a divine person's
sustaining a human nature is itself possible. Speaking of a property in virtue of which
the possession of a further property is *possible* is on the face of it confusing. We can
understand the sort of thing that the medievals want to talk about if we think of
an S-property as something like a *power*. (It is not exactly like a power since, as we
saw in the last chapter, the medievals do not believe that actually sustaining a human
nature should be understood in causal terms. Nevertheless, the analogy will help

us disambiguate the notion of being *that in virtue of which something is possible*.) A substance's possession of a power need not be sufficient for some event's being caused. But there is a sense in which the possession of a power is sufficient for a substance's being able to cause certain events: the possession of the power is necessary for the event, but sufficient for the ability. Analogously, possession of an S-property is sufficient for a substance's being able to sustain a human nature that is non-essential to it. Clearly, spelt out in this way, we will not be tempted to think of the possession of an S-property as being sufficient for actually sustaining such a nature. (The second person of the Trinity, after all, always possesses his S-property, but he has not always been incarnate.)

Most of the thinkers I examine in this chapter accept some form of the theory that the Son has his S-property in virtue of the divine essence. According to Scotus, however, claiming that the Son's S-property is had in virtue of the divine essence leads to the wildly heterodox Christological consequence that all three divine persons are incarnate in the human nature of Jesus. Scotus derives his view from Richard of Middleton, based in turn on some hints in Bonaventure. I examine Richard's theory in section 4, and Scotus's views in sections 5 to 7 of this chapter, after looking —in the first three sections of the chapter—at the views of those theologians whom Richard and Scotus oppose. As we shall see, Scotus's account is tied in closely to his distinctive and powerful defence of the coherence of the doctrine of the Trinity.

The gist of the argument that Richard and (in more detail) Scotus invoke against their opponents is that, if the S-property is possessed in virtue of the divine essence, then the incarnation of any one of the divine persons will entail the incarnation of them all. The insight here is that the possession of the divine essence is sufficient for actually being incarnate, supposing that at least one of the persons possessing this essence actually is incarnate. For reasons that should become clear below, this argument as Scotus (at least) presents it is reasonably compelling. But on the face of it it overlooks something obvious: surely, both the essence and a personal property might be necessary and *jointly* sufficient for the possibility of being incarnate. Neither Richard nor Scotus consider this, apparently believing that there cannot be two jointly necessary and explanatorily sufficient reasons for the same state of affairs.[1] So Scotus's

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[1] See for example his consideration of a theory both that the divine essence could be explanatorily sufficient for being incarnate and that possession of a personal property might be non-explanatorily necessary for being incarnate. Scotus rejects this view: for the whole discussion, see *Ord.* 3. 1. 5, n. 6 (Wadding, vii. 55–6). But there are two odd things about the discussion. First, Scotus's failure to consider the possibility that essence and property might be jointly necessary for incarnation (neither of them alone being sufficient), and secondly Scotus's failure to be clear about the distinction between explanatory and non-explanatory conditions for some state of affairs. After all, we customarily suppose that certain conditions might be sufficient *explanations* for a state of affairs even if other conditions are non-explanatorily necessary for the state of affairs. (On the face of it, there is at least some sense in which my pushing the first domino in a series is explanatorily sufficient for the final domino's tumbling over; but the presence of other dominoes in the series, each falling over in turn, is non-explanatorily necessary.) I will return in sect. 6 below to another possibility that Scotus considers a little more rigorously: that the S-property of the Word could be had in virtue of his personal property, but that the possession of the divine essence is still a necessary condition for being incarnate. I believe that there is probably an explanation for Scotus's claim that essence and personal property cannot be jointly necessary explanatory conditions here, and I suggest what it is at n. 45 below.

discussion of his own view presupposes two further claims, both of which he accepts, but only the first of which is an integral part of his discussion of the S-property: first, that the possession of the divine essence is not *sufficient* for the possession of the S-property, and secondly, that the possession of the divine essence is not *necessary* for the possession of the S-property. (The second claim here on the face of it entails the possibility of created *supposita* hypostatically sustaining natures that are not their own proper natures. I will return to this, and the putative inference, in section 6 below.)

I will discuss all of this in detail; I just want to be clear, before beginning a rather complex topic, what the ultimate destination is. It is that, according to Scotus, possession of the divine essence is logically independent of possessing an S-property. One final point: I shall assume that possession of some essence or another will be necessary for possession of an S-property—or at least, anything which possesses an S-property must have certain other properties of its own.[2] The question is whether possession of *divine* essence is necessary or sufficient for possession of an S-property.

I claimed above that the whole issue only received serious attention in the years after Aquinas's death. Aquinas, as far as I can tell, touches on this problem just once, claiming that a divine person can have more than one nature (i.e. a non-divine nature as well as his divine nature) on the grounds that a divine person is *infinite*:

(7.1) It is proper to the divine person, on account of his infinity, that in him there can be a concurrence of natures, not accidentally but substantially.[3]

By itself, the argument leaves almost everything to the imagination. Cajetan, for example, when commenting on the passage, claims that the infinity of the divine person is what allows it to *take the place* of a (finite) created *suppositum* in supporting a human nature.[4] Aquinas's argument, read through Cajetan's spectacles, forms a composite of two separate arguments found in Giles of Rome. I shall label the two arguments the 'omnipotence' argument and the 'infinity' argument. The second argument is found also in Matthew of Aquasparta and Richard of Middleton, and forms the basis of a more sophisticated argument defended by Henry of Ghent and, in a slightly different form, by William of Ware (the 'perfection' argument). As we shall see, by the time the argument appears in William of Ware, it is reducible to a more general thesis: the *ratio terminandi* is the divine essence. These three different arguments are very similar to each other; in an attempt to impose some

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[2] On the face of it, there could exist something whose only essential property was an S-property. In this case, the essence of that thing would just be the S-property. As we shall see below, Scotus holds that the possession of some essence or another is necessary for possession of an S-property, but denies generally that this or that essence is either necessary or sufficient for possessing an S-property. The being that is only S-property is a counter-instance here. But it is one that I will ignore for the purposes of this discussion.

[3] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 3. 1 ad 2 (iii/1. 25ᵃ).

[4] Cajetan, Commentary on Aquinas, *ST* 3. 3. 1, sect. v, in Aquinas, *Opera Omnia* (Rome: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1884–), xi. 55ᵃ.

clarity on a complex debate, I classify the arguments in a way that I take to be implied in Scotus's treatment of them. I examine these three arguments in the next three sections.

1. THE OMNIPOTENCE AND INFINITY ARGUMENTS

In his second *Quodlibet* Giles offers the skeleton of an explanation to account for a divine person's S-property:

(7.2) Just as the divine nature can take the place (*supplere vicem*) of any created nature, since it can, without any created nature, produce whatever can be produced with such a nature, so too a divine *suppositum* can take the place of any created *suppositum*, since whatever he can do with the mediation of such a *suppositum*, he can also do without the created *suppositum*. Just as God, in other human beings, sustains the human nature with the mediation of a created *suppositum*, so he can, by any divine person, receive into himself human nature, or any other nature, and sustain it in himself without any other created *suppositum*.[5]

The idea is that the divine person(s) somehow (non-causally) sustain a non-assumed created nature by means of that nature's created *suppositum*. But since whatever God can sustain mediately he can sustain directly, it is possible for the divine person(s) to sustain a created nature directly. And this is what it is to be incarnate. This is the omnipotence argument: omnipotence is sufficient for the possession of an S-property.

   Later, in *Quodlibet* 6. 3, Giles offers a little more. The basic argument in both *Quodlibets* is an argument from analogy: just as the divine nature can be the immediate cause of anything, a divine person can be the immediate subject of anything.[6] But at one place in the later *Quodlibet*, Giles suggests a further argument:

(7.3) We should not conclude that the divine *suppositum* can assume natures of whatever kind and number, except in so far as he can take the place (*supplere vicem*) of created *supposita* of whatever kind and number, since he does not have limitation in relation to such *supposita*.[7]

The last clause here suggests that the reason the divine *suppositum* can take the place of a human *suppositum* is that the divine *suppositum* is unlimited in relation to a human *suppositum*. This is the argument I am labelling the 'infinity' argument.

   We can also find the infinity argument in Matthew of Aquasparta and Richard of Middleton. Matthew's contribution is certainly earlier than Giles's. Matthew's suggestions are barely more adequate than Aquinas's: the infinity and immensity of the divine person are such that the divine person can substantify more than one kind-nature.[8] Matthew tries to draw an analogy between the divine person and the divine nature: just as the infinite divine nature can be substantified in many divine persons, so the infinite divine person can substantify many created natures.[9] Richard

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   [5] Giles, *Quod*. 2. 2 (p. 52ᵃ).   [6] Ibid. 6. 3 (p. 360ᵃ ᵇ).   [7] Ibid. 6. 3 (pp. 360ᵇ–361ᵃ).
   [8] Matthew, *QDI* 8 (p. 156); also 8 ad 6 (p. 163); 8 ad 11 (p. 165).   [9] Ibid. 8 (p. 156).

of Middleton rests content merely to repeat the basic Thomist claim: a divine person can have more than one nature in virtue of the person's immensity.[10] Hervaeus is likewise concise: a divine person can assume another substantial nature because of his infinity.[11]

So all of these thinkers hold that the Son's S-property is had in virtue of his infinity/immensity. Even in Giles the argument is not very full. None of the thinkers, for example, considers whether infinity/immensity is a property had in virtue of the divine essence or of the divine person's personal property. Henry of Ghent, however, suggests a way to flesh the account out; I turn to this fuller account now.

2. THE PERFECTION ARGUMENT: HENRY OF GHENT

In his *Quodlibet* 11. 10, disputed either at Christmas in the same year (1287) as Giles's Easter *Quodlibet* 2. 2, or at Easter in 1288, Henry of Ghent discusses whether or not a created person—in this case an angel—could become incarnate. In the course of giving his (negative) reply to this question, Henry gives us a great deal more than the question might lead us to expect. Not only does Henry attempt to show that infinity is a necessary condition for possession of an S-property; he attempts to show too that it is sufficient, and thus that infinity and possession of an S-property are logically equivalent. His account is very similar to Giles's—though as I will show below, it differs from Giles's in that Henry believes that the relation between infinity and possession of an S-property requires further explanation. The further explanation turns out to be perfection, as we shall see; it is for this reason that I label Henry's argument the 'perfection' argument.

The argument to show that an angel cannot become incarnate (i.e. assume a human nature) is straightforward. A necessary condition for being able to assume a kind-nature is failing to be limited to just one kind-nature. But created persons are limited to just one kind-nature. Hence created persons cannot become incarnate:

(7.4) Any created personality is finite, and by its finitude limited to the singularity of its nature, and appropriated to it, such that for this reason the personality of no creature can be communicated to many natures.[12]

Why suppose that finitude entails limitation to just one nature? The answer is found in Henry's discussion of the contrapositive, that being infinite is necessary for being incarnate:

(7.5) Personhood which is communicable to many natures must be of itself undetermined and of undetermined nature (otherwise the personhood would be determined by the nature).[13]

Both the divine person and the divine nature are infinite, and therefore in every respect unlimited and undetermined.[14] Thus the divine person satisfies one of the

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[10] Richard, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 4 (iii. 9ʳ).   [11] Hervaeus, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 4 (p. 285ª).
[12] Henry, *Quod.* 11. 10 (Paris, ii. fo. 465ʳF).   [13] Ibid.   [14] Ibid.

conditions necessary for becoming incarnate. Equivalently, finitude entails deter-
mination to just one nature: presumably only an infinite person has, as it were, space
for two substantial natures.[15]

(7.4) and (7.5) thus show that infinity is necessary for possession of an S-
property. The argument so far looks like Giles's argument. But as Henry develops
it, there are some clear differences. Crucially, Henry denies that the infinity of a
divine *suppositum* is *in itself* sufficient to allow for the possibility of incarnation. Henry
claims that the incarnation of a divine person entails that person's replacing the
created personhood that would otherwise be had by the nature assumed. The divine
person can do this since he already sustains an infinite nature that contains the per-
fections of every created nature:

(7.6) On account of the indetermination of such personhood and nature [viz. divine person-
hood and nature], the personhood can be communicated to a limited created nature, since
whatever is in such a finite nature is also in that infinite nature, though in a more eminent
manner. For this reason the conjunct containing divine and human nature does not require
any other personhood than [that] of one of these.[16]

(7.6) shows that infinity is sufficient for possession of an S-property: the S-
property of a divine person is had in virtue of his infinity, and the *reason* why infinity
is so important here is that infinity entails the power to sustain an infinite nature.
Finally, the reason why the power to sustain an infinite nature is so important is
that an infinite nature is a perfect nature, containing virtually all created perfec-
tions. Thus the power to sustain an infinite nature entails the power to sustain a
created nature.

I refer to this argument as the 'perfection' argument, since it is the fact that the
infinite divine person sustains the perfect divine nature (and thus a nature that
contains created perfections) which is the feature most relevant to an explanation
of the possibility of the Incarnation. Henry's way of putting the argument leaves
some things unclear. It is not clear the extent to which Henry thinks of the divine
person's infinity as a property had properly in virtue of the divine essence. Equally,
it is not clear to what extent Henry believes that the divine person's S-property is
had in virtue of the divine essence.[17]

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[15] This view of created personhood forms part of Henry's claim that created subsistence entails sep-
arate existence: Henry, *Quod.* 11. 10 (Paris, ii. fo. 465ʳ). Existing separately is entailed by subsistence;
but (as we shall see in Ch. 12), Henry does not believe that mere separate existence is a sufficient *explana-
tion* of subsistence.

[16] Henry, *Quod.* 11. 10 (Paris, ii. fo. 465ʳ); see also 13. 5, arg. 2 in opp. (Macken, xviii. 27).

[17] We should perhaps recall another feature of Henry's account, discussed in Ch. 4 above (see (4.25)
of that chapter)—a feature that surprisingly did not seem to attract such attention from his contempor-
aries and successors—namely, Henry's anti-Thomist view that the (non-relational) *esse* communicated
to the (non-relational) human nature is the *esse* not of the relational divine person but of the non-
relational divine essence. Presumably, this is another way for Henry to argue that the human nature
depends on the divine person in virtue of the divine essence. But the general ambiguity of the medieval
language of *esse* makes it hard to be sure what exactly Henry is defending here.

3. THE *RATIO TERMINANDI* AS DIVINE ESSENCE: WILLIAM OF WARE

William—who is the direct target in much of Scotus's Christological discussion—provides a succinct but sophisticated version of Henry's perfection argument. He argues that the divine *suppositum* contains the perfections of every created *suppositum*, and that this explains ('causes') the possibility of a divine person's becoming incarnate: it explains, in other words, the divine person's S-property.

(7.7) Since therefore the divine *suppositum* has the whole power (*virtus*) of a human *suppositum*, it could substantify as human nature just as a human *suppositum* can, or much more so since it contains the power and perfection of all *supposita* in an eminent and excellent manner.[18]

Equally, the reason that the divine *suppositum* contains such perfections is that the divine person is *infinite* or *immense*.[19] This argument derives from one proposed in Giles's early *Lectura* (as we have just seen, Giles's later position is a little different from this); the argument constitutes a further instance of William's being influenced specifically by Giles. Giles argues that the divine person contains the perfections of all created *supposita*—all their powers and qualities contained in an eminent way. A perfection of any created *suppositum* is its capacity to sustain its nature. Since the divine person contains this perfection, the divine person can sustain any created nature.[20]

William's account is closer to Giles's early account than it is to Henry. Henry's (7.6) includes the claim that a divine *suppositum*'s S-property is explained by the fact that the divine *essence* contains the perfections of created natures: 'Whatever is in such a finite nature is also in that infinite nature, though in a more eminent manner.' The argument is that a divine *suppositum* can sustain a created nature on the grounds that it can sustain an essence (the divine) that contains the perfections of the created nature. William provides a much neater argument, developing Giles's early insight into a theory. The 'power'[21] to sustain a nature is had by a divine

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[18] 'Cum ergo suppositum divinum habeat totam virtutem suppositi humani ipsam naturam humanam potuit substantificare sicut suppositum humanum potest vel multo fortius cum contineat virtutem et perfectionem omnium suppositorum modo eminenti et excellenti': William, *In Sent.* 155 (MS V, fo. 104vb); see also MS M₁, fo. 138va: 'Continentia . . . virtutis . . . est causa unionis, quia si aliquid habeat in se perfectam virtutem alicuius suppositi et ipsum contineat potest naturam illam sustentificare sine proprio supposito; et talis continentia et virtus est in solo Deo.'

[19] 'Quidquid est virtutis positivae in creatura est modo immenso in Deo, et per consequens perfectiones omnium specierum et differentiarum sunt in Deo, tamen sine contradictione': William, *In Sent.* 156 (MS M₁, fo. 138ra); see MS V, fo. 105rb: 'Quid virtutis et perfectionis est in omnibus creaturis continetur virtualiter et unitive in Deo, licet modo immenso et indeterminato sine contradictione, non obstante quod tales perfectiones in creaturis sint disparatae'; see also William, *In Sent.* 156 sed contra 3 (MS V, fo. 105^m): 'Illud quod attribuitur Deo et divinae naturae propter suam infinitatem et illimitationem non potest attribui creaturae, immo etiam hoc repugnat; quare cum attribuatur Deo propter suam illimitationem quod sit substantialiter alia natura nulli alteri convenit.'

[20] Giles, *Lect.* 3. 11 (p. 188); for the eminence claim, see *Lect.* 3. 20 (p. 208).

[21] Not really a power, as we saw in the previous chapter—though William does sometimes talk of it in causal language, as we shall see in a moment.

suppositum in virtue of the divine essence; the divine essence explains how it is that a person who has that nature has the power to sustain a created nature:

(7.8) If [the assumption is compared] to the *per se* sustaining end term, then the *suppositum* is *per se* the assuming thing, since it is the *per se* end term of the assumption. If [the assumption is compared] to the formal basis (*rationem formalem*) of the sustaining, then the essence is the assuming thing, since it is through the essence—as through the formal basis—that the *suppositum* has the power (*virtus*) of sustaining a human nature.[22]

The opposing view here would be that a divine person has this S-property in virtue not of its essence but of its personal property. So William's argument is that the divine essence is the *ratio terminandi*, since the divine person's perfection is what allows it to sustain a created nature, and the divine person's perfection is had by him in virtue of the divine essence.

Why should William think this? He claims (following standard Augustinian Trinitarian thought) that, unlike the divine essence, the personal property of the divine *suppositum* is a *relation*, and thus the only perfections had by a divine *suppositum* in virtue of its personal property will be *relational* perfections. The divine essence, contrariwise, is non-relational; any non-relational perfections had by a divine person are had by it in virtue of its nature. The act of sustaining a human nature is a non-relational perfection. Thus it is had by the divine *suppositum* in virtue not of that *suppositum*'s personal property but in virtue of its essence:

(7.9) A relation in God does not imply a perfection simply speaking, [otherwise] some perfection would be in one person which is not in another—which is absurd. But the whole perfection arises from the essence itself, which is why, since the substantification in the case at hand results from perfection (as has frequently been said), the substantification originates from the essence containing the perfections and powers of all created *supposita*, rather than from the relation.[23]

How does this relate to Henry's position? Although William never states it explicitly, he would presumably want to claim that 'containing perfections' is a non-relational perfection, and thus one had by the divine person in virtue of its nature.

At one point, William suggests a further argument making use of his theology of divine indwelling:

(7.10) According to Bernard, *Ad Eugenium* book 5, the unity of the assumed nature with the Word is the greatest of all unities other than the union of the persons in the divine essence.

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[22] 'Si <comparetur assumptio> ad terminum sustentificantem per se, sic suppositum per se est assumens, quia per se terminat assumptionem. Si <comparetur assumptio> ad rationem formalem sustentificandi, sic essentia est assumens, quia per essentiam—sicut per rationem formalem—habet suppositum virtutem sustentificandi naturam humanam': William, *In Sent.* 168 (MS M₁, fo. 153^{rb va}); see MS V, fo. 114rb.

[23] 'Relatio in divinis non dicit perfectionem simpliciter <alioquin> aliqua perfectio esset in una persona quae non est in alia, quod est absurdum. Sed tota perfectio consurgit ex ipsa essentia; quare, cum ipsa substantificatio in proposito sit ex perfectione, sicut frequenter dictum est, oritur ipsa substantificatio per essentiam continentem perfectiones et virtutes omnium suppositorum creatorum, et non per relationem': William, *In Sent.* 169 (MS V, fo. 114va).

It is thus greater than the unity with creatures which is by general indwelling. But this unity [viz. by general indwelling] is impossible for a creature; therefore the greater unity which is by special indwelling is impossible for any creature. And [the hypostatic union] is like this, according to John of Damascus, book 3 chapter 3, where he claims that this union of Christ is by special indwelling.[24]

The argument here is again one from *analogy*; a more rigorous Aristotelian such as Scotus will, as we shall see, find little to be convinced of in William's argument. (I discuss Scotus's reaction to it in the next section, since Scotus understands it as a kind of omnipotence argument.)

4. THE *RATIO TERMINANDI* AS PERSONAL PROPERTY: RICHARD OF MIDDLETON

Richard, writing slightly earlier than William, proposes a wholly different account of all this, and Richard's suggestion is taken up and developed by Scotus. Strangely, William, whose position is severely threatened by Richard's view, does not attempt to refute this view. It is hard to avoid the impression that William simply does not know of Richard's theory.

The basic idea—that a divine person's capacity (as it were) for exemplifying human nature is to be explained by his personal property—can be found very loosely in Bonaventure:

(7.11) God . . . can be compared to a creature . . . under the description of a sustaining *suppositum*. . . . The comparison can pertain distinctly to one person since, even if one person shares in nature and power with another, nevertheless it is distinct from the other in *suppositum* and personal property.[25]

The idea here is that the divine essence and common power are irrelevant to the sustenance of a human nature. The divine person's S-property is had not in virtue of that person's essence, but in virtue of his personal property.

Richard builds on this view. The aim of the passage I quote here is to show how it is possible for just one person to become incarnate, without the other two persons thereby becoming incarnate:

(7.12) To see how this was possible, it should be borne in mind that both the essence and the relative property constitutive of a person belong to a person. The persons share in the

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[24] 'Unitas naturae assumptae cum Verbo est maxima inter omnes unitates praeter unionem personarum in divina essentia, secundum Bernardum ad Eugenium l. 5, et ita est maior unitas ista quam sit illa unitas quae est per communem illapsum in creaturas. Sed unitas ista repugnat creaturae; ergo maior unitas quae est per specialem illapsum repugnabit cuilibet creaturae, cuiusmodi est ista unitas secundum Damascenum l. 3 c. 3, ubi vult Damascenus quod {quod] ubi MS} haec unio Christi est per specialem illapsum': William, *In Sent.* 156 (MS V, fo. 105ᵐ). The Bernard reference (*Cons.* 5. 19 (*Opera*, vol. iii, ed. J. Leclerq and H. M. Rochais (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1963), 483, ll. 9–10) is a commonplace in medieval Christological discussion.

[25] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 2 concl. (iii. 13ᵃ).

essence, because [the essence] is numerically one in the three. But they are distinguished according to personal properties. Whence, if the person of the Son were incarnate in such a way that the human nature were united more immediately to him by reason of the essence than in virtue of the personal property, then he could not be incarnate unless the Father and Holy Spirit were simultaneously incarnate, because if many things, distinct among themselves, share in some one thing [x], then what pertains to them immediately by reason of the thing [viz. x] in which they share with the others, pertains too to the others. But the person of the Son was not incarnate in this way; rather, the human nature was more immediately and first united to the person of the Son of God by reason of the personal property than by reason of the essence.[26]

The idea is that if the S-property is the divine essence, or had by reason of the divine essence, then like the divine essence it will be numerically one. But if the S-property is numerically one in all three persons, then all three will be incarnate if any of them is. The argument is incomplete as it stands, since Richard makes no attempt to show why the numerical unity of the S-property entails the conclusion he supposes. Perhaps he just thinks that it is obvious, but in any case Scotus fleshes out Richard's intuition into a fully-fledged theory. There is another way in which Richard's argument is aporetic: he never explains how it relates to his claim, discussed in section 1 above, that it is the immensity of the divine person that allows it to become incarnate. William's argument is a genuine threat here, because William would claim that immensity is had in virtue of the divine essence. Again, Scotus sorts this out by denying the relevance of immensity at all.

5. DUNS SCOTUS AGAINST THE OMNIPOTENCE AND INFINITY ARGUMENTS

Scotus develops the view found in Richard, and from this perspective spends a great deal of time attempting to refute what I am calling the perfection argument. Before I discuss this, I will look at his brief refutations of the omnipotence and infinity arguments.

Against the omnipotence argument

Scotus's specific target is William of Ware. But one of the arguments Scotus refutes looks more like a version of Giles's omnipotence argument quoted in (7.2). According to Giles, a divine *suppositum* can take the place of any created *suppositum* in much the same way as the divine nature can take the place of any created nature. As we have seen, Giles argues that the second of these possibilities—that of the divine nature taking the place of any created nature—is true in the sense that the divine nature can cause directly anything which a created nature can cause. Scotus's refutation links the possibility of these relations of 'taking the place of' to

[26] Richard, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 2 (iii. 6ᵇ).

God's perfection. His aim is to show that the possibility of a divine person's being able to take the place of a created person cannot be linked to the question of the person's perfection—or at least, that it cannot be linked in the way suggested by Giles. Scotus's attack focuses on the relevant sense of 'take the place of'. The argument in Scotus is extremely compressed, and I try to spell out here in a bit more detail what I think Scotus is trying to get at. Scotus (implicitly) pinpoints at least two different senses of 'take the place of': a *causal* one, and one which we might label *ontological*. In the causal sense of 'take the place of', x takes the place of y if x causes an effect which would otherwise have been caused by y. In the ontological sense of 'take the place of', x takes the place of y if x plays a role in the structure of a substance (say, as a component part) which would otherwise have been played by y. Clearly, in the case of the hypostatic union, the relevant sense of 'takes the place of' is the ontological one, not the causal one. The divine *suppositum* does not have any causal role in the assumption of his human nature (on this, see Chapter 6 above). He does, on the other hand, have an ontological role, and he takes the place of a created *suppositum* by playing the same role in the structure of a material substance as would have been played by the created *suppositum*.

Scotus uses this insight to show that Giles's analogy is irrelevant. In Giles's analogy, the relevant sense of 'takes the place of' in the relation between divine and human *supposita* is the *ontological* one. But it is not true that the divine nature can take the place of a human nature in this ontological sense. As Scotus puts it,

(7.13) The divine essence cannot be, from its perfection, the nature of any created person, such that it might take the place of a created nature which (nevertheless) it contains virtually.[27]

So the analogy cannot be used to establish that a divine *suppositum* can ontologically take the place of a created *suppositum*.

Scotus argues similarly against William's indwelling argument (see (7.10) above). God's general indwelling is causal; his special indwelling in the assumed nature is not causal but rather 'like the sustenance . . . of an accident by its subject'. So the analogy is irrelevant.[28]

Against the infinity argument

Against the infinity argument—as found in (7.1), (7.3), and part of (7.5)—Scotus reasons that a divine person is infinite not in virtue of his personal property but in virtue of his essence. Like William, Scotus denies that the personal property can be a pure perfection since, if it were, each person would have a perfection not had by the others.[29] As Scotus understands the infinity argument, it thus entails that a divine person has his S-property in virtue of his (infinite) essence, and not in virtue of his personal property. But Scotus holds—for reasons that I discuss in the next

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[27] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 7).   [28] Ibid. 3. 1. 4, n. 2 (Wadding, vii. 47).
[29] See e.g. Scotus, *Quod.* 5, nn. 13–14 (Wadding, xii. 128–9; Alluntis and Wolter, 118–20 (nn. 5. 30–5. 32)); *Ord.* 3. 1. 4, n. 2 (Wadding, vii. 47).

section—that it is false that a person has his S-property in virtue of the divine essence. So infinity cannot explain a person's possession of an S-property.[30]

Scotus also rejects the first stage of Henry's argument, namely the claim that infinity is necessary for possession of an S-property. I discuss this at the very beginning of section 7 below.

6. DUNS SCOTUS AGAINST THE PERFECTION ARGUMENT

Scotus's main energies are targeted on William's version of the perfection argument (7.7). According to Scotus, the basic belief of those who hold the perfection argument is that a divine person can take the place of a created person in virtue of the divine person's containing all created perfections. Scotus agrees with William that a divine person contains created perfections not in virtue of its personal property but in virtue of its having the divine essence.[31] But he tries to show that it is not possible for the divine essence to be the S-property, or to be that in virtue of which a person possesses an S-property. If the divine person contains created perfections in virtue of his essence, and if the essence cannot be the S-property, or that in virtue of which a person possesses an S-property, then containing created perfections cannot be the S-property or that in virtue of which a person possesses an S-property.

Before I look in detail at the way in which Scotus uses the basic claim that a divine person contains created perfections in virtue of having the divine essence, I would like to look at the reasons Scotus might have for accepting it. Suppose, Scotus argues, that a divine person contains the perfections of created *supposita* in virtue of its personal property. There are infinitely many possible such created *supposita*. So the divine person will contain, in virtue of its personal property, infinitely many perfections. Containing infinitely many perfections entails being infinite. And for an object x to contain infinitely many perfections in virtue of a property F entails that x is infinite in virtue of F. (Being F is sufficient for being infinite; it does not, of course, have to be necessary.) Furthermore, any such property—one in virtue of which something is infinite—is a pure perfection.[32] Thus, on the view that Scotus wants to reject, the personal property of a divine person is a pure perfection. But both Scotus and William agree that the personal property of a divine person is not a pure perfection (for Scotus's acceptance of this, see section 5 above). Thus, it cannot be that property in virtue of which a divine person contains created perfections.[33]

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[30] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 4, n. 2 (Wadding, vii. 47). On the other hand, infinity is no block on assumption: 'The infinite does not have in itself any being formally, or eminently, or virtually, and thus the Word can add to himself that, in the way in which he does not contain human nature, that nature can depend on the Word': Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1 n. 16 (Wadding, vii. 25).

[31] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 5, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 55), referring to 3. 1. 1, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 7).

[32] On the pure perfections, see my *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 31–2.

[33] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 7–8); see also Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 5 (Wadding, xii. 495; Alluntis and Wolter, 430–1 (nn. 19. 46, 19. 48)).

Given that the divine person does not contain created perfections in virtue of his personal property, Scotus concludes that his basic claim—that the divine person contains such perfections in virtue of his having the divine essence—is true. All of this has an obvious Christological bearing which Scotus draws out. According to the perfection argument, the divine person can sustain a created nature in virtue of his containing created perfections. Since he contains created perfections in virtue of his having the divine essence, it will follow, according to the adherent of the perfection argument, that the divine person can hypostatically sustain a created nature —he has the S-property—in virtue of his having the divine essence.[34] Scotus believes that it is false that the divine essence is that property of the divine person in virtue of which he can sustain a created nature, and spends some time developing a rather complex argument to this effect.

Scotus argues, like Richard, that there are some analogies between sustaining a created nature and divine causality. (Scotus would not want to push these analogies too far, since, as we saw in Chapter 6, he believes that hypostatically sustaining a created nature is not at all a *causal* sort of state.) Specifically, Scotus likens the possession of an S-property to the possession of a causal power. And an exploration of the nature of God's causal powers leads Scotus to his conclusion that it is not in virtue of possessing the divine essence that a divine person can sustain a created nature.[35]

To see how Scotus gets the conclusion, we need to look closely at what he says about the relevant feature of God's causal powers. Basically, Scotus argues that the three divine persons—because of the their Trinitarian nature (as three exemplifications of numerically one indivisible essence)—share numerically one and the same set of causal powers, such that any given external action is brought about in virtue of just numerically one causal power.[36] But the possession of a causal power by an object x is sufficient for any action brought about by means of that power to be attributed to x. Since all three divine persons possess numerically one and the same causal power with regard to any external action, every external action is attributed to every divine person:

(7.14) [A divine person] does not create except in so far as he has the power for creating; and on account of this, whoever has the formal power of creating, creates. Thus it is necessary for the three persons to create all together.[37]

Scotus argues—developing suggestions in Richard—that sustaining a human nature is analogous to this. If a divine person x possesses an S-property in virtue of the divine essence, then any actual hypostatic sustenance that obtains in virtue of the

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[34] Scotus, *Ord*. 3. 1. 5, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 55); we saw in section 3 how William defends this argument.
[35] Scotus, *Ord*. 3. 1. 5, n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 55); see *Quod*. 19, n. 2 (Wadding, xii. 492; Alluntis and Wolter, 420 (n. 19. 8)).
[36] Scotus, *Ord*. 3. 1. 5, n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 55); see *Quod*. 8, n. 6 (Wadding, xii. 205–6; Alluntis and Wolter, 201–2 (n. 8. 10)).
[37] Scotus, *Ord*. 3. 1. 5, n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 55).

S-property must be attributed to x. On the perfection argument, a divine person possesses such a property in virtue of its having the divine essence. Thus, having the divine essence is sufficient for the possession of the relevant property. But all three persons have the divine essence. Hence all three possess the numerically singular property in virtue of which a created nature can be hypostatically sustained. Possession of the property, however, is sufficient for any actual hypostatic sustenance to be attributed to any object possessing this S-property.

Scotus is presumably thinking that actual hypostatic sustenance is just (in some sense) the *activation* of the S-property. Since the divine essence is numerically one, and since the S-property is (in effect) a feature of the divine essence, the S-property will be numerically one, an immanent universal, repeated in each divine person. So supposing that the S-property is activated in one person, it will be activated in all; so all three divine persons will become incarnate on the assumption of a dependent human nature. But it is factually false that all three persons become incarnate. So the perfection argument must be false.[38]

The presupposition in Scotus's argument is that the divine essence, and any property possessed by a divine person in virtue of this essence, is *numerically one* in all three divine persons. So on the perfection argument the S-property had by the Son is numerically identical with the S-property had by Father and Spirit. The gist of Scotus's criticism of William is that, if William is right in supposing that its S-property belongs to a divine person in virtue of the divine essence, it will be impossible to explain how one person can become incarnate without the other two likewise becoming incarnate. And the reason for this is that the divine essence, and thus any S-property had in virtue of the essence, is numerically one, not distinct in each person that has it.

Scotus's refutation of William has a problem, in the shape of William's argument that the power to sustain a nature is a perfection. As a perfection, it is necessarily had (if at all) in virtue of the divine essence. Personal properties, after all, are not perfections, and thus not the sorts of things in virtue of which persons could possess perfections (such as the power to sustain a nature). Scotus is aware of this argument of William's, and offers a reply. He agrees with William that the personal property of a divine person is not itself a perfection, and not the sort of thing in virtue of which a person could possess a perfection. But he denies that the possession of the S-property is a perfection:

(7.15) Hypostatic entity is not that by which something is formally perfected but that according to which [a person] receives perfection or at least ends up with the perfection received. And in this sense, one would have to deny this statement 'It is necessary that the term supporting the dependence be perfect,' for it suffices that the imperfection that marks the dependence be incompatible with it. . . . Whatever can be really identical with something that is

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[38] Ibid. For a discussion and defence of Scotus's theory of the numerical identity of any property had by different *supposita* in virtue of an immanent universal, see my 'Divisibility, Communicability, and Predicability in Duns Scotus's Theories of the Common Nature', forthcoming.

simply perfect cannot in any way be imperfect and still it is not necessary that it be simply perfect if we consider it precisely in its formal meaning.[39]

The idea is not that the S-property is an imperfection, but that it is not that in virtue of which a person is perfect. All possession of the S-property requires is the lack of the imperfection of dependence.

As we shall see in the next section, Scotus argues in accordance with (7.15) that a divine person's independence—a feature explained by his *personal property*—is sufficient for his possessing an S-property. Arguing in this way, without appeal to the divine essence, allows each person's S-property to be *numerically distinct* from any other person's S-property. Denying that possession of an S-property is a perfection clears the way for Scotus's own theory.

7. THE INDEPENDENCE ARGUMENT: DUNS SCOTUS

A prima facie *presupposition*

Thus far, Scotus has attempted to refute the view that the divine essence could be a *sufficient* condition for possession of an S-property. But his arguments leave untouched the view that the divine essence could be a *necessary* condition for possession of an S-property. One way to show that the divine essence is not a necessary condition for possession of an S-property is to show that God could bring it about that a created *suppositum* could hypostatically sustain, in addition to its own nature, a nature that is not its own. As I will show below, Scotus's argument does not presuppose this possibility, in the sense that he accepts a further principle that would allow him to conclude that the divine essence cannot be a necessary condition for possession of an S-property. But I will briefly consider Scotus's views on the possibility of a created *suppositum*'s sustaining a nature that is not its own, by way of a continuation of the ground-clearing exercise that I began in the previous section.

Scotus's opponent is Henry of Ghent. As we saw above, Henry claims that infinity is a necessary condition for possessing an S-property. No created *suppositum* is infinite; therefore no created *suppositum* can possess an S-property. Scotus is not unequivocal in his rejection of this view—the body of his discussion shows merely that arguments in favour of Henry's view are not decisive,[40] and he replies at the end of the article to arguments on both sides of the debate.[41] So it looks to me as though the discussion in the main body tends to the view that God can bring it about that a created *suppositum* can in principle sustain a nature that is not its own. Scotus's residual doubts on the matter seem to have more to do with his being unsure whether there are two created natures of different kinds whose essential properties are not

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[39] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 9 (Wadding, xii. 498; Alluntis and Wolter, 426–7 (nn. 19. 31–19. 32)); see *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 7), where Scotus specifically directs a similar objection to William.
[40] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 4, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 50).   [41] Ibid. 3. 1. 4, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 50).

contradictory. (Since, as we shall see in Chapter 8, Scotus holds that it is possible for one and the same person to exemplify divine and human attributes even if these attributes are on the face of it contradictory, Scotus should not be too worried about the contradictoriness of created attributes: in principle he should regard himself as having a solution to it.)

Scotus's solution to Henry's argument is in effect just to show that there is no reason to suppose that infinity is a necessary condition for possession of an S-property. As we shall see in Chapter 15, Scotus generally supposes that a state of affairs is logically possible if (and only if) it involves no contradiction: if (and only if), in other words, its components are compossible. His basic strategy against Henry is to show that a created *suppositum*'s sustaining a nature that is not its own does not appear in principle to involve any more incompossibility than an uncreated *suppositum*'s sustaining a nature that is not its own.[42] And if this is the case, possession of the (infinite) divine essence is not a necessary condition for being incarnate. (Recall that Henry's argument in (7.5) does not suggest a reason why created personhood is determined to just one nature.)

The theory

Scotus's basic claim is very simple. A divine person's S-property has nothing to do with that person's containing created perfections. Rather, all that is required for sustenance is *independent* existence. (Independent existence is necessary for sustenance, and sufficient for the possibility of sustenance.) Independence is had in virtue of the personal property of a divine person. So the personal property of this person is his S-property. Scotus agrees with Richard that a divine person's S-property is had not in virtue of that person's essence, but in virtue of his personal property. As we have seen, Scotus rejects the possibility that a person's S-property could derive in any sense from his essence—whether as a necessary or as a sufficient condition for the S-property. So, Scotus reasons, the S-property must derive from the person's personal property.[43]

Scotus tries to specify just which of the features that a divine person gains from its personal property can explain the possession of an S-property:

(7.16) I do not argue from the perfection of personal entity, as if it contains virtually any created personhood, but [I argue rather] from the fact that the personal entity is independent. The independent as such can be the end term of the dependence of another (which naturally has such an end term) on it. This dependence naturally has person, and not nature, as its end term; therefore an independent divine person can sufficiently be the end term of such dependence of a created nature on it.[44]

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[42] 'If therefore there is found no reason for the impossibility of a created *suppositum*'s being able to sustain a nature that is extrinsic to it—if God brings about the dependence in the nature thus united and sustained, and [the sustenance] in the *suppositum* of the other nature—then it should not be posited to be impossible without any reason': Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 4, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 50). I will return to another of Scotus's arguments at the end of this section.

[43] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 3 (Wadding, xii. 492–3; Alluntis and Wolter, 420–1 (n. 19. 10)).

[44] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 7).

The crucial feature here is that the *independence* of the divine person is necessary and sufficient for the possibility of its becoming incarnate. Scotus's reason for this is that the relation is one of dependence; and he supposes that dependence relations are ordered such that a dependent object depends on one which is in some relevant sense independent. Independence, as we shall see in a moment, derives from the person's personal property. Thus, a person's S-property is ultimately possessed in virtue of his personal property—indeed, Scotus speaks as though the S-property just *is* the personal property, and I shall not be too careful about distinguishing the usages here.[45]

Why believe that a divine person's independence derives from his personal property and not from the divine essence? The answer is simple: being independent (in the relevant sense) and being a *suppositum* are equivalent. So whatever makes something a *suppositum* (in this case, its personal property) also makes it independent. For Scotus, however, the problem (as so often in this writer) admits only of a more complicated solution:

(7.17) Whatever formally excludes imperfection also formally rules out any kind of dependence. . . . This is evident since dependence is either formally imperfection or has imperfection as a necessary adjunct. Now the hypostatic entity of the Son formally excludes imperfection, and is for him the formal ground why it cannot be present. For there is no feature of the divine reality that is compatible with imperfection. Otherwise it would be possible for imperfection to characterize that feature.[46]

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[45] Scotus sometimes speaks as though the S-property does not merely explain how it is that a divine person is able to exemplify a created nature: he speaks as though it is itself the proper end term of the nature's dependence. Thus, the personal property of the Son is not merely that in virtue of which the Son can sustain human nature: it is itself the proper end term of the relation of dependence: see e.g. *Ord*. 3. 1. 5, n. 1 (Wadding, vii. 52), where Scotus slips easily between these two different ways of speaking: 'The fifth [question] . . . asks . . . about the formal end term of the Incarnation: namely, whether the formal basis for the terminating of the union of the human nature to the Word is his relative property.' Nothing turns on this for the purposes of my discussion here. Underlying the equivocation is a principle (F) which I discuss in Ch. 10 below. According to (F), if a form is that in virtue of which a substance acts in a certain way, then the form itself must act in that way. Analogously, if a property is that in virtue of which a person can sustain a created nature, then the property itself is what ultimately sustains the nature. This principle perhaps helps explain why Scotus is reluctant to think of the essence and the personal property as jointly necessary conditions for hypostatic sustenance, and certainly explains why he rejects the view, outlined in n. 1 above, that the divine essence could be the S-property and the personal property of the Son a *sine qua non* condition. This latter claim amounts to the assertion that the divine essence is the end term of dependence—and in this case, it is hard to see what role the personal property of the Son could play. After all, it is hard to think of the dependent nature having a dependence relation on the essence that is somehow *not* a dependence relation on the essence (in so far as it is in fact a relation of dependence on the person of the Son, rather than on the Father or Spirit: recall that the divine essence exists equally in each person). The view that the divine essence is the proper end term of the union is the divine essence, and that the personal property is some sort of *sine qua non* conditions for this is—as far as I am aware—first found in Durandus of St Pourçain, writing in the second decade of the fourteenth century: see Durandus, *In Sent*. 3. 1. 2, nn. 7–13 ((Antwerp, 1567), 472ᵇ–473ᵇ). Perhaps the view represents an attempt to clarify the standard Thomist view found in (6.1) above.

[46] Scotus, *Quod*. 19, n. 4 (Wadding, xii. 495; Alluntis and Wolter, 422 (n. 19. 14)).

According to Scotus, then, dependence entails imperfection. But the argument is problematic, because it does not show that the divine essence cannot be that which 'formally rules out any kind of dependence'. After all, the divine essence as much as the personal property 'formally excludes imperfection'.[47] The objection is important. For if Scotus cannot show us why it is not the case that independence pertains to a divine person in virtue of his having the divine essence, he will be unable to show that a person's S-property is not had in virtue of the divine essence. And in this case his own position will be open to all the criticisms he levelled at William's theory. Still, I have tried to indicate that it is in fact obvious that independence pertains to the divine person in virtue of his personal property, not in virtue of his essence, and so I am not going to worry further about the inadequacy of (7.17).

In the *Quodlibet*, Scotus also offers a series of arguments against his claim that independence is the relevant immediate explanation for the possession of an S-property.[48] On the face of it, the arguments will not in themselves touch Scotus's claim that a person's S-property is had by it not in virtue of its essence but in virtue of its personal property. But on closer inspection they might do considerable damage to this claim. After all, what relevant explanatory feature other than independence could derive from a personal property? A consideration of the most important reply will allow us to see more clearly why Scotus believes that the S-property is sufficiently explained by the personal property rather than the essence.

According to the objection, a person's S-property is sufficient for the possibility of that person's sustaining a nature that is not essential to it. But independence does not seem to be such a property. After all, I am independent, but there are all sorts of dependencies that I cannot sustain.[49] Given this, Scotus's objector argues that a person's S-property must include both independence and some sort of additional perfection. And given that this additional feature is a perfection, it must belong to a person in virtue of its essence, and furthermore, it must belong to a person in virtue of its possession of the divine essence, along the lines suggested by William. More precisely, then, possession of independence and of the divine essence are both necessary and jointly sufficient for possession of an S-property.[50]

Scotus's reply is difficult to disentangle. Basically, he argues that I (for example) can sustain the dependencies of any accident that 'can by nature inhere in' me.[51] To this non-explanatory reply,[52] Scotus adds a proposition which he holds to be true:

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[47] See also *Quod.* 19, nn. 5, 9 (Wadding, xii. 495, 498; Alluntis and Wolter, 423, 426–7 (nn. 19. 20 and 19. 32)) for an objection and reply, the reply of which (text (7.16)) I discuss briefly above.

[48] I add 'immediate' here because, as we have seen, independence in turn derives from the personal property of the divine person.

[49] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 5 (Wadding, xii. 495; Alluntis and Wolter, 422 (nn. 19. 15–19. 16)).

[50] Ibid. 19, n. 5 (Wadding, xii. 495; Alluntis and Wolter, 423 (n. 19. 19)).

[51] Ibid. 19, n. 8 (Wadding, xii. 497; Alluntis and Wolter, 425 (n. 19. 24)).

[52] 'Non-explanatory' since it does not provide any sort of principled way of determining just which accidents should be included in the set of accidents which can inhere by nature in me.

(7.18) This seems even more probable, 'Something independent in every respect can support any dependent whatsoever, or at least can do so with regard to some [i.e. not every] dependent and with respect to some form of dependence.'[53]

Clearly, if this claim is true, it will provide Scotus with a way of defusing the objections to his view. Irrespective of my capacity for sustaining various sorts of accident, the independence of a divine person is sufficient for his being able hypostatically to sustain any created nature. And this, in turn, is understood by Scotus to provide him with a way of answering his objector's assertion that perfection is required for this sort of sustenance:

(7.19) To support any dependence in general cannot be repugnant to something completely independent, either by reason of its independence or in virtue of something conjoined to it.[54]

The idea is that perfection is in itself irrelevant to the capacity that a completely independent object might have for sustaining a nature. The only explanatorily relevant feature is complete independence, and this feature is had by a person in virtue of his personal property.

Underlying the objection and reply is the thought that independence is what allows something to be an (ultimate) subject of properties, and thus to be the (ultimate) end term of the dependence of such properties. But the *nature* of the thing determines the *kind* of properties that a substance can sustain. Scotus's point is that for something that is completely independent—such as a divine person—the nature of that thing can place no blocks on the kind of properties that it can sustain. It is not clear to me why Scotus should think this. Presumably Scotus means us to understand that the divine nature can place no blocks except in cases where sustaining a certain sort of property would necessarily lead to imperfection—for example sustaining a property that entails *moral* badness. (Perhaps we should recall the doctrine of the *privatio boni*. Sustaining a lack is not sustaining anything—hence the divine person's inability to exemplify moral badness is not a counter-instance to the claim that the completely independent divine person can sustain any sort of dependence.)

If Scotus's argument is successful—if, in other words, both the premiss stated in (7.19) is true and a divine person has complete independence in virtue of his personal property[55]—then Scotus can hold both that the possession of the divine essence is not in itself a necessary condition for the possession of an S-property,

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[53] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 6 (Wadding, xii. 497; Alluntis and Wolter, 424 (n. 19. 21)). I gloss 'some' as 'not every', otherwise the passage might appear to contradict itself. What Scotus means is that any dependent can be supported by that which is independent in every respect, although, of course, certain combinations of dependent object may be incompatible with each other.

[54] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 9 (Wadding, xii. 498; Alluntis and Wolter, 425–6 (n. 19. 28)).

[55] As we will see in Ch. 15, Scotus believes that divine persons are completely independent in the sense that dependence is logically incompossible with them. Presumably, he believes that this complete independence is a result of each divine person's personal property, rather than the result of the divine essence as such.

and that created *supposita* cannot become incarnate. For the argument is that complete independence is sufficient for the possession of an S-property, and that the complete independence of a divine person is explained by his personal property and not by his essence. Still, Scotus rightly does not think that the argument is sufficient to show that a created person could not become incarnate. Thus, it does not show that complete independence is necessary for becoming incarnate, even if it is sufficient. When discussing the possibility of a created *suppositum*'s becoming incarnate, Scotus notes that a *suppositum* does not need to be independent in every respect in order to become incarnate. After all, Scotus argues, created *supposita* invariably support the dependence of accidents, and the independence required for this is compatible with causal dependence on God. So hypostatic sustenance—in this case, supporting accidents—does not require independence in every respect. And Scotus does not seem to regard the sustenance of accidental properties as in principle different from the sustenance of kind-natures. So complete independence does not appear to be necessary for possession of an S-property, even if it is sufficient.[56]

Overall, Scotus's theory will allow him to explain how only one person can become incarnate—something which I would judge Scotus successfully to have shown to be a real difficulty for his opponents. The relevant feature of the personal properties of the divine persons—and of any property had in virtue of a personal property, such as an S-property—is that such properties are numerically many. The S-property of the Father is *numerically distinct* from the S-property of the Son, just as the personal property of the Father is numerically distinct from the personal property of the Son. This allows Scotus to explain how one divine person can be incarnate without another. The 'activation' of the Son's S-property leaves the S-property of the Father untouched; conversely, the 'activation' of the Father's S-property leaves the S-property of the Son untouched. But Scotus's position raises a difficulty. The personal properties of the Father and Son are in some sense different *sorts* of thing. The two S-properties, contrariwise, appear to be indiscernible. I will examine Scotus's answer to this difficulty in the next subsection.

[56] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 4, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 50). The *Quodlibet* account offers a further argument to identify a divine person's S-property: see Scotus, *Quod.* 19, nn. 11–14 (Wadding, xii. 502–4; Alluntis and Wolter, 427–30 (nn. 19. 33–19. 45)). The basic argument is that the divine person is *incommunicable*, and that incommunicability is sufficient for the possibility of being incarnate: Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 11 (Wadding, xii. 502; Alluntis and Wolter, 427 (n. 19. 33)). The property of incommunicability is of several different sorts. (I return to this in later chapters.) Here, however, it is clear that the sort Scotus has in mind is exactly equivalent to independence: 'What it means for that nature [viz. the human] to be actually dependent upon a *suppositum* then is simply that it be communicated to this as its *suppositum*': Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 11 (Wadding, xii. 502; Alluntis and Wolter, 427 (n. 19. 34)); conversely, incommunicability is equivalent (here) to independence. So the argument adds nothing of substance to the argument from the independence of the divine *suppositum*. (The argument itself contains much of interest that I discuss elsewhere, in Parts I and IV. As I shall show below, Scotus does not in fact believe that independence and incommunicability are in every respect the same property, since he believes that there is a sense in which the divine essence is both communicable and independent. I will explain below just what Scotus conceives the difference between these two concepts to be.)

A Trinitarian difficulty

In fact, the difficulty is even greater than I just suggested. According to William of Ware, the possibility of incarnation requires as a necessary condition a divine person's having his S-property in virtue of the divine essence. The problem for Scotus is that a divine personal property is not common to the three persons. Something possessed by the Son in virtue of his personal property is not *eo ipso* possessed by the other two persons; indeed, one might be inclined to suppose that if the Son possesses his S-property in virtue of his personal property, this will be sufficient to *prevent* any other divine person possessing an S-property. (Things possessed by a divine person in virtue of his personal property are proper to that person.)

What Scotus needs to be able to do is find out a way in which each of the persons can possess a property in virtue not of the divine essence but precisely of the person's personal properties. Put another way, since the S-property is the same in kind in each person, what Scotus needs is a way in which such a property can nevertheless be such that a numerically different instance of the property exists in each divine person.

Scotus does not address this issue specifically in relation to the possession of an S-property. But he does address the problem in a different context. There is, after all, a sense in which *being a person* is a univocal property possessed by all three persons in virtue not of the divine essence but of their personal properties. Scotus spends some time trying to show how the three persons' possession of this property does not entail that the property is had by them in virtue of the divine essence. Scotus could argue the same case, *mutatis mutandis*, for the persons' possession of their S-properties. As we shall see, the S-property will, on this showing, have to be a negation. And this will of course fit exactly with Scotus's claim that the S-property is to be identified as incommunicability or independence.

Scotus was not the only medieval to discuss this question. At issue is the univocity of the concept of person or hypostasis when ascribed to the three divine persons. On the face of it, the univocity of this concept would seem to entail that it belongs to the divine nature, since one and the same attribute would be somehow shared by the three divine persons—and this is what it means for a divine attribute to be essential. As Aquinas puts it,

(7.20) A difficulty arises about the signification of this noun 'person' in God, since it is predicated in the plural of the three persons, which is not the nature of nouns signifying [the divine] essence.[57] . . . The manner of speaking shows that the noun 'person' is common to the three, since we say 'three persons', just as when we say 'three men' we show that 'man' is common to the three. But it is clear that this [use of 'person'] is not real commonness (*communitas rei*), in the way that one essence is common to three, since it would then follow that there was one person of the three, just as there is one essence.[58]

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[57] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 29. 4 c (i/1. 159ᵃ).   [58] Ibid. 1. 30. 4 c (i/1. 163ᵇ).

Aquinas's reply is neat enough:

(7.21) We should say that even in human beings the noun 'person' is common by a conceptual commonness (*communitate rationis*) not as genus and species [are common by conceptual commonness] but as a 'vague individual'. . . . A vague individual, such as 'some man', signifies a common nature with the determinate mode of existing that belongs to singulars, namely that it exists in itself and distinct from others. . . . So the noun 'person' is imposed to signify not the individual considered as a nature (*ex parte naturae*), but as a thing subsisting in such a nature.[59]

We would say that a vague individual is a subject variable. And this seems clear enough. Calling something an individual does not mean that 'being an individual' is a genuine property of the thing, or that there is a 'form of individuality' that all individuals share. Its being individual is, as such, a purely conceptual or logical matter.

Scotus answers rather differently. He objects strongly to the claim, associated particularly with Henry of Ghent, that 'person' signifies merely a second intention, that is, a logical object. Scotus offers a powerful argument in favour of Henry's position. If 'person' signified something extra-mental, then it would have to signify a universal or common nature—personhood—really shared by all things of which 'person' is predicated. Each divine person would then have two natures: divinity and personality. So 'person' must signify a logical object—a person is in fact merely a logical subject of predication.[60]

Scotus rejects this view, since it seems to him that we can genuinely abstract something from individual persons that is in some sense common to them. After all, persons are in some sense constituted by their haecceities or (in the case of divine persons) their mutual relations. We can certainly abstract the notion of relation easily enough from the divine persons. And, Scotus argues:

(7.22) Whenever something common of first intention can be abstracted from the formal constitutive features of things, then by the same token, or even *a fortiori*, something can be abstracted from the thing constituted [by the feature].[61]

How does Scotus deal with the worry that anything thus abstracted is a common nature? According to Scotus, here following Henry of Ghent, being the sort of thing to which properties and natures are properly ultimately attributed involves satisfying merely a negative condition: being *incommunicable*.[62] (The condition comes from Richard of St Victor, who according to Scotus defines 'person' as 'the

[59] Ibid.

[60] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 23. un., n. 7 (Vatican, v. 380–1): the argument is constructed from certain claims that Henry makes at *SQ* 53. 7 arg. 2 and c (2 vols. (Paris, 1520), ii. fo. 69ʳ ᵛᴬᴮ, 70ʳ ᵛII); *SQ* 53. 8 arg. 1 and ad 1 (ii. fo. 71ʳM, 71ʳR); *Quod.* 4. 4. c (Paris, i. 91ᵛC); *Quod.* 7. 8 c (Paris, i. 262ᵛV–3ʳX), and ultimately derives from John of Damascus, *De Fide Orth.* 48 (Kotter, 116; Buytaert, 180).

[61] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 23. un., n. 9 (Vatican, v. 351).

[62] Ibid. 1. 23. un., n. 15 (Vatican, v. 357). As we shall see in Ch. 12 below, Henry probably thinks that incommunicability in the required sense results from the presence of *esse*—or of some other positive mode—in a nature. The point that Scotus is trying to make is that if we set about defining what exactly a person is (and not: how it is constituted), we will need to give a definition that contains merely negative components.

incommunicable existence of an intellectual nature'[63]—as Scotus puts it, 'expounding or correcting' Boethius's 'individual substance of rational nature'.[64]) As Scotus understands this incommunicability, it involves two different negative conditions: not being repeatable (immanent universals and common natures are in some sense repeatable; persons are not), and not being a form of something (the human soul, for example, is a form; persons are not).[65] These sorts of negations are not things or forms that can be *really shared* by extra-mental objects. But this does not mean that the significate of 'person' is a merely logical object: 'person' picks out a conceptual commonality had by real objects—that is, things that are *really* incommunicable in the relevant ways.[66]

As we have seen, Scotus identifies the S-property as independence or incommunicability. So it turns out on inspection that the S-property is just a negation. And this allows Scotus to explain how it can be predicated of all three divine persons without entailing that it is a property had in virtue of the divine essence.[67]

The debate that I have been describing in this chapter gives the impression of being incomplete—loose ends need to be tied up, and there is a real sense of a discussion that is still ongoing at the death of Scotus. Indeed, the material I have been looking at here constitutes the only area of Christological speculation where real

[63] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 23. un., n. 15 (Vatican, v. 356). The definition is a composite of different claims from Richard: see Richard, *De Trin.* 4. 22 (ed. Jean Ribaillier, Textes Philosophiques du Moyen Age, 6 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1958), 188) and 4. 23 (p. 188).

[64] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 23. un., n. 15 (Vatican, v. 356), referring to Boethius, *De Per.* 3 (p. 85).

[65] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 23. un., n. 16 (Vatican, v. 357); the issue is discussed in more detail at *Ord.* 1. 2. 2. 1–4, nn. 379–80 (Vatican, ii. 345–6). As we shall see in Ch. 15, Scotus uses another sense of 'incommunicable' in his discussion of the Incarnation: something is incommunicable if it is hypostatically *independent*. This sense should be clearly distinguished from the sort of *unrepeatability* that Scotus is focusing on in the passages under discussion here. See too n. 56 above.

[66] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 23. un., n. 20 (Vatican, v. 360).

[67] Scotus believes that the divine essence is an individual—a one-of-many—and he also holds that it is subsistent in the restricted sense of being a self-individuated particular that does not inhere in, or depend on, anything else. In this sense, the divine essence is independent—and indeed completely so. So it is worth considering whether the divine essence might itself possess an S-property—not in the sense of being that in virtue of which each divine person has an S-property, but in the sense of itself being possibly incarnate. Scotus is clear that the divine essence does indeed possess an S-property in this way—though, of course, this S-property is numerically distinct from any of the S-properties of the divine persons. In the previous chapter, I discussed the general medieval agreement that God could become incarnate even supposing—counterpossibly—that Unitarianism is true. Scotus goes rather further than this, arguing that the divine essence can become incarnate even supposing that Trinitarianism is true. The divine essence is independent; what it lacks is incommunicability, since it is a one-of-many, repeatable in its different instances. But, as we saw above, Scotus holds that independence is necessary and sufficient for the possession of an S-property. So the divine essence possesses an S-property of its own: see Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 2, n. 6 (Wadding, vii. 37). In what sense is the divine essence independent? Scotus holds that, unlike creaturely properties, the divine essence does not in any sense require the divine persons for its existence; if, counterpossibly, there were no divine persons—no Father, Son, or Spirit— the divine essence would still exist: 'That the essence, a *per se* existent, can be the proximate end term of the union is shown, because it does not have any *esse* from a person, but is naturally prior to its being in a person, and it gives *esse* to the person. The nature is in itself a "this", and a *per se* subsistent, though not incommunicably': Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 2, n. 6 (Wadding, vii. 37).

progress was made in the period after that which I am focusing on here—the only area, that is to say, where substantive new solutions were proposed in subsequent decades. John Baconthorpe, for example, writing in or just before 1325 and always a reliable guide to contemporary debate, gives, in addition to the view of Scotus, different (and novel) opinions from three thinkers of the 1310s (including Durandus and Peter Aureol), as well has his own view, different again from these. And he devotes considerable space to the refutation of Scotus's view.[68]

The seemingly obscure discussion that I have focused on in this chapter has a perhaps surprising consequence for modern dogmatic theology. The medievals all hold that the concept of person is univocal to the three divine persons. They thus accept something that according to Karl Rahner is a necessary presupposition for the belief—a belief which Rahner considers to be false—that the Father or the Spirit could be incarnate instead of—or as well as—the Son.[69] In fact, the medievals all hold that there is no logical incoherence in holding this belief.[70] If the standard medieval view is true—that the S-property is had in virtue of the divine essence— then it will be clear that Rahner is wrong, since an S-property, like the divine essence, will be had by every divine person. Scotus's view is somewhat more complicated, and in principle a Scotist view could be formulated that would allow Rahner to block the possible incarnation of Father or Spirit. After all, on Scotus's view the S-property is had in virtue of the personal property, and thus, in principle, it may be possible to argue that the S-property is uniquely the Son's personal property. It seems to me that Rahner's view is false, and so the capacity of Scotus's view for supporting Rahner will not be an advantage. In any case, Scotus believes that unqualified independence is sufficient for the possession of an S-property (and thus that every divine person possesses an S-property, and can therefore become incarn- ate); someone adopting Rahner's view would still need to show why Scotus is wrong about this.

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[68] Baconthorpe, *In Sent*. 3. 2. 2. 1 (2 vols. (Cremona, 1618), ii. 18ᵃ–23ᵇ). Interestingly, the debate that Baconthorpe describes assumes—with Scotus—that the S-property will be the proper end term of the assumed nature's dependence: in accordance with Scotus's principle (F), that in virtue of which a per- son has a capacity for sustaining a nature is also itself the entity that sustains the nature. (On this, see my comments in n. 45 above.) I do not have the space—or the warrant—to look at this debate here, though I hope perhaps to describe it at a later date.

[69] Karl Rahner, *The Trinity*, trans. Joseph Doncel (London: Burns and Oates, 1970), 29.

[70] Considerations that the medievals offered in favour of the incarnation of the Son all have to do with *fittingness*, not with any sort of entailment relation: see e.g. Aquinas, *ST* 3. 8 (iii/1. 30ᵃ–31ᵇ). I look at the different views on the question of the simultaneous incarnation of all three divine persons in one human nature in Excursus 2. So my concern here is not specifically on this question, but rather on the more general question of the possibility of the three divine persons becoming incarnate some- how or another. As far as I know, no one held that the incarnation of the Son in principle exhausted God's power for bringing about such incarnations—see e.g. Aquinas, *ST* 3. 3. 5 c (iii/1. 27ᵇ); Henry, *Quod*. 15. 4 (Paris, ii. fo. 577ᵀꟳ).

PART III

The communication of properties

Chapter 8

CHRISTOLOGICAL PREDICATION

1. THE COMMUNICATION OF PROPERTIES

The schoolmen universally understand the communication of properties to be the ascription of divine and human properties to the (divine) *person*.[1] It is worth pausing to think about this for a bit, since the account is not that which we find in some of the Fathers, or—perhaps even more famously—Luther. Luther understands the communication of properties to allow the ascription of divine properties to the human nature (and, sometimes, apparently the ascription of human properties to the divine nature). For example:

Since the divinity and the humanity are one person in Christ, the scriptures ascribe to the divinity, because of this personal union, all that happens to the humanity, and vice versa. And in reality it is so.[2]

I do not want to adjudicate on the precise meaning Luther has in mind. But Luther uses this strategy to insist on Christ's bodily ubiquity or omnipresence, and the later Lutheran tradition certainly understood Luther to be asserting at least that the properties of the divine nature can be ascribed to the human nature.[3]

There are some pre-Chalcedonian precedents for this sort of view, but there is no doubt that, unless developed with considerable care, it is inconsistent with any obvious understanding of Chalcedon. (The *Tome* of Leo, canonized at Chalcedon, allows the ascription of predicates to natures: see for example the notorious passage that led sixth-century monophysites to hold—understandably—that the *Tome* was simply Nestorian: 'Each nature bringing about, with the communion of the other,

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[1] As we have seen above, Scotus allows the ascription of properties to other objects too—for example, to Christ considered as a whole whose parts are the Word and the assumed nature. I am not interested in this feature of Scotus's theory here; my aim in this chapter is merely to talk about the ascription of properties to the Word (and the Word certainly is not a whole that includes itself and human nature as *parts*, though of course for the Chalcedonian Scotus the human nature is a *property* of the Word).

[2] Luther, *Bekenntnis* (*Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar: Hermann Böhlaus, 1884–), xxvi. 321; ET in *Luther's Works*, vol. xxxvii: *Word and Sacrament III*, ed. Robert H. Fischer (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1961), 214).

[3] 'The words, "Christ sits at the right hand of God" [require] that his body and blood may be there as well as at other places': Luther, *Daß diese Wort* (1527) (WA, xxiii. 144/145; ET in *Luther's Works*, xxxvii. 64), and this claim certainly entails that ubiquity is predicated of the human nature *in abstracto*. The later Lutheran tradition talks of the *genus maiestaticum*, though (contrary to the obvious sense of Luther's words) it does not understand Luther to want to assert too that the properties of the human nature can be ascribed to the divine nature. I hope to explore all of these controversies in a future study of the communication of properties in Lutheran and Reformed theology.

what is proper to it.'[4] But it certainly does not allow any legitimate sense in which the properties of one nature could be predicated of the other, whether concretely or abstractly. I tried to show in Chapter 6 above how the medievals, even while allowing a sense in which the divine essence could be called 'man', would certainly want to deny that the divine essence suffers and so on. As we shall see, it is the Word who is man, and who suffers.) The Lutheran tradition found in John of Damascus an exposition of the communication of properties that approximated to that proposed by Luther. John wants to be able—in common with much of the Greek theological tradition—to be able to speak of the divinization of the human nature:

[The divine nature] imparts its own glories to the flesh, while itself remaining impassible and without participation in the passions of the flesh.[5]

I mention all this in such detail because I want there to be no doubt about what is at issue for the medievals here: not the communication of properties understood in any sense as the ascription of the properties of the one nature to the other, but the communication of properties understood as the ascription of divine and human properties to the person of the Word. Not, then, the sort of thing that Luther (and possibly John of Damascus[6]) wants to defend, but merely the sort of thing that Cyril, Leo, and Chalcedon want to defend.

Central to the analyses of Christological predication in all of my writers is the claim that propositions of the form '*x* is *F*' are asymmetrical: the subject term *refers*, picks out an individual; the predicate fails to have such a 'direct reference, for it is true *of* individuals—ascribed, not referring to an identity'.[7] As Aquinas puts it, 'predicates are taken formally, and subjects materially'.[8] Predicates, then, ascribe certain natures or properties to their subjects. Aquinas gives an example:

(8.1) When I say 'Man is an animal': that which is a man is truly an animal, for in the same *suppositum* there is both a sensible nature, from which he is called 'animal', and a rational [nature], from which he is called 'man'.[9]

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[4] Leo, *Tome*, in Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (London: Sheed and Ward; Georgetown, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), i. 79[b].

[5] John of Damascus, *De Fide Orth.* 51 (Kotter, 126). A glance at Martin Chemnitz's magisterial *De Duabus Naturis in Christo* (Leipzig, 1578) makes it clear that the Damascene and others of the Greek Fathers—and not Luther—are the source of the Lutheran tradition's denial that the properties of the human nature can be ascribed to the divine nature.

[6] In my 'Perichoresis, Deification, and Christological Predication in John of Damascus', *Mediaeval Studies*, 62 (2000), 69–124, I show how John keeps the doctrine of the deification of the human nature quite separate from the question of the communication of properties.

[7] Arthur Gibson, 'Ockham's World and Future', in John Marenbon (ed.), *The Routledge History of Philosophy*, vol. iii: *Medieval Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 329–67, p. 347. This of course need not entail that the ontological structure of reality reflects this feature of propositions. For example, Scotus would want the truth conditions for some contingent subject–predicate sentences (viz. those sentences whose subject refers to a substance and whose predicate signifies (has as its sense) an accident) to include its being really the case that an individual accident (of the kind signified by the predicate)—an *instantiation* of the accident—inheres in—is *exemplified* by—the individual substance referred to by the subject term.

[8] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 13. 12 c (i/1. 75[a]).   [9] Ibid.

Most of my authors are realists on the question of universals, and the theory of predication I am talking about here does not dovetail as neatly as we might like with the claim that the assumed human nature is an individual in itself. This does not matter; accepting the theory of predication allows us to provide a clear and acceptable analysis of Christological predications.[10]

Given this general account, it is no surprise to see our thinkers adopting an account of the communication of properties that closely resembles the dynamic of Cyrilline and Chalcedonian Christology. Subject–predicate sentences ascribe (abstract) properties to (concrete) objects. And the divine person is the concrete object that has divine and human properties in the Incarnation. At issue is the sense in which we can ascribe predicates to the divine person in circumstances when the predicate term picks out a different nature from that implied by the subject term. Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Scotus established the general principles through an analysis of the basic Christological claim, 'God is man'. The problem is to see what sorts of general principles could allow a claim like this—one in which the predicate term picks out a different nature from that implied by the subject term—to be true.

In fact, given the general account of predication, the issue admits of a straightforward solution. While all three thinkers agree on the basic position, there are some features of the account which are shared by the Franciscans Bonaventure and Scotus, but not by Aquinas. So I will look at the position of Aquinas first, and then at that defended by the Franciscans. The differences are by no means great, although they do reflect to an extent the different accounts of the hypostatic union found in these thinkers, and outlined in Part I.

According to Aquinas, the subject term, 'God', refers not to the divine essence but to a divine person: in this case, the second person of the Trinity.[11] The term 'man' can predicate any subject which has human nature. Since the second person of the Trinity has human nature, the basic Christological claim, 'God is man', is true.[12]

Given that the predicate term picks out a different nature from that implied by the subject term, there will be some analogies with a *contingent* proposition, one

[10] In fact, there is thus a sense—in line with that outlined in n. 7 of this chapter—in which analysing 'God is man' along these lines fails to reflect closely the metaphysics of the Incarnation. The assumed human nature is seen by all three thinkers as itself a concrete object. The correct logical form of a claim such as 'God is man' assumes that the human nature is abstract. To understand the slippage (from concrete to abstract) we need to keep in mind the agreed account of universals. In virtue of assuming a human nature, it is true that the divine person exemplifies common human nature: and it is this relation between the Word and common human nature—had in virtue of his relation to his (individual) human nature—that grounds the account of predication given by the medievals.

[11] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 1 ad 1 (iii/1. 100ᵃ).

[12] Ibid. 3. 16. 1 c (iii/1. 100ᵃ). As we saw in (8.1), Aquinas talks about nouns applying to things 'from' certain properties of that thing. Technically, Aquinas talks about 'that from which' a noun is applied, and that 'to which' a noun is applied—the first of these being signification and the second supposition (see e.g. *In Sent.* 3. 6. 1. 3, n. 55 (iii. 232)). This should be kept in mind when interpreting passages such as the following: 'A noun signifying a nature in the concrete can refer to (*supponere pro*) any of the things contained in that common nature': Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 1 c (iii/1. 100ᵃ); see too 3. 16. 5 c (iii/1. 103ᵃ). Aquinas is not claiming that concrete nouns *refer to* natures—so we should not mistake his view for that seemingly proposed by Luther, discussed briefly at the beginning of this chapter.

whose truth requires a cause. Aquinas is happy to claim that the truth of the pro-
position 'God is man' is like this: the cause of its truth is the (contingent) fact that
one divine person is 'a *suppositum* of human nature'. But Aquinas wants to distance
the claim 'God is man' from any straightforward sort of contingent (i.e. acci-
dental) predication:

(8.2) The divine and human natures, although they are maximally distant, nevertheless, through
the mystery of the Incarnation, share in one *suppositum* in which neither of them exists acci-
dentally but substantially.[13]

The point is, as we saw in Part I, that Aquinas does not want to liken the hypo-
static union to an accidental union. Thus, he does not want to claim that 'God is
man' is an accidental predication. Aquinas will, however, allow certain disanalogies
between the case of the Word's possession of human and divine natures. Spe-
cifically, while both natures are possessed substantially, the human nature is not
possessed necessarily. So we cannot use the denominative predicates 'Lord-like'
(*dominicus*) or 'deified', which imply a merely accidental relation between predicate
and subject, whereas we can use the denominative predicate 'hominized', since the
Word's being man is not necessary.[14]

   Bonaventure, writing a few years before Aquinas, also accepts that subject–
predicate sentences are asymmetrical, in just the same way as Aquinas does:

(8.3) Those things [viz. the Trinitarian persons] which agree in nature are not predicated of
each other in the way that those things which agree in person are, since nature implies some-
thing common, and hypostasis the proper *suppositum*.[15]

Unlike Aquinas, however, Bonaventure is happier with the analogy between 'God
is man' and an instance of accidental predication:

(8.4) In a certain way the predication can be called substantial, and in a certain way acci-
dental. 'Substantial', if we compare the divine nature to the person in whom the union exists,
of which [the divine nature] is substantially predicated; it can be called 'accidental', if we
compare the human nature to the person, to which it is united through grace.[16]

Here, Bonaventure claims—admittedly cautiously—that 'is man' is an accidental
predicate, and that 'is God' is the substantial predicate. (Strictly, in the medieval
analysis of these things, 'man' is the predicate, and 'is' is a copula; but looking at
the issue in the more modern way that I do here seems to be clearer, and in any
case does not make substantive difference for my purposes in the discussion.)

   In addition to this shift in emphasis (a shift perhaps reflecting the different analo-
gies used by the two thinkers to describe the hypostatic union), Bonaventure's account

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[13] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 1 ad 1 (iii/1. 100ᵃ).
[14] Ibid. 3. 16. 3 ad 2 (iii/1. 101ᵇ). For 'hominized', see John of Damascus, *De Fide Orth.* 50 (Kotter,
120; Buytaert, 187–8): 'hominization refers to the joining of a human being'; see also Lombard, *Sent.*
3. 5. 1, n. 12 (ii. 45).
[15] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 7. 1. 1 ad 1 (iii. 171ᵇ).   [16] Ibid. 3. 7. 1. 1 ad 4 (iii. 172ᵇ).

adds a further detail lacking in Aquinas's. Bonaventure explicitly rejects the rival 'nominalist' theory of predication here, the so-called 'two-name' theory. On this theory, subject–predicate sentences are true if and only if the subject and the predicate both refer to the same concrete object. This sort of theory thus denies an asymmetrical structure of subject–predicate sentences. According to Bonaventure, someone accepting this theory would want to analyse 'God is man' as 'God is he who is man.' He claims that this sort of analysis will entail an unacceptable infinite regress:

(8.5) When it is said, 'God is he who is man,' here we could ask, about the implication which belongs to the predicate, to which [sort of] predication it should be reduced: and then it would be necessary either to go to infinity in implication, or to have recourse to another mode of predication.[17]

What Bonaventure means is that the predicative clause 'he who is man' is itself only an instance of the two-name theory if 'man' is analysed as 'he who is man': and so on, for each predicative occurrence of 'man' in these various *analysantia*.

Scotus's account exploits the asymmetry of subject–predicate sentences in much the same way. The overall similarity of treatment between Scotus and the other two thinkers can be seen in the analysis of the basic Christological claim 'God is man.' 'God' refers to any object which has divine nature:

(8.6) 'God' both refers to a common nature, and is ordered denominatively in any hypostasis, i.e. person.[18]

In this case, 'God' refers to the Word.[19] Furthermore, the predicate term, 'man', is to be understood as related to the subject 'formally'—that is, as common nature that requires 'contracting' through individuating features.[20] The proposition is true since the divine person is 'a *suppositum* [subsisting] in human nature'.[21]

Scotus explicitly considers a two-name analysis of the proposition, and he rejects it on the grounds suggested by his Franciscan predecessor Bonaventure: any such propositional analysis falls victim to an infinite regress. Suppose we analyse 'God is man' as 'God is a *suppositum* who is man,' where 'God' and '*suppositum* who is man' both refer to the same concrete object. In this case, Scotus claims, we will need to be able to offer a similar analysis of '*suppositum* who is man'. The reason is that 'is man' is, in Scotus's analysis, in every case an instance of Scotus's 'formal' predication, the sort of predication that asserts that a concrete object is an

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[17] Ibid. 3. 7. 1. 1 c (iii. 171ᵇ).
[18] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 7. 1, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 189), quoting John of Damascus, *De Fide Orth.* 55 (Kotter, 133; Buytaert, 207).
[19] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 7. 1, n. 2 (Wadding, vii. 189).
[20] Ibid. 3. 7. 1, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 190). On aspects of predication in Scotus, see my 'Divisibility, Communicability, and Predicability in Duns Scotus's Theories of the Common Nature', forthcoming.
[21] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 7. 1, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 189). See also ibid. 3. 6. 2, n. 6 (Wadding, vii. 179).

instantiation of a divisible common nature. Since any two-name theory of predica-
tion will itself require further analysis, the theory will be correct only if an infinite
regress of *analysantia* is possible.[22]

Details of Scotus's account also differ from Aquinas's, and have more in com-
mon with Bonaventure's account. Unlike Aquinas, and more like Bonaventure, Scotus
is happy to claim unequivocally that the predication is contingent,[23] and that it is
contingently true. It is in fact what we would label synthetic, and its truth is dis-
covered from revelation.[24] Equally, like Bonaventure, Scotus is happy to claim that
the predicate is in some sense like an accident of the subject.[25] This presumably
reflects his different account of the metaphysics of the Incarnation: the hypostatic
union, as we have seen, is in Scotus's account analogous to an accident—an ana-
logy which Aquinas explicitly rejects.

All three thinkers deal with 'A man is God' in ways consistent with the ana-
lysis of 'God is man'. According to Aquinas, 'man' refers to a *suppositum* exemplify-
ing human nature—here the second person of the Trinity. 'God' predicates any
subject which has divine nature.[26] But the second person of the Trinity clearly satisfies
this description. So 'A man is God' is true.[27] Aquinas's account, in fact, clearly entails
that divine and human properties can be ascribed to the Word:

(8.7) Whether therefore we say 'man' or 'God', we are referring to the hypostasis of
divine and human nature. And for this reason, we can ascribe to the man those things which
belong to the divine nature, and we can ascribe to God those things which belong to human
nature.[28]

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[22] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 7. 1, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 190). Of course, an infinite regress is impossible, since we
would never arrive at a cause of the truth of the formal predication.

[23] Ibid. 3. 7. 1, n. 2 (Wadding, vii. 189).   [24] Ibid. 3. 7. 1, n. 7 (Wadding, vii. 192).

[25] Ibid. 3. 7. 1, n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 191).   [26] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 39. 4 c (i/1. 195ᵇ).

[27] Ibid. 3. 16. 2 c (iii/1. 100ᵇ); Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 7. 1. 1 concl. (iii. 171ᵃ); Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 7. 2,
n. 8 (Wadding, vii. 198).

[28] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 4 c (iii/1. 102ᵇ). Any defender of the communication of properties has to allow
some sorts of restriction: some things are true of the human nature—e.g. that it is assumed—that can-
not be true of God. Aquinas comments: 'To be assumed belongs to the human nature not in virtue of
the *suppositum* but in virtue of itself. Thus it does not pertain to God': Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 4 ad 3 (iii/1.
103ᵃ). This seems correct and unexceptionable. See also Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 7. 2, n. 9 (Wadding, vii. 198):
'From the rule about the communication of properties are excepted those things which express the union
of the nature to the person. The reason for this is that the communication in predications is made on
account of the union, and presupposes the union. For this reason it [viz. the communication of predica-
tions] is not made according to those things which express the union.' The point is made beautifully
by the fourteenth-century Augustinian Hugolinus of Orvieto: 'A property (*idioma*) of a nature is one
thing, and a property according to a nature is another. A property of a nature is what belongs to it [viz.
the nature] and is proper to it, and not to the person: as it is proper to the human nature . . . to be able
to be assumed, and such-like. . . . A property according to a nature is what belongs to a person and is
proper to it [viz. the person] according to a nature: as . . . to be able to will by a human will, and so on.
The first properties (*idiomata*) which are properties of natures, are not as such communicated to the
one person, as is clear inductively. But the others—namely those which are "according to" a nature and
can belong to a person—are [communicated to the one person]': Hugolinus, *In Sent.* 3. 1. un. 2 (ed.
Willigis Eckermann, 4 vols., Cassiciacum: Supplementband, 8–11 (Würzburg: Augustinus-Verlag, 1980–
8), iii. 55).

All three thinkers analyse 'God became man' along the same lines. 'God is man' is true, as we have seen; but it has not always been true. Thus, 'God became man' must be true.[29]

The analysis offered thus far would lead us to expect that 'A man became God' would be rejected. And so it is in both Bonaventure and Aquinas. 'Man' refers to the divine person; and it is not true that this *suppositum* ever *became* God—he was, if I may so put it, *always* God.[30] But Scotus is happy to allow that a man became God. To understand his defence of this claim, we need to keep in mind a basic Scotist principle that I outline in Excursus 2 below, namely that substance-sortals properly refer not to *supposita* but to individual(ized) natures—that is, to substances.[31] The analysis does not sit easily with the account offered thus far in this chapter— I think we will just have to accept that for Scotus, substance-sortals are intrinsic- ally ambiguous in reference, sometimes referring to *supposita*, and sometimes to substances (though note that the Trinitarian analysis considered in Excursus 2[32] seems unequivocally to assert that substance-sortals refer properly only to substances, and never properly to *supposita*. The account of the reference of substance-sortals given thus far in this chapter is inconsistent with this Trinitarian theory of Scotus's.) As we shall see in the next chapter, Scotus holds that 'God became man' is true not in virtue of any change in God, but as a result of a change—a new relation—in the created order. Thus, the basic claim in virtue of which 'God became man' is true is 'A human nature is personally united to the Word.'[33] And Scotus holds that this claim entails 'A man became God'. The discussion makes it clear that Scotus believes 'a man' to refer here to the assumed human nature.[34]

As I have suggested, Scotus believes that the reference of substance-sortals is fun- damentally ambiguous, requiring context to allow us to fix reference—whether it be to a substance or to a *suppositum*. For example, he accepts that 'A man is God' is true;[35] but if we suppose that 'A man' refers to the human nature, then 'A man is God' is false: the human nature, after all, is not God; neither does it become God (except in the egregious sense just outlined). I do not know what to say about this, other than that Scotus clearly believes that 'A man became God' exhibits a

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[29] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 6 c (iii/1. 104ᵃ); Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 7. 1. 2 fund. 4, c, ad 1, and ad 2 (iii. 174ᵃ–175ᵇ); Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 7. 2, nn. 3–4 (Wadding, vii. 195). I discuss this claim that the Word can 'become' man in more detail in Ch. 9 below.

[30] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 7 c (iii/1. 105ᵃ); Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 7. 1. 3 fund. 2 (iii. 176ᵃ).

[31] I explore the different ways in which thinkers distinguished *supposita* from substances in Part IV below.

[32] And at greater detail in my 'Duns Scotus on Divine Substance and the Trinity', forthcoming.

[33] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 7. 2, n. 8 (Wadding, vii. 198).

[34] Ibid. 3. 7. 2, n. 6 (Wadding, vii. 196). An analogous principle seems to underlie Scotus's fam- ous assertion—based on the Vulgate text of Romans 1.4 ('qui destinatus est Filius Dei')—that Christ is predestined to be the Son of God. Scotus reasons that predestination properly regards natures, not *supposita*. And it is true that Christ's human nature is predestined to be united to the Word, and thus to be the Word: see *Ord.* 3. 7. 3, n. 2 (Wadding, vii. 199). For a discussion of Christ's predestination according to Scotus, see my *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 127–9.

[35] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 7. 2, n. 8 (Wadding, vii. 198).

radically different deep structure from other Christological propositions, and that
his reason for this is that the only object to which anything happens in the Incarnation
is the human nature.[36]

In fact, however, there is a medieval precedent for Scotus's analysis here. As we
have seen, Bonaventure rejects 'A man became God.' But when discussing 'That
man [i.e. Christ] began to be,'[37] and 'A man began to be God,'[38] Bonaventure adopts
a different principle, more in line with the sort of claim Scotus appeals to when
accepting 'A man became God.' Thus, Bonaventure allows that 'that man' might
refer not to the divine person but to the individual assumed nature. And, he claims,
in such a case 'That man began to be' is true.[39] Clearly, the human nature of Christ
did begin to be. But Bonaventure's analysis of 'A man began to be God' is, like
Scotus's analysis of 'A man became God,' far more problematic. The proposition
is false, Bonaventure concedes, if 'man' here refers to the person of the Word. But
it is true of the '*suppositum* of the singular man who is Jesus'.[40] This *suppositum* of
the singular man who is Jesus is to be identified as the assumed human nature: 'The
singular *suppositum* of the man, i.e. the individual of human nature which is assumed
by the Word.'[41] If this is correct, then Bonaventure's reading of 'A man began to
be God' is a clear precedent for Scotus's reading of 'A man became God.'[42]

On the basis of this sort of passage, one famous modern interpretation of Scotus
is that Scotus holds that the human nature is an 'assumed man' (*assumptus homo*).[43]
I think that we need to be very careful about this sort of reading, not least because

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[36] In the *sed contra* of *Ord.* 3. 7. 2, n. 1 (Wadding, vii. 194), Scotus cites Augustine, *De Trin.* 1. 13.
28 (ed. W. J. Mountain, 2 vols., CCSL, 50 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1968), i. 69): 'This assumption was
such that God became a man and a man became God'; so it might be that he felt the need to accept 'A
man became God' merely on the basis of the authority of this Father.

[37] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 11. 2. 2 (iii. 251ª–255ᵇ).   [38] Ibid. 3. 11. 2. 3 (iii. 255ª–257ᵇ).

[39] Ibid. 3. 11. 2. 2 (iii. 253ᵇ): Bonaventure refers to the 'singulare hominis': I show in a moment that
this phrase should be understood to be a reference to the assumed nature.

[40] Ibid. 3. 11. 2. 2 (iii. 256ᵇ).

[41] Ibid. 3. 11. 2. 2 ad 3 pro parte neg. (iii. 254ª ᵇ); see also e.g. 3. 11. 2. 2 arg. 2 (iii. 251ª). Bonaventure
is happy to allow a sense in which the individual human nature is a *suppositum*: see *In Sent.* 3. 10. 1. 3
concl. (iii. 231ª), and he uses 'singular thing of a man' to refer to the assumed nature at *In Sent.* 3. 11.
2. 2 (iii. 253ª).

[42] Underlying Bonaventure's teaching here is the doctrine of Alexander of Hales, and ultimately the
assumptus homo theory reported by the Lombard (on this, see Ch. 1, sect. 1 above). According to Alexander,
nouns like 'man' and 'Son of Man' can be legitimately used to refer to the individual human nature of
Christ: see Walter Principe, *Alexander of Hales' Theology of the Hypostatic Union* (The Theology of the
Hypostatic Union in the Early Thirteenth Century, 2), Studies and Texts, 12 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute
of Mediaeval Studies, 1967), 193–5. Alexander's teaching on this matter is closely paralleled in his con-
temporary William of Auxerre: see Principe, *William of Auxerre's Theology of the Hypostatic Union* (The
Theology of the Hypostatic Union in the Early Thirteenth Century, 1), Studies and Texts, 7 (Toronto:
Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963), 126–7. We should keep in mind, however, Alexander's
explicit denial of the proposition 'That man began to be God,' a denial made in the context of his discus-
sion of the *assumptus homo* theory: see Principe, *Alexander of Hales' Theology of the Hypostatic Union*, 107.

[43] The consistent teaching of the French Franciscan Déodat de Basly was that Scotus defended some
sort of *assumptus homo* theory, which de Basly interpreted in terms of an (autonomous) human consciousness
in Christ. For a discussion of de Basly's reading of Scotus, see most recently Maria Burger, *Personalität
im Horizont absoluter Prädestination: Untersuchungen zur Christologie des Johannes Duns Scotus und ihrer
Rezeption in modernen theologischen Ansätzen*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie

it could be taken as suggesting a Nestorian Christology that Scotus is at pains to reject. Furthermore, his standard Christological analysis of the term 'man' (*homo*) makes it clear that the term properly refers to the divine *suppositum*, and *not* to the human substance or nature. As we have seen, Scotus only allows the term 'man' to refer to the assumed nature in exceptional contexts, *despite* the fact that this sort of usage would tie in precisely with his analysis of substance-sortals in the Trinity. Finally, although Scotus *could* have spoken of an *assumptus homo*, given his account of the reference of substance-sortals, he nevertheless never does so explicitly.

So far, I have looked at claims such as 'God is man' and 'man is God'—claims ascribing a nature to a person. What about claims such as 'God suffers' and 'man creates'—claims which ascribe to a person characteristics that are as it were the consequences of having such and such a nature? The basic treatment of these is straightforward, and in accordance with the general strategy just outlined—though in the next section I will provide an important qualification to this claim. As passage (8.7) from Aquinas makes clear, the subject term ('God', 'man', and so on) refers to the Word—and it is true of the Word that both human and divine characteristics can be ascribed to him. The point here is that the divine and human characteristics are all predicated of the one person. The cases are not exactly parallel since, as we saw above, divine characteristics are essential to the person in the way that human ones are not.

Scotus goes into more detail specifically about the metaphysics involved here. Human accidents depend on the Word in so far as they depend on the assumed human nature.[44] Such accidents are predicated of the Word in so far as they are predicated of the nature. The Word is the remote subject, and the nature the proximate subject, of these predicates. Scotus makes the point clearly when contrasting those properties that properly belong to an individual nature as such with those that properly belong to things of any sort (and not just natures). (Examples Scotus gives of properties that belong to things of any sort are the transcendentals (being, one, and so on), and certain first intentions (subject, accident, whole, part, creature). Examples of properties that belong properly to a nature are the accidents that are proper to that sort of nature.) Scotus claims, for example:

(8.8) 'Being generated' denominates a nature, and naturally denominates a *suppositum* by means of the nature.[45]

'Being generated' is the sort of thing that happens to things that instantiate certain *kind-natures*; this is what Scotus means by claiming that it denominates a nature.

des Mittelalters, N. F., 40 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1994), 166–203. I will return to the question of Christ's human activity and consciousness in Ch. 10 and in the Conclusion below. In Ch. 10 I shall also consider certain further instances where Scotus apparently talks of the human nature as a man.

[44] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 14 (Wadding, xii. 503–4; Alluntis and Wolter, 430 (nn. 19. 44–19. 45)). I cite some other passages in the Introduction above; see too n. 28 above, where I note that there are some exceptions to this rule.

[45] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 11. 1, n. 12 (Wadding, vii. 242).

Other examples Scotus gives of this sort of human predicate are 'living', 'under-standing', and 'eating'.[46] All of these, then, belong properly to the Word in so far as they belong to his human nature ('living' and 'understanding' presumably here to be understood in a human sort of way: human life and human understanding). I will examine some more cases of this in the next chapter.

There is an additional problem that I would like to consider briefly, largely as a means of introducing the material of the next section. As I have made clear, the sorts of properties that we should understand the human nature to be the proximate subject of are *forms*, whether substantial (in virtue of which it is a man, and e.g. finite, or passible) or accidental (in virtue of which it is e.g. intelligent, or in pain). On the face of it, the divine *suppositum* will be the remote subject of these various attributes. But the passibility of the assumed nature, on this theory of proximate and remote predication, seems straightforwardly to entail the passibility of the divine *suppositum*. Given that the divine *suppositum* is, according to Scotus, essentially impassible, the theory of remote and proximate predication seems to entail a contradiction.

In fact, this problem is far wider than merely the theory of remote and proxim-ate predication. Any Christology that makes human attributes predicable of the divine *suppositum*—that is to say, any Chalcedonian Christology—will be open to this sort of objection. Scotus deals with this most explicitly, using a strategy that can clearly be traced back to the *Tome* of Leo. I examine this strategy in the next section. As far as my account of Scotus is concerned, the lesson we can learn is precisely how to understand instances of *remote* predication. As we shall see, Scotus is forced to make some fairly ad hoc moves, both because of his account of the divine nature, and because of his understanding of certain limited human attributes.

2. REDUPLICATION AND CONTRADICTORY PREDICATES

One of the most telling objections to the doctrine of the Incarnation found in modern writers is that the doctrine is logically incoherent, entailing that contra-dictories are simultaneously true of one and the same object.[47] As we shall see, the medievals—who clearly know of the potential difficulty—radically underestimate the force of this problem.

The basic strategy is Patristic: dividing the predicates between the two natures, such that some predicates apply to the person in virtue of the divine nature, and some in virtue of the human nature. Leo the Great puts the matter clearly enough:

The Son of God is said to have been crucified and buried, since he suffered these things not in the divinity itself whereby the Only-begotten is coeternal and consubstantial with the Father, but in the weakness of the human nature.[48]

[46] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 11. 1, n. 13 (Wadding, vii. 242).

[47] See e.g. John Hick, 'Jesus and the World Religions', in *id.* (ed.), *The Myth of God Incarnate* (London: SCM Press, 1977), 167–85, p. 178.

[48] Leo, *Tome*, in Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, i. 80ᵃ.

As we saw in the previous section, the medievals, too, rightly claim that human characteristics can be ascribed to the person in virtue of his possession of human nature, and that divine characteristics can be ascribed to the person in virtue of his possession of divine nature. But on the face of it this sort of claim does nothing to help block Christological contradictions; it just tells us how it is that certain predicates are ascribed to the person.

In fact, the medievals were aware that these sorts of propositions—which I shall call *qua*-propositions—admit of a number of different analyses. Peter Lombard's discussion of the 'nihilist' proposition 'Christ *qua* man is not anything' provided an influential and significant treatment of the matter.[49]

(8.9) '*Qua*' [in the proposition 'Christ *qua* man is not anything'] has many meanings; sometimes it expresses [i] a condition or property of the divine nature or human nature, sometimes [ii] the unity of person, sometimes it denotes [iii] vesture (*habitus*), sometimes [iv] a cause.[50]

Lombard does not explain these various meanings. Presumably, understanding '*qua*' in the first sense requires us to read the nihilist proposition as 'Christ's human nature is nothing'. The second sense of '*qua*' yields 'The (human) person of Christ is nothing'. Vesture is harder to work out; perhaps the background is the *habitus* theory, and the sense is 'Christ's human nature or *habitus* is nothing.' The causal sense is the most important: 'Christ is nothing in virtue of (because of) his human nature.'[51] As we shall see in a moment, the thirteenth-century scholastics habitually use two different analyses of *qua*-propositions, the reduplicative and the specificative; these correspond roughly to Lombard's [iv] and [i] respectively.[52] (For convenience, I shall follow this now-standard later terminology, which is in any case reflective of a clear distinction that was well-known and understood in the thirteenth century.) In what follows, I shall examine first the reduplicative analysis, and then the specificative analysis.

The reduplicative analysis

The reduplicative analysis of *qua*-propositions is Peter Lombard's causal sense. The *qua* qualification *explains* why the predication is true. Let '*qua$_r$*' pick out this sense of '*qua*'. '*Qua$_r$*' is understood as follows:

(A) x *qua$_r$* G is F = x's being F is explained by x's being G.

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[49] On so-called 'Christological nihilism', see Ch. 11 below.

[50] Lombard, *Sent.* 3. 10. 1, n. 3 (ii. 73).

[51] On these, see Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy in the Twelfth Century: A Study of Gilbert Porreta's Thinking and the Theological Expositions of the Doctrine of the Incarnation during the Period 1130–1180*, Acta Theologica Danica, 15 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 268–70.

[52] It is impossible to work on this topic without making use of the thorough analyses offered by Allan Bäck: see his *On Reduplication: Logical Theories of Qualification*, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 49 (Leiden, New York, and Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1996); *id.*, 'Aquinas on the Incarnation', *New Scholasticism*, 56 (1982), 127–45; *id.*, 'Scotus on the Consistency of the Trinity and Incarnation', *Vivarium*, 36 (1998), 83–107. I do not always agree with the details of Bäck's analyses, though much of what follows makes use of Bäck's work.

My term '*qua*ᵣ' is thus correctly understood as 'in virtue of'. This definition of reduplication is found most clearly in Scotus:

(8.10) '*Qua*' . . . properly denotes that that which follows it is the formal reason for the inherence of the predicate: such as 'a human being, *qua* white, or *qua* coloured, is seen'.[53]

Clearly, as Scotus spots, understanding *qua*-propositions in this way is of no help in blocking potential Christological contradictions. Consider the following pair:

(1) Christ *qua*ᵣ man is passible.

(2) Christ *qua*ᵣ God is impassible.[54]

On the definition given in (A), this yields the following pair:

(3) Christ is passible.

(4) Christ is impassible.

And the conjunction of (3) and (4) yields the contradictory

(5) Christ is passible and impassible.[55]

Is there any way to avoid this sort of contradiction? Suppose we accept that Christ is passible, and thus accept (1) and (3). We clearly cannot accept (2) or (4). But we can accept the following:

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[53] Scotus, *RP* 3. 6. 2, n. 3 (Wadding, xi. 444ᵇ); see Scotus, *Ord*. 3. 6. 2, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 178). See also *Ord*. 3. 11. 2, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 245–6); 3. 11. 2, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 246): '*Qua* is the mark of the inherence of the reduplication of a predicate.'

[54] Note that 'Christ' is the subject term here, so on Scotus's principles we would in any case expect the analysis of these sorts of proposition to be rather different from the sort of analysis that would be offered for propositions whose subject is God or man. There might not be any reason to suspect that, even if we could solve contradictions in the easy case (where 'Christ' is the subject of Christological propositions), we could solve them for the cases of the genuine communication of properties, where the subject is God or man. The situation is somewhat different for Aquinas, since, as I have argued above, Aquinas does not make a distinction between the referents of 'Word' and 'Christ'.

[55] See Scotus, *Ord*. 3. 11. 2, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 245–6): 'When an affirmative proposition is false from the incompatibility of its extremes, its falsity is not removed by the addition of any determination or reduplication that does not remove their incompatibility.' Aquinas offers a rather different analysis of reduplication: 'In another way ["man" as a reduplication—i.e. "*qua* man"] can be taken in virtue of the *suppositum*; and then, since the *suppositum* of human nature in Christ is the person of the Son of God, to whom it pertains *per se* to be God, it is true that Christ, *qua* man, is God': *ST* 3. 16. 11 (iii/1. 108ᵃ). For Aquinas, then, the point of the reduplication is to clarify that the subject term refers to the *suppositum* of the Word. We can capture Aquinas's account by means of the following:

*x qua*ᵣ *y* is *F* = *y*'s being *F* is sufficient for *x*'s being *F*, where '*x*' and '*y*' refer to one and the same object.

The advantage of this sort of account is that it does not even tempt us to think, falsely, that it could deal with Christological contradictions. After all, in the reduplication '*qua*ᵣ *y*' cannot substitute for a predicate of *x*; in fact, as Aquinas understands it, it entails that *x* and *y* are numerically identical. To see this, consider (1) and (2). On Aquinas's account, (1) and (2) yield respectively

(1*) If this man is passible, then Christ is passible

and

(2*) If God is impassible, then Christ is impassible.

This man's being passible and God's being impassible yields, on this analysis, the contradictory (5), supposing with Aquinas that the referents of 'God', 'this man', and 'Christ' are in this context identical.

(2′) It is not the case that Christ *qua*$_r$ God is possible.

This means that, whether or not Christ is possible, possibility is not a property had in virtue of the divine nature. (2′) does not entail (4), and thus does not contradict (3), or (therefore) (1). But, of course, (2′) by itself is neutral on the question of the ascription of impassibility to Christ.[56] So this reduplicative analysis can neither help avoid contradictions, nor somehow provide a way of allowing Christ to be both passible and impassible. Think of white-Socrates. It is true of white-Socrates that he is coloured *qua*$_r$ white, and it is false of him that he is coloured *qua*$_r$ man; but this obviously does not entail that Socrates *qua*$_r$ man is not coloured—if it did, Socrates would be (absurdly) both coloured and not coloured.[57]

The specificative analysis

The specificative analysis is more interesting. Consider the following from Aquinas:

(8.11) Just as in human and corporeal matters those things which it can be called into doubt whether they belong to a whole or a part, we do not ascribe to the whole simply or without determination if they inhere in a part: for we do not say that an Ethiopian is white, but that he is white according to his teeth.[58]

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[56] The same point can be made, *mutatis mutandis*, if we accept Christ's impassibility, and thus accept (2) and (4). In this case, in order to avoid contradiction we would need to replace (1) with

(1′) It is not the case that Christ *qua*$_r$ man is impassible,

and argue as above.

[57] John Haldane offers a rather different analysis of what is going on here. He argues that we should not understand these reduplicative forms to legitimate an inference from (using my terminology) '*x qua*$_r$ *G* is *F*' to '*x* is *F*'. According to Haldane, there are clear non-contradictory cases when we allow both '*x qua*$_r$ *G* is *F*' and '*x qua*$_r$ *H* is not *F*'; and this shows that the correct reduplicative analysis does not allow the validity of the general schema '*x qua*$_r$ *G* is *F* → *x* is *F*' (John Haldane, 'Incarnational Anthropology', in *Human Beings*, ed. David Cockburn, Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement, 29 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 191–211, pp. 200–5). This is very odd, since the reduplicative sense is in effect a way of talking about the explanation for *x*'s possessing a certain property, and it seems evident that something cannot straightforwardly possess contradictory properties, irrespective of the *explanation* for its possession of these properties. Haldane makes his point by considering an objection to the effect that the correct analysis of '*x qua*$_r$ *H* is not *F*' is 'It is not the case that *x qua*$_r$ *H* is *F*'. On this analysis, of course, we can infer '*x* is *F*', but not '*x* is not *F*'. (On my analysis, of course, this objection is spot on.) Haldane replies as follows. ¬(x)(*Hx* → *Fx*) is equivalent to (∃x)(*Hx* & ¬*Fx*). If we assume, however, that the predicates *G* and *H* are coextensive, then if (x)(*Gx* → *Fx*), (∃x)(*Hx* & ¬*Fx*) is clearly false, and ¬(∃x)(*Hx* & ¬*Fx*) true. Thus in the case where *G* and *H* are coextensive the claimed existential consequence is false while the premiss remains true. (Roughly quoting Haldane, 'Incarnational Anthropology', 204, n. 20.) Haldane's point is that adopting the analysis suggested by his opponent—and for that matter by me—entails an invalid inference, and thus that the analysis must be false. The problem with Haldane's criticism lies in his analysing reduplicative propositions as truth-functional conditionals. The reduplicative analysis is about relationships of *explanation*, and we cannot use truth-functional conditionals (and certainly not non-modal truth-functional conditionals) to capture this sort of relation. But Haldane's objection relies on the truth-functional conditional analysis that he proposes, since it is only on this analysis that he can infer the contradictory claims that are in Haldane's account fatal for the objection, viz. (∃x)(*Hx* & ¬*Fx*) and ¬(∃x)(*Hx* & ¬*Fx*). If the reduplication is just a way of explaining how it is that *x* has a certain property, then we will not be inclined to think that, for example, the denial that *x* has a certain property *F* as a result of its being *H* entails that there exists something that is not *F*. So Haldane's analysis as it stands does not threaten my claim (a claim that the medievals agree with) that reduplicative analyses do not help deal with Christological contradictions.

[58] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 8 c (iii/1. 106^a); see also ad 2 (iii/1. 106$^{a\ b}$).

Aquinas's point here is that the predicate 'white' is true not of the whole Ethiopian but only of his teeth. Using 'qua_{sa}' to pick out this sense of 'qua', Aquinas thus accepts the following definition of 'qua_{sa}':

(B) x qua_{sa} y is $F = y$ is a part of x, and y is F.[59]

'Qua_{sa}' is thus as Aquinas presents it a sign of synecdoche. It *qualifies* the subject by modifying the reference of the subject term.

The analysis applies obviously in the case of whole–part relations. (Since Aquinas does not think that the human nature is really a part of the divine person, I will consider below whether or not the specificative understanding can have any analytic force in Christology.) And it is worth pausing to think about this. We might think that predicates of parts of a thing cannot be predicates of the whole thing. But this would be wrong. Eleonore Stump, in a lucid paper on Aquinas's Christology, points out that there are often senses in which the properties of a part are properties of the whole too. The case is clear enough with integral constitutive parts (recall Aquinas's fondness for the whole–part model for the hypostatic union):

There is a distinction between a property a whole has in its own right and a property it has in virtue of having a constituent that has that property in its own right; . . . a whole can borrow a property from one of its constituents. . . . Analogously, some of the properties attributed to Christ are properties borrowed from his constituent natures. So, for example, Christ is limited in power and not limited in power, but he borrows the first attribute from his human nature and the second from his divine nature. So he has the property of being limited in power just in virtue of having a constituent, namely, human nature, which has the property of being limited in power in its own right; he has the property of not being limited in power just in virtue of having a different constituent, divine nature, which has the property in its own right. Because the incompatible properties are borrowed properties, Christ does not have them in the same respect.[60]

This seems spot on, and it is easy enough to think of examples. While the borrowed property is *really* a property of the borrower, it is not—under normal circumstances—

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[59] I use 'qua_{sa}' to distinguish this specificative analysis offered by Aquinas from another, that I discuss below, derived from insights of Bonaventure (and labelled 'qua_{sb}').

[60] Eleonore Stump, 'Aquinas's Metaphysics of the Incarnation', forthcoming, pp. 15–16. I am very grateful to Eleonore Stump for giving a copy of the typescript of her paper to me. It seems to me likely that Reformation disagreements over the *communicatio idiomatum* are best explained, at least from a strictly Christological point of view, by a disagreement over precisely the issue outlined here. (Of course, Eucharistic controversies provide an *additional* explanation.) Both Zwingli and Calvin take a parts model (body and soul) as their basic Christological model, and then deny that any properties of the parts are literally properties of the whole (I provide a preliminary discussion of Zwingli's analysis of this in my article '*Alloiosis* in the Christology of Zwingli', *The Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, 47 (1996), 105–22.) Luther agrees with the later Reformed tradition that predicates are literally ascribed to their subject only if they are ascribed to the whole, and thus, contrariwise, holds that predicates of each part, since they can be ascribed to the whole, can be literally ascribed to the other part too (see for example the texts cited at nn. 2 and 3 above). Of course, the medievals must be right—and the later Protestants wrong—in denying the curious principle that predicates are literally ascribed to a whole only if they can be ascribed to all the parts. As I hope to have made clear, the medieval backgrounds to a parts Christology can be found variously in both Aquinas and Scotus; it is not clear to me as yet which of these two—if either—is the more important source for the various Protestant theories.

straightforwardly a property of the borrower. This, I take it, is the force of Aquinas's (8.11). And it is this that allows the otherwise contradictory properties to belong to one and the same substance.

The example in (8.11) is supposed to show, among other things, that the inference

(C) If *x* qua$_{sa}$ *y* is *F*, then *x* is *F*

is unsound whenever the three following conditions obtain: '*y* is *F*' is true, '*x* is *F*' (unqualified) is false, and the predicate is the sort of thing that could in principle be ascribed to the whole (*x*) as much as to a part of *x*. Truths merely about parts of things are not, other things being equal, straightforwardly or unqualifiedly truths about whole things. (They can, of course, be *qualifiedly* truths about whole things.)

What about cases where one or more of the three conditions necessary for the unsoundness of (C) do not obtain? Aquinas considers the most interesting case:

(8.12) Those things about which it could not be suspected that they belonged to the divine person in himself, can be said simply of Christ in virtue of the human nature: just as we say simply that Christ suffered, died, and was buried. . . . We say without determination that [the Ethiopian] is curly, because this can only pertain to him in virtue of his hair.[61]

So (C) is sound when '*F*' unambiguously predicates a part (*y*), such that we know that '*y* is *F*' is literally true, and such that the truth of '*y* is *F*' is *necessary* (as well as sufficient) for the truth of '*x* is *F*'.[62] In such cases, Aquinas holds that the whole—the borrower—has a property of one of its parts unqualifiedly or straightforwardly.

The specificative analysis I have just been considering clearly allows us to block Christological contradictions. Consider the following:

(6) Christ *qua*$_{sa}$ man is passible

(7) Christ *qua*$_{sa}$ God is impassible.

Supposing the unsoundness of (C) here, then on the definition of '*qua*$_{sa}$' just offered, (6) and (7) are not contradictories because Christ borrows the two properties—passibility and impassibility—respectively from his two different parts: the human nature and the divine nature.

On the face of it, the cogency of this analysis requires that the natures of Christ can be thought of as parts or constituents of the Word. After all, Chalcedonianism requires that every property necessary for being divine and every property necessary for being human can be predicated of the Word. And the specificative analysis is defined by Aquinas in terms of whole–part relations. It may be thought that Aquinas's use of the whole–part analogy for the hypostatic union places him in a strong position here. But I do not think that it does so in fact. The whole–part model is just that—a model, one that Aquinas thinks is literally *false*. The human nature is not in fact a part of the Word. Can the 'borrowing' of properties apply in cases other than those of parts and their wholes? I doubt it, because it seems to me that,

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[61] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 16. 8 c (iii/1. 106^a).
[62] In fact, (8.12) says a bit more than this, since Aquinas's real concern is to avoid ascribing passibility and so on to the divine nature. But this does not make any difference to the principles involved.

necessarily, a monadic property of a substance is either in itself a property of the whole substance or in itself a property of a part of the substance. Failing to be a monadic property of the whole and failing to be a property of a part are contraries. If Christ has no parts, then every monadic property of Christ is a property of the whole of Christ. Suppose possibility is not in itself a property of a part of Christ. Then it is a property of the whole of Christ. And nothing can have contradictory properties that are in themselves properties of the whole of that thing.[63]

Eleonore Stump proposes a counter-instance to this sort of line of reasoning. She puts the sort of objection that I am proposing with her customary rigour:

In the case of Christ, the natures are not integral parts; insofar as they are any sort of part at all, they are metaphysical parts. Metaphysical parts aren't physically segregated bits of the whole, and so it seems that a whole can't borrow properties from them. Metaphysical parts aren't really segregated from each other, as physical parts are segregated from one another in space.[64]

Her response is to find a case where specification appears to obtain even in the absence of physical parts. She considers Mark Twain's *Letters to the Earth*: a work that is at once serious and satirical: 'So the work qua attack on Christianity is serious (and therefore not funny); qua work of satire, on the other hand, it is very funny.'[65] I do not find this very plausible. The problem lies in the claim that 'serious' and 'satirical' are contraries; it seems to me that they are independent. And in any case, books have parts closely analogous to integral parts—a book can be good in parts, for example.[66]

Scotus offers a very similar—though more fully developed—treatment of these matters. And Scotus adopts a more explicitly mereological understanding of Christ than Aquinas does. (Aquinas's use of whole–part analyses is merely a model; for

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[63] If this is right, and if Christ's natures are not parts of his, then appealing to Christ's different natures as the immediate subjects of certain properties does not help deal with Christological contradictions. Thus, it is no help to argue, as Gyula Klima does, that the contradictions can be blocked by parsing all these specificative Christological propositions as being about the *natures* of Christ, unless we also think of the natures as parts. See Klima, 'Libellus pro sapiente—A Response to Allan Bäck's Argument against St Thomas Aquinas' Doctrine of the Incarnation', *New Scholasticism*, 58 (1984), 207–19, responding to Bäck, 'Aquinas on the Incarnation'. If we do not make this metaphysical claim, then Klima's linguistic analysis will raise the suspicion of Nestorianism.

[64] Stump, 'Aquinas's Metaphysics of the Incarnation', 17.   [65] Ibid.

[66] There is another reason for feeling unhappy about Aquinas's specificative analysis. Suppose the natures are not parts. Then Aquinas's analysis—which appears to allow, for example, human properties to be predicated of the human nature—seems close to Scotus's remote and proximate predication—an analysis that Aquinas also repudiates. On this, see text (8.7) above. My treatment of Aquinas's theory in Part I provides sufficient evidence for the first of these difficulties. For Aquinas's denial of something that looks like Scotus's remote and proximate predication, see e.g. *ST* 3. 16. 5 c (iii/1. 103ᵃ), where Aquinas carefully talks not of human properties belonging to the human nature, or being predicated of it, but of properties which *pertain to* the human nature being predicated of the divine person: 'Concrete names refer to the hypostasis of a nature. And for this reason those things which pertain to each nature can be predicated indifferently of concrete names.' On the other hand, it must be admitted that Aquinas sometimes talks in terms of the assumed human nature being a subject of properties: see for example the discussion of Christ's human attributes at *ST* 3. 9–15.

Scotus, the Word and the human nature really are parts of Christ.) Christologically, however, Scotus's mereological analysis is no help, as we shall see, because it does not provide a way for human properties to be ascribed to the Word (as well as to the mereological whole, Christ, a whole that for Scotus fails to be identical with the Word).[67] Like Aquinas, Scotus claims that there is sometimes a genuine sense in which a predicate of a part can be properly and straightforwardly a predicate of the whole:

(8.13) If 'healthy' is naturally or principally in a human being according to the chest, that is, according to the heart (which is what I understand by 'chest' here), the animal can then be said to be unqualifiedly healthy if the chest is healthy. But if this property or its opposite is naturally in another part [of the animal], then the [whole] animal is not said to be [unqualifiedly] healthy in so far as the property denominates this part, since then two contradictories could be simultaneously said of the same thing.[68]

Scotus provides a clarification here that is very important. This distances his account from Aquinas's in (8.12), and reduces the possibility of misunderstanding the specificative analysis as a way of legitimating contradictory predicates straightforwardly. In (8.13), Scotus argues that the following pair is consistent:

(8) This human being is healthy;

(9) This human being qua_{sa} some part other than her heart is unhealthy.

(9) on this analysis is equivalent to

(9*) Some part of this human being, other than her heart, is unhealthy.

The propositions are all consistent, according to Scotus, since the health of the parts— with the exception of the health of the heart—does not affect the health of the whole. Given that Christ is straightforwardly impassible, this strategy allows the following consistent pair:

(10) Christ is impassible;

(6) Christ qua_{sa} man is passible,

where (6) entails

(11) Christ's human nature is passible,

but not

(12) Christ is passible.

[67] We should again keep in mind Scotus's explicitly mereological analysis of Christ (though not of the Word). So the sort of specificative analysis that I am discussing here should fit rather more easily with his general Christological insights. But we should note too that none of the analyses of this sort of specificative proposition (propositions which include 'qua_{sa}') offered by Scotus quite dovetails into his general analysis of unqualified propositions which have 'Christ' as the subject—largely because Scotus does not exploit his insight that such propositions have predicates that are not univocal with their senses in non-mereological contexts. I have discussed Scotus's analysis of such propositions in Chs. 1 and 5 above.

[68] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 11. 2, n. 6 (Wadding, vii. 247).

This is fine; (12) needs to be false to avoid contradicting (10), but (6) is sufficient—given Scotus's mereological analysis—for Christ to borrow the property of passibility from his human part. (Borrowing a property does not mean having the property straightforwardly; indeed, it means not having it straightforwardly.)

Scotus develops his account in some detail, making use of whole–part analogies. Scotus considers the following fairly uncontroversial case:

> (13) *x*'s eyes see

and

> (14) *x* sees.

We would reasonably suppose that the truth of (13) entails the truth of (14). Supposing that (13) can be true, this pair would seem to be a good instance of the sort of situation Scotus has in mind with his part–whole analysis. Scotus believes that this sort of analysis can provide a harmless way of allowing the simultaneous truth of the following pair:

> (14) *x* sees,

and

> (15) *x* is blind:

(8.14) This does not follow: 'this animal is blind; therefore it does not see', unless the animal has just one nature, to which one visual system belongs. For if the animal had two natures, to which two visual systems belonged, it would follow only that the animal does not see according to that nature according to which it is blind.[69]

That is to say, Scotus wants to deny that (14) and (15) are contradictories (he denies that '*x* is blind' entails '*x* does not see'), since in the case of an animal with two visual systems, one functioning and one damaged, both (14) and (15) seem to be true. And the passage clearly extends the discussion from talk of parts and wholes to talk of things and their natures. So the discussion might provide a way of clarifying Scotus's theory of remote and proximate predication. Scotus clearly supposes that the inferences to (14) and (15) are buttressed by his theory that there are some natures whose properties are properties of the remote subject—in this case, *seeing* and *being blind* are properties of an animal (had in virtue of its two natures). What Scotus will not allow is the conjunction of (14) with

> (14′) It is not the case that *x* sees.

So 'is blind' is a predicate of the whole animal in virtue of one of its natures, but 'does not see' is a predicate of the whole straightforwardly.

Scotus uses his analysis to try to make sense of Christological propositions, and an examination of the Christological material will help us see what he is trying to get at:

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[69] Scotus, *RP* 3. 11. 1–2, n. 4 (Wadding, xi. 459ᵃ).

(8.15) Even if in virtue of the two natures opposed affirmative properties [viz. creator and creature] are predicated of the whole . . . nevertheless it is impossible for the negatives of these affirmatives to be *simpliciter* in the same subject simultaneously, and thus contradictories are never simultaneously true. Rather, just as he is passible and impassible, so 'It is not the case that he is passible' is false, and likewise 'It is not the case that he is impassible.'[70]

'*Simpliciter*' here means 'ruling out any qualification', and the point is that

(16) It is not the case that Christ is passible

and

(17) It is not the case that Christ is impassible

rule out their contradictions whether qualified or not. Thus, (16) rules out

(6) Christ qua_{sa} man is passible.

(6) is true, so (16) is false. Likewise, (17) rules out

(7) Christ qua_{sa} God is impassible.

(7) is true, so (17) is false.

This analysis—which is exactly right—is very revealing of the overall dynamic of the specificative reading of these propositions. The point is that propositions of the form 'x qua_{sa} y is F' have in effect two-place predicates. And this is what allows 'x qua_{sa} y is F' to be consistent both with 'x is not-F' and 'x qua_{sa} z is not F'. (Compare standard cases of two-place predicates. 'Rxy' and '$Rx\neg y$' are not contradictory: the first states that x is related to y; the second states that x is related to not-y—for example, I can be related (perhaps by affection) to Felix the cat and to another cat that is not Felix. But 'Rxy' and '$\neg(Rxy)$' are contradictory: the first states that x is related to y, and the second that x is not related to y—for example, I cannot both be related to Felix in a certain way and not be related to Felix in that same way.)

The problem with this is that Christ, in Scotus's account, is not identical with the Word. If Scotus were both to keep his mereological analysis of Christ, and to claim that Christ were identical with the Word, then he could have—just as Stump proposes—borrowed attributes that, if they were not borrowed, would be contradictory: passibility and impassibility, for example. And the problem with

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[70] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 11. 2, n. 7 (Wadding, vii. 247). See also Bonaventure: 'These can stand together, i.e. to be simply (*primo*) mortal and immortal. But these two propositions cannot stand together: "Christ is mortal", and "It is not the case that Christ is mortal," since the negation to a greater extent negates, and removes the signification of, the term "mortal", than the "immortal" opposed to it': Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 11. 2. 2 ad 3 pro parte neg. (iii. 254^b). (Scotus denies that Christ is a creature since 'creature' is the sort of term that applies to things in general, and not just to things in virtue of their kindnatures: see *Ord.* 3. 11. 1, n. 12 (Wadding, vii. 242).) Scotus makes much the same points when discussing the senses in which Christ is worthy of worship. He believes that 'being worthy of worship' is the sort of predicate which applies to a whole. He believes that, in the case of the incarnate Christ, 'being worthy of worship' applies in respect of one of Christ's natures—the divine nature. But he denies that 'Christ is worthy of worship in respect only of his divine nature', if this proposition is understood to mean that only a part of Christ is properly worthy of worship. See Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 9. un., n. 6 (Wadding, vii. 222); see also Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 9. 1. 1 c (iii. 200^b–201^a).

this proposal—as I shall outline in the Conclusion below—is finding a whole–part analysis that allows Christ—the mereological whole—to be irreducibly one person.

In non-Christological contexts, Scotus tries to find a way in which an analysis related to this specificative one that I have been considering might be made to work without the need to appeal to part–whole relations. His proposals are not unlike Stump's Mark Twain example (though they are developed more fully), and seem to me to be open to the same sort of objection as Stump's example. When discussing the theology of the Trinity, Scotus claims that one object that essentially possesses distinct attributes can be the subject of contradictory properties provided that the properties belong to the object in virtue of the different attributes. He gives an example from the created world: white is both similar to black and dissimilar to it: similar in virtue of their shared genus (colour); dissimilar in virtue of their being different species of this genus.[71] In this case, contradictory predicates are true of one thing even though this thing lacks integral parts. Scotus briefly mentions this sort of analysis in the Christological context too, and there he classifies it as a sort of specificative analysis.[72]

Clearly, if this analysis is correct, it will be possible for one thing to have contrary or contradictory attributes *in different respects*, even if these different respects are not parts.[73] But it seems to me that the strategy is open to the same sort of objection as I raised above against Stump's Mark Twain example. As Tweedale puts it, discussing Scotus's example of the similarity and dissimilarity of black and white:

Scotus gives the case of whiteness, which he says both agrees with and differs from blackness. This will be relevant only if we interpret 'differs from' as the negation of 'agrees with' (likewise 'dissimilar to' as the negation of 'similar to'). We might want to hoist the red flag right there. . . . But what reason do we have for saying 'differs from' is not the negation of 'agrees with' other than that we often want to say that one and the same thing both agrees with and differs from something else[?] In other words, our reason for raising the red flag was simply that we saw our revered first principle [viz. the law of non-contradiction] was headed for trouble if Scotus was allowed his gambit. But that, of course, just begs the

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[71] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 2. 2. 1–4, n. 419 (Vatican, ii. 365–6).

[72] The example is 'Motion is the act of a being in potency in virtue of its being potency', discussed at *RP* 3. 6. 2, n. 3 (Wadding, xi. 444ᵇ). Bäck calls this the 'abstractive' analysis, and he distinguishes it from the standard specificative analysis by claiming that the abstractive analysis applies in those cases where the feature of that subject that is isolated is only *formally distinct* from the subject itself: see Bäck, 'Scotus on the Consistency of the Incarnation and Trinity', 98–100. This is not quite right, because the abstractive analysis could presumably be made to work in cases of really distinct accidents too. The crucial feature of the abstractive analysis is that it does not require the subject to have different *parts*. Bäck observes that the strategy is Aristotelian: 'Examples of such a use of qua phrases in Aristotelian philosophy abound: "being *qua* being is the subject of metaphysics," "the doctor builds, not *qua* doctor but *qua* builder"': see Bäck, 'Scotus on the Consistency of the Incarnation and Trinity', 99, referring to Aristotle, *Metaph.* Γ. 1 and *Ph.* 3. 1.

[73] We should note that Scotus does not use the abstractive analysis in this way in Christology. In the passage where Scotus mentions it, his purpose is merely to show how Christ as God is the same thing as Christ as man: see *RP* 3. 6. 2, n. 3 (Wadding, xi. 445ᵃ).

question against someone like Scotus who from the start has few scruples against weakening the first principle.[74]

In other words, we can use this strategy in Christological and other contexts only if we are prepared to sacrifice, or at least play fast and loose with, the law of non-contradiction. This seems quite right; and I would judge the law of non-contradiction, and everything that entails it, to be too high a sacrifice to pay, and too rigid a principle to allow us to play fast and loose with it. So Tweedale's initial hoisting of the red flag is right: the different attributes that Scotus sees as contraries ('agrees with', 'differs from') are not in fact contraries—just as I claimed to be the case for Stump's 'serious' and 'satirical'. And in this case the strategy cannot be used to help deal with Christological contradictions (assuming—as seems clear enough—that impassible and passible are genuine contradictories except in cases where they are borrowed from different parts, as in the standard specificative analysis).

Scotus is aware of yet another strategy for dealing with these Christological difficulties. The origins of the strategy can be found in Bonaventure, though Bonaventure does not develop it in just the direction that Scotus does. On this analysis, the various Christological predicates genuinely apply to the whole, and they do so without generating contradictions. Bonaventure claims that while 'Christ is a created-man' is true, 'Christ is created', understood straightforwardly, is false.[75] And this claim suggests to Scotus an alternative strategy for dealing with Christological predication. Suppose, Scotus argues, we allow the specifying 'qua' to qualify not the reference of the subject term, as 'qua_{sa}' does, but rather the sense of the predicate term. Using 'qua_{sb}' for this, we read (using Scotus's example), 'The Ethiopian qua_{sb} teeth is white' as 'The Ethiopian is white-toothed':

(8.16) If we add 'according to his teeth' to the predicate, such that it specifies the predicate and removes the incompatibility of the predicate with the subject, then the proposition, which without the qualification is false, is true.[76]

There are two very appealing features of this account. First, it is clear that the predicates truly and properly—straightforwardly—apply to the whole. Thus, as the quotation makes clear, the reference of the subject term is left unaltered by the

[74] Martin M. Tweedale, *Scotus vs. Ockham: A Medieval Dispute over Universals*, 2 vols., Studies in the History of Philosophy, 50 (Lewiston, Queenstown, and Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1999), ii. 493.

[75] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 11. 2. 1 ad 5 (iii. 250[b]).

[76] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 11. 2, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 246). See too the following very striking passage from Luther: 'Thesis 53. "The Ethiopian is white according to his teeth," the grammarian can say in a different way thus: "The Ethiopian is white in his teeth (*albus dentibus*), or of white teeth, or with white teeth." Th. 54. If this does not satisfy, let him say, that the Ethiopian has white teeth, or that the teeth in the Ethiopian "white-ize" (*albent*), or, most simply, that the teeth of the Ethiopian are white. . . . Th. 56. So, since these ways of speaking ("Christ as man, or according to his humanity, or by his humanity, or through his humanity, or in his humanity is a creature") intend nothing other than that [Christ] has a creature, or assumed a human creature, or (which is the simplest) the humanity of Christ is a creature, we should condemn the *pravilogicales*, who through grammatically diverse forms of speaking invent opinions about the same thing': Luther, *Disp. de div. et hum. Christi* (1540), theses 53, 54, 56 (WA, xxxix/2. 96).

specification. In fact, the example makes it clear that the predicate is untrue of the parts. The Ethiopian, and not his tooth, is white-toothed.[77]

Secondly, it is clear that the inference from the qualified predicate to the simple predicate does not follow:

(8.17) This does not follow, 'Christ is a created-man, therefore he is a creature.'[78]

Thus, according to Scotus, being white-toothed is not a case of being white; being a created-man is not an instance of being created.

These two features of this specificative analysis are appealing, and they might provide a way for Scotus to clarify his theory of proximate and remote predication in such a way as to avoid generating contradictions. But ultimately they are as theologically problematic as the consequences of the Thomist-style specificative analysis ('qua_{sa}'). Think about the following:

> (18) Christ qua_{sb} man is possible.

(18) should be understood as

> (19) Christ is a possible-man

(or perhaps 'possibly-hominized').[79] But (19) avoids contradicting 'Christ is impassible' only at the price of denying that *being a possible-man* or *being passibly-hominized* is an instance of *being passible* at all.[80] And this looks dangerously close to Docetism.

All in all, it does not seem to me that there is much Christological mileage in either sort of specificative analysis. The reason is that, at the very least, the defender of Chalcedonian orthodoxy needs to be able to claim that properties essential to God and humanity are not incompatible. The medievals, in seeing that the reduplicative analysis does not help deal with Christological contradictions, saw clearly enough what is at stake here—that is to say, they saw clearly enough that the bare Patristic strategy will not do. But they failed to see that use of the specificative analysis requires a very serious acceptance of a whole–part Christology.

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[77] Bonaventure does not quite understand that this analysis allows the predicates to apply to the whole—still less that it *requires* that the predicates apply to the whole. He argues that 'created-man' is true of Christ, while 'creature' is not, since otherwise 'such a predicate would be understood to be attributed to him straightforwardly and wholly, i.e. in virtue of each nature': Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 11. 2. 1 ad 5 (iii. 250^b). On this analysis, as I understand it, 'created-man' is true of Christ only because it does *not* apply to the whole.

[78] Scotus, *RP* 3. 11. 1–2, n. 9 (Wadding, xi. 450^a); see also *Ord.* 3. 11. 1, n. 13 (Wadding, vii. 243).

[79] For 'hominized', see above. Scotus in fact is unhappy with this predicate: see *Ord.* 3. 7. 1, n. 9 (Wadding, vii. 193).

[80] Michael Gorman has suggested to me in correspondence that 'being a possible-man' and 'being passibly-hominized' do not contradict 'being passible', but rather 'being passible *in every respect*'. But this is not quite right. 'Qua_{sb},' as it is defined in my authors modifies the sense of the predicate, specifying a particular *sort* of suffering. 'Being a passible-man', or 'being passibly-hominized', is a species of the genus 'being passible'. So we can infer that x is passible from the statements that x is a passible man, and that x is passibly-hominized. 'Being passible in a certain respect', contrariwise, does not modify the *sense* of the predicate 'being passible' in this way; it modifies the reference of the subject term, and specifies that the predicate is true of the subject in a certain respect—'in a certain respect' is equivalent to 'qua_{sa},' not 'qua_{sb}.'

An analysis of potentially incompatible predicates in terms of specificative quali-
fications seems to make too many Christological sacrifices. The correct strategy—
supposing that a parts Christology cannot be made to work—is to jettison one or
other in any contradictory pair of divine and human attributes. It is this strategy—
or so it seems to me—which allows the doctrine of the Incarnation to be coherent.
In fact, in some passages, Scotus makes just this claim; for example:

(8.18) I concede that there is greater diversity [between man and God], but not greater repugn-
ance: for those things are said to be more diverse which share less of the same kind; but
they are not for this reason more incompatible [with each other]—just as white and black
share more [sorts of feature] than white and man, and nevertheless white and black are more
incompatible than white and man, and in this way a greater diversity of the extremes is not
a cause of their falsity, but [the cause of their falsity is] the repugnance or incompatibility
of extremes having formally one of those four oppositions [viz. on the square of opposition].[81]

(8.18) makes it look as though Scotus believes that we could formulate a list of essen-
tial divine and human properties, and discover no incompatible pairs on the list—
unlike the case of black and white, which are incompatible with each other. (Recall
too Scotus's discussion, mentioned in Chapter 7, section 6, of the possibility of a
created *suppositum*'s sustaining, in addition to its own nature, a nature that is not
its own. A central feature of Scotus's discussion of this counterfactual is his con-
cern that the two natures not have contradictory attributes.) For example, we might
decide that human beings are essentially passible; which, given the Incarnation, will
entail that impassibility is not a part of the intension of divine nature. As I have
already suggested, this seems to me to be exactly what a defender of Chalcedonian
orthodoxy should do. The medievals, however, were too strongly wedded to their
brand of traditional theism to be prepared to follow through the moves hinted at
in (8.18).

[81] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 7. 1, n. 9 (Wadding, vii. 193); see also 3. 1. 1, n. 16 (Wadding, vii. 24). For the
oppositions between universal affirmative, universal negative, particular affirmative, and particular neg-
ative propositions, see e.g. Aristotle, *Int.* 7 (17^a38–18^b12).

Chapter 9

RELATIONS AND
INTRINSIC PROPERTIES

One of the advantages of the rejected *habitus* theory, at least according to its adherents, is that it can give an account of the Incarnation without having to concede that the immutable Word in any way changed.[1] The insight derives from Augustine: the Incarnation is like a *habitus* in which what changes is not the subject, but rather 'those things which are accidental to it'. Augustine uses the insight to illustrate the Incarnation: 'The Word did not change on the assumption of a man, just as limbs endowed with clothing do not change.'[2]

I am not sure who first saw the applicability of this insight outside the context of the *habitus* theory.[3] By the time of Bonaventure, writing just before Aquinas, the general applicability of the insight was firmly established. The basic idea is that the Incarnation is a relation, such that the human nature is really related to the Word without there being a corresponding real relation in the Word. There is an obvious appeal to this insight: if successful, it would allow us to talk about the Incarnation without having to compromise divine immutability. It is in precisely this way that the medievals made use of the strategy, and it is still embraced by Thomists and others for just this reason.[4]

How does the strategy deal with the threat to immutability? The idea is that a proposition such as 'God became man' is true not in virtue of any change in God, but merely in virtue of a change in the created order—a new sort of relation of a creature to God. Some medievals use the strategy as a way of dealing with the issue of passibility too. Passibility, as understood by the medievals, requires passive potency. The lack of passive potency in God is sufficient for an account of the hypostatic union merely in terms of (the relevant sort of) dependence, not in terms of actualization. And mere dependence entails that the hypostatic union exists merely in

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[1] For the *habitus* theory, see Ch. 1 above.

[2] Augustine, *De Div. Qu.* 73. 2, n. 1 (pp. 209–10), quoted by Lombard, *Sent.* 3. 6. 5 (ii. 56), in support of the *habitus* theory.

[3] The strategy can be found in embryo in the *Sum. fr. Alex.* 3. un. 1. 4. 2. 7. 1 ad 1 (iv/2. 93^b); and in Albert the Great, *In Sent.* 3. 6. A. 1. 1. ad 1 (xxviii. 122^a).

[4] See for example Thomas G. Weinandy, *Does God Change? The Word's Becoming in the Incarnation*, Studies in Historical Theology, 4 (Still River, MA: St Bede's Publications, 1984), 74–100; P. J. Bearsley, 'Jesus the Son of Mary according to St Thomas Aquinas', *Angelicum*, 55 (1978), 104–23, pp. 104–5, 113, 116. For an excellent discussion of the issues, see Michael Gorman, 'Christ as Composite According to Aquinas', *Traditio*, 55 (2000), 143–57.

virtue of a real relation in the human nature.[5] In other words, the unreal-relation claim was seen to be necessary to save divine impassibility.

Thomas Weinandy is right when he claims that this theory, 'on first reading . . . seems to raise more questions than it answers'.[6] An obvious worry is that it empties the Incarnation of any real content: 'such a relation is no relation at all. God may appear to be related, but really is not.'[7] In what follows, I will discuss various medieval theories, including the reasons offered for God's failure to be really related to any of his creatures. Having discussed the various theories, I will attempt to offer an evaluation of the medieval contribution here, and end by considering whether a distinction between Christ and the Word—such as I have been arguing Scotus proposes—might allow for a less vacuous account of the matter. (On this sort of account, the *Word* is not really related to the human nature and human attributes, though *Christ* (the composite of Word and human nature) is.)

Before we look in detail at the medieval theory in its application to the Incarnation, we need to be clear on the differences between medieval and modern theories of relations. More historically-minded readers might like to skip straight to section 1. (They might too find section 2 below otiose, and prefer merely to read the first section.)

On the face of it, the medieval view requires a very particular—characteristic— theory of relations: one which reduces relations to monadic properties. Thus, roughly, if an object x is really related to another object y, then a relation R—some sort of property—really inheres in, or really belongs to, x. If y is related to x, then another relational property—R_1—belongs to y. This is different from most modern accounts of relations, according to which a relation is a two-place predicate, or something that in some sense 'hangs between' two different individuals but is not a property of either one of them. The medieval account of relations is clearly sufficient to allow for x's being really related to y without y's being really related to x. There is a modern correlate to this medieval theory. Suppose we contrast properties and relations in the way just outlined, and hold that properties are intrinsic in a way in which relations are not. (We can certainly understand relations to be reducible to concepts here, though we need not do so.) Different predicates can be true of an item at different times even if that item is *in every other respect* unchanging. Peter Geach labelled this sort of change a (merely) Cambridge change:

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[5] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 1 ad 1 (iii. 10ᵃ ᵇ).   [6] Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, 87.

[7] Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, 87. The great nineteenth-century Lutheran historian of doctrine J. A. Dorner puts the matter with his customary clear-headedness: 'Thomas Aquinas considered the incarnation to be something new merely in relation to man, not for God himself. . . . We see, accordingly that [Thomas] . . . strictly speaking, let[s] fall the very idea of an incarnation of God . . . in that he does not admit that God became man, but sees in Christ merely an impersonal manifestation of God under the form of a man . . .': J. A. Dorner, *History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, Division Second, Volume 1, trans. D. W. Simon, Clark's Foreign Theological Library, third series, 10 (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1861), 353–4—though I do not think we need agree with Dorner's further assessment that this amounts to the *habitus* theory, despite the origins of the strategy in this theory.

We need to distinguish 'real' changes, processes that actually go on in a given individual, from among 'Cambridge' changes. The great Cambridge philosophical works published in the early years of this [viz. the twentieth] century, like Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* and McTaggart's *Nature of Existence*, explained change as simply a matter of contradictory attributes' holding good of individuals at different times. Clearly, any change logically implies a 'Cambridge' change, but the converse is surely not true; there is a sense of 'change', hard to explicate, in which it is *false* to say that Socrates changes by coming to be shorter than Theaetetus when the boy grows up, or that the butter changes by rising in price . . . ; in these cases, 'Cambridge' changes of an object (Socrates, the butter . . .) make no 'real' change in the object.[8]

In fact, the theory of relations adopted does not make a great deal of difference here. It does so for some sorts of theological claims—e.g. about creation. But it does not in the case of the Incarnation, since we can deny the intrinsicity of human properties without being committed to any specific theory of relations.

1. THEORIES

Bonaventure

Bonaventure's account of the matter, for all its brevity, is as sophisticated as any in the Middle Ages. Indeed, unlike Aquinas, Bonaventure expressly relates his theory —just as he should—not just to divine immutability but to divine impassibility as well. As we have seen, Bonaventure argues that the human nature (merely) depends (in the relevant sense) on the Word. Bonaventure's reason for this claim is, uncontroversially, that the human nature does not actualize any passive potency in the Word: it lacks any feature in virtue of which the actualization of passive potency could occur. Dependence is analysed in merely relational terms. But, according to Bonaventure, we always analyse God–creature relations in terms of a real relation in the creature with no corresponding real relation in God.[9]

Bonaventure elsewhere offers an argument to show why God–creature relations are reducible to real relations merely in creatures, with (necessarily) no corresponding real relation in God. Real relations are of three types: (i) the result of certain accidental properties; (ii) causal; (iii) originating. The first cannot be in God, since God has no accidents.[10] The second sort of relation cannot be in God, since while *being caused* is a real relation, *being a cause* is not. The third sort of relation is in God, but only in the context of internal Trinitarian relations. So there are no real relations

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[8] Peter Geach, 'Logic in Metaphysics and Theology', in *id.*, *Logic Matters* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), 289–327, pp. 321–2.

[9] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 1 ad 1 (iii. 10ᵃ ᵇ). The same argument is repeated in Matthew of Aquasparta: see *QDI* 8 ad 2 (p. 162). Matthew, as we have seen above, follows Bonaventure closely.

[10] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 1. 30. un. 3 (i. 525ᵇ). Bonaventure argues that the presence of accidents in God would compromise both divine simplicity and divine causal priority over creatures.

in God to his creatures.[11] On the other hand, what Bonaventure calls 'modal' relations can exist in God—by which he means that certain relational predicates are true of God in virtue of certain corresponding real relations in creatures to God.[12] Bonaventure's modal relations are thus what the later scholastics call 'rational' relations: a relation 'according to our mode of understanding'.[13] Calling such relations 'modes', or 'rational relations', and denying reality to them, needs to be understood carefully. As Bonaventure notes, these modal relations entail that certain propositions are *really* true of God (and therefore their contradictories really false of him). But this real truth is not the result of anything intrinsic in God, be it relational or non-relational accident. The truth of the relevant propositions is entirely the result of the way creatures are:

(9.1) When it is objected that 'Lord' implies superiority, and likewise 'creator' causality, I say that in God superiority is really superiority, and [causality is] really causality, because God is really superior to others, and really causes them. But this superiority is not really a relation, and likewise neither [is] causality, but it is really the divine essence which is itself superior, and causes.[14]

So God is really these relational things (superior, creator), but he is not so in virtue of any relation inherent in him. The relevant relational accidents inhere in the creaturely terms of the relations:

(9.2) Some things are relatives according to the existence of both extremes, like 'master' and 'slave' in creatures; some just from one extreme, as the known and knowledge, or the measured and the measure. And so it is in the case at hand [i.e. relations between God and creatures].[15]

Christologically, then, it is true to say, for example, that God became man; but the truth of this proposition is the result not of a real relation that begins to be in God, but merely of a real relation that begins to exist in the created order:

(9.3) In the work of the Incarnation, it was brought about that God is man, not in virtue of any change brought about in God, but in virtue of a change brought about in the other extreme [of the relation].[16]

Aquinas

Aquinas's account is very similar to this, and the differences from Bonaventure lie merely in certain small details.[17] Aquinas does not appeal to the account of

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[11] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 1. 30. un. 3 (i. 525[b]–526[a]). *Being a cause* is not a real relation since the inherence of a real relation in a substance entails that the substance in some sense causally depend on something external to it (namely, on the object to which it is related); clearly, a cause cannot causally depend in any sense on its effect.

[12] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 1. 30. un. 3 (i. 526[a]).   [13] Ibid. 1. 30. un. 3 (i. 526[a]).

[14] Ibid. 1. 30. un. 3 ad 4 and 5 (i. 526[b]).   [15] Ibid. 1. 30. un. 3 ad 3 (i. 526[b]).

[16] Ibid. 3. 7. 1. 2 ad 1 (iii. 175[a]).

[17] For this reason, it is quite wrong to claim that 'in placing the incarnational act within the conceptual framework of relations, Aquinas has made an original contribution to Christology' (see Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, 87). This conceptual framework is already found in a fully developed form in Bonaventure.

relations to show how the human nature does not actualize any passive potency in the Word. There is an obvious reason for this. Aquinas's account of the hypostatic union relies, as we have seen, on the concrete whole–concrete part analogy. And it is easy to see why this analogy pushes away from the actualization problem felt so keenly by those who prefer some sort of substance–accident analogy (such as Bonaventure). We do not tend to think of a concrete whole as having a passive potency for its integral parts in the same way as we might think of a substance as having a passive potency for its accidents.

Aquinas certainly believes that there are relations between wholes and their parts. But, according to Aquinas (following the standard medieval line), there cannot be real relations in God to his creatures. Aquinas appeals to his doctrine of God's pure actuality to show this. Since God is the first mover, he cannot contain any passive potency. (If he did, something could affect him, and thus he would not be the first mover.[18])

Aquinas uses precisely Bonaventure's strategy to try to show how Christ's human nature can be really related to the Word without there being any corresponding real relation in the Word:

(9.4) This union is not in God really, but only according to reason. For God is said to be united to a creature from the fact that the creature is united to him, without any change in God.[19]

In an important passage, Aquinas offers an analogy:

(9.5) 'Becoming' means that something begins to be predicated of something else. Whence, whenever something begins to be predicated of something else with a change in the thing that is the subject of predication, then 'becoming' is 'changing'. And this pertains to every-thing that is said non-relationally: for whiteness or size cannot begin to belong to something unless this be because it newly changes to whiteness or size. But those things which are said relationally can begin to be predicated of something without its change: as in the case of a man who begins to be to the right through the motion of something to his left. Whence in such cases it is not necessary that everything that becomes, is changed, for this [becoming] can happen through the change of something else. . . . Being man pertains to God in virtue of the union, which is a certain relation. For this reason being man begins to be predicated of God without his change, through a change in the human nature which is assumed to the divine person.[20]

As Weinandy has pointed out, what Aquinas means to claim is that certain tensed propositions about an object x can really change in truth value, not in virtue of any real change in x, but merely in virtue of a real change in an object to which x is related.[21] We should be quite clear, again as Weinandy notes, that these propositions are *really* about their subjects. Aquinas's claim that the relation is merely rational is intended

[18] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 3. 1 c (i/1. 14ᵇ), quoted at (c.1); in my Conclusion I will suggest a reason why we should not regard this argument as satisfactory.

[19] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 7. ad 1 (iii/1. 20ᵃ).   [20] Ibid. 3. 16. 6. ad 2 (iii/1. 104ᵃ).

[21] Weinandy, *Does God Change?*, 86–96.

to show no more than that such propositions are true not in virtue of a form inherent in their subject, but in terms of a form inherent in something other than their subject. In fact, as Weinandy notes, Aquinas's position amounts to no more than merely that a proposition can be true of its subject without this truth requiring an inherent form in the thing referred to by the subject of the proposition: 'It is because the creature is really related to God as the source of its being, that God is actually related to [it] as creator.'[22]

Aquinas makes this clear by distinguishing between two different aspects of categorial relations: the *esse-ad* of the relation, and the *esse-in* of the relation. The *esse-ad* of the relation is 'a respect or condition toward another';[23] the *esse-in* of a relation is its existence as an accident, its inherence in a subject. This *esse-in* is simply identified, by Aquinas, with the non-relational accident that grounds the relation: for example, the *esse-in* of a relation of similarity that Plato has to Socrates as two white objects is just the whiteness of Plato.[24] Real relations—categorial real relations —have both the *esse-in* and the *esse-ad* of a relation. But rational relations have *esse-ad* without *esse-in*; in short, they are not grounded on any inherent accident:

While not accidents, relations of reason and the personal relations in the Trinity are truly relations, for although they do not have the property of inhering in a subject . . . they do have the *ratio* of a relation, i.e. a respect toward another.[25]

It is this, presumably, which Weinandy wants to highlight when he claims that rational relations, while not real, are fully actual.

Applied to the Incarnation, Aquinas's position is that the Word is actually related to his human nature—he has the *ratio* or *esse-ad* of such a relation. But he is not (categorially or) really related to the nature, since he has the *esse-ad* of the relation without the inherence of any accident in him. He has the *esse-ad* of the relation merely in virtue of the possession of a real relation by the assumed human nature.

Overall, Aquinas offers a fuller account than Bonaventure of the metaphysics of relations. But the crucial claim—that a relational predication can be true of its subject without this subject requiring an inherent form—is clearly present in both thinkers.

Duns Scotus

Scotus uses the claim that God cannot be really related to his creatures as the premiss in his argument in favour of his account of the hypostatic union as a dependence relation analogous to the relation between an accident and a substance:

(9.6) The assuming person has no real relation to the created nature, from book 1 distinction 30. So, conversely, unless the assumed nature has some relation to the assuming thing,

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[22] Ibid., 94.
[23] On this, see Mark G. Henninger, *Relations: Medieval Theories 1250–1325* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 16, and the references cited in n. 15 there.
[24] Henninger, *Relations*, 19–23, and 14–16, nn. 8 and 16.   [25] Ibid., 17.

nothing would be understood by this union in itself (*per se*); neither is the relation in the assumed nature merely a rational thing, because then the union would not be real. The union is therefore a non-mutual relation (*relatio disquiparantiae*)[26] that is real in one related extreme, to which no relation corresponds in the other extreme—or at least, no real relation. And this relation is one of order in the related extreme.[27]

(For Scotus, then, the claim about the unreality of relations between God and creatures is sufficient to generate his whole metaphysics of the hypostatic union. Fortunately—since it seems to me that there is much to be learned from Scotus's Christology—it is not also necessary.)

Why does Scotus accept his premiss, namely, that there are no real relations in God to his creatures? If God were really related to any of his creatures, something in God—his relation to his creatures—would require the existence of something external to him. So God cannot be really related to any of his creatures.[28] What Scotus is objecting to is not the *logical necessity* of something external to God for the existence of something in God, but rather the (in some sense) *causal necessity* of something external to God for the existence of something in God. After all, God's knowledge of the existence of contingent things in some sense logically requires that those things actually exist, even if (according to Scotus) the existence of created reality has no role as part of a set of causal conditions for God's knowledge. God's knowledge that I exist logically requires my existence; but my existence is in no sense part of a set of causal conditions for God's knowledge that I exist. The case of real relations is different: real relations are in some sense caused by their terms. Since God's knowledge is wholly caused by him, it is not a real relation.[29]

As we have seen, Aquinas insists that the rationality of a relation, while not requiring the reality of the relation as grounded on an inherent non-relational form, certainly requires what Weinandy calls the *actuality* of the relation, such that the actuality of the relation is quite independent of any rational activity. Thus, Aquinas's rational relations are not reducible to merely conceptual relations—they are not constructed by our thought processes. For Scotus, however, the situation is rather different. As far as I can tell, Scotus believes that rational relations are indeed reducible to merely conceptual relations:

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[26] Maria Burger, *Personalität im Horizont absoluter Prädestination: Untersuchungen zur Christologie des Johannes Duns Scotus und ihrer Rezeption in modernen theologischen Ansätzen*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, N. F., 40 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1994), 53, n. 11, plausibly suggests emending this to '*disparantiae*', in line with *RP* 3. 1. 1, n. 2 (Wadding, xi. 419ᵇ). The manuscript tradition, however, is firmly in favour of the eccentric '*disquiparantiae*': see e.g. MS A, fo. 137ᵛᵃ.

[27] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 3 (Wadding, vii. 5–6).

[28] Ibid. 1. 30. 1–2, n. 51 (Vatican, vi. 192). In *Quod.* 1, n. 8 (Wadding edition, xii. 10; Alluntis and Wolter, 11–12 (nn. 1. 20–1. 22)), Scotus offers a different argument: 'Relation to a creature cannot be a pure perfection, because it involves a term that is potential', and every essential divine attribute is a pure perfection. On God's pure perfections, see my *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), ch. 3, section 1.

[29] For God's knowledge of contingent truths as in no sense caused by anything external to him, see my *Duns Scotus*, 51–5.

(9.7) If *per impossibile* God were not an intellectual nature . . . and he produced a stone, then the stone would be really related to God, and nevertheless there would be no relation of reason in God to it [viz. the stone].[30]

Presumably, this means that propositions about God's (rational or conceptual) relations to creatures are true only if someone cognizes the creature's real relations to God. Scotus's position here does not of course commit him to the falsity of propositions about God's relations to creatures. It is true (now) that God is creator, and likewise false (now) that God is not creator. To this extent, Scotus's position is like Aquinas's. But there is a further intuition underlying Scotus's mind-dependence thesis about rational relations. As we have just seen, Aquinas distinguishes two aspects of a relation: its *esse-in* and its *esse-ad*. Scotus, however, never makes a distinction of this nature. He claims, rather, that categorial relations—relations founded on non-relational accidents—are themselves things.[31] Relations are inherent accidents for Scotus, and he does not give any account of what we might call the *esse-ad* component of a relation over and above an account of the relation's *esse-in* (borrowing Aquinas's terminology to talk about Scotus's inherence claim). Real relations here are *reduced* to a (very generous) theory of their *esse-in*. So it might be true that, in virtue of his possessing human nature, God is man; but he is not related (at all) to this nature, since he does not possess the relevant relational form. Supposing that my analysis of Scotus is right—and Scotus does not propose a brand of relation other than real and mind-dependent (i.e. rational)—then for Scotus the Word's rational relation to his human nature is wholly mind-dependent.

2. EVALUATION

Scotus's account is emptier than Aquinas's: a debased form of the original currency. The value of a currency can be assessed by (among other things) how much it will buy. The medievals used the theories outlined in section 1 of this chapter to try to show how the Incarnation—which requires mutability, temporality, and passibility—could be consistent with a doctrine of God that requires immutability, timelessness, and impassibility. If the proposed strategy can achieve this without compromising the integrity of the Incarnation, then we should value it highly. In this section, I shall try to show what this medieval strategy can achieve, and what its limitations might be. My conclusion will be that the strategy I am assessing here should be assigned a low value.

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[30] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 30. 1–2, n. 39 (Vatican, vi. 186). On this, see my 'Duns Scotus on Eternity and Timelessness', *Faith and Philosophy*, 14 (1997), 3–25, pp. 9–11.

[31] On this, see Henninger, *Relations*, ch. 5, and my *The Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of the Theological Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 107–15. As I note there, Scotus's odd position here results from his view that separability relations can obtain only between really distinct items— things, not formalities. Since a substance and indeed a composite of substance and accident can exist without any given categorial relation, the relation as much as the substance and the accidental whole must count as a thing.

The strategy is supposed to allow for the Word to change, to suffer, and to be temporal, in virtue of what we might call certain *extrinsic* relations: for example, the Word extrinsically changes in virtue of real changes in creatures. Let me label this sort of mutability 'R-mutability' (relational mutability), and label the sort of mutability that applies to something in virtue of its own inherent forms 'I-mutability' (intrinsic mutability). (I shall use the usual cognates of 'mutability' here too.) Furthermore, let me use 'I-immutability' for the contradictory of 'I-mutability': that is to say, anything which is not I-mutable is I-immutable. According to the medievals, the following pair is consistent: Christ is I-immutable; and, Christ is R-mutable. And this looks reasonable. Everything which is I-mutable is R-mutable (every intrinsic change involves a change in relation to everything else), but not vice versa.

I have started with the easier case; things get a bit more complex if we think about impassibility. Clearly, there are two ways in which passibility and impassibility have a bearing in the Incarnation. First, does the Word undergo anything, or is any passive potency in him actualized, when he becomes incarnate? Secondly, does actually being incarnate—being man—involve passibility? The first of these looks to me to be dealt with easily enough. Becoming man is *merely* a sort of change (it does not, in itself, involve the actualization of potency). Being impassible in this context is thus equivalent to being I-immutable. So impassibility in this context raises no more problems than immutability—and admits of the same sort of solution. God can become incarnate while remaining I-immutable, and thus while remaining impassible.

The situation is far more complex in the second case, however. And the problem is generalizable to include not only passibility but all of the human attributes of Christ. On the face of it, if we understand these attributes to belong to the Word in virtue of the Word's relation to his human nature, then these human attributes are not *intrinsic* to the Word at all. By 'intrinsic' here, I do not mean 'permanent'; intrinsic attributes can certainly be temporary or accidental. My point is that there is a difference between—for example—my being F in virtue of some property of mine and my being F in virtue of a relation that I have to some other object. We would be inclined to think that properties signified by one-place predicates should be *intrinsic* to me. But the medieval strategy in effect makes all human attributes of the Word *relational* properties: the Word is, for example, passible in virtue of his relation to a passible nature, where this relation is explicitly distinguished from any intrinsic property.[32]

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[32] It is in fact surprisingly difficult to make sense of the medieval views here. Let me take Aquinas as an example. On the one hand, Aquinas wants to deny that the Word's relation to his human nature and its attributes is intrinsic to him. Thus, first, this is the point of Aquinas's denial of the *esse-in* of the Word's relation to his human nature; and, secondly, it follows from the fact that the Word has only an (extrinsic) relation to his human nature that he has only an extrinsic relation to the attributes of the human nature—in other words, only an extrinsic relation to his human attributes. On the other hand, Aquinas persistently claims that human attributes exist 'in' the Word in some sense. Thus, he holds

Of course, the claim that Christ's human attributes fail to be intrinsic to him is precisely the claim that makes medieval accounts of the Incarnation appear so vacuous, so close to Docetism. It seems to me that if we reject a parts Christology, then this is the inevitable result of claiming that the human attributes of Christ are merely related to him without being properly intrinsic to him. Let me take passibility as an example. As the medievals understand the matter, the divine nature is impassible. But, supposing that natures are not parts, the claim that the divine nature is impassible amounts to the claim that every divine person is essentially impassible. And the claim that something is essentially impassible entails that the thing cannot under any circumstances suffer, or be passible. Appealing to the claim that passibility is a relational attribute is no help here. On the medieval accounts, Christ is passible in the sense that the Word is related to something that is intrinsically passible—something with passive potencies that can be actualized over time. Let me use 'R-passible' (and its cognates) to refer to the first sort of passibility, and 'I-passible' (and its cognates) to refer to the second sort of passibility. By 'I-impassible' I pick out the contradictory of 'I-passible', such that everything that is not I-passible is I-impassible.

Is R-passibility an instance of passibility (however we choose to define 'passibility')? If not, then the claim that the incarnate Word is R-passible does not entail that the Word is passible. If the incarnate Word is *merely* R-passible, and not passible as such, then Docetism is true. If, on the other hand, R-passibility is an instance of passibility, then anything which is R-passible is passible. I take it as evident that I-impassibility is an instance of impassibility—otherwise it will not be true to claim that God is impassible. But in this case, the medieval view entails a contradiction. To see this, consider the following inferences, both of which are sound on this horn of the dilemma: If Christ is R-passible, then Christ is passible; and, If Christ is I-impassible, then Christ is impassible. Clearly, that Christ is R-passible and I-impassible is exactly what the medievals want to accept. So, on this horn of the dilemma, the medieval view entails a contradiction. It is thus false that R-passibility is an instance of passibility. So it is false that the incarnate Word is passible. So the medieval theory entails Docetism.[33]

All of this presupposes that we reject a parts Christology. The situation is very different if we suppose that the divine and human natures are parts of the incarnate person. If the divine person contains a part that is I-passible, then the divine person can be I-passible, just as he can be I-impassible in virtue of his containing a part that is I-impassible. (I discussed in the previous chapter the difference a whole–part Christology makes in this context, and will not repeat the issues here.)

that various sorts of suffering exist in the Word, in virtue of the possibility of the human nature: see *ST* 3. 15. 4 c–9 c (iii/1. 93ᵇ–97ᵃ). These two claims look inconsistent, because the first claim makes the human attributes somehow extrinsic, while the second makes them somehow intrinsic.

[33] Note that to claim that the Word is intrinsically passible does not amount to the claim that the Word is passible in virtue of his divine nature. But it does mean that the divine nature places no blocks on passibility: and thus that no divine person is essentially impassible.

The divine person is really related to his human attributes—these attributes are intrinsic to him—because he includes his human nature as a part.[34]

None of this means that the relation between the two parts of Christ—his two natures—need involve any relation inhering in the divine nature, or any real relation between this nature and the human nature and attributes. Neither need it involve the divine nature's being the subject of human attributes. All of this comes at a price, however: the Word has his human attributes intrinsically, and the Word really changes—intrinsically changes—as a result of a change in these attributes. And this contravenes the original motivation for proposing the sort of theory that I am discussing here, which was to show how the Word could be incarnate without this involving any intrinsic change in him.

To avoid the conclusion that the Word intrinsically changes as a result of changes in his human attributes, we would need to make a distinction between Christ and the Word, such that Christ does, and the Word does not, include human nature as a part. This, of course, is just the position that I am ascribing to Scotus. So is Scotus in a better position than his contemporaries to utilize (without consequential losses) the medieval strategy that I am outlining in this chapter?[35] The Scotist proposal is that Christ—the whole including the *suppositum* and the human nature as parts—can have real relations to creatures and creaturely properties, even though the Word as such cannot. Scotus is explicit that this is the case, as he makes clear when discussing the different relations of *sonship*—one eternal, one created and temporal —that Christ has to his divine Father and to his mother Mary, respectively:

(9.8) Each relation is real. This is clear for the eternal [relation of sonship], because he really is the eternal Son. I prove it for the temporal [relation of sonship] on the grounds that a relation that follows the [related] extremes [just] from the nature of the extremes, without an act of the intellect, is real. But if we posit a generating mother, and thus a *suppositum* that has a nature by generation, sonship follows here [viz. in Christ], just as motherhood there [viz. in Mary], [just] from the nature of the extremes, without an act of intellect. If

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[34] It might be thought that there are two different claims here: that the divine person is really related to his human attributes and that his human attributes are intrinsic to him. There is of course a difference: as I have been describing intrinsicity here, it is *contrasted* with relationality. But it would be closer to the truth to claim that the divine person's being really related to his human attributes entails their being intrinsic to him (though not vice versa, since we do not need to have a theory in which something is related to its attributes in order to have a theory of the intrinsicity of certain attributes). A thing's being really related (in the medieval sense) to its attributes entails that the attributes are intrinsic to it. If this were not the case, then it would be hard to distinguish *its* attributes from any intrinsic object to which it is related.

[35] The material here is based on a discussion in Gorman, 'Christ as Composite', 149–52, though I would stress that the treatment of this material is mine, not Gorman's. Gorman finds something like the theory I am about to discuss in Aquinas. I am not sure that we can find in Aquinas the theory I am about to discuss. Part of what I have been arguing is that Aquinas believes the analogy of concrete whole–concrete part to be a good one for the hypostatic union. On the face of it, then, Aquinas might be in a position to utilize the account that I am just about to propose. But we have to be very careful here. According to Aquinas, the human nature is like a concrete part in the sense that it is a truth-maker without being a potency-actualizer. It is not like a concrete part in any other sense. I discuss all of this in Ch. 2 above.

someone thinks that the intellect operates to cause this relation, this is disproved on the grounds that if Mary were to generate a mere man, she would truly be a mother, and he a son by a real relation [to Mary]. But she did no less now [viz. in the case of Christ] than she would then have done [viz. if she had generated a mere man]. Neither did Christ, as man, receive less really a nature from her than a mere man would have received. Therefore from the nature of the extremes he is now a son, just as there then [viz. if Mary had generated a mere man] would have been, and thus the relation is equally real in the two cases.[36]

Necessary for accepting this is accepting Scotus's distinction between Christ and the Word. Since Christ includes human nature as a part, Christ is really related to his mother—though of course, the Word, which does not include human nature as a part, is not. And Scotus could argue likewise for all sorts of creaturely relations and properties.[37]

Could this strategy of Scotus's save the medievals from Docetism? According to Scotus, as I have interpreted him, it is true that Christ has a part—namely, the human nature—not had by the Word. And it is true that this part is I-passible. So Christ is I-passible in just the sense required. But none of this helps with Chalcedonianism. The Chalcedonian claim is that the Word suffers, not just Christ: thus to allow Scotus's strategy to help the Chalcedonian, we would need to find a way for the human nature to be a part not just of Christ but of the Word.[38]

Fortunately for the contemporary theologian the relation theories I have been considering in this chapter are by no means intrinsic to the general account of the Incarnation found in this period. (Bonaventure is an exception, since he believes some sort of relation theory to be entailed by his account of the hypostatic union, but it would be easy enough to find a reply to his argument.) So the error that to my mind they all make here does not vitiate the overall value of their contributions, which value I will assess in the Conclusion below.

[36] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 8. un., n. 11 (Wadding, vii. 212). In taking this view, Scotus takes a minority view. Bonaventure, Aquinas, and Henry of Ghent, for example, all reject the view that Christ has a real relation of sonship to his mother, on the grounds that real relations of sonship ('being a son of ———') are individuated by their possessors, such that two such relations of 'being a son of ———' entails two sons. For this reason, the relation between Christ and his mother is merely rational: see e.g. Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 8. 2. 2 (iii. 193ᵇ–195ᵇ); Aquinas, *Quod.* 1. 2 (p. 3ᵃ ᵇ), 9. 4 (p. 182ᵃ ᵇ); Henry, *Quod.* 4. 3 (Paris, i. fo. 90ʳ ˣ–ᶻ). One of the reasons offered by both Aquinas and Henry for the impossibility of a real relation in Christ to his mother is that God—the person of the Word—has no real relations to creatures. This I take it is sufficient to refute Gorman's reading of Aquinas on this point.

[37] Scotus's position here is usually linked in the literature to his Mariology—a stress on the motherhood of Mary is held to form part of Scotus's general focus on the centrality and dignity of Mary, a focus that finds its highest expression in Scotus's defence of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. (On Mary's motherhood, see H.-M. Manteau-Bonamy, *Maternité divine et incarnation: Etude historique et doctrinale de Saint Thomas à nos jours*, Bibliothèque Thomiste, 27 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1949); on the Immaculate Conception, see conveniently my *Duns Scotus*, 132–3, and the literature cited there.) In fact, however, I hope that my discussion here has made it clear that what is distinctive about Scotus's view has a Christological emphasis and motivation. It is Scotus's distinction between Christ and the Word that allows him to posit a real relation of creaturely sonship in Christ.

[38] I do not mean to suggest that Scotus's Christology is not wholly Chalcedonian; merely that his distinction between Christ and the Word does not help deal with the Docetism that I am finding in the medieval theologians here.

Chapter 10

CHRIST'S HUMAN ACTIVITY

AGENCY AND PREDICATION

In the Introduction, I outlined some reasons why the claim that the assumed human nature is an individual might reasonably lead a theologian to want (in some sense) to ascribe human activities—and indeed human properties and accidents in general —to the assumed nature. (The relevant sense is that the human nature is the proximate, though not the remote or *ultimate* subject, of such activity.) My argument here is that, if (as the medievals assume) the assumed nature is something like an individual substance, then it will not be possible to ascribe properly human activity to the Word unless the assumed nature is itself the *causal origin* of the human actions. Making this ascription has certain consequences—only fully articulated by Scotus in this period—about the way in which we understand the human actions to be predicated of the Word.

Why, if we suppose that the assumed human nature is an individual substance-like thing, should we object to the theory that the Word's human actions owe their causal origin to him? On the medieval scenario I am describing, the assumed human nature has human causal powers. These powers clearly belong to the nature in some way (though, as I will make clear in a moment, they belong too to the Word). Suppose the causal origin of the Word's human actions is the Word. In this case, the causal origin of the human actions cannot be the assumed nature (or its causal powers), otherwise we would have two causal origins for one and the same action— and, furthermore, for the sort of action that appears to be sufficiently causally explained by the presence of merely one causal origin. This entails causal over-determination, since an action that could be brought about by the causal powers of the human nature is also brought about by the causal powers of the divine person. To avoid the problem of causal overdetermination, we would have to conclude that the human nature's causal powers were merely *moved by* the Word—and thus that they were not the causal origin of the human actions at all. In this case, two undesirable consequences follow. First, all of Christ's human activity would be merely instrumental, originating not from the human causal powers, or from the human nature, but from the person in so far as he possesses *divine* causal powers (divine causal powers, because the human nature has a merely instrumental role here: what does the moving is the divine nature and its causal powers, which are prior to the possession of the human nature)—though as we shall see in a moment, some theologians were perfectly happy to accept that Christ's human activity is merely

instrumental.[1] Secondly, this entails in turn that the *Trinity*—and not just the Word—is the causal origin of the human activity, since all external actions of the Trinity brought about in virtue of the divine causal powers are undivided, common to all the persons who possess these powers.

This topic requires extremely careful handling, from both a theological and a philosophical point of view—gloves, we might say, must be worn. First of all, the sorts of claim I am making here do not entail any sort of *assumptus homo* (assumed man) theory. Being the causal origin of human activity does not entail being a human person. We might link the sort of theory I am talking about here with the claim that the assumed nature has its own human self-consciousness—though we do not have to. But if we do want to talk about a strong two-minds Christology (not just two minds but two 'centres of consciousness'), then we will probably need to make some of the moves I am describing here. (I will return to this below, since it is important to be clear about what is and is not *entailed* by the claims about causal powers that I am just about to outline.) If we concede further that the assumed nature is a substance, we will need (in order to avoid Nestorianism) to find some way of distinguishing between persons and substances, such that not all human substances are persons. I examine such distinctions in Part IV.

Secondly, I want to be clear that the issues I talk about here are not necessary components of every Chalcedonian Christology. They are components only of the sort of Christology that posits Christ's human nature to be an individual substance-like thing.

Finally, it is worth getting clear about a *rejected* reason for wanting to make some of the moves I outline here. Léon Seiller, for example, appears (wrongly) to ascribe the following argument to Scotus: God's external actions are undivided; therefore Christ's human action must be caused by the assumed human nature.[2] But this is unsound. Augustinianism requires that every action brought about by *divine* causal powers is undivided since the three persons possess numerically the same causal powers: one intelligence, one will, one creativity, and so on. But, of course, the assumed human nature and the Word's *human* causal powers are possessed merely by the Son—so the Son can on the face of it certainly bring about effects by himself, non-instrumentally, through these causal powers.

There seems to be an obvious objection to the line of argument I am advancing. If the causal origin of the human actions is the assumed human nature, how can these actions be in any sense actions *of the Word*? To reply to this, we need to make a distinction between what we might call the *causal* and *predicative* aspects of agency.

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[1] Since these human actions must in some sense be the Word's in a way that other created actions (e.g. my writing this book) are not, we cannot appeal merely to the standard case of God's primary causation of everything—the link to the human actions of Christ must be stronger than this. Instrumentality looks like a plausible candidate. I write this book using a variety of instruments—pen, pencil, computer, perhaps whatever lies to hand—but *I* write it, not the instruments.

[2] See Léon Seiller, *L'activité humaine du Christ selon Duns Scot*, Etudes de science religieuse, 3 (Paris: Editions Franciscaines, 1944), 27–9, 33–5.

In virtue of the communication of properties, we can predicate human agency of the Word, without this entailing that the Word is the causal originator of the agency ascribed to him. The theory is explicitly defended by Scotus. The earlier schoolmen are more ambiguous about it. What is clear is that they are happy to ascribe human activity to the assumed nature. They all assume that we can speak of the human nature doing things, and at least Scotus understands that this way of speaking is an inevitable result of the Augustinian axiom. I have discussed some examples of the first of these claims—namely that the human nature itself does things—at length elsewhere, and I do not want to go into details here.[3]

These actions belong both to the assumed nature and to the Word. But who is the *causal* origin? According to Aquinas, the human nature does things, has some sort of agency: for this, see passage **(6.17)** above. But the communication of properties entails that the actions of the nature are predicated of the divine person:

(10.1) Operating belongs to a subsistent hypostasis—though according to [its] form and nature, from which the operation receives its species.[4]

But Aquinas grounds this predication relationship in a wholly different way from the one I have been recommending here. For Aquinas, one way—presumably the only way—for the actions of anything created to be the actions of a divine person is for the creature to be the *instrument* of that person.[5] And this is precisely what Aquinas accepts:

(10.2) In Christ, the humanity is thought to be as it were (*quasi*) a certain organ of the divinity.[6]

This allows Aquinas to draw attention to the formal similarity between Christ's action and the action of all other human persons. Generally, Aquinas claims, 'An operation is a certain effect of the person according to some form or nature';[7] in the case of the Incarnation, the person of the Word brings about human actions 'according to' his human nature—in this case, by using the nature as an instrument.

The account is not quite as straightforward as this might suggest, however. According to **(6.17)**, Christ's human nature has its own intrinsic form and power.

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[3] See my 'Incarnation, Indwelling, and the Vision of God: Henry of Ghent and Some Franciscans', *Franciscan Studies*, 57 (1999), 79–130; and see some of the material in my *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 122–4, 130–2.

[4] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 19. 1 ad 3 (iii/1. 121[b]).

[5] See for example Aquinas's discussion of sacramental causality at *ST* 3. 62. 1 c (iii/1. 348[b]–349[a]) and 3. 62. 4 (iii/1. 351[a b]). The idea is that the action of the sacramental minister just *is* God's action, in much the same way as the action of an axe chopping a piece of wood just *is* the action of the person wielding the axe.

[6] Aquinas, *CT* 1. 212, n. 420 (*Op. Theol.* i. 98[b]); see too *ST* 3. 18. 1 ad 4 (iii/1. 121[b]): 'The human will in Christ had a certain determinate mode from the fact that it was in the divine hypostasis: namely, that it was moved (*moveretur*) always according to the nod of the divine will.' The Dominican Hervaeus Natalis argues that the instrumental status of the human will is intrinsic to the hypostatic union as such: see *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 4 (p. 283[b]). This view perhaps derives from Giles of Rome: see *Lect.* 3. 1 (pp. 180–1), where Giles argues that the mark of a *suppositum* is that it is not the instrument of any other *suppositum* in the way that a nature is the instrument of its *suppositum*. On views about the necessary consequences of the hypostatic union, see Excursus 1 above.

[7] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 18. 1 ad 4 (iii/1. 121[b]).

But on Aquinas's usual account of instrumental causality, instruments do not have intrinsic causal powers at all: their causal activity is caused in them in virtue of the causal powers of the primary agent.[8] Perhaps Aquinas is trying to spell out some sort of causal co-operation according to which the human nature never acts in any sense independently of the divine nature, in which case we should take very seriously (10.2)'s qualifying 'as it were'. But the less we think of the human nature as an instrument, the harder it will be for Aquinas to explain how Christ's human actions are actions of the Word.

Henry of Ghent speaks similarly. On the one hand, he wants to be able to ascribe human actions to the assumed nature: 'Each nature bring[s] about, with the communion of the other, what is proper to it';[9] 'There is one work of the divine nature, and another of the human.'[10] On the other hand, like Aquinas, he happily refers to the Word as an agent of these actions:

(10.3) Christ is a supernatural agent in virtue of the agent person, whether he acts according to his divine nature or according to his human nature. . . . No human action of Christ, if it is said to be truly human, is supernatural; rather, it is only purely natural, despite the fact that the agent is supernatural.[11]

It is not clear whether this agency should be understood in properly causal terms, or merely in predicative terms.

Scotus argues very differently. He is explicit that the human nature (the assumed substance) has its own intrinsic causal powers, and that it elicits actions in virtue of these powers:

(10.4) The [human] will in Christ has dominion over its own acts to the same extent as in any other man, for the will in Christ does not cause in any other way [than in any other human substance], and the Trinity permits the human will to elicit its acts in the same way as it permits other wills to elicit their [acts].[12]

(10.5) For this reason, the will in Christ is no more deprived, by the union to the Word, of dominion in relation to its acts than [it would be] if it were not united to him.[13]

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[8] See Aquinas, *ST* 3. 62. 4 (iii/1. 351$^{a\,b}$); it is for this reason that I translate 'moveretur' in (10.2) as 'was moved', rather than the equally possible intransitive 'moved'. But since Aquinas is trying to talk about some sort of causal co-operation that is a little stronger than standard instrumental causality, I take it that either translation is equally possible. At *ST* 3. 7. 1 ad 3 (iii/1. 47^b), Aquinas argues that Christ's human nature is an *animate* instrument, and that it therefore is not merely acted upon, but rather 'acts such that it is acted upon'. This account makes the instrumentality of Christ's human nature indistinguishable from a particular sort of secondary causation, and thus hard to see how on this account Christ's human actions are actions of the Word at all—any more than (say) mine are.

[9] Henry, *Quod.* 15. 3 (Paris, ii. fo. 576^{I}B), quoting the *Tome* of Leo: see Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (London: Sheed and Ward; Georgetown, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), i. 79^b.

[10] Henry, *Quod.* 15. 4 (Paris, ii. fo. 576^{I}D).   [11] Ibid. 15. 3 (Paris, ii. fo. 576^{I}B).

[12] Scotus, *RP* 3. 17. 1–2, n. 4 (Wadding, xi. 414^a). Note here Scotus's apparent reference again to the human nature as a man.

[13] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 17. un., n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 380).

These passages make it unequivocally clear that the human substance (the assumed nature) of Christ is the causal origin of its human actions in just the same way as any other human substance is the causal origin of its human acts.

Scotus also holds unequivocally that any divinely originated actions in relation to the human nature have the Trinity—and not merely the Word—as their causal origin:

(10.6) When it is said that the Word brings about all the operations which the human nature brings about, I say that the Word has no causal role (*nullam rationem causae*) in relation to the operation of Christ which is not had by the Father and Holy Spirit.[14]

Finally, Scotus claims that, although there is no sense in which the Word is the causal origin of the human actions, nevertheless this human agency can be *predicated* of the Word in virtue of the communication of properties:

(10.7) How therefore is [the Word] said to will? I say that, just as the Son of God is coloured, so he is said to will because his soul is said to will, and because the nature subsists in the Word, [the Word] is therefore denominated in this way.[15]

(10.8) The Word, and not the whole Trinity, is denominated by the operation of the created will on account of a union which results in the communication of properties.[16]

This account is, of course, in exact accordance with Scotus's general account of the ascription of human accidents to the incarnate Word, discussed in Chapter 8: these characteristics are predicated of the Word in virtue of their inherence in the assumed nature.

How does this work out in the case of Christ's human activity? Basically, on this account, the causal origin of the human actions is the assumed substance; the ultimate subject of these actions is the Word. Scotus does not fully develop the theory needed to buttress this sort of account. But in other contexts he goes some way towards making the sorts of suggestions required. In Chapter 1 I outlined a central principle (**E**)—the existence principle—according to which, if a form F-ness is that in virtue of which something is F, then F-ness must itself exist. Associated with this principle is a further principle, accepted by (at least) Scotus:

>　(F) If a form F-ness is that in virtue of which something acts (in manner f),
>　then F-ness must act (in manner f).

Scotus reasons:

(10.9) Every form, existing as a form in another, gives to that [other] thing that the thing is denominated by its [viz. the form's] action, just as [the form] gives existence (*esse*) to the thing. And although a form [existing] in a *suppositum* is denominated by its [viz. the form's] action, nevertheless [it is not so] by final denomination, but the *suppositum* is more finally denominated by the same action [of the form].[17]

    [14]　Scotus, *RP* 3. 12. 1, n. 7 (Wadding, xi. 462$^{a\ b}$).
    [15]　Ibid. 3. 17. 1–2, n. 4 (Wadding, xi. 484^a).
    [16]　Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 17. un., n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 380).
    [17]　Ibid. 1. 12. 1, n. 51 (Vatican, v. 54); at *Ord.* 1. 12. 1, n. 51 (Vatican, v. 55), Scotus talks of whiteness doing things; see too my *The Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 95–7. On the ascription of causal activity to accidental forms, see also Henry, *Quod.* 3. 14 (Paris, i. fo. 66^{v}P).

(E) and (F) go to the heart of Scotus's hypostatizing ontology. (F) has a direct bearing on the Incarnation. The actions of the human nature are properly predicated of this nature: but, in virtue of this predication, these human actions are also predicated of the divine person.

(F) is related to Scotus's general views about the exemplification of an immanent universal. According to Scotus, the pertinent feature of such a universal φ is that it is a 'this', an individual and singular thing that is repeated in each *suppositum* that exemplifies it.[18] According to Scotus, such an individual is the proper subject of the sorts of properties that inhere by nature in things of kind φ.[19] The assumed human nature is a 'this', too, an individual and singular thing.[20] As such, it is the proper subject of human properties; these properties are then ascribed denominatively to the person—the Word—who exemplifies this nature.

How should we understand (F)? Perhaps the easiest case to grasp is one in which (F) looks unequivocally true. According to Scotus, the human soul has certain causal powers and actions that properly belong to it: it is, for example, the proper active cause of our acts of knowledge, and it is the proper receptive subject of such acts.[21] Scotus argues that mental acts are unextended, and as such belong to an unextended subject—namely, the human soul.[22] Nevertheless, in virtue of this active and passive causality, it is true that the whole human being understands;[23] presumably, the whole human being causes her mental acts, and these acts properly belong to her. This might look as though it entails two causal origins and subjects of one and the same act—namely, the human person and the unextended soul. And this in turn entails causal overdetermination, not least because Scotus is convinced that a disembodied soul can have (i.e. both cause and possess) all of these cognitive acts.[24] Unless we make a distinction between properly causal and merely predicative senses of agency, I think that Scotus's account will indeed entail causal overdetermination. Since the soul is clearly and unequivocally the causal originator and possessor of our mental acts (since on Scotus's reasoning the originator and possessor of such acts *must* be unextended), we must say that the relation between the whole

[18] On this, see my forthcoming 'Divisibility, Communicability, and Predicability in Duns Scotus's Theories of the Common Nature'.

[19] See e.g. Scotus, *RP* 2. 12. 5, n. 3 (Wadding, xi. 326ᵇ); see also *Ord.* 2. 3. 1. 1, nn. 37, 41 (Vatican, vii. 406–7, 409–10; Spade, 65–7).

[20] See Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 2, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 33–4); see also *RP* 3. 1. 3–5, n. 9 (Wadding, xi. 425ᵃ) and the discussion of the individuality of the assumed nature in the Introduction above.

[21] On the active (causal) and passive (receptive) features of this, see e.g. *Ord.* 1. 27. 1–3, nn. 20, 58, 78 (Vatican, vi. 72, 87, 94); *Ord.* 1. 3. 3. 4, nn. 603–4 (Vatican, iii. 355–7); I give full references for this in *Duns Scotus*, 174, nn. 15 and 17. For an extensive discussion of the receptive aspect, see Scotus, *Ord.* 4. 43. 2, nn. 7–9, 12 (Wadding, x. 23–4, 26; *Philosophical Writings*, 139, 140–1, 143–4). On the distinction between causal and receptive aspects of action in general, see also Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 1. 2. 1, n. 69 (Vatican, ii. 51–2); *Ord.* 1. 17. 1. 1–2, nn. 48–53 (Vatican, v. 158–60). Note this distinction between the (active) causation and the (passive) possession of an act is not the same as the distinction I am trying to make between the causal and predicative aspects of causation. The causal/predicative distinction can be made both in the case of active powers and in the case of passive powers and liabilities.

[22] Scotus, *Ord.* 4. 43. 2, n. 12 (Wadding, x. 26; *Philosophical Writings*, 143–4).

[23] Ibid. 4. 43. 2, n. 6 (Wadding, x. 23; *Philosophical Writings*, 139).

[24] See e.g. ibid. 4. 45. 2, n. 8 (Wadding, x. 180).

human substance and these actions and agency is merely *predicative*, rather than properly causal.[25] For example, we should construe 'Socrates causes a mental act' as 'Socrates's soul causally originates the mental act, and the origination of the mental act (or perhaps merely the mental act itself?) is predicated of Socrates in virtue of his possession of his soul.'[26]

This case is clearly analogous to Scotus's suggestion in the case of the Incarnation: the human nature elicits its actions by means of its own proper intrinsic causal powers; these actions are then predicated of the Word by the communication of properties. Of course, there is no reason for us to accept (F) as a general principle, so long as it can be applied plausibly in the case of the Incarnation. And one way in which this can happen is if we make the distinction between predicative and causal aspects of action. So the crucial question is how plausible this distinction can be made to be. On the face of it there is an obvious objection to it. Suppose that we explain agency in terms of the possession of causal powers. One plausible way of giving an account of action on this sort of theory is to claim that a substance's acting is identified as its possessing a causal power that is active. (Recall a similar point made when discussing the *ratio terminandi* in Chapter 7 above.) But this account reduces the causal aspects of action to the predicative aspects of action. For a substance to cause an action is just for the action to be predicated of the substance. I think, however, that Scotus can offer a plausible response here. As we have seen, Scotus distinguishes between the remote and proximate subjects of predication, and of properties in general. Scotus could apply this distinction to the case at hand. To be a cause, properly speaking, is to be the *proximate* or *immediate* possessor of an active causal power. The remote possessor of such a causal power will be the subject of the action in the sense that the action can be predicated of the remote possessor, as outlined above. This is not a merely ad hoc strategy. Scotus's distinction between proximate and remote predication corresponds to some sort of modern distinction between properties and relations. The properties of a thing are intrinsic to it in a way that its relations are not. The remote or ultimate subject of properties is so—at least in those cases where there is a proximate subject of properties—in virtue merely of a certain sort of relation that it has to the proximate subject of

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[25] Clearly, we can in some sense appeal to the sort of 'borrowing' of attributes that I outlined in Ch. 8 above: a substance can 'borrow' a causal power and operation from its form, and clearly in such cases of borrowing there will only be one power and one operation, just as there is only one substance properly speaking. But this is precisely where we need to appeal to the predicative aspect of causation: for a substance to borrow a power or an operation from its form is for the one operation (the operation that is proper to its form) to be *predicated* of it. *Causally*, the form and the form alone is properly the agent.

[26] This cannot be Scotus's general understanding of (F), because (F) also obtains in cases where the form alone cannot produce the relevant act, and Scotus is clear that there are such cases—perhaps sensation is the most obvious (on this, see my 'Philosophy of Mind', in Thomas Williams (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, forthcoming), but in fact almost every operation of a material substance will fit this description. The solution in such cases is that the form provides the causal powers in virtue of which the action is caused, but that these causal powers require that the form is embodied in order for them to operate. That is to say, a necessary condition of F's acting in manner f is, in such cases, that F is embodied. Melting requires a certain sort of body: God cannot melt (at least, not unless he becomes incarnate as some sort of mineral or inorganic compound); neither can too too solid flesh.

properties. And we would expect agency to be explicable in terms of *intrinsic* causal powers, not extrinsic relational ones.[27]

The overall interpretation I am suggesting—which seems unequivocal in the case of Scotus's treatment of the Incarnation—is not too far distant from one suggested sixty or so years ago by Léon Seiller, though my reason for accepting this account is different from Seiller's, as I have already made clear. (This account is not quite the same as Seiller's, since Seiller makes a great deal of the *assumptus homo* interpretation of Scotus suggested by Déodat de Basly—an interpretation which I suggested in Chapter 8 is false, or at least misleading.) Since Seiller's reading has been the cause of some controversy, it is worth looking in a bit more detail at the proposed criticisms. Seiller summarizes the Scotist view, as he understands it, by means of a short tag derived from a summary of this aspect of Scotist Christology proposed by the eighteenth-century Thomist theologian Charles-René Billuart: 'actiones sunt Verbi non elicitive sed denominative'—Christ's human actions belong to the Word not causally but predicatively.[28] As commentators have noted, Scotus himself never uses this tag.[29] Nevertheless, it seems to me to be in its way a reasonable reading of Scotus's position on Christ's human activity. Is there any substantial evidence against this sort of reading? The only writer to address this head-on suggests the following two passages:

(10.10) If the human nature assumed by the Word were to be given up, without any positive action directed to it . . . 'this man' would bring about every act that the Word now has by the mediation of this nature.[30]

(10.11) Christ operates according to his human nature, and all those operations belong to the *suppositum* by the mediation of the human nature.[31]

(10.10) is part of an extremely complex argument, the purpose of which is to show that, in certain cases, separated forms can do the same sorts of things as they are principles for when embodied.[32] Scotus applies this expressly to the Incarnation, by continuing (10.10) as follows:

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[27] Of course, the sort of relation that Scotus has in mind between proximate and remote subjects of properties is *inherence*: the proximate subject *inheres* in the remote subject. But he clearly wants to deny that inherence is a transitive relation. As we saw in Part I, Scotus is explicit in claiming that human accidents inhere in Christ's human nature without thereby inhering in the Word. Analogously, there is a sense in which the (essential) causal powers of the human nature are intrinsic to it without being intrinsic to the Word. After all, they are non-inherent contingent properties of the Word. (Recall that standard medieval accounts of property-possession entail that all properties are either non-contingent or inherent—or indeed both, as in Aquinas's *propria*: see e.g. Aquinas, *ST* 1. 77. 1 ad 6 (i/1. 370ᵇ).)

[28] See Seiller, *L'activité humaine*, 55.

[29] Chrysostomos a Pamplona, *De Christologia Duns Scoti: Investigatio Critico-Historico*, Bibliotheca Pampilonensis, Series Theologica, 1 (Barcelona: Herder, 1969), 143.

[30] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 7. 1, n. 78 (Vatican, iv. 142). Note that Scotus's reference to 'this man' is not here a reference to the assumed nature but to the substance under the counterfactual supposition that it has been separated from the Word.

[31] Scotus, *Lect.* 3. 28. un. (C. Balić, *Theologiae Marianae Elementa*, Biblioteca Mariana Medii Aevi. Textus et Disquisitiones, 2A (Sibenik: Kacic, 1933), 319); both this and the previous passage are cited in Pamplona, *De Christologia*, 148–9.

[32] See Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 7. 1, nn. 11, 79–80 (Vatican, iv. 112, 143).

(10.12) If nothing positive constitutes a created *suppositum* (according to the second article of distinction one of [book] three), it is certain that the notion of *suppositum* does not contribute to a thing anything positive for the purpose of action.[33]

Of course, my reading can make perfect sense of these passages. There is nothing *unreal* about the predication of human agency of the Word—and indeed this predication is made *via* the human nature analogously to principle (F).

There is one aporia outstanding. In the passages just cited, Scotus claims (on my understanding) that the predication of agency of the Word is mediate: the Word acts in virtue of the causal activity that is proper to the human nature, just as a human being understands in virtue of the causal activity of her soul. But in one passage, Scotus claims that truths about the Incarnation are *immediately* predicated of the Word:

(10.13) Contingent truths said of Christ are not contained virtually in a subject in the way that a subject is said to contain a passion, because then they would be necessary; they do, however, have some subject of which they are immediately and necessarily said, and this is the Word—for the theological truths about the Incarnation, Nativity, and Passion are these ones: 'The Word is made man', 'the Word is born a man', 'the Word is a suffering man', and so on.[34]

Perhaps we should modify the proposed understanding of (10.10)–(10.12): the causal agency is, *qua* causal, immediate to the assumed nature, but, *qua* predication, immediate to the Word. After all, if the Word's human nature brings about some action *a*, it must be the case that the Word brings about this action. But, although I have no alternative suggestion, this device—if it can make any sense at all—looks ad hoc in the worst way of certain scholastic distinctions.[35]

What about the possibility that the assumed nature, as described here, would count as a centre of consciousness? This is certainly one of the aspects of Seiller's presentation that causes unease. In fact, we do not need to accept this as a reading of

[33] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 7. 1, n. 78 (Vatican, iv. 142). For Scotus's claim that a created *suppositum* is constituted by a negation, see below, Ch. 15.

[34] Scotus, *Ord.* prol. 3. 1–3, n. 174 (Vatican, i. 117), cited in Pamplona, *De Christologia*, 137.

[35] At one point, Scotus makes a distinction between the causer and the cause—that by which it causes—and suggests that the cause is the immediate subject of causation: see *In Metaph.* 9. 3–4, n. 19 (iv. 541–2); see too *Th.* 22, n. 18 (Wadding, iii. 329ᵃ ᵇ). What is at issue here is the predicative aspects of causation—the question of the correct application of different 'denominative' terms. We should keep this distinct from the strictly causal aspect of the issue. So I am not completely sure that Peter King's reading of the passage is correct: 'What brings about the change is *not* the principle [or cause], though it is often harmless to speak loosely in this way, but rather the principiator [or causer]': King, 'Duns Scotus on the Reality of Self-Change', in Mary Louise Gill and James G. Lennox (eds.), *Self-Motion from Aristotle to Newton* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 229–90, p. 261. It is true that causation and principiation ultimately *denominate* the causer or the principiator; but the causal aspect of this, as opposed to the predicative, seems to be a different matter. In the passage under discussion, the issue is whether one and the same thing can move itself. Scotus's claim is that it can, on the grounds that both 'moving' and 'being moved' denominate one and the same thing. It seems to me that the trick in Scotus's argument is to locate the *causal* aspect of this—rather than the merely predicative—in two different features of the thing. King's reading, contrariwise, is that one and the same *cause* causes in virtue of different principles or powers.

Scotus if we do not want to—at least on the basis of Scotus's discussion of Christ's human activity. As Burger rightly points out (to rather different effect), 'psychological questions are alien to [Scotus]'[36]—so perhaps Seiller, in positing a distinct human centre of consciousness, has read too much into certain Scotist passages. This is doubtless true. But it seems to me that we could accept everything that Scotus says on the nature of Christ's human activity—even on the understanding I have been defending here—and yet remain neutral on the question of a separate human centre of consciousness. We could believe that the presence of 'independent' causal powers is sufficient for an 'independent' centre of consciousness (psychologically independent, of course, not ontologically independent). But there is no need to take this step—we could accept that the human substance has 'independent' causal powers without this entailing an 'independent' centre of consciousness. The only *caveat* would be that, if it could be shown that the presence of a psychologically independent centre of consciousness was sufficient for the presence of an independent person (ontologically independent, not psychologically independent, of course), then the claim that there is an independent centre of consciousness would need to be rejected on pain of Nestorianism. But I do not know a knock-down argument sufficient to show that every centre of consciousness is a person in the required sense— that is, an ontologically independent subject of properties. I will return to this whole issue in my Conclusion, below.

It seems to me, too, that Scotus—as I have been presenting him here—merely lays bare presuppositions that have to be made by any theologian who thinks—as many of the medievals do—of the assumed nature as a substance and (in some sense) an agent. This seems to me to be as true for Aquinas as of Scotus. And this tells us something about Aquinas's union in personal *esse*. According to the standard Thomist line, the union in personal *esse* simply precludes any talk of the human nature having any proper causal powers.[37] But this seems a case of eisegesis. Aquinas generally accepts that the assumed nature is something like an individual substance, united to the Word like a concrete part to a concrete whole. In itself, this account of the union is neutral on the extent to which the human substance might have psychologically independent causal powers.

There is on the face of it a problem for my reading of Scotus, not in terms of content but in terms of orthodoxy. In the encyclical *Sempiternus Rex* (1951), Pius XII condemned the *homo assumptus* view of Déodat de Basly. Specifically, Pius opposed the view that

the human nature of Christ . . . might seem to be thought of as a certain independent subject (*subiectum sui iuris*), as though it did not subsist in the person of the Word. . . . The Chalcedonian Council . . . forbade the positing of two individuals in Christ such that some

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[36] Maria Burger, *Personalität im Horizont absoluter Prädestination: Untersuchungen zur Christologie des Johannes Duns Scotus und ihrer Rezeption in modernen theologischen Ansätzen*, Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, N. F., 40 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1994), 195. Passage (6.19) may suggest just one ego—but it is hard to be sure.

[37] See e.g. the passage from Billuart cited by Seiller, *L'activité humaine*, 44, n. 49.

assumed man, fully possessing complete autonomy, was placed under the power of the Word (*penes Verbum collocetur*).[38]

The best any reading can hope for is honesty, but I would say to those worried about my reading that I am certainly repudiating the *assumptus homo* reading of Scotus found in some twentieth-century commentators. And in any case it is safe enough to assume that Pius XII's motivations for condemning the *assumptus homo* theory had more to do with the way in which its principal proponent—Déodat de Basly—spelled out the theory. According to this theologian, the unity of person in Christ should be reduced to 'the totality relating Christ's divine and human egos'.[39] It is this view that was in effect condemned by Pius XII—and, as Pannenberg rightly points out, this goes 'far beyond Duns Scotus'.[40] So I am fairly sure that my Scotus does not fall foul of Pius XII, who in any case remained prudently silent on the express issue of a separate human centre of consciousness in Christ. Again, I will return to this in the Conclusion.

This chapter has contained some radical Christological material, material that would perhaps constitute a strong theological motivation for adopting—or indeed rejecting—the medieval view on the individuality and substantiality of the assumed nature. In other words, someone who wanted to affirm some sort of psychologically autonomous human action in Jesus would probably want to accept the individuality and substantiality of the assumed nature. (In favour of this sort of theory might well be some of the stories about Jesus, the weak and fallible figure of the Gospels.) Of course, affirming the individuality and substantiality of the assumed nature does not entail accepting any autonomous human activity in Jesus; so someone who found such autonomy theologically undesirable does not *eo ipso* need to find arguments against the philosophical reasons suggested in the Introduction above for the individuality and substantiality of the assumed nature. On the other hand, the modern theologian might find much in this sort of account that is appealing. (I will consider the opinions of some such theologians in my Conclusion below.) Suppose we wanted to affirm a two-centres-of-consciousness Christology. We could most clearly do this by means of the sort of account that Scotus is offering. And, even if we reject a two-centres-of-consciousness Christology, we might still think that the sort of account Scotus offers provides the most elegant way of trying to deal with the Gospel affirmations of Christ's limitations—his ignorance and lack of power, for example. (Scotus would not, of course, because he does not believe Christ in

[38] DS n. 3905.

[39] Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man*, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (London: SCM Press, 1968), 329.

[40] Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man*, 329. As commentators have noticed, Pius is conspicuously silent about a distinction made in the earlier part of the twentieth century between ontological and psychological subjects in Christ—the idea being that we should reasonably understand *Sempiternus Rex* as deliberately condemning the view that there could be two ultimate ontological subjects in Christ, while remaining neutral on the psychological question.

fact to have suffered from any of these limitations.[41]) On the 'Scotist' model I am developing, these features of Christ's human life are unequivocally properties of his human nature. They are not, of course, features of the Word, on pain of contradiction. Putting the matter bluntly, unless we adopt some strategy such as that proposed by Scotus, we will be forced to deny that there is anything which is ignorant, and hence that claims to ignorance in the Gospels are simply untruths, deceptions practised on us by Christ. On the 'Scotist' strategy, there will at least be some subject for these attributes: namely, the human nature.

In my Conclusion, I will explore in more detail how it is possible for some of the attributes of the human nature to fail to be attributes of the Word. (In other words, how, despite this nature's not being the ultimate subject of some properties, it clearly is for other properties. We have already seen instances of this in the assertion of Scotus, for example, that the human nature is the ultimate subject of statements about its union to the Word.) Suffice it to say for now that there are several plausible ways of blocking the predication in this sort of case. And, as I will also make clear in the Conclusion, there is no reason to suspect that blocking some of these predications is harmful to the Chalcedonian sort of Christology that the medievals tried to defend.

[41] On this, see my *Duns Scotus*, 122–4, and Marilyn Adams, *What Sort of Human Nature? Medieval Philosophy and the Systematics of Christology*, The Aquinas Lecture, 1999 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999), 68–90.

Excursus 2

COUNTING PERSONS
AND NATURES

The medievals found the discussion of counterfactual and counterpossible states of affairs to be particularly useful tools for clarifying tricky theological questions. As I noted in Excursus 1, Christology is no exception to this. Here I would like to look at the first two of the issues I listed at the beginning of Excursus 1 (viz. Are multiple incarnations possible? and Could many divine persons assume just one and the same nature?) relating them closely to medieval intuitions about the individuality of the assumed nature.

One advantage of the medieval claim that the assumed nature is an individual in its own right is that it allows for the possibility of multiple incarnations—indeed it is not only sufficient for this possibility, it is necessary too. (I will return to why someone might regard this as an advantage in my Conclusion below.) Why should the possibility of multiple incarnations require that an assumed human nature is an individual in its own right? Suppose the human nature is (just) a universal. Clearly, a universal can be exemplified just once by one substance. If it could be exemplified more than once by one and the same substance, we would need ways of distinguishing these two exemplifications. But the only way of distinguishing exemplifications is by distinguishing substances. Suppose, similarly, that the human nature is an individual, but that its identity is determined by its substance—the divine person—in the sense that the identity of the person is sufficient for the identity of the nature. In this case, there cannot be two natures of the same kind united to just one person, since any two natures whose identity is sufficiently determined by one and the same person will be identical with each other.

Suppose then that one divine person did assume more than one nature of the same kind. Clearly, on this scenario, we can count both the person and the natures. But how many human beings will there be? How many men and women (since there is no reason to suppose that the divine person would assume just male natures)?[1] According to Aquinas, the impossibility of a divine person's assuming more than one nature of the same kind represents an unacceptable limitation on divine power, such that

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[1] The medievals believed male natures more suitable, but the arguments—at least the ones that they offer—obviously reflect no more than merely cultural presuppositions: see e.g. the discussion in Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 12. 3. 1 (iii. 270ᵃ–271ᵇ); Aquinas, *In Sent.* 3. 12. 3. 1 qu. 2 and sol. 2, nn. 58–60, 65–70 (iii. 386–8).

(ii.1) [a divine person would be] so restricted (*comprehensa*) by one human nature that it could not assume another to its personality—which is impossible, for the uncreated cannot be restricted by the created.[2]

Clearly, in any case of multiple incarnations of one and the same person, there will be one person and many natures. But can we say how many human beings there would be? According to Aquinas, plurality of human beings requires (though, as we will see in a moment, it is not entailed by) plurality of persons. There is just one incarnate person. So there is just one human being.[3] The reason for this is, according to Aquinas, merely conventional: we do not call one person who—say— is wearing two sets of clothing 'two clothed things, but one clothed thing with two sets of clothing'.[4]

William of Ware disagrees. Clearly, as Aquinas notes, we do not count substances in virtue of their accidental modifications; after all, their accidents are individuated by the substance, and not vice versa. But concrete substantives ('human being', for example) are signs of the substantial forms of things; more than one substantial form— two assumed human natures for example—entails more than one substance.[5]

Scotus agrees that there would be as many human beings as there are natures assumed—though of course only one human person. Scotus refers us back to the discussion of the procession of the Holy Spirit, his being spirated ('breathed') by the Father and Son: Father and Son are one spirator, but two inspiring things (*spirantes*).[6] Scotus's treatment is notably different from Aquinas's. Basically, Scotus disagrees with Aquinas's claim that plurality of 'nouns imposed from forms' (e.g. 'man') requires plurality of *supposita*. According to Scotus, then, plurality of substances (at least as referred to by plural substance-sortals) does not require plurality of *supposita*. He makes his point by distinguishing the way in which we count things referred to by means of adjectives (the use of 'bare' adjectives is possible in Latin in a way in which it is not in English) from the way we count things referred to by concrete substantives. Underlying this is that the intuition that things we refer to by adjectives are *supposita*, whereas the things we refer to by substantives are individual(ized) natures or substances. (On the distinction between *supposita* and individualized natures or substances, see Part IV. As we saw in Chapter 8, Scotus is not always wholly consistent in his use of concrete substantives to refer to individualized natures.) Scotus argues that an adjective properly qualifies a person or *suppositum*, associating a form with the *suppositum*. Thus in relation to the question

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[2] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 3. 7 c (iii/1. 29ᵃ).   [3] Ibid. 3. 3. 7 ad 2 (iii/1. 29ᵃ).   [4] Ibid.

[5] 'Ego dico quod esset duo homines, quia aliter est de nominibus adiectivis et substantivis, sicut dixi in primo libro in illa questione qua quaerebatur utrum pater et filius essent unus spirator. Adiectiva enim nomina totaliter adiacent ad supposita, et ideo numeratur ad numerationem suppositorum sicut et accidentia. Sed substantiva nomina signant rem in quadam abstractione: signant enim formam et ideo habent numerum ex forma significata per terminum, non ex supposito. Quia formam signat iste terminus "homo", illa persona erit duo homines secundum numerum naturarum assumptarum': William, *In Sent.* 160 (MS M₁ fo. 143ʳᵇ).

[6] Just as William does too: see n. 5 above.

of the spiration of the Holy Spirit by the Father and Son, Scotus claims that we should allow 'two *spirantes*' and 'one *spirator*' on the grounds that the adjectival '*spirantes*' corresponds to the *supposita* (Father and Son) in a way in which the substantive '*spirator*' does not:

(ii.2) The [plural] enumeration of a determinable form [in the case of an adjectival term and not of a substantival term is] on account of [the adjectival term's] association with a *suppositum*.[7]

(ii.3) When [an adjectival numerical term—e.g. 'two'] is added to an adjective, as when we say 'two *spirantes*', both [terms] . . . are dependent on a third on which they depend and which is determined by them. In the case at hand, this is ' "someones" ' or 'persons', as if we were to say 'three creating "someones" ', or 'three [creating] persons'.[8]

So, supposing one divine person assumed more than one human nature, we would want to claim that there is one (humanized) person.[9]

So far, the account is similar to those of Aquinas and William. But Scotus's account of the quantification of substantives by numerical terms is rather different. According to Scotus, concrete substantives (substance-sortals) do not always refer to forms precisely as those forms are possessed by *supposita*. So if we quantify a substantive with a numerical term, we number the referents of the substantive, irrespective of whether these referents are *supposita*:

(ii.4) When a numerical term is added to a substantive, as if we say 'two *spirators*', the adjectival numerical term [viz. 'two'] immediately has a substantive on which it depends, since an adjective determines that on which it depends. Therefore the significate of its substantive is denoted to be [plurally] numbered.[10]

In the case of the Incarnation, the substantive 'man' refers to the Word + an individual human nature. But suppose the Word were to assume two individual human natures. Then we would have the following pair: (Word + human-nature$_1$); (Word + human-nature$_2$). Each of these is properly referred to as 'man'; and since the substantive term 'man', on Scotus's principle, does not correspond to a *suppositum* on a necessarily one-to-one basis, we can claim that there are two men. Note that, as we saw in Chapter 5, Scotus explicitly holds that the senses of 'man' in 'The Word is man' and '(The Word + human nature) is man' are different, where the different senses are determined by the reference of the subject term. And using this strategy allows Scotus to avoid a commitment here to relative identity.

What about the second counterfactual case: that of the assumption of one created nature by more than one divine person? The metaphysics, here, as well as the theology, seems rather more complicated. The standard objection to the possibility of such a scenario is set out by Anselm: 'Many persons cannot assume one and

    [7] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 12. 1, n. 45 (Vatican, v. 50).   [8] Ibid. 1. 12. 1, n. 46 (Vatican, v. 51).
    [9] See Scotus, *RP* 3. 1. 3–5, n. 11 (Wadding, xi. 426^a).
    [10] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 12. 1, n. 46 (Vatican, v. 51).

the same man into unity of person; therefore it is necessary that this [assumption] be brought about in one person.'[11] Bonaventure explains:

(ii.5) The union of the divine nature to the human results in the mutual communication of properties. Therefore if the three persons assumed one man, that man would be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And from this it would follow, on account of the communication of properties, that the Father would be the Son and the Holy Spirit, and vice versa. And if this is the case, then the distinction of persons would perish. . . . As Anselm says, many persons cannot assume one and the same man, not on account of a defect of power, but on account of the impossibility of the implied contradiction.[12]

If three persons assumed one created nature, then there would be three persons and one nature. But there would be one human being, since on account of the numerical unity of nature, each person would be this human being. And this entails falsely that the three divine persons are identical with each other.

Aquinas agrees with Bonaventure that, if the three persons assumed one human nature, then we should conclude that the three divine persons are one human being:

(ii.6) If it were the case that the three persons assumed one human nature, it would be true to say that the three persons were one human being, just as it is actually true to say that they are one God, on account of the one divine nature. Neither does 'one' imply unity of person, but rather unity in human nature. For it could not be argued that, since the three persons are one human being, they are one without qualification.[13]

But Aquinas does not believe that there is an identity problem here, since the claim that the three persons are one human being is exactly parallel to the claim that the three persons are one God—a claim that he does not believe to raise any insuperable identity problems.

Of course, Aquinas might be right in thinking that, if the identity problem can be solved in the case of the shared divine nature, then it can be solved for the case of a shared human nature too. How satisfactory we find this will depend on how we try to explain the fact that the problem can be solved in the case of the divine nature. Henry of Ghent argues that the identity problem can be solved in the case of the divine nature by appealing to the *limitlessness* of the divine nature. Henry argues that the relations between the divine nature and the divine persons are all of the same type—namely, identity—such that the repeatability of such a relation requires limitlessness. So a limitless nature can be identical with three different things of the same kind. The limitlessness of the divine nature means that it can be repeated in each divine person, such that it is identical with each divine person,[14] though without division.[15]

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[11] Anselm, *CDH* 2. 9 (*Opera Omnia*, ed. Franciscus Salesius Schmitt, 6 vols. (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946–61), ii. 105).

[12] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 3, fund. 3 and c (iii. 14ᵃ, 15ᵃ).

[13] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 3. 6 ad 1 (iii/1. 28ᵃ).   [14] Henry, *Quod.* 6. 7 (Macken, x. 75–6).

[15] Ibid. 6. 1 (Macken, x. 8–9).

An assumed human nature is not limitless in this way. But, according to Henry, such a nature is only accidentally united to any divine person. Its being accidentally united to the persons means that we can think of the assumed nature's different relations to the different persons as different in kind from each other, like the different relations a nature has in virtue of different accidental properties.[16] Henry's argument is more than usually obscure—and Henry at the best of times is not a writer blessed with the sort of clarity that we find in the lucid prose of an Aquinas. But I take it that this analogy is a way of trying to show that the human nature can be shared by the different divine persons without being identical with them.

If my reading of Henry is correct, then it must be admitted that his strategy is hardly ideal. Henry in effect solves the identity problem by denying that 'A divine person is this human being' should be understood as an identity claim, at least in the case of the incarnation of all three divine persons in one and the same human nature. The problem is that, as Bonaventure points out in the passage I quoted above, the communication of properties seems to entail that the statement 'A divine person is this human being', if true, should be construed as making an identity claim. As I shall show below, however, there is a different way of understanding the issue here—one which is developed by Scotus in a rather different context.

William certainly understands Henry in just the way I am proposing, and indeed he agrees with Henry that there is no objection to one nature's being assumed by more than one divine person. According to William, the *identity* of a nature with more than one person—as in the case of the Trinity—requires the infinity of the nature. But a nature's being *sustained* by more than one person does not require infinity. So the finitude of the human nature is no block on its being assumed by more than one person.[17]

The solution to the Anselmian/Bonaventuran problem is not in fact as straightforward as Henry and William suppose. It is certainly true that the divine persons are identical (on some understanding of 'identical') with the divine essence in a way in which they are not identical with the assumed nature. And it is in virtue of their identity with the divine essence that each divine person is God. But it is in virtue of the dependence relation that an assumed human nature has to a divine person that an incarnate divine person is identical with a man—not, identical with a human nature, but still identical with a man, since in virtue of the assumption a divine person is a man. On the proposed scenario, each divine person is identical with one and the same man—so (falsely) each divine person is identical with all other divine persons.

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[16] Henry, *Quod*. 6. 7 (Macken, x. 76).

[17] 'Dicendum . . . quod unam essentiam esse in tribus personis potest esse duobus modis. Primo modo quod sit eadem realiter et naturaliter cum illis personis, ita quod tota realitas et <in>finitas sit ab illa essentia ex infinitate essentiae. Alio modo potest intelligi unam naturam esse in tribus suppositis sed quod non sit eadem realiter cum tribus personis, sed substantificatur in illis, et hoc non arguit infinitatem in natura tali, sed magis in personis substantificantibus. Sic est in proposito; hoc non est ex infinitate essentiae nec repugnat creaturae sive essentiae': William, *In Sent*. 159 (MS V, fo. 107ʳᵃ).

Scotus shows some awareness of the inadequacy of the response offered by Henry and William. He sees that the identity question makes no difference; what is at issue is the repeatability of numerically one nature, irrespective of its relation to the *supposita* in which it is repeated—that is, irrespective of whether it merely belongs to its *supposita* or is really identical with them. The repeatability of numerically one object is possible only if that object is infinite. It is for this reason that, as we see empirically, it is impossible for numerically one accident to exist in many substances.[18]

In fact, Scotus elsewhere offers some clear light on this obscure question. When dealing with the Trinitarian identity problem, Scotus makes it clear that he understands the identity relation between each divine person and the divine nature to be a relation of exemplification, such that the divine nature is something like a necessary property of each divine person. The divine nature is numerically one, like an immanent universal; it is a one-of-many that is in some sense a constituent of each individual that exemplifies it. An individual human nature assumed by three divine persons would be like this too—not divided into numerically many objects, but numerically one thing exemplified without division by three *supposita*. Scotus believes that identity problems can be solved in the case of the divine nature. So he should believe that identity problems can be solved in the (as he sees it) counterpossible assumption of one human nature by more than one divine person. The basic claim is to hold that 'The Father is this God' should not be understood as making a 'Leibnizian' identity claim at all. Rather, the predicate 'is this God' is a (misleading) way of picking out that the Father exemplifies an immanent universal (the divine nature). As Scotus puts it, arguing to the identity of the Father with the divine substance is to mistake the predicate 'is this God' for a reference to a primary substance. 'Is this God', in the context under discussion, is a way of signifying the divine nature—it signifies a kind (a *quale*), not a thing (a *quid*).[19]

Scotus, then, has the tools to deal with Bonaventure's problem. He does not use them, presumably because he (mistakenly) believes that the finitude of an individual created nature is sufficient to block its assumption by more than one person —thus rendering a discussion of Bonaventure's problem otiose.[20]

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[18] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 2, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 33–4); see also *RP* 3. 1. 3–5, n. 9 (Wadding, xi. 425ᵃ).

[19] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 2. 2. 1–4, nn. 414–15 (Vatican, ii. 363–4). Scotus's theory at this point is consistent with Christian orthodoxy, since it allows him to affirm one God (i.e. substance or individual nature) and three persons. I discuss this aspect of Scotus's Trinitarian theology in my forthcoming 'Duns Scotus on Divine Substance and the Trinity'.

[20] For the relevance of finitude, along with a consideration of other Scotist arguments against the applicability of immanent universals in the case of created natures, see my 'Divisibility, Communicability, and Predicability in Duns Scotus's Theories of the Common Nature', forthcoming.

PART IV

Theories of subsistence

Chapter 11

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In this last part, I want to look in detail at the definition of subsistence—what it is for an individual nature to subsist. This, of course, is precisely the feature of medieval Christological discussions that C. J. F. Williams finds (at best) superfluous to requirements.[1] In a sense—though not his sense—he is right. Given that the human nature is an individual substance, or substance-like thing, we do not need a complete account of subsistence in order to avoid Nestorianism (the claim that there are two *persons* in Christ, divine and human, such that the divine person is not properly speaking the subject of any human properties)—where a complete account of subsistence is a complete list of conditions individually necessary and jointly sufficient for subsistence. All we need is a way of blocking the subsistence of the assumed human nature. And, as I shall show, the elements of this were clearly in place by the mid-twelfth century. Putting it another way, all we need to avoid Nestorianism is that the Word is the (ultimate) subject of human attributes. To this extent, the discussion I have offered in Parts I to III is sufficient to show that none of the thinkers I examine could fairly be labelled a Nestorian. On the other hand, if we want a really explanatory account of non-subsistence, we need to give a full account of subsistence. For example, suppose we believe that subsistence is fully explained by a nature's possession of a positive subsistence-property S. We know, since Nestorianism is false, that the union of a nature to the Word entails that the nature is not a person. And we know that non-subsistent natures lack S. But it is the lack of S—and not union with the Word—that explains why an assumed nature is not a person.

One background difficulty felt by all the thinkers can be traced back to Boethius's definition of 'person': ' "Person" is "an individual substance of rational nature." '[2] Part of the trouble facing Boethius is the question of the correct translation of Greek philosophical terms into Latin. For Boethius, '*substantia*' (substance) translates the Greek 'hypostasis' (person), on the grounds that both terms properly refer to bearers of accidents. This identification of substance and person thus sets up—though was by no means uniquely responsible for—the subsistence problem that so troubles modern readers of medieval Christological debates. Putting it bluntly, Christ's human nature on the face of it satisfies Boethius's definition. It does so too for the proposed replacement definition offered by Richard of St Victor: ' "Person" is "an individual existence of rational nature." '[3] 'Existence' here replaces 'substance',

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[1] On this, see my discussion in the Introduction above.   [2] Boethius, *De Per.* 3 (p. 85).
[3] Richard of St Victor, *De Trin.* 4. 23 (p. 188).

since Richard believes 'substance'—unlike the concrete 'existence'—to have a funda-
mentally abstract reference: 'By the name of "substance" is signified not so much
"who" as "what".'[4] Furthermore, Richard clarifies 'individual' as 'that which can
depend only on one thing'.[5] Despite initial appearances, none of this is any help
for Christology. After all, despite Richard's clarification of the terms 'substance'
and 'individual', Christ's human nature still satisfies the definition of 'person'. It
depends on just one thing, and it is a concrete existence.

Many twelfth-century thinkers take it for granted that the assumed human nature
is an individual, and, furthermore, an individual for which an explanation of its non-
subsistence is required.[6] Nevertheless, even before Peter Lombard, they have some
notion of the requirements for avoiding Nestorianism. (The discussion of Boethius
and Richard perhaps means no more than that the canonical definitions of 'person'
are more the locus for Christological problems than Christological solutions.)
Basically, subsistence—being a person—requires not being composed with another
substance. This account of subsistence excludes Christ's human nature; and it does
so whatever account of the union is offered. Abelard's parts Christology formally
avoids Nestorianism by just this move, as does Hugh of St Victor's *homo assumptus*
theory.[7]

Peter Lombard discusses the issue in relation to so-called 'Christological
nihilism'—the view that Christ as man is not something (*non est aliquid*). The
tag originates from Roland of Bologna.[8] Exactly how the Lombard understood
Roland's claim, and indeed whether the Lombard accepts or rejects it, is a matter
for some debate. The nihilistic claim was itself condemned in 1170,[9] and again in
1177,[10] by Pope Alexander III, who expressly attributed the theory to Peter

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[4] Richard of St Victor, *De Trin.* 4. 7 (p. 169).   [5] Ibid. 4. 23 (p. 188).

[6] Gilbert of Poitiers is an important exception here, as I mentioned in Chapter 1. Perhaps the most
intellectually significant thinker to hold that nature language should be interpreted merely abstractly is
Anselm of Canterbury. According to Anselm, the divine person assumed an individual human nature.
(Anselm rather awkwardly sometimes referred to the assumed individual nature as the 'assumed man'.)
But this nature is not the sort of thing that could, under different circumstances, subsist. Talk of natures
is merely a way of talking about property exemplification. The divine person is human simply in virtue
of his exemplifying human nature: see Anselm, *Ep. de Inc.* 11 (ii. 28–30).

[7] For Abelard, see *Exp. Symb. Ap.* (PL, clxxviii. 624C): 'Whenever the human soul is in the body,
it cannot be called a person, because, joined to the flesh, it constitutes one person and one rational sub-
stance with it. In this way too the Word united to the man in Christ yields one person, not two.' For
Hugh, see *De Sac.* 2. 1. 8 (PL, clxxvi. 394A). On this, see Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy: A Study of
Gilbert Porreta's Thinking and the Theological Expositions of the Doctrine of the Incarnation during the Period
1130–1180*, Acta Theologica Danica, 15 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1982), 195 (Hugh and his followers), 219
(Abelard), 224–5 (Abelard's school), 245–6 (Peter Lombard). There are traces of this sort of view in
Gilbert too: see Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy*, 62–4.

[8] Roland of Bologna, *Die Sentenzen Rolands nachmals Papstes Alexander III*, ed. Ambrosius M. Gietl
(Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1891), 176–7. Note that the earlier identification of the author of these
Sentences as Roland Bandinelli (Pope Alexander III)—as suggested in the title of the edition—has now
been shown to be mistaken: for a summary of the literature on this, see Colish, *Peter Lombard*, 2 vols.,
Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 41 (Leiden, New York, Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1994), i. 65–6.

[9] In the letter *Cum in Nostra* (DS, n. 749).   [10] In the letter *Cum Christus* (DS, n. 750).

Lombard.[11] It seems to me—despite Alexander's claim—that the Lombard in fact
wants to reject this Christological nihilism, and that his rejection of it includes a
clear statement of a view that subsistence required non-assumption.

First of all, the relevant passage from the *Sentences*:

(11.1) [1] If, as man, he is something, then either a person, or a substance, or something
else. But not something else; therefore a person or a substance. If he is a substance, then
either rational or irrational. But he is not an irrational substance; therefore rational. If there-
fore as man he is a rational substance, he is therefore a person, since 'Rational substance of
individual nature' [*sic*] is the definition of person. If therefore as man he is something, then
as man he is a person.

[2] But, on the other hand, if as man he is a person, then either a third person in the
Trinity, or another. But not another; therefore a third person in the Trinity. And if as man
he is a third person in the Trinity, [he is] therefore God. For these inappropriatenesses, and
others, some say that Christ as man is not a person or a thing. . . .

[3] What is posited in the above argumentation—that if Christ as man is a rational sub-
stance, therefore [he is] a person—does not follow, however. For in the same way the soul
of Christ is a rational substance, but [is] not however a person, because it is not *per-se-sonans*,
but [is] rather joined to another thing.[12]

According to some scholars, paragraph [2] represents the Lombard's own view on
the matter—namely, his acceptance of Christological nihilism, rejecting the claim
that Christ as man is something. On this reading, Christological nihilism is a ver-
sion of the *habitus* theory: it denies that the Word became anything. The Incarnate
Word is not a human thing, since if he were, he would be a human person in addi-
tion to his being a divine person. And this would lead to four persons in the Trinity.[13]

I do not think that there is much to be said in favour of this reading, which relies
on the unsupported claim that the Lombard accepted the *habitus* theory. Indeed,
as I shall show in a moment, it is clearly possible to accept the *habitus* theory and
reject Christological nihilism, provided that the nihilistic claim is understood in a
different way from that just suggested.

Lombard clearly states at the beginning of paragraph [3] of (11.1) that the opin-
ions in paragraphs [1] and [2] are both false. Since the arguments of paragraphs [1]
and [2] both accept the inference from Christ as man being something to Christ as
man being a person, Lombard's claim is that both of the opinions are wrong. And
his reason for thinking that they are both wrong is that not every human substance
is a person. So presumably what is at stake here, as the Lombard understands it,

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[11] ' . . . pravae doctrinae Petri quondam Parisiensis episcopi': DS, n. 749. Interestingly, the position
condemned amounts to the *habitus* theory—a theory that, as I shall outline in a moment, seems to be
independent of Christological nihilism. It is not possible to tell for certain whether the Lombard accepts
the *habitus* theory, as some commentators think (see e.g. Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy*, 263). But I
find Colish's claim that he wants to reject all three of the Christological theories convincing: see her
Peter Lombard, i. 425–7.

[12] Lombard, *Sent.* 3. 10. 1, nn. 2–4 (ii. 72–3).

[13] For this reading, see e.g. Nielsen, *Theology and Philosophy*, 264–7.

is not the question of the union as such between the divine person and the human nature—whether, for example, the Word, in virtue of his possessing a further substance is himself a further person—but rather the question of the status of the human substance as such. And Lombard's answer is that this nature is a substance but not a person, since necessary for being a person is not being joined to something else. So, according to the Lombard, whatever explanation we give of the union, we have got to present a clear strategy for avoiding Nestorianism.[14]

This sort of reading seems to me to be confirmed by a consideration of Christological nihilism in the immediate aftermath of its condemnation by Alexander III. The condemnation raised problems for Christ's unity. If Christ is two things, then he appears to be two persons—that is, Nestorianism is true. Simon of Tournai, for example, felt the tension. Having stated the (now official) view that Christ as man is something, he immediately discusses Christ's unity. To avoid Nestorianism he asserts that Christ is one, but finds himself at a loss to see how this can be so.[15] Simon's problem, then, is (just like the Lombard's) to see how a human substance can fail to be a human person. To avoid this problem, given the condemnation of nihilism, it is necessary for anyone who accepts the individuality of the human nature to opt for an account of subsistence which makes non-assumption necessary for subsistence.

So the sort of strategy pioneered by the twelfth-century thinkers did not immediately dominate. But, understandably, it came to do so, and was generally accepted (with important refinements) by the mid-thirteenth century. Perhaps the most important statement of a refined version of the non-assumption solution to the subsistence problem can be found in William of Auxerre, writing in the 1220s, discussing Christological nihilism. William's aim is targeted specifically on the claim that Christ as man is a person. William clearly understands 'as man' to be picking out the human nature. According to William, there is no sense in which the assumed nature can count as a person. Suppose we understand 'as man' to be restricting the reference of 'Christ' merely to the assumed nature as such. A nature as such is a universal—and no universal is a person. Suppose, however, we restrict the reference of 'Christ' to the individual man (i.e. human nature) referred to by 'Jesus'—so 'Christ is a person as Jesus'. Again, the proposition thus understood is false, and William supports this claim with an astute refinement of the twelfth-century strategy for picking out subsistence:

(11.2) For something to be a person, a three-fold determination is required: namely, [i] the distinction of singularity, which is in the soul of Socrates and in Socrates, which by its singular existence differs from every other thing—and by which it is also distinguished from

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[14] For this reading, see Marcia Colish, 'Christological Nihilism in the Second Part of the Twelfth Century', *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale*, 63 (1996), 146–55; also Walter Henry Principe, *William of Auxerre's Theology of the Hypostatic Union* (The Theology of the Hypostatic Union in the Early Thirteenth Century, 1), Studies and Texts, 7 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1963), 67.

[15] On this, see Principe, *William of Auxerre's Theology of the Hypostatic Union*, 69.

the universal; and [ii] the distinction of incommunicability, which is in Socrates from the
fact that he is not communicable as a part since he does not belong with something else as
a part in a composite—and this distinction is not in a soul or a body, and for this reason
neither the soul nor the body is properly a person, for it is not *per-se*-one, or *per-se-sonans*,
as Boethius says. . . . [iii] The third distinction is the distinction of dignity, which is in Socrates
from the fact that his humanity is not mixed with a higher (*digniora*) form in him. And both
Peter and Paul are truly persons, for in them these three distinctions all occur. But the last
distinction is not in Jesus as Jesus, because 'Jesuity' is joined to a higher form in the Son of
God, and thus it is not distinguished from something higher.[16]

So, a person is: (i) not universal; (ii) not a part; (iii) not joined to a higher form.
The second and third of these are particularly significant. The second has decided
ontological overtones derived from the twelfth-century discussions—perhaps most
notably combining the sort of strategy found in the Lombard with Richard of
St Victor's more technical and philosophically sophisticated vocabulary. Clearly,
Richard's definition of 'person' is supposed by William to exclude more candidates
than Boethius's can. But still not enough, however, since—as William sees—Richard's
incommunicability criterion still includes Christ's human nature in its extension.

   The origins of William's third criterion necessary for subsistence are rather dif-
ferent. Failing to be joined to a higher form is, according to William, a mark of
dignity. The background here is a *juridical* understanding of person found by William
in the Council of Frankfurt (794):[17]

(11.3) Through this it is clear that what the Council says is true, namely that 'the person
consumed a person', for that union of the humanity to the divinity excludes the third dis-
tinction required for being a person, and thus the advening higher form consumed the person.
For this reason that Council adds 'the person consumed', because ' "person" is a juridical
term, and "nature" a generic term.' ' "Person" is a juridical term', that is, of power and dign-
ity. Whence, because the humanity in Jesus does not operate *per se* in Jesus (rather, what-
ever it does is done by the divinity which is in the same person), for this reason it is not
'*per-se-sonans*', or '*per-se*-one'. And for this reason Christ is not a person either as man, or
as Jesus.[18]

The Council of Frankfurt itself quotes from Faustus of Riez (*c*.408–*c*.490), who argues
that the term 'person' is juridical in the sense that power over a person—a son or
a slave—can be held by another person—the householder—such that the power-
holding person 'consumes' the legal powers of the person subjected. Substances,
however, cannot be thus consumed, since 'a substance is a physical thing (*res
naturae*)'.[19] William's account of 'person' is more ontological in its thrust than this

   [16] William of Auxerre, *Sum. Aur.* 3. 1. 3. 8 (iii. 36–7).
   [17] The relevant text from the Council is usefully quoted in Principe, *William of Auxerre's Theology
of the Hypostatic Union*, 275, n. 52.
   [18] William of Auxerre, *Sum. Aur.* 3. 1. 3. 8 (iii. 37). For similar references to this juridical sense of
'person' before 1200, see Principe, *William of Auxerre's Theology of the Hypostatic Union*, 85.
   [19] Faustus, *De Spir. Sancto* 2. 4 (*Opera*, ed. Augustus Engelbrecht, CSEL, 21 (Prague, Vienna, and
Leipzig: F. Tempsky and G. Freytag, 1891), 139).

is—William is interested not in perseity in power, but in perseity in being—the dignity of independent existence. Given the way the twelfth-century discussion moved, this ontological interest need not come as a great surprise.

Understanding the dignity criterion proved surprisingly problematic. What William is trying to pick out is that non-assumption is necessary for subsistence. But the term 'dignity' seemed to some—Alexander of Hales, for example—to imply more than this:

(11.4) The distinction is three-fold: there is a distinction of singularity—and this the soul has; [there is a distinction] of singularity and incommunicability—and this a human being has; [and there is a distinction] of singularity, incommunicability, and dignity—and this Christ has.[20]

Principe helpfully comments: Christ's human nature has an eminent property— rationality—that

would suffice, were the union dissolved, to make the human nature a person. But in the union this property is no longer pre-eminent; God does not take it away in the union but rather grants personal *esse* to human nature according to a nobler property, that of the divine person.[21]

The problem here is that the distinction of dignity is bound up with the *rationality* of a person. This is rather different from William's distinction of dignity, which is to exist *per se*. Bonaventure makes a similar move to that proposed by Alexander, claiming that rationality is necessary for (true?) individuality.[22] Theologians of the mid-thirteenth century took a radical approach to this misapprehension of Alexander's and Bonaventure's. The mark of subsistence, according to William, is not rationality but non-assumption. This can be powerfully underscored if we argue that it would be just as possible for the Word to assume an irrational nature as a rational one.[23] On this sort of view, the non-assumption of Felix the cat as much as of Socrates, or of Gabriel the archangel, is that in virtue of which he subsists.

Scotus argues in exactly this way. He claims that subsistence belongs to an individual in virtue of its independence: its factual non-assumption (a state for which it has a natural inclination). But this subsistence is not the sort of thing that could block assumption. Only the divine persons possess subsistence in such a way as to block this sort of assumption.[24] *Qua* subsistence, irrational natures are no more perfect than created rational natures. So if the subsistence of a created rational nature is such that it does not prevent assumption, *a fortiori* the subsistence

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[20] Alexander of Hales, *In Sent.* (L) 3. 5. 41 (4 vols., Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica, 12–15 (Quaracchi: Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae, 1954), iii. 69–70).

[21] Walter H. Principe, *Alexander of Hales' Theology of the Hypostatic Union* (The Theology of the Hypostatic Union in the Early Thirteenth Century, 2), Studies and Texts, 12 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1967), 120.

[22] Bonaventure, *In Sent.* 3. 5. 2. 2 ad 1 (iii. 113ᵇ).

[23] On this, see my 'Incarnation, Indwelling and the Vision of God: Henry of Ghent and Some Franciscans', *Franciscan Studies*, 57 (1999), 79–130, and Excursus 1, n. 1 above.

[24] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, nn. 9–11 (Wadding, vii. 15–16). See Ch. 15 below.

of an irrational nature is not such as to prevent assumption.[25] Subsistence, then, is had not in virtue of rationality but in virtue of non-assumption. This Scotist argument explains well the significance of the debate.

In what follows, I try to examine the various solutions to the subsistence problem suggested by my authors. These solutions fall into three types: *esse* theories (where *esse* is added to an individual substance/nature to explain subsistence), relation theories (where a special relation to divine efficient causality is added to an individual substance/nature to explain subsistence), and negation theories. This last group of theories—negation theories—are all refinements of non-assumption arguments. On negation theories, *nothing* is added to explain subsistence; Christ's human nature fails to subsist because certain features of this nature block its subsistence. The removal of such blocks is explanatorily sufficient for subsistence.[26]

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[25] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 2. 1, n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 65–6).

[26] Of theologians writing in the middle of the thirteenth century, only Peter of Tarentasia cites William without proposing any further clarification of William's position: see Peter, *In Sent.* 3. 5. 2. 2 (iii. 34ᵃ). As I made clear in Part I, every medieval thinker supposes that there is some sense in which the human nature exists *in* the Word, or in Christ. And as I shall make clear in Part IV, all thinkers suppose that the human nature is an individual substance-like thing that nevertheless does not subsist. To this extent, all my thinkers would be happy with the claims that the nature is both enhypostatic and anhypostatic respectively—at least as these terms were later understood in Protestant scholasticism. The terminology, however, is not used in the Middle Ages, and in any case the term 'anhypostatic' (used to mean non-subsisting) was a Protestant innovation. John of Damascus uses 'enhypostatic' to draw attention to the existence of the nature *in* the hypostasis of the Word, though he expressly denies that the nature is anhypostatic—lacking a hypostasis—precisely on the grounds that it has an (extrinsic) hypostasis: see *De Fide Orth.* 53 (Kotter, 128). I suspect that the reason why the terminology is not exploited is simply that this isolated chapter of John is one of only two texts known in the Middle Ages where the terminology is used (for the other, see John of Damascus, *Dialectica* 27 (enhypostatic) and 28 (anhypostatic) (*Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos.* vol. 1: *Institutio elementaris. Capita philosophica*, ed. Bonifatius Kotter, Patristische Texte und Studien, 7 (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1969), 109–10; see too John of Damascus, *Dialectica: Version of Robert Grosseteste*, ed. Owen A. Callaghan, Franciscan Institute Publications: Text Series, 6 (St Bonaventure, N. Y.: The Franciscan Institute; Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts; Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1953), 24–5); note that in the long version of *Dialectica* (printed in Migne), the relevant chapters are 44 and 45). What seems a major late-Patristic teaching to those who have access not only to more of John's works but also to the work of other late Patristic theologians such as the two Leontiuses and the author of *De Sectis*, appeared to the medieval theologians as an isolated case—and not all that clear a case in Burgundio's rather garbled translation of *De Fide Orth.* So there is continuity of teaching on all these matters, however, even if not of terminology, and it derives from John's summary of the Chalcedonian tradition in terms of the human nature's existence in the person of the Word, and its consequent failure to subsist in itself (both of which John talks of in terms of the nature's being enhypostatic): on this, see U. M. Lang, 'Anhypostatos-Enhypostatos: Church Fathers, Protestant Orthodoxy and Karl Barth', *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, 49 (1998), 630–57.

Chapter 12

ESSE THEORIES OF SUBSISTENCE

According to Aquinas, the early Henry of Ghent, and Giles of Rome, *esse* is the mark of subsistence. Giles is unequivocal in positing *esse* as the solution to the subsistence problem: a subsistent nature can be distinguished from a non-subsistent nature in terms of the addition of *esse*. Henry of Ghent most probably accepts something like this too. But the position in Aquinas is more complex. I shall argue that, while *esse* is unequivocally the mark of subsistence for Aquinas, Aquinas is unclear whether he sees *esse* as something that, along with a nature, irreducibly belongs to a *suppositum*, such that the nature and the *esse* might be thought of as in some sense *parts* of the *suppositum*, or whether he sees *esse* as something that under the right circumstances could belong to a nature—namely, to a nature that subsists. Strictly speaking, only the second of these views generates a subsistence problem. We need to be clear that the first of these two views is Aquinas's 'official' one, the view that he adopts in every *ex professo* discussion of the essential differences between natures and *supposita*. But Aquinas certainly talks in the second sort of way too. I shall argue that his ambivalence here ties in precisely with an ambiguity in his presentation of the composition between essence and *esse*.

1. THOMAS AQUINAS

Let me begin with an account of Aquinas's official view. At least sometimes, Aquinas looks to adopt a position related to one recommended by Williams. For example in passages (0.2) and (0.3) from Aquinas that I quoted in the Introduction, Aquinas seems explicit in holding that there is no sense at all in which a nature could be a real, extra-mental, subject of properties. Talk of natures is just a way of talking about the essential properties of a thing.[1] A *suppositum* is a whole which includes a set of parts: the nature, individuating features, and accidents:

(12.1) It happens that in some subsisting things we find something which does not pertain to the nature of the species, viz. accidents and individuating principles. . . . The nature of the species is itself included in the *suppositum* and certain other things are added which are beyond the nature of the species. Whence, a *suppositum* is signified as a whole, having a nature as a formal part, perfective of it.[2]

Aquinas does not name any other parts; so we must conclude that the *suppositum* for him will not be anything *over and above* these parts. The unity of the *suppositum*

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[1] The most extended defence of this sort of position can be found at Aquinas, *Quod.* 9. 2 (pp. 178^b–180^b).

[2] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 2. 2 c (iii/1. 13^a). Note that (12.1) overlaps with (0.2).

is guaranteed just in virtue of the peculiar types of entity that its parts are. Its parts are not in themselves even possibly *supposita*; they are types of entity that will naturally unite with each other to produce just one *suppositum*.

There is no subsistence problem on this account. A nature can be thought of as truth-maker—it is *id quo aliquid est*, a 'formal part', as (12.1) puts it—and, as we have seen, there is no official sense for Aquinas in which truth-makers are really existent objects;[3] they are not the sort of thing that can be created. In so far as *esse* counts among the 'certain other things . . . added beyond the nature of the species', *esse* is a feature not of a nature but of a *suppositum*.

But Aquinas is not always unequivocal in his defence of this sort of account of Christ's human nature. The reason, I suspect, is two-fold. First, the human nature is the sort of thing that appears to satisfy criteria for kind-membership—and certainly not the sort of thing that could be some sort of accidental truth-maker:

(12.2) That which is predicated accidentally does not predicate something [of its substance], but how much or what sort or how related. If therefore that human nature came accidentally [to the divine person], then something would not be predicated [of the substance], but what sort or how much or how related. And this is contrary to the decree of Pope Alexander [III], *Cum Christus*.[4]

Christ's human nature is not just a property of something in the way that an accident is: it is in some sense like a substance. Secondly, as I discussed at some length in the Introduction above, the human nature appears to be individuated independently of its union to the second person of the Trinity; and this provides a temptation to think of the nature as the kind of thing that might (under the right sorts of circumstances) subsist.

Let me first present the evidence for this rather different account of nature in the Christology of Aquinas, focusing specifically on those passages where Aquinas talks of subsistence as something that might be a feature of a nature. The most important passage is (0.4), quoted above. In this passage, Aquinas is explicit that subsistence (personhood) is something that can belong to an individual nature. The argument of (0.4) is that Christ's human nature lacks its proper personhood because it exists in (as united to) the person of the Word. Speaking in this way suggests that personhood is something that an individual nature could possess. And in this case we can ask what feature a nature could possess that might explain its possessing the feature of personhood.

So at least some of what Aquinas says require that he be able to give a solution to the subsistence problem. His official theory does not require this; but other parts of his account clearly do. Anyone who believes that we should simply disregard anything that Aquinas says that is inconsistent with his official view should simply skip the rest of this section. I believe, however, that it is possible to identify quite clearly

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[3] An exception might be some of the things that Aquinas says about accidents in transubstantiation. I indicated in Ch. 1 why I think that these Thomist claims are inconsistent with things that Aquinas officially holds about accidents.

[4] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 6. 2 sed contra (iii/1. 17ᵃ).

the elements of a solution to the subsistence problem in Aquinas—and it is a solu-
tion that dovetails in very neatly with some of the central things that Aquinas believes
about Christ's human nature on his 'unofficial' account.[5]

Aquinas does not address the issue head-on (presumably because he is not con-
scious of the equivocation in his account of what it is to be a *suppositum*), though
he does offer some sort of discussion of the issue. And this has led Aquinas's com-
mentators to find a number of different (and inconsistent) solutions implicit in
Aquinas. So there is an interpretative problem here. The debate has been usefully
summarized by Othmar Schweizer. According to one view, closely associated with
Capreol, *esse* constitutes an individual nature as a *suppositum*. A second interpreta-
tion of Aquinas, usually associated with Cajetan, holds that some further formal or
essential sort of feature is what constitutes an individual nature as a *suppositum*.[6] A
final interpretation holds that neither the first nor the second interpretation is
correct, and that some other feature, neither *esse*-like nor essence-like, constitutes
an individual nature as a *suppositum*. The most obvious candidate for some such
feature would be a privation or negation.[7] Schweizer holds the third of these views,[8]
and I once believed that this 'Scotist' reading of Aquinas was correct.[9] This now
seems to me, however, to be mistaken. I shall argue that the best way to read Aquinas
is in terms of some sort of *esse*-theory of subsistence: what distinguishes a mere indi-
vidualized nature as such from a person is the presence of its own *esse* as a neces-
sary and sufficient condition for an individual nature's subsisting—in other words,
for such a nature's being a *suppositum*.[10] I shall thus want to defend perhaps the
most traditional interpretation of Aquinas on this point.[11]

   [5] For a powerful and convincing defence of the claim that the first view just outlined (in (12.1))
is Aquinas's real view (his 'canonical' view), see Michael Gorman, 'Uses of the Person–Nature
Distinction in Thomas's Christology', *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales*, 67 (2000), 58–79.
Some of the hardest material for Aquinas's official view to deal with is Aquinas's persistent claim that
the assumed human nature can *do* things (e.g. at *ST* 3. 9–15, mentioned in Ch. 10 above). In this sec-
tion, I shall provide further evidence in favour of the claim that individual *natures* are—unofficially—
generally the ultimate subjects of properties and predicates for Aquinas.
   [6] This view cannot, as far as I can tell, be found in the period that I am discussing in this book. So
this seems to me to be another—though not too significant—way in which Christological debate gen-
uinely developed after the early fourteenth century (on this, see my comments in the Preface and in the
concluding section of Ch. 7).
   [7] For these three interpretations, see Othmar Schweizer, *Person und Hypostatische Union bei Thomas
von Aquin*, Studia Friburgensia, N. F., 16 (Fribourg: Universitätsverlag, 1957), 6–10, 15–17, 23–53.
   [8] Ibid., 114–17.
   [9] See my 'Aquinas on Nature, Hypostasis, and the Metaphysics of the Incarnation', *The Thomist*, 60
(1996), 171–202, p. 177. I label the view 'Scotist' because it is espoused most famously and in its most
sophisticated form by Scotus. For the view, see Chs. 14 and 15 below.
   [10] I add 'its own' here because the discussion in Ch. 2 above should have made it clear that Aquinas
holds that Christ's human nature shares in the personal *esse* of the Word (in a way analogous to that in
which any concrete part shares in the *esse* of its whole), and to this extent does include *esse*. The *esse*
that it includes is not however its own: it includes the *esse* that is proper to the Word.
   [11] We should keep in mind that on Aquinas's official position, all of these theories are otiose.
Nevertheless, his unofficial position does indeed require that he offer a solution; and indeed, as we shall
see, Aquinas does seem implicitly to offer an unofficial solution to this unofficial problem (see pass-
age (12.6) and my discussion of it below). So my account here does not raise too many methodological

There are several ways of approaching the basic conclusion. Perhaps the simplest is to look at the counterfactual scenarios of the Word's assuming a pre-existent nature, and of his giving up a nature which he has assumed. The set of passages has been usefully assembled by Alfred J. Freddoso, whose excellent translations I use here.[12] First, passages on the assumption of a pre-existent nature:[13]

(12.3) Since the Word assumed the human nature to unity of person . . . it was necessary that the human nature not exist before being united to the Word. For if it had preexisted, then—since the nature could not exist except in an individual—there would have had to be some individual of *that* nature existing prior to the union. But an individual of a human nature is a hypostasis or person. Thus it will have to be claimed that the human nature which was going to be assumed preexisted in some nature or hypostasis. . . . Suppose . . . that the hypostasis or person in question . . . were not to remain in existence [on the assumption of the preexistent nature]. This could not happen without something's being corrupted, since without corruption no singular thing ceases to be that which it is.[14]

(12.4) A person is not presupposed in the human nature for the assumption. . . . For if it were presupposed, then either it would have to be corrupted, in which case it would be assumed without effect; or else it would have to remain after the union, in which case there would be two persons, the one assuming and the other assumed—which is erroneous.[15]

These two passages are explicit that something—namely a person—would be destroyed on the assumption of a pre-existent nature. So being a person involves something positive over and above a nature. But the passages are not clear whether subsistence or personhood is a feature of a nature, or rather a feature of something of which the nature is irreducibly a part (as outlined in (12.1)). A further passage, however, is more suggestive of the 'unofficial' theory that I am outlining here:

(12.5) If the human nature were not assumed by a divine person, then the human nature would have its own personhood. . . . By this union the divine person prevents the human nature from having its own personhood.[16]

Here, Aquinas appears to suggest that personhood is something that could be possessed by a nature. But (12.5) is agnostic about the nature of the feature (a positive feature, as we learn from (12.3) and (12.4)) required to make an individual nature a person. When discussing the counterfactual (counterpossible for Aquinas)

problems. It would do so, however, if there were no solution to the difficulty to be found in Aquinas. In such a case, I would be offering a hypothetical solution to a problem the existence of which Aquinas does not even spot. As it is, however, Aquinas does seem inchoately aware of the problem, and he does offer a solution. What he fails to see is that his official account of nature should entail that he does not even raise the problem in the first place. The difficulty for Aquinas, then, is his failure to grasp fully the implications of his official account of what a nature is.

[12] See Alfred J. Freddoso, 'Human Nature, Potency and the Incarnation', *Faith and Philosophy*, 3 (1986), 27–53, pp. 46–7.

[13] These scenarios are counterpossible in Aquinas, for reasons I will discuss in a moment (see Aquinas, *De Unione*, 2, obj. 10 and ad 10 (*Qu. Disp.*, ii. 426ᵃ and 428ᵇ)); as we shall see below, some thinkers regarded them as possible but counterfactual—see e.g. my discussion of Scotus in Ch. 15 below.

[14] Aquinas, *ScG* 4. 43, nn. 3804–5 (iii. 332ᵇ–333ᵃ), Freddoso's italics.

[15] Aquinas, *ST* 3. 4. 2 c (iii/1. 33ᵃ).   [16] Ibid. 3. 4. 2 ad 3 (iii/1. 33ᵃ).

scenario of the Word giving up the human nature, however, Aquinas makes it clear that this feature is *esse*:

(12.6) Suppose, however, that the humanity were to be separated from the divinity. Then the humanity would have its own *esse*, distinct from the divine *esse*. For nothing prevented it from having its own proper *esse* except for the fact that it did not subsist on its own (*per se*).[17]

So here the idea is that a subsistent nature is so in virtue of its possession of its own *esse*, distinct from any divine *esse*. And it is clear that the sort of *esse* that Aquinas is talking about is not merely the sort of truth-making *esse* that he ascribes to natures in his official theory. After all, what is at issue is the capacity of a nature to subsist, and to exist on its own. And the sort of *esse* appropriate in such cases is personal *esse*, the sort of *esse* that belongs to primary substances.

Let me immediately offer three clarifications. First, (12.5) and (12.6) are not unequivocal evidence in favour of Aquinas's acceptance of the unofficial view. Aquinas could be claiming, for example, that the separated nature of (12.6) would become a *part* of a new *suppositum*, where the other parts are *esse*, accidents, and individuators, in line with (12.1). Secondly, there is no reason to insist that, on this view, the human nature, as actually assumed, includes—or is the subject of—accidents (recall that according to (12.1) accidents are parts of their *supposita*). Rather, the idea would be that if the human nature were given up, then it would become the subject of its own proper *esse*, and consequently of its own accidents. This would dovetail in to some extent with Aquinas's official account of subsistence as including accidents and individuating features, as outlined in (12.1). Thirdly, however, there does appear to be a sense for Aquinas, as I have pointed out above, in which the human nature, as actually assumed, includes—or is the subject of—accidents. At any rate, whether or not we think of it as including accidents even when it is assumed, it is clear that it does not include its own *esse*.

As I argued in Chapter 2 above, one of the points of Aquinas's claim that concrete parts lack their own *esse* is that parts are not instantiations of essences. This makes any reading of (12.6) problematic: it makes little or no sense to suppose that one and the same object could (on its separation from the whole of which it is a part) *begin* to be an instantiation of an essence. But setting this worry aside, the observation that concrete parts lack their own *esse* suggests that it may make some sense to consider whether or not Aquinas's account of Christ's human nature and the theoretical possibility of its subsistence can be dovetailed into Aquinas's account of the real composition of essence and *esse*. For as we shall see, things Aquinas says about the composition of essence and *esse* suggest one or other of the two accounts of subsistence I have been outlining here.[18] But the material is not wholly unambiguous, for two reasons. First, Aquinas's presentation of his essence–*esse* theory

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[17] Aquinas, *Quod.* 9. 3 c (p. 181ᵃ).

[18] As will become apparent, there is no practical metaphysical distinction to be drawn between essence and nature in this context, and I shall proceed as if the two terms are synonymous.

equivocates on the individuality of these principles. Secondly, it equivocates on the correct metaphysical relation between them—specifically, whether *esse* is something like an attribute of an essence, or whether both essence and *esse* are parts or attributes of some third item—namely, a *suppositum*. (On the first of these options, a *suppositum* will not be in any sense a third item over and above the nature and the *esse*: it will just be the nature with the *esse* that the nature possesses.)

The best way to see where the first problem lies is to recall the distinction drawn by Anthony Kenny between specific and individual existence to which I drew attention in Chapter 4, when discussing Henry's critique of Giles. If we talk about the instantiation of a concept we are talking about specific existence; if we talk about the existence of this or that particular object we are talking about individual existence. Anthony Kenny argues plausibly that Aquinas equivocates between these two senses:

In the youthful *De Ente et Essentia* Aquinas introduced the distinction in the following way. Every essence can be thought of without anything being known about its actual existence; for I can understand what a man is, or what a phoenix is, without knowing whether these things exist in reality (*esse habeant in rerum natura*): what a thing is is different from whether there is such a thing, its *quidditas* differs from its *esse*. Here it is clear that it is specific existence that is in question: in modern terminology, Aquinas is saying that one may grasp the concept of phoenix without knowing whether the concept is instantiated. . . .

In other works, Aquinas makes clear that when he is talking about existence he means the individual existence of a given creature, and that by the essence of a given creature he means something as individual as its individualised form. . . . Thus in arguing in the *Summa Theologiae* that in God essence and existence are not distinct, Aquinas says that any existence which is distinct from the corresponding essence must be an existence which is caused by something external to the thing whose existence it is.[19]

Aquinas certainly uses these different senses, though it is less clear that he notices the equivocation. Clearly, the first of these senses is metaphysically harmless, and there is no sense in which it could play any sort of central role in a solution to the subsistence problem. The first distinction, after all, is just about *concepts*; and there is nothing about this sort of distinction that requires any corresponding distinction *in re*. In fact, as I will show in a moment, it is the second of these two distinctions which is the one relevant to Aquinas's talk of the composition of essence and *esse*. But in order to understand what Aquinas has to say about essence and *esse* considered as more than merely concepts, we need to introduce another distinction. Aquinas sometimes talks of essence and *esse* in this context as individual, and sometimes as *common*. By 'common' I do not mean merely conceptual and universal, but something like the common natures posited variously by Aquinas and Scotus, discussed in the Introduction above. So in fact there are three possible senses of essence and *esse* here: merely conceptual, common, and individual. (In fact, it is hard to

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[19] Kenny, *Aquinas*, Past Masters (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 53–4, discussing Aquinas, *ST* 1. 3. 4 c (i/1. 17ª); see too ad 2 (i/1. 17ᵇ).

understand just how Aquinas might understand the commonality of *esse* here, since his standard understanding of common natures explicitly refrains from including any sort of being or existence in a common nature. But let that pass for the time being.) I ignore the merely conceptual level here, since it does not entail any real composition between essence and *esse*, and is thus not relevant for my purposes.

The first case of Aquinas's distinction between essence and *esse* that I will consider is the one which fits most neatly into his theory of common natures. In this first case, Aquinas appears to claim that a shared common nature does not exist (is not an *ens*) in itself, and that the existence of any individual instance of the nature requires that the (non-existent) nature enters into composition with the *individual* existence of any such instance:

(12.7) All things which are in one genus share in the quiddity or essence of the genus, which is predicated of them essentially (*in eo quod quid est*). But they differ according to *esse*: for the *esse* of a man is not the same as that of a horse, and [the *esse*] of this man [is not the same as the *esse*] of that man.[20]

Esse here is clearly individual existence: my *esse* and your *esse* are (numerically) distinct from each other; and here too essence is clearly common.[21] This is precisely what we would expect Aquinas to say on the supposition—that I discussed in the Introduction above—that his common natures are objects that, while real, lack in themselves any sort of being. To explain the being of instances of the nature, we need to add existence.[22] Unfortunately, Aquinas does not follow this suggestion through, and generally speaks of the composition between essence and existence in rather different terms.

Secondly, then, Aquinas sometimes thinks of *esse* as common. Commenting on Boethius's '*esse* and that which is differ; . . . that which is can participate in something, whereas *esse* itself (*ipsum esse*) does not in any way participate in anything',[23] Aquinas notes:

(12.8) It is impossible that . . . *esse* itself (*ipsum esse*) participates in anything. For it cannot participate in anything in the way in which matter or a subject participates in form, since, as was said, *esse* itself is signified as something abstract. Likewise, however, neither can it participate in anything in the way in which the particular participates in the universal. For in this way those things which are said in the abstract can participate in something, like

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[20] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 3. 5 c (i/1. 18ª); see also the comments by Peter Geach in 'Form and Existence', in Anthony Kenny (ed.), *Aquinas: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Modern Studies in Philosophy (London and Melbourne: Macmillan, 1969), 29–53, p. 49.

[21] On *esse* as individual, and on its role in individuation, see Joseph Owens, 'Thomas Aquinas', in Jorge J. E. Gracia (ed.), *Individuation in Scholasticism: The Later Middle Ages and the Counter-Reformation*, SUNY Series in Philosophy (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 173–94.

[22] Aquinas often speaks of a composition between essence and existence; on this understanding of essence and existence, however, it is hard to see how we could think of the essence—the non-existent common item—as in any sense a component of a substance. But we could think of individual existence as a property of this nature, and to that extent the existent substance will be composite of thing—essence—and property—*esse*.

[23] Boethius, *Hebd*. (p. 40).

whiteness [participates in] colour. But *esse* itself is most common (*communissimum*), so it is participated in by other things, but it does not participate in anything other. But that which is, or the being (*ens*), is said concretely; and for this reason it participates in *esse* itself—not in the way in which the more common is participated by the less common, but it participates in *esse* itself in the way in which the concrete participates in the abstract.[24]

Here, *esse* appears to be a common property of an *ens* or individual *suppositum*; precisely the reverse, in fact, of the first case just considered. The details of Aquinas's proposal are hard to work out, for the reason mentioned above: for Aquinas, common properties lack any sort of being, and it is hard to see how this sort of claim could make much sense in the case of *esse*—how, that is, common *esse* could be distinguished from individual *esse* by lacking being. Aquinas gives no further clues, and I have no speculations to offer.

Aquinas's third account—which is his standard one—involves asserting a composition between individual essence and individual *esse*:

(12.9) Whatever is in something over and above its essence must be caused, either by the principles of the essence (as proper accidents are consequent upon the species, in the way that a capacity for smiling is a consequence of [being] a man and is caused by the essential principles of the species), or by something external (as heat in water is caused by fire). If therefore the *esse* of a thing is other than its essence, it is necessary that the *esse* of the thing is caused either by something external, or by the essential principles of the same thing. But it is impossible that the *esse* is caused only by the essential principles of the thing, since nothing whose existence is caused is sufficient for being the cause of its own existence. So it is necessary that anything the *esse* of which is other than its essence must have *esse* caused by something else.[25]

In support of his contention that Aquinas's concerns here are individual essence and individual existence, Kenny notes,

It would be absurd to speak of the meaning of a word 'F' as exercising an influence on the existence of Fs which could be comparted to the causal efficacy whereby a dog's parents bring the dog into existence.[26]

This seems spot on: if the essence is to be the sort of thing that can satisfy the relevant description, then it must be an *individual*. This reading—according to which the relevant sense of 'cause' is 'efficient cause'—is confirmed by a parallel passage in *De Ente et Essentia*. Aquinas argues that being cannot be caused by a thing's essence, since nothing is a self-causer—and he clarifies: 'by "caused" I mean by an *efficient cause*'.[27] Clearly, Aquinas does not object to treating an essence as, in some sense, an individual (and we would not expect him to in the context of this argument): what he objects to is the possibility of this thing being self-caused, on the utterly reasonable grounds that nothing is a self-causer, nothing is a cause of its own existence.

[24] Aquinas, *In Hebd.* 2, n. 24 (*Op. Theol.*, ii. 397ᵃ).   [25] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 3. 4 c (i/1. 17ᵃ).
[26] Kenny, *Aquinas*, 54.   [27] Aquinas, *De Ente* 4 (Roland-Gosselin, 35; Maurer, 56; my italics).

I shall not be too concerned about this ambiguity, however, because it seems that Aquinas's claim in the official (12.1) entails that the relevant sense of *esse* is individual. There is clearly a slippage here—from common to individual *esse*[28]—but Aquinas is clear that every extra-mental essence is individual,[29] and he is clear too (as we shall see below) that it is this essence—individual essence—that enters into composition with *esse*. So the first of my three senses of the essence/*esse* distinction—that in (12.7)—is irrelevant. In some ways, it makes little difference which of the other two is the correct one—whether, in other words, Aquinas is thinking of the *esse* that enters into composition with individual essence as being common *esse*—as in (12.8)—or individual *esse*—as in (12.9). I shall assume in what follows that Aquinas's usual way of thinking and talking about *esse* is as individual, and thus that the account implied in (12.9) is closest to Aquinas's preferred understanding of the matter.

Given all this, the second problem to sort out is how precisely Aquinas understands the relation between essence and *esse*. As I suggested above, there are two possible models for this in Aquinas, and I now want to look at these models in more detail. On the first model, *esse* is something like an attribute of an individual essence; on the second, both individual essence and *esse* are parts or attributes of some third item—namely, a *suppositum*. Only the first of these generates a subsistence problem, since only the first of these entails that an individual essence is the sort of thing that could, under the relevant circumstances, exist.

Perhaps surprisingly, the evidence in favour of the first reading—and thus in favour of an 'unofficial' account of essence in Aquinas—is in principle quite strong. The issue is most easily dealt with by considering Aquinas's usual treatment of the case of an angel: a substance which is, on Aquinas's account, an individual essence. Angels do not have shared common natures in any sense as constituent parts. In the case of angels, it is quite clear that the sort of composition Aquinas wants to assert is between an individual essence and its individual existence. Angelic essences—the essence of Gabriel or Raphael, for example—are themselves like specific essences which admit of only one instantiation. More properly, the relation between an angel— its *suppositum*—and its essence is *identity*.[30] According to Aquinas's usual account, the essence/*suppositum* of an angel is the *subject* of its *esse*:

(12.10) The nature [of an angel] is compared to its *esse* as potency to act. If therefore we take away matter, and posit that the form does not subsist in matter, there would still remain

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[28] On this, Joseph Owens's 'Diversity and Community of Being in St Thomas Aquinas', *Mediaeval Studies*, 22 (1960), 257–302, is judicious, and I have found it a very helpful resource. John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being*, Monographs of the Society for Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy, 1 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000) contains much interesting material on this. It appeared too late for me to be able to make use of it here, though it does not challenge my overall analysis.

[29] See e.g. Aquinas, *De Pot.* 7. 2 ad 5 (*Qu. Disp.*, ii. 192ᵃ). (This does not mean that all an essence is individual. There is no reason why we should not think of essences as in some way common—though Aquinas frequently notes that really common universals have no existence outside the mind. For a discussion of this moderate realism, see my Introduction above.)

[30] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 3. 3 (i/1. 16ᵃ).

a comparison of the form to *esse* as of potency to act. And this composition is understood to be in angels. And this is what is said by some, that an angel is composed of *quo est* and *quod est*, or of *esse* and *quod est*, as Boethius says.[31] For that which exists (*quod est*) is the subsistent form, whereas the *esse* itself is that by which (*quo est*) the substance exists.[32]

Applied to the subsistence problem, this view would entail that a nature or essence that is the subject of (its own) *esse* is *eo ipso* a *suppositum*. This dovetails in precisely with the unofficial account of nature found in, for example, (0.4) above. A nature that is the subject of its own *esse* is *eo ipso* a *suppositum*, and as such the subject too of accidents and other individuators in line with the official (12.1).

But there are two problems here. The first is that the case of material substance is more complex than that of an angel. The second is that in one late discussion, Aquinas radically alters his account of the relation between an angel and its *esse*.

Looking at the first of these, it is clear that the essence of Socrates, for example, is distinct from the essence of humanity. Aquinas somewhat gnomically remarks, 'It is clear that the difference between the essence of Socrates and the essence of man lies solely in what is designated and not designated.'[33] Still, if we understand material substance as closely analogous to angelic substance with respect to the relation between individual essence and *esse*, we end up with the view that the individual essence of Socrates is the subject of *esse* and accidents. And this would allow us to understand (0.4) and (12.6) as providing a solution to the subsistence problem in terms of *esse*: an individual nature subsists if it is subject of its own proper *esse*.

This would dovetail in with Aquinas's unofficial account of the human nature of Christ exactly: the kind of thing that is (or can be) the subject of accidents; and the kind of thing that can be the subject of *esse*. And in this case Aquinas accepts an *esse* theory of subsistence. Thus, in so far as Aquinas offers a solution to the subsistence problem, it is broadly of the kind ascribed to him by the *princeps Thomistarum*—Capreol.

What about Aquinas's claim that it is impossible for the Word to give up his human nature? If we look at the passages where Aquinas considers such counterpossible situations, we can see that Aquinas's reasons for claiming impossibility are to do not with metaphysics but with divine action: since the assumed human nature is impeccable, God can have no reason to give the nature up; and what he has no reason for doing, God cannot do.[34] But I think that, even on the unofficial account that I have been considering thus far, there is a metaphysical reason too: how could

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[31] Boethius, *Hebd.* (p. 40).

[32] See e.g. Aquinas, *ST* 1. 50. 2 ad 3 (i/1. 254ᵃ ᵇ). Clearly, in this passage, the relevant composition is between an individual form (a subsistent form) and its existence. Given that an angel is a subsistent form, Aquinas claims that its form is identical with its essence: see e.g. Aquinas, *ST* 1. 3. 3 (i/1. 16ᵃ).

[33] Aquinas, *De Ente* 2 (Roland-Gosselin, 11; Maurer, 37).

[34] See e.g. Aquinas, *ST* 3. 50. 2 c (iii/1. 287ᵇ): 'That which is given by God's grace is never revoked without some fault. . . . Therefore, since there was no sin in Christ, it was impossible that the union of the divinity with his flesh should be dissolved' (translation from Freddoso, 'Human Nature, Potency and the Incarnation', 47–8).

a nature survive a change in personal *esse*? How can it *persist* through such a change? As we shall see, this problem can be found in Giles's account too—and it is more acute for him, since he never makes it clear that the proposed scenarios are counterpossible as well as counterfactual. The lesson is that anyone accepting an *esse* theory of subsistence should accept that it is a necessary feature of a non-assumed nature that it is non-assumed, and a necessary feature of an assumed nature that it is assumed. Scotus, as we shall see, uses this as an argument against the *esse* theory of subsistence—though as I shall note in Chapter 15, this Scotist line of argument is open to a strong objection.

But there is still one outstanding problem. I mentioned above that Aquinas changes his mind about the relation between an angel and its *esse*, and it is now time to consider this more closely. After all, according to (12.1), from the *tertia pars*, nature and *esse* are parts of a *suppositum*, and thus Aquinas's official account of the relation between nature and *suppositum* as found in the *tertia pars* is clearly at odds with his account of the relation between essence and *suppositum* as found in the *prima pars* (quoted as passage (12.10) above). In *Quodlibet* 2. 4, dating from Christmas 1269 (and thus from a period between (12.10) and (12.1)), Aquinas modifies his account of the relation between essence and *suppositum* in an angel. According to (12.10), and angel's essence/*suppositum* is the subject of its *esse*. In the modified account of angelic subsistence, Aquinas claims that the *esse* of an angel is a *part* of its *suppositum*, but not of its essence. So an angel's *suppositum* is no longer identified as the angel's essence. The angel's *suppositum* includes essence and *esse* as parts—just as in the official (12.1) a *suppositum* includes nature and *esse* as parts.[35]

There are many attempts in the literature to explain this shift.[36] But I would like to suggest that we could see the shift as an inchoate attempt by Aquinas to distance himself from the sort of reading that I am labelling his 'unofficial' view—the sort of reading that requires a solution to the subsistence problem. In this case, Aquinas will come closer to satisfying Williams's requirements for a good Chalcedonian Christology, and there will ultimately be no subsistence problem in Aquinas's Christology. But we cannot push this reading too far; after all, while (12.1) is clearly consistent with the material from *Quodlibet* 2. 4, the rogue passage (0.2) comes from the same article as (12.1), and clearly suggests that subsistence is a possible property of a nature—that a nature could, under the right circumstances, be a *suppositum*. So if Aquinas at the end of his life was feeling his way toward a less different account of the distinction between nature and *suppositum* (one consistent with his belief that individual natures cannot subsist), it was not an account that he ever managed to grasp fully.

[35] See Aquinas, *Quod.* 2. 4 (pp. 24^b–26^a).

[36] See e.g. the extensive bibliography in John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Godfrey of Fontaines: A Study in Late Thirteenth-Century Philosophy* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1981), 230–2; see too the comments in Christopher Hughes, *On a Complex Theory of a Simple God: An Investigation in Aquinas' Philosophical Theology*, Cornell Studies in the Philosophy of Religion (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 94–6.

2. HENRY OF GHENT (1): PRE-1286

As I indicated in Chapter 4, I think we should take 1286 as the year in which Henry decisively changed his mind on the question of the *esse* ascribed to natures and accidents. I shall thus see myself as free to use any material from before this year in describing Henry's earlier view. The dating issue is, however, important. I shall argue that the early discussion—in *Quodlibet* 3. 2—is neutral on the question of the issue of the status of natures (as objects and possible *supposita*, or as things more akin to properties, things *possessed by supposita*). But material in *Quodlibet* 6 clearly entails that natures are objects and possible *supposita*. If we count this material as clarifying the account in *Quodlibet* 3 (as I am inclined to), then the early Henry does indeed accept the subsistence problem, and he solves it by appealing to *esse*. His later account—for reasons already outlined in Chapter 4—shifts position on the question of the *esse* to be attributed to accidents, and is more explicit about the ascription of *esse* to natures too. I shall argue here that Henry fails to exploit his new theory in order to offer an explicit solution to the subsistence problem, though he offers some hints. In presenting Henry's earlier view, I shall first discuss the material in *Quodlibet* 3. 2 in isolation, and then look at the clarifications offered in *Quodlibet* 6.

Henry's early account of subsistence makes it clear that the mark of subsistence is *esse*:

(12.11) In creatures, *esse* principally belongs (*convenit*) to a *suppositum*, and to a nature (whether matter or form) only as it has *esse* in a *suppositum*.[37]

(12.12) We should keep in mind about the *esse* of actual existence that such *esse* is attributed properly only to that which has [this *esse*] in itself and absolutely, as a being distinct from another—and [is] not [attributed] to that which has [this *esse*] in another, or through union with another.[38]

When discussing the opinion of Aquinas, Henry argues similarly:

(12.13) In [creatures], actual *esse*, and [*esse*] of subsistence, belongs to a *suppositum* in itself (*per se*), and [it does] not [belong] to anything in [a *suppositum*] except through it. So an accident, according to Aristotle, because it does not subsist in itself, but inheres in another, is not said to be a being, but of a being, and is not properly said to be (*esse*), but to be in (*inesse*). It is the same for matter and form in a composite, even though they are not accidents.[39]

(In this early *Quodlibet*, Henry rejects Aquinas's theory of the hypostatic union, not because he disagrees with the general subsistence claims made by Aquinas, but because he disagrees about the applicability of these claims to divine *supposita*.[40])

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[37] Henry, *Quod.* 3. 2 (Hocedez, 30–1).   [38] Ibid. 3. 2 (Hocedez, 33).
[39] Ibid. 3. 2 (Hocedez, 32).
[40] Ibid. As we saw in Ch. 4 above, Henry's early account differs from Aquinas's in at least one other way too: namely, Henry's acceptance of the substance–accident model for the hypostatic union, and the consequent claim that accidents share in the *esse* of their substances.

Henry is clear that the human nature has no *esse* of its own because it does not exist independently of the divine Word:

(12.14) No *esse* of actual existence can be attributed to the human nature in Christ in itself and separately, because it never had such [*esse*], namely [*esse*] properly belonging to itself (*in se terminatum*), neither could it have [such *esse*] after it was assumed to the divine nature, otherwise the Son of God assumed, or was in a position of having assumed, not only a human nature but also simultaneously a person.[41]

The claim is that Christ's human nature is not the sort of thing that can have its own *esse*, on the grounds that it is a dependent particular.

Henry's claims in *Quodlibet* 3 admit of two quite different interpretations, one of which seems to me more likely than the other. The less likely reading is that a nature is not the sort of thing that could be (in some sense) the subject of *esse*, and thus presumably be a *suppositum*. Even in (12.14) Henry never unequivocally speaks of a nature as being the subject of its *esse*; we could read (12.14) as stating that a nature is united to an *esse* without being the subject of that *esse* (rather as, for example, in Aquinas's official account, which sees nature and *esse* as parts of a third item, a *suppositum*; or as in some sort of account that would make nature and *esse* two properties (*intentiones*) of a *suppositum*). But the more natural reading of (12.14) is that a nature is the subject of its *esse*, and thus the sort of thing that with the addition of *esse* would subsist.[42]

This sort of reading—ascribing to Henry an *esse* theory of subsistence—can be confirmed by material from *Quodlibet* 6, and from Henry's own later assessment of his earlier position, offered in *Quodlibet* 10. In the second of these places, Henry expressly claims that the assumed human nature has *esse* and that it fails, in virtue of being assumed by the Word, to possess the subsistence that it would otherwise possess. So in *Quodlibet* 10 Henry does indeed believe subsistence to be a possible property of a nature. And in this passage Henry claims that his earlier account (that is, *Quodlibet* 3. 2) is essentially the same, differing merely in terminology:

(12.15) Beyond this last mode [of *esse*], namely, of subsistence (*esse subsistentiae*) . . . all other modes of subsisting can be included under the *esse* of essence (*esse essentiae*). We used '*esse* of essence' (*esse essentiae*) in this way in other questions [that is, *Quodlibet* 3. 2], namely by using '*esse* of essence' to designate all *esse* belonging to a thing excluding the fact that it subsists in itself by having the perfect *esse* of actual subsistence outside the mind.[43]

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[41] Henry, *Quod.* 3. 2 (Paris, i. 49ʳF; Hocedez, p. 33, does not include all of the quoted passage).

[42] Henry sometimes speaks of the assumed nature as something like a substance, and I take it that substances are paradigm cases of things that can be (or are) subjects of *esse*: see e.g. Henry, *Quod.* 3. 8 (Paris, i. fo. 58ʳA), where Henry talks about the 'substance of the humanity', and *Quod.* 3. 8 (Paris, i. fo. 58ʳC): 'Nothing perished from his substance by any natural corrupting thing'—in context an apparent reference to the human nature.

[43] Henry, *Quod.* 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 203).

Henry, of course, is sometimes disingenuous about his intellectual vacillations, so the evidence from *Quodlibet* 10 needs to be treated cautiously.[44] But I think that it can be confirmed by material from *Quodlibet* 6. In *Quodlibet* 6, Henry makes a number of claims that seem to suggest that he sees natures as the sort of objects that, under the right sort of circumstances, possess their own subsistence. In question six, Henry asks about the possibility of an assumed nature lacking any opportunity to enjoy the vision of God. I have analysed much of this question in detail elsewhere.[45] For my purposes here, the important claim made by Henry is that the human nature can be thought of as an agent in its own right: in this case, an agent that can enjoy the vision of God. Thinking of the assumed human nature in this way makes it relatively less likely that Henry would want to accept my first proposed reading of his *Quodlibet* 3. 2. If the assumed human nature is an agent, it looks to be the sort of thing that could, under the right circumstances, be a *suppositum*. What in this case prevents it from being such is just the fact that it is assumed.

This evidence is hardly conclusive. Henry could accept both that the assumed human nature is an agent and that *supposita* are the subjects of both their natures and their *esses*, such that natures cannot themselves be subjects of *esse*. And this would allow the first reading of *Quodlibet* 3. 2 proposed above, although the conjunction of the claims about agency and *esse* could hardly be counted a happy one. In any case, as we saw in Chapter 10, Henry is clear that, whatever the status of the human nature's causal powers, the Word is the (only?) agent for Christ's human activity: see (10.3) above. The evidence from *Quodlibet* 6. 7, however, is more explicit. Here, Henry wonders whether more than one divine person could assume one human nature.[46] In the course of his defence of a positive reply to the question, Henry makes more clear the sort of distinction he wants to make between nature and *suppositum*. Henry's argument is that the individuation of a substantial nature is intrinsic to itself in a way in which its belonging to a person is not. As he puts it, self-limitation—individuation—is separate from limitation to existence in just one person. Neither does the first sort of limitation entail the second sort. So the numerical identity of a nature does not entail that it is limited to existence in just one person. Accidents have the second sort of limitation—presumably (although Henry does not make the point explicitly here) because they are individuated by their substances. But natures are self-individuators; they do not require existence in just one subject for their identity.[47]

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[44] As I noted in Ch. 4, there is good reason to suppose that Henry's claim in (12.15) about his terminology is not exactly true. In *Quodlibet* 10, Henry claims that *Christ's* human nature has proper *esse* of existence (*esse existentiae*), a claim that he explicitly denies earlier on. As we will see below, the later Henry rejects his earlier *esse* theory of subsistence—though it is not clear precisely what this theory is replaced with.

[45] See my 'Incarnation, Indwelling, and the Vision of God: Henry of Ghent and Some Franciscans', *Franciscan Studies*, 57 (1999), 79–130, and Excursus 1 above.

[46] I discuss this question in Excursus 2 above.   [47] Henry, *Quod.* 6. 7 (Macken, x. 74–5).

Thus far this discussion is consistent with both readings of *Quodlibet* 3. 2. (After all, a nature could be a necessarily dependent self-individuating particular, and thus fail to be the sort of thing that could possess *esse*.) But in the course of the discussion, Henry considers the following counterfactual:

(12.16) The human nature is not thus limited [i.e. by the second sort of limitation] by the [divine] person in which it is assumed, but [it is limited by the first sort of limitation] by its nature and essence, such that in itself it is a being and a 'this something', but has its *suppositum* and personhood from another—just as if numerically one stone, existing in itself, were assumed, it would retain its numerical identity (*numerationem*) and gain a new person.[48]

The crucial claim here is that a stone-nature is the sort of thing that can gain and lose subsistence (it can gain and lose its possession of *intrinsic* personhood; if assumed it possesses extrinsic personhood). This claim requires that subsistence is a feature of a nature, not of something that itself has a nature. So Henry's assertion that something that is a *suppositum* can be assumed—and thereby cease to be a *suppositum*— constitutes the strongest evidence that he would prefer my second reading of his *Quodlibet* 3. 2. This in turn means that Henry needs to give some sort of account of the nature of subsistence. And we learn from this *Quodlibet*, particularly passages (12.12)–(12.14), that it is the *esse* of actual existence—*esse existentiae*—that is required for subsistence. As we saw in Chapter 4, the early Henry is clear that the human nature, in virtue of its being hypostatically united to the second person of the Trinity, lacks its proper *esse existentiae*. So Henry's early solution to the problem of subsistence matches his early account of the hypostatic union precisely—ultimately depending on his theory of the union of substance and accident, according to which accidents lack proper *esse existentiae*.[49]

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[48] Henry, *Quod*. 6. 7 (Macken, x. 74).

[49] We can learn something more of Henry's view by considering how he understands this *esse*. Henry argues that both the *esse* of essence and the *esse* of existence can be talked about relationally: the *esse* of essence is possessed by a creature in virtue of a relation to God's *formal* causality, making the creature the kind of thing it is; the *esse* of existence is possessed by a creature in virtue of a relation to God's *efficient* causality, making the creature an effect of God in reality: see Henry, *Quod*. 3. 9 (Paris, i. fo. 62ᵛo). In *SQ* 28. 5 (1279), Henry discusses *ex professo* the issue of the distinction between nature and *suppositum*. The passage is not relevant for my purposes, because the distinction Henry draws in this non-Christological context is between common nature and *suppositum*, and the passage is about individuation, not subsistence: see Henry, *SQ* 28. 5 (i. fos. 168ᵛc, 169ʳD). The argument is that an abstract nature exists (has *esse existentiae*) in so far as it is particularized in a *suppositum*. True universality is mind-imposed. (We have seen enough now of medieval theories of universals to understand that this is a standard moderate realist view.) For Henry on universals, see Stephen F. Brown, 'Henry of Ghent (b. ca. 1217; d. 1293)', in Gracia (ed.), *Individuation in Scholasticism*, 195–219, pp. 197–9. On the distinction between universal and particular—rather than on the question of subsistence—see also Gordon A. Wilson, 'Supposite in the Philosophy of Henry of Ghent', in W. Vanhamel (ed.), *Henry of Ghent: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on the Occasion of the 700th Anniversary of his Death*, Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, De Wulf-Mansion Centre, Series 1, 15 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 343–72, and Jean Paulus, *Henri de Gand: Essai sur les tendances de sa métaphysique*, Etudes de philosophie médiévale, 25 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1938), 355–62. The material in a later question (Henry, *SQ* 53. 5 (1282)) is hardly clearer; but some of Henry's claims are suggestive of a firm adherence to the view that being a *suppositum* is a possible property of a nature. If we offer a definition of the word 'person', we will end up with a definition of a *concept* (as Henry puts it, of an 'intention'). The relevant

3. HENRY OF GHENT (2): POST-1286

Henry's later view is very different from that found before the controversy with Giles. As I showed in Chapter 4, Henry comes to believe that both accidents and Christ's human nature have their own, underived, existence—their own *esse existentiae*. Underlying this shift is the intuition—expressed in principle **(E)** outlined in Chapter 1—that any feature which is a truth-maker must count as an object with its own *esse* (i.e. *esse existentiae*). Christ's human nature is a truth-maker; so it must count as an object with its own *esse*. Henry's early account of *esse* as the mark of subsistence cannot be sustained in the light of his new belief that non-subsistent objects have their own *esse*. *Esse* here remains a feature that a nature can have; but it is no longer a feature sufficient for being a *suppositum*. While Henry is aware that his new belief about the *esse* of these contingently dependent particulars has a knock-on effect in relation to his account of subsistence (since he can no longer adopt an *esse*-theory of subsistence), I get the impression that Henry does not know how such a theory could be spelled out. I think we might characterize the view as some sort of mode-theory: for a nature to be a *suppositum* entails that the nature has a certain *mode* of existence. Henry is, however, frustratingly vague about the nature and description of this mode.

The discussion is found in *Quodlibet* 10. 8. Henry is explicit—unsurprisingly—that independence is a sufficient condition for a nature's being a *suppositum*:

(12.17) Something created has the perfection of actuality that is called the *esse* of subsistence in extra-mental existence, in virtue of its existing in itself, separately and distinctly from anything else.[50]

Henry believes, in contrast to his earlier view, that the *esse* had by a nature remains numerically identical over any change from non-subsistence to subsistence (and presumably vice versa):

(12.18) Therefore [an object that has begun to subsist] had the same *esse* before as after; but before [it did] not [have it] in virtue of being a *suppositum*, but in virtue of simple existence, which later it has in virtue of being a *suppositum*, as a result of the separation. Simple existence and subsistence differ in this alone, that something does not subsist unless it is separated, though [the same thing can] exist as joined to another; and what is simple existence in the conjunct object is subsistence in the separated object.[51]

concept is '(being) incommunicable': the concept of person is equivalent to the concept of incommunicable thing. (On this, see Ch. 7, sect. 6 above.) But, as Henry notes, when we use the word 'person', we usually do more than offer definitions of it: we often claim of individuals that they are persons. Henry implies that the individuals of whom we make such claims are natures. For example, he argues that the word 'person' pertains to intellectual natures, 'not as what is signified, but since ["intellectual nature"] belongs to the notion of [person], just as in some way a subject belongs to the notion of a proper passion': Henry, *SQ* 53. 5 (i. fo. 66ᵛx). The idea here is that whenever we have a person, we have a nature—a person is a 'proper passion' of a nature.

[50] Henry, *Quod.* 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 203); see Henry, *Quod.* 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 206), where he calls this mode '*esse separatum*'.

[51] Ibid. 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 211).

Henry believes that the only change between the two states is a *modal* one:

(12.19) Placing the nature in [existence] in itself does not give it new *esse*, but only a new mode of *esse*.[52]

The idea is that the nature retains its proper *esse* over all these changes, and that it gains a new mode. Thus, the nature always has the *esse* that is intentionally distinct from the nature; what it gains over the change to subsistence is an additional mode of being. Henry has an extensive doctrine of modes that is quite different from the sort of account that we can find in Giles of Rome, though the account does not really help us flesh out his account of subsistence very effectively. (I have discussed Giles's theory in Chapter 4; I return to it below.) Basically, Henry identifies modes as the distinctive features that are associated with things in virtue of their position on the hierarchy of being. Being participated, for example, is a mode of all categorial realities.[53] This mode is subdivided as subsistence and inherence, modes belonging respectively to substance and accident;[54] inherence is subdivided as inhering 'absolutely' and (barely) inhering, modes belonging respectively to non-relational and relational accidents.[55]

In effect, then, Henry's claim is that an assumed nature has the mode of an accident, and an independent nature has the mode of a substance. This does not help flesh out the account of subsistence, though it does give us a link between Henry's account and Giles's. Giles, after all, is explicit in claiming that a substance, even according to Aristotle, can have the mode of an accident, and an accident the mode of a substance—a claim that was later used by William of Ware and Scotus to buttress the possibility of the Incarnation.[56] And while it is clear that having the mode of a substance entails, for Henry, being a non-relational item, Henry does not tell us whether the mode itself—the mode of independent existence—should be understood as a relation or as a non-relational property.[57]

Given all this, I think we can see how different Henry's later theory is from his earlier account. In Henry's earlier account, an assumed nature lacks the *esse* that is

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[52] Henry, *Quod.* 10. 8 (Macken, xiv. 211).

[53] Ibid. 5. 2 (i. 154ᵛE). For this discussion of Henry on the modes of being, I rely closely on Mark G. Henninger, *Relations: Medieval Theories 1250–1325* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 48–52.

[54] Henry, *Quod.* 5. 2 (i. 154ᵛF).   [55] Ibid. 5. 2 (i. 154ᵛG).

[56] For William, see Ch. 3 above; for Giles, see Ch. 4; for Scotus, see Ch. 5.

[57] At *Quod.* 11. 10 (Paris, ii. fo. 465ᵛF), Henry notes that personhood is 'nothing other than a mode of existing separately from another created nature', and that 'in creatures this notion is absolute, and each singular nature in creatures has such a singularity proper to it—by which not only is one created nature distinguished from another, but also [the nature] is so determined to itself that it is separated from any other.' On this view, the relevant mode of existing is not a relation but a non-relational property. But despite the incarnational context to the discussion in this question, I do not think that Henry is specifically focusing on the issue of subsistence as it is raised by the hypostatic union. On the definition of personhood offered in the question, Christ's human nature would count (falsely) as a person, since the nature does exist 'separately from another *created* nature'. Rather, Henry's aim here is to show why it is that uncreated persons can assume created natures in a way that created persons cannot. As non-relational things, created persons are limited to just one singular nature in a way in which the relational divine *supposita* are not.

intentionally distinct from it. If such a nature should begin to subsist, it gains such an *esse*. In the later account, an assumed nature has the *esse* that is intentionally distinct from it. If such a nature should begin to subsist, it retains this *esse*, and gains a new mode of existence. The reason for this change is not that Henry's account of essence and *esse* has undergone any substantive shift. It is, as I argued in Chapter 4, merely that his account of the proper existence of accidents and non-essential natures has shifted.[58]

4. GILES OF ROME

In the early *reportatio* of Giles's *Sentence* commentary, Giles hints at what is to become his theory later on: that *esse* is the explanation for an individual nature's subsistence. But the *reportatio* is nevertheless vague on this. As we have seen, in Giles's early account a nature is the instrument of a *suppositum*, such that there is a real distinction between nature and *suppositum*: it is in this way that the early Giles explains the hypostatic union. He clearly holds that factual independence is sufficient for a substantial nature's constituting a *suppositum*—Christ's human nature does not constitute a *suppositum* because it is united to a *suppositum* that it 'presupposes'.[59] But Giles never explains what is required of an independent nature for it to constitute a *suppositum*. The closest he comes to this is a claim that an independent nature 'constitutes [a *suppositum*] in *esse*'—that is to say, in *per se esse*.[60] But it is not clear whether '*esse*' here has a technical sense—if it does, then the passage represents an early attempt to state the unofficial Thomist position.

The mature Giles, however, with his distinctive doctrine of the real distinction between *esse* and essence, and the corresponding theory of modes, explicitly affirms that the distinction between nature and *suppositum* should be drawn in terms of *esse*: a *suppositum* includes its proper *esse*; nature as such is indifferent to having or lacking its proper *esse*. *Esse*, for Giles, is the mark of subsistence. Giles spells out this claim in terms of his very distinctive doctrine of *modes*. A basic account of the distinction between nature and *suppositum* appears in *De Compositione Angelorum*. (As we shall see below, this account does not dovetail in exactly with the Christological distinction between nature and *suppositum*; but an examination of the ways in which the distinctions differ is itself instructive.)

Giles's basic claim—though, as we shall see, it needs to be understood with care— is that there is some sort of *modal* distinction between nature and *suppositum*: a *suppositum* is a nature with an *esse*-mode—*esse*$_m$. We need to be clear that the sort of nature Giles has in mind is an individual nature, not a common nature. The evidence here is not wholly unequivocal. But the most noteworthy is passages (**12.22**)

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[58] We should note one obvious advantage to Henry's later position: viz. that (unlike his earlier position) it no longer violates his stipulation that an essence and its *esse* are inseparable. The later Henry requires merely the separability of a thing—the nature—and a mode.

[59] Giles, *Lect.* 3. 1 (p. 180). [60] Ibid.

and (12.23) below, where Giles makes it clear that the central question is the distinction between *suppositum* and individual nature—namely, Christ's human nature—not human nature as such (common human nature). Equally, as we saw in Chapter 4, Giles's general account of the relationship between essence and *esse* presupposes that the relevant sense of essence is *individual* essence. While it is true that *De Compositione Angelorum* is about the composition of angels from *esse* and individual essence, Giles explicitly claims that the account can be generalized to include all material substances;[61] and he does not believe that individual essence is the only sense of 'essence' applicable in the case of material substances.[62] It seems to me that if we take all of this into account, we can affirm with safety that, whatever Giles's views on the relation between common nature and individual nature, he is happy to posit a modal distinction between individual nature and *suppositum*, such that a *suppositum* is an individual nature with an *esse*-mode.

Giles's account of the distinction between *suppositum* and (individual) nature is centred around a defence of four related conclusions: (i) nature and *suppositum* are *really* distinct; (ii) it is not the case that nature and *suppositum* are *essentially* distinct; (iii) nature and *suppositum* are *modally* distinct (entailed by (i) and (ii)); (iv) nature and *suppositum* are *definitionally* distinct (entailed by (iii)).[63]

(i) Giles's argument for a real distinction between nature and *suppositum* is semantic. Our linguistic usage dictates that a *suppositum* fails to be really identical with its nature: a human being is not a human nature, for example.[64]

(ii) But, Giles reasons, a *suppositum* and its nature are not two different essences. Again, the argument starts from semantic principles. A property F of a *suppositum* x is essentially distinct from x if propositions of the form 'x is F' are contingent. But natures are properties, and for no nature (natural-kind) is it true that propositions of the form 'x is F' are contingent. So no nature (presumably, no non-assumed nature) can be essentially distinct from its *suppositum*.[65]

(iii) According to Giles, the real distinction of a *suppositum* and its nature, coupled with their being essentially identical (in the senses of 'real distinction' and 'essentially identical' outlined) entails that there is a modal distinction between a *suppositum* and its nature. The mode that is proper to a *suppositum* is *per se esse*: '*suppositum* means that which has *per se esse*', where the relevant contrast to *per se esse* is existence in virtue of the *esse* of something else. Given Giles's beliefs about *esse* outlined in Chapter 4, it should come as no surprise that Giles regards having this *per se esse* simply as having proper *esse*. As we saw in Chapter 4, Giles understands 'failing to subsist' to be defined as 'existing in the *esse* of something else'.[66] And note that the *esse* that Giles is talking about here is $esse_r$—so existing in the *esse* of something else is to be identified as having $esse_m$ from the $esse_r$ that is proper to something else—namely, a subsistent. I will return to this in a moment.

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[61] Giles, *DCA* 5 (Trapp, 449–50). Note that Giles presupposes that the only sense of 'essence' applicable in the case of angels is individual essence: see e.g. Giles, *ThEE* 2 (p. 7, l. 20–p. 8, l. 4).
[62] See e.g. Giles, *ThEE* 10 (pp. 55–7).   [63] Giles, *DCA* 5 (Trapp, 470).
[64] Ibid.   [65] Ibid.   [66] Ibid.

(iv) The final conclusion clarifies the real–modal distinction between a *suppositum* and its nature. A definition of a nature includes only its essential principles; if we could define *suppositum*, we would need to include in the definition not only the definition of the nature of the *suppositum*, but also the *esse* of the *suppositum* and the accidents of the *suppositum*.[67]

There would, I think, be little here to convince a serious advocate of a position alternative to Giles's. The argument seems riddled with difficulties. In particular, the first stage seems to equivocate between specific nature and individual nature. Clearly, any opponent of nominalism will happily deny that a *suppositum* is identical with its specific nature. (Given that a nominalist, if she accepts talk of specific natures at all, will regard such natures as concepts, I suspect that some nominalists will be happy with this denial too.) And it seems to be this sense of 'nature'—specific nature —that Giles's argument presupposes. But the relevant distinction Giles needs to make if he wants to clarify the conditions for subsistence is a distinction between a *suppositum* and its *individual* nature. And claiming that a *suppositum* fails to be identical with its individual nature seems question-begging. After all, what Giles is trying to show is that there is a distinction between a *suppositum* and an individual nature.

Giles himself raises rather different worries. First, how can one essence admit of two different descriptions, such that at least one includes features not included by the other? Giles gives two examples of this: a determinable and a determinate, and a thing and a mode:

(12.20) It is consistent that [two] things name the same essence, and yet something fall under the definition of the one which does not fall under the definition of the other. For whiteness and quality name the same essence, and nevertheless something falls under the definition of quality [which does not fall under the definition of whiteness]. Similarly it is consistent that [two] things name the same essence and yet really differ. . . . For extended matter really differs from itself as non-extended, and yet it, as extended, does not name another essence than it as non-extended.[68]

The first of these examples is bound to be less controversial than the second. Clearly, the extension of all sorts of predicates will include the extension of other predicates as subsets, and Giles's opponents are likely to want to concede this. The second example, however, appears to be question-begging: that a thing and its modes are the same in the relevant way—that is, are the same essence—and differ in the relevant way, is just what Giles needs to show.

Giles's second worry is related: how can there be a *real* distinction between a thing and its mode? Trapp quotes a useful passage from book two of Giles's *Sentence* commentary:[69]

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[67] Giles, *DCA* 5 (Trapp, 470–1).   [68] Ibid. 5 (Trapp, 471).

[69] The second book of Giles's *Sentence* commentary is dated variously to 1308/9 (Stegmüller, *Repertorium in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, 2 vols. (Warzbürg: Schöningh, 1947), i. 19), after 1309 (Glorieux, *Repertoire des maitres en théologie de Paris au XIIIe siècle*, 2 vols., Etudes de philosophie médiévales, 17–18 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1933–4), ii. 304), and *c.*1290–1309 (Donati, 'Studi per una cronologia delle opere di Egidio Romano. I: Le opere prima del 1285. I commenti aristotelici', *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, 1 (1990), 1–111; 2 (1991), 1–74, vol. 2, p. 65).

(12.21) Every distinction is either according to the intellect alone, or not according to the intellect alone, but the distinction is found also in the thing without the consideration of the intellect. If [the distinction] is in the intellect alone, then there is a rational distinction. If the distinction is not only according to reason, but also in reality, then there is [a distinction] according to *esse*.[70]

Clearly, Giles leaves no room for any sort of intentional or formal distinction. Instead, he wants to reduce all intentional or formal distinctions to real distinctions, just if the distinction is not merely mind-imposed. But the difference is more than terminological: something can really differ from itself in virtue of a mode, where the thing is really separable from the mode.[71] (In Chapter 14, I shall look at the attempt of Godfrey of Fontaines to refute this view.)

So far, then, Giles more or less holds that there is a real distinction between nature and *suppositum* on the grounds that a *suppositum* is a nature along with an $esse_m$ derived from an $esse_r$. The point is made beautifully in (4.7), a passage that is central to my argument here. On Giles's metaphysical principles, as we have seen, the presence of $esse_m$ requires the presence of $esse_r$ to explain it. According to the definitions thus far, $esse_r$ is not a part of a *suppositum* at all. And this seems to raise an acute problem for the unity of a *suppositum* and its $esse_r$. Giles, as far as I know, does not address this. But I have two observations. First, we need to keep in mind the analogy with extended matter. As we saw, extended matter is (matter + $extension_m$), where (matter + $extension_m$) is one essence, an essence along with a mode. The presence of the mode is explained by the inherence of $extension_r$, quantity, where $extension_r$ is neither a part nor a property of (matter + $extension_m$). $Extension_r$ is not freefloating. But, beyond the fact that matter participates in $extension_r$ such that $extension_r$ inheres in matter, it is not clear what exactly Giles supposes the relation between $extension_r$ and (matter + $extension_m$) actually is. This aporia is exactly analogous to the one I just pinpointed in Giles's discussion of *suppositum* and $esse_r$.

Secondly, however, I expect that Giles's motivation for wanting to exclude $esse_r$ from *suppositum* has to do with his concerns for the unity of a *suppositum*. Giles has no real model for explaining the unity of two *things*—say, nature and $esse_r$, or matter and $extension_r$. For Giles, unity requires an explanation in terms of *modes*. Presumably if $esse_r$ were part of a *suppositum*, a *suppositum* could not be a unity. Giles makes a point related to this when discussing Aquinas's view of the relation between *suppositum* and *esse*. Giles unequivocally prefers Aquinas's later account (found in *Quodlibet* 2. 4) to Aquinas's earlier position. According to Giles, the mark of a

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[70] Giles, *In Sent.* 2. 3. 1. 1. 2 ((Venice, 1581), p. 171ᵃ), quoted in Trapp, 472.

[71] Some—Henry and later Scotus—would want to class them as some sort of intentional or formal distinction; others—notably Godfrey—would want to class them straightforwardly as instances of identity. (Though note that Scotus came to classify his formal distinction as a kind of real distinction (presumably because it is prior to thought): see e.g. Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 2. 2. 1–4, nn. 400–3 (Vatican, ii. 355–7).) For Giles, any extra-mental distinction, whatever the sorts of object it holds between (e.g. objects, properties, or objects and properties), is *real*. Hence his claim that there can be a real distinction between a thing and a mode, and his claim that a modal distinction is a kind of real distinction.

suppositum is that it include *esse*$_m$. Aquinas's earlier accounts have *suppositum* as a consequence of *esse*, but not as a whole including *esse*.[72]

All of this has a bearing on the human nature in the Incarnation. But, as I suggested above, the bearing is not wholly straightforward. On the account thus far, a *suppositum* is a nature + an *esse*$_m$. If we apply this straightforwardly to the Christological material, we will naturally be inclined to conclude that Giles believes that the human nature lacks an *esse*$_m$. But this is not quite right. As I showed in Chapter 4 above, Giles's account of the hypostatic union appears to entail affirming that the human nature has an *esse*$_m$—one which is derived from the *esse* of the divine *suppositum* (where this divine *esse* is presumably some kind of *esse*$_r$).

Given this, what account can we give of Giles's treatment of the subsistence problem? The main discussion can be found in *Quodlibet* 2. 2. (For the background claims about the nature of the union, see Chapter 4 above.) First of all, the texts:

(12.22) *Suppositum* means an essence as it is perfected by *esse*. . . . To exist in a *suppositum* . . . is not to have *esse*, or *per se* existence (*existere*), but to have the *esse* of the *suppositum*.[73]

(12.23) Therefore, just as if whiteness were separated from its subject, it would not exist unless some other *esse* were communicated to it . . . so, if the human nature were separated from the *suppositum* of the Word, then it would form a *suppositum* and exist through its proper *esse*.[74]

Giles does not mean to suggest that nothing would need to be done to such a nature in order for it to exist—that its existence would just be automatic; rather, God would need to create its proper *esse*:

(12.24) Since the human nature could not exist unless it were joined to some *esse*, and if it were separated from the Word it would not exist through the *esse* of the Word, and it would not be sustained in the *suppositum* of the Word, . . . it would be necessary [if it were separated from the Word] for some other created *esse* to be communicated to it—in which case it would constitute some created *suppositum*, and would be sustained in a created *suppositum*. For just as, for the human nature to exist in the Word is for it to exist through the *esse* of the Word, and [for it] not to form a proper *suppositum* but to be sustained in the *suppositum* of the Word, so for the human nature to be separated from the Word is for it to exist through its own *esse* (*per esse suum*), and to form its own *suppositum* (*facere suppositum proprium*), and to be sustained in that *suppositum*.[75]

How should we understand the new *esse* that Giles is proposing here? In the last sentence of the last quoted passage, Giles insists that the new *esse* of the human nature is its own *esse*, and not the *esse* of some (other) *suppositum*. So I would propose the following reading. The assumed nature has *esse*$_m$ from the *esse*$_r$ of the divine *suppositum*; when separated from this *esse*$_r$, the nature is given a new *esse*$_r$, proper

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[72] Giles, *DCA* 5 (Trapp, 452–3). So Aquinas's change is from a view which makes a *suppositum* the subject of an (extrinsic) *esse* to a view which makes a *suppositum* include an (intrinsic) *esse*. If anything, Giles's view in fact looks closer to Aquinas's earlier view; the reason that Giles understands his own view to correspond to Aquinas's later view is that Giles here associates Aquinas's *esse* with his own *esse*$_m$.

[73] Giles, *Quod.* 2. 2 (p. 51^b).   [74] Ibid. 2. 2 (p. 52^a).   [75] Ibid. 2. 2 (p. 52^b).

extrinsic (divine) $esse_r$

humanity$_r$ + E-$esse_m$
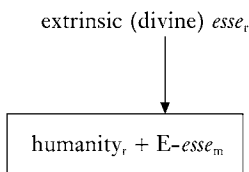
Figure 12.1

to it, from which it derives a new $esse_m$. We learn from the account in *De Compositione Angelorum* that this new $esse_r$ is not itself a part of the new *suppositum*; but it is that in virtue of which the *suppositum* exists. Thus, in *Quodlibet* 2. 2, Giles is proposing that the nature is united to a new $esse_r$; and what distinguishes an assumed nature from a subsistent nature is that a subsistent nature is—and an assumed nature is not—united to its own proper created $esse_r$.

It is in this sense that we should understand the claim that a *suppositum* is a nature + $esse_m$. First, on no account should we understand $esse_r$ to be a part of a *suppositum*. Secondly, however, not every nature + $esse_m$ is a *suppositum*. In order to count as a *suppositum*, a nature must derive its $esse_m$ from its own $esse_r$, and not from the $esse_r$ of some other *suppositum*. (In the case of the assumed nature, of course, just as in the case of an accident, there is no proper $esse_r$ at all, since any unified object as such is the result of the presence of exactly one $esse_r$.)

Again, the issue can be nicely represented diagrammatically. Figure 4.5 diagrams the hypostatic union. The bottom box represents the assumed nature, and the bottom part of the top box represents the divine $esse_r$ communicated to this nature. We can now make these elements of the diagram more accurate. I use 'E-$esse_m$' to refer to an $esse_m$ that derives from an extrinsic *suppositum*. The box in Figure 12.1 represents the assumed human nature. Suppose this assumed nature were to be given up by the divine person. Using 'P-$esse_m$' to refer to an $esse_m$ that derives from a created *esse* proper to a created nature, we can represent the proposed situation by Figure 12.2. The box represents the newly constituted *suppositum*: having P-$esse_m$—and thus failing to have E-$esse_m$—is necessary for being a *suppositum*. The created $esse_r$ is newly created by God: it did not exist prior to the nature's separation from the divine person.

Giles's account clearly requires an account of subsistence, since his separability claim here entails that a nature is—under the relevant sorts of circumstances—the sort of thing that can subsist (note that the humanity$_r$ represented in Figures 12.1 and 12.2 *persists* through the relevant changes). To this extent, his account could be considered no more satisfactory than that of the early Henry. Both accounts share the insight that a necessary mark of a subsistent object is that it properly speaking exists. For Giles, non-subsistents can begin to subsist on the addition of new *esse*, and they can retain identity over this sort of change. So Giles's account really requires a solution to the subsistence problem; but his appeal to *esse* to explain the conditions for subsistence is hardly satisfactory, in the lack of an account of how a nature could gain new *esse* and retain identity over this sort of (non-Aristotelian) change.

proper (created) *esse*

proper (created) $esse_r$

$$\downarrow$$

$$\boxed{\text{humanity}_r + \text{P-}esse_m}$$
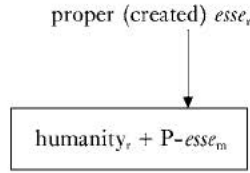
Figure 12.2

5. TWO DOMINICANS AFTER AQUINAS

Raymund of Guilha, writing 1284–5, holds that the assumed human nature fails to be a human person on the grounds that its union with the *esse* of the divine person means that it fails to have the proper *esse* required for subsistence.[76] Raymund holds that the separation of the human nature from the Word would entail that this nature gain the *esse* that it lacks as united to the Word—just as would occur in the separation of a part from its whole.[77] Raymund thus interprets Aquinas in line with the unofficial reading I am proposing: the human nature is the sort of thing that, under the right circumstances, can subsist: and what is required for its subsistence is the possession of proper *esse*. (The 'right circumstances' here are existence separate from another *suppositum*. But these right circumstances do not *explain* subsistence: *esse* is required for this.)

In so far as I can work his opinion out, the Dominican Thomist Robert of Orford appears to be in agreement with my unofficial version of Aquinas too. Writing in 1289–93 in opposition to Henry of Ghent,[78] Orford proposes that if the assumed human nature were to be given up by the Word, then it would immediately gain its own personal *esse*. This *esse* would not require an efficient cause for its production. Rather, the union of body and soul would automatically result in personal *esse* unless prevented by the union of the whole nature to the Word. As Orford puts it, the assumed nature is in 'most proximate' potency to such personal *esse*—as opposed to the pure potency that the human nature would be if its *esse* had to be caused.[79] Since Orford is presupposing here that personal *esse* is a *property* of a nature, I take it that he sees *esse* as the solution to the subsistence problem, and to this extent his view is in conformity with the unofficial solution proposed by Aquinas.[80]

[76] Raymund, *Qu.* ad 4 (p. 120).   [77] Raymund, *Qu.* (p. 118).

[78] For the date of Orford's *Imp.*, see Andrew P. Vella, *Les premières polémiques thomistes: Robert d'Orford, Reprobationes dictorum a fratre egidio in Primum Sententiarum*, Bibliothèque thomite, 38 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1968), 17.

[79] See Robert of Orford, *Imp.* (Hocedez, 100).

[80] In a passage cited by Pelster from MS Vat. lat. 987, Orford appears to make much the same point: 'The essence of the human nature in Christ lacks the proper *esse* of personhood and subsistence, and participates in the *esse* of the divine personhood and subsistence': see Pelster, 'La quaestio disputata de Saint Thomas', 380. Here, the suggestion is that the union in *esse* deprives the human nature of the *esse* (of subsistence) that it would otherwise possess.

Chapter 13

RELATION THEORIES OF SUBSISTENCE

1. RICHARD OF MIDDLETON

Richard's theory—a theory that is later developed by William of Ware—is that an individual nature is distinguished from a *suppositum* by a relation. In brief, an individual nature is either assumed or not assumed: as assumed, it has a relation to the divine *suppositum* in virtue of which it is not a subsistent nature; as non-assumed, it has a relation to the divine *suppositum* in virtue of which it is a subsistent nature. Richard holds—in line with the standard Franciscan line—that the assumed human nature of Christ has its proper *esse*. (Richard's understanding of the distinction between essence and *esse* is thus irrelevant to the issue here, except in so far as it casts light on his reasons for believing that the assumed nature has its own *esse*.[1]) Richard makes the relevant distinctions between essence, *esse*, and subsistence in terms of a series of different relations between a creature and God.[2] An essence is that in virtue of which an object is related to God's exemplar causality; *esse* is that in virtue of which an object is related to God's efficient causality.[3]

But mere existence as a real object, with relations to God's exemplar causality (essence) and efficient causality (*esse*), is not, according to Richard, sufficient for subsistence. Richard explains his position by comparing Christ's human nature to subsistent human natures. All of these natures have a relation to God's efficient causality, and have their proper *esse*. But Christ's human nature has a further relation to God's efficient causality that no other human nature has; and all other human natures have a different further relation to God's efficient causality that Christ's human nature lacks. Richard makes his point most clearly when discussing the counterfactual possibility of Christ's human nature being laid aside by the Word:

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[1] On essence and existence in Richard, see Edgar Hocedez, *Richard de Middleton: sa vie, ses oeuvres, sa doctrine*, Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense. Etudes et documents, 7 (Louvain: 'Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense' Bureaux; Paris: Honoré Champion, 1925), 185–90; F. A. Cunningham, 'Richard of Middleton, O. F. M. on *Esse* and Essence', *Franciscan Studies*, 30 (1970), 49–76.

[2] As Henry does too: see Ch. 12, n. 49.

[3] Richard, *Quod*. 1. 3 ((Brescia, 1591), pp. 5ᵇ–6ᵃ); for the background in Henry, see Hocedez, *Richard de Middleton*, 189–90. In short, Richard denies Henry's claim that objects with *esse essentiae* have some sort of extra-mental existence independently of their instantiation (their possession of *esse existentiae*): see e.g. Richard, *In Sent*. 1. 35. 1. 1 (i. 302ᵇ–303ᵃ), criticizing Henry, *Quod*. 9. 2 (Macken, xiii. 25–46).

(13.1) Although, if a created substance remains, [God] cannot by however much power take away from it every relation to its efficient cause, nevertheless it can be brought about by divine power that something that is related in one way (*modus*) becomes related in another. So a relation to its efficient cause can be taken away from [a created substance], and [the substance can] gain another. So if God were to make a created substance that exists in himself [viz. God] as in its *suppositum* (as the human nature of Jesus Christ now exists), I say that [the nature] would be related to its efficient cause differently after the assumption than before, for a different relation is implied by existing in oneself as a result of an efficient cause, from that which is implied by existing in another as a result of an efficient cause.[4]

This passage makes it clear both that the relevant criteria for subsistence and non-subsistence are relations to a primary efficient cause, and that we can think of these relations as modes.[5] Furthermore, these relations are both relations that are added over and above the 'bare' divine causal activity that results in existence—though presumably God has to cause one or other of these relations in addition to causing the substance itself. (Everything that exists is either a *suppositum* or not a *suppositum*.)

Furthermore, a relational change to *esse in se* is necessary and sufficient for subsistence:

(13.2) If the Son of God laid aside the human nature, then it would be neither a person nor anything at all (since it would totally cease to be), unless there were present some divine causal influence conserving it so that it subsisted in itself. But if this influence is present, then it would be a person without anything else being given to it, since it would exist in itself, having the complete mode of its existence.[6]

(Note that the relevant efficient cause, as (13.2) makes clear, is the *primary* cause, namely God.) Conversely, if counterfactually the Word were to assume a pre-existent person, then the assumed nature would lose this relation to God's causal influence:

(13.3) If the human nature assumed by the Word pre-existed, it would be true that it was a person, and, nevertheless, the Son of God could have assumed it. In this case however he would have taken away from it, or excluded from it, the notion of created personality, by removing from it the first causal influence necessary for its existing in itself.[7]

All of this raises an Aristotelian problem that Richard is aware of. According to Aristotle, there can be no relational change without some non-relational change underlying it. I cannot gain or lose relations to things unless something else about either the things or me really changes. Richard replies that relations between creatures and God's efficient causality result from God's free will: and God can change the modes of these relations without changing any other feature of the world.[8] (I looked at this issue briefly in Chapter 5 above.)

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[4] Richard, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 1 ad 8 (iii. 6ª).
[5] They thus are not like Richard's usual sorts of relations, which are not modes but things—see Mark G. Henninger, *Relations: Medieval Theories 1250–1325* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), ch. 4.
[6] Richard, *In Sent.* 3. 5. 2. 2 ad 1 (iii. 50ᵇ).   [7] Ibid. 3. 5. 2. 2 ad 3 (iii. 51ª ᵇ).
[8] Ibid. 3. 1. 1. 1 ad 7 (iii. 6ª).

As Richard understands his position, it is clear that these two different relations to divine causality—namely, subsistence and non-subsistence—are both relations to God's *general* causal indwelling. They do not in themselves constitute relations to God's *special* indwelling.[9] Presumably, Richard understands God's special indwelling to refer to precisely his hypostatic presence. God's general indwelling is what allows a nature to be—or not to be—a *suppositum*. A nature that is not a *suppositum* is such as a result of its relation to God's general causal indwelling, so that the nature exists not *in se* but *in alio*. God's special indwelling in the nature is something additional over and above this: not his hypostatically sustaining human nature (and its being a property of his), but his *presence to* it.

There is one important further feature in Richard's account, and it is a feature that creates some difficulty. Richard believes—understandably—that substances have a *natural* inclination to subsist.[10] As far as I can see, Richard is the first writer to make this point in the context of the hypostatic union (Richard's first *Quodlibet*, where the point is made, is usually dated to 1285); as we shall see in Chapter 15, it is a point that has some very important consequences for the later development of a subsistence theory.[11] Thus a substance, unless prevented, will subsist. This claim does not sit easily with Richard's relational account of subsistence. On the relational account of subsistence, a special act of divine efficient causality is required for subsistence. Subsistence requires more than just the lack of some sort of block here; it requires an active divine volition.[12] The problem here is that subsistence, on Richard's account, is effectively a divine gift. A substance subsists if and only if God gives it a certain sort of relation to his efficient causality—a relation that requires a particular divine causal act over and above the mere creation of the substance. And it is hard to see how the claim that subsistence is a supernatural gift can sit easily with the claim that a substance has a natural inclination to it. To see this, we need to consider more closely the range of things that might be covered under the concept of natural inclination.

It seems to me that there are at least three possible senses. (i) A substance x is naturally inclined to a property φ if x has φ unless prevented. (I shall label this a *default* inclination.) (ii) x is naturally inclined to φ if the possession of φ is naturally necessary for x. (I shall label this a *necessary* (that is, naturally necessary) inclination.) (iii) x is naturally inclined to φ if the possession of φ is necessary for x to be a perfect instance of its kind. (I shall label this a *teleological* inclination.) A necessary inclination is stronger than a default inclination, in the sense that a default inclination can be frustrated by a natural agent, whereas a necessary inclination can be frustrated only by a supernatural agent. Teleological inclination is clearly the weakest sort of inclination.

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[9] Richard, *Quod.* 1. 3 ad 2 (p. 7ᵃ).   [10] Ibid. 1. 3 (p. 6ᵇ), ad 1 (p. 7ᵃ).

[11] Aquinas makes a related point in the context of the separated accidents in the Eucharist: accidents are not necessarily inherent; they are rather such that they have a natural inclination to inhere: see *ST* 3. 77. 1 ad 2 (iii/1. 516ᵃ).

[12] For the voluntary aspect of this, see Richard, *Quod.* 1. 3 ad 2 (p. 7ᵃ).

Applying all this to the case in hand, we can see how anomalous Richard's theory will end up looking at this point. According to Richard, a substance x has a natural inclination to a supernatural gift. But we need to ask just which sense of natural inclination can be relevant to Richard's position. Not a default inclination, because x's possession of subsistence is the result of a divine act that is distinct from the creation of x. *A fortiori*, the inclination cannot be a necessary inclination. The third sort of inclination—the teleological inclination—looks more promising. Subsistence might be a good candidate for a perfection necessary for being a perfect instance of a natural kind. But there is still a difficulty. If we make subsistence necessary for being a perfect instance of a natural kind, it will follow that, necessarily, Christ's human nature—whatever its overall perfection—is an imperfect instance of human nature.[13] And it is hard to suppose that any medieval theologian would be happy to accept that consequence. (Since the natural inclination claim is only made in the (early) *Quodlibet* 1, it may be that Richard changed his mind about this when he came to revise book three of his *Sentence* commentary a few years later.[14])

2. WILLIAM OF WARE

William's account fleshes out that offered by Richard. William believes that there are good reasons for believing the assumed human nature to be an individual substance.[15] And he equally denies that the assumed human nature could be a person or *suppositum*. His reason for this is that necessary for subsistence is being *independent*:

(13.4) It belongs to the definition of a *suppositum* that it has subsistence in itself (*per se positionem*) and that it does not depend on another. This is why positing that [something] is a *suppositum* and that it is united to another is to claim that it is a *suppositum* and not a *suppositum*. . . . And added to nature [by *suppositum*] is that it is a subsistent (*per se stans*).[16]

Furthermore, given that every *suppositum* is a substance and not every substance is a *suppositum*, William claims that substancehood is *naturally prior* to subsistence:

(13.5) There is one definition of nature as individual, and [another] as it makes a *suppositum*. And nature as individual precedes itself as making a *suppositum*.[17]

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[13] I speak of Christ's human nature as an instance of human nature. This is because, on the sorts of theory that I examine in this part of my book, the human nature is a substance. This is not inconsistent with the claim that the Word is a human substance, or a human *suppositum*, in virtue of his union with the human nature.

[14] The issue of a natural inclination to subsist is in any case a complex one, and I will return to consider it in more detail in Ch. 15 below.

[15] On this, see the Introduction above.

[16] 'De ratione suppositi est quod habeat in se positionem et non innitetur alteri, quare ponere quod sit suppositum et quod altero unitatur est dicere quod sit suppositum et non suppositum. . . . Et supra naturam est quod sit per se stans': William, *In Sent.* 171 (MS V, fo. 115va).

[17] 'Alia ratio naturae ut individua est et ut facit suppositum, et natura ut individua praecedit naturaliter se ipsam et ut facit suppositum': William, *In Sent.* 172 (MS V, fo. 116ra); see also 171 (MS V, fo. 115rb).

(13.6) There is one definition of individuality and another of personhood (i.e. of *suppositum* or person). For a *suppositum* is an individual, but these are not equivalent, for, since human nature as individual precedes the definition of *suppositum*, it is possible for God to cause a nature to be individual without [causing it] to be a *suppositum* in itself, having [its own] proper *suppositum*.[18]

On the account thus far, what distinguishes subsistence from mere substance-hood is independence, where independence is naturally posterior to substancehood. What specification does William add to this to yield a criterion for subsistence? Put differently, how precisely should this independence condition be understood? William explicitly rejects any attempt to explain it in terms of any additional absolute (that is, non-relational) property. The argument he offers is similar to slightly earlier ones (offered by Olivi and Godfrey of Fontaines) that we will encounter in the next chapter. But it is in fact rather more sophisticated:

(13.7) [If] the divine *suppositum* were to give up the nature assumed by the Word, that nature would make a *suppositum* without any absolute *esse* coming to it (as [is] probable), and consequently it would have the *esse* of actual existence since the nature existing in the *esse* of the Word really has its own *esse* of actual existence. That it would make a *suppositum* without anything added is clear, for if something were added to it, this would be either substance or accident, but not substance, because [if substance, then] either matter or form or composite (for this is how substance is divided, according to Aristotle and Averroes, *De Anima* 2); and one cannot say that it would be matter or form, because then in such a *suppositum* there would be a different matter from [that in] other human beings, or a different form [from that in other human beings]—which should not be granted, because in a human *suppositum* there would be a *suppositum* without a humanity, like the *suppositum* of an accident now existing. In this way it could not be said to be an accident, because an accident cannot be that which formally acts in something substantified, because that [which substantifies] cannot be an accident.[19]

William presupposes that the assumed human nature could be laid aside by the Word. He does not require this assumption for his discussion of the issue; he could ask about criteria for subsistence even if he thought it impossible for the human nature

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[18] 'Alia ratio est individualitatis et alia personalitatis sive suppositi sive personae. Est enim suppositum individuum, sed non convertitur, quia cum natura humana ut individua praecedat rationem suppositi possibile est ut Deus influat ad naturam ut sit individua et non ut sit suppositum in se habens suppositum proprium {proprium] propriam MS}': William, *In Sent.* 155 (MS V, fo. 104$^{\text{va}}$).

[19] '<Si> suppositum divinum dimitteret naturam assumptam a Verbo, illa natura faceret suppositum sine aliquo esse absoluto adveniente sibi (sicut probabile <est>), et per consequens haberet esse actualis existentiae, quia modo natura existens in esse Verbi habet realiter esse proprium actualis existentiae. Quod autem sine aliquo addito faceret suppositum patet, quia si aliud adderetur sibi aut illud esset substantia aut accidens. Non substantia, quia aut materia aut forma aut compositum (sic enim dividitur substantia secundum Philosophum et Commentatorem 2 de anima), et non potest dicere quod esset materia vel forma, quia tunc in tali supposito esset alia materia quam in aliis hominibus, vel alia forma, quod non esset dare, quia in suppositum humanum esset suppositum absque humanitate sicut suppositum accidentis existentis modo. Sic etiam <non> potest dici quod esset accidens, quia accidens non potest esse illud quod formaliter agit in substantificato, quia illud non potest esse accidens': William, *In Sent.* 174 (MS V, fos. 117$^{\text{vb}}$–118$^{\text{ra}}$).

to be laid aside. But the assumption does serve to focus the question. If the human nature really can be laid aside—if its being assumed is really accidental to it—then a discussion of this counterfactual scenario will force an answer to the subsistence question. But the assumption also serves to delimit the possible range of answers. After all, on the assumption being made, subsistence simply cannot be an essential feature of a nature—or, at least, it cannot be an essential feature of Christ's human nature, since that nature (on the counterfactual scenario being considered) subsists merely contingently.

The argument in (13.7) is closely related to arguments that we find in Olivi, Godfrey, and Scotus. A subsistence feature cannot be a non-relational property, because it can be neither substance nor accident. It cannot be substance because it can be neither matter, form, nor composite—and this exhausts the possibilities for substance in an Aristotelian universe. William is supposing that the presence in an individual nature x of additional matter, or of additional substantial form, over and above the matter and form essential to x entails that a further substance is produced from the union of this matter or form with the pre-existing matter or form essential to x. Suppose that subsistence requires that an additional form is added to x. In this case, the additional form will unite either with x itself or with x's matter such that a new substance results. This new substance would on the first scenario include x as a part; on the second, it would include part of x (x's matter) as a part. Presumably neither option is acceptable. On the first, x would fail to be a complete substance, since it would be apt to become part of a further substance over and above itself. On the second, two complete substances would somehow share the same matter. William's opponent, Aquinas, would hardly find this acceptable, since for Aquinas matter plays a central role in individuation. And, as William himself points out, this second substance would not be human (it would be a '*suppositum* without humanity').

William provides an argument to show that subsistence cannot be explained by an accident:

(13.8) They argue thus, that if *suppositum* added to nature merely a relation which is required for making a *suppositum*, then such a *suppositum* would be a relational *suppositum*, because in the same way when an accident is added to a human nature to make a *suppositum*, it does not make a *suppositum* that is a substance but rather an accident or accidental [*suppositum*].[20]

The idea is that if an absolute accident is that in virtue of which a nature subsists, then—falsely—a subsistent nature is an accidental unity, consisting of the substance or nature along with the accident. (The first consequent in (13.8) is *ad hominem*: William himself believes both that 'a relation is required for making a *suppositum*', and that it is not the case that a *suppositum* is a relational thing.)

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[20] 'Item ipsi sic arguunt, quod si suppositum adderet solam relationem super naturam qui requiritur ad faciendum suppositum, tunc tale suppositum esset suppositum respectivum, quia eodem modo cum superadditum super naturam humanam quam faceret suppositum esset accidens, non faceret suppositum quod est substantia immo accidens vel accidentale': William, *In Sent.* 174 (MS V, fo. 118ra).

In some ways, of course, the whole discussion misses the point of Aquinas's view, which I have been proposing is that a *suppositum* subsists in virtue of its *esse*. *Esse* is some sort of substantial element in a *suppositum*. And *esse*, of course, is neither matter nor form. William, at any rate, regards himself as having sufficient warrant to reject any sort of claim to the effect that subsistence can be explained in terms of any absolute entity. William replaces this proposed explanation with one which makes a *relation* responsible for subsistence. As we shall see, William is quite clear that the relevant sort of relation is some sort of accident: the relation is not an essential feature of its substance. But William believes both that there is a good reason for wanting to deny that a relation is the sort of thing that, when united to a substance, makes a merely accidental unity, and that there is a good reason for wanting to deny that a relation, when united to a substance, necessarily makes a merely relational unity.

Underlying William's theory are two prior claims that he believes the theory needs to be able to explain: first, that some predicates are true of a nature that are not true of a person, and vice versa (persons are independent, whereas natures are indifferent to independence; and a nature is prior to its person); and secondly, that a nature cannot be distinguished from its person by any absolute entity.

The first of these entails that there must be some sort of distinction between a nature and its person. William is careful to avoid claiming that there is any sort of *real* distinction between a nature and its person. I suspect—for reasons that will become clear in a moment—that his reasons for avoiding this sort of talk are identical with his reasons for wanting to deny that subsistence can be the result of any absolute entity. Instead, William seems to suppose that there is some sort of intentional or modal distinction between a nature and its person. This intentional or modal distinction is invoked to explain how it can be that contradictory propositions can be true of different aspects of one and the same thing. William gives two such examples. In God, claims are true of divine persons that are not true of the divine essence, even though any divine person is identical with the divine essence. For example, each divine person in some sense has the divine essence. But despite the real identity of person and essence, it is not true that each divine person has a divine person. Equally, it is true that the Father generates the Son, whereas the essence does not.[21] William's second example makes the issue even clearer. An individual and its nature are really identical. But we can form a concept of a nature without being able to form a concept of an individual.[22]

[21] 'Nos dicimus quod aliqua sunt <idem> realiter, puta natura divina et persona, et tamen actus realiter convenit personae quod non competit vel attribuitur ipsi essentiae. Exemplum: generatio est actus realis qui attribuitur personae et non essentiae. Dicimus enim quod persona generat et non dicimus quod essentia <generat>, non obstante quod sunt idem et quod essentia est in persona. Similiter essentia quae una est in tribus personis et in eis assumitur (ut ita loquar) ad personalitatem personae et non dicimus quod persona assumatur sicut patet quod essentia quae est in patre assumitur ad personalitatem talem': William, *In Sent*. 172 (MS V, fo. 116ʳᵃ ᵇ). On the relation between the divine essence and the divine persons according to William, see Ch. 6 above.

[22] 'Similiter hoc patet in humanis actibus intentionalibus. Non obstante quod albedo et haec albedo sint idem realiter, tamen intellectus potest ferri super albedinem obiective absque hoc quod feratur super hanc albedinem': William, *In Sent*. 172 (MS V, fo. 116ʳᵇ).

This looks like a classic case of an intentional distinction: a distinction in concept corresponding to some sort of extra-mental distinction—in this case, between a nature and an individual. And William explicitly appeals to this case when talking about the distinction between individual nature (i.e. first substance) and *suppositum*:

(13.9) Therefore in the same way it can happen that, despite the fact that a proper *suppositum* and [its] nature are the same, a nature, itself existing in its proper *suppositum*, is really assumed, while its proper *suppositum* neither remains nor is assumed.[23]

I think we can exclude the possibility of William's wanting to reduce this sort of distinction to a merely rational or conceptual one. At one point, William is explicit that being a person is a *mode* of existing. In relation to a nature laid aside by the Word, William states,

(13.10) It would not acquire another absolute, but rather merely a mode of existing in itself—namely, such that the nature which was previously substantified in the Word is now substantified in itself.[24]

I take it that it would be unlikely for a medieval thinker to want to claim that this distinction between a nature and its modalization is merely rational.[25] (As we have seen looking at Giles, of course, a medieval thinker might want to claim that there is a real distinction between a nature and its modalization. But, as I have already made clear, William does not want to hold that there is a real distinction between a nature and its *suppositum*. So I take it that he would not want to claim that there is a real distinction between a nature and its modalization.)

William holds that this mode is some sort of relation—here, what William labels a 'respective mode' (a term that I will explain in a moment). An objector states a thesis that William himself seems to be happy to accept:

(13.11) *Suppositum* adds no more to nature than a respective mode, for it cannot add any absolute thing. Therefore if a *suppositum* is corrupted while the nature remains, a relation is corrupted in itself, which is impossible.[26]

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[23] 'Ergo eodem modo potest esse, non obstante quod suppositum proprium et natura sunt idem, quod natura ipsa sic existens in supposito proprio realiter assumatur, [in] supposito proprio non manente et non assumpto': William, *In Sent.* 172 (MS V, fo. 116[rb]).

[24] 'Nec tamen adhuc aliud esse absolutum acquirit, sed modum existendi <in> se, ut scilicet natura quae prius fuit substantificata in Verbo nunc substantificatur in se': William, *In Sent.* 171 (MS V, fo. 116[ra]).

[25] The discussion makes it clear, among other things, that William would not want to make the mistake that Scotus usually makes of supposing that separability can only hold between distinct *objects*. Here, William's intentional distinction is marked off from a real distinction in terms of the sorts of things distinguished, rather than in terms of the separability of these things. Hence, an intentional distinction holds between a thing and a mode, even if the thing and its modalization are separable (such that the thing can exist without the mode).

[26] 'Suppositum nihil addit super naturam nisi quemdam modum respectivum. Non enim potest addere aliquid absolutum. Ergo si suppositum corrumpitur manente natura, relatio per se corrumperetur, quod est impossibile. Eodem modo arguitur: si dimitteretur a Verbo natura, tunc natura habeat proprium suppositum, et per consequens relatio sola esset terminus generationis, quod simpliciter est impossibile': William, *In Sent.* 172 (MS V, fo. 116[ra]).

Although the objector does not explain his reasons, underlying the claim that it is impossible that 'a relation is corrupted in itself' is the Aristotelian insight about the nature of relations discussed in Chapter 5 above. According to Aristotle, a change in relation between two things can only result from some non-relational change in one or both of the things.[27]

William's reply assumes the truth of the claim that *suppositum* adds a relation, or else a relational mode, to nature. William thus accepts some sort of relation theory of subsistence. I will note in a moment how William believes his theory to be immune to the sorts of objection that he raises against Aquinas's theory. Before I do that, we need to see more closely how precisely William understands his theory. And it must be admitted that William is not always as explicit as one would like. But there is some reason for thinking that William has a theory that is in basic outline very similar to Richard's.

I will spend the rest of this chapter outlining the relation theories of subsistence considered by William. Briefly, William considers two possible theories: that subsistence is explained by a relation, and that subsistence is explained by what William labels a respective mode. I shall argue that William in fact accepts (or certainly that he *ought* to accept) the respective mode theory. My reason is that this theory is more consistent with three features of William's account that I examine in the material that follows: his tendency to speak as though he accepts some version of the negation theory; his claim (derived from his argument against Aquinas at (13.8)) that a created *suppositum* cannot be a merely accidental unity; and his claim that a nature has a natural inclination to be a *suppositum*.

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[27] I discussed this in Ch. 5; see also briefly the discussion of Richard of Middleton above. William would not be swayed by this objection, since he elsewhere gives some examples of changes that appear to violate the Aristotelian claim. One of these comes from natural philosophy, and so provides William with particularly strong evidence in favour of the sort of scenario he has in mind. Suppose we take a discrete mass of something—say, a puddle of water. William believes that this puddle counts as a *suppositum*. (On this, William is followed by Scotus. I discuss Scotus's treatment of this and related issues in my *The Physics of Duns Scotus: The Scientific Context of a Theological Vision* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), Ch. 8.) Suppose the puddle is split in two. In this case, the existent *suppositum* is destroyed, and two new *supposita* begin to exist. And suppose conversely that a further mass of water is added to the puddle. Prior to the addition, there are two *supposita*: the puddle and the additional mass of water. In this case, these two *supposita* are destroyed, and a new *suppositum* begins to exist—the *suppositum* of the new, larger, puddle. As William points out, none of this involves the generation or corruption of any absolute entity: 'Aliter dicitur quod licet natura et suppositum sint idem realiter, [quod] natura bene potest assumi licet suppositum non assumatur. Exemplum: cum aliquod continuum dividitur—puta aqua—aliqua pars immediate habere incipit et habet proprium suppositum quam <vis> non adveniat sibi aliquod novum esse absolutum quod non habuit in supposito prius. Similiter si talis pars aquae coniungatur toti aquae iterum et continetur talis ipsa pars aquae, deficit habere proprium suppositum et facere proprium suppositum. Non tamen producit aliquod esse absolutum': William, *In Sent.* 171 (MS V, fo. 115ᵛᵃ). It is the same in William's other examples: the separation of the human soul from its body, and the separation of an accident from its substance: 'Eodem modo de anima intellectiva, quae tunc separatur est subsistens per se, nec post separationem habet aliquod absolutum quod prius non habuit in composito, et cum iterum unitur deficit esse in se subsistens, nec tamen amittit aliquod esse absolutum proprium. Hic similiter aliud exemplum est de accidente, quod accidens est in sacramento altaris per se stans absque aliquo de novo sibi impresso quod prius non habuit, et illud accidens potest esse alteri inhaerens et per consequens potest ab invicem separari in accidente ista duo, scilicet accidens et per se stans sive subsistens, absque hoc quod aliquid corrumpatur': William, *In Sent.* 171 (MS V, fo. 115ᵛᵃ). The point of all of these is that, on the face of it, there is nothing *new* there: nothing that was not somehow there before.

Suppose with William that what distinguishes a *suppositum* from a nature is that a *suppositum* includes some sort of relation: '*suppositum* adds merely a relation to nature', or '[*suppositum*] adds a respective mode [to nature]'.[28] What could the end term of this relation be? The most likely option seems to be that it is some sort of relation to divine efficient causality—just as proposed by Richard of Middleton. The crucial claim is buried in the middle of the following very complex passage (I have marked it in italics; I will discuss this difficult passage in greater detail below):

(13.12) In another way [being a *suppositum*] does not add a relation but a respective mode, and this mode neither ceases to be through corruption, nor begins to be through generation. For I do not suppose that such a mode ceases to be through any corruptive action, but only *through the cessation of divine influence, which does not causally indwell the nature such that it makes a* suppositum. Likewise the nature assumed by the Word, if left to itself, begins to be a person not by any new generation but only because it is left to itself—because if the block [on subsistence] is taken away, supposing general causal influence, it begins to be simply by becoming [subsistent]. An example: hot water, left to itself, returns to being cold simply by removing the block [on being cold], simply by becoming actually cold.[29]

(The point about the heat example is that William is thinking, rather as we do today, that cold is just the lack of heat.) The theory, expressed at least in the italicized portion of (13.12), is that subsistence is the result of God's special causal influence constituting the nature as a *suppositum*. And this causal influence is expressly spoken of in relational terms—it is a 'respective mode'—a term whose meaning I return to below.

That William wants to understand the relation theory of subsistence in terms of (in some sense) relations to God's efficient causality—just as proposed by Richard of Middleton—can be confirmed by another passage too. Earlier in the same question as that from which I have just quoted, William seems to argue, like Richard, that special acts of divine causation are required both for assumption and for subsistence:

(13.13) A nature, considered as individual, is prior to itself considered as forming a *suppositum*. God can so causally affect a nature which is now in its proper *suppositum* that it remains individual, and—by assuming it—not so causally affect it that it remains personated by its proper subsistence, just as he did by assuming a nature that never formed a *suppositum*.[30]

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[28] William, *In Sent.* 172 (MS V, fo. 116ᵛᵃ).

[29] 'Aliter dicitur quod non addit relationem sed modum respectivum, et iste modus non capit non esse per corruptionem, nec dicitur quod capit esse per generationem. Non enim imaginor quod { [quod] MS et} capiat non esse talis modus per actionem corruptivam sed solum per desitionem influentiae divinae quae non influit ad naturam ut faciat suppositum. Similiter natura assumpta a Verbo si dimitteretur sibi capiat non esse <personam> per aliquam generationem de novo {novo] MS mundo} sed solum quia dimitteretur sibi, quia ablato prohibente, supposita influentia generali, per simplicem exitum prorumpit in esse. Exemplum de aqua calida quae sibi derelicta redit ad frigiditatem quod <fit> ablato prohibente per simplicem exitum in actum frigiditatis': William, *In Sent.* 172 (MS V, fo. 116ᵛᵃ).

[30] 'Natura ut individua praecedit se ipsam ut facit suppositum. Potest Deus sic influere ad naturam quae est modo in supposito proprio quod maneat individua, ipsam assumendo ad se, et non influere ut manet supposita per propriam suppositionem, sicut facit assumendo naturam quae nunquam fuit suppositum': William, *In Sent.* 172 (MS V, fo. 116ʳᵃ).

Here, a nature's being a *suppositum* requires that the nature has a *relation to divine efficient causality* which the nature would not have were it to be assumed, and thus fail to be a *suppositum*. And this would amount to a statement of the relation view of subsistence.

There appear to be several *prima facie* difficulties with William's account of the relation theory of subsistence. One is that in **(13.12)** William speaks as though *suppositum* adds to nature merely the negation of a special relation to God's efficient causality, such that, if this special relation were had by a nature, the nature would *fail* to be a *suppositum*. Such a nature would have a special relation to divine efficient causality such that the nature exists as united to the second person of the Trinity. The problem for my reading is that this makes it look not as though *suppositum* adds a relation to nature, but merely as though a *suppositum* lacks something an assumed nature has. A special relation to divine efficient causality is required for being assumed, but not for subsistence.

On this showing, William's account even in **(13.12)** is not wholly consistent, since he also seems committed to the view that being a *suppositum* adds a relation to a nature. There are other problems with William's account too. One is that the relation theory of subsistence seems vulnerable to the objection that a *suppositum* is not a merely accidental unity. And the other is that—as I argued above when discussing Richard's relation theory—the relation theory is inconsistent with the claim that a nature has a natural inclination to subsist—a claim that (as I will show in a moment) William makes fairly unequivocally.

These three problems can all be solved if we allow William to make a refinement to the relation theory that he sometimes toys with: namely, that subsistence is explained strictly speaking not by a relation but by a respective mode. We can understand more or less what William has in mind by considering some of what he says about the distinction between nature and *suppositum*. As we saw in **(13.12)**—the passage in which William is most explicit in the suggestion that subsistence is not a relation but a respective mode—William believes that a nature begins or ceases being a *suppositum* without anything being generated and corrupted. So respective modes are not things that can be generated or corrupted. (This contrasts with William's theory of relations. Relations for William are indeed the sort of thing that can be generated and corrupted.[31])

I think that this allows us to see how William would spell out a respective mode theory of subsistence: a *suppositum* is a nature along with a respective mode, where a respective mode is not any sort of *thing*, and thus not the sort of thing that could form a merely accidental unity with its subject. The status of a respective mode allows us to see why William can sometimes speak of it in terms of a negation. Suppose that the relation of hypostatic dependence is a real relation—and thus a

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[31] 'Dato quod totum non dicit aliam realitatem ultra absolutam realitatem partium, dicitur quod totum compositum corrumpitur ita tamen quod nihil realitatis absolutae capiat non esse, sed solum per talem corruptionem relatio capit non esse': William, *In Sent.* 172 (MS V, fo. 116ᵛᵃ). (On this, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 82–5.)

thing on William's theory of relations—whereas independence is merely a respective mode—and thus not a thing. If we offer an analysis in terms of *things*, the respective mode will indeed appear as a negation—it is a mode, in this case the *lack* of a thing (the lack of a relation of hypostatic dependence).

So the respective mode theory is consistent with William's claim that a nature's beginning and ceasing to be a *suppositum* does not require generation or corruption. (At least, it does not *in itself* involve generation and corruption, though it certainly entails the corruption and generation of real relations of hypostatic dependence.) It is also clearly immune to the accidental unity objection. In fact, I think that some careful discussion can also allow William's other projected theory—Richard's relation theory—to be consistent with the claim that a *suppositum* is not an accidental unity. According to **(13.8)**, if a relation explains subsistence, then a *suppositum* will be a relational unity. William devotes some time to sorting out why this claim is false. Basically, he tries to find a way to show how the relational divine *supposita* can be distinguished from non-relational human *supposita*, given that subsistence in all cases is *explained by* a relation:

(13.14) Neither is it valid to argue: a *suppositum* adds merely a relation to nature, therefore the *suppositum* is relational (as a *suppositum* in God is relational, since it adds merely a relation to the essence). For [this] consequence is invalid: this cannot exist without a relation, therefore a relation is a formal cause of this thing. Neither are the cases of a divine *suppositum* and a human or created one similar, because it belongs to the definition of the divine essence that it does not subsist in itself, but that it acts in a relational *suppositum*—and that consequently a divine *suppositum* is merely relational. But it belongs to the definition of a created essence that, if left to itself, it subsists in itself; consequently it makes an absolute *suppositum*.[32]

According to William, relations are things over and above their subjects. But they are not the sort of thing that makes an accidental unity with anything. Relations and their subjects exist in what he calls 'apposition'. William develops this theory to explain how it can be that there can be an inherence relation between a substance and an accident without this entailing an infinite regress of such inherence relations. The idea William is opposing is that we would need a further inherence relation to explain the inherence of the first inherence relation, and so on. William's solution is that relations do not inhere in their subjects. Relations and their subjects exist in apposition, where apposition seems to be a metaphysically irreducible unity quite separate from an accidental one.[33] The account is not very explanatory.

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[32] 'Nec ultra valet arguendo suppositum addit solam relationem super naturam, ergo est suppositum relativum sicut in divinis est suppositum relativum quia addit solam relationem super essentiam. Nam consequentia non valet, hoc non potest esse sine relatione ergo relatio est istius causa formalis. Nec est simile de supposito divino et humano vel creato, nam de ratione divinae essentiae est quod non subsistat in se, sed quod fiat in supposito relativo, et per consequens suppositum divinum est solum respectivum. De ratione autem essentiae creatae est quod sibi relicta subsistat in se ipsa et per consequens faciat suppositum absolutum': William, *In Sent.* 172 (MS V, fo. 116ᵛᵃ).

[33] On this argument in William, see my *The Physics of Duns Scotus*, 85. For references to a similar argument in Avicenna and Thomas Aquinas, see Henninger, *Relations*, 89.

But it clearly allows William to avoid claiming that a *suppositum* is an accidental unity. And it does so in a reasonably principled way. After all, William must be right that there cannot be an infinite regress of inherence relations, and he must therefore be right that we need some sort of account that is sufficient to block such an infinite regress. William's apposition theory might not be entirely satisfactory—not least since there are alternatives that on the face of it look less agnostic. After all, William never explains precisely what he believes this apposition to involve. Nevertheless, the application to the Christological problem I am examining here is obvious, even though it is not an application that William himself ever explicitly made.

Having shown that the relation theory can be made consistent with the claim that a *suppositum* cannot be an accidental unity, it should still be pointed out that it cannot be made consistent with the claim that a nature's beginning and ceasing to be a *suppositum* does not involve generation or corruption. So to that extent I think that the evidence favours William's acceptance of the respective mode theory over the relation theory. (Recall too that my attempt to show how William could make his proposed relation theory consistent with the claim that a *suppositum* is not an accidental unity does not correspond to any argument explicitly made by William.) A consideration of a further aspect of William's theory I think increases the evidence in favour of his acceptance of the respective mode theory—or at least, of the greater cohesion of the respective mode theory with other claims that William wants to make about *supposita* in general.

It is clear that William accepts that a nature has a natural inclination to be a *suppositum*. As we shall see in the next chapter, the affirmation of such an inclination was often made by adherents of the negation theory too. I have already quoted one of the most important passages in this context, **(13.12)**. When showing that the relation theory of subsistence does not entail that a *suppositum* is a relational unity, William distinguishes an individual created essence from the individual divine essence by claiming that a created essence, unlike the divine essence, has a natural inclination to subsist. When contrasting a substance and an accident, William notes that accidents have a natural inclination to inhere, whereas a substance does not:

(13.15) Just as it is of the nature of an accident that it is not fixed in itself, but naturally inclines to another, the *per se* is that which is fixed according to itself and in itself and through itself, and not something added [to something else]. But for a perfect substance to be fixed, and apt in itself and not through another, is for it to make a *suppositum*.[34]

Whether or not this amounts to a claim that a nature has a natural inclination to be a *suppositum* largely depends on the force we choose to give to the word 'apt' here. It might imply no more than a passive potency; it might, however, imply a natural inclination to existence as a *suppositum*.

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[34] 'Sicut de naturae accidentis est quod ipsa secundum se non figatur sed ad aliud inclinetur naturaliter, per se est quod ipsa secundum se ipsam in se et per se ipsam figatur et non aliquid additum. Sed substantiam perfectam figi et per se aptam et non per aliud est facere suppositum {suppositum] MS supposito}': William, *In Sent.* 171 (MS V, fo. 115ᵛᵇ).

In another passage, William is clear that an assumed nature, while not actually
a person, is nevertheless 'virtually' or 'potentially' a person, in the sense that, if laid
aside, the nature would immediately be a *suppositum*:

(13.16) He assumed a nature virtually or potentially personated, because if that nature were
laid aside by the Word, it would immediately make a person, or be a person.[35]

The sense of 'potentially' here is stronger than mere passive potency; it clearly seems
to imply some sort of natural inclination.[36] (These terminological difficulties, as we
shall see, are clearly sorted out in Scotus.)

When discussing the respective mode theory, William is clear that a nature has
a natural inclination to be a *suppositum*. In (13.12), William makes it clear that
a nature subsists unless God prevents it. This makes it clear that a nature has a
natural inclination to be a *suppositum*. This does not make a great deal of sense on
the relation theory. As I pointed out above, none of the relevant ways of spelling
out here a natural inclination for a supernatural property can be made coherent.
But the respective mode theory might provide the solution here. Respective
modes—unlike William's relations—are not things, and presumably they do not
require any special divine act to be brought into existence. Recall Aquinas's (1.10):
analogously to Aquinas's accidents, William's modes are not things, and they do
not exist. *A fortiori* they do not need to be caused. Of course, that a substance has
the mode is a state of affairs that might need causing. But this state of affairs might
represent merely the default setting, as it were; God's general causal activity causes
both the substance and (granted that there are no blocks, such as the possession of
a real relation of dependence on the divine person) its respective mode of independent
existence. So William's natural inclination claim might be spelled out in such a way
as to entail the respective mode theory of subsistence. Reading William in this way
provides us with an answer to the worry I expressed above that William's theory
might amount to some version of the negation theory of subsistence. On my read-
ing of William, what distinguishes a *suppositum* from a nature is not merely a nega-
tion; but it is not a thing, either. It is rather a respective mode, a contingent property

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[35] 'Assumpsit naturam personatam virtualiter sive potentialiter, quia si illa natura dimitteretur a Verbo
immediate faceret personam sive esset persona': William, *In Sent.* 171 (MS V, fo. 115ᵛᵃ).

[36] At one point (a passage following on directly from (13.6) above), William seems to suggest other-
wise, arguing apparently that the nature has natural inclinations for both dependence and independence:
'et per consequens ex quo non habet suppositum proprium sequitur quod inclinetur ut sit suppositum
et supponitur in alio et non in se videtur ergo quod quantum est ex parte naturae assumptae quod incarn-
atio sit possibilis': William, *In Sent.* 155 (MS V, fo. 104ᵛᵃ). Possibly we should understand 'inclina-
tion' here to mean passive potency. But the scribe of MS M₁ knows of a different, and to my mind
rather better, interpretation. Commenting on the version of the passage available to him ('et ita cum
haec natura non habeat suppositum propria inclinabitur ad aliud suppositum'), he adds in the margin
'in aliena natura, inclinatione dico non naturali sed obedientiali' (MS M₁, fo. 137ᵛᵃ). On this reading, a
thing can have different *sorts* of inclinations to contrary states: a natural inclination to one state (such
that the state is automatically had unless there is some further divine action to prevent it), and an obedi-
ential (i.e. supernatural) inclination to a state that is beyond its natural powers to obtain. In an import-
ant sense, being hypostatically united to a divine person most fully expresses what a human nature is
intended to be.

united to its substance along the lines suggested in the general theory I am labelling
(AI2).

This theory developed by Richard and, in far more detail, by William, bears some
resemblance to a modern reading of Scotus's theory. As will become apparent below,
the reading bears scant likeness to Scotus. Heribert Mühlen, under the influence
of Heidegger's analysis of 'being-toward', argued as follows (here usefully summar-
ized by Pannenberg):

According to Duns Scotus, there resides in created personality the possibility for becom-
ing a person either in dedication to God or in rendering one's self independent from God.
While the latter possibility is realized in all other men, Jesus actualized being a person in
dedication to God, so that the divine person became the element of his existence which was
constitutive for his person.[37]

The idea is that Scotus develops a theory of personhood that focuses on the notion
of a tendency towards certain sorts of *relation*. If there is a medieval analogue to
this sort of analysis—and I think the Hegelian and existentialist mode of thought
adopted by Mühlen is sufficient to make this analogue remote—then it should be
found in William, not in Scotus. William is explicit in identifying both assumption
and personhood as *relations* in some sense—though admittedly they are relations
over which God alone has any control, and they are relations that are more to do
with the metaphysics of property exemplification than with 'dedication to God'.

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[37] Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man*, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe (London: SCM
Press, 1968), 296, summarizing Heribert Mühlen, *Sein und Person nach Johannes Duns Scotus*,
Franziskanische Forschungen, 11 (Werl: Dietrich Coelde Verlag, 1954). Mühlen's contribution is
discussed in detail in Burger, *Personalität im Horizont absoluter Prädestination: Untersuchungen zur
Christologie des Johannes Duns Scotus und ihrer Rezeption in modernen theologischen Ansätzen*, Beiträge zur
Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters, N. F., 40 (Münster: Aschendorff, 1994),
203–49.

Chapter 14

NEGATION THEORIES
OF SUBSISTENCE
(1) THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

1. PETER JOHN OLIVI

The earliest explicit attempt to defend the negation theory of subsistence—the theory that what distinguishes a person from an individual nature is just a negative feature—can be found in Peter John Olivi. In what follows, I give first of all Olivi's presentation of the opposing view—in this case, the *esse* theory of subsistence—along with Olivi's reasons for rejecting it, and secondly Olivi's account of the negation theory of subsistence.

On the esse *theory of subsistence*

Olivi's description of the opposing theory is in itself interesting. In reply to the objection that, if subsistence is something positive, then its presence will entail a difference in species (such that a nature lacking its own subsistence will be specifically different from one which has its subsistence), Olivi proposes the following defence on behalf of his opponents:

(14.1) The concept of *per se* existence does not imply anything partial, but rather implies the whole under the description of whole. According to some it implies a whole nature along with some absolute mode of being. According to these people, this mode really adds something to a nature: something formal, understanding 'formal' very broadly. . . . It is of that genus of formal things by which the notion of a being is diversified with regard to its existence (*existere*).[1]

Olivi makes much the same observations in book two of his *Sentence* commentary.[2] Talk of an 'absolute mode of being' puts one immediately in mind of Henry of Ghent's theory. But talk of this mode 'really adding something' sounds more like Giles of Rome. (Richard of Middleton and William of Ware are excluded here, since they believe the added feature is merely relational.) There is a problem with the dates here. The relevant texts of Henry and Giles were not composed before 1286.

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[1] Olivi, *QI* ad 1b (pp. 27–8).
[2] Olivi, *In Sent.* 2. 15 (ed. Bernardus Jansen, 3 vols., Bibliotheca Franciscana Medii Aevi, 4–6 (Quaracchi: Collegium Sancti Bonaventurae, 1922–6), i. 276, 285).

This might help confirm the date of Olivi's *Sentences*. On the usual account, the *terminus a quo* is the mid-1270s, since it was (apparently by Olivi's own testimony) composed in Narbonne,[3] and we know that Olivi was in the south of France from this time. On this account, the *terminus ante quem* is 1283, when propositions from the commentary were included among propositions condemned in that year.[4] But Sylvain Piron has recently argued that Olivi's cursory *Sentence* commentary (1276–9) is lost, and that the ordered questions that exist on book two (along with some questions on the remaining books) originate in disputations held between the late 1270s and the mid-1290s.[5] And this certainly allows Olivi to have Henry and Giles as his targets here.

In the *Sentence* commentary, Olivi provides a comprehensive array of philosophical arguments, some of which appear later in Scotus's discussion of the same issue, against the theory that subsistence is a positive feature of its subject, and in favour of the negation theory. In fact, the set of arguments is by far the most thorough offered by adherents of the negation theory. I do not have space to examine them all here. But I will briefly mention four. Two of them are similar to each other: if an assumed human nature such as the one united to the second person of the Trinity in the Incarnation were to be laid aside by the assumer, then 'without addition it would exist in itself';[6] and if subsistence were to add a positive feature to a nature, then God could remove this feature without supplying any replacement, such that a nature could exist which lacked any sort of subsistence—whether intrinsic or extrinsic. And this is absurd. Both arguments beg the question against Olivi's opponents.

The third argument is rather different. Suppose that subsistence adds a positive feature to a nature. In this case, the nature will itself be the subject or *suppositum* of this positive feature.[7] Olivi presumably wants to object to the metaphysical complexity resultant from this view of things. A properly constituted *suppositum* is, on the view Olivi wants to reject, itself a composite of what we might call a lower-order *suppositum* (the individual nature which is the subject of an additional feature constituting subsistence) and the additional feature constituting subsistence. What Olivi is objecting to is the thought that a nature could be a subject of a form, or of something analogous to a form. Clearly, Olivi will be himself committed to the view that a subsistent nature is subject to a negation. Evidently he does not regard this as objectionable in the same way as he regards the nature's being subject to a form objectionable. (I think there is a good reason for this: forms are things that have relations to their subjects; negations are not like this. I will return to this in Chapter 15.)

Olivi's final argument is that there is no sort of feature which any putative such positive feature could be.[8] The positive feature cannot be *matter* or *form*, since, like

[3] See *In Sent.* 2. 36 (i. 633).

[4] F. Stegmüller, *Repertorium in Sententias Petri Lombardi*, 2 vols. (Warzbürg: Schöningh, 1947), i. 324.

[5] See Piron, 'Parcours d'un intellectuel franciscain. D'une théologie vers une pensée sociale: l'oeuvre de Pierre de Jean Olivi (ca. 1248–1298) et son traité "De contractibus"', unpublished doctoral thesis, Paris, EHESS, 1999. I am grateful to Russ Friedman for this reference.

[6] Olivi, *In Sent.* 2. 15 (i. 288).   [7] Ibid. 2. 15 (i. 289).   [8] Ibid. 2. 15 (i. 289).

an essential difference, both of these are parts of a kind-nature, and hence the addition of any such entity alters the species of the whole. Neither can it be an *accident*, since then a nature will be the subject of this accident, and the same complexity objection as that just considered would arise.[9] This argument again appears to beg the question. As Olivi himself notes (see **(14.1)**), his opponents seem to suppose that the feature added to a nature to get a *suppositum* is *existence*: and on the opponents' view, existence is not the sort of thing which affects the kind of an object.

The negation theory of subsistence

Olivi makes it unequivocally clear that he himself accepts the negation theory:

(14.2) It is more truly said differently by some, among whom also by myself, that [person] does not add anything really diverse [to nature], . . . but only implies that the nature is not dependent on any other *suppositum*, or related to anything else after the manner of such dependency.[10]

As he understands it, the negation theory entails that there is no real distinction between person and nature:

(14.3) Created personality is utterly the same as any human nature. . . . Person or *suppositum* does not imply anything other than the whole being.[11]

But there is, nevertheless, an *intentional* distinction between the two:

(14.4) The whole being, under the description of 'whole' or 'totality', is not necessarily utterly the same (*omnino idem*) as its nature, although it is the same (*idipsum*) as the whole considered as a whole. For its nature does not necessarily include in itself the concept of 'that whole'; rather, it can sometimes be without it. Neither is this inference valid: 'This is utterly the same as itself, therefore the concept of the totality (*ratio totalitatis*) implies whatever the whole itself implies, and nothing else'—unless we could first prove that the concept of the totality (*ratio totalitatis*) implies whatever the whole itself implies, and nothing else. Given this, it does not follow that these two are utterly the same, speaking of the identity of real concept (*rationis realis*). Sometimes, mere diversity of real concept suffices for one concept to be able to be had without another, as is clear in the diverse relations and properties of the persons of God. And this is especially true when the different concepts are distinguished merely by the negation of something extrinsic, as according to some is the case here.[12]

'Identity of real concept' is the tightest sort of identity, something like Scotus's formal identity. Roughly, two properties—or an object and its properties—have identity of real concept if and only if they are definitionally the same. When discussing his intentional distinction, Olivi makes it clear that the sort of distinction he has in mind is something like a definitional distinction: a real *ratio*, as he puts it, involves a 'logical definition'.[13] This sort of definition, according to Olivi, does not need to

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[9] Ibid. 2. 15 (i. 274).   [10] Ibid. 2. 15 ad 2 (i. 288).   [11] Olivi, *QI* obj. 1a (p. 3).

[12] Olivi, *QI* ad 1a (p. 27); see also Olivi, *In Sent.* 2. 7 (i. 137): '[Negations] do not add anything really diverse.'

[13] Olivi, *In Sent.* 2. 7 (i. 144). On the intentional distinction in Olivi, see Carter Partee, 'Peter John Olivi: Historical and Doctrinal Study', *Franciscan Studies*, 20 (1960), 215–60, pp. 251–3.

satisfy the strict requirements of an Aristotelian definition. Thus, it does not have to be a composite of genus and difference. I take it that Olivi wants us to have reasonably rigid ways of talking about certain properties, such that, even if the properties do not admit of Aristotelian definitions, they will admit of rigid descriptions —the 'logical definitions' relevant to the intentional distinction. These logical definitions are 'really predicable' of a substance;[14] the point being, I take it, that the definitions correspond to properties of a subject.

In (14.4), an individual nature is definitionally distinct from its property of *being a whole*. And *being a whole* adds to the individual nature 'the negation of something extrinsic'—in this case, the relation of dependence on an extrinsic person. (For the relation of dependence in Olivi, see Chapter 3 above.)

All of this raises a problem that Olivi does not seem to have been fully aware of. As we saw, his first argument against the *esse* theory presupposes that a nature that is now assumed could be given up by the Word—and his second presupposes that a nature that is now independent could be assumed by the Word. This entails that subsistence is a contingent feature of a nature, such that the nature can exist irrespective of whether or not it subsists. Given that a nature can exist without subsisting, it looks reasonable to claim that there is a sense in which a nature is separable from its subsistence. The problem is this: Olivi sometimes claims that real separability entails real distinction.[15] But his account of the negation theory entails that there is a merely intentional distinction between a nature and its subsistence. So his negation theory entails that a nature and its subsistence are inseparable.

But the problem here is not specifically with Olivi's account of subsistence, but rather with his vacillations on the nature of real distinction. Thus, Olivi sometimes explicitly rejects the separability criterion for real distinction. An opponent objects to Olivi's theory of creation on the grounds that it violates the separability criterion for real distinction:

(14.5) *When one of two positive things can leave or be removed from another which remains, then the two are really distinct*, and one adds to the other something really distinct from it. But the instant of creation leaves and passes, while the essence of the created thing remains. Therefore [being created adds to the essence of a creature something really diverse from it].[16]

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[14] Olivi, *In Sent.* 2. 7 (i. 138).

[15] Olivi claims that two really identical but intentionally distinct items are *inseparable*: 'Just as [a genus] is really the same as its difference, it cannot be separated from it': Olivi, *In Sent.* 2. 50 ad 5 (ii. 46). (Olivi elsewhere makes it clear that the distinction between genus and difference is an instance of the intentional distinction: see Olivi, *In Sent.* 2. 7 (i. 135).) In fact, Olivi is wedded to a strong link between separability and real distinction, since he also claims that inseparability is sufficient for real identity: 'If things differ essentially among themselves, then it is impossible that the making of one of them is in itself the making of another, or that the destruction of one is in itself the destruction of the other. Suppose that God makes nothing other than the *ratio* of unity, truth, and the like. Some essence is made by this, otherwise it could scarcely be the case that anything exists. And it is most clear to one who looks that it is impossible to make any of these *rationes* without *eo ipso* the others being made, such that the making of one is the same as the making of all: for to make unity is to make goodness and truth and being, and (likewise) to make entity is to make the others, and so for the others too': Olivi, *In Sent.* 2. 7 (i. 137).

[16] Olivi, *In Sent.* 2. 2 obj. 1 (i. 23), my italics.

According to Olivi, there is no real distinction between a creature and its property of being created. His opponent objects that the property of being created is distinct from the creature, on the grounds that *being created* is a momentary property; after the time of its creation, the creature exists without the property. Thus, if the creature has at t the property of being created, it lacks it at t_n. The argument is of course specious: a creature's being-created-at-t is a (time-indexed) property which a creature has throughout its existence. But Olivi rejects the opponent's argument for a different reason:

(14.6) I reply that the first premiss is true when the real entity of one positive thing is removed from the entity of another which remains; but it is not true when it is removed only according to the aspect (*ratio*) according to which it differs from the concept (*ratio*) of the other positive thing.[17]

Olivi's response here is that separability is not sufficient for real distinction. Intentionally distinct entities are separable.

In any case, Olivi's (14.5) probably solves as much of the problem as we need to solve to show how Olivi's negation theory can be made coherent. Olivi makes it clear that he is interested in applying his intentional distinction to positive things and positive *rationes*: and on any showing, however real or unreal a positive real *ratio* is, it will always be more real than a negation. A negation is a lack; it is not some sort of thing had by objects in virtue of their lacking other properties. For an object to gain a negation, all that it needs to do is to fail to possess a certain positive property; for it to lose a negation, all that it needs to do is to begin to possess a certain positive property. (There is a substantive philosophical point at stake here, which I discuss in detail in the final section of the next chapter.)

Olivi's solution to the subsistence problem is a landmark in discussions of this problem, setting the scene for the sophisticated development of this Olivian position. But Olivi's insights here show him fully aware of the strengths and most of the potential weaknesses of the negation theory. Olivi also spots something else. Adherents of the negation theory—Scotus for example—sometimes reason that arguments to the effect that subsistence cannot be by a positive entity on the grounds that there are no available entities to explain subsistence. The idea is that the only sorts of thing there are are the Aristotelian substance and accident, neither of which can possibly explain subsistence. Defenders of the *esse* theory posit something which is neither substance nor accident—namely, *esse* itself. And Olivi spots that adherents of the *esse* theory are thus unlikely to be swayed by the thought that neither substance nor accident can explain subsistence.[18]

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[17] Ibid. 2. 2 ad 1 (i. 28).

[18] Scotus later repeats the substance–accident refutation of the negation theory, seemingly without noticing how thin the argument would look to adherents of the *esse* theory. Perhaps Scotus was so convinced (and rightly so) that there could be no sort of distinction between essence and *esse* that he did not seriously consider his opponents' claims to the contrary. I take it that much the same can be said of Godfrey of Fontaines, who also exploits the substance–accident argument against the *esse* theory while accepting the real identity of essence and *esse*. (On the real identity in Godfrey, see Ch. 4 above.)

2. GODFREY OF FONTAINES

On Giles's esse *theory of subsistence*

Godfrey, as in his other Christological discussions, focuses on the thought of
Giles of Rome as a target for criticism. Again, the whole discussion springs from
Godfrey's rejection of Giles's account of *esse*, and, ultimately, from Godfrey's rejec-
tion of Giles's account of property-possession. Godfrey accepts a form of the nega-
tion theory of subsistence. His discussion begins from a perception that there must
be some sort of distinction between a nature and its *suppositum*, since nature-words—
abstract terms—cannot predicate *suppositum*-words—concrete terms. Thus, it is never
true to claim, for example, that 'a man is (a) humanity'.[19] On behalf of his oppo-
nent, Godfrey uses this linguistic argument to show that the distinction between a
nature and its *suppositum* must be the result of some positive entity belonging to a
suppositum but not to a nature.[20] Clearly, what *suppositum* adds to nature cannot be
merely an accident, since a *suppositum* would then be composed of nature + acci-
dent, and such a composite would not be a substance, but rather an accidental whole.
Rather, subsistence must be explained by whatever it is that needs to be added to
a nature to account for its existence. And the most obvious candidate here is *esse*.
So a *suppositum* is fundamentally nature + *esse*.[21] (Godfrey allows that there might
be other features of a substance that are in some sense necessary for its existence:
propria and other accidents, for example.[22] But I take it that, given his argument
against an accident theory of subsistence, he wants to ascribe to his opponent some
sort of *esse* theory of subsistence. This is certainly borne out in the way Godfrey
develops his opponent's theory.)

Godfrey goes on to describe in great detail, and with great accuracy, Giles's *esse*
theory of subsistence. The salient features of this theory, as Gregory sees it, are as
follows: (i) if an accident φ-ness inheres in a subject x, then there is a real dis-
tinction between x and φx; (ii) this real distinction is explained by the fact that x
gains a φ-mode from the accident φ;[23] (iii), analogously, if *esse* belongs to a nature
y, then there is a real distinction between y and (y + *esse*); and (iv) this real dis-
tinction is explained by the fact that y gains an *esse*-mode from the *esse*-thing united

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[19] Godfrey explicitly distinguishes this question from the problem of individuation (see Godfrey, *Quod.*
7. 5 (PB 3, pp. 300–1)). He is clear that abstract nouns can refer to individual things: 'We should enquire
whether human being adds anything to humanity, and whether this human being [adds anything] to
this humanity' (Godfrey, *Quod.* 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 301)).

[20] Godfrey does not consider the opposing view that nature might add something to *suppositum*.
I think that there is probably a reason for this. Godfrey assumes that being a person entails being a
subject of properties, and that minimally being a subject of properties entails that accidents or the
possibility of them must be part of the connotation of the word person. On no account can a *suppositum*,
overall, include less than a nature.

[21] Godfrey, *Quod.* 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 302). This argument clearly parallels the material in Giles, *DCA*,
discussed at the beginning of Ch. 12, sect. 4 above.

[22] Godfrey, *Quod.* 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 302).   [23] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, pp. 302–4).

to it; (v) the presence of *y*'s *esse*-mode is explained by the fact that *y* supports accidental properties.[24]

Godfrey rejects this *esse* theory of subsistence. His arguments fall into two basic groups: those that argue against Giles's modal theory of accidents and *esse*, and those that argue more generally against the claim that the mark of subsistence could be a positive entity. Godfrey deals with this second group by conceding for the sake of argument that Giles's modal theory of *esse* is true, and trying to show that, given this truth, it is still not possible for an *esse* theory of subsistence to be true.

The arguments against Giles's modal theory of accidents and *esse* focus on Giles's general account of the possibility of a real distinction consequent merely on a mode. Giles holds that there can be a real distinction between x and φx even if φ is no more than a mode. Godfrey believes this claim to entail a contradiction: a real distinction can be the result only of a distinction between things, just as a rational distinction can be the result only of a distinction between concepts.[25]

The argument looks to be stipulative. But we can see some of Godfrey's motivation if we keep in mind that both he and Giles reject the possibility of any sort of formal or intentional distinction. Given that the only available distinctions are real and rational, the most obvious way of distinguishing these distinctions is in terms of the sort of objects they can obtain between: things in the first case, and concepts in the second. Giles's admission of modes into his ontology would on this sort of account seem to require some sort of intentional or formal distinction— perhaps a *modal* distinction—in order to be spelled out coherently.

It is easy enough to be sympathetic to the claim that Giles's extravagant theory posits more than it needs to. As Godfrey points out, it is the accident φ-ness that is directly responsible for its substance's being φ, or at least, for the composite of substance and accident (that is, for φx) being φ:

(14.7) Properly, it should not be said that matter is extended, and that quantity extends, but that the composite [of matter and quantity] is extended in itself and quantity is the formal reason of extension, or is itself the extension of the composite. For this reason the extension of matter is too another thing than the matter itself, just as quantity is a thing other than matter. Neither is the extension of matter a certain mode, except as quantity is a certain mode of substance; for universally accidents are certain modes or dispositions of a substance.[26]

This looks to be correct. Giles's theory looks undesirably baroque, far removed from the austere Gothic of his teacher Aquinas, or of his opponent Godfrey. But Godfrey's argument as it stands should not convince Giles. Giles could respond easily enough to it, since Giles believes that only the accident, and not the mode, is properly explanatory of its substance's being φ: the presence of the mode is itself explained by the presence of the accident. (I explored this claim of Giles's in Chapter 4 above.)

[24] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 304).   [25] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, pp. 304–5).
[26] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 314).

Godfrey's remaining arguments focus more closely on the substantive point at issue: that no theory that explains subsistence by appealing to a positive entity added to nature can be true. The first three—of which I give one—are directed explicitly against the fifth Aegidian claim in Godfrey's account: namely, that the presence of a nature's *esse*-mode is explained by the fact that the nature supports accidental properties. Suppose that the existence of a nature as a *suppositum* is explained by the fact that the presence of accidents results in the nature's gaining a subsistence mode. On this sort of picture, the subsistence mode must be posterior to the presence of the relevant accidents, since the presence of this mode is explained by the presence of the accidents. But it cannot be true that the nature's subsistence mode is posterior to its possession of accidents. The nature is only capable of supporting accidents if it already constituted as a *suppositum*. *A fortiori*, the nature has a mode resulting from the presence of accidents if it is already constituted as a *suppositum*. Such a mode, after all, is posterior to the inherence of accidents.[27] (The argument is very similar to Olivi's third argument against the *esse* theory; the argument crops up too in Scotus, as we shall see in Chapter 15.)

Godfrey's final argument focuses more closely on Giles's *esse* theory of subsistence as Giles himself wants to understand it. Clearly, as Godfrey spots, there are theological reasons for abandoning the claim that the presence of accidents is sufficient for subsistence. Christ's human nature supports accidents, but it does not subsist. So, Godfrey claims (and I am sure Giles would be happy with this), subsistence must be explained by the presence not of accident-modes but of an *esse*-mode. Christ's human nature, even though it supports accidents, lacks a (proper) *esse*-mode. But this *esse*-mode, Godfrey argues, must be posterior to the nature, since it requires the nature for its existence. As posterior, the *esse*-mode is only *per reductionem* in the genus of substance. And as such it cannot explain subsistence.[28] The idea is that the subsistence of a nature cannot be explained by an entity which is in some sense 'less' than itself, or which is in some sense posterior to the nature. The argument is again clearly related to Olivi's third argument: that the nature will, absurdly, itself be a subject for its *suppositum*—a kind of sub-*suppositum*, as it were, a *suppositum*'s *suppositum*. But Godfrey's argument does not draw out exactly this problem. It relies, rather, on less immediately obvious claims about the inability of a 'reduced' entity to explain subsistence, and these claims in turn rely on an inference from being posterior to being reduced in the relevant sense.

The negation theory of subsistence

Godfrey's own theory is very much better than his attempt to refute Giles, though it does not seem by any means as sophisticated as those of Olivi and Scotus. Nevertheless, as we shall see, there is one important advance that Godfrey makes on Olivi: Godfrey adopts Richard of Middleton's claims about the natural inclination of a

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[27] Godfrey, *Quod.* 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 306).   [28] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, pp. 306–7).

substantial nature for subsistence. This adoption is very important for the later develop-
ment of the negation theory in Scotus.

As we shall see, Godfrey does allow a sense in which there is a real distinction
between *suppositum* and nature. But that there should be such a real distinction is
not a part of Godfrey's theory of subsistence, but is rather a consequence of it. I
shall look first of all at the theory of subsistence, and secondly at the real distinc-
tion which results from this theory.

Godfrey holds that the principal sense of the *suppositum*-terms and nature-
terms is the same. Thus, if we offer a definition of a concrete *suppositum*-term such
as 'human being', and of the corresponding abstract nature-term—in this case,
'humanity'—the definition of both is the same: 'whatever pertains to the definition
of a nature pertains to the definition of the *suppositum*, and vice versa'.[29] As Godfrey
makes clear, the referent of all such terms is an individual substance. (Contrari-
wise, unlike substances, accidental wholes—composites of substance and accident
—are not identical with the essence or nature of either of their components.[30])
Nevertheless, 'nature' and '*suppositum*' are not synonymous in every respect: each
has a different connotation. '*Suppositum*' connotes certain privative conditions:
not depending on something else, and not being (or having a natural inclination
to be) a part of something else.[31] The context here is a discussion of the assumed
human nature of Christ, so I take it that 'dependence' here means hypostatic
dependence, the sort of dependence that accidents have on their substances. (For
Godfrey's account of this sort of dependence, see Chapter 4 above.) Although Godfrey
does not make the point explicitly, the exclusion of an inclination towards parthood
is doubtless supposed to exclude the possibility of a separated soul (and perhaps
even a separated accident, though such a thing would not be a substance, and thus
not on the face of it even qualify for being the relevant sort of nature) from being
a *suppositum*.

That *suppositum*-words and nature-words have different connotations means
that they cannot predicate each other. According to Godfrey, 'A human being is a
humanity', for example, is not true. The reason is that *suppositum*-words connote
independence, whereas nature-words lack this connotation. By the same token, it
is possible for the Word to assume a human nature without assuming a human being:

(14.8) From this it is clear that, since that which is united to something in unity of *supposi-
tum* has in some way the nature of a part and of something that depends on another . . . it
is said that the Son of God assumed a humanity (or a human nature), and not a man. And
this is said not on account of any real diversity which '*suppositum*' implies with respect to
nature, but since for something to have the definition of a *suppositum* and to be signified under
the description of '*suppositum*' concretely, that thing must be understood to exist in and through
itself. And this requires that it is not understood under the description of 'part', whether

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[29] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 308).   [30] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 308).
[31] '. . . connotando exclusive aliud vel cui innitatur vel cum quod sit pars vel nata sit esse pars': Godfrey,
Quod. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 311).

material or formal, or as a feature of another or as dependent on another, or as that in virtue
of which something belongs to another.[32]

The last sentence here gives a nearly complete list of the criteria excluded by the
term '*suppositum*', outlining the possible sorts of part (material and formal) and the
various related sorts of imperfection (dependence, being that in virtue of which some-
thing belongs to something else) excluded by being a *suppositum*. To complete the list,
I take it that we need to add a denial of an inclination to be any of these things too.

In fact, Godfrey makes a stronger point too about the natural tendencies of
at least some *supposita*. Christ's human nature, although it fails to be a *suppositum*,
nevertheless has a natural inclination to subsistence.[33] I take it that, *a fortiori*, this
inclination will characterize all *supposita* (I will return to my reasons for this in a
moment). So Godfrey wants to make two points: not only do *supposita* lack an
inclination towards any of the sorts of parthood just outlined, they have natural
inclinations towards the opposite states. (As we shall see below, Scotus makes just
the same sorts of claim, and shows more precisely some of the implications of this
claim for Christ's assumed nature.)

Godfrey claims that the natural inclination to independence entails that Christ's
human nature, if separated from its union with the Word, would automatically sub-
sist: nothing would need to be added to it in order for it to subsist.[34] Godfrey clearly
wants this sort of 'automatic' subsistence to be a mark of every substance: God does
not need, as it were, to create subsistence over and above the creation of a sub-
stance: 'The *esse* of a singular substance, and [the *esse*] of its subsistence are really
the same.'[35]

On this sort of view, a nature that fails to be a *suppositum* does not in itself
lack anything had by a *suppositum*. Neither, for that matter, does a *suppositum* lack
anything had by a nature. For a nature to be a whole, for it to be independent—
the mark of a *suppositum*—is not explained by any entity additional to the nature,
or by any lack in the nature. But Godfrey does believe that being a *suppositum* has
certain necessary consequences. There are certain features of a *suppositum* that are
explained by its being a *suppositum*. And its being a *suppositum* is in turn explained,
of course, by the sorts of privative conditions just described. These further features,
according to Godfrey, are part of the connotation of the word '*suppositum*', though
not of the word 'nature'. And Godfrey's reasons for this have to do with the sub-
sistence which is connoted by the term '*suppositum*' but not by the term 'nature'.
Nature-terms are abstract nouns, and thus refer to the essence of a thing, 'as if through
the mode of a simple form'.[36] And the essence of a thing does not include its being
a subsistent; neither does it include the thing's accidents. (Accidental features are,
by definition, not essential.) So part of the connotation of nature-terms is the exclu-
sion of accidents. But although accidents are not part of the essence or definition
of a thing, nevertheless, a subsistent cannot exist without its accidents: there is a

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[32] Godfrey, *Quod.* 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 311).   [33] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 311).
[34] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 312).   [35] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 311).   [36] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 308).

sense in which accidents are a necessary feature of a subsistent. The presence of accidents is a necessary consequence of subsistence. *Suppositum*-terms thus do not connote the exclusion of accidents.[37]

In this sense there is a real distinction between a nature and its *suppositum*: a nature-term connotes the exclusion of something—namely accidents—really distinct from itself. But there are several things we should note about this claim. The first I have already made clear. The features of a *suppositum* that are really distinct from a nature do not explain the subsistence of the nature: they are merely necessary consequences of subsistence. Subsistence is explained by a merely privative feature: and the explanatory distinction between nature and *suppositum* is not a positive feature (for example, a form or dependent particular) of either the nature or its *suppositum*. Secondly, according to Godfrey, the fact that *suppositum*-terms connote accidental properties really distinct from anything connoted by a nature-term does not imply that the real definitions of *suppositum*-terms and nature-terms are in any way distinct. If the definition of a *suppositum*-term included accidents, then the whole referred to by the term would be no more than an accidental whole.[38] A *suppositum*-term refers to a substance, though it connotes subsistence, along with both the (privative) explanation for subsistence and the (entitative) necessary consequences of subsistence (that is, accidents).

3. HERVAEUS NATALIS

As we saw in the Introduction above, Hervaeus is explicit that the assumed human nature is individuated by quantity, and that this quantity should be thought of as an intrinsic part of the nature itself, rather than of its *suppositum*. And as we saw in Chapter 2 above, Hervaeus holds that the *esse* of the assumed nature is precisely the same as the *esse* that it would have if the nature were subsistent. This *esse*, however, exists under two different conditions (*rationes*) or modes as, respectively, dependent and independent.[39] More generally, *suppositum* and nature 'in the common course [of things]' are really identical; the distinction between person and nature is drawn in terms of conditions or modes, such that a nature can be, and a person cannot be, assumed.[40] The mode of personhood is simply independence:

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[37] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 309).

[38] Ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 309): 'Since "*suppositum*" does not include in itself and properly any accidents in its significate, [a *suppositum*] is a thing in itself, and not accidentally.' In fact, Godfrey sometimes claims that a *suppositum*-term includes accidents (see e.g. Godfrey, *Quod.* 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 309)). But elsewhere he makes it clear that it is better to think of a *suppositum*-term as not excluding accidents: 'A *suppositum*, in relation to what is essentially included in its significate, is not a whole or a composite over and above nature, because a nature-term includes the same thing; but [it is a whole over and above nature] in relation only to that which is . . . understood along [with the nature] or which is included (as communicating [*esse*]), or rather not excluded': ibid. 7. 5 (PB 3, p. 312).

[39] Hervaeus, *In Sent.* 3. 6. 1. 3 (p. 295ᵇ).

[40] Ibid. 3. 1. 1. 3 (p. 283ᵇ); see too 3. 1. 1. 1 (p. 282ᵇ).

(14.9) That thing [viz. a human nature] that is a human *suppositum* cannot be assumed to the unity of another *suppositum* according to the condition by which it is a human *suppositum*; but it can be assumed according to the condition by which it is a human nature. Neither is anything added to it by the fact that it is assumed; rather, there is taken away from it its independence from anything else.[41]

The claim that nothing is added by assumption is not quite true, since Hervaeus, as we saw in Chapter 2, holds that a relation is added on the assumption of a nature. But the claim that the mode of subsistence is the negation of dependence is reasonably clear (though I suppose that we could take Hervaeus to mean, very implausibly, that *in*dependence is a kind of positive property of a *suppositum*). Hervaeus holds too that all substantial natures have a natural inclination for independence.[42]

In terms of the relation of Hervaeus to Scotus, we need to keep in mind that Hervaeus's *Sentence* commentary pre-dates by a couple of years any surviving version of the third book of Scotus's *Sentence* commentary. So it may be that Hervaeus's source for all this is Godfrey of Fontaines. But Scotus doubtless commented on the third book of *Sentences* in Oxford at the very end of the thirteenth century. Given the strong resemblance between the things that Hervaeus and Scotus have to say (specifically, the use of the term 'independence' in this context), it seems likely to me either that Hervaeus gives a very basic summary of Scotus's teaching from a year or two before, or that Hervaeus is a source for Scotus at this point. (A third possibility which is far from implausible is that the thinkers simply came up with the same terminology independently of each other. The terminology, after all, does not require much imagination given the common use of the term 'dependence' in this context.)

[41] Hervaeus, *In Sent.* 3. 1. 1. 3 (p. 283^b).   [42] Ibid. 3. 1. 1. 4 (p. 284^a ^b).

Chapter 15

NEGATION THEORIES
OF SUBSISTENCE
(2) DUNS SCOTUS

Duns Scotus accepts the negation theory of subsistence, and provides a considerably more sophisticated account of it than either Olivi or (especially) Godfrey. Scotus also provides arguments to defend the theory from possible attacks. I will look at Scotus's account of the theory after I have examined some of his arguments in favour of accepting such a theory. These arguments all focus on the incoherence of any theory which would explain subsistence in terms of some positive entity added to a nature.

1. IN FAVOUR OF THE NEGATION THEORY

Scotus explicitly targets for attack two different sorts of subsistence theories: those that explain subsistence by appealing to some sort of relation added to a nature, and those that explain subsistence by appealing to some sort of non-relational entity added to nature.[1] The sort of theory defended by Richard of Middleton and William of Ware would be covered under the first of these; any *esse* theory under the second. Scotus responds to these two theories with arguments that are intended to be effective against either of them. His defence of the negation theory is, to this extent, more explicitly economical than that of Olivi or Godfrey.

   Scotus's first two arguments are similar. Suppose subsistence is explained by the presence of a positive feature over and above nature. Christ's human nature fails to be a subsistent, and thus will necessarily fail to have this feature. This is theologically undesirable. According to John of Damascus, what cannot be assumed cannot be healed. So if there were a feature of human existence that could not be assumed, necessarily this feature of human existence would be excluded from redemption.[2] But it is also philosophically undesirable. On the face of it, every created entity is equally susceptible of hypostatic dependence on the divine person. But no positive feature explanatorily sufficient for subsistence could hypostatically depend on the

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[1] Scotus, *Ord*. 3. 1. 1, n. 6 (Wadding, vii. 12).
[2] Scotus, *Ord*. 3. 1. 1, n. 7 (Wadding, vii. 12); *Quod*. 19, n. 18 (Wadding, xii. 507; Alluntis and Wolter, 433 (n. 19. 60)); see John of Damascus, *De Fide Orth*. 50 (Kotter, 121; Buytaert, 188), quoted in Lombard, *Sent*. 3. 2. 1, n. 4 (ii. 21). (The tag is an anti-Apollinarian commonplace.)

divine person. (If it did so depend, it would be both, by definition, a subsistent (or a property of a subsistent) and, as dependent, a non-subsistent (or a property as a non-subsistent). And this is contradictory.) So, according to Scotus's argument in the *Ordinatio*, there can be no positive entity explanatorily sufficient for subsistence.[3]

In the *Quodlibet*, Scotus develops a slightly different version of the argument:

(15.1) Any nature whatsoever is simply in obediential potency to depend upon a divine person. Therefore, if there were some positive entity which made the nature a person in its own right, then this entity would have been assumed by the Word and this Christ's human nature would be invested with a dual personhood, which is impossible. For if it were personated by something created, this would render it formally incommunicable to another person. Hence it could not be taken up by the person of the Word, and thus be personated in him.[4]

Here, the issue is not the possibility of the entity explanatorily sufficient for subsistence depending, but rather the possibility of a nature depending, presupposing that an explanation for the subsistence of that nature is a positive entity of some sort. Neither version of the philosophical argument looks successful. The *Ordinatio* version—requiring the premiss that every created entity is equally susceptible of hypostatic dependence on the divine person—seems to beg the question. Scotus's opponent will want to deny exactly this claim. The *Quodlibet* version presupposes that any positive feature explanatorily sufficient for subsistence would be a necessary feature of its substance. And there is no reason for Scotus's opponent to hold this.

The theological argument taken from John of Damascus might well fail to convince an opponent too. After all, we would not want the assumed nature to lack anything necessary for being human. But the only features relevantly necessary for being human are features of human nature. And Christ's human nature can lack (positive) personhood while lacking nothing necessary for being human—while, that is to say, lacking no features of human nature. Putting the point a different way, denying that Christ's human nature lacks anything required for being human could mean denying that it lacks anything a *suppositum* has, or denying that it lacks anything a nature has. On the face of it, there is nothing theologically objectionable about the first of these denials.

Scotus's second argument is similar to these, and again slightly different in the *Ordinatio* and *Quodlibet* versions. In the *Ordinatio*, Scotus argues that his opponents' theories entail that the assumed nature 'would lack that positive entity that is posited to be the highest, and (as it were) most actual and most determinate in such a nature'.[5] The *Quodlibet* gives us a reason for thinking this to be an undesirable state of affairs:

(15.2) Besides, if human nature formally became a person by reason of some positive entity, the Word could not put off the nature he had assumed without either letting it remain depersonated (which seems incongruous) or else giving it some new entity by which it would have

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    [3] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 7 (Wadding, vii. 13); see also Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 19 (Wadding, xii. 508; Alluntis and Wolter, 434 (n. 19. 66)).
    [4] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 18 (Wadding, xii. 507–8; Alluntis and Wolter, 433 (n. 19. 61)).
    [5] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 7 (Wadding, vii. 13).

created personhood. But this too is impossible. This could not be an accidental entity, since an accident is not the formal reason why a substance is a person. Neither could this entity be substantial, be it matter, form, or a composite substance; for then it would no longer have the nature it had before, but it would have another matter, form or composite substance.[6]

This sort of argument seems to be related to Olivi's fourth argument against the *esse* theory of subsistence. And, as Olivi spots, there would be no reason for an adherent of an *esse* theory to accept that matter, form, and composite are the only sorts of non-accidental object available to explain subsistence. It is tempting to be sympathetic to Scotus's claim—again derived from Olivi—that the explanation for subsistence cannot be any sort of accident. Presupposed to an object's having any contingent features is that the object is—or is in some sense united to—a *suppositum* that can be the ultimate subject of those features. The idea is that a positive feature of a thing must depend on something that is a *suppositum*—and as a dependent item it cannot (as it should) explain that on which it is supposed to depend. Hence, 'an accident is not the formal [i.e. explanatory] reason why a substance is a person'.

Scotus's remaining two arguments—found in the *Ordinatio* but not in the *Quodlibet*—examine more closely reasons why the proposed positive entity explanatory of subsistence could be neither a necessary nor a contingent feature of a substance. (Given, of course, that it is neither necessary nor contingent, such an entity cannot exist: necessity and contingency are exhaustive disjuncts.) The intended force of the first is that subsistence cannot be explained by a necessary feature, and of the second that it cannot be explained by a contingent feature. We have already seen Scotus's best argument against the possibility of subsistence being an accidental form of some description, and the further argument that he proposes relies on an obvious fallacy. So I do not discuss it here.[7]

The argument to show that the proposed feature could be a non-contingent feature of a nature is more interesting. Scotus presupposes that the assumed nature could be laid aside by the Word. If this were to happen, the assumed nature could not gain the feature in virtue of which it would subsist, since any such feature is a non-contingent feature of a nature. Thus, if a nature has it, it does so necessarily; if a nature lacks it, it is impossible for it to gain it.[8]

This argument too might fail to convince an opponent. As I have already shown, defenders of at least the *esse* theory of subsistence ought to believe that *esse* is a necessary feature of an individual nature, and thus that subsistence is not a contingent matter. But we could see Scotus's argument as *ad hominem*: with the exception of Aquinas, defenders of the *esse* theory are, as we have seen, surprisingly cavalier in

    [6] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 18 (Wadding, xii. 508; Alluntis and Wolter, 433 (n. 19. 62)); see also Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 5. 1–2, n. 1 (Wadding, vii. 122), quoted as (15.6) below. The text is more or less a direct quotation from Olivi and William of Ware.
    [7] For the argument, see Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 7 (Wadding, vii. 13); Scotus gives a related—and equally fallacious—argument against William's relation theory at *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 6 (Wadding, vii. 12).
    [8] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 7 (Wadding, vii. 13).

their assessment of the possible persistence of an individual nature over a change in *esse*.

Elsewhere, Scotus provides an argument to show that every human nature has a passive potency for assumption—and thus that it is false that subsistence is a non-contingent feature of a nature. As Scotus understands his argument, the domain of 'every human nature' includes those natures that subsist. So as Scotus understands the conclusion of his argument, it would in effect buttress his claim that assumption is a contingent state of affairs for any nature, and thus that subsistence is a contingent state of affairs for any nature. Christ's human nature is of the same kind as every other human nature. Christ's human nature has a passive potency for assumption. (We know this since, factually, Christ's human nature is assumed, and *ab esse ad posse valet consequentia*.) But the passive potencies and liabilities of a nature are essential features of it, not accidental features. The passive potency for assumption had by Christ's human nature is thus essential, and therefore shared by all human natures. All human natures have a passive potency for assumption. Thus no human nature can possess a feature that is sufficient to block assumption.[9]

The appeal of this argument might be deceptive. Alfred Freddoso argues that we do not need to accept that all natures of such and such a kind are alike in their passive potencies. Likewise, we do not need to accept that all natures are alike in their passive potencies for dependence or independence. Freddoso outlines a principle, which he labels '(S)', that he believes (rightly, as far as I can see) to be implicitly held by Scotus and Ockham:

> (S) Necessarily, for any individual x, property P and natural kind K, if (i) x has P necessarily and (ii) x belongs to K and (iii) P is shareable [i.e. multiply exemplifiable], then for any individual y such that y belongs to K, y has P necessarily.[10]

As Freddoso notes,

(S) as it stands has very little going for it. First of all, consider the properties *not being Socrates* and *being Socrates or a mother*. Both are shareable, and yet each is had necessarily by some human beings and only contingently or not at all by others.[11]

If Freddoso is right, subsistence could be explained by a feature that is a necessary property of a subsistent nature, and assumption could be explained by a feature

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[9] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 21 (Wadding, xii. 511; Alluntis and Wolter, 437 (n. 19. 77)): 'two natures of the same kind have the same reason or ground for depending hypostatically on the same person or *suppositum*'; Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 25 (Wadding, xii 513; Alluntis and Wolter, 442 (n. 19. 92)): 'Although my nature does not actually depend upon the Word hypostatically, nevertheless it does have the same aptitude to depend as the nature he assumed.' Conversely, Christ's human nature can be laid aside on this line of reasoning, since the argument entails that dependence is a contingent feature of a human nature. This might seem to violate Chalcedon's claim that the union of the two natures in one person is 'inseparable'—but we should recall, of course, that this Chalcedonian claim purports to be a factual claim, not a claim about counterfactual possibilities of the sort we are discussing here.

[10] Freddoso, 'Human Nature, Potency and the Incarnation', *Faith and Philosophy*, 3 (1986), 27–53, pp. 39–40.

[11] Ibid., 40.

that is a necessary property of an assumed nature. How convinced we are by the rejection of (S) in this context will largely depend on *other* reasons that we might have in favour of the negation theory, since (as I will argue shortly) I think that an argument can be found to derive the claim that all human natures—whether subsistent or not—have a passive potency for assumption from the claim that the negation theory is true.

The overall failure of Scotus's arguments does not mean that there is no good argument in favour of the negation theory. In fact, I believe that there is one. Suppose that subsistence can be explained only by invoking some sort of positive entity. As we saw in Chapter 13, this theory is not merely inconsistent with the claim that a nature has an inclination to independence; it is also inconsistent with the claim that a nature is in neutral potency to independence (and thus in neutral potency to dependence) too. As Freddoso notes, the position that a nature is in neutral potency entails

the awkward (and probably inconsistent) conclusion that while it is naturally impossible for any given human nature to be united to a divine person, it is not naturally necessary for it to be a human person.[12]

The proposed conclusion is indeed probably inconsistent, and certainly awkward. So it is reasonable to suppose that it is naturally necessary for a nature to be a *suppositum*. As I argued in Chapter 13, it is hard to see how it can be naturally necessary for a nature to be a *suppositum* if being a *suppositum* is a divine gift. But being a *suppositum* must be a divine gift on any theory that posits that subsistence is a positive feature of a nature. After all, on such theories, being an individual created nature is not in itself naturally sufficient for being a *suppositum*. So the negation theory must be true.[13]

2. THE NEGATION THEORY OF SUBSISTENCE

As I have pointed out, Scotus himself focuses on a different claim: namely, that there is nothing created which cannot be assumed in the relevant way by the divine person. It is this feature which Scotus stresses in his account of the negation theory itself. I turn now to a discussion of this.

In what follows, I want to look at the three central aspects of Scotus's theory: Scotus's account of the negative conditions necessary and sufficient for subsistence; (very briefly) his replies to objections that defenders of opposing theories might want to propose; and his account of the sort of distinction that can obtain between nature and *suppositum* given that the negation theory is true.

Like Godfrey, only far more explicitly and with more argument, Scotus accepts that a *suppositum* must satisfy two negative conditions. For a nature to subsist—for

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[12] Ibid., 52, n. 15.
[13] William of Ware's respective mode theory seems a plausible rival here; but as should be evident from my discussion in Ch. 13, the theory is in fact extremely close to some sort of negation theory.

it to be a *suppositum*—it must not only be factually independent, it must have a nat-
ural inclination for independence. As Scotus puts it, it must be independent 'unless
prevented'.[14] The second criterion is added for two reasons. First, it allows that a
separated soul is not a person.[15] Secondly, according to Scotus, it allows us to assert
that the existence of a created *suppositum* does not do violence to its nature.[16]

Of course, Scotus does not need in principle to posit this natural inclination for
independence to avoid the egregious situation in which being a *suppositum* would
be unnatural. He could argue that a nature is in neutral potency to dependence.
(Ockham argues in exactly this way later on.[17]) The way Scotus sets up his dis-
cussion indicates that he has not thought of this possibility. He presents the nega-
tion of a natural inclination to depend as a natural inclination not to depend.[18] But
of course the contradictory of having a natural inclination to dependence is failure
to have a natural inclination to dependence. And this does not entail having a
natural inclination to independence, since it is equally well satisfied by being in
neutral potency to dependence or independence. But we have already seen that a
neutral potency in this context is not possibly exemplified, for the reason outlined
by Freddoso and quoted at the end of the previous section.

I take it, then, that for some complex reasons Scotus is right to suppose that the
negation theory entails a natural inclination to independence. But there is a further
negative condition that a created nature cannot satisfy: it cannot be necessarily inde-
pendent.[19] Independence or subsistence cannot be a necessary feature of a created
nature. Why should Scotus think this? The reasons are connected with reasons Scotus
has for rejecting the theory that subsistence could be explained by some sort of pos-
itive entity. As we have seen, Scotus holds that there is no created nature that lacks
a passive potency or liability for being assumed. And as I shall show in a moment,
Scotus believes this to be *entailed* by his negation theory. (In section 1 of this chap-
ter I discussed Scotus's unsuccessful attempt to derive the negation theory from
the premiss that there is no created nature that lacks a passive potency for assump-
tion.) Now, if a created nature has a passive potency for assumption, it follows

[14] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 9 (Wadding, vii. 15); *Quod.* 19, n. 19 (Wadding, xii. 508; Alluntis and Wolter,
434 (n. 19. 64)).
[15] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 9 (Wadding, vii. 15); *Quod.* 19, n. 19 (Wadding, xii. 508; Alluntis and Wolter,
434 (n. 19. 65)).
[16] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 9 (Wadding, vii. 15).   [17] See Ockham, *Rep.* 3. 1 (*OT*, vi. 37–8).
[18] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 9 (Wadding, vii. 25); *Quod.* 19, n. 19 (Wadding, xii. 508; Alluntis and Wolter,
434 (n. 19. 64)). We might think that Scotus's claim that all created natures—even Christ's—have a
natural inclination to independence would entail that the assumption of Christ's human nature does
violence to that nature. As Scotus says, 'a supernatural action does not require an inclination in a nature,
since [the nature] is only in obediential potency to it': Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 11 (Wadding, vii. 16). In
fact, I think that there is no way for Scotus to avoid this violence conclusion. As he puts it elsewhere,
'As long as the recipient and the form remain what they are (viz. that the form can be received, but
only contrary to the inclination of the recipient), then no matter how the agent is varied, violence is still
done to the recipient' (Scotus, *Ord.* prol. 1. un., n. 59 (Vatican, i. 36; trans. in Allan B. Wolter, 'Duns
Scotus on the Necessity of Revealed Knowledge', *Franciscan Studies*, 11 (1951), 231–72, p. 260).
[19] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 9 (Wadding, vii. 15); *Quod.* 19, n. 19 (Wadding, xii. 508; Alluntis and Wolter,
434 (n. 19. 66)).

that independence or subsistence cannot be a necessary feature of that nature. If Scotus's argument here—namely that the negation theory entails that every nature has a passive potency for assumption—is successful (as I believe it is), it follows that subsistence must be a non-essential feature of any individual nature, and thus that it is logically possible for any nature to be assumed. This in turn means that the suspect principle (S), outlined by Freddoso and accepted by Scotus, is irrelevant to a discussion of Scotus's negation theory.

Why should Scotus believe that every created nature has a passive potency for assumption? The reason is that a block on assumption would have to result from the presence of some sort of positive entity explaining subsistence. The lack of a passive potency must be the result of the way something is, not the way it is not. Thus, Scotus's negation theory entails that independence cannot be a necessary feature of a created nature. On Scotus's negation theory, independence is not some sort of positive feature of a nature. Neither does it result from any such feature. So nothing about independence entails that a nature lacks a potency for dependence.

Why should we suppose that the lack of a passive potency can only be explained by appealing to the presence of a positive entity? Why, more loosely, should we suppose that the lack of a passive potency must be the result of the way something is, not the way it is not? At one point, though in a slightly different context, Scotus makes his reason clear:

(15.3) We should never assume two things are formally incompatible unless this is manifest from their definitions or it can be proved that they include such incompatibility or that such incompatibility is a consequence of what they are. But in none of these ways is human nature incompatible with dependence upon another person. Hence we should not assume such dependence is simply impossible so far as the nature is concerned.[20]

On this account, we should assume that an object x has a passive potency for some property φ unless there is something about the necessary features of x that is incompatible with φ. And the reason for accepting this principle is clearly related to Scotus's insight into the nature of possibility and necessity as such: 'The possible is that which does not include a contradiction.'[21] Scotus's famous account of synchronic possibility relies on the claim that the only limit on the possibility of propositions is logical consistency.[22] The analogous version of this principle in relation to the modal properties of things is precisely the claim we have been considering: that the lack of a passive potency for φ can only be explained by the presence of a necessary property incompatible with φ.

The principle can be seen clearly in an example of the sort of negation that is incompatible with something—that is, of the sort of negation that results from the lack of a passive potency: 'The negation that requires repugnance . . . is in man with

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[20] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 22 (Wadding, xii. 511; Alluntis and Wolter, 438 (n. 19. 79)).
[21] Scotus, *Ord.* 1. 2. 2. 1–4, n. 196 (Vatican, ii. 249).
[22] On this, see my *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), ch. 4, sect. 3, and the literature cited there.

respect to irrationality.'[23] Human beings lack a passive potency for irrationality on the grounds that they have a necessary property—rationality—that is sufficient to block the presence of such a passive potency. Similarly, divine persons lack a passive potency for assumption, each possessing a positive entity the presence of which is sufficient to preclude the possession of a passive potency for assumption.[24] So the negation theory entails that being a subsistent is a contingent feature of an individual created nature.

One result of Scotus's discussion is that the terms 'person' and '*suppositum*' are not univocal. One sense of 'person' and '*suppositum*' is relevant in the case of divine persons, and another in the case of human persons. As Scotus points out, the concept of independence, necessary to the concept of person or *suppositum*, fails to be univocal. Actual and inclinational (or, as Scotus labels it, 'aptitudinal') independence are shared by divine and human persons. But there is a third sort of independence—independence that entails the lack of a passive potency for dependence—that is had by divine persons, but not by human persons or created *supposita*.[25]

All of this presupposes that the negation theory is coherent. Scotus devotes some space to replying to arguments against his theory. The arguments he considers all focus on the claim that independence must be explained by some further positive entity: negations do not explain things. I give the most interesting one of the objections and replies.

The objection runs as follows. An imperfection—such as dependence—can be excluded from an object only in virtue of a positive perfection. So a mere negation cannot be sufficient for independence.[26] Scotus replies that, although the lack of a potency for dependence is a perfection, mere factual independence alone is not a perfection. So factual independence does not require the existence of a positive entity over and above a nature.[27]

There seems to me to be a further objection that Scotus could raise too. Does not his theory involve admitting that something accidental or contingent—namely, the negation of dependence—is responsible for subsistence? And does not this admission violate Scotus's claim that subsistence cannot be explained by any accidental feature? The correct response is to recall the distinction between accidents in the

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[23] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 10 (Wadding, vii. 16).   [24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.; note that Scotus's term for independence here is 'incommunicability'. Scotus never claims, of course, that his negation theory can be inferred precisely from the claim that no human nature can possess a feature that is sufficient to block assumption. When dealing with the impossibility of such a feature being possessed by a human nature, Scotus notes: '"To be communicable", or "to depend in this way" would be simply inconsistent if and only if this being did possess some positive entity of its own which rendered it incommunicable or unable to be dependent': Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 20 (Wadding, xii. 509; Alluntis and Wolter, 435 (n. 19. 69)). The point is that possession of such a positive entity is necessary to block the possession of a passive potency for assumption, not that it is sufficient. So the passage certainly does not constitute a further argument in favour of the negation theory.

[26] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 8 (Wadding, vii. 15); *Quod.* 19, n. 20 (Wadding, xii. 507; Alluntis and Wolter, 433 (n. 19. 58–19. 59)).

[27] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 1. 1, n. 11 (Wadding, vii. 16); *Quod.* 19, n. 20 (Wadding, xii. 510; Alluntis and Wolter, 436 (n. 19. 72)).

medieval sense—accidental *forms*—and properties (in this case, contingent properties) in the modern sense. Accidents in the medieval sense are dependent particulars. But not all properties—even contingent properties—in the modern sense are dependent particulars. I am not sure generally how to classify contingent properties into dependent particulars and other, non-entitative sorts of properties. But I am fairly sure—as Scotus is too—that negations do not count as dependent particulars. So, unlike the various positive entity theories of subsistence, Scotus's theory does not involve explaining subsistence by appealing to an entity that depends on the very thing it is supposed to be explaining.

There is, related to this, another possible objection to the negation theory that I will return to in the next section. The objection relies on there being a real identity between a nature and its created *suppositum*. Negations are not *things*, and so will not be objects over and above their subjects. Scotus himself sometimes claims that a nature and its created *suppositum* are identical.[28] I take it that these identity assertions refer to some sort of *real* identity. A *suppositum* is not composed of two separable parts. But, of course, there must be some sort of distinction between a nature and its *suppositum*, otherwise it would not be possible for a nature to be assumed without its *suppositum* also being assumed. What sort of distinction does Scotus have in mind? It must be admitted that he is rather vague about this. He discusses the issue when examining an objection that looks remarkably like one of his own arguments for the negation theory:

(15.4) A nature is assumed; therefore a person [is]. The consequence is proved through the major premiss which was proposed in the previous question [viz. 'Those things which are really the same, are really the same with respect to any real action (whether they are related to the action as principle or as end term)'], and this minor: 'A created person is the same as a nature'—because if it were other, then either substance or accident: but not accident, since no accident is the basis of subsistence *in se* for anything. If substance, then either matter, form, or composite: and whichever of these, it will follow that in a created person there are many composite substances, or many matters, or many forms.[29]

The point of the objection is that, if the negation theory is true, then there will not be any sort of real distinction between a nature and its created *suppositum*. The reply clarifies several things about the distinction between nature and *suppositum*:

(15.5) If we look at that which is positive in a person, then, since personhood does not add any positive entity to a nature, a created person is the same as a nature. But if we look at personhood completely, in so far as it implies incommunicability, then a person and this nature are not entirely the same (*non omnino idem*), just as an entity indifferent to an affirmation or a negation is not entirely the same as the negation, or as itself with the negation. And it is

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    [28] Scotus, *Quod.* 19, n. 11 (Wadding, xii. 502; Alluntis and Wolter, 427 (n. 19. 34)); 19, n. 14 (Wadding, xii. 503; Alluntis and Wolter, 429 (n. 19. 42)); 19, n. 2 (Wadding, xii. 492; Alluntis and Wolter, 439 (n. 19. 81)); *Ord.* 3. 5. 1–2, n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 132).
    [29] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 5. 1–2, n. 1 (Wadding, vii. 122).

like this here. Therefore this nature has sufficient distinction from this independent nature
so that this nature can depend, whereas this independent or personated nature cannot depend
(in the composed sense).[30]

If we look at the issue merely in terms of the positive features of nature and *sup-
positum*, Scotus is saying, then we will indeed want to conclude that a nature and
its *suppositum* are identical. There is no positive entity that a *suppositum* includes
that a nature does not. But there is a distinction in terms of a negation: a *suppositum*
includes a negation not included by a nature. And, even though a negation is not
a thing, this inclusion is sufficient to allow for some distinction between a nature
and its *suppositum*. According to Scotus, whatever this distinction is, it is sufficient
to allow that 'a person cannot depend' is true 'in the composed sense'. That is, the
following proposition is true:

   (1) Not possibly, a person is dependent.

But Scotus clearly does not accept the truth of the following, if the domain of
'person' is restricted to created persons:

   (2) A person is not possibly dependent.

Scotus thus accepts

   (2′) A person is possibly dependent.[31]

The difference between (1) and (2) lies in the scope of their modal operators.
In (1), scope of the modal operator ('possibly') is the proposition 'a person is
dependent'—the modal operator is, as logicians say, *de dicto*, governing the *dictum*
or (roughly) proposition. (1) thus amounts to the claim that 'a person is dependent'
is necessarily false. (Scotus talks about (1) as the composed sense since the modal
operator governs the whole proposition, a *composite* of its syntactical parts.) In (2),
the modal operator qualifies the subject term ('a person') alone: it states that a
person lacks a passive potency for dependence. The modal operator is, as modern
logicians say, *de re*, governing the (thing referred to by the) subject term. So (2)
is false if the domain of 'person' is restricted to created persons, since Scotus
clearly believes that created persons as much as natures have a passive potency for
dependence.

   On the other hand, Scotus will allow both of the following propositions:

   (3) Possibly, a nature is dependent

and

   (4) A nature is possibly dependent.

(3) and (4) are both true because a nature is the sort of thing with which depend-
ence is compatible (and hence, *de dicto*, the proposition 'a nature is dependent' is

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   [30] Scotus, *Ord.* 3. 5. 1–2, n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 132).
   [31] The domain in (1) and (2′) is restricted to created persons, because divine persons, as we have
seen, lack a passive potency for dependence. Divine persons are necessarily independent.

not necessarily false), and which has a passive potency (even if not an inclination) for dependence (and hence, *de re*, is the sort of thing that can be dependent).[32]

This is, of course, entirely consistent with the discussion of Scotus's position above. But on the face of it, it looks a bit puzzling. How can a person have a passive potency for dependence and yet be such that 'a person is dependent' cannot be true? The answer is straightforward. Many objects have passive potencies for properties that the object under certain descriptions cannot have. To employ one of Scotus's own examples, a white surface has a potency for being black, even though, of course, it is never true that a white surface is black. (1) states that nothing that satisfies the description 'person' is dependent, just as nothing that satisfies the description 'white' is black. (2′) states that something that satisfies the description of person has a passive potency for being a dependent, just as some of the things that satisfy the description 'white' have a passive potency for being black. Put more succinctly, (1) states no more than that one object—here a nature—cannot have contradictory properties—here, *being a person* and *not being a person*, or *being independent* and *being dependent* (since being a person and being independent are logically equivalent). (2) states that being a person, or (equivalently) being independent, is a contingent property of a nature.

There is, however, a more troubling worry about Scotus's position. The problem is that a negation is only formally distinct from its subject. On Scotus's usual criteria for formal distinction, the formal distinction of two objects entails their *inseparability*, such that one cannot exist without the other. Scotus makes it clear, however, that the usual sorts of criteria for real and formal identity do not obtain in the case of negations:

(15.6) The proof adduced from the identity [of nature and *suppositum*] does not conclude any more than that a created person does not add any positive entity over and above this nature—which I concede.[33]

The idea is that Scotus's usual criterion for identity entails that identical objects (whether really identical or formally identical) are inseparable. This rule does not obtain in the case of negations. (I noted in Chapter 14 a similar claim made by Olivi.) The 'adduced proof' to which Scotus refers is the argument that nature and person are really identical. So Scotus's reply is that the real identity of nature and person

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[32] The whole question of the nature of subsistence in Scotus is discussed too, in a good analytic fashion, in Corinna Schlapkohl, *Persona est naturae rationabilis individua substantia: Boethius und die Debatte über den Personbegriff*, Marburger Theologische Studien, 56 (Marburg: N. G. Elwert, 1999), 155–70. As Schlapkohl notes, Scotus prefers Richard of St Victor's definition of 'person' to that offered by Boethius, on the grounds that both a separated soul and the divine nature satisfy Boethius's definition (Schlapkohl, *Persona*, 162, referring to Scotus, *Ord*. 1. 23. un., n. 15 (Vatican, v. 355–6)). In order to understand Scotus's reasons for preferring Richard's definition in the Trinitarian context, it is necessary to distinguish two ways in which Scotus thinks common natures can be related to the particulars under them: by divisibility, and by mere communicability. Although Schlapkohl mentions this distinction (*Persona*, 163), she does not explain properly what it is. I explore this in my pair of forthcoming articles, 'Divisibility, Communicability, and Predicability in Duns Scotus's Theories of the Common Nature', and 'Duns Scotus on Divine Substance and the Trinity'.
[33] Scotus, *Ord*. 3. 5. 1–2, n. 5 (Wadding, vii. 132).

is sufficient to show that a person does not include any positive entity over and above nature. But this is irrelevant to the question of the possible truth of 'a person is assumed', since, Scotus seems to presuppose, the inseparability criterion for identical objects does not obtain in cases where these objects are distinguished by negations. By saying that the inseparability rule does not obtain in the case of negations, I am not trying to suggest that objects and the negations that belong to them are really separable parts. But it is clear that there is a sense in which a nature can exist without its *suppositum*—and all that distinguishes a nature from its *suppositum* is a negation. I will return to this admittedly problematic discussion in the next section.

3. ARE NEGATION THEORIES FATALLY METAPHYSICALLY FLAWED?

In an important article, Freddoso has argued that negation theories of subsistence as defended by Scotus and Ockham are fatally metaphysically flawed.[34] The lesson, for Freddoso, is that we should infer from the negation theory that the assumed human nature cannot be laid aside, and that no created nature can be assumed after having existed as a *suppositum*. The argument can be stated simply enough, at least in a very rough form. Suppose with Scotus that

(3) Possibly, a nature is dependent

is true. And suppose that the negation theory is true. Negations are not things, so there is nothing that a person adds to being a nature—there are no things had by persons that are not had by natures, and vice versa.[35] Persons and natures are thus identical. Supposing that two objects cannot differ merely in virtue of modal properties, (3) along with the identity of nature and person entails

(1′) Possibly, a person is dependent.

But Scotus accepts

(1) Not possibly, a person is dependent

and thus rejects (1′).

Freddoso makes his point by means of a story about Socrates and his nature, '*B*'. Socrates and *B* are identical. Hence, by the indiscernibility of identicals, if *B* is assumed, so is Socrates. Conversely, if (1) is true, then *B* cannot be assumed either, and is thus a counter-instance to (3).

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[34] Freddoso, 'Human Nature, Potency and the Incarnation'. What follows in this section is a revision of my 'Nature and Personality in the Incarnation', *The Downside Review*, 107 (1989), 237–54, an article which the material here supersedes.

[35] '[T]hey [viz. Aquinas, Scotus, and Ockham] all deny the quaint suggestion, made by some of their contemporaries, that a human person is composed of both positive entities (body and intellective soul) and "negative" entities, where the negative entities are thought of as yielding a human person when added as parts to a substance composed of a body and an intellective soul. . . . The idea of a negative entity, our philosophers concur, is an absurdity': Freddoso, 'Human Nature, Potency and the Incarnation', 30.

What should we say about this? We could just accept with Freddoso that, if the negation theory is true, it is not possible for the human nature to be given up by the Word, or for an independent nature to be assumed—though if we do this we will have to show what is wrong with the inference from the claim that an individual nature has a natural inclination for subsistence to the negation theory. But I think that there is a possible response to all this. Freddoso's application of Leibniz relies on the claim that Socrates and B are identical. And Freddoso bases this claim on Scotus's assertion that the negations responsible for subsistence are not things. But, of course, while it is true that these negations are not dependent particulars (and thus things), it is still the case that they are properties in the broader modern sense. So if we use 'Socrates' to refer to a nature + its negations, and 'B' to refer to the nature as such (*excluding* the negations), Socrates and B—persons and natures— do not have all the same properties. So there is no reason to suppose that they are identical (in the modern sense required for the applicability of Leibniz's law).

When Scotus talks about identity in this context, I take it that one possible scenario he is trying to rule out is that a created person and its proper nature could be two (overlapping) objects. There is not one object which is B and another— Socrates—which includes B as a part, along with certain negations too. The reason for this, of course, is that the negations, although contingent properties, are not things. So Scotus's **(AI4)** does not apply. (**(AI3)** is not an option for Scotus; but I take it that in any case the observation that negations are not things is sufficient to rule out the applicability of **(AI3)** too.) Hence **(AU3)** does not apply either. The model that best describes Scotus's theory of the relation between a nature and the contingent negations in virtue of which it is a person is **(AU2)**: there is no sense in which the nature + the negations is an object over and above the nature. But this does not entail any difficulties of a Leibnizian kind. 'Person' is just the term we use to refer to a nature while it has these two negative properties. As the medievals would say, the nature is 'personated': B, as it were, (contingently) *Socratizes*—satisfies a couple of merely negative conditions.

The gist of all this is that there are no metaphysical objections to the negation theory. This makes the negation theory an appealing option for someone who thinks that natures are substances. In the Conclusion, I shall argue that theologians interested in medieval-style Christologies—whether for theological or for philosophical reasons—should find the negation theory of subsistence more appealing than its rivals. And I have already tried to show that the negation theory is straightforwardly entailed by the clearly true claim that individual natures, if they can subsist at all, have a natural inclination to subsistence.

Conclusion

A PROGRAMME FOR CHRISTOLOGY

According to C. J. F. Williams, the distinguishing mistake made by the medievals is their treatment of the assumed human nature as (in some sense) a substance—a property-bearer.[1] As I have shown, this is not a universal tendency. Aquinas at least seems to want to avoid it, although—as I have also tried to show—he did not always succeed. The reason that Aquinas had such difficulty maintaining that the Word is the only substance (property-bearer) in the incarnate Christ is *philosophical*: specifically, Aquinas's belief that matter individuates natures, and that substances are (something like) individualized natures. Duns Scotus is the most powerful exponent of this sort of tradition, according to which we can reasonably think of the human nature as a substance in its own right, a property-bearer some of whose properties are also properties of the Word. It seems to me that with the exception of Aquinas all of the thinkers I have been examining here fall into this basic tradition—and Aquinas's dissent is not unambiguous.[2]

The modern theologian might think that there is another obvious objection to medieval theories: they make little—indeed, practically no—reference to the Jesus of the Gospels. This seems, however, to be a problem endemic to discussions of Chalcedonianism, and I do not think it raises any more problems for the medievals

[1] The relevant properties here are ones also had by the Word—not the sort of properties (such as *being assumed*) that are not appropriately covered by the *communicatio idiomatum*. I will return to this distinction between different properties of the assumed nature below.

[2] My analysis should be sufficient to make us wary of any attempt to associate the well-known Franciscan emphasis on the humanity of Christ in popular medieval thought and practice with the sorts of position we find in the more technical material I discuss here. It does not seem to me that the Franciscan theologians I have looked at are as a group significantly more explicit about the concrete humanity of Jesus than many of the other theologians I have discussed. Scotus is a lone exception here, with his unparalleled emphasis on the human agency of the assumed nature, as outlined in Ch. 10. But this is isolated, and certainly not sufficient to allow us to think of a Franciscan trend. Indeed, as I have tried to show, Scotus's reasons for his view appear to be ultimately philosophical, springing from a coupling of his notion of causal agency with his notion of the individual substancehood of the assumed nature. Equally, there is no unequivocal evidence that Aquinas, in the final analysis, fails to allow that Christ's humanity (at least in Aquinas's 'unofficial' account) is in some sense both a substance and an agent. (His instrumentality claim, made in his official discussion of Christ's human agency, does not always sit easily with the general material about Christ's human activity in *ST* 3. 9–15.) Perhaps the most distinctive Franciscan move is to minimize the extent to which the hypostatic union has any necessary consequences for the human nature in terms of its spiritual gifts, as I discussed in Excursus 1. But even here, the speculations are purely counterfactual (Christ could have lacked—though did not in fact lack— various spiritual gifts that some writers (Thomas and Henry) see as necessary consequences of the hypostatic union). And this sort of speculation—even if it were relevant to a Franciscan emphasis on the humanity of Christ—seems in any case to have been initiated by the Dominican Kilwardby.

than it does for other defenders of Christological orthodoxy. Indeed, I will try to highlight one way in which the medievals are in a much stronger position than some of their more modern critics in trying to locate a Christology in the context of the scriptural data about Jesus.

In this last section I would like to consider possible reasons, both theological and philosophical, for wanting to adopt this sort of medieval view. I will also consider which of the various medieval opinions have most to offer the contemporary theologian, and what the consequences of this view may be.

1. THE ASSUMED NATURE AS AN INDIVIDUAL SUBSTANCE

Before I consider reasons why we might want to think of the assumed nature as an individual substance, it is worth considering some arguments that should be rejected. Scotus for example sometimes argues in favour of the negation theory of subsistence by claiming that opposing views require the Word to assume a nature that lacks some distinctive positive human feature—namely, subsistence or personhood. And, Scotus reasons, in this case the Word is not fully human at all. I have indicated above, in Chapter 15, why I believe this argument is defective—namely, because *ex hypothesi* the Word in the rejected scenario has all that is required for being human. (Being a human person just means having human nature—there is no such thing as a distinctively 'human' sort of subsistence setting aside all talk of natures.[3])

A similar sort of argument could be proposed in favour of the view that the assumed nature is a substance. An argument approximating to this can be found in the modern literature. Schoonenberg objects to the Thomist view, as found in Capreol, that Christ's human nature lacks 'a properly created *act of being*'.[4] According to Schoonenberg, this is just Docetism, since it 'makes Christ's human nature completely unreal'.[5] Richard Sturch argues that, in itself, this criticism is unfair:

Surely [Capreol's] view does not make Christ's human nature unreal, it simply says that what makes it real, the instrument of its reality, is not something created but something divine.[6]

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[3] There is, according to Scotus, a distinctively divine sort of subsistence, resulting from the radical independence of any divine person. This independence is nothing to do with the exemplification of divine nature—it is just to do with the sort of subsistence had by divine persons (namely, subsistence such that it is *de re* impossible to be assumed). I do not think we need find this intrinsically objectionable, provided all three divine persons possess the same sort of subsistence.

[4] P. Schoonenberg, *The Christ*, Sheed and Ward Stag Books (London: Sheed and Ward, 1972), 60. Schoonenberg's view is summarized in Richard Sturch's *The Word and the Christ: An Essay in Analytic Christology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 123–4, whose account I follow here.

[5] Schoonenberg, *The Christ*, 60, cited in Sturch, *The Word and the Christ*, 123. We should recall too that it is not wholly clear that Aquinas wants to deny the human nature any *esse* whatever—though it is clear that he wants to deny that it has its own act of being (personal *esse*). On all of this, see my discussion in Ch. 2, sect. 1, above.

[6] Sturch, *The Word and the Christ*, 124.

Sturch, following James Mackey,[7] argues instead that what is defective about a view such as Capreol's is that it entails that Christ's human nature does not exist (presumably not quite the same thing as not being *real*):

How ... can Christ's humanity, given that Christ really exists, *not* have its own act of existence? It exists, of course, only by the created will of God; but then that ... is true of all created things. Indeed, one might add, do not the various parts of Christ's human body have their own 'acts of being'? His hands and his feet were real things, which really existed; are we to say that they too only existed by the 'act of being' of the eternal Word, whereas our hands and our feet have their own 'acts of being'?[8]

According to Sturch, we would want to say that the human nature of Christ is an existent (human?) thing. And someone might be forgiven for wanting to infer from this that Christ's human nature is a substance.

But this final inference is as specious as Sturch's criticism of Capreol. The truth of the Incarnation is by no means compromised by the belief that Christ's human nature does not exist. We could reasonably (like Aquinas) adopt an ontology according to which only substances—and not their natures or properties (or even parts) —exist. On this view, it is the Word, not his human nature, that exists. The non-existence of Christ's human nature does not compromise the reality of the Word's being human, just as the non-existence of my nature does not compromise the reality of my being human. Equally, the reality of the human nature, or its existence (its possession of its own act of being) does not entail that it is a substance, or a subject of accidents.

There is too another specious modern argument that would entail the truth of the common medieval analysis of the assumed nature as a substance. According to Wolfhart Pannenberg,

Following the logic of the Dyothelite decision of 681, one probably would have to speak of a divine ego and a human ego side by side, since will (and consciousness) are not conceivable apart from an ego centre.[9]

Of course, holding that Christ's human nature is some sort of centre of consciousness entails that Christ's human nature is an individual substance. Sturch helpfully corrects the misapprehension in Pannenberg's rather careless argument:

The question is whether they [viz. the two wills and consciousnesses] need to have *separate and distinct* 'ego centres'. A square ... is not conceivable without corners; yet ... two squares may *share* a corner and still remain two: two squares, though a single geometrical figure.[10]

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[7] James Mackey, *Jesus: The Man and the Myth: A Contemporary Christology* (London: SCM Press, 1979), 246.
[8] Sturch, *The Word and the Christ*, 125, Sturch's italics.
[9] Pannenberg, *Jesus: God and Man*, 329.
[10] Sturch, *The Word and the Christ*, 139, Sturch's italics.

The idea is that there is no consciousness and no will without a centre of con-
sciousness, but that this is no reason why Christ's centre of consciousness cannot
be the one centre of consciousness of the Word. (Of course, there might be *other*
reasons for wanting Christ's human nature to have its own centre of consciousness,
apart from the Word. I will return to this in a moment.)

These, then, are specious reasons for wanting to adopt a Scotus-style Christo-
logy. Are there some good reasons? It seems to me that there are, and that we can
divide them into two general sorts: philosophical and theological. Philosophically,
it seems to me that we have every reason to want to reject Lockean theories of
substance, according to which a fundamental category distinction is made between
properties and (bare) property-bearers. And it seems to me that the most desirable
alternative view (or at least a strong contender for this) is the (non-Thomist) medieval
one, according to which what exists are individualized natures and individualized
properties, such that a substance is an individualized nature. If substances are indi-
vidualized natures, then it is clear that Christ's human nature is a substance. As
such it is a subject of properties and accidents—albeit not an *ultimate* subject of
properties and accidents.

This is of course a philosophical argument, and it is beyond my purposes
here to develop a considered defence of the philosophical account of substance—
that substances are individualized natures—entailed by it. My point is simply that
if we abandon bare particular views of substance we may well end up adopting a
Christology close to the Scotist pattern. After all, we do not need to accept that
substances are individualized natures in order to reject Locke's bare particular sort
of theory. We could have substances as bundles of universals, or as bundles of tropes,
for example. And both of these will generate Christologies similar in general thrust
to the medieval ones.[11]

Are there theological considerations too that might push us in the direction of
medieval Christology? I think that there are, though they are more controversial
than the philosophical ones, and they are not arguments that the medievals them-
selves would be very happy with. One of the arguments is simple, and can be dealt
with quickly. A modern Christologist may want to be able to defend the possib-
ility (or even actuality) of multiple incarnations of one and the same divine person.
The reason for this is simple: it is a way—though perhaps not a very satisfactory
one—of reconciling the Christian claim that Jesus Christ (i.e. the second person of
the Trinity) is the one route to salvation with the perceived pluralism of religions.[12]
Of course, this sort of view requires the individuality of the assumed nature. But,
given the widely conflicting information given by different religious leaders—and
thus their very different and sometimes incompatible beliefs about the nature of

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[11] I have already shown in the Introduction above how trope theories will end up with a similar ana-
lysis of Christ's human nature.

[12] For a clear exposition of this sort of view, see John Hick, *The Metaphor of God Incarnate* (London:
SCM Press, 1993), 89–98, though note that Hick himself wants to deny that the notion of an incarnate
God, as understood at Chalcedon, is anything other than a metaphor.

reality—it also requires that any assumed nature is a substance. Why should this be? To see, we need to consider my more important second reason for wanting the assumed nature to be an individual human substance.

The second reason is that there seem to me to be at least two very powerful reasons for wanting the human nature to be a centre of consciousness in its own right. And this entails that the assumed human nature is an individual property-bearer, such that some of its properties are also properties of a more ultimate subject—the second person of the Trinity. (Claiming that the assumed human nature is a centre of consciousness, as I understand it, does not entail that the assumed human nature is an *ultimate* centre of consciousness; though it does entail that consciousness is communicable. I will return to this below.) The second person of the Trinity is essentially omniscient. But the Gospels present Jesus as ignorant and mistaken. So, minimally, we need a subject for this lack of knowledge. It cannot be the second person of the Trinity on pain of contradiction. So it must be the assumed nature. (I will develop in more detail in section 2 below the account of the communication of properties required for this.)

We might be inclined to answer that the ignorance is just the Word's knowing only a finite amount by means of his human nature, such that he knows everything else in some other way—namely, by his infinite divine intellect. But there are two problems with this response. First, in this account, the Word does not know empirically the *frustration* that is particular to ignorance. Of course, an omniscient being does not need to experience things empirically—even emotional states—in order to know them. But we might feel that this frustration—derived empirically, from the exigencies of daily existence—is an essential part of human existence in a fallen world.[13] The assumed human nature's frustration at its own ignorance is a property that can be had too by the Word in virtue of his assumption of human nature, even if the Word cannot have the ignorance that the human nature experiences. Put another way, the Word cannot have the first-order property of ignorance, but he can have the second-order properties of frustration and the disappointment that so often accompanies reasonably informed ignorance. In order for the Word to have these properties empirically and by experience (and thus to be genuinely human in a fallen world), he must assume a nature that is some sort of experiencing subject— a nature that can genuinely experience ignorance, or be ignorant. So to have these properties he must assume an individual human substance.

But there is a further problem too. Jesus in the Gospels is not just *agnostic* about certain things: he is (or at least may be) actively mistaken. Agnosticism in one of Christ's minds might be wholly compatible with knowledge in the other mind; agnosticism is after all just a privation. But being mistaken does not seem to be compatible with knowledge. So Christ needs not only to have a human consciousness that is communicable to the second person of the Trinity, he needs to have a human

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[13] It is odd to claim that frustration resulting from ignorance is a necessary human property in a fallen world while denying that ignorance is a necessary human property. As will become apparent, it is an ad hoc move on my part to save the essential omniscience of a divine person.

consciousness of which some features are *not* communicable to the second person of the Trinity.[14] (Again, I will develop below an account of the communication of properties that will allow for this.)

There are other relevant second-order properties too. Most obviously, the human nature is limited in power, while the Word is omnipotent. The human nature's limitations were doubtless a cause of immense sorrow—at his inability to help someone in need, for example. The Word cannot experience the inability, which is a merely privative or negative property. But he can experience the second-order sorrow consequent upon the inability. So too, the human nature cannot control all the things that happen to him. The Word can; but the Word can nevertheless share in the human nature's experience of terror at an impending execution over which the nature has no control.

It might be objected that ignorance, for example, is an essential human property, such that, if the second person of the Trinity is genuinely human, he will be genuinely ignorant. But this objection should be resisted. If the second person of the Trinity is essentially omniscient, then he can never be ignorant. If ignorance is an essential human property, then the second person of the Trinity simply cannot become incarnate. (Of course, on the sort of view I am trying to defend here, there is nothing *unreal* about the frustration and sorrow felt by the Word, even though the Word himself was neither ignorant nor limited in power. Recall too that I do not see a way of allowing the legitimacy of an appeal to reduplication in this context: *qua* man and *qua* God: on this, see Chapter 8 above.)

The second reason is less compelling, but still theologically significant. Developing a medieval-style Christology—specifically one like Scotus's—is necessary too for any theologian who wants to remain faithful to Chalcedon while allowing that the human Jesus and the second person of the Trinity can engage in dialogue and conversation. Rahner defends this sort of view:

The human nature of Christ possesses a genuine, spontaneous, free, spiritual, active center, a human self-consciousness, which as creaturely faces the eternal Word in a genuinely human attitude of adoration, obedience, a most radical sense of creaturehood.[15]

This requires a degree of human autonomy that can only be achieved, as far as I can see, on Scotus's view, or something very like it. And if we wanted to accept this sort of view, we would need to take very seriously Scotus's nuanced attempt to construct an appropriate metaphysic.

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[14] Attempts to provide for the Word's being the subject of these mistaken beliefs always appeal to the strange cases of divided minds: see e.g. Richard Swinburne, *The Christian God* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 201–11. An excellent critique of this sort of approach can be found in T. W. Bartel, 'Why the Philosophical Problems of Chalcedonian Christology Have Not Gone Away', *Heythrop Journal*, 36 (1995), 153–72.

[15] Karl Rahner, 'Current Problems in Chistology', in *id.*, *Theological Investigations*, vol. i (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1963), 149–200, p. 158. (I am grateful to Michael Gorman for bringing this passage of Rahner to my attention.)

2. THE PROGRAMME

It seems to me, then, that there are some good reasons, both philosophical and theological, for wanting to adopt the medieval view that the assumed nature is a human substance. I do not think that any of these reasons are decisive—there are other moves that could be made too by the defender of Chalcedon, and these would result in a very different Christology from the one that I am describing. But given that we do want to make the sort of moves I described in the previous section, in what sorts of way should we think of developing Chalcedonianism? Most of what I will have to suggest will be relevant too for someone who, while wanting to remain faithful to Chalcedon, does not want to develop a Christology along medieval lines— Williams, or Swinburne, for example. But some of it will not.

The greatest theological gain for the medieval-style Christologist is the possible ascription of second-order human feelings to the second person of the Trinity. Presupposed to my way of spelling this out is—as we have seen—that the second person of the Trinity cannot be the subject of contradictory attributes. I have dealt with this in detail in Chapter 8 above. Basically, we cannot use the reduplicative '*qua*' to try to block Christological contradictions. So if being human entails changing, then the second person of the Trinity can be neither timeless nor immutable. Given that the second person of the Trinity has every property essential for being divine, no divine person is essentially timeless or immutable. And since nothing can be first timeless and then temporal, timelessness cannot be a contingent property. Thus God is not timeless if the Incarnation is true. (God's eternity is just his everlastingness.) Neither can any divine person be immutable, though of course any divine person can be factually unchanging for as long as he chooses. (God can be immutable (incapable of change) on this account, but only if we understand 'immutable' to mean that his essence cannot change—i.e. that he cannot come into existence or pass out of existence.) Equally, God is impassible only in the sense that nothing happens to him that he does not want—not in the sense that he cannot feel pain (since I take it that the second person of the Trinity genuinely felt pain at many points in his earthly life).

The medievals, of course, all believed that there are good reasons for supposing that God is pure act (or some equivalent claim)—and thus that he is immutable, and impassible, and (probably) that he is timeless. What can we say about this? One strategy would be simply to deny that things, whether God or creatures, have passive liabilities at all. On this account, everything would be pure actuality in the relevant sense (that is, would lack passive liabilities). Pure act thus understood would not entail immutability or impassibility, since immutability and impassibility could no longer be spelt out in terms of the lack of passive liabilities.

A more helpful strategy, at least in the present context, would be to accept that there are passive liabilities, or that (some) things have passive liabilities, such that anything that is mutable or passible has such liabilities. Since Chalcedonianism entails

that a divine person changes and suffers, God must have passive liabilities. To this extent he cannot be pure act—and so much the worse for any philosophical argument that purports to show that he is pure act, since such an argument will turn out in fact to be inconsistent with the heart of the Christian message about an incarnate God. I think that we can say about God that nothing can happen to him that he does not want, and that anything that happens to him has to be allowed by him. To this extent, and in this way, God is impassible. And this account of God would certainly safeguard the central religious message of the old impassibility and immutability teachings—namely, that God is both perfect and wholly reliable. So to that extent I do not want to worry about this rather minimal interpretation of God's impassibility and immutability.

But what of the arguments in favour of God's pure actuality? Most well-known are Aquinas's, and they spring from God's being the cause of everything else. If God causes everything, then nothing can cause an effect in him:

(c.1) It is necessary that the first being is actual, and in no way in potency. For although in one and the same thing that goes from potency to actuality potency is temporally prior to actuality, nevertheless actuality is simply prior to potency, for what is in potency is reduced to actuality only through a being that is actual. It was shown above, however, that God is the first being. Therefore it is impossible that in God there is anything in potency.[16]

There is of course an obvious problem with this argument. The premiss states no more than that God has to be sufficiently actual to create. But this does not obviously entail Aquinas's proposed conclusion—namely, that God is *pure* actuality (and thus for example incapable of actualizing any passive potency in *himself*). Neither does it entail that God's effects cannot cause effects in him: it entails merely that they cannot cause in God his power to cause effects, or (perhaps) cause him to cause an effect. Aquinas cannot rely on divine simplicity to infer that God cannot be affected (on the grounds that any alteration in God would require the redistribution of parts or components). The pure act argument, after all, is for Aquinas a step on the way towards the doctrine of simplicity—not *vice versa*.

The failure of an argument like Aquinas's to demonstrate God's pure actuality is a blessing. If Aquinas's argument were successful, he would effectively have demonstrated the impossibility of the Incarnation—at least if my analysis of the matter is correct. God, then, is not pure act; and his immutability and impassibility should be understood respectively to mean no more than imperishability and that nothing happens to him that he does not allow.

All of this seems to me a required belief of anyone who seriously accepts Chalcedon. But the claim that the assumed nature is an individual substance adds further complexities. One has to do with Christ's human activity, and it is that Christ's human actions are actions of the Word only if one of the following two conditions obtains (and not both): either first, that the human nature is an instrument of the Word

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[16] Aquinas, *ST* 1. 3. 1 c (i/1. 14^b).

(as Aquinas held), or secondly, that we can make a distinction between the causal and predicative aspects of agency (as Scotus held). I have discussed these two theories in Chapter 10, where I drew attention to what seem to me to be insuperable difficulties with Aquinas's view. What happens if we adopt Scotus's view? According to Scotus, the human nature is the causal origin of the human actions; these actions can be predicated of the Word by means of the communication of properties—the ascription of divine and human properties to the one person. The Word, as Scotus points out, does not exercise direct causal control over the human nature, which thus has a degree of psychological and causal autonomy.[17] The Word, on this view, can really experience the contingent transience and limitedness of human existence, and he does so through the causal autonomy of his human nature.

A further consequence of the view that the human nature is an individual substance—or something like such a substance—is that (as the medievals spotted) certain relational properties of the assumed nature—its being assumed and united to the second person of the Trinity, for example—are not properties of the Word.[18] But the medieval-style Christologist will need to add other properties too—privative or negative properties, and properties the possession of which is incompatible with being a divine person. The limited power of the assumed nature cannot be a property of the second person of the Trinity, for example. Many such 'negative' properties do not fall under the communication of properties.[19] Equally, any property of the human nature that is opposed to some divine property cannot be a property of the incarnate Word. Jesus's possibly mistaken beliefs about the parousia, for example, are not in any sense properties of the Word. These properties are properties of the individual human nature—this nature is their ontological and psychological subject, just as this nature is the ontological subject of the property of being assumed. The Incarnation, on this account, consists of two overlapping individuals, the Word and his individual human nature; the union between these two individuals is explained by the fact that one of them is a property of the other.

[17] Scotus thus explains the impeccability of the incarnate Christ by appealing not to direct causal constraints exercised by the Word, but instead to the assumed nature's experience of the beatific vision, where this experience entails impeccability: see my *Duns Scotus*, Great Medieval Thinkers (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 124, 149–51. Of course, we could give other explanations for Christ's impeccability, though space forbids a discussion here.

[18] See e.g. Ch. 8, n. 28, above.

[19] Scotus—the most thoroughgoing proponent of the sort of Christology that I am trying to defend here—would disagree with this assessment, though I do not think that he should do. See e.g. *Ord.* 3. 11. 1, n. 4 (Wadding, vii. 239), where Scotus rejects the strategy on the grounds that there is no principled distinction to be drawn between positive and negative properties. But since Scotus is elsewhere committed to just such a clear distinction, as we saw in Ch. 15, there seems no reason to take his reservations here seriously. In addition to the sort of case I am considering here, think too about the following. Suppose we think that the divine essence is a property-bearer, and that this essence is immutable and impassible. Immutability and impassibility are not—except in the restricted senses outlined above—properties of the incarnate Word: in fact, they are not properties of any divine person at all. (On the divine essence as a subject of properties independent of the persons, see my 'Duns Scotus on Divine Substance and the Trinity', forthcoming. But we need not accept that there is any sense at all in which the divine essence is a (primary) substance.) Equally, the motivations for this sort of view are different from those that might make us want to think of the human nature as a subject of properties.

On this view, the Word is the subject of (most) human properties, whereas the human nature is not the subject of any divine properties. 'Being a property of' is not necessarily transitive, since there are some properties of the human nature that cannot be properties of the Word—for example, being assumed, and, if I am right, being ignorant or mistaken. In brief, 'being a property of' is not transitive in cases where there are blocks on the ultimate subject's possessing some of the accidental or relational properties of the proximate subject; but there is no reason to believe that these blocks are in turn sufficient to block the ultimate subject's possession of the proximate subject and its essential properties.

The advantages of this view are that we do not have to appeal to a divided mind theory (i.e. within one and the same person), and that we can locate a subject for properties had by Christ that are incompatible with properties necessarily had by the Word. Ignorance, for example, does not need to be a property of the Word at all, so long as some human properties are properties of his (and all essential human properties are).[20]

Furthermore, on the theory I am suggesting, 'Being the ultimate ontological subject of a (psychological) property' does not entail being a person or *suppositum*, because only those ontological subjects that are not properties of some other substance are persons or *supposita*. Persons are the ultimate ontological subjects of *all* their properties, not just of *some* of them (as I am proposing is the case for Christ's human nature). Clearly, some properties of the human nature will need to be properties of the divine person—it makes little sense to claim that the divine person is a human being but yet lacks any human properties. The only constraint on the sorts of human properties that can be properties of the Word is that the Word cannot have properties incompatible with his divine nature. On my fairly restricted account of the list of necessary divine properties, this will not require our compromising any essential human properties.[21]

This all allows us to see more clearly how the assumed nature could be a centre of consciousness. On the view that I am trying to develop, any property that is not incompatible with divine nature is ultimately a property of the Word. So most of the experiences of the human centre of consciousness are experienced by the Word.

[20] Furthermore, on the broadly Scotist view that I am developing here, there is a difference between the Word's possessing a human property and Christ's possessing a human property. Christ—the whole that has the Word and the human nature as overlapping individual parts—can have otherwise contradictory properties in virtue of its parts, as I outlined in Chapter 8 above. Of course, Christ is not a person in the same sense as the Word is, and (more importantly) claiming that Christ has such-and-such a property does not entail that the second person of the Trinity has that property: so there are no obvious Christological gains here. But there is a not-so-evident gain, which I will outline in a moment.

[21] There is an objection to this sort of view, nicely articulated by Eleonore Stump in her review of Thomas V. Morris, *The Logic of God Incarnate* (Cornell and London: Cornell University Press, 1986), in *Faith and Philosophy*, 6 (1989), 218–23; see e.g. p. 220: 'If the only constituents of the human nature Christ takes on are those properties essential to human beings but not incompatible with any divine properties, what I share with Christ as regards human nature seems rather meager'. But if my argument is correct, this is just a necessary consequence of Chalcedonian Christology. On the consequences for the distinction between Chalcedonianism and monophysitism, see my 'A Recent Contribution on the Distinction between Chalcedonianism and Monophysitism', *The Thomist*, 65 (2001), 361–84.

Mental properties on this view are not in principle incommunicable: some of the mental properties of an assumed nature are too the mental properties of the Word. If by 'centre of consciousness' we mean an *ultimate* centre, then there is only one in Christ. But there are still two experiencing subjects on this sort of view.[22] The matter seems to me terminological: we could use 'centre of consciousness' to refer to something possessed by any experiencing subject (in which case there will be two centres of consciousness in Christ); we could use 'centre of consciousness' to refer just to the ultimate centre: either the only experiencing subject, or (in the case of the Incarnation) the experiencing subject that can experience the mental and physical life of another experiencing subject (in which case there will be just one centre of consciousness in Christ—namely the Word—though two experiencing subjects).

Supposing that there are two centres of consciousness—two experiencing subjects—we will need to make use (for at least some attributes) of Scotus's distinction between the causal and predicative aspects of both agency and property possession, outlined in Chapter 10. Whatever the active and passive causal powers involved, we still need to be able to predicate human actions and properties of the Word. To avoid causal overdetermination, we will need to be able to ascribe the causal aspects of these human properties and actions to the assumed nature.

This point is important. I am claiming that there is a sense in which the predicative aspects of active causation are *transitive*. And I want to claim the same for experiences too, and other passive liabilities: if the Word feels the human nature's feeling of pain, then the Word feels the pain. Pain is caused in the Word as much as it is in the human nature. But this is because the human nature *directly* possesses the relevant passive powers or liabilities; the Word possesses them *indirectly*. The only sort of case where this transitivity fails is when the human nature has a property that is incompatible with an essential divine property.

It might be objected to the claim about centres of consciousness that persons, not natures, are centres of consciousness. Lonergan, for example, argues that only persons can be conscious, and that any view that associates consciousness with a person's nature or faculties is mistaken.[23] It is of course true that psychological faculties are not the sorts of things that are conscious. But it is not at all clear to me that individualized natures cannot be conscious—indeed, it seems to me that individualized human natures are paradigm cases of things that are conscious. (As I will show below, none of the medieval solutions to the problem of subsistence entails that being a centre of consciousness need be associated exclusively with

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[22] I think it is possible to interpret Pius XII's *Sempiternus Rex* as being neutral on this question, as I suggested in Ch. 10 where I quoted the relevant passage. My preferred reading of this encyclical is that there is only one ontological subject in Christ, and only one *ultimate* centre of consciousness in Christ. The problem with the seemingly Nestorian teachings of Déodat de Basly—Pius's intended target—is that the Word on such a view simply fails to have the relevant access to Jesus's human experiences. The human nature's being a property of the Word gives us the relevant link.

[23] See Bernard Lonergan, *De Constitutione Christi Ontologica et Psychologica. Supplementum*, 2nd edn. (Rome: Universitas Gregoriana, 1958), 110–19.

persons—but of course, the medievals did not think so explicitly of centres of consciousness anyway.)

Presupposing that the assumed nature is a centre of consciousness, or a psychological subject, could the assumed nature be ignorant of his state of assumption? (Could he lack the beatific vision, or have lacked his 'Abba' consciousness?) This is a separate issue from the metaphysical topics I have been considering thus far. But it seems to me that the later Franciscan distinction between the possession of a power and the opportunity to exercise it probably means that he could. Part of the thrust of the arguments against Henry outlined in Excursus 2 is that neither the enjoyment of God nor the (bare) vision of God can be a necessary consequence of the Incarnation. This might not be a palatable conclusion for the modern theologian, who often wants to draw attention to the close links between the fact of the Incarnation and that of Jesus's experiencing the immediate vision of the divine essence. For example, Rahner makes the following suggestion:

There is a correct interpretation of his [viz. Jesus's] immediate vision of God which does not look on it as an extrinsic addition to the Hypostatic Union, but as . . . being an intrinsic and inevitable element of the Union.[24]

The arguments against Henry's position draw attention to the problem of defending a view such as Rahner's. According to Rahner, the human nature cannot fail but know who its person is. On the principle espoused by the Franciscans, no second act (such as knowledge) is necessary for existence. Hence this human nature could be assumed and fail to know this fact.

The account I have been sketching relies on the view that the Word and his individual human nature are two overlapping individuals. As I have spelt this claim out, it entails the non-identity of Christ and the Word. This might seem absurdly Nestorian, to compromise irreparably the unity of person in the incarnate Christ. The account is Scotus's; small wonder, a reader may be thinking, that Scotus has always been suspected of Nestorianism. I have three comments. The first is that the material in Part IV is sufficient to acquit the thirteenth-century theologians of formal Nestorianism. The second is that it is the *unity* of person that is important in countering Nestorianism: and all the theologians I consider here are convinced that there is just one person, the Word, and that the human nature is something like a *property* (or, on Aquinas's account, part) of his. Claiming that this property might be an individual substance—even one which has some properties of its own over and above relational ones such as *being assumed*—does not entail Nestorianism, provided that the nature is a property of the Word's. Thirdly, the non-identity claim is, I have been arguing, a necessary consequence of viewing Christ's human nature as an individual substance. And I argued at the end of Chapter 1 that it may be

[24] Karl Rahner, 'Dogmatic Considerations on the Knowledge and Consciousness of Christ', in Herbert Vorgrimler (ed.), *Dogmatic vs Biblical Theology* (London: Burns and Oates, 1964), 241–67, p. 266. I discuss Rahner's view in my 'Incarnation, Indwelling, and the Vision of God: Henry of Ghent and Some Franciscans', *Franciscan Studies*, 57 (1999), 79–130, pp. 84–5, 116–17, n. 73.

that if the Word and the human nature are to count as one person—rather than just (say) an aggregate or accidental unit—there must be some one thing that the Word and the human nature compose, even if that thing is not itself a person in the same sense that the Word is.

Supposing we want to accept the medieval view of the assumed nature as an individual substance, which sort of account of subsistence should we accept?[25] The first point to notice is that on the face of it none of the medieval proposals is sufficient to *block* the assumed nature's being a centre of consciousness. Neither being, nor a relation, nor a negation, seems in any way intrinsically linked to the consciousness of an individualized human nature or substance.

Given this, which medieval theory of subsistence is most desirable? *Esse* theories rely on an overly baroque ontology, positing an individual *esse* as a constituent (a principle) of a thing. Causing a substance and causing its existence are one and the same thing—and if this is true, then there is no sense in which a substance and its existence are distinct. *Esse* theories of subsistence are, in addition, inconsistent with the (true) claim that any substance has a natural inclination to subsist—as I outlined in Chapter 13. Relation theories are inconsistent with this claim too, as I have shown, and in addition rely on the reducibility of relations to monadic properties. Negation theories are the simplest, and all possible metaphysical objections to them that I know seem to be answerable. They allow a human nature to have a natural inclination to subsistence. Equally, on a negation theory, the assumed nature lacks nothing had by a non-assumed nature. So on the face of it the assumed nature looks in this theory to be a powerful candidate for being a centre of consciousness or experiencing subject in its own right. (It is hard to see what sort of blocks assumption could place on being an experiencing subject; though note that the negation theory does not *entail* that Christ's human nature is an experiencing subject. It might be—as some philosophers of mind think—that there are no such things as centres of consciousness. Or it might be that there is some way in which assumption places blocks on being a centre of consciousness—perhaps if we insist on developing a theory that posits a strong identity between ontological and psychological subjecthood.)

All in all, then, supposing that we accept a medieval-style Christology, it seems that the negation theory of subsistence is the most desirable. And if we accept it, then as far as I can see we will not need to do much metaphysical work not done already by Scotus. But we will perhaps need to do some. Specifically, I think that the defender of a medieval-style Christology would need to think some more about the non-identity of Christ and the Word (where 'Christ' refers to a whole that has the Word and the human nature as parts—as two overlapping individuals). I am not sure exactly what line this development would need to take; perhaps building on Scotus's notion that the reference of the subject terms can alter the sense of the predicate terms would represent the most fruitful way forward. (Another way

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[25] As I pointed out in Ch. 11 above, we do not need to develop a subsistence theory in order to avoid Nestorianism; so if none of the subsistence theories on offer pleases, the theologian could simply dispense with one altogether, at least for theological purposes.

forward would be to deny that the assumed nature's status as a first substance entails that Christ is in any sense a whole that includes two parts; but I have indicated above, in the Introduction and in Chapter 5, why I do not think that this would be a desirable course to follow.)

One final consequence of all this is that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth is wholly extrinsic to the doctrine of the Incarnation. It seems to me that this is the case whichever model of Chalcedonian Christology we accept. But it is clearly the case on the negation theory of subsistence, which, as I showed in Chapter 15, entails the possibility of the Word assuming an individual nature that pre-exists such a union *as a person*. Clearly, this possibility entails the simpler possibility that the Word assume a nature that was naturally conceived, though never pre-existed as a person.

As I indicated above, I do not think that the philosophical and theological arguments in favour of a medieval-style Christology (outlined in section 1 of this chapter) are irresistible, and I am not sure that a medieval-style Christology is the correct one. But I hope to have shown that such a Christology could be developed in some very fruitful ways, and that it is worthy of serious theological attention.

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